

The Global “war” of the transnational elite

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Abstract The aim of this article is to show that the so called “war” against terrorism that was launched by the transnational elite in the aftermath of the events of September 11, like the previous “wars” of the transnational elite (Iraq, Yugoslavia), aims at securing the stability of the New World Order — which is founded on capitalist neoliberal globalisation and representative “democracy” — by crushing any perceived threats against it. However, this is also a new type of war. Unlike the previous “wars,” this is a global and permanent war. A global war, because its targets are not only specific “rogue” regimes, which are not fully integrated in the New World Order or simply do not “toe the line,” but any kind of regime or social group and movement which resists the New World Order: from the Palestinian up to the antiglobalisation movements; and a permanent war, because it is bound to continue for as long as the New World Order, and the associated with it systemic and state violence to protect the present huge asymmetry of power between and within nations (which give rise to counter-violence) are perpetuated.

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The first task in an effort to interpret the causes and the significance of the 11/9 events is to delineate the meaning of political violence, a form of which is terrorism¹ and to discuss the relationship between terrorism, systemic violence and democracy — the object of the first section. However, the attacks, which functioned as the catalyst for the present so-called "war" on terrorism (in fact, simply a military suppression of technologically much inferior opponents, as was also the case with the previous "wars" of the transnational elite) become incomprehensible unless we examine their historical and structural background, something which brings us to an examination of the contours of the New World Order (NWO) — and this is done in the second section. The third section will discuss the events of September 11 and compare and contrast the present war with the previous wars of the transnational elite. The penultimate section examines the aims of this new type of war and its phases up to now, as well as the possible phases of it in the future. Finally, the concluding section discusses the crucial issue of whether there is any way out of the present cycle of violence, which, as one can certainly expect — after the bloody first two phases (Afghanistan, Palestine) — may quite possibly become even bloodier in the future.

1. Terrorism, Systemic Violence and Democracy

Systemic Violence, Counter-Violence and Terrorism

The attacks of September 11 were presented by the transnational elite-controlled mass media, as well as by the intellectuals who function as the apologists of the New World Order, as the act of fanatic fundamentalists who envy the wealth and democratic organisation of the West, if not as pure "nihilism," that is, as part of the eternal battle of Good and Evil in a dualistic

¹ The term terrorism is used here in a technical sense with no moral strings attached to it.

universe fueled by hatred and envy, and by religious/ ideological fundamentalism. To my mind, a meaningful discussion of the crucial issues that arose out of these events which, according to the propaganda machine of the transnational elite, were the cause of the “war against terrorism” that it launched in their aftermath, should involve an examination of the meaning and causes of **political violence** (i.e. the use of violence for political aims) in all its forms: wars, systemic violence, state repression and state terrorism on the one hand and counter-violence and popular terrorism on the other.

As a British analyst pointed out in the aftermath of the September events, “the tendency in recent years, encouraged by the scale of last month’s atrocity in New York, has been to define terrorism increasingly in terms of methods and tactics — particularly the targeting of civilians — rather than the status of those who carry it out.”² This is an approach which, as the same analyst stresses, would classify historical liberation movements, like the ANC and the Algerian FLN that attacked civilian targets, as “terrorist” — an approach which unfortunately has been adopted today by many in the Left, even self-declared libertarians. All this, despite the fact that the concept of modern terrorism derives from the French revolution, where terrorism was only state terrorism.

On the other hand, a useful definition of terrorism that takes into account these crucial considerations is the one given by professor Johan Galtung, who, starting with Clausewitz’s classical definition of war as “the continuation of politics by other means,” defines in a similar way terrorism as “the continuation of violence by other means.”³ This definition is particularly helpful because it explicitly takes into account the fact that violence for political aims, either it originates in a socio-economic system and its political expression, the state, or in opposing forces “from below,” is always a cycle and is incomprehensible unless seen as such. Galtung stresses in particular the significance of what he calls **structural violence** (I would better call it **systemic violence** to emphasise its systemic character), i.e. the institutionalisation of highly asymmetric situations, which leads to state repression or even state terrorism on the one hand and its counterparts guerrilla warfare and popular terrorism on the other. The institutionalisation of asymmetric situations, i.e. systemic violence, may refer to:

- the economic level, where the built-in control of economic resources by a minority, which is institutionalised in a market economy system, leads to unemployment, poverty and insecurity for vast parts of the population;

² Seumas Milne, “Terror and tyranny,” *The Guardian* (October 25, 2001).

³ Johan Galtung, “On the causes of terrorism and their removal,” *IFDA Dossier 66* (July-August 1988), pp. 29-42.

- the political level, where the institutionalisation of the control of the political process by a minority in a representative 'democracy' leads the vast majority of the population to political alienation and apathy;
- the social and cultural levels, where the control of social and cultural institutions by parts of the population leads to various forms of discrimination against the other parts;

All these phenomena, i.e. unemployment, poverty, insecurity, political alienation and apathy, as well as various forms of discrimination against parts of the population on the basis of gender, race, identity etc, are simply forms of systemic or structural violence, as a result of the institutionalisation of concentration of power in all its forms, that is, the institutionalisation of political, economic and social inequality. It is therefore clear that the ultimate cause of systemic violence is the non-democratic organisation of society, in other words its organisation on the basis of institutions which, instead of aiming to secure the equal distribution of power in all its forms among all citizens, aims at reproducing the pattern of asymmetry of power that has historically been established by privileged social groups.

The privileged social groups in the last two centuries or so, i.e. during the periods of liberal and statist modernity,⁴ have established their power mainly through their control of the state machines. However, in the last quarter of a century or so, that is during the present era of neoliberal modernity, this is increasingly being achieved through their control of the international institutions established by the transnational elite, as we shall see in the next section. Still, in both cases, it is the concentration of power at the hands of various elites that leads to systemic violence and counter-violence. **Counter-violence** against systemic violence may be undertaken by social groups collectively, or by individuals acting on their own. **Collective counter-violence** may take the form of direct action, violent demonstrations and riots that may culminate in a violent revolution and, in extreme cases, it may assume the form of guerrilla warfare or even popular terrorism. **Individual counter-violence** mainly takes the form of crimes against property (robberies, break-ins, car thefts etc), although it may also take the form of physical violence, as in the case of terrorist activities undertaken by individuals or groups (which do not have organic links to popular movements so that they could be classified as forms of popular terrorism) against the elites and their representatives. Collective counter-violence, when it takes mass proportions, could lead to either direct **state repression** (i.e. the violence against civilians, which is undertaken directly by the state apparatus

⁴ See for an analysis of the various forms of modernity, Takis Fotopoulos, "The Myth of Postmodernity," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 2001), pp. 27-76.

and is bounded by normal legal proceedings, with the aim of fighting collective counter violence) or, in extreme cases, to state terrorism, whereas individual counter-violence is dealt with stricter legislation on crime and corresponding increases in the prison populations.

It is not accidental that, historically, both state repression and counter-violence have flourished in the last two centuries. This is because representative "democracy" and the market economy, which flourished during this period, not only institutionalised the concentration of political and economic power (i.e. systemic violence) but also made easier the flourishing of counter-violence, some forms of which were legally recognised. No wonder that when counter-violence was suppressed, as for instance in the case of military regimes, extreme forms of counter-violence have developed like guerilla warfare or even popular terrorism .

As the above definition of terrorism implies, there are two main types of terrorism: state terrorism "from above" and popular terrorism "from below." Although state terrorism is simply a further elaboration of state repression, it differs from it because state terrorism is unpredictable and not subject to formal legal procedures. We may therefore define **state terrorism** as any kind of violence against civilians, which is undertaken directly or indirectly by the state apparatus, is unbounded by normal legal proceedings, and aims at fighting collective counter violence. Such forms of state terrorism are for instance the US administration-authorized CIA killings of suspected terrorists (recently extended to include even heads of state of "rogue" regimes!), the "targeted killings" by Israel, as well as the collective punishments against the Palestinian population regularly implemented by the Israeli army. It is therefore not surprising that as George Monbiot⁵ points out, the US government "for the past 55 years has been running a terrorist training camp, whose victims massively outnumber the people killed by the attack on New York, the embassy bombings and the other atrocities laid, rightly or wrongly, at al-Qaida's door. The camp is called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, or WHISC. It is based in Fort Benning, Georgia, and it is funded by Mr Bush's government." Another form of state terrorism is **inter-state terrorism**. This is a kind of state terrorism that emerges when the asymmetry of power between states leads weak states to clandestinely support terrorist activities against strong states. Inter-state terrorism is proclaimed by the transnational elite as one of the causes of the present war against terrorism

On the other hand, popular terrorism, which is an extreme form of counter-violence, challenges what the state considers its right, i.e. the monopoly of violence. This is the reason why every kind of elite is against

⁵ George Monbiot, "Backyard terrorism," *The Guardian* (October 30, 2001).

popular terrorism — something that could go a long way in explaining the fact that every ruling elite today, from the American up to the Russian and the Chinese ones (each for its own reasons of course), is unanimously in favour of the “war against terrorism.” Popular terrorism differs from guerrilla warfare because, unlike the latter, does not presuppose some sort of symmetry in military power. In fact, popular terrorism arises when the asymmetry of power is so great that guerrilla warfare is impossible.

Popular terrorism may be defined as the violence against members of the state apparatus or civilians expressing the interests of the elites, which is planned by organisations that constitute the military wing of a popular movement and is carried out by small groups or even individuals, with the aim to fight systemic violence, state repression and state terrorism (this is the case, for instance, of national liberation organisations, resistance organisations against military regimes etc). This definition of popular terrorism rules out forms of terrorism like the Italian Right’s terrorist bombings in the 1970s and the various Latin American death squads. This is not only because these forms of terrorism are usually funded and supported by various parts of the elites which also control the state apparatus, but also because they do not aim at countering the violence of the elites “from above” but mainly the counter-violence of the oppressed “from below.” Similarly, the above definition of popular terrorism rules out the activities of the various terrorist organisations of the Left that emerged, mainly in Europe, in the 1970s. Although this type of terrorism aims at fighting systemic violence and state repression the fact that it is carried out by organisations that are not organically connected to popular movements gives them the character of elitist organisations, which hope that, through their actions, will create the objective and subjective conditions that will “force” the oppressed to rise in an antisystemic struggle against the oppressors.

Popular Terrorism and Democracy

It is therefore clear that it is the institutionalisation of the “asymmetry” (or unequal distribution) of power in all its forms which is the ultimate cause of popular terrorism. It is equally clear that popular terrorism is a form of political activity, which has the special characteristic that it involves the use of violence against military or civilian targets for political aims. As such, it has to be assessed with political as well as moral criteria. As I will attempt to show next, popular terrorism is not only morally unjustifiable but also incompatible with the democratic project and therefore, on both grounds, should be rejected.

Thus, at the moral level, any political activity which uses as the main means for the achievement of a political aim the destruction of human life,

which should be considered as the *absolute good*, has to be rejected. The only cases in which political violence may be justified, as Hannah Arendt⁶ also pointed out, are the cases of revolution and collective or individual self-defence against state violence and violence emanating from the elites. Furthermore, it is morally degrading for the oppressed to use the same bestial methods which are employed by the oppressors — something that is bound to accustom them to political violence, through the negative long term effects on their personalities that the use of violence creates.

Furthermore, popular terrorism should also be rejected at the political level as well, particularly so since physical violence lies outside the field of *logon didonai* (rendering account and reason), which, "in itself entails the recognition of the value of autonomy in the sphere of thinking"⁷ that is synonymous with reason itself. In other words, as Hannah Arendt again stresses, "violence itself is incapable of speech, and not merely that speech is helpless when confronted with violence (...) in so far as violence plays a predominant role in wars and revolutions, both occur outside the political realm."⁸ Democracy, therefore, whose very basis is speech and reason, is incompatible with violence and terrorism — as long, of course, as change by democratic means is possible within a given institutional framework. No wonder that the classical concept of politics, which was developed in the Athenian Democracy, was also incompatible with violence:⁹

To be political, to live in a *polis*, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence. In Greek self-understanding, to force people by violence, to command rather than persuade, were prepolitical ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the *polis*, of home and family life, where the household head ruled with uncontested, despotic powers, or of life in the barbarian empires of Asia, whose despotism was frequently likened to the organisation of the household

In this problematique, the only political issue is whether political violence can be justified as a means of reaching a genuine democracy, something which brings us to the issue of "confronting the system," an issue that I have

⁶ H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1990).

⁷ C. Castoriadis, "The Crisis of Marxism and the Crisis of Politics," *Society and Nature*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1992), p. 209.

⁸ H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 19.

