

ARGENTINA, BRAZIL AND THE WORLD IN THE FACE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

This paper analyses the international scene in the XXIst century by taking into account three major issues: first, the new world order; second, the relationship between technological advances and the humanist conception; third, the search for a solution for the increasing differences between affluent and marginal societies, and, within them, extremely rich and extremely poor sectors.

In this context, the opportunities Argentina and Brazil have within Mercosur and the South American Community of Nations are also highlighted.

Key words: International relations; Argentine foreign policy; Brazilian foreign policy; Integration new world order, humanism, inequality, Argentina, Brasil.

1. Perspectives of the World

At the beginning of the 21th century, the world - just come out of the Cold War and after having held throughout the 20th century the biggest scientific and technological revolution in history - is faced with three main orders of problems: (1) that of the formation of a new world order to substitute the old American-Soviet polarity (2) that of solving the crucial problem of contemporary culture, concerning the relation between the technological perspective and the humanistic perspective and, in parallel with this problem, that of the relation between the great cultural systems that subsist and the big subdivisions that exist within them and (3) that of finding a satisfactory solution to the problem of the ever growing and immense differences that separate affluent

and marginal societies from poor societies and, within them, the extremely rich sectors and the extremely poor sectors.

The new world order

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. emerged as the only superpower and they tried, under Bush's first presidency and under Clinton's presidency, to reconcile their incomparable supremacy with a satisfactory multilateral adjustment with the rest of the world, the superpowers, on the one hand, and the UN and its Security Council, on the other. The second Bush, emerged, by decision of the Supreme Court, out of very debatable elections, surprised the world - who was expecting the formation of a moderate government that would try to restore the deteriorated American unity - with the constitution of a cabinet composed mainly of personalities marked by an extreme-right ideology. The terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 gave Bush's government the excuse, in the name of the principle of legitimate defense, to adopt an imperialistic unilaterality ignoring the UN, international law regulations and the opinion of former allies and most of the countries and peoples of the world. The U.S. defined themselves as a country in a state of war against international terrorism and against countries that they considered despicable and that, actually or supposedly, support this terrorism. For this aim, a new doctrine of national defense was adopted, characterized, on the one hand, by an ostentatious unilateral position that confirms the international position, erga omnes, of American deliberations and interests. On the other hand, and as a consequence, this position holds the principle of preventive war against anything and against anyone who is considered dangerous for the U.S. A war which legitimacy depends exclusively on the decisions of the American government itself. Bush emphatically insisted on these positions during his inauguration pronouncement of his second term.

That new American stand led the country, on clear violation of the UN charter and Security Council determinations, to unilaterally invade Irak claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction that represented an immediate threat for the U.S. and for the world and, after an insignificant resistance, to occupy that country. Repeated inspections made by the UN and by the U.S. themselves revealed that such weapons did not exist. However, President Bush reasserted the legitimacy of his intervention and military occupation of Iraq presenting now as predominant reason the fact that such initiative had freed the world and Iraq of an extremely dangerous dictator besides opening the path to the democratization of that country.

The position of Bush's government is at the root of an unsustainable situation: that of an international conflict between power and legitimacy. The centre of power, the only superpower whose military, economical and technological supremacy is virtually incontestable, has turned into a legitimate power. The centre of legitimacy, the UN, is powerless. The conflict between legitimacy and power cannot be long neither in the national nor in the international sphere. It will lead, and not on the long run, to relocate the power on the norms of legitimacy or to the loss of validity of the previous legitimacy regime. To face this issue, the world has several alternatives that will be developed in different periods.

First, we could consider the relatively short period that corresponds to President Bush's second term. Bush's inaugural speech on January 20th 2005 has been an emphatic commitment to the international defense of freedom even, if necessary, by means of unilateral military interventions. On the other hand, the president has moderated such unilaterality by declaring himself open to dialogue and consultations.

Independently of the reelection of Bush, the world is faced with a longer period that coincides with the first third of the century. During this period, American supremacy might be consolidated and universalized assuming the characteristics of a world empire though presenting aspects very different from those of the classical empires, the Roman and the British. We might also witness a variant of the empirical model through the formation of a system of American supremacy which is made more bearable by co-optation with the other powers. Something equivalent, under contemporary conditions, to what Philippe of Macedonia achieved with the Corinthian Congress of 338 BC, when he formed, with the rest of the Greek states, a Hellenic league with proportional representation in an assembly but keeping the military command of the system in the hands of Macedonia.

During the same period, conditions will tend to exert a deep influence on the subsequent evolution of the world. Such conditions will depend on whether some countries, or groups of countries, manage or not to sustain a consistent development that allow them to reach superior international autonomy thresholds. We are referring mainly to the cases of China and Russia and to the possible formation, within the sphere of the European Union, of an eventual political pro-Europe subsystem and, also, to the evolution of countries like India and Brazil, on the one hand, and of the Islamic world, on the other.

