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Geopolitics and National Movements: An Essay on the Dialects of Imperialism

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War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life and death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied ... The first of these essential factors is moral influence; the second, weather; the third, terrain; the fourth, command; and the fifth, doctrine ... To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill. Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy. Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. They capture his cities without assaulting them and overthrow his State without protracted operations.

– Sun Tzu, c. 400 B.C.E., *The Art of War*

Two Approaches to the Study of Imperialism

A generation ago, the study of imperialism seemed to be safely geared to the economic-political approach, illustrated by N. Bukharin and especially V.I. Lenin and his followers in the socialist and anti-imperialist movements the world over, as well as his disciples and foes in the academic world. I have tried, in another paper [Abdel-Malek, 1971c], to give substance to my contention that this (Leninist) approach is fundamentally sociological. That is, the way it tackles the problem is rooted in the

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study of the functioning of early twentieth-century capitalist systems in the framework of the international balance of forces [...].

The core of Lenin's approach – as pursued in highly differentiated fashion by J.V. Stalin, P. Togliatti, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi-minh, Fidel Castro – is precisely to link in a *structural dialectical* mold the two basic component elements of the world struggle against imperialism: the united world front of working-class and national movements, facing the constellation of conflicting colonial and imperialist forces.

Such has been the general strategic line [...], with an important difference: the Soviet Union's vision, as exemplified by the resolutions of the International Conferences of the Communist and Workers Parties (Moscow, 1966 and 1969), has stressed the central role of the system of socialist States in alliance with the working class and socialist movements in the world, and has demoted the national liberation movements to third place [...]. On the other hand, China has coupled her thesis on the union of the revolutionary forces of the five (not three) continents with an equal stress on the thesis that "East wind prevails over West wind"; i.e. that the Orient – the hitherto "under-developed," dependent countries – is now taking the lead in the historical revolutionary initiative, exactly as the West did from the time of the great maritime discoveries and the Renaissance.

We are thus a very long way from the prevailing tendency in present-day work on the theory of imperialism in some western countries. The decline of the West, as exemplified by the decline of old empires, and the displacement of the new center of world imperialism from Europe to America, has been accompanied by a profound crisis of values, culture and civilization. And this crisis, in its turn, led to a quest for new, and possibly more secure, faiths. The concrete dialectics of concrete societies of this concrete world could have promoted a more genuinely precise scientific work of analysis, comparative studies and theoretical elaboration – in organic conjunction with mass political work of a protracted and efficient nature. And it has been so, indeed, but not much in the field of the social sciences, which still are massively dominated by the political-cultural needs, moods, fashions and imperatives of the West in crisis.

Thus it happened that the main trend in studies of the theory of imperialism has been of the second type of approach, i.e., *structuralist-functional hegemonic ideology*, however with a "revolutionary," "Marxist" flavor. Its younger epigones are now pursuing the same course, i.e. reducing the dialectics of the contemporary societies to a[n] amalgam of well-defined units, with a more sophisticated epistemological vocabulary, a more refined methodology (not method) a zest for universalism which truly belongs to the messianic vision of the grand epoch of the "white man's burden." The key inspirators, here, are quite obvious: L. Trotsky and his posterity; R. Luxemburg, perhaps more acceptable to informed opinion, inasmuch as she did take courageous political action. The key notions/concepts belong to the "universalist"-reductionist tradition: "hegemonic center," "periphery," "accumulation,"

“modes of production,” and the pervasive mood is one of *predetermined historic necessity (fatality?)*. Revolution stems from sophisticated epistemology: the dons, now draped in red, can still set the pace of world history. Such are, fundamentally, the pretensions and aims of the prevailing younger epigones of this approach today.² But their concerted arrogance cannot veil their deep enmity towards the rising revolutionary initiative of the East, essentially China, following a communist course, Egypt in the Middle East, and Africa, following a national-radical course, inasmuch as they conceive of imperialism as a world system of economic-financial accumulation, which can only be crushed by a world unity of the peoples led, no doubt, by their intelligencia(s).