⁹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 26-27.

discussed in the past in my dialogue with Ted Trainer.¹⁰ As I stressed in that dialogue, this confrontation can be seen in a broad or a narrow sense. In a broad sense, this confrontation involves any kind of activity which aims to confront rather than to bypass the system, at any stage of the transition to a new society. Such activities could include both direct action and life-style activities, as well as other forms of action aiming at creating alternative institutions at a significant social scale (e.g. the taking over of local authorities through the electoral process). The condition for such activities to be characterised as confronting the system is that they are an integral part of a mass political movement for systemic change. Clearly, this type of confrontation does not involve in principle any physical violence, apart from self-defence in the case, for instance, of direct action, although it should be expected that the elites will extensively use other forms of violence — particularly economic violence — to crush such a movement. On the other hand, in a narrow sense, confrontation means the physical confrontation with the mechanisms of physical violence which the elites may use against an antisystemic movement and refers exclusively to the final stage of the transition towards an alternative society. For the Inclusive Democracy (ID) project, whether the transition towards an ID will be marked by a physical confrontation with the elites will depend entirely on the attitude of the latter at the final stage of transformation of society, i.e. on whether they will accept peacefully such a transition, or whether they will prefer instead to use physical violence to crush it, as is most likely given that this transition will deprive them of their privileges.

The violence of the oppressors and the violence of the oppressed

The experience over the years
Of nothing getting better
Only worse
The humiliation of being able
To change almost nothing
The example of those who resist
Being bombarded to dust
(John Berger, *The Guardian*, 25-10-2001)

Although popular terrorism and political violence in general are (as a rule) incompatible with the democratic project, and as such rejectable, this does not mean that we can equate all forms of political violence as many, even in the Left, do today, who (consciously or unconsciously adopting the logic of the

¹⁰ See Takis Fotopoulos, "The Limitations of Life-style strategies," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2000), pp. 287-308.

transnational elite and the NGOs directly or indirectly financed by it) "put in the same bag" the popular violence of the oppressed (e.g. the Palestinian "suicide bombers") with the state violence of the oppressors.¹¹ To my mind, irrespective of the target of violence, the violence of the oppressors should never be equated with that of the oppressed for the following reasons:

First, the violence of the oppressors is normally aggressive and in today's socio-economic system always aims at the reproduction of inequality in all its forms (political, economic, social, military), whereas the violence of the oppressed is normally defensive. Even in the case when the violence of the oppressed is formally aggressive, as when it aims at the overthrow of an oppressive regime (as for instance the Palestinian struggle for liberation), its character is in essence defensive since its aim is the restoration of some form of autonomy (political, economic, national or cultural) which was usurped by the oppressor.

Second, the oppressors, given their superior military power, have always the capacity of selecting targets that do not involve the use of indiscriminate violence against civilians — particularly so today, in the era of laser-guided missiles etc. If they do not exploit this capacity, this is due to their deliberate decision to terrorise the oppressed to submission. This was the aim of the "mass wars" that involved indiscriminate killings of civilians, which began with the Nazi bombings in the Spanish civil war and continued with the carpet bombings of Dresden and then of Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and so on, not to mention the nuclear holocaust at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the other hand, the oppressed, given the same asymmetry of power, do not have much choice in their targets, particularly when this asymmetry makes even guerrilla warfare non feasible. This is the case of the suicide-bomber today who resorts to the last resort i.e. the use of his/her own life as a weapon, in a kind of desperado action against the massive killings of civilians by a vastly superior (in military terms) oppressor.

In this problematique, one may easily understand the motives of the Arab suicide¹² bombers in September 2001, or of Palestine suicide bombers in the months which followed who, unable even to cause any significant military

¹¹ As Paul Foot aptly put it: "anyone who favours the Israeli occupation of the areas, or the settlements, or who denies the right of violent resistance to the Palestinians is siding unequivocally with the oppressor against the oppressed". "In defence of oppression," *The Guardian* (March 5, 2002).

¹² As Robert Fisk, who, together with John Pilger, provide some of the best examples of independent journalism, aptly put it, suicide bombing is "the new weapon of the Middle East which neither Americans or any other Westerners could equal: the despair-driven, desperate suicide bomber. All America's power, wealth — and arrogance, the Arabs will be saying — could not defend the greatest power the world has ever known from this destruction." R. Fisk, "The awesome cruelty of a doomed people," *Znet* (12 September 2001).

casualties to an enemy which caused thousands of deaths of civilians in Iraq and Palestine, resort to this kind of desperado terrorism. Therefore, the only rational way in which one may understand activities like suicide-bombing is as a kind of a desperado irrational response to the present, unprecedented in History, asymmetry of power which is founded on the systemic violence built-in within the NWO. This implies that the issue for the radical Left is not simply to ponder on whether it should join the bandwagon of "anti-terrorism" (as most in the Left have done gaining in the process the approval of the establishment media) or not. The real issue is what alternative ways of response to the systemic violence of the elites are possible today — an issue that we will consider in the last section of this paper.

Finally, whereas the oppressed, being the victims of oppression, are by definition innocent, this does not apply to everybody on the other side, i.e. the side which directly or indirectly takes part in the oppression. Those on the side which carries out the oppression are innocent only when they adopt a stand against the crimes of their elites — if, of course, they are aware of them. However, the crucial problem here is that, usually, the peoples are not aware of the crimes of their elites or, given the power of the media to distort events, are confused and have a false consciousness about them. Still, to take two obvious topical examples, there are many Americans who are fully aware of the crimes of their elites but nonetheless, tacitly or not, endorse them, with the obvious aim to secure their privileged standard of living — although they have the power to stop such crimes, as they did in the Vietnam war when "their own boys" began coming back in body bags. Similarly, there are even more Zionists in Israel and all over the world who, being also fully aware of the crimes of the Israeli state against the Palestinians, still, tacitly or not, endorse them. Their motive supposedly is to secure a place of living for the Jews (which, in fact, can be secured in alternative democratic ways rather than through a Zionist state) but in reality their stand is founded on their nationalist/religious ideologies that often verge on racism. In all these cases one would have to agree with Ellen Cantarow, a Jew writer, who, desperate in the face of the Israeli crimes in Jenin and elsewhere in the April 2002 onslaught, cried: "those who do not speak out against the abominations of these horrors are complicit by their silence. Those who exonerate or apologize for Israel as it commits them are guilty by association."¹³ Of course, this does not apply to the US Congress whose guilt is much more than that of association. This was made evident for instance when, at the very moment the world anger against the Israeli crimes in Jenin and elsewhere was mounting, it passed resolutions of blatant support for the Zionist state, blessing its brutal military campaign as an attempt at "dismantling the

¹³ Ellen Cantarow, "Speak Out"/ "34 years of Israeli policy have laid the groundwork for its unholy war in the West Bank," *Jerusalem Indymedia* (April 06/08, 2002).

terrorist infrastructure" in Palestinian territory, whereas the House majority leader declared shamelessly that "I'm content to have Israel grab the entire West Bank"!¹⁴

2. Systemic violence and counter-violence in the New World Order

There is no doubt that counter-violence in all its forms has increased significantly since the rise of neoliberal globalisation. This can only be interpreted in terms of a significant increase in systemic violence (or even state repression) and the associated increase in the concentration of power at the hands of the ruling elites —that is in terms of a growing asymmetry between rulers and ruled. The discussion of the crucial issue whether there has indeed been a significant increase in systemic violence lately will bring us to an examination of the contours of the New World Order. As I have discussed in detail elsewhere¹⁵ the meaning of the NWO I will only outline here its main dimensions, which are also the dimensions of systemic violence.

At the outset, it should be stressed that the meaning of NWO used in this paper has little relation to the usual meaning given to this term that simply refers to the changes at the political and military level that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of the Cold War. In this paper, the NWO takes a much broader meaning extending to:

- the economic level, as expressed by the emergence of the present neoliberal economic globalisation in the form of the internationalised market economy, which secures the concentration of economic power in the hands of the transnational economic elite
- the political-military level, as expressed by the emergence of a new informal political globalisation securing the concentration of political power in the hands of a newly-emerged transnational political elite
- the ideological level, as expressed by the development of a new transnational ideology of limited sovereignty (supposedly to protect human rights, to fight "terrorism" etc.) — a kind of ideological globalisation justifying the decrease of national sovereignty, which complements the corresponding decrease of economic sovereignty as a result of economic globalisation .

¹⁴ Alison Mitchell, "Congress Passes Measure of Support for Israel," *New York Times* (May 2, 2002).

¹⁵ See for an earlier formulation of the NWO concept in this journal, Takis Fotopoulos, "The First War of the Internationalised Market Economy," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 1999), pp 357-382 and for a more recent extended version of it, "New World Order and NATO's War against Yugoslavia," *New Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 73-104.

The economic dimension of systemic violence

As regards, first, the economic dimension of systemic violence today, the emergence of neoliberal modernity can be traced back to important structural changes and their effects on the parameters of social struggles that brought about the collapse of the statist form of modernity, i.e. the period of the social-democratic consensus lasting from roughly the mid 1930s to the mid 1970s.¹⁶ These structural changes were both technological and economic, although mainly the latter.

The technological changes, which refer mainly to the information revolution, constitute a parallel (though not independent from the economic changes) process that marked the shift of the market economy from the industrial to the post-industrial phase. This resulted in a drastic change in the employment structure and consequently the class structure of advanced market economies (through the decimation of the working class) with significant political and social implications — above all the decline of the labour movement and consequently of the socialist movement.¹⁷

As far as the economic changes are concerned, they mainly represented the growing internationalisation of the market economy during the 1950s and 1960s, as a result of the expansion of free trade and the corresponding expansion of the newly emerged Transnational Corporations (TNCs). The expanding needs of TNC's led to an informal opening of capital markets, mainly through development of the Euro-dollar market (1970s) which, however, was instrumental for the later lifting of exchange and capital controls.¹⁸ However, growing internationalisation implied that the growth of the market economy was more and more relying on the expansion of the world market rather than the domestic market, making statism (which kept growing throughout the early post-war period under the pressure of the labour movement) incompatible with it, as it encroached on competitiveness. The stagflation crisis of the early 1970s was the result of this incompatibility between growing statism and internationalisation rather than, as it is usually argued by orthodox economists, of the oil crisis, or as it is argued by Hardt & Negri,¹⁹ of the accumulation of class struggles.

¹⁶ See Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy*, (London & New York, Cassell/Continuum, 1997) ch 1

¹⁷ See Takis Fotopoulos, "Class Divisions Today: The Inclusive Democracy Approach," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2000), pp. 211-252.

¹⁸ See Will Hutton, *The State We're In* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), ch. 3.

¹⁹ See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Ca. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), Part 3.

At the same time, the above changes in the "objective" conditions created the corresponding changes in the "subjective" conditions, in terms of the rise of the neoliberal movement and the parallel decline of the trade union and socialist movements.

In this problematique, the arrangements adopted by the economic elites to open and liberalise markets, mostly, institutionalised (rather than created) the present form of the internationalised market economy. The opening and liberalising of markets was simply part of the historical trend to minimise social controls over markets, particularly those aiming to protect labour and the environment that interfered with economic "efficiency" and profitability. The combined effects of these changes has been what is called "neoliberal globalisation," which clearly reflects the structural changes of the market economy and the corresponding changes in business requirements of late modernity. Policies implemented today for the management of neoliberal globalisation are therefore "systemic" policies, necessitated by and reflecting the dynamics of the market economy, rather than capitalist "plots" carried out by unscrupulous neoliberal governments and decadent centre-Left parties — as the reformist Left suggests²⁰ which has never grasped the significance of the present monumental changes at the economic level and the corresponding consequences at the political, military and ideological levels.

This system already functions as a self-regulating market in which the interests of the elites that control it are satisfied to the full, almost "automatically," through the mere functioning of the market forces. In fact, both economic theory (radical economic theory and even parts of orthodox theory) as well as empirical evidence can show that the opening and liberalisation of markets, which constitute the essence of neoliberal globalisation, inevitably, leads to the concentration of income, wealth and economic power, given unequal initial conditions. In fact, there is overwhelming evidence today which confirms the huge concentration of income and wealth, as a result of neoliberal globalisation, and also makes obvious the economic dimension of systemic violence: the richest 20% of the world's population receive today 86% of world GDP (versus 1% of the poorest 20%) and control 82% of world export markets and 68% of foreign direct investment.²¹

The political/ military dimension of systemic violence

Coming next to the political dimension of the NWO, it is obvious that a transnational economy needs its own transnational elite. In other words,

²⁰ Takis Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 2001), pp. 233-280.