If a country like China manages to keep for another long period the extraordinary 7% to 8% a year development index that has been holding since Deng Xiaoping and, besides, finds a suitable institutional path, this country will conquer conditions of equipollency with the U.S. by the mid-century. Something similar could be said about Russia if the reorganization given by Vladimir Putin, reelected on March 2002, leads his country on a path of self-sustainable development that will manage to regain for itself the condition of superpower that it held during the Soviet period.

Even though the conditions are different, countries like India and Brazil also have at their disposal the possibility of carrying out significant national development during the first third of the century and of reaching a high level of international autonomy. It's not foreseen that these two countries will become superpowers by mid-century like it could happen to China and Russia. Cultural characteristics of India, despite its control of the production of nuclear weapons, will stop it from turning into a superpower during this century but its successful development will grant it a high level of international autonomy and will make this country one of the great world interlocutors by mid-century. Also in Brazil, a successful development will not tend to turn the country into a superpower for reasons concerning its socio-cultural characteristics as well as for the fact that its emerging as an important international interlocutor will depend fundamentally on the consolidation of alliances within the frame of Mercosur and South America which will grant it a leadership that is structurally dependant on the consensus of the allies.

The European Union, after the incorporation of its ten new members, eventually even that of Turkey and others, will forever lose, as a consequence of its political heterogeneity, the possibility of turning into an important political protagonist in the international scene. It will be a great economic system and it will still be, even though in a less creative way than in the past, a great centre of culture. Such situation, however, will stimulate the creation within the European Union of two or more political subsystems. Nowadays, we can foresee the formation of an actively pro-Europe political subsystem of which France and Germany will be the nucleus. Maybe followed by the Latin countries and another Anglo Nordic pro-Atlantic subsystems deeply committed to the alliance, like the U.S. There aren't any conditions that allow us to foresee how the new members, mainly the Slavic and the future of Turkey, will develop on a longer term. On the short term, they have already proved their identification with the pro-Atlantic position. However, that position may not persist on the long term especially for all members of this group. Hence, the possibility of a subdivision of the new members according to the two positions already mentioned or the possible formation of a third position not foreseen for now.

The hypothesis of the formation of an important pro-Europe subsystem will tend to constitute a serious obstacle for the consolidation of an American world empire. If a consistent and durable pro-Europe subsystem is constituted, as it seems probable, the world alternatives will tend to limit themselves to the last two hypothesis stated above, that of the new Hellenic league with significant decentralization of power even though America will hold the military supremacy and the hypothesis of a new multipolar regime.

The Muslim world scattered among a great number of countries and geographical regions with its irremediable dualism between its Chiita and Sunita sectors will not turn either into a unitary system capable of exerting world power but might turn into an important international interlocutor if it reaches satisfactory articulation and development levels among its members.

The possibilities of realization of this power are very significant but not unavoidable. Depending on the direction that these countries might take as well as on the internal divisions in the U.S., the conditions at the beginning of the second third of the century might correspond to the emerging of these new interlocutors as well as, on the contrary, to their adaptation to the hegemonic American system which will be more probable in the case of a predominance in the U.S. of a co-opting stand of the world instead of a unilaterally dominant one.

Three scenarios

With the alternatives previously introduced, the world faces three possible scenarios in the last third of this century: (1) that of an absolute American supremacy though practiced under the form of a benign empire, (2) that of an American hegemony based on the co-optation with the superpowers with a significant decentralization of the power according to the ancient model of the Hellenic league or (3) that of the restoration of a multipolar regime with the resulting risks of a suicidal nuclear confrontation, even if not deliberate.

It would be important to notice the extent to which such an empire will be different from its predecessors. A possible “American empire” would not consist, as the historical empires, in a formalized system of power where representatives of the imperial centre, like proconsuls or viceroys, control their “provinces” or “colonies” with the due support of the imperial bureaucracy and the military forces. It’s true that the location of important American military contingents in strategic points of the world reminds us of the ancient location of Roman legions on the Ecumen. However, this “empire” would have to show the characteristics of a “field” in the way we refer to a magnetic field or a gravitational field. Within the general frame of the globalization process, that also affects the U.S., this country benefited from the conditions that allowed it to optimize the effects of globalization to its own benefit. For this reason, everything makes globalization act as an Americanization of the areas and sectors subjected to this process.

In this way, the “American empire” results, within the frame of globalization, in a collection of economic, financial, technological, cultural and political pressures, as well as military pressures when suitable, that force the areas subjected to its influence to act according to American interests independently of the will of their leaders.