[...]

It is my contention that the first (economic-political) approach is a genuinely scientific, sociological one, and that it alone can provide an understanding of the dialectics of imperialism in our times [...].

The Dialects of Imperialism

To speak of imperialism is, perforce, to speak of two distinct elements – distinct as regards their origin and historical status, yet closely linked, in recent times, by the dialectics of hegemony and subjugation. On the one hand are the peoples, social formations, nations, countries, and states occupied or wholly or partially dependent on the European and American metropolis during the colonial and imperialist eras. On the other hand, are the centers of hegemonic power, colonial and imperialist, of the West.

This matter [...] indicates that one of the two elements – the dependent national societies – is the primary element, i.e. that they existed generations, centuries, and sometimes millennia before the advent of modern colonialism and imperialism. It also indicates that the second element, Western hegemony, obtained only since the era of the maritime discoveries, the rise of modern European nation-states dominated by the bourgeoisie, the Renaissance, the great bourgeois-democratic and industrial revolutions, i.e. from the 15th century onwards.

Because of their distinct and separate historical life-courses, each of these two elements, that is, each social-national unit within each one of these two groups, developed its own specific approach to dependence or hegemony, within the very general framework of a world ruled by the central contradiction of imperialism and national and social revolutions. In other words: the “system” functions not as a

² I would refer the reader to that admirable statement by Salvador Allende of Chile in an interview with Regis Debray [1971].

functional-structural system, of blind hegemonic/dependent interchangeable units, but as a dialectical system of (historically determined) specific societal ensembles, i.e. national societies crystallized around their power apparatus, the state, in vastly different conditions, with vastly different styles and modes, through vastly different paths, towards vastly different achievements, attainments, fulfillments. Each of the hegemonic imperialist powers and each of the subjugated dependent nations is apt to manifest its own (historically determined) specific vision of its destiny, its own vision of the image of [humanity] it purports to maintain, to fight for, to be willing to bring forth.

[...]

The pattern of interrelations between these two distinct elements is not revealed by the now ritual dichotomy between (evil) “imperialism” and (good) “national movements,” but rather it is a genuine dialectical pattern in which the inter-relationships between hegemonic imperialism and anti-hegemonic national liberation movements unfolds in a wide spectrum of modes, as determined by the interaction of the two dimensions of specificity (the specificity of *both* sides, i.e. the different imperialist systems and the different national societies), and the world system of power (as applied by different imperialist systems to different national societies).

For analytic purposes, it is possible to describe the dimension of specificity as the endogenous dimension; and the dimension of the world system of power, or geopolitics, as the exogenous dimension. Both are at play within each of the two elements, and are thus interwoven in a highly complex dialectics.

I do not purport to analyze in this paper the endogenous dimension, i.e. the concept of specificity [Balandier, 1970; Abdel-Malek, 1971a, 1971b]. For practical purposes, I would propose [that] the specific character of a given society, can only be comprehended by a critical study of the concrete historical development of a given socio-economic national formation which defines the pattern of societal maintenance specific to this society. This specific pattern of societal maintenance is nothing but the pattern of articulation and interaction of the key constituent factors of any societal maintenance throughout the historical course of its existence: the production of material life, within the geographical and ecological setting (the mode of production); the reproduction of physical life (sexuality); social order (power and the state); the field of time (the limitedness of human life, religions and philosophies). [...] Thus conceived, the concept of specificity grounded in a critical analysis of the historical process can help us reach a deep understanding of different national societies, much beyond first attempts at classification through socio-economic criteria alone.

The exogenous dimension, that is the world system of power, is much more apparent. And yet its impact, as well as its rapidly changing pattern, are hardly understood. Strong feelings are at hand to help cloud our perception of this dimension.

