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## **Imperial Barbarism?**

The re-election of Bush as the President of the United States in 2004 will surely reinforce the neo-con power that has pursued the completion of the global empire. The neo-conservative circle has a fundamentalist faith in the special role of the U.S. as the beacon for the civilized world. In this context, every possible means of violence has been justified in the name of war with the force of evil. However, the U.S. is constantly threatening the world peace, instead of securing the peaceful future of humanity. Their credo is "you are either with us or against us."<sup>1</sup>

Patriotism is extolled. Permanent war becomes the slogan of the U.S. government. Looking for enemies has become a major job of the Pentagon. Massacre in Iraq has been ignored. New barbarism prevails. Imposing the world order in accordance with the interests of the U.S. ruling class betrays the essential truth of the so-called war against terrorism. The United States grows into a war nation or war machine. In the face of this reality, the world is deeply divided. And the U.S. is increasingly and paradoxically isolated contrary to its expectations.

As Rev. Philip Berrigan has emphasized in the 1970s in his anti-war movement, "no one knows God until one knows injustice... Today, knowledge of God means struggling against the bombing of the innocent, against victimizing the weak... Forgetting the victims would be to forget god, his Christ, whether at Bethlehem or in Upper Room... War is big lies."<sup>2</sup>

Recently in the United States, there emerged a rich argument on the notion of Empire. It seems to reflect the global concerns with the devastating impacts of the American imperialism. Now we are on the crossroad between the unprecedented imperial barbarism and the just world of humanity. This article primarily deals with the question of Empire<sup>3</sup> that rhetorically justify mechanisms of oppression and subordination to sustain the imperial hegemonic position of the U.S. around the world. It also seeks to disclose the brutality of the Empire hidden behind its hypocritically benign face. "Benevolence of Empire" is to be demystified. Demystification of the lies is the road to the truth that will free us from the shackle of imperial oppression.

In terms of current or contemporary Christian political ethics, I discovered that, except in the cases of a few Christian ethicists, there has not been any major public discussion about the imperial nature of the United States in the past few decades. Furthermore, the notion of "Empire" itself has often been disregarded or belittled in public discourse in the United States. In my Christian faith, the confrontation between the ethics of the Kingdom of God that serves people and the Empire that enslaves people is central to the understanding of the nature of Jesus' movement. I believe that the responsibility of Christian political ethics is to serve the ethics of the Kingdom of God, while exposing and rejecting the ethics of Empire. Thus, Christian political ethics,

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<sup>1</sup> Stefan Halper & Jonathan Clarke, *American Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Berrigan, *Fighting the Lamb's War: Skirmishes with the American Empire* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1996), 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997). The United States reached the stage of modern world-system or shaped the global hierarchical order on the basis of capitalist development, which is clearly distinguished from other patterns or forms of Empire. Now we unavoidably recognize a "single global process" of integration under the power of the United States, though there have been some serious challenges to it. I will deal in the following chapter with how the United States, as an Empire, has pursued the integration of the world into its system of capitalism.

empowered by the vision and courage of faith in God's justice, should subversively critique the "center of power" in its attempt to uphold radical transformation and resistance against the status quo that oppresses the periphery. This unavoidably involves a political commitment, which believes in God's solidarity with the oppressed, to liberation of the captives from the bondage of Empire.

In fact, capitalism without police and military is unthinkable, since it has to protect itself from the revolutionary access of the dispossessed to wealth and power. This means a strategic combination of economic restructuring on the periphery with political oppression of the resistance movement, based on huge military build-ups. The global system of the American Empire survives on this rule of exploitation and oppressive domination by militarism.

Therefore, it becomes vital to demonstrate a critical understanding of how the moral rhetoric of Empire systematizes its logic to hide the real face of capitalist imperialism. As Eduardo Galeano observed, "imperialism is called globalization" and "the system of power that creates poverty is the same one that wages war without quarter on the desperate people it begets"<sup>4</sup> The ethical basis for the critical demystification of imperial dominion of the *Pax Americana* is articulated in the idea of *ethics of life-affirmative actions that refuse the power of death sustained by the Empire*. It juxtaposes the Kingdom of God model that serves the people against the Empire of Pyramid model that would enslave them.