This imperial system, as it has been consolidated and universalized, will probably assume characteristics of co-optation similar to those that Philippe of Macedonia managed to impose on the “Hellenic league”. An American “Hellenic league” would consist in a world hegemony system regulated by co-opting principles where the superpowers and the countries of greater international weight would participate in the management of the system in a proportion relative to the margin de power of each of them preserving this way its leadership and its military supremacy.

On the other hand, the hypothesis of the eventual formation of a new multipolar regime would lead to a new world order that would involve great autonomous systems of power with countries like the U.S., a superdeveloped China and a Russia, that has regained its character of superpower, on a lower level of influence and constraint by a group of international interlocutors that will eventually include the European political subsystems, India, Brazil, Japan and a not very well integrated Islamic system keeping at the top of the system an armed security in charge of leading a fragile equilibrium of power based on the practical non-viability of a big nuclear conflict. That world order, that could carry on for a long time, would lead to gradually assuming growing institutionalization that would lead, on the long run, to a Pax Universalis and to a satisfactorily unitary world organization if a suicidal nuclear confrontation, even if not deliberate, did not occur.

2. Cultural matters

Levels of the problem

The importance of cultural matters tends to be proportional to the level of development of societies. Under current conditions, where military conflicts are no longer viable except in peripheral regions of the world, cultural matters assume a growing importance. Reduced to the bare essentials, such matters are of two kinds: 1) in the sphere of each of the great cultural systems, what is at stake is the relation between techné and telos, between technological and humanistic perspectives, between efficiency and quality of life; 2) in the relation between the great cultural systems that have survived up to the 20th century: in the Western, the Islamic, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Indian and the African worlds, what is at stake is the margin of influence that each one will be able to exert on the others. On the other hand, each of those worlds are marked by considerable subdivisions. Like the Germanic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon and Slavic divisions in the Western world. In the Islamic world the *sunitas* and *chiitas* branches. In the Indian world, the Hindu-Brahman and Buddhist branches.

Analyzing this latter matter from a historical perspective, what strikes us most is the degree of growing influence that the Western world has been exerting on the others as from the end of the 17th century. The scientific development of the Western world since Galileo and Newton has generated conditions for the technical use of that knowledge. The technological development of the Western world, especially in its military manifestations, has accumulated in favor of the European countries a growing and irresistible superiority over the peoples of non-Western culture. Throughout the period that goes from the second half of the 17th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the European world, later on followed by the U.S., has developed a growing expansion to the expense of the Islamic, Chinese, Japanese and African worlds.

Within this process, it's necessary to point out two important events. The first one, which is present in all cultural systems but particularly in the Western, is the degree of conversion of scientific knowledge and technological progress that go from being accessory elements, like they were at the beginning, to being fundamental elements. This process goes to such an extent that nowadays we can no longer talk about a Western civilization like we used to until mid-19th century. Originally, as from the dissolution of the Carolingian empire until mid-19th century or until World War I, Western civilization was an ethnocentric culture whose nucleus of reference was Christianity. Since these more recent periods, the central nucleus of Western culture are its scientific-technological conceptions. Religious beliefs survive, to a bigger or lesser extent, according to the way we analyze Western countries. But in all of them, these beliefs have stopped constituting the central nucleus of their world vision. We can then consider the current Western civilization as a Late Western world. The same way we talk about a Late Antiquity when we mention the passage from Classical civilization to Christianity as from Constantine.

Another important event that we need to take into account is the extent to which the unilateral Westernization of the world that began at the end of the 17th century has, as from the 18th century, found a reciprocity in the growing influence of non-Western elements in the Western world. Like, among many aspects, the decisive importance of African elements in popular music and in Western art, of Buddhist elements in self-help practices, of Japanese elements in fighting techniques or in cooking and of Islamic and Chinese elements in decoration.

As opposed to what Samuel Huntington¹ assumed, the world is not heading towards a war between civilizations. The conflict with Islamic groups or societies and the possibilities of a Sino-American antagonism are, actual or potentially, conflicts of power and not of civilization. Everything shows that, on the long run, the world is headed towards the formation of a planetary civilization capable of incorporating all civilizations and whose organizing axis is the Late Western civilization but presenting characteristics and internal subdivisions – Islamic branch, Buddhist branch, etc.- equivalent to those that, within the Western civilization, differentiated the Latin, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon and Slavic branches.

Technology and humanism

As it has already been mentioned, the contemporary man within the frame of each cultural system faces a second order of big cultural matters that concern the relation between the technological and the humanistic perspectives. As I have already said, this deals with the relation between the world of the media, that of the tekhnê, and the world of the goals, that of telos.