Intellectuals and social scientists of the hegemonic countries are prone to veil their western-centered approach by an insistence on universalism, the values of humanism, the traditional liberal or liberal-radical normative political power and power struggle. Or they may apply the same universalist approach, in a functionalist manner, to the study of imperialism, conceived of as a unified world hegemonic system clustered around one single center and doomed to breakdown as a system, and national liberation movements and revolutions, conceived of as pre-ordained, pre-synchronized international global actions, transcending frontiers, hated nations and their abhorred states (in the fashion of the Trotskyist-Luxemburgist approach, contemptuous of the Orient and the prevailing East wind).

How can the concrete-historically determined dialectics of the two dimensions, the endogenous and the exogenous, be formulated? First, an attempt should be made at determining the relative importance of each dimension in each one of the two elements, imperialism and national movements.

Quite obviously, the national movements' struggle for independence, national liberation and social revolutions posits itself as a struggle for the recovery, the reconquest, of national identity, sovereignty and power of decision against imperialist hegemony. It thus follows that national movements are bound to exhibit a far more powerful density of explicit specificity-content than hegemonic imperialism, precisely in as much as this specificity lies at the very heart of their liberation struggles and revolutions. And, in fact, any serious study of the political and social science literature since 1840-1900 demonstrates that such has been the case in the movement of ideas and thought of the dependent Three Continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. More than ever before, however, the concept of specificity is now the central concept of the social and political philosophies of the national movements in the Three Continents. This is because the second scientific and technological revolution has given the hegemonic imperialist powers a far more damaging penetration of the human soul and mind through the control of mass culture and mass media.

On the other hand, the hegemonic imperialist powers tend to veil their profoundly held assumption about the specificity of the West – that it is born to lead and rule, to civilize the hidden dimensions and remote areas (Asia, Africa, Latin America) of the world: the “white man’s burden” – beneath “universalist” assumptions. After all, the status quo – i.e. the non-challenge of Western hegemony by the rising East – can only maintain the extant balance of power, with the imperialist system at the very center of the peaceful coexistence born at Yalta (1945). In other words, while the hegemonic imperialist powers minimize their specificity, they do act in a way which is founded on their own vision of their own the stress is elsewhere on universality.

A parallel situation, though [...] more disconcerting, exists when we consider the relative importance of the exogenous dimension, i.e. world balance of power. One would tend to expect the hegemonic imperialist powers to manifest an explicit awareness of their privileged position. Yet, except for the USA, there is a real tendency

to underplay this advantage, in an attempt to mask the reality of the political struggles in our times. Hegemonic imperialism would like to be accepted as the legitimate heir of the historical superiority of Europe and the West, not as the power operator fighting to maintain domination through the ruthless use of the highest combination of violence in the history of mankind.

The other side – the dependent national societies – appears, quite naturally, to be more conscious of the power set-up. After all, the two major thermonuclear strike forces of US imperialism are poised in front of the two major areas of the operational strategic alliance between the socialist states and the national movements: the VIIth Fleet, facing China and the Asia Pacific area; the VIth Fleet, facing Egypt, the Arab world, the Mediterranean and the southern flank of the European system of socialist states. Few doubts can be harboured in the minds of the broad masses of the populations concerned. But it is also equally clear that the leadership of the national liberation movement within the “political class” in most of the dependent countries often experiences genuine difficulties in reaching a precise understanding of the real parameters of the dialectics of imperialism as it now exists and as it now rapidly changes.