²¹ UN, *Human Development Report 1999*.

globalisation cannot be seen only in terms of trade, investment and communications but it requires also a political and security dimension, which used to be the domain of nation-states and today is that of the transnational elite. The emergence of such an elite has already been theorised both from the Marxist²² and the Inclusive Democracy²³ viewpoints and the evidence on it has been increasingly substantiated. The **transnational elite** may be defined as the elite which draws its power (economic, political or generally social power) by operating at the transnational level. It consists of corporate directors, major shareholders, TNC executives, globalising bureaucrats and professional politicians functioning either within major international organisations or in the state machines of the major market economies, as well as important academics and researchers in the various international foundations, members of think tanks and research departments of major international universities, transnational mass media executives etc. Its members have a dominant position within society, as a result of their economic, political or broader social power and, unlike national elites, see that the best way to secure their privileged position in society is not by ensuring the reproduction of any real or imagined nation-state but, instead, by securing the worldwide reproduction of the institutional framework on which the NWO is founded: the system of market economy and representative "democracy." In other words, the new transnational elite sees its interests in terms of international markets rather than national markets and is not based on a single nation-state but is a decentred apparatus of rule with no territorial centre of power.

This is clearly an *informal* rather than an institutionalised elite. Thus, in the same way that economic globalisation expresses an informal concentration of economic power at the hands of the members of the economic elite, political globalisation expresses an informal concentration of political power at the hands of the members of the political elite. In other words, the economic elite constitutes that part of the transnational elite which controls the internationalised market economy, whereas the political elite constitutes that part of the transnational elite which controls the distinctly political-military dimension of the NWO. The main institutions securing the concentration of economic and political power at the hands of the transnational elite are the market economy and representative "democracy" respectively, whereas the main organisations through which the transnational elite exercises its informal control are the EU, NAFTA, the G8, WTO, IMF, World Bank, NATO and the UN.

The three "wars" launched by the transnational elite so far (i.e. the Gulf war,²⁴ the war in Kosovo²⁵ and the on-going "war on terrorism"), are cases

²² Leslie Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

²³ Fotopoulos, "Globalisation the reformist Left and the Anti-Globalisation 'Movement'."

²⁴ See Takis Fotopoulos, *The Gulf War* (Athens: Exantas, 1991) — in Greek.

substantiating the existence of an informal system of transnational governance, a political globalisation presided over by a transnational elite. The informal character of globalisation is needed not only in order to keep the façade of a well functioning representative "democracy" in which local elites are still supposed to take the important decisions but also in order to preserve the nation-state's internal monopoly of violence. The latter is necessary so that local elites are capable of controlling their populations in general and the movement of labour in particular, enhancing the free flow of capital and commodities.

Despite the dominance of the US-based elements within the transnational elite, it is clear that the latter does not consist only of Americans and that therefore it is wrong to talk about an "American empire." It is only the uneven distribution of political/ military power among the members of the transnational elite which establishes the informal hegemony of the US elite in the present form of political globalisation. This is particularly important if we take into account the fact that the transnational elite, like national elites, is hardly a monolithic body and that there are instead significant divisions within it. Still, these divisions refer not to the common goal of protecting the stability of the universal institutional framework (capitalist neoliberal globalisation and representative "democracy") but on ways and means of doing so. Such divisions become particularly important today in view of the deteriorating multi-dimensional crisis, mainly with respect to its economic and ecological dimensions, as is shown by the clash of views between "conservative" elements of the transnational elite (mainly US-based) and "progressive" elements (mostly Europe-based). An example of this division is the dispute over the Kyoto treaty which has been endorsed by all members of the transnational elite apart from the US elite. A similar division has arisen with respect to the growing concentration of economic power that neoliberal globalisation implies. European elites, having to face stronger reactions against the neoliberal philosophy than their American counterparts (due to the stronger socialist/ social-democratic traditions in Europe) propose various measures to reduce absolute (but not relative) poverty, and pursue a policy of fully integrating China, Russia and the "rogue" states into the internationalised market economy rather than alienating them through aggressive political and military strategies. In other words, the aim of the European parts of the transnational elite is to create a "capitalist globalisation with a human face" that does not alter the essentials of New World Order.²⁶ Finally, the divisions within the transnational elite

²⁵ See Takis Fotopoulos, "The War in the Balkans: The First War of the Internationalised Market Economy," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 1999), pp. 357-382.

²⁶ See for example an expression of this trend in a recent Observer leader under the eloquent title "The US is not fit to run the world: We must help Europe take on the job," *The Observer*

concerning the future phases of the war against terrorism is another case illustrating this point.

Still, given the unrivalled power of the US-based parts of the elite, one might expect that a consensus reached between the various trends within it on matters of strategy and tactics will mainly express the US positions. Particularly so today when the US-based parts of the elite have established a long-term superiority over the other parts of it, not only at the military level, where the events of September 2001 gave them the opportunity to function as the policeman of the New World Order, but also at the economic level. The present US economic superiority is based not only on the long-term decline of Japanese elites but also on their unchallenged position in the information revolution placing them well ahead of rivals in the Far East and Europe. A clear indication of the American predominance within the transnational elite is the fact that whereas at the end of the 1980s eight of the 10 biggest multinationals in the world were Japanese, a decade later all ten were American.²⁷

Finally, it should be added here that the New Political Order, a necessary complement of the New Economic Order that is based on neoliberal globalisation, is defined not only by the informal structure of political globalisation which I considered above but also by an important institutional change: the redefinition of NATO's role by the 1999 Washington treaty. As is well known, NATO was founded in 1949 as a collective defence organisation against the communist 'threat' posed by the Soviet bloc. The heart of the North Atlantic Treaty was Article 5, in which the signatory members "agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." In fact it was article 5 that was used by the transnational elite in order to involve NATO in the present war against terrorism. But the 1999 Washington summit, which was dedicated to an expanded NATO that included several formerly Soviet block countries, adopted a new "strategic concept"²⁸ that radically changed the nature of this crucial military organisation in which all main advanced market economies — apart from Japan — take part.

The new NATO constitution redefined the role of NATO from a mutual defence organisation of a number of nation-states allied against the Soviet bloc into the main military institution of the internationalised market economy. As, the new constitution explicitly states,²⁹ "the Alliance therefore not only ensures

(April 1, 2001). Also, the French paper *Le Monde Diplomatique* plays a significant role with respect to this trend, both in theory and in practice.

²⁷ Madeleine Bunting, "Smash and grab inc.: The US ruled the last century and it will rule the next. What will it do with its power?," *The Guardian* (August 24, 1999).

²⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, *The Alliance's Strategic Concept* (24th April 1999).

²⁹ *ibid.* article 6.

the defence of its members but contributes to peace and stability in this region." Then, in a section entitled "The evolving strategic environment" the document lays out the NATO/UN relationship by stating that "the United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security."³⁰ It is indicative that at the time of the summit meeting, President Chirac interpreted this clause as implying that NATO could not act without UN authorisation, but this interpretation was immediately contradicted by Solana who stated that a Security Council resolution would not be necessary before making an intervention outside NATO territory.³¹ The issue has been resolved in practice, at the NATO war against Yugoslavia: if the transnational elite cannot secure the votes of all permanent members of the UN Security Council they will have no hesitation to start military action without prior UN mandate.

Further on, in a section entitled "Security challenges and risks," the new strategic concept is clearly defined and the transformation of NATO is made explicit: from a defensive alliance which protects specific areas from the communist threat to an aggressive alliance which protects a vaguely defined broad area ("in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and the periphery of the Alliance") against a series of loosely defined "risks."³² In effect, any kind of conflict situation (including "the disruption of the flow of vital resources" and "acts of terrorism") within this broadly defined geographical area, that might directly or indirectly threaten the stability of the internationalised market economy, may be considered as threatening the Alliance.³³

The new role of NATO as the defender of the transnational elite and its global interests is therefore obvious from the Washington Treaty. Furthermore, although the above formulations imply that all members of NATO would take part in defining a "risk situation" and in proposing the appropriate measures to be taken, it is obvious that, given the US hegemony, it is basically the US part of the transnational elite that takes the responsibility of defending the New Economic Order. No wonder that the Pentagon explicitly declared that "a prosperous, largely democratic, market-oriented zone of peace and prosperity that encompasses more than two-thirds of the world's economy" requires the "stability" that only American "leadership can provide."³⁴ Protection of the internationalised market economy and free trade thus depend on America's

³⁰ *ibid.* article 15.

³¹ Ben Macintyre, *The Times* (26/04/1999).

³² *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*, article 20.

³³ *ibid.* article 34.

³⁴ Christopher Layne & Benjamin Schwarz, "Making the World Safer for Business: instability and aggression are regarded as a threat to the global stability upon which U.S. markets depend," *Los Angeles Times* (02/04/1999).

overseas military commitments and power. An influential New York Times columnist³⁵ was even more frank on the matter when he stressed that: "For globalisation to work, America can't be afraid to act like the almighty superpower it is ... The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist ... and the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

Yet, the fact that US military hegemony is recognised by all members of the transnational elite does not mean that there are no parts of it which would like to move toward some degree of independence from the US. The French parts of the transnational elite, in particular, wish to create an independent EU military power with the aim of moderating the American dominance over the other members of the transnational elite. But, as one could expect in view of the military weakness of the European powers, such wishes can never exceed the stage of pious hopes. As George Robertson, the NATO secretary general, pointed out recently, European countries spend on arms the equivalent of two-thirds of the US defence budget but have nothing like two-thirds of the US defence capability because of duplication.³⁶ In fact, all this was before the recent huge rise in US military spending announced by the Bush administration which, according to Professor Paul Kennedy at Yale University, will lead to the US spending more each year than the next nine largest national defence budgets combined!³⁷ No wonder that although the Nice Treaty signed by EU ministers in February 2001 states clearly that common foreign and security policy shall include "all questions relating to the security of the union," it then goes on to specify in a long annex that "NATO remains the basis of the collective defence of its members and will continue to play an important role in crisis management. The development of European security and defence policy will contribute to the vitality of a renewed transatlantic link."³⁸ It is therefore clear that any European defence force would be fully integrated into NATO, securing the military hegemony of the US elite and, in effect, playing a complementary, rather than a competitive, role to it.

So, the new NATO constitution made it clear that the type of wars envisaged in the future had nothing to do either with the kind of wars between advanced market economies culminating in two World Wars which marked the 20th century, or those that were expected by the original NATO constitution between the two Cold war blocs. In this sense, the new NATO constitution accurately reflects the transnational elite's problematique on wars in the NWO.

³⁵ Thomas Friedman, New York Times (March 28, 1999). Quoted in M. Parenti's *To Kill A Nation, To Kill A Nation* (Verso, 2000), p. 235.

³⁶ Michael White, *Guardian* (February 10, 2001).

³⁷ Peter Beaumont and Ed Vulliamy, *The Observer* (February 10, 2002).

³⁸ Richard Norton-Taylor, *Guardian* (February 28, 2001).

Thus, as regards, first, wars among major market economies, the smooth functioning of a self-regulating internationalised market economy, involving free movement of commodities and capital, is incompatible with embargos and military activities. Therefore, the present internationalisation of the market economy makes such armed conflicts between major market economies superfluous, if not impossible. Today, the nation states are essentially the municipalities of the internationalised market economy and their job is to provide, at the cheapest possible cost, the infrastructure and "public goods" required for the effective functioning of business.³⁹ It is simply against the general interest of the transnational elite to allow any military conflicts to arise between the major advanced market economies, i.e. the Triad (EU, NAFTA and Japan) on which all elements of the transnational elite are based. Furthermore, it is not difficult to see that, in the framework of this internationalised economy, any attempt by a country or an economic bloc to use military force against another country or bloc within the Triad is inconceivable, since it will incur the immediate sanctions of the global financial markets, the first casualty being its own currency. At the same time, a generalised war, like the two previous world wars, will lead to collapse the internationalised market economy, through the collapse of the internationalised stock exchanges and the bankruptcy of the transnational corporations that will have to drastically restrict their activities.

But, if wars among the countries in the Triad are ruled out this is not the case as regards wars between them and countries in the periphery and the semi-periphery of the internationalised market economy, nor is this the case with regard to wars (like the present global "war" on terrorism) to crush any resistance against the NWO, nor, finally, is this the case with regard to wars between peripheral countries (often expressing corresponding divisions within the transnational elite).

Thus, as regards wars between countries in the Triad and countries in the periphery and semi-periphery, as well as those against resistance movements, the explosion of inequality in the world distribution of power within the NWO implies that attacks against any "rogue" regimes or resistance movements challenging it will continue unabated — this is the main aim of the present global "war." Such regimes or movements will have to be crushed in the kind of total victory that we have seen in the case of the three "wars" to date. It is with the purpose of fighting wars of this type that the armies of countries in the Triad are fast being converted into armies of professional killers (a kind of samurai) who are not susceptible, as conscripts are, to ideological influences and feelings of solidarity with the social groups from which they are recruited

³⁹ K. Ohmae, "The rise of the region state," *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1993).