Successful periods in history have been marked by a satisfactory equilibrium between these two kinds of values, with a predominance of the telos, if we compare them with the instrumental ones. Also the Hellenic culture, in the long phase that goes from the pre-urban period (8th c. BC) to the Empire of Alexander (4th c. BC), developed a technological base that would prove to be satisfactory for the basic needs of the Ancient World enriched with future and important Hellenistic and Roman contributions². It's interesting to see that the institution of slavery that crosses all of the Ancient World, but is more significant in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, inhibited the practical use of the fantastic innovations of the Hellenistic period limiting them mainly to military use. The slave, human machine, made mechanics dispensable. Apart from their military use, Hellenistic innovations have been adopted in medicine and have been used in their prodigious temples.

Based on that technology, the Greek world developed an extraordinary guideline of values that disciplined the Hellenistic life since the heroic Homeric areté until the harmonic urban Kalogatia of the Eupatridae that combined virile virtues with an aristocratic sense of civic duty and, with democracy, it reached the common man.

Once the polis disappeared with the Empire of Alexander and the formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms, the parish commitment to the city was replaced by the cosmopolitan ethics of epicures (that did not have at the time the Sybaritic sense that the word has acquired in modern times) and by stoicism. Both philosophies advocated important differences. The combination of personal serenity with the commitment to serve society and a sense of self rigor and tolerance with the others.

With the ideal of salvation, Christianity introduced the norms of behavior of the good Christian that have guided the ethical conduct of the Western world until the 18th century. The modern period, began with Illustration, has introduced a differentiation between natural religion and ethics, dictated by the human heart and

worshipped by the Deist philosophers, from their dogmatic formulations, criticized by them and has created the ideal of “honnête homme”.

The crisis of religions and of traditional values, that is accelerated as from World War I and has expanded exponentially during the second half of the 20th century, has generated in the contemporary world, even more so in the Western³, a deep value crisis. What’s the meaning of life if it ends in this world? What’s the meaning of the world if it’s dominated by the rich and powerful?

The conflict between technological and humanistic perspectives is found within that frame. If life finishes in this world and this world is dominated by factors of wealth and power, what matters is augmenting the ability to acquire them. What is important is the “know how” and its operative manifestation, technology. This perspective becomes particularly dominant in the Anglo-Saxon world and, especially, in the U.S.

As a contrast to this perspective, an important dose of humanism still subsists in the contemporary world that, in contrast with the “know how”, constitutes the “know for”. A humanism that reveals itself, in general, in Latin cultures particularly in a country like Italy where humanism is diffused by the popular mass and like M. Jourdain’s prose, people practice it daily without realizing. Humanism, on the other hand, impregnates the world vision of great continental philosophers from Jaspers to Scheler, from Horckheimer to Habermas, from Sartre to Merleau Ponty, from Croce to Bobbio, from Unamuno to Ortega. Even in the Anglo-Saxon philosophy, despite being almost totally dominated by logical positivism, humanism is present, among others, in Whitehead and Bertrand Russel. In Argentina, humanistic philosophy finds a high expression in Francisco Romero, Rizieri Frondizzi and Carlos Astrada. In Mexico, in Octavio Paz y Carlos Fuentes. In Brazil, in Vicente Ferreira da Silva, Mario Vieira de Melo and Miguel Reale.

Contemporary humanism, implicitly or explicitly agnostic, accepts in its philosophical manifestations the limitations of nature and human condition - with the exception of notable figures like Teilhard de Chardin or, in Brazil, that of the priests Fernando Bastos de Ávila and Henrique de Lima Vaz- but highlights the fact that in a private cosmos of sense, in an unfair world and in an ephemeral human life, the sense of life is given by men who can individually or collectively do something excellent and magnificent out of it. Contemporary philosophical humanism in its multiple and different formulations goes back to the fundamental precepts of Hellenist humanism and adds a deep social and ecological sense to it. Popular humanism, on the other hand, unconsciously impregnated with these values, consists above all in the art of knowing how to live well. It’s extraordinary to establish how, thanks to this diffuse but effective humanism present in the conduct of people, Latin societies, in a general manner, and particularly marked in Italy or in poor communities of Latin America where *samba* from Rio de Janeiro and *tango* from Buenos Aires were born, can achieve a quality of life incomparably superior to their income levels. The shantytowns of El Salvador and Recife, like the ones in Rio de Janeiro before they were controlled by drug-traffickers, present an extraordinary contrast with the poor areas of Harlem. In the former, joy reigns overcoming misery; and in the latter, in spite of the average income per capita being incomparably higher, resentment and the deepest frustration predominate.