## The role of the State in the context of Globalization

Global formation of the world economy now critically challenges national sovereignty around the world. Neo-liberal principles of market freedom function as the only restraints upon the role of politics in capitalism's worldwide expansion. Additionally, there has been a growing awareness of the diminished role of the state in the newly globalized web of capitalism. Robert B. Reich argues that "the very idea of an *American* economy is becoming meaningless, as are the notions of an American corporation, American capital, American products, and American technology."<sup>5</sup> He continues to emphasize that "there is no longer any reason for the United States – or for any other nations – to protect, subsidize, or otherwise support its corporations above all other."<sup>6</sup> Saskia Sassen, who studies the mobility of capital and labor in international political economy<sup>7</sup> also chronicles the profound transformation of the role of the state and its diminished sovereignty in the current age of globalization.<sup>8</sup> Given the modern stage of globalization, the political Keynesianism of the Cold War period for the interventionist function of the state seems to be outdated.

Thus, as Edward S. Herman argues, there is an increasing consensus that the neo-liberal capitalist market is triumphantly dismantling the state in order to enhance corporate control over the global economy.<sup>9</sup> He defines this neo-liberal tendency of deregulation as the "privatization of government,"<sup>10</sup> in which "private power and the incessant demands of capital as the main engine of the economy have always dominated the U.S. political system."<sup>11</sup>

However, this transformation of the state does not imply the marginalization of the state in terms of its role in the capitalist world economy. Noam Chomsky, a critic of the U.S.-

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<sup>4</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-glass World*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 40, 90.

<sup>5</sup> Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nation* (New York: Vintage Book Point, 1992), 8.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Saskia Sassen, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1988). "The capitalist world economy consists of a multiplicity of political units, the nation-states. This ensures that no single political regime can gain full control over the world economy." p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Edward S. Herman, *Triumph of the Market: Essays on Economics, Politics, and the Media* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 73-77.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 73.

dominated globalization process, argues that the government or the state is still centrally significant to the modern capitalist system. The state continues “lavishly subsidizing corporations and working to advance corporate interests on numerous fronts.”<sup>12</sup> Studies of the U.S. foreign policy reveal how the United States – as a state – functions largely as the business representative of U.S. corporate interests throughout the world. Thus, it is the basic doctrine of the so-called “Washington Consensus” which supports “liberalizing trade and finance, letting markets set prices, ending inflation, [and] privatizing.”<sup>13</sup> Such activities require a different role for the state. It becomes a manager of, and a servant to, the global economy. The state has power over labor, but is powerless to resist the demands of capital.

The structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are being implemented through the state to strengthen the political position of capital, while weakening that of labor. David C. Korten describes the end of national boundaries and the rise of the global rule of corporations. Government exists to serve the corporate interests,<sup>14</sup> and this process begins in corporate colonialism.<sup>15</sup> Peter Gowan’s recent study of how the strategic alliance between Washington and Wall Street in the form of the “Dollar-Wall Street Regime”<sup>16</sup> clearly reveals the process of the American government being strengthened for corporate rule in the world. Politics or the role of the state defines the structure of appropriation of the surplus values. Bush’s neo-conservative world of militarized empire is fundamentally based on this role of the state in the imperialist system of globalization.

This also shows how the core states in the globalization process work for the production of the unequal and hierarchical order in peripheral states. Global capitalism cannot survive without profit, and profit presupposes inequality that insures imperial appropriation of wealth or surplus value on the periphery by the core. The power to control surplus value is the target of this struggle for imperial domination.<sup>17</sup> Under this circumstance, politics (or the role of the state in the core) is designed to regulate the resistance of labor or periphery in order to sustain the global mechanism of capitalism. The state functions to advance the interests of “imperial corporations,”<sup>18</sup> which maintain the so-called *New World Order* of capitalist

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<sup>12</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Profit over People* (New York: Steven Stories Press, 1999), 13. “Globalization is the result of powerful governments, especially that of the United States, pushing trade deals and other accords down the throats of the world’s people to make it easier for corporations and the wealthy to dominate the economies of nations around the world without having obligations to the peoples of those nations.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>14</sup> David C. Korten, *Corporations Rule the World* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1966). In terms of the political process of corporate rule, Korten has focuses on the rise of corporate power in the U.S., and the decline of democratic pluralism.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 121-131.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble: Washington’s Faustian Bid for World Domination* (London: Verso, 1999), 19-24.