(usually the poorest groups). Despite the higher cost of professional armies,⁴⁰ the NWO elites have no choice but to finance such extra expenses since wars are no longer for the defense of the country but purely for the defense of the NWO and the privileges of those benefiting from it — primarily the transnational elite but also the upper middle classes in the Triad countries as well as the elites in the peripheral countries.

As for wars among peripheral states, conflicts of a cultural, religious, nationalist or ethnic nature may easily arise between them, often giving outlet to socio-economic frustrations. The reaction of the transnational elite to such wars is not uniform. In some cases, as with ethnic wars in the Balkans, such conflicts may threaten the stability of the NWO and have to be crushed through its military arms, if possible through the UN, alternatively by the new NATO, or as last resort by US military power. If these tensions do not threaten the NWO as such but are useful in financing expansion of the transnational elite's armaments industries then, such tensions are left to keep simmering.

In conclusion, the military branch of the transnational elite, i.e. the US Pentagon, with the assistance of the second-in-command, the British Army — with or without the help of NATO — play today the role of managing the security dimension of the NWO. In this framework, the new global "war" of the transnational elite offers, as we shall see below, the very security apparatus for the process of neoliberal globalisation (a global war for a globalised economy), as well as the protection mechanism with respect to any threat against the NWO in general.

The ideological dimension of systemic violence

Economic and political globalisation are inevitably accompanied by a kind of "ideological globalisation," i.e. a transnational ideology used to justify the decrease of national sovereignty, which complements the corresponding decrease of economic sovereignty following economic globalisation. The core of this new ideology is the doctrine of "limited" sovereignty which is used to "justify" military interventions/ attacks against any "rogue" regimes or political organisations and movements.⁴¹ According to this doctrine, there are certain universal values that should take priority over other values, like that of national sovereignty. The five centuries-old culture of unlimited sovereignty, which

⁴⁰ Adrian Hamilton, *The Observer* (25/02/1996).

⁴¹ Tony Blair's foreign policy guru Robert Cooper expressed clearly the new ideological globalisation when he argued that "what is needed is a new kind of imperialism, one compatible with human rights and cosmopolitan values: an imperialism which aims to bring order and organisation but which rests today on the voluntary principle." Robert Cooper, "Why we still need empires," *The Observer* (April 7, 2002).

nations that participated in the drafting of the UN charter agreed to limit only as regards their right to wage war in case of an attack, in exchange for a promise that the Security Council provide collective security on their behalf (an arrangement blatantly violated by the US's "war" against Afghanistan⁴²), is therefore completely abolished in the NWO.

In cases where "universal values" are violated, international organisations expressing the will of the "international community" (i.e. the UN Security Council, NATO etc.) should enforce them by any means necessary, irrespective of national sovereignty concerns that should never override the primary significance of these universal values. This new doctrine was formally expressed by the UK prime minister in a Chicago speech, just before the Washington NATO summit. The upshot of this speech was that democratic states should be allowed to intervene in the internal affairs of other states so long as human rights are at stake — a principle fully endorsed by the "new" NATO.⁴³

There are two obvious conclusions that one may draw from this new doctrine of "limited sovereignty," which is fast becoming the ideology of the NWO, first with respect to human rights and second with respect to the "war against terrorism." The first conclusion is that this doctrine overrides the UN Charter which explicitly states that "nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" except upon a Security Council finding of a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression."⁴⁴ This reversal becomes all too clear when one takes into account that a proposal to ensure the protection of human rights was explicitly rejected at the San Francisco Conference establishing the UN. The second conclusion is that given the huge asymmetry of power in the present world order it is not the

⁴² As Monique Chemillier-Gendreau points out "The end of international law, likely since the Gulf war, is accelerating (...) the UN Security Council finally bowed to the US in Resolution 1368 of 12 September 2001 (...) By describing the attacks of 11 September as "threats to international peace and security" (...) (it) has abandoned any idea of collective action in the name of the UN (...) the UN is encouraging a vicious circle where the response to violence and murder is a war of vengeance that may be extended to other lands." "UN: the end of collective action," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 2001).

⁴³ Article 20 of the new strategic concept makes it explicitly clear that only a limited conception of sovereignty is recognised by the new NATO. This is the obvious conclusion from references that article 20 makes to ethnic and religious rivalries, or the abuse of human rights — events which, according to the new "strategic concept," can lead to crises affecting Euro-Atlantic stability and armed conflicts affecting the security of the Alliance by spilling over into neighbouring countries. (NATO, *The Alliance's Strategic Concept*).

⁴⁴ UN Charter, article 2 #7 & article 39.

sovereignty of the powerful states in the Triad countries which is going to suffer because of this new doctrine but only that of the weak ones.

It is therefore clear that this new doctrine is false, asymmetrical and potentially oppressive. It is false, because primacy of "human rights" or the protection against "terrorism" over national sovereignty presupposes that we live in a society and a world in which the peoples of this world (and not their elites) can define the meaning of "human values" and "terrorism." It is asymmetrical insofar as it creates a right for the powerful to intervene in the affairs of the weak, and not vice versa. This could explain, for instance, why massive violations of Palestinians' human rights in the past and the Jenin crimes during the second phase of the "war" against terrorism in April 2002 at the hands of a brutalised Zionist army, with the obvious connivance of the transnational elite, have never warranted any action by the transnational elite (not even a commission of inquiry!), or why the KLA in Kosovo and the Contras in Nicaragua, easily qualifying as "terrorist" organisations, not only were never pursued by the transnational elite but instead were armed and financed by it! Finally, it is potentially oppressive, because it can easily be used by the transnational elite to oppress any movement that might try to establish an alternative kind of society which aims to abolish the unequal distribution of political and economic power. This new doctrine of limited sovereignty, therefore, plays the ideological role of legitimising political and military interventions of the transnational elite in order to guarantee the stability of the NWO.

Finally, it is worth noting the role of the centre-Left and the mainstream Greens as the main promoters of the new transnational ideology. Both have played a vital part in justifying the "wars" of the transnational elite through the doctrine of limited sovereignty. This is not difficult to explain in view of the fact that both the centre-Left and the mainstream Greens have already fully adopted the New World Order in its economic and political aspects. Thus, all major European centre-Left parties (Germany, Britain, France, Italy etc.) have already adopted the capitalist neoliberal globalisation. Similarly, mainstream Greens have long ago abandoned any ideas about radical economic changes and have adopted instead a kind of "eco-social-liberalism" that amounts to some version of "Green capitalism."

It was therefore hardly surprising that the centre-Left endorsed enthusiastically all three "wars" of the transnational elite, whereas the mainstream Greens, who at the beginning of the 1990s were concerned about the ecological implications of the Gulf war, were dedicated supporters of the war against Yugoslavia by the end of the decade and today have fully endorsed the "war against terrorism." The argument used by Greens to justify their stand was that the Green ideology of fighting for human rights and human liberation

in general was perfectly compatible with the new role of NATO as protector of human rights! Still, there is an alternative explanation for the Green stand: since ideas about the anti-party party, direct democracy, and radical ecology were shelved once the mainstream green parties became "normal parties" fighting for government power, it was inevitable that, once in power, they would become "normal governments," taking part in criminal activities like the NATO war.

However, if the historical role of social democrats on the side of the ruling elites in their various wars can be taken for granted, this does not apply to the Left in general or the Greens in particular. As regards the former, it was surprising though not unexpected to see that the "war" against Yugoslavia was endorsed by most intellectuals of the European "left": from Anthony Giddens and Alain Tourain to Edgar Morin, Habermas and many others, who, in effect, served as apologists for NATO's attack against the Yugoslavian people when they justified the doctrine of "limited" sovereignty and talked about a "new era" in international relations, supposedly marked by the Pinochet affair and the "war" itself. It is clear that most "left" intellectuals, having abandoned their critical role are now, as Castoriadis aptly described them, "enthusiastically adhering to that which is there just because it is there."⁴⁵

The same applies to the Greens who entered the political arena a quarter a century ago, as a new social movement fighting for the noble goal of liberating Nature and Humanity from the evils of the present society. Their participation in the last two criminal "wars" of the transnational elite (Yugoslavia, Afghanistan) constitutes a flagrant violation of the *raison d'être* itself of the Green movement. This became particularly obvious in the case of Yugoslavia, when "realist" Greens like the ex Leftists and now professional politicians Cohn-Bendit⁴⁶ and Joschka Fischer, and "red-Greens" like Alain Lipietz,⁴⁷ as well as the European Green parties, saw no contradiction between the end of this war (liberation of Kosovars from oppression and ethnic cleansing) and the means used for this purpose (the criminal war machine of the transnational elite engaged in the systematic destruction of the country's infrastructure). Mainstream Greens have shown that they no longer have (if they ever did) a vision of an alternative society: they simply endorse the institutional framework of the present internationalised market economy and its political expressions. As socialist critics⁴⁸ were quick to point out, mainstream Greens today cannot claim to be

⁴⁵ Cornelius Castoriadis "The Retreat from Autonomy: Postmodernism as Generalised Conformism," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 2001), pp 17-26.

⁴⁶ Daniel Cohn-Bendit, "Le recours, c'est la force," *Liberation* (06/04/1999).

⁴⁷ Alain Lipietz, "Ce qu'il faut savoir avant une guerre terrestre," *Liberation* (13/04/1999).

⁴⁸ As Paul McGarr stresses: "Their (Green) politics are a criticism of some aspects of the capitalist system, such as the way it leads to environmental destruction, but not a rejection of the system itself." "European Greens, Shades of Deep Khaki," *Socialist Worker* (23/04/1999).

any kind of "anti-systemic force." Clearly, therefore, from the moment "realists" won the battle against radical currents within the European Greens, Green parties have become an element of the NWO engaged in environmental "statecraft" on behalf of the middle classes which they mainly represent, ending any hopes for their anti-systemic potential.

Counter-violence in the New World Order

Political violence in all its varieties is not of course a new phenomenon and has always been present in every form of hierarchical (or heteronomous) society. As I attempted to show in the first section political violence was always associated with the unequal distribution of power at all levels and particularly the political/ military and the economic levels. In other words, the asymmetry of economic and political/military power between and within nations has always been the necessary condition for political violence, both from the point of view of the oppressor as well as that of the oppressed. One may even go further and assume a direct relationship between inequality in the distribution of power and political violence: the higher the inequality in the distribution of power the greater the degree of political violence in all its forms.

As hopefully was made clear in the last section, the NWO has institutionalised an extreme concentration of economic, political/military power, i.e. an extreme form of systemic violence, which is the ultimate cause of the huge rise of counter-violence in the last quarter of the century or so. But, in contrast to the liberal and statist forms of modernity, when power was concentrated at the national level and therefore terrorism was also nationally focused, in the NWO of neoliberal modernity, power is concentrated at the international level, in the hands of the transnational elite. Not surprisingly, terrorism also takes a globalised form today to hit the centres of the transnational elite and particularly the USA. However, it has been various non-extreme forms of counter-violence rather than terrorism itself that flourished in the NWO, although one may notice some significant variations between the North and the South.

In the North, counter-violence in the 1980s and early 1990s used to take mainly the form of individual counter-violence, as expressed through the huge increase in crime. No wonder that today the world prison population is an all-time record, with more than 8.75m people in prison around the world and about half of them in three countries alone: the US (1.93m), China (1.43m) and Russia (0.96m)⁴⁹ where the concentration of power in all its forms is highest. The only North-based terrorist organisations still operating today are either remnants of

⁴⁹ Alan Travis, "England worse than China in prison population rate," *The Guardian* (February 13, 2002).

the 1970s (November 17th Organisation in Greece and the resurrected Red Brigades in Italy) or national liberation movements (ETA in Spain, "Real IRA" in N. Ireland). However, with the blooming of neoliberal globalisation in the 1990s, a new form of collective counter-violence developed recently, as expressed particularly by the activity of the antisystemic currents within the anti-globalisation movement. No wonder that the new antiterrorist legislation that was introduced in many countries in the North, even before the September 11 events but particularly after them, has been designed to be applicable not only with respect to terrorism from the South but also with respect to the antisystemic currents within the antiglobalisation movement and similar movements outside it. Particularly so, since the systemic violence is at a very high level in the NWO, with inequality, poverty and unemployment having reached record post-war levels, representative "democracy" not giving any outlet for protest as all main parties agree on the basic principles governing neoliberal globalisation, and the capital-controlled mass media being busy in manufacturing consent around the aims of the transnational elite which manages the NWO. Inevitably, this huge systemic violence can only be sustained through state repression, in case the built-in mechanisms used by the elite to push the oppressed into passivity and individualisation (consumer culture, drug culture, mass media etc.) are not sufficient for their control.