As it was the case in the good periods in history, the solution to the value problem of our days consists in satisfactorily combining the media values and the goal values, between technology and humanism. Our contemporary world depends on the maintenance and, to a great extent, on the development and expansion of technology. Without this requirement, societies would be very rapidly led to extinction. Besides, without the development and the expansion of humanism conceived in its social and ecological reformulation, individual and collective life will be devoid of all sense and will reduce itself to the extremes of the quest for power and intransitive consumerism generating this terrible reality of our time, the disposable man.

An analysis of Western culture shows that, based on socio-cultural differentiations within the Anglo-Saxon and Latin worlds, adding to the latter the Germanic and the Slavic worlds, the problem consists, on the one hand, in implementing the dominion of technology in the Latin, German and Slavic societies and, on the other hand, a stronger presence of humanism in Anglo-Saxon societies. As regards this, an important role is played by Latin America which shows an extraordinary ability for its accelerated technological modernization and has an important dose of humanism in the popular sector as well as in the learned sector.

Wealth and marginality

The third order of big problems with which the contemporary world is confronted refers to the growing gap that separates wealthy societies from marginal societies and, in a general way, the gap between very wealthy and very poor sectors seen in many societies. While in the richest societies of the world the income per capita is over 30,000 US\$, in the poorest societies, the income per capita is 300 US\$, that is to say, 100 times smaller. According to the OIT report of 2004, this huge inequality tends to worsen.

When we analyze poverty and underdevelopment, it's important to distinguish the case of societies that were led to this condition by historical conditions that arose from the expansion of the Western world from the levels of poverty and marginality that were generated especially in Latin American and also in marginalized sectors of rich countries, like Europe and the U.S.

The great mass of poverty has resulted from the growingly unfair effects of the three waves of the process of globalization. Countries like China and India had in the 16th century a similar development level and, in some aspects, even superior to that of European countries. With the maritime discoveries and the mercantile revolution, the relation of income per capita, initially of 1 to 1, changed to 1 to 2 in favor of the Western world. The technological revolution of our days has caused, in the extremes of the richest and poorest countries, a relation of 1 to 100. The three waves of the process of globalization have exponentially risen the active capacity and economic wealth of modern countries and have contributed, by means of highly unfavorable conditions of trade, to the impoverishment of underdeveloped countries. In these countries, the insufficient growth of the social surplus compared with its demographical growth has perpetuated and worsened poverty. The case of African countries is different from that of Asian countries. In the latter, great civilizations that did not reach the Western scientific and technological revolution in time paid the high historical prize mentioned above. Countries

like China and India, however, have made in the second half of the 20th century an extraordinary effort of modernization and development and they are heading towards turning into interlocutors at the beginning of the century. In the case of African countries⁴, however, European colonialism intervened when these countries were still in their tribal phase. Their frontiers were cut, arbitrarily, to benefit the colonial occupations, without any relation to the corresponding societies. Thus, states were created that, when they became independent, did not have satisfactory national integration. We should also mention that African countries are subjected to extremely adverse conditions in terms of the formation and conduct of their elites. As we have already seen, historically, as well as currently, elites have a relatively fixed cost of maintenance. When the social surplus is very small, like in the current case of Africa or like in the case of Europe until the 18th century or until the first half of the 19th century, the cost of maintenance absorbs almost the total of the social surplus condemning the masses to poverty and perpetuating it. That dead-end sociological situation only tends to solve itself in two cases. In most cases, when the increase of productivity resulting from better methods and means of production (Europe) significantly increase the social surplus, allowing the cost of maintenance of the elite to be smaller. In exceptional cases (Meiji restoration in Japan), when the new elite limits its expenses and invests a growing percentage of the social surplus in good development projects.

In the case of Latin America, where the percentage of poor and indigent people is extremely high, this situation has as an immediate cause the total uneducation of these sectors worsened, in a general way, by a relatively high unemployment rate and, in particular, by the continual descent of the demand for manual work as a consequence of technological progress. However, the deep cause of this state of affairs are the extreme inequalities that characterize, since colonial times, Latin American societies that functioned until the 20th century, and in many countries still work, as producers of raw material and goods of low added value. This system has been controlled by a small elite and assisted by a huge labor force with very low salaries. Besides, this picture is characterized by insufficient social incorporation of the ancient indigenous populations or of part of the ancient slave descendants, frequently a majority (Andean countries) or extremely numerous (Brazil).

In the case of Europe and the U.S., marginalized sectors are composed of emigrants of very low educational level and with insufficient incorporation to the society to which they moved, to be victims of racial or cultural discrimination.