There are two reasons for these difficulties. On the one hand, the concrete dynamics of the national liberation movements, of national and social revolutions in the dependent countries, tends to fall within one of two patterns: either the multiplication of a general line inspired by a powerful revolutionary center – namely, the Soviet Union or China or the autonomous national elaboration of a general line. In the first instance, the concrete balance of world power is viewed through the lenses of the main revolutionary center and its state and party; it will quite naturally tend to echo, at the national level, the over-emphasis or under-playing of the existing world balance of power, in as much as this field lies at the very heart of the vision, will and policy of the state, any state, in any social and ideological system. In other words: what might seem unreasonable, or not feasible, because of the existing balance of world power, can be attempted and achieved to a certain degree – for example, Vietnam, in spite of severe odds (fundamentally because of the decision of the national Vietnamese revolutionary leadership, but also in a very important way because of the combined massive support of both the USSR and China); and what might appear to be attempted and feasible can, in fact, be channelled to vastly different realizations – for example, the prevalence of the general frontist line furthered by Castro and Allende, as compared to the guerillist call of Guevara. Examples abound.

The important point is as follows: only if the revolutionary struggle of national liberation movements is firmly in the hands of an independent national leadership can the parameters of the world balance of power be realistically assessed and computed in the actual unfolding of the dialectics of/with imperialism.

The second difficulty arises as a result of the artificially inflated impact of the ideological, scientific and theoretical work in this field done in radical and revolutionary centers of the West upon the thought and blueprints of small sections of the intelligentsia and the political class of the dependent countries. Here again, we have either the under-estimation of the liberation potential of dependent countries or, more frequently, the romanticist idealization of subjectivism which leads, as it did in the past, to grave mistakes.

To sum up: the hegemonic imperialist powers of the West tend to underplay or veil, their own use of the endogenous (specificity) and exogenous (world balance of power) dimensions; while the national movements of the rising East put specificity at the very core of their struggles, and have amore acute awareness of the world balance of power situation, even if this awareness is often diluted by ideological clichés.

Having thus determined the relative importance of each dimension in each of the two component elements of the dialectics of imperialism, we can proceed to assess the actual dynamics of this dialectical process.

Let us consider, first, the endogenous dimension, i.e. national movements. They can be approached through a comparison with other types of movement within their own societies: group and class movements; political movements; cultural, ideological movements. Each type, and subtype, of such movements is more or less limited in its scope, intensity and continuity – that is, societal extension and efficiency, depth of impact. On rare occasions, one witnesses an unusual concentration or organization, even through it remains sectorial – the Paris Commune, for example; and yet, because of the very limitedness of both scope and intensity within the broad national-societal spectrum, such movements remain weak. Nevertheless, they are the utmost that such a type of movement can attain.

The central problem in social dialectics is the problem of the combination of scope, intensity and continuity, that is, the problem of finding the largest possible front of allied forces aiming at the most intensive possible action rallied around the issues most capable of achieving maximal intensity of action. And such is, specifically, the privileged role of national movements, throughout the various phases of their unfolding. Here, and here alone, do we witness the greatest possible concentration of different social groups, classes, forces, trends, united broadly to achieve the fundamental tasks of liberation and socio-economic transformation: such have been the examples of Kemalism in Turkey, Maoism in China, Nasserism in Egypt, Castroism in Latin America, and all the resistance movements in Europe during the Nazi occupation. Here is truly the fundamental matrix of social dialectics in the period of imperialism and revolutions.

Facing this factor, described as the maximal combination of scope, intensity and continuity which can be attained by any social movement in modern societies – the maximal national liberation thrust – stands the exogenous dimension, imperialism, whose maximized aspect can be defined as geopolitics.

Here again, one should distinguish between several component parts of the world system of imperialist power: national and multinational monopolies; national hegemonic states; the international control of scientific and technological progress, of the major cultural and ideological trends, of mass-media through which the dependent countries are maintained in a state of permanent “communication” with the hegemonic imperialist powers. Here again, one can distinguish between these component elements, as regards their scope, intensity and continuity/durability. This has been reflected in a subtle evolution from the infrastructural, economic-financial, interpretation of imperialism to the more refined contemporary vision of imperialism as an attempt to impose an all-embracing world system of hegemony through the efficient use of the military-industrial complex. And this military-industrial complex, in our century, and more so during this second scientific, technological and industrial revolution in advanced countries, manifests itself through the direct control of space, as a framework and a preliminary to depth-penetration and subjugation.

