

The War Economy

“... to free mankind
from fear and want”.
*Preamble to the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.*

Violence can never be justified. But it should be studied in order to identify its origins and thus help us to make advances in avoiding it, in preventing it. Violence has two principal roots: poverty and fear.

We must put ourselves in the shoes –that’s what tolerance is all about– of the millions of human beings, all equal in dignity, who live in inhuman conditions. Promises to improve them, made by the more prosperous countries, have almost always been unkept. And after days and years in this situation of neglect, exclusion, humiliation and abandonment by the rest of the world: feelings of frustration, hostility, resentment and radicalization rise to the point that there seems to be no possible solution. And it is then that violent reactions sometimes explode. On other occasions, desperation is reflected in attempts to migrate that frequently involve risking human life.

I sincerely and urgently recommend that the worlds’ leaders personally but discretely observe how the daily lives of the great majority of people are really lived. That these policy makers see clearly the breeding grounds

where patience and serenity are some day eventually lost and just as suddenly people, particularly [young] men, decide that “enough is enough!” Without further ado –since they have long ago lost all hope– they resort to force, to muscle. The FAO has reported a frightening figure: about 60,000 persons die every day of hunger. If some are really looking for “weapons of mass destruction” the name is clear: Hunger!

Instead of decreasing, the gap separating the richest from the poorest has widened. Attempts to repair the holes in the social fabric have been made with barbed wire and bullets, rather than with generous subsidies [*do you mean here significant public investments?—‘generous subsidies’ sounds to me like Christian charity!*], dialogue and understanding. Whether we wish to recognize it or not, in mid-2007 we are, more or less reluctantly, headed toward a war economy in which economic power is concentrated in a very few hands, and which uses any excuse to reach colossal proportions. The war in Iraq, based on false pretexts, gave a strong push to the industrial war machine.

Now, since the present US Administration cannot extend the number of its “enemies” due once again to the resounding failure of war to solve problems, it has instead been able to extend the tentacles of its military power, in a context of the [deafening or resounding—*deafening is a more strongly sarcastic usage in English*] silence of the European Union. The anti-missile shield, which violates the agreement that the two superpowers so painfully reached in Reykjavik at the end of the Cold War, has now been complemented by the massive rearmament not only of Israel, but also of the Gulf states: worth 46 billions of euros. It must be emphasized that most

of these weapons systems are for the kinds of wars that are no longer fought.

Once more, the old myth echoes: “If you want peace, prepare for war.” The hypothetical threat of Iran, the US’s former ally, will genuinely cost thousands of lives, victims of the vicious cycle of a market economy that perpetuates poverty, and of the war economy that once again claims to resolve the great challenges of mankind by force.

The United States leads, but the other prosperous countries allow it to. The European Union, which should be a [symbol of or should be dedicated to— *symbol is WEAK in English*] a culture of peace and democracy in the world, continues to be focused on structural problems. This distracts us from fulfilling its key mission as a guide and as a watch tower. None of the immensely important issues facing our world can be resolved arbitrarily by a single country, regardless of its power and capacity for international action. Due to the nature of this challenge, such questions should be dealt with by the United Nations: the UN that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt [*we had 2: Theodore and FD Roosevelt*] dreamed of.

It is urgent to humanize globalization, to reduce drastically existing inequalities and to ensure that migration is a choice and not simply the seemingly last resort of the alienated. Putting people first, without exception, is our main objective. Using the fight against terrorism as an excuse –and we should all work together in that fight– authoritarian regimes are writing laws that restrict rights and ignore legal procedures that protect prisoners from torture and mistreatment, while their allies either consent or look the other way. Security cannot be guaranteed at the cost of

human rights. And I will repeat this: The security of peace, yes! The peace of security, never! That is peace without freedom: the peace of distrust and fear.

Globalization doesn't give thought to working conditions, political machinery, human rights... Through takeovers and megamergers, the global picture has not only become more tense through increasing inequalities, but what is worse, those who exercise governmental powers in the name of their citizens have ceased to be accountable. Not only economic and social conditions, but also environmental deterioration, cultural uniformity, the loss of moral references... now depend to a considerable extent on the "faceless power" of large multinational enterprises that do as they please with total impunity.

Instead of a market economy or a war economy, we need an economy that would enable us to implement the Millennium Objectives, that is, the social, economic and environmental commitments adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2000 at the United Nations General Assembly.

It is urgent for Spain in Europe and Europe in the world to realize that "doing well at home" cannot be achieved at the expense of the many inhabitants of the rest of the world. It is useless to shut the doors and batten down the hatches. And even less so to transform them into projectors of an image of complacency. It is time to take responsibility: to transcend force with dialogue: to authenticate real democracy. It is time to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah and "beat our swords into plowshares."

As I proposed in *A New World*, published in 1999, the war economy must give way to a great global contract for development. And let no one say that this is impossible! If anyone thinks so or tries to convince others that it is true, let them read John F. Kennedy's speech, "The Strategy for Peace," given at American University in Washington, D.C. on June 10, 1963: "Too many of us think that [peace] is impossible. (...) ...that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. (...) Our problems are Man-made. Therefore, they can be solved by Man. (...) No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings."

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