The resulting general picture before mentioned is characterized by the existence of more than 1,000 million indigent people in the world and of an even superior number of people in a state of great poverty. Such situation is not only unacceptable from the ethic point of view. It's socially unsustainable. The world can not continue throughout the century as a few islands of wealth surrounded by an ocean of misery. The growing migratory pressures and the equally growing manifestations of terrorism that will be exerted on wealthy societies will not be compatible with their values and patterns of civilization. These societies are and will be faced up to the alternative, in order to stop the migratory and terrorist influx, of exerting a prevention and repression of fascist kind that will be translated into a fascization of societies themselves -such is the current

tendency in the Bush's U.S. - or, in order to keep their values and democratic patterns, they will be led to suffer an overwhelming invasion of undesirable immigrants and forced to make a great effort of international help. An equivalent situation is that of most Latin American countries where great metropolis are surrounded by huge areas of marginality which make the preservation of conditions of safety and patterns of civilization of life in these cities non-viable.

If the civilized world does not destroy social marginalization, marginalization will destroy the civilized world. To extinguish social marginality, a single recipe is not enough. The Asian and the African cases have to be differentiated from the Latin American and the Euro-North American cases and from very critical situations like that of Palestine. In the case of Asia, the solution is already in practice. It consists in keeping the high rates of development that China and India hold at the moment. In the case of Latin-American countries, two fundamental matters are at stake: (1) an effective and consistent political will of eradicating marginality and (2) the not less effective and consistent adoption of a new economic model that will allow them to overcome the stagnation that has been paralyzing them for the last 20 years and grant them annual growth rates similar to those of Asian countries. The case of Palestine is characterized by the urgent need for an equitable solution for the Palestine people.

The problem of the spheres of marginality in European countries is related to the problem of underdevelopment in northern Africa and tropical Africa. An attempt to propose policies and measures for the development of Africa would exceed the dimensions of this brief study. We have limited ourselves to pointing out that the promotion of this development goes beyond the regional spheres and constitutes a crucial problem for Europe itself and for the world. It's important to point out that any policy for the development of Africa will not be effective and consistent unless carried out by Africans themselves, even if with massive international help.

The case of the marginalized sectors of the U.S. has two faces, external and internal. Internally, and under not very favorable conditions, this problem presents similarities with the problem in Latin America. It's a matter of education and employment together with the effective incorporation to American society of those who come from marginalized sectors. In reference to this, we should emphasize the extraordinary progress that is observed in that country as regards the incorporation of African Americans to the average patterns of that society. Something which is an example for a country like Brazil where the inexistence, since the abolition of slavery, of previous explicit barriers of racial discrimination favors the persistence of implicit barriers. Externally, this matter is related to the development of Central America, especially that of Mexico. Just as in the relation between Africa and Europe, even though on a less serious scale, Central American poverty feeds massive migrations to the U.S. that will only end with the development of Central America.

3. Argentina and Brazil

Internal contradictions

Argentina and Brazil, against reasonable expectations, since the first decades of the 20th century in Argentina and since the second half of last century in Brazil, have not been able to get into the 21st century as developed societies.

The extraordinary development of Argentina of the last two decades of the 19th and of the 20th centuries suffered a long interruption during the past century. There have been more recent moments of justified hopes with the quinquennial plans of Peron (1946 – 1955) and with the development projects of Frondizi (1958 and 1962). The political instability that results from the peronism - anti-peronism antagonism, that extends over the second half of last century and reaches our days, has prevented the continuity of a consistent project of social and economic development. During that period, the country enjoyed a good and broad public education introduced by Sarmiento which generated on Argentinean soil the most educated and civilized population in Latin America. However, the creation of a productive system corresponding to its cultural level, has not been achieved. This way, a big disequilibrium between a sophisticated Argentinean society and an underdeveloped economy began. The former making demands that the latter could not satisfy. The result on the long term was a growing external indebtedness that led to the recent collapse with De la Rúa and Cavallo.

The recovery led by Kirchner's government and its capable Minister of Economy, Lavagna, is promising but there is a long way to go.

As we will see later on, the great national goals of Argentina will only be possible under current conditions of the world through its regional integration, starting from a solid and reciprocally beneficial alliance with Brazil. It's unfortunate that president Kirchner strives to exhibit hostile attitudes towards Mercosur and Brazil before a limited internal public.

Brazil, because of its historical formation as a big tropical estate whose characteristics subsisted until the 1960s, and the extraordinary socio-cultural heterogeneity that it currently presents in spite of the continual progress of modernization, that is observed in the country since the 1930s and accelerated during the second government of Vargas (1951-1954) and during the Kubitschek government (1956-1961), hasn't been able to satisfy either, in spite of its critical mass, the expectations of the development generation of mid-20th century. This way, Brazil presents extraordinary contrasts between a sector that represents about 30% of the population (about 55 million) and enjoys a level of life and education comparable to that of Southern Europe and an extremely uneducated and poor sector that represents more than 40 % of the population in which a sector of 12% (about 12 million) live in a level of indian misery.