In other words, the military-industrial complex which wields power of decision in the more advanced states brings to bear all the resources and potentialities of hegemonic imperialism in their maximal combination of scope, intensity and durability through the political uses of space, i.e. geopolitics.

It thus follows that, by coupling these two terms – national movements and revolutions on the one hand and the imperialist uses of geopolitics on the other hand – we conclude that one field of contemporary political praxis exists where the dialectics of the struggles for world power reach their maximal level. Here lies the central contradiction of present world history in the making. And here, also, is the scientific field which holds the richest promises for a renewal of political and social theory, in as much as general theory derives its principal content from the macro-societal ensembles – here, from the two major macro-societal phenomena of our time.

The Relevance of Geopolitics

A critical study of the role of geopolitics should address itself to the following three questions: how did geopolitics develop and how has it been made use of in the dialectics of world power? What are the limitations to the relevance of geopolitics? And, hence, what could be the uses of geopolitics in the study of the paramount social dialectic of our times, i.e. the dialectics between imperialism and national movements?

Long before the term “geopolitics” had been framed, a long established tradition in geography – political and physical alike – had clearly established that “the study of political phenomena in their areal context” (W.A.D. Jackson) led directly to a parallelism between the concept of system in political theory, and the concept of area in geography (H. Sprout). An important body of scientific work has accumulated since

Friedrich Ratzel's [1897] *Politische Geographie [Political Geography]* [...]: political areas; political potential; the concept of power; the respective roles of both centrifugal and centripetal factors, of politics, economics and culture in the area of power problems; the dynamic aspects of these problems; etc. [...] [O]ne should be aware of the fact that geopolitics had a dominant importance in the field of political geography before the 1930's.

The first intra-imperialist (world) war of 1914-1918 put an end, for some time, to German expansionist policies to the benefit of the British and French imperialist systems, while the October Revolution demonstrated [the same] in the mainland of Europe itself. And this was to be the starting point of geopolitics in the contemporary meaning [of geopolitics]: it started with *Staten som Lifsform* ("The State as an Organizer") by the Uppsala political scientist Rudolf Kjellen, in 1916; its German translation, in 1917, directly inspired then [...] thought of Karl Haushofer, who lectured on geopolitics in München [Munich] starting in 1919, launched the influential *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* in 1924, and became a full professor of geopolitics at München and Director of its "Institut für Geopolitik" after 1933 with the help of the Nazi regime.

Meanwhile, the fortune of geopolitics throughout the world did show a consistent pattern: geographers from old-established Western hegemonic powers tended to take a critical, and sometimes negative, position (such as in France, where P. Vidal de la Blache, J. Brunhes and C. Valloux, while acknowledging Ratzel's contributions, refused to view geopolitics as environmental determinism, thus joining ranks with A. Demangeon, J. Ancel and others; in England, there was a notable discretion on the whole matter, until World War II). On the other hand, geographers and social scientists from the rising, hitherto dependent, nations of the East, as well as from the USA, showed an increasing interest in geopolitics. Japan, that ideal land for geopolitics, led the way (V.I. Lenin mentioned specifically Hashida's *The Role of Japan in the Pacific* 1905; and Haushofer wrote six books on Japan alone, between 1913 and 1938). Egypt coupled a strong cultural emphasis (from Taha Hussein's [1936] *The Future of Culture in Egypt*, to Gamal Hamdan's [1967-1970] *Egypt's Personality, A Study in the Genius of Space-Location*, Cairo, via Gamal Abdel-Nasser's [1954] *Philosophy of the Revolution*; Hussein Fawzi's [1961] *Sindbad the Egyptian*, and A. Abdel-Malek's [1962] contributions, *Égypte Société Militaire* [Egypt as Military Society] [and] *Idéologie et Renaissance Nationale: l'Égypte Moderne* [Ideology and National Renaissance: Modern Egypt] [1969]; etc.); Brazil, perhaps more explicitly than any other country (Josué de Castro's [1952] *Géopolitique de la Faim* [Geopolitics of Hunger], general Golberi de Couto o Silva's [1967] *Geopolítica do Brasil*; etc.). Italy did not manifest a particular interest, even during Mussolini's heyday.