On the other hand, in the South, the rise of systemic violence represented by the NWO has been met by a corresponding rise of collective counter-violence, including popular terrorism. This is the case of many movements that have emerged in the last decade or so in Latin America — particularly in countries like Brazil where the demands for land redistribution have grown — but also, in Asia, in countries like India and lately China,⁵⁰ where demonstrations against the effects of globalisation seem to have flourished lately. Popular terrorism is also rampant in the South. This is on account of two reasons. First, because counter-violence is usually suppressed by the repressive regimes dominating the South (even if they formally adopted the representative "democracy" paraphernalia), pushing resistant social groups to the use of terrorist methods. In fact, terrorism has almost replaced other forms of collective counter-violence like guerrilla warfare, which used to be the main form of struggle in the periphery. Second, because when counter-violence is directed against the North (or colonizers from the North like the Zionist regime in Israel), the asymmetry of power between oppressors and oppressed is such that the latter have in fact no effective choice but the resort to terrorism.

⁵⁰ John Gittings, "Strikes convulse China's oil-rich heartlands," *The Guardian* (March 21, 2002).

3. The September 11 events as the catalyst for the new 'war'

The Causes of the September 11 events

The common theme of the transnational elite and its ideological commissars in interpreting the September events has been that they constituted an inexplicable attack against democracy and civilisation caused by religious fanatics whereas the more "sophisticated" of those analysts talked about the "clash of civilisations."

Thus, the *New York Times*, the medium par excellence of the transnational elite, found the causes of the attack in "religious fanaticism" and in the anger of those left behind by globalisation.⁵¹ Similarly, several of the ideological commissars of the same elite "explained" the events as pure "nihilism." A Harvard university professor, for instance, writing in the immediate aftermath of the events, gave the following "interpretation," which obviously aimed at preparing world opinion for the bloody 'war' to come:⁵²

It is important to insist on the apocalyptic content and the nihilistic moral meaning of these events because so many good people persist in believing that the attacks were a cry from the heart of an unjust world, an indictment, wrong in moral form, but right in content, of the injustice of American power. Some even go so far as to claim that America's guilt deprives it of the right to strike back. The mistake is to construe an act of annihilating nihilism as an act of politics... Since the politics of reason cannot defeat apocalyptic nihilism, we must fight .

As the above extract makes clear, the aim of the establishment ideologues has been to separate completely the violence of September 11 from systemic violence so that the impression of a nihilistic event could be established. However, neither was the attack inexplicable nor was it directed against democracy and civilisation. In fact, it was clearly an extreme form of popular terrorism directly related to the systemic violence built into the NWO. Thus, the attack becomes far from inexplicable when it is taken into account that the Arabs who carried out it grew up in a world order in which their brothers and sisters in Palestine were murdered on a daily basis in the process of a barbarous ethnic cleansing, the perpetrators of which, far from being bombed as in Yugoslavia for their contempt of numerous UN resolutions, were

⁵¹ Leader, *New York Times*, "The National Defence" (12/09/2001).

⁵² Michael Ignatieff, "It's war - but it doesn't have to be dirty," *The Guardian* (October 1, 2001). A similar position was adopted by "Left philosophers" like Andre Glucksmann, *To Vema* (07/10/2001).

scandalously supported by the transnational elite—mainly the US-based parts of the elite — for the sake of its control of Mid East oil, and were rewarded at the rate of over 3 billion dollars per year. They also grew up in a world order in which more than a million of their compatriots in Iraq (half of them children) have died out of the mass bombings and the subsequent embargo⁵³ of the transnational elite.

Also, concerning the allegation that the September events represented an attack against democracy, one may argue that it was the very absence of real democracy in the USA that was the cause of death of innocent victims. Surely, most of these victims were not responsible for the decisions to subjugate the Palestinians, the Iraqis, the Indonesians, or earlier on the Latin Americans and the Vietnamese. It was the political elites, at whose hands political power is concentrated in a representative “democracy,” that have to be blamed for this. Also, most of these victims were probably not even aware of the *avoidable* death (according to UNICEF) of over 10 m children per year, because of the lack of proper living conditions and of the role of Western elites in the development of such conditions. On the other hand, it is the 200 billionaires, who concentrate in their hands an amount of wealth which is eight times higher than the total income of 582 m people in the “developing” countries,⁵⁴ who in a market economy are invested with economic power and, with the support of the privileged social groups, determine the fate of everybody in the planet.

Finally, the allegation that the September events represent a kind of “clash of civilisations”⁵⁵ is obviously an ideological smokescreen to cover the real cycle of systemic violence and counter-violence. Not only the transnational elite has clearly not been motivated by any crusade but there is also no evidence that the Arabs who carried out the attack were motivated by some fervent desire to spread Islamic fundamentalism.⁵⁶ This, does not deny of course the possibility that their religious beliefs (which might well have been exploited by their leadership to recruit them in the struggle against the transnational elite) might have helped them in executing (but not in taking) their decision to sacrifice their own lives. As regards the rise of Islamic fundamentalism itself, it was only in the late 1960s that Muslims throughout the Islamic world had begun to develop

⁵³ See e.g. John Pilger, “Inevitable ring to the unimaginable,” *Znet* (September 13, 2001).

⁵⁴ UN, *Human Development Report 2000* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵⁵ See for the theory of the clash of civilisations Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

⁵⁶ As Ric Rouleau pointed out “Islamic rhetoric became an instrument of mobilisation, serving as a cover for nationalist and anti-imperialist objectives. But it also had a social component, and included denunciations of the injustices, corruption, and tyranny that characterised the reigning oligarchies”. Ric Rouleau, “Terrorism and Islamism,” *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 2001).

what we call fundamentalist movements and it was not before 1979, when the ayatollahs took over in Iran, that the Islamic fundamentalist movement flourished — usually enhanced by the West in its struggle to dismantle the Soviet bloc. This was therefore a phenomenon that happened after, and not before, the failure of Arab nationalism/ socialism to stem the continuous decline of Arab societies, despite the political and economic independence that the end of colonialism supposedly brought about. The turn of the Arab populations (including the radical currents within the Palestinian movement) to Islamic fundamentalism is therefore the logical outcome of this failure and of the parallel establishment by the transnational elite of semi-dictatorial client regimes which stifle any democratic process.

One may therefore conclude that the ultimate cause of the September 11 attacks should be traced back to the NWO that we considered in the last section, which has established a huge inequality in the distribution of economic and political power **between** and **within** nations. It is this huge asymmetry that inspired the attackers to express themselves in a language of desperation, something that did not represent any clear strategy, with its long term aims and short term tactics. From this viewpoint, Saskia Sassen's observation is clearly to the point:⁵⁷

the attacks are a language of last resort: the oppressed and persecuted have used many languages to reach us so far, but we seem unable to translate the meaning. So a few have taken the personal responsibility to speak in a language that needs no translation.

At the same time, the events of September themselves functioned as catalysts and gave the perfect pretext to the transnational elite, headed by the US-based parts of it, for its present attempt to crush any resistance movement in the South, in the hope that this will eliminate any serious threats to its interests. As the special, correspondent of *Le Monde Diplomatique* put it: "Having been challenged by a new terrorism, the US is determined to regain control, if only partially, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and even Iraq. It means to eliminate all the political and social forces that pose a violent threat to its interests."⁵⁸ However, despite the fact that *Le Monde Diplomatique*⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Saskia Sassen, "A message from the global south," *The Guardian* (September 12, 2001).

⁵⁸ Paul-Marie de la Gorce, "Uncivil war in Washington," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 2001).

⁵⁹ As Ignatio Ramonet, the editor of LMD, wrote in a leader in the aftermath of the September events, "throughout the world, and particularly in the countries of the South, the most common public reaction to the attacks in New York and Washington has been: what

attempts to differentiate between the US and the European elements of the transnational elite and blames only the former, one may argue that this elite as a whole did not have any other choice and, in spite of the differences on tactics, all its members agree on the long-terms of the war, as the European Commission made clear.⁶⁰

It is therefore clear that, despite the differences in tactics that may well exist between the various elements of the transnational elite, it does not make any sense to assume that it will ever take any measures to fight the causes of popular terrorism (i.e. the systemic violence within the NWO) rather than its symptoms, as it does with the global "war." Therefore, one could not expect that this elite will ever abandon the client Zionist state, which is the main foundation of the NWO in the area, or that it will stop seeking to overthrow "rogue" regimes and suppress radical movements threatening its vital interests, or finally that it will introduce any effective measures to control neoliberal globalisation for the sake of protecting labour and the environment and against the imperatives of neoliberal globalisation.

The aftermath of September 11: launching a new type of "war"

The attacks of September 11 gave the opportunity to the transnational elite, whose military branch is, de facto, the US military machine, to start its latest "war" against terrorism. Despite the fact that the new war has several common characteristics with the previous "wars," as we shall see below, there are also significant differences between these "wars." Thus, the war against terrorism, unlike the previous ones, is a global and permanent war. It is a global war, not in the sense of a generalised war like the two world wars but in the sense that its targets are not only specific "rogue" regimes (as it was the case with the Saddam and Milosevic regimes), which are not fully integrated in the New World Order or simply do not "toe the line," but any kind of regime or social group and movement which resists the New World Order: from the Palestinian up to the antiglobalisation movements. As Dan Plesch, senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute put it "the war on terrorism is analogous to civil war on a global scale, in that it is taking place in a world which globalisation

happened in New York was sad, but the US deserved it". *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 2001).

⁶⁰ A spokesman for Chris Patten, the EU foreign affairs commissioner, declared on the aftermath of Bush's "axis of evil" speech that "although we have the same long-term aims (with the Americans) we have a different policy, a policy of rapprochement, in order to achieve the same aims." Associated Press/ *Eleftherotypia* (01/02/2002).

has shrunk and interconnected.”⁶¹ Furthermore, it is a permanent⁶² war, because it is bound to continue for as long as the New World Order and the systemic and state violence associated with it are reproduced.

In other words, the “war against terrorism” is a particularly expedient means of controlling populations that threaten the NWO. The direct target in its first phases is those populations in the South which are particularly influenced by Islamic fundamentalism. As we have seen above, the selection of this target does not indicate the kind of “clash of civilisations” predicted by the ideologues of the NWO but rather the fact that the populations in countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, as well as Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia, have been the main victims of the NWO, particularly in its economic dimension, because of their geographical and economic position.

Still, the fundamentalist movements in the South are not the only targets of the “war against terrorism.” Direct action movements in the North, like the anti-globalisation movement, are also the implicit target of the transnational elite. The significant curbing of civil liberties introduced at the moment throughout the North (USA, EU etc), ostensibly to subdue Islamic terrorists, could easily be used to suppress the more radical elements within the anti-globalisation movement. The tactics used to suppress this movement have already led to violent confrontations (from Seattle to Göteborg and Genoa) which, in the present anti-“terrorist” climate, could clearly be used by the transnational elite to identify anti-globalisers with “terrorists.” Particularly so at a moment when, as Alex Wilks points out,⁶³ a number of official and media commentators have already claimed that the way to fight terrorism is further economic liberalisation, implying that anyone who dares question this is on the side of terrorists.

In this problematique, therefore, the “war” against terrorism does not aim at “eradicating” terrorism, as the official propaganda asserts, although, as we shall see in the next section, discouraging counter-violence in general is a basic aim of it. However, counter-violence in all its forms, which under certain conditions may take the extreme form of popular terrorism, will never be eradicated as long as there is systemic violence, state repression and state terrorism. The transnational elite is well aware of this fact, given the historical experience which clearly shows that state repression and state terrorism never

⁶¹ Peter Beaumont, “America gears up for a new kind of war,” *The Observer* (March 10, 2002). According to the same report US forces are now fighting and deploying across the globe - in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Iraq and Colombia and in the former Soviet republics. American arms and money are flooding elsewhere as its military takes up new bases across the globe.

⁶² According to Dick Cheney, the US Vice President, the new war may last 50 years or more. See John Pilger, *The Mirror* (Jan. 29, 2002). <http://www.zmag.org>

⁶³ Alex Wilks, “Keeping the pressure on,” *The Observer* (November 4, 2001).

managed to eradicate popular terrorism for as long as the asymmetry in power that caused it in the first instance, still continued. This is particularly true today when terrorists are prepared to use even their own lives to resist against a formidable enemy, who is able to use the most deadly technology at a minimum cost (in lives) to itself.