The immense socio-cultural heterogeneity of Brazil, other than being an important obstacle to the general development of the country, stops the formation of political majorities that can sustainably hold consistent projects of development. The political neutralizations that the peronism - anti-peronism antagonism imposes in Argentina finds its counterpart in Brazil in the contradictions arising from its socio-cultural heterogeneity.

It's interesting to see in the case of Brazil, because of historical reasons, the high rate of national integration, superior to that of many European countries and superior to almost all of the Latin American

countries. In contrast with its incredibly low rate of social integration that allows the country to resist the disintegrating effects of its heterogeneity. However, the surmounting of this heterogeneity presents itself as the main problem of the country. And the possibilities of development of Brazil depend on it.

Supposing that the necessary measures for the reduction of such heterogeneity were implemented, it's calculated that those efforts would take at least three generations, that is to say, about 50 years. Such period is significantly superior to the time that Brazil will have, about 20 years under current conditions of the world, to sustainably and autonomously reach a satisfactory development threshold. This is the main reason why, despite the critical mass that is present in the country, its great national objectives will only be achieved if Brazil reaches an adequate level of integration. Like in the case of Argentina, this objective depends sine qua non on the formation of a stable and trustworthy alliance with Argentina. On the short term, that objective finds opposition in President Kirchner's anti-Brazilian attitudes. The imperatives dictated by reality, however, will have to conquer difficulties of simply psychological origin.

Tasks to be performed

There are significant differences between Argentinean and Brazilian underdevelopment. In the first country, the solution consists in elevating the productive system to the socio-cultural level of the society. In Brazil, the crucial problem consists in correcting its perfidious social profile through the eradication of ignorance and misery and through the reduction of the distance that separates the great masses from the middle classes. In Brazil, making an effort for the completion of its economic development is also important.

All in all, in both countries, the main obstacle for that development is political. In Argentina, the peronism – anti-peronism antagonism needs to be overcome once and for all by means of the formation of a modern political constellation where all centre-left and centre-right tendencies are represented. On the short term, it's also about preventing the theatrical attitudes of president Kirchner, aimed at pleasing a small internal audience, from later on affecting more seriously the consolidation of Mercosur and the Argentine-Brazilian alliance. In Brazil, it's necessary to achieve an equivalent political composition.

In the case of Argentina, everything indicates that a new political formation will have to arise from the contradictory political complex in which peronism has turned into with the resulting adjustments in the radicalism sphere. Besides the struggles for leadership like the ones fought by Kirchner and Duhalde, the most important thing in the peronist complex is its internal division between center-right neoliberal tendencies (Menem) and centre-left social democrat tendencies (Kirchner and Duhalde). We can see a similar polarization in the radicalism sphere. Thus, the opportunity is presented for a political realignment in Argentina that can overcome the long and paralyzing peronism – anti-peronism conflict. The peronist leader that achieves to articulate the centre-left front incorporating sectors related to radicalism will have the conditions for the realization of a great national project.

In the case of Brazil, as shown by the scandals that arise every day during the second semester of 2005 and that affect the PT, allied parties and Lula's government, the political problem presents two dimensions, one of institutional character and another one, partially derived, of operative character. The legislation that regulates elections and political parties is extremely deficient and allows all kinds of abuses. The adoption of a broad and deep reform of such legislation is urgent. There's consensus between experts on the matter on the adoption of the district regime (simple or mixed), rigorous party fidelity, the demand for a minimum of 5 national votes for the survival of a party, a new financial regime for the elections and measures that lead to the formation of stable parliamentary majorities invested with a unique program and leadership each term of office.

A broad reformulation of the party system is also necessary. The current electoral legislation brings about parliamentary fragmentation that forces the President of the Republic to make the most far fetched party alliances. Cardoso's government was forced to articulate an alliance between the centre-left Social Brazilian Democracy PSTD and that of the centre-right Liberal Front PFL with negative repercussions for the government program. President Lula had an even worse option, that of incorporating to the parliamentary support base of the government parties without any public significance like the PTB, the PP and the PN allowing the practice of countless illicit acts that are being shown by several investigations carried out in the second half 2005. The broad and deep reform of the electoral and party regime mentioned above is the necessary condition for a satisfactory realization of Brazilian political parties.

Historical period

History, among many things, consists of a succession of periods. The realization of certain things is subordinate to a certain period and they become unrealizable or extremely improbable past this period. The great non-Western civilizations of Islam, India and China lost the opportunity to modernize and industrialize themselves at the right time, as opposed to Japan, and therefore, they were transformed in underdeveloped societies. Deep political and cultural modifications have allowed China and India to recover in the second half of the 20th century the modernization initiative they had lost before. Islam, with the exception of Mustafa Kemal's Turkey, has not achieved that until today.