<sup>17</sup> In this sense, it is important to pay some critical attention to Marx’s theory of value, and how it is related to the question of class struggle and social process of production of political regulation of the relationship between capital and labor. I.I. Rubin, *Essays on Marx’s Theory of Value* (New York: Black Rose Books, 1990), “Political economy is not a science of the relations of *things to things*, but the relations of *people to people* in the process of production”, p. 3. David Harvey clearly shows how the social production of value defines the power relations between capital and labor, and the concept of value cannot be understood independently of class struggle. *The Limits to Capital* (London: Verso, 1999), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Richard J. Barnet and John Cavanagh, *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994). In the 1970s, Richard Barnet, along with Ronald E. Muller, investigated the power of multinational corporations as world managers; see *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974). He also saw the managerial dilemma of the nation-state in the globalization process. “...[T]here is a connection between the mounting instability in the United States (and other advanced capitalist states) and the structural changes in the world political economy... The public sector had its managerial revolution under the banner of Keynesianism almost forty years ago. That revolution established a new body of official truth: artful government regulation of the

globalization. Immanuel Wallerstein shows how capitalism has historically developed its own political strategies to maintain the reproduction of itself. However, capitalism has reached a crisis, a moment of transition, because of resistance movements from the oppressed.<sup>19</sup> In this context, the state is the arena of the political and socio-economic struggle. And this is still operative in the logic of the global transformation of capitalism.

The capitalist state secures “by force the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in last resort relations of exploitation.”<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, the state becomes a “strategic site”<sup>21</sup> of struggle for the means of reproducing the capitalist mode of production. Nicos Poulantzas’ study of fascism and its relationship to capitalism clearly shows how the state, under bourgeois hegemony, works to shape the political foundation of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>22</sup> He argues: “fascism in effect belongs to the imperialist stage of capitalism,” or reflects “a crisis of the imperialist stage.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, if we could understand how the state strengthens the “cohesive factors”<sup>24</sup> in resolving the contradictions of global capitalism, we might discover the point of antagonism between the dominant classes and the dominated ones, which clarify the strategic notion of struggle<sup>25</sup> against the repressive system of surplus-value extortion. The historical development of capitalism shows that “the state and state power assumes a central role in capital accumulation.”<sup>26</sup> Counter-hegemonic struggle of the oppressed against the power of the capitalist state predominantly revolves around the role of the state in capital accumulation.

Therefore, reclaiming the state for the oppressed is one very important agenda for liberation movements that are against the neo-liberal globalization by the core over the periphery. A Christian political ethics for the liberation struggle needs to understand concretely not only how the state works, but also must re-evaluate the state/politics as the practical ground of imperial subordination of the oppressed to control power and wealth in the capitalist process of exploitation. The struggle against the power of the Empire should look into the dynamics of the state in the world system of capitalism.

Richard Barnet’s inquiry into the roots of U.S. foreign policy in the Kennedy administration exemplifies Poulantzas’ critical analysis of the state and class in capitalist development.<sup>27</sup> It exposes the role of the state in the core that serves corporate rule in the world. From the New Deal to Reaganomics, we see class struggle in the political dimensions of conflict in the United States. Our critical concern with the politics or the role of the state, therefore, will

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economy is necessary to keep unemployment down (at whatever level considered acceptable) to prevent inflationary price rises, and to stimulate economic growth”, p. 255.

<sup>19</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1992). “The first question we shall address is: who gets the immediate individual benefits?... Indeed, this has been the central focus of political struggle within historical capitalism.... The second element of state power of fundamental concern to the operations of historical capitalism was the legal right of states to determine the rules governing the social relations of production within their territorial jurisdiction” (47-51). Ch.2. The Politics of Accumulation: Struggle for Benefits

<sup>20</sup> Nicos Poulantzas recognizes that the State is the “site of class struggle, and often of bitter forms of class struggle”

<sup>21</sup> Bob Jessop, *Nicos Poulantzas: Marxist Theory and Political Strategy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 129.

<sup>22</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: Verso, 1979).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>24</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: Verso, 1987), 77.

<sup>25</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1980). “[S]truggles play the primary and fundamental role: even at the level of exploitation and the relations of production, these economic, political and ideological struggles occupy the very field of the relations of power.... The State plays a constitutive role in the existence and reproduction of class powers, and more generally in the class struggles itself...” (38).

<sup>26</sup> Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in their Place* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 45.