Common characteristics of the transnational elite's wars

Still, despite the novel elements of this war there are also certain common features characterising all the transnational elite's wars so far (i.e. the Gulf war, the NATO war against Yugoslavia and the war against Afghanistan) and in all probability will characterise also the "wars" to come within the general framework of the "war against terrorism." Such characteristics are: First, the so-called "wars" are decided by the highest echelons of the transnational elite — the leading role in this decision-taking process being played of course by the American members of this elite which possess the necessary equipment and technology. Despite the fact that the regimes which take part in these "wars" are called "democracies" the peoples themselves are never involved directly in these decisions and even the professional politicians in the respective parliaments usually are called to approve these "wars" after they have already been launched.

Second, the wars are invariably carried out in blatant violation of international law, both when they are formally covered by a capitalist-controlled UN Security Council resolution, as in the case of the Gulf war, and when they are not, as in the cases of Yugoslavia⁶⁴ and Afghanistan. As we have seen above, the doctrine of limited sovereignty used to justify these wars is in blatant contradiction to the UN Charter. With regards to the attack against Afghanistan in particular, it should be noted that article 51 of the UN Charter, which has been used to justify this "war," refers to the right of "self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations," not to any "right" to retaliate against an attack using a civilian airliner, and in no way grants permission to attack a country which offers refuge to the transnational elite's enemies!

Third, the pattern of military division of labour between the members of the transnational elite, as it emerged from all three "wars," involves the almost exclusive use of the US military machine, particularly its unrivalled air power, in the first stages of the war effort, with the military machines of the other members mobilised mainly at later stages, for peace-keeping roles etc. It is this pattern of military division of labour, which has persuaded some analysts to make the untenable assumption of US unilateralism, if not isolationism — at

⁶⁴ See Takis Fotopoulos, *The Gulf War* (Athens: Exantas, 1991) and *The New Order in the Balkans* (Athens: Staxy, 1999).

the very moment when US is involved in a global' war! However, this pattern has been imposed de facto by the US-based members of the elite, exclusively because of military considerations, i.e. as a result of the overwhelming superiority of US military power over the other members of the transnational elite.⁶⁵ This has therefore nothing to do with any real divergence between the members of this elite regarding the common long-term aims, although of course the huge asymmetry in military power among the members of the elite gives a much greater weight to the views on tactics adopted by the American members of the elite vis-à-vis the views of the other members.

Fourth, any negotiated settlement is ruled out by the transnational elite, which it either sets conditions that no sovereign country could accept (this was the case of Yugoslavia which according to the Rambouillet proposals it had to be voluntarily converted into a NATO protectorate to avoid the attack against it)⁶⁶ or simply blocks any offers for a negotiated settlement by the country under threat of an attack (this was the case of Iraq in the Gulf war, or of Afghanistan in the present "war").

Fifth, the political-military aim of the "wars" is the destruction of the infrastructure of the countries concerned and the terrorisation of their peoples (killing thousands of innocent civilians in the process as "collateral damage") so that they would be "softened up" to accept alternative elites friendly to the transnational elite.⁶⁷ A parallel basic aim is the minimisation of the losses on the side of the transnational elite to undermine the flourishing of any mass anti-war movement, like the one that effectively forced the US elite to stop its war against Vietnam.

Sixth, as I mentioned in the second section, the transnational elite's "wars" are justified by the doctrine of "limited" sovereignty, according to which there are certain universal values that should take priority over other values, like that of national sovereignty. However, these universal values change according to the requirements of the "international community," i.e. the

⁶⁵ As a result of the huge US military superiority, according to a well known NYT columnist, "we are increasingly heading for a military apartheid within NATO: America will be the chef who decides the menu and cooks all the great meals, and the NATO allies will be the bus boys who stay around and clean up the mess and keep the peace – indefinitely." Thomas Friedman, "America will be the chef and its NATO allies the bus boys who stay to clean up the mess," *The Guardian* (February 6, 2002).

⁶⁶ See Takis Fotopoulos, "New World Order and NATO's war against Yugoslavia," *New Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 73-104.

⁶⁷ Adm. Sir Michael Boyce, the chief of the British Defence Staff, was explicit about this during the heavy bombing of Afghanistan: "The squeeze will carry on until the people of the country themselves recognize that this is going to go on until they get the leadership changed." Michael R. Gordon, "Allies Preparing for Long Fight as Taliban Dig In," *New York Times* (October 28, 2001).

transnational elite. Thus, in the war against Iraq it was the protection of the world from a "new Hitler" that necessitated not only the ousting of his troops from the elite's client state (Kuwait) but also a deadly embargo that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. In the "war" against Yugoslavia, it was the protection of human rights that was promoted to a universal value justifying any criminal activity by the transnational elite. Still, in the "war against terrorism" the protection of human rights is bypassed if not suspended in favour of protection from "terrorism" (as defined by the transnational elite again!) which becomes a new universal value justifying any kind of limitation of civil liberties, if not pure state terrorism and suppression.

Seventh, the mass media, particularly the electronic ones, play a crucial role in the manipulation of popular opinion, either by minimising the significance of the elites' crimes, or by distorting and cutting off the events from their historical context. As Phillip Knightley,⁶⁸ the author of *The First Casualty: a history of war reporting* points out, Western media follow a depressingly familiar formula when it comes to the preparation of the public for conflict. In stage one, an atmosphere of crisis is created which supposedly demands military action to be overcome. In stage two, the enemy's leader is demonised (Sadam is likened to Hitler, the Serbian elite to the Nazis, Bin Laden is presented as a maniac islamist etc). In stage three, the demonisation expands to include most in the enemy peoples themselves (the Serbians are presented as Nazi thugs intent on genocide, the Taliban — in fact, most Afghans, even many Muslims — are described as fanatical and cruel etc). Finally, in stage four, the demonisation process culminated with the supposed "atrocities" of the Iraqis, the Serbs, the Afghans (the Kuwaiti babies story is a well known scandal of western mass media fabricating stories against the Iraqis). However, the transnational elite in its new permanent "war" went much further than this usual process. Thus, following the September 11 attacks, the military branch of this elite, the US Pentagon, opened an Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) with the explicitly Orwellian mandate to spread misinformation aimed at brainwashing the international press and "influencing public opinion and political leaders in friendly as well as unfriendly countries."⁶⁹

Eighth, the ideologues of the NWO undertake the theoretical justification of the elite's "wars" and at the same time try to defame every intellectual that would dare to reveal the criminal character of its actions. In this effort, the most valuable assistance comes from the ideologues of the system, particularly those in the "Left"⁷⁰ who, having abandoned any antisystemic vision after the

⁶⁸ Phillip Knightley, "The disinformation campaign," *The Guardian* (04/10/2001).

⁶⁹ Ignacio Ramonet, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (March 2002).

⁷⁰ A typical example is ex-Trotskyite Christopher Hitchens, who in a vitriolic attack against the critics of the "war" against Afghanistan, wrote in the *Spectator* that intellectuals who seek to

collapse of the socialist project, have endorsed the NWO in all its aspects. The assimilation process has been gradual: the first war of the transnational elite was adopted only by the centre-Left intellectuals and analysts; the second war was endorsed also by most of the Green and broadly "Left" intelligentsia; finally, the present "war" against terrorism has been adopted by most of the remaining "Left" including several Marxists, ex communists et al!

4. The aims of the global "war"

But, if the eradication of terrorism is mainly a pretext, as I attempted to show above, which are the real aims of this new type of "war"? To my mind, the transnational elite pursues a series of aims with this "war" — all within the boundaries set by the general aim of securing the stability of the New World Order in its economic and political dimensions through the crushing of any perceived threats against it. Such "particular" aims are:

- a. to discourage the flourishing of counter-violence brought about by the growing systemic violence, which is the inevitable by-product of capitalist neoliberal globalisation and its political implications;
- b. to secure "stability"⁷¹ in Central Asia and the Middle East, so that the sources of energy (on which the growth of the market economy depends) could be guaranteed;
- c. to guarantee the reproduction of the war economy (which went through a "raison-d'-etre" crisis after the end of the cold war) that significantly contributes to the growth of the market economy.

However, the question still remains why the transnational elite has chosen this particular moment in History to launch this unprecedented new type of war? There are several reasons for this amounting to the fact that this elite has much better chances to crush any violent reaction against the NWO, which is based on the internationalised market economy and representative "democracy," than the national elites ever had in the past. Such reasons are, first, the fact that the universalisation of representative "democracy" has reduced drastically the number of people that would resort to violent action today in order to achieve significant social change when they believe that such change can also be achieved through parliament. This is particularly the case in the periphery and semi-periphery where national elites used to rely in the past on dictatorial or

understand the new enemy are no friends of peace, democracy or human life; See Tariq Ali, "The new empire loyalists," *The Guardian* (March 16, 2002).

⁷¹ See, for example, Pierre Abramovici, "The US and the Taliban: a done deal," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (January 2002).

semi-dictatorial regimes that stifled any illusion of change through "democratic" means, leading to rampant counter-violence in all its forms. Second, the creation of a basically self-regulating internationalised market economy institutionalises systemic violence at the economic level in a way the few are even aware of the nature and real causes for the huge inequality in the distribution of economic power. Third, the vast improvements in the technology of state repression have created a huge asymmetry of military power that has led to the actual disappearance of the guerrilla strategy in the periphery (apart from a few exceptions in Latin America and the Philippines) and of urban terrorism almost everywhere. Fourth, the collapse of socialist statism, in its forms of "actually existing socialism" in the East and social democracy in the West, has led to the end of traditional antisystemic movements⁷² and the collapse of the traditional Left in general, given the homogenisation of electoral politics that the internationalisation of the market economy implies.⁷³

On the basis of such reasons one could therefore assume that the transnational elite decided to launch this new type of global war in order to secure its unchallenged hegemony for many years to come.

The intermediate targets and means implied by the above aims are the following ones:

- a. the military crushing of any "rogue" regime or "popular terrorism" organisation around the world and the parallel installation of a vast global network of military bases with the aim to encircle any potentially dangerous regime or country which harbours forms of popular terrorism that threaten the elite's interests. Thus, the "temporary" US bases in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Caspian states, which were supposedly built for the needs of the war, have already taken a character of permanency, as some US Administration officials made clear.⁷⁴ No wonder that, as it was recently reported on the basis of the views of several defence analysts and experts, "today, almost six months after the attacks on New York and Washington, the US is putting in place a network of forward bases stretching from the Middle East across the

⁷² See Takis Fotopoulos, "The End of Traditional Anti-systemic movements and the need for a new type of anti-systemic movement today," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Nov 2001), pp. 415-456.

⁷³ See Takis Fotopoulos, "Globalisation, the reformist Left and the anti-globalisation movement," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 7, No 2 (July 2001), pp. 233-280.

⁷⁴ As Monbiot reports, "In December, the US assistant secretary of state Elizabeth Jones promised that "when the Afghan conflict is over we will not leave central Asia. We have long-term plans and interests in this region." *The Guardian* (February 12, 2002).

entire length of Asia, from the Red Sea to the Pacific. US forces are active in the biggest array of countries since the second world war."⁷⁵

b. the parallel suppression of the radical currents within the new antisystemic movements emerging today and particularly the anti-globalisation movement. This is achieved mainly through the introduction of draconian "antiterrorist" legislation in the North, supposedly to fight terrorism but in reality as an effective means to suppress the collective counter violence against the present intensification of systemic violence. Thus, anti-terrorist legislation "deepens" everywhere. In the USA, the Patriot Act anti-terror legislation has effectively suspended parts of the US constitution, creating, as a law professor at Columbia University pointed out,⁷⁶ "one of the more dramatic Constitutional crises in United States history" and giving the federal government sweeping new powers to investigate electronic communications, personal and financial records, computer hard drives, and other individual documents. Similar legislation in Britain suspended parts of the European convention for Human Rights so that, among other provisions, foreigners could be detented indefinitely without charge or trial, on the basis merely of suspicion, whereas the European Union embarked on discussions to define terrorism in a way that would allow the arrest as terrorists of students and workers occupying public buildings.⁷⁷

As far as the "war" itself is concerned, given its global and permanent nature that I mentioned above, we can only describe its phases up to date and make some projections about its possible future phases. The first phase has been the war in Afghanistan. The second phase, though not formally stated as such, involves the suppression of the Palestinian resistance movement. The next stage in all probability would involve an invasion of Iraq to "finish the job" that began with the Gulf war. From then on several candidates have been mentioned and the list is expanding all the time.

⁷⁵ Ewen MacAskill, "From Suez to the Pacific," *The Guardian* (March 8, 2002).

⁷⁶ Patricia J. Williams. "This dangerous patriot's game," *The Observer* (December 2, 2001).