Argentina and Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century are faced with what seems to be their last chance to autonomously reach a satisfactory and sustainable development threshold. To achieve this, they have a historically very short period that is calculated in a maximum of 20 years. If they don't, they will turn, and there are already worrying signs, like many other countries are already turning, in simple undifferentiated international market segments and provinces of the empire.

The estimation of a period of 20 years does not result from a mathematical certainty but rather from a rather reasonable collection of verifications. On the one hand, we should take into account the growingly accelerated process of globalization with its implicit effect of satellization of the U.S., process that operates by internationalizing economies and cultures of the countries that have not yet reached a satisfactory level of

autonomy and development. Such progress, if it's not controlled by forces that neutralize it, will lead, in a very short period, estimable in less than 10 years for the cases of Argentina and Brazil, to the conversion of the countries in which it operates into simple international market segments and in provinces of the empire. On the other hand, we need to acknowledge that for countries like Argentina and Brazil the surmounting of their underdevelopment will not be possible because of technical and sociopolitical reasons in less than 20 years. However, such period is expanded according to how they consistently walk a path that will lead to their development. For that reason, if the absence of adequate policies tends to turn Argentina and Brazil in less than 10 years in simple international market segments and in provinces of the empire, a vigorous and consistent effort of development will broaden the space of international permissiveness of these countries and will allow them to autonomously reach a satisfactory and sustainable development threshold.

This goal presents a double demand for Argentina and Brazil. Internally, the demand to urgently apply the necessary political reforms in a way that they can consistently implement a great development program, predominantly economical for Argentina and socio-cultural for Brazil throughout the next 20 years. On top of that internal demand, both countries face a not less critical demand for international coexistence. Under current conditions of the world, Argentina and Brazil can no longer develop independently.

In order to do that, Argentina needs enough economic and demographic critical mass. Brazil lacks a satisfactory level of social integration.

The national aims of the development project defended in Brazil by the ISEB (1950s and 1960s) and implemented by the second Vargas and by Kubitschek, also tried by Peron and Frondizi, is no longer viable. What has become viable under current conditions of the world and of these countries is a regional development project and Mercosur represents a minimal system of integration capable of allowing its members to develop autonomously, that is to say, capable of avoiding their transformation in simple international market segments and provinces of the empire. The South American Community of Nations, an effective system of economical and political integration, constitutes the goal of desirable integration, it's capable of granting its members the status of great independent international interlocutors in this century.

Mercosur and the Southern Community of Nations will only be effective and internationally valid systems if they are based on a stable, believable and reciprocally beneficial Argentine-Brazilian alliance. Such an alliance will automatically lead to the consolidation of Mercosur which will lead to the consolidation of the Southern Community of Nations.

The implementation of an effective Argentine-Brazilian alliance is for both countries as urgent as the internal measures necessary for their development. As from the beginning of last century, there is broad consensus between the responsible sectors of Argentina and Brazil on the importance of such an alliance. Despite President Kirchner's anti-Mercosur and anti-Brazilian stands.

A reindustrialization project for Argentina with active public and private cooperation of Brazil needs to be designed. It's finally about harmonizing both countries' foreign policy and overcoming isolated leadership intentions, on the part of Brazil, and resentment, on the part of Argentina. The Argentine-Brazilian alliance is

perfect. A harmonic and intelligent mobilization of the resources that both countries have at their disposal is needed. The project is basically feasible, however, it can easily go off track if the responsible leaderships of both countries do not understand that this essential alliance means to both of them an optimization of conditions that reasonably compensate for the dissymmetries between them. As allies, Argentina and Brazil will guarantee, throughout this difficult 20th century, the preservation of their national identities and their historical fates and, with them, those of the region. Separately, they will slide in the same direction as the growing number of countries that will be historically irrelevant.

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2 On ancient technology, refer to Forbes, R. J. de Dijksterhuis, E. (1963) *A History of Science and Technology*. Vol 1. Naltimore: Penguin Books; on Hellenistic technology, refer to Rostovzeff, M. (1941) *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*. pp. 1180. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

3 We have to take into account the degree to which the preservation of religious values in certain non-Western cultures, like in the case of Islam, corresponds to a broad survival of medieval mentality and uses.

4 Cf. Ki-Zerbo, Joseph. (2001) “África, História Crítica da África do Sul do Saara,” chapter 13, Vol. II in Jaguaribe, Helio. (2001) *Un Estudio Crítico de la Historia*. México: Fondo de la Cultura Económica.

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