<sup>27</sup> Richard J. Barnet, *Roots of War: The Men and Institutions behind U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986). “The second great root of war is embedded in our capitalist economy (ever more state capitalist) and the business creed that sustains it”, p. 340.

unveil and demystify the power of the dominant capitalist state such as the United States, while helping us to consider where and how to begin the political struggle against oppression in the global context. This struggle challenges the political power of the state, which facilitates the militarized domination of the world by the neo-conservative design as well as the exploitative neo-liberal integration of the periphery into the Empire

## **Inquiry into the Imperial System of Violence**

Since its beginning, for many in the U.S, the nation was called to freedom and equality, guided by the inalienable, divine mission of “manifest destiny.” Particularly after World War II, when the U.S. became the new hegemonic power in the world (as Henry Luce, the founder of *Time and Life*, anticipated and articulated in 1941), the notion of “the American Century” came to represent the historical culmination of democracy and prosperity. Luce said:

The time has come to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to assert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such means as we see fit.... The vision of America as the dynamic leader of world trade has within it the possibility of such enormous human progress as to stagger the imagination. Let us not be staggered by it. Let us rise to its tremendous possibilities.<sup>28</sup>

Fifty-seven years later, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches, this “American Century” reasserts its global authority and prestige:

With the end of the cold war, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the arrival of the electronic age, America plays a greater role in the world than it ever has before. If this has been the American Century, it has never seemed more American than in its final decade.... Concern about a hegemonic America is tangible in more than a few foreign capitals, including Moscow and Beijing. Yet America’s freedoms and success are envied everywhere. That seems especially true now that the United States holds such a commanding position as the world’s sole diplomatic and military superpower and as the linchpin of world stability.<sup>29</sup>

In this appeal to the logic of the global mission of U.S. hegemony, we see the recurrent self-aggrandizement of the U.S. and the universality of its identity. The neo-conservative idea of the American Empire is deeply embedded in the notion of “surplus of power.”<sup>30</sup> Missing from this analysis is the question of how the American Century has been sustained. Marty Jezer, who extensively researched the repressive domestic reality of the Cold War period in the U.S., commented on Luce’s idea of “the American Century”:

With victory, Luce’s dream of planetary manifest destiny seemed assured. The American victory opened the world to American corporate expansion. The coming century would belong to the American capitalist.<sup>31</sup>

The “American capitalism” here undoubtedly represents to many the most advanced civilization possible. Under this context, the Cold War between the United States and the now-defunct Soviet Union was ideologically, politically and even religiously accepted as a just war to defend the most cherished Western civilization, which could and would guarantee human dignity and freedom. Any challenge or resistance to the U.S. framework of the Cold War, whether domestic or foreign, was therefore easily defined as an unforgivable sin, worthy of punishment. It was believed that “being soft” on any challenge would have jeopardized the global security of the *Pax Americana*, the ideological slogan of the American Century, which sanctifies any action supportive of U.S. leadership in policing the world. Nevertheless, many in the U.S., including Richard Barnett, a leading and senior researcher for the Institute for Policy Studies, have been critical of U.S. foreign

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<sup>28</sup> W. A. Swanberg’s *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Scribner, 1972), 180-183, quoted from Marty Jezer’s *The Dark Ages: Life in the United States, 1945-1960* (Boston: South End Press, 1982),

<sup>29</sup> “The Presidency and the World”, editorial, *New York Times*, March 25, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York: Viking Press, 2004)

<sup>31</sup> Marty Jezer, *The Dark Age: Life in the United States, 1945-1960*. (Boston: South End Press, 1982)

policy. Barnett has successfully uncovered a layer of violence excused under the cause of “international police power and the world leadership” of the U.S.<sup>32</sup> If, with Richard Barnett, we look back at the history of the Third World in relation to the U.S., then U.S. “protection” (claiming to bring peace and justice, freedom and prosperity) has in fact meant war and injustice, oppression and poverty, through systemic and organized violence.

Gabriel Kolko, a prominent revisionist historian, analyzed how U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War shaped the foundation of the political brutality in Third-World countries. William Blum, a founder in 1967 of the *Washington Free Press*, the first alternative newspaper in the U.S. capital, researched the detailed historical records of the violent global U.S. interventions since World War II. For a long time, these remained neglected documents for the U.S. public.<sup>33</sup> Blum’s accounts of the CIA’s clandestine activities to dissolve the people’s resistance movement in the Third World reveals the contradictions between the highly respected norms of the American Century and its dismal reality. This violent intervention eventually develops into the strategic paradigm of so-called low intensity warfare.<sup>34</sup> Though it is called “low,” to anyone who is violently victimized, the effect of such warfare is anything but low. Rather, it is a lethal attack. Violence thus euphemistically hides its cruelty behind the facade of strategic options, which seem to be more benign than previous ones.