World War II clearly marked a turning point. The ascent of the USA to the rank of the major world power was accompanied by a boom in geopolitical studies, prudently labelled "political geography" – as if to dispel the ghost of Nazism: this was

the great tradition inaugurated by that seminal work of Admiral A.T. Mahan [1890] *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1782*, and pursued notably in Great Britain by Halford Mackinder, and in the USA by M.J. Spykman, D. Whittlesey, I. Bowman, A.P. de Seversky, G. Kolko; in France, by Jean Gottman. We should also note that the traditional anti-geopolitics attitude of the Komintern [or “Comintern,” i.e. the Communist International] has now been subtly replaced by a much more sophisticated approach from the major communist parties concerned, notably those of the USSR, China, Vietnam and Italy: it is understood that geopolitics is studied in the cadres schools; Mao Tse-tung’s [1963] *Military Writings* and General Vo Nguyen Giap’s [1970] *The Military Art of People’s War* [...] are established textbooks; the Italian C[ommunist] P[arty]’s major concern with the Mediterranean as the “sea of decision”; etc.

How can we assess the importance and limitations of geopolitics? The neglect, contempt, etc., as we have seen, belonged to the elitist intellectualist circles, mainly those of the cosmopolitan anti-national leftist type. Political cadres and organic intellectuals never shared this ideological prejudice. And yet, once the role of geopolitics has been asserted in the social dialectics of our times, we should appraise it as fundamental – yet, not decisive.

It is fundamental, in as much as it constitutes the (external) framework which bears heavily upon the unfolding of social dialectics in each separate case/region/etc. The role of the second industrial revolution cannot be over-rated in that it immeasurably enhanced the effectiveness of the power framework, both by the ruthless use of the space factor, and by the depth-penetration of the human will power, mind and soul. Yet, for all its might, geopolitics fails to convincingly appear as the decisive factor in contemporary world struggles – as a close study of Joseph McNamara’s [1968] *The Essence of Security* reveals.

Never before had the power machine, based on ICBMs [InterContinental Ballistic Missiles] and the nuclear arsenal, so frankly exposed its limitations. For, when all was said and done, a hidden factor – identified as the national movement, the national existence, the national will of the people of Vietnam had emerged as the really decisive factor. But even there, [it was decisive] only when coupled with the combined and sustained massive military, economic and logistical support from both China and USSR to a country lying at the southern borders of China’s People Republic.

By this, I mean that the decisive factor – the national will of the masses of the people – can operate as a decisive factor in the world power struggles between imperialism and national movements only when it plays its role as an integrated component part of a global strategy, making full use of the positive and negative aspects, the supporting and limitative aspects, of geopolitics. This can be made apparent by several meaningful cases: Vietnam-China as compared with the Palestinian resistance-Egypt; Mexico-Cuba as compared with Peru-Chile; etc. The

fundamental proposition remains fundamentally correct, i.e. that geopolitics are a fundamental, yet not ultimately decisive factor [of] national liberation. What we should aim to achieve is [...] to assess the specific parameters – minimal and maximal – of the relevance of the geopolitical factor in the world power struggles of our time.

This now leads us to ponder directly on the possible uses of geopolitics in the shaping of the world to come. Not the “theoretical model” for such possible uses – but the concrete potentialities of the changing balance of power in the world.