⁷⁷ . The draft framework decision on terrorism that the European Commission has presented to the European Council and parliament, as a European civil servant argued, would mean that an anti-capitalist action, using dubious but non-violent methods, could be considered as terrorism. As he pointed out "this legislation will target individuals or groups with a perfectly legitimate desire to radically change the political, economic and social organisation of one or more countries. They will not be prosecuted for anything they have actually done, but because they may have done it for ideological reasons." John Brown, "Euro law wrongly defines terrorism," *Le Monde diplomatique* (February 2002).

Phase I: The "war" against Afghanistan

This "war" was supposedly aimed at the military crushing of the Al Quaida organisation, which is thought to be the perpetrator of the September 11 attacks. But, as soon as the massive US air bombardment began, it became obvious that the real target was the infrastructure of Afghanistan and some pitiful military facilities of the Taliban regime, including empty camps and caves where Al Quaida members used to hide in the past. Thus, despite the fact that it is highly unlikely that the Taliban regime itself was involved with the September 11 events and in spite of its desperate efforts to achieve a negotiated solution (even offering to hand Osama bin Laden over to a neutral country for trial) the transnational elite went ahead with its "war" because obviously it had a very different agenda, i.e. the aims I mentioned above. The brutality of the B-52 carpet bombing and the use of cluster bombs, depleted uranium bombs and other newly developed super bombs⁷⁸ against one of the poorest countries on earth with a life expectancy of 46 years (world average: 67 years) and an adult illiteracy rate of 65% (world average: 25%),⁷⁹ which did not have even a remote capability of effecting any significant damage to the "brave" attackers, set the pattern for the phases of the war against terrorism to follow and particularly the Israeli massive crimes in Palestine. No wonder that experts and informed sources put the total deaths of civilians at between 2,000 and 8,000 and according to a UN source in Kabul "it is definitely in the four figures"⁸⁰ — significantly surpassing those in New York!

The real aims were confirmed as soon as a new protectorate of the transnational elite was established in Kabul.⁸¹ Thus, the conferences, at the end of 2001, in Bonn and in Pakistan (where a parallel economic conference under the auspices of the World Bank took place) sealed the integration of Afghanistan into the NWO, i.e. the internationalised market economy and representative "democracy." No wonder that on January 29, the IMF's assistant director for monetary and exchange affairs suggested that Afghanistan should abandon its currency and adopt the dollar instead, as a "temporary" measure!⁸²

⁷⁸ Robert James Parsons, "Depleted uranium in bunker bombs- America's big dirty secret," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (March 2002).

⁷⁹ World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001*, Tables 2 & 1^o.

⁸⁰ Ian Traynor & Julian Borger, "Storm over Afghan civilian victims," *The Guardian* (February 12, 2002).

⁸¹ Hamid Karzai (who was appointed by the transnational elite as head of the Afghan interim government agreed at the Bonn meetings) used to be a consultant for the US company Unocal during the negotiations over the Afghan oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea to the port of Karachi (Pierre Abramovici, "The US and the Taliban: a done deal"). See also George Monbiot, "America's pipe dream," *The Guardian* (October 23, 2001).

⁸² George Monbiot, "America's imperial war," *The Guardian* (February 12, 2002).

Needless to add, the aims of the “war” against Afghanistan never included the protection of women’s rights from the Taliban regime, as the propaganda of the transnational elite, eagerly adopted by the “Left” intelligentsia in the West, had it. As a French feminist pointed out several months after the end of the war — indirectly, also, exonerating the French elite which however never dissociated itself from the “war”:⁸³

Has the US always fought for women’s rights? No. Has it ever? No. On the contrary, it has trampled on them. Afghan women were defended by Marxist governments, and they were the friends of the US’ enemy, so the women had to go to the wall. After all, human rights cannot be allowed to interfere with the pursuit of world domination. Women’s rights are like Iraqi babies. Their death is the price paid for US power (...) To say that the war may be good for Afghan women is almost to say that it is better for them to die in the bombing, cold or starvation than to live under the Taliban (...) At present the women of Afghanistan are on the road, living in tents or camps, in their millions. There are a million more refugees outside the country than there were before the war and a million displaced persons in the country itself

Phase II : The suppression of the Palestinian movement

The second phase of the global war involves the suppression of the Palestinian movement at the hands of the transnational elite’s proxy in the area, the Zionist state of Israel, which enjoys the full support of the American elements within the transnational elite and the tacit support of the rest. The aim of this informal phase is to terrorise to submission the Palestinian people so that a Palestinian protectorate could be created that will be totally dependent (economically as well as politically-militarily) on the Zionist regime and through it on the transnational elite. The ultimate aim is to secure the ‘stability’ of the crucial Middle East area and to guarantee the smooth supply of energy on the transnational elite’s terms.

The means employed were the massive use of brutal force, which in the case of Jenin may have reached the level of a massacre that the transnational elite did everything possible to cover up and was carried out by a brutalised army, whose conscripts have grown up in a racist regime that sees Palestinians as “inferior” to the “chosen people.” This brutal action against a basically defenceless people enjoyed the massive support of the Israeli public, as indicated by all polls and the lack of any mass antiwar demonstrations. This support could not simply be interpreted in terms of the insecurity that the Israeli

⁸³ Christine Delphy, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (March 2002).

public justifiably felt as a result of suicide bombings — as the propaganda of the transnational elite and the Zionists asserts. Suicide bombing is only a very recent phenomenon which can not explain the continuous “hardening” of Israeli public opinion over the years. Such a hardening becomes obvious by the fact that supporters of the two major parties, who have carried out all these years the systematic colonisation of the territories through the settlements, constitute the vast majority of the population. The same majority strongly supported the brutal force used to suppress the two intifadas and tacitly accepted even the Jenin crimes.

To explain this hardening, we have to refer to the drastic change of the political profile of the Israeli people in the last 50 years since the installation of the new state. This change in the political profile was the result mainly of two demographic factors: the physical withering away of the older generations, who were the real victims of blatant anti-Semitism, and the parallel massive infusion of “new blood” — often originating from the ultra-conservative parts of the US Jewish community which believe that the entire Palestine belongs to them by Biblical right. Similar factors and particularly the massive conversion of Jewish communities abroad into Zionism could explain their fervent support for the colonial and racist regime that has been established in Palestine with the overt protection of the transnational elite. No wonder that the Zionist “holocaust industry”⁸⁴ (i.e. the exploitation of the systematic persecution and liquidation of Jews by the Nazi regime) and the similar “anti-Semitism industry”⁸⁵ (i.e. the defaming of any critic of the Zionist ethnic cleansing) was put globally at top gear. The intention was, as always, to impose a kind of severe self-censorship on any well-intended critic of the Zionist/ transnational elite policies.

A discussion of the real aims of the transnational elite and the Zionists with respect to the present suppression of the Palestinian movement is meaningless unless we examine briefly the establishment of the state of Israel at the end of the second world war. It was at that time that the Zionists began the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, in the aftermath of the historic UN decision which recognised the establishment of a Jewish state on 55% of British Palestine, despite the fact that the Arabs constituted more than 60% of the total population. Then, under the pretext of Arab hostility against this blatant colonisation, a huge Zionist campaign to expand further this new state began, with the massive support of the West, at the expense of the Arabs who became refugees in their own lands. The Palestinians, according to the Zionist plans, should never have a really sovereign state, i.e. nothing beyond a kind of

⁸⁴ see N.G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry* (Verso 2001).

⁸⁵ see e.g. P. Beaumont, “The new anti-Semitism?,” *The Observer* (17/02/2002).

protectorate dependent on Israel, that could also serve as a permanent source of cheap labour.⁸⁶

Thus, through wars and an overt policy of colonisation of the occupied territories (approved by all major Israeli parties) the Zionists ended up controlling 90% of the Palestinian land in the early 1990s, when, under the threat of another intifada following the first one at the end of the 1980s, agreed to a process of negotiations at the 1993 Oslo meeting. At that stage began the process of creating a Palestinian protectorate that would allow the Zionists to keep 78% of the land and allow the Arabs to create a Bantustan-type of state, with areas completely encircled by Zionists, in the remaining 28% of the land.⁸⁷ The newly emerging Palestinian middle class, facing the establishment of the NWO after the collapse of the Soviet block that supported them, expressed, through the Arafat elite, its willingness to accept this sort of arrangement. However, the lower social groups, as well as the millions of the refugees living under miserable conditions in the neighbouring countries (who were deprived of any right of return under the Oslo accord), were hostile to such plans. Many of those "rejectionists" joined the Islamic organisations that were engaged in a fierce struggle against the occupation and the continuous expansion, in blatant violation of international law, of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. When therefore a final "settlement" along these lines was offered in 2000 at Camp David⁸⁸ the Palestinian leadership, under severe pressure "from below" was unable to accept it. This signalled the intensification of repression and the beginning of the second Intifada.

In this context, the September events provided the perfect opportunity to crush the Palestinian organisations which could now be declared as "terrorist" and face a treatment similar to the one given by the transnational elite to the Taliban. Thus, the US elements of the transnational elite, followed by those in the European Union, effectively gave the green light to the Zionist regime when they frozen the financial resources of the Palestinian organisations, which were classified as terrorist. The "Afghan treatment" of the Palestinian organisations and people that followed was as inevitable as was the dissociation by most of the Left from both the violence of the oppressors and the consequent counter

⁸⁶ George Szamuely, *The Observer* (12/08/2001); See, also, Noam Chomsky, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," *Alternative Information Centre* (20/10/2000).

⁸⁷ Dilip Hiro, "Land is the issue. Land is confiscated, stolen, kept," *The Guardian* (May 22, 2001).

⁸⁸ According to an article in the New York Review of Books by Robert Malley, a member of the US negotiating team at Camp David, Barak and Clinton used the negotiations to set a trap for the Palestinians. The talks were "designed to increase the pressure on the Palestinians to reach a quick agreement while heightening the political and symbolic costs if they did not." (George Szamuely, "Israel will always have a Yankee friend," *The Observer*, August 12, 2001); see also the article on the same line by David Clark, a special adviser at the Foreign Office until May 2001, "The brilliant offer Israel never made," *The Guardian* (April 10, 2002).

violence of the oppressed — an attitude implicitly equating the two forms of political violence.

Still, alternative solutions of democratic co-existence of the peoples of Palestine had been proposed for many years by prominent members of the Jewish Left like Hannah Arendt who, as early as the 1940s, was arguing strongly against Zionism and in favour of a Middle East federation of the peoples in Palestine.⁸⁹ In fact, one could argue that even today there is a non-racist solution to the problem in terms of a confederal Inclusive Democracy of the peoples in Palestine. In such a confederal system all forms of power could be distributed equally between its citizens: Arabs, Jews and those belonging to minorities. Of course, such a solution is anathema to the Zionists and their apologists, as well as to the transnational elite which, for, in the case of such a solution being adopted by the peoples involved, they will not be able to control the crucial Middle East area.⁹⁰

Phase III: A new invasion in Iraq?

The next stage of the “war” seems to involve the elimination of the “rogue” regime in Iraq, employing the highly successful method used for the removal of the Taliban regime: the massive bombardment of the infrastructure followed by some sort of uprising of the Iraqi opposition, which is funded and armed by the transnational elite. The outrageous excuse used by the elite this time to justify the expected bloodbath is that the Iraqi regime has not implemented all the UN Security Council resolutions and that it has developed dangerous chemical weapons of mass destruction — an excuse which has hardly any connection to the supposed aim of the war, i.e. to punish terrorism. All this, at the very moment when the transnational elite itself is fully aware of the fact that the UN embargo they have imposed on Iraq operates in breach of the UN covenants on human rights, the Geneva and Hague conventions and other international laws and that its client regime, the Zionist Israel, has contemptuously ignored all UNSC resolutions passed against it and, on top of this, possesses weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear ones. It is also indicative of the “democratic” character of the “international community” (i.e. the transnational

⁸⁹ See Moshe Zimmermann, “Mother of post-Zionism,” *Ha’aretz* (20 Oct. 2000).