Therefore, political oppression, military intervention and covert action to thwart liberation struggles are not contradictory to the hegemony of *Pax Americana*, but its indispensable component. U.S. capitalist integration of the periphery unavoidably requires a system of violence to sustain its hierarchical order in the world. It helps expand the base for the accumulation of capital and suppress resistance to it. Frank Kofsky explains how the system of coercion successfully emerged in the Cold-War policy of the U.S. and how it was related to the socio-economic requirements of the post-war American capitalist reconstruction in *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948*.<sup>35</sup>

In recent years, more critical arguments have surfaced, regarding the self-destructive damage of U.S. imperial policy. Paul Kennedy, in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*,<sup>36</sup> argued that excessive military spending and imperial overreach contributed to U.S. global economic decline. James Petras and Morris Morley contend, in *Empire or Republic*, that “as the empire expands, the republic declines.”<sup>37</sup> This is due to the fact that the growth of the empire (by diverting domestic resources to sustain global power militarily) deteriorates the national economy and society. Michael

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<sup>32</sup> Richard Barnett, *Intervention and Revolution: America’s Confrontation with Insurgent Movements Around the World* (New York: Meridian Books, 1972), 100.

<sup>33</sup> William Blum, *The CIA: A Forgotten History* (London: Zed Book Ltd., 1986). He compares U.S. intervention into Vietnam and Korea: “Everything we’ve come to love and cherish about Vietnam had its forerunner in Korea: the support of the corrupt tyranny, the atrocities, the mass slaughter of civilians, the cities and villages laid to waste, the calculated management of the news, the sabotaging of peace talks.” p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh, ed., *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988). This book is very substantial in terms of its historical approach and detailed analysis regarding the official U.S. understanding of Third-World liberation movements.

<sup>35</sup> Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995). In the postwar period, the U.S. economy faced a serious possibility of abortive takeoff because of peacetime curtailment of production. Crisis management was required. War mentality consequently was yielded, in the form of collective hysteria about new enemy. Then, it was perceived as unsurprising that violence was justified in the context of new confrontation with deadly foes.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987). Kennedy’s specific study of the historical succession of hegemonic positions among the Great Powers does not pay attention to the other side of this hegemonic struggle such as Third-World challenges and their historical implications. He is much too preoccupied with the strategic concerns with the way to make a nation strong and the hypotheses about which Great Power will be the next hegemonic power. He also does not envision the possibility of multi-polar alliance system of global politics.

<sup>37</sup> James Petras and Morris Morley, *Empire or Republic: American Global Power and Domestic Decay* (New York: Routledge, 1995), xv.

Parenti, a political scientist who continuously raises a fundamental question about U.S. imperialism in relation to its impact on the domestic decay of people's power, joins the critical debate on the self-destructive consequences of the Empire. Violence was mobilized to sustain Empire, but its network (which has insured overriding extraction of wealth from the people of the Third World)<sup>38</sup> acts like a boomerang to the U.S. Resistance from the oppressed of the Third World and the financial burden of the U.S. shows the critical limitations of this imperial system. The US invasion of Iraq and its political aftermath shows the dilemma of the imperial involvement that would lead to the self-destructive consequences.

The Imperium of America expands the terrain of oppression that assures and stabilizes its process of wealth accumulation on a world scale. The cost is irrevocable damage to and violent destruction of people's lives and the ecological values<sup>39</sup> of the world. Walden Bellow, who has struggled to raise this issue globally, called the United States' overwhelming rule against the resistance of the oppressed in the Third-World "global rollback,"<sup>40</sup> which would violently thwart the autonomous development or growth on the periphery.

Whatever the means is, the imperial system of hegemonic control over the people on the periphery always produces misery and brutal sacrifice of human dignity. The fundamental nature of the imperial system of control is destructive to the lives of the people on the periphery. Only the strong one's profit prevails. Victims are blamed because of their challenge to the capitalist imperial system of the extraction of wealth. Violence is still integrated into the process