The starting point will be thus: the world balance of power, established at the end of World War II at the Yalta Conference, is now entering its final stage. By this we should understand not that the USA and USSR are no more the two leading super-powers – they are, and shall remain so at least till the end of this century – but that they no longer constitute the only two centers of world power; and that the Yalta arrangement, which deals with the Western world, now appears extinct in face of the rise of the East. This is essentially so in Asia, but also, in varying degrees, in Africa and the Middle East, as well as in distant and hitherto neglected Latin America.

The shape of the new world balance of power around the year 2000 can be outlined as follows:

- a) A western-European power bloc, led by the USSR, with a dualistic system of intra-European alliances: Germany (whose social-democratic leadership’s Ostpolitik is geared to engage the most advanced industrial and technological know-how of the capitalist European system of states), and the immense potentialities of the USSR, now committed to promoting an accelerated tempo of economic modernisation to face both US imperialism and Chinese political influence (a policy which could entail a form of German reunification under the guise of a confederation of the two German states); and the classical USSR-Western Europe type of alliance, with France as the major partner, albeit at a cultural-political level, and Italy, now advancing steadily towards a form of “apertura a sinistra” [opening for the left] with the direct participation of the Italian Communist Party, the most powerful and influential of the non-ruling C[ommunist] P[artie]s in the West, the Mediterranean and the Three Continents.
- b) An Asian-Oriental power bloc, led by China, in alliance with the Arab world, around Egypt, the Mediterranean and East African regions, and in close cooperation with Japan, to face the problems of economic modernisation, after the Great Cultural Revolution.
- c) A Western-American power bloc, essentially made of, and dominated by, the USA, in alliance with minor partners.

The central factors in this new alignment of power are “a” and “b”: the political initiatives of the two major socialist states, in alliance with the national movements at the political level, and with the two major, non-hegemonic, capitalistic powers (Germany, Japan), under the protection of the thermonuclear umbrella of both USSR and China, at the economic and technological levels.

The role of “c” – American imperialism – thus appears as determined by the convergent dual advance of the major socialist-cum-national liberation forces – a [defensive strategy] as it were, epitomized by Vietnam.

Further to this realignment of the world balance of power, the following areas can be clearly visualized:

- a) The area of the Western-European bloc, led by the USSR will extend to all European, Western and Central Asia, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Northern Africa, parts of the Atlantic (North and Central); Pacific (North and South, via the Indian Ocean) and Indian Oceans. It will thus provide a highly variable, [...] adequate, umbrella to national movements in these areas, provided they clearly demonstrate their force and clearly understand the parameters of possible Soviet involvement. (The Mediterranean and the Middle East clearly are directly within the immediate geopolitical range of Soviet action; but not so Chile or India.)
- b) The area of the Asia-Oriental power bloc, led by China, will cover all mainland Asia, as well as East Africa, parts of the Middle East and the Pacific Ocean. This can prove decisive for the bulk of the national liberation movements and revolutions in that part of the world, where more than half of mankind lives.
- c) The Western-American area, led by the USA, will cover North America, most of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans area, South America, Africa south of the Sahara, Oceania. Within this area, it is reasonable to expect a maximal use of violence to keep these remaining sectors, their peoples, wealth and potentialities, well in the hands of US imperialism. This means that national movements are both liable to prove the strongest in these areas, because of intensified US pressure, and be the most dangerously persecuted.

At the world level, the major contradiction will be that between the two blocs led by the two major Socialist states on the one hand, and the bloc led by the USA. Within each of these two blocs, other subordinate contradictions will abound, between states of different socio-economic types and between all such states and their socialist leading partners. This protracted and intensified social dialectics in the world of the

coming generations will develop through a pattern of intensified and complex struggles. And nobody can now assess the chances of a Third World War – especially as the vital decision-making forces of imperialism feel that they are losing their historical initiative.

Therefore, [it is vitally important to] integrat[e] geopolitics as a fundamental, yet not decisive, factor in our appraisal of the future of imperialism and national movements in our time and beyond.

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