⁹⁰ Although it is to Chomsky’s credit that he has never been an apologist of Zionism, still, in contradiction to his radical stand on the matter in the past, he declared in a recent NBC chat that “personally I don’t think and have never thought that we should discontinue support of Israel.” He then went on to repeat the strange statement he has made in the past that US is “a very free, very democratic society” and declare that he agrees with the “two-states” solution in Palestine which, however, would inevitably involve the backdated vindication of the racist policies of Zionists (see MSNBC.com chat of 2 October 2001, published in Znet).

elite) that the entire campaign is being organised despite the fact that, according to the polls,⁹¹ even strong supporters of such "wars" in the past, like the British public (as well as the German and French public) are against it, presumably suspecting that the real aim of this new 'war' is to secure absolute control on Iraq's oil reserves. This is not surprising of course if one recalls Henry Kissinger's brutally frank admission that oil "is much too important a commodity to be left in the hands of the Arabs."⁹²

Needless to add, there is no evidence whatsoever to substantiate the propaganda of the transnational elite concerning the weapons of mass destruction, supposedly possessed by the Iraqi regime. Scott Ritter, who was a UN weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998, declared recently that "under the most stringent on-site inspection regime in the history of arms control, Iraq's biological weapons programmes were dismantled, destroyed or rendered harmless during the course of hundreds of no-notice inspections."⁹³ Even an extensive survey⁹⁴ among Western arms inspectors and military and foreign affairs experts drew similar conclusions. Thus, according to this survey, "most analysts concede that there is considerable doubt about the extent of Saddam's weapons programme, and about how dangerous it could be to the rest of the world." Furthermore, several experts, including ex-inspectors, agree that the inspectors destroyed 95% of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and the remaining 5% has been rendered unusable by the fact that Iraq is prevented under sanctions from replacing equipment needed to deploy them. Finally, Rosemary Hollis, head of the Middle East programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, reported that from discussions with nuclear scientists it seemed clear that Iraq does not have the capacity to build nuclear weapons, whereas the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is responsible for monitoring nuclear weapons and which is still making visits to Iraq, has recently concluded that there is no sign of a surviving programme.

⁹¹ A March 2002 poll in Britain showed that a clear majority - 51% - would disapprove of British political support for an American-led attack on Iraq, with or without the presence of British troops. As the Guardian noted at the time the poll shows that the Germans and French are more in tune with British public opinion on this issue than Mr Blair or Mr Duncan Smith (the leader of the opposition). Alan Travis, "Say no to Iraq attack," *The Guardian* (March 19, 2002).

⁹² Hans von Sponeck and Denis Halliday, "The hostage nation," *The Guardian* (November 29, 2001). The report by these two ex-UN humanitarian coordinators for Iraq is particularly useful in showing that "The uncomfortable truth is that the west is holding the Iraqi people hostage, in order to secure Saddam Hussein's compliance to ever-shifting demands."

⁹³ Scott Ritter, "Don't blame Saddam for this one," *The Guardian* (October 19, 2001).

⁹⁴ Julian Borger, Richard Norton-Taylor, Ewen MacAskill and Brian Whitaker, "Iraq: the myth and the reality," *The Guardian* (March 15, 2002).

It is not therefore surprising that the transnational elite used every method available to it in order to preclude any independent assessment of the weapons of mass destruction supposedly possessed by Iraq, including an unprecedented coup to oust the director-general of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that enforces the chemical weapons convention who has proposed a peaceful solution to "the problem." As Monbiot⁹⁵ pointed out at the time, "the coup will also shut down the peaceful options for dealing with the chemical weapons Iraq may possess, helping to ensure that war then becomes the only means of destroying them."

Phase IV: The "axis of evil" and beyond

The permanent feature of the new type of "war" launched by the transnational elite was made clear by its spokesman, Bush Jr., in his State of the Union address to the Congress in January 2002 in which he extended the war targets to include, after Afghanistan, what he called "the axis of evil," i.e. Iraq, Iran and North Korea. As Ivo Daalder, a strategic analyst at the Brookings Institution, said "It was a virtual declaration of war; it enunciated a new doctrine, which says that people we declare bad, with weapons we declare bad, are basically the same as terrorists."⁹⁶ Thus, whereas the original "Bush doctrine," which was announced in the aftermath of September 11 declared "war" against the terrorist perpetrators of these attacks and the states harbouring them, the new expanded and improved version of it declared war against anyone the transnational elite through the US elite considers as "bad."

The rhetoric used by Bush was the usual: "North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens" and Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom. These regimes, as well as the usual suspect, Iraq, "by seeking weapons of mass destruction pose a grave and growing danger" as "they could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States."

Of course the truth, as usual, has nothing to do with this rhetoric. There is no evidence that North Korea does have the technology to put credible weapons on its ramshackle missiles. The real problem that N. Korea creates for the transnational elite is that it is a major exporter of ballistic missile technology to the Middle East.⁹⁷ Also, Iran has committed itself to international inspection of its chemical, biological and nuclear facilities. In fact, the real problem with the

⁹⁵ See G. Monbiot, "Chemical coup d'etat," *The Guardian* (April 16, 2002) and "Diplomacy US style," *The Guardian* (April 23, 2002).

⁹⁶ Julian Borger, *The Guardian* (January 31, 2002).

⁹⁷ Oliver Burkeman, "North Korea 'selling missiles'," *The Guardian* (February 2, 2002).

fundamentalist regime in Iran is that the Zionist Israeli regime has always seen it as its gravest long-term threat, i.e. the "rogue state" at its most menacing, combining sponsorship of international terror, nuclear ambition, ideological objection to the existence of the Jewish state and unflagging determination to sabotage the Middle East peace process. As an experienced analyst⁹⁸ pointed out, Israel classifies Iran as one of those "far" threats — Iraq being another — that distinguish it from the "near" ones: the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab states. It seems therefore that the plan of the transnational elite is that once the Palestinian movement has been crushed and accepts the kind of protectorate status the former designed for it, it will be the turn of Iraq, Iran and possibly North Korea for the "Afghan treatment."

As I mentioned above, although all members of the transnational elite share the same long-term goals, still, some members, notably the EU elites, would prefer to "deal" with Iraq and particularly with Iran through the use of non-military means. However, as I mentioned in previous sections, given the huge asymmetry of power between USA and the other members of the elite, there is little doubt as to which tactical approach will prevail at the end. In fact, the extent of America's power is unprecedented in human history, since, with the latest increases in its military spending announced by Bush Jr., US military spending will account to 40% of the worldwide total, putting the US military predominance miles ahead of any previous military empire - from the Roman to the British — which have never enjoyed anything like this preponderance, let alone America's global reach. The target of this huge military power was made explicit by a report for the US Space Command last year, which, after celebrating about the "synergy of space superiority with land, sea, and air superiority" that would come with missile defence and other projects to militarise space, drew the conclusion that "this would 'protect US interests and investment' in an era when globalisation was likely to produce a further 'widening between haves and have-nots'."⁹⁹

Finally, the list of states which are candidates for some sort of treatment by the transnational elite if they do not "behave" is lengthening all the time. At this stage, the transnational elite demands from the local elites to take "steps," with its help, to crush the indigenous resistance movements and allow the US military to establish its presence there. This applies in particular to the Philippines, where a diplomat was quoted recently in Washington as observing that "the Americans have been desperate to get back into the Philippines since their armed forces were kicked out of the Clark and Subic Bay bases in 1992."¹⁰⁰ But, it also applies to countries like Malaysia, where several terrorist groups

⁹⁸ David Hirst, "Israel thrusts Iran in line of US fire," *The Guardian* (February 2, 2002).

⁹⁹ Seumas Milne, "Can the US be defeated?," *The Guardian* (February 14, 2002).

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Murray, "Challenge in the east," *The Guardian* (January 30, 2002).

are based; Indonesia, where the Islamist tide is rising and mass anti-war demonstrations have taken place; Yemen and Sudan, which are asked to liquidate what remains of the training camps, depots and resources once used by supposedly terrorist groups; and Georgia, for which the Pentagon has already outlined plans to take war on terror to it.

Furthermore, Latin American movements resisting the effects of capitalist neoliberal globalisation are already characterised as terrorist. Thus, "in Brazil, the military has often described the Landless Peasants' Movement (MST) as terrorist, in Mexico, the Zapatistas have been accused, whereas the CIA national intelligence council and the Chilean military research centre have identified 'a new challenge to internal security': the indigenous threat, from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego."¹⁰¹ Very recently, Cuba was added on the list of the targets of the war against terror when in a speech called "Beyond the Axis of Evil" the under-secretary of state John Bolton accused Fidel Castro's regime of developing biological weapons and sharing its expertise with other "rogue states."¹⁰² No wonder that the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) finds a close relationship between the construction of the FTAA (i.e. the process which aims to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement —NAFTA— to the entire hemisphere) and a new "security architecture in the Americas."¹⁰³

Naturally, the old big enemies, Russia and China, have not been forgotten but simply downgraded as "evil" states, at present, because the ruling elites in these countries are eager to integrate their economies to the internationalised market economy. Still, preparing for the eventuality of a change of regime in these countries, the military part of the transnational elite in the US, as was revealed in March 2002, has already prepared contingency plans for a nuclear attack on seven countries, which apart from the usual suspects (Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya and Syria) includes also Russia and China!

5. Concluding Remarks: The way out of the cycle of violence

The obvious conclusion from the above analysis is that systemic violence and therefore state repression (if not state terrorism), as well as counter-violence (including popular terrorism), are built-in elements of any society characterised by an unequal distribution of political and economic power. But if the ultimate cause of political violence in all its forms is the asymmetry of power it is obvious that the only way out of the cycle of violence is the elimination of this

¹⁰¹ Janette Habel, "Latin America recolonised," *Le Monde diplomatique* (January 2002).

¹⁰² Julian Borger, "War on terror may extend to Cuba," *The Guardian* (May 7, 2002).

¹⁰³ Ibid. Quoted from Patrice M Franko, "Toward a new security architecture in the Americas. The strategic implications of the FTAA," *The CSIS Press*, Vol. XXII, No 3, Washington, 2000.

asymmetry and particularly the elimination of systemic violence. This involves the establishment of new political and economic institutions that aim at the equal distribution of power in all its forms, between, as well as within, nations, and the parallel creation of a culture compatible with it. The cultural factor is particularly important because it would be a serious error to assume that the present socio-economic system relies only on the elites' repression and the media brainwashing and not also on the socialisation by schools, the family and other social institutions which condition people to take the present socio-economic system for granted. The political apathy created by representative democracy and the individualism promoted by the market economy are not only symptoms of the systemic violence that is associated with the concentration of political and economic power institutionalised by these institutions. They form also the constituent elements of a process which leads to a fundamental lack of belief towards an alternative socio-economic organisation — a process that the collapse of the socialist project decisively influenced.

However, if it would be erroneous to minimise the significance of the cultural factor it would be equally erroneous to move to the other extreme, particularly fashionable today among many radical ecologists and feminists, i.e. to minimise the importance of the institutional factor and assume that what is wrong is not the market economy system and representative 'democracy' themselves but the Western culture, as if culture is somehow independent from the institutional framework. These two extremes have led to correspondingly extreme positions as regards the transition to a new society. As I attempted to show elsewhere,¹⁰⁴ the appropriate strategy cannot be in terms of the old Marxist approach, which is based on the building of an antisystemic movement in the hope that the struggle against the present system and for the establishment of new institutions following a revolution will create the necessary culture. As the Soviet case showed, this strategy failed to create the new culture, even after the lapse of more than 70 years following the revolution. Nor could it be in terms of the anarchist approach of "prefiguring," i.e. building the new within the old at the small social scale of our commune or neighbourhood, outside of a mass antisystemic movement and the political arena in general. Such experiments of "anarchy in action" have been tried for more than 30 years, since the late sixties and early seventies, and dismally failed to create a new antisystemic consciousness at a massive scale, remaining always marginalized or even used by social-liberal governments as a kind of alternative system of welfare services at no cost to the budget, in place

¹⁰⁴ See Takis Fotopoulos, 'Transitional strategies and the Inclusive Democracy project', *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 17-62.

of the welfare state that is being mercilessly dismantled by the capitalist neoliberal globalisation.

The appropriate strategy may only be a synthesis of these approaches, as well as of the direct action approach used by movements like the antiglobalisation movement. This implies, as I stressed in the last issue,¹⁰⁵ creating a democratic organisation which will fight for the building of a new massive antisystemic movement with clear long-term and short-term goals and strategy aiming at a new political and economic institutional framework, as a necessary condition (though not a sufficient one) for the elimination of the unequal distribution of political and economic power. Such a movement will combine the fight against the present system with the parallel struggle to create a new system within the old. Building inclusive democracies at the local level, as an integral part of an antisystemic movement explicitly aiming at the institution of a confederal inclusive democracy, is perhaps the only way leading to the creation of a genuinely alternative society rather than an easily reversible variation of the existing one. It is also the first step towards the creation of a society with no systemic violence, in which the cycle of violence will, for the first time in History, become redundant.-

¹⁰⁵ See Takis Fotopoulos, "The transition to an alternative society: The ecovillage movement, the simpler way and the Inclusive democracy project - Takis Fotopoulos' reply," *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No 1 (March 2002), pp. 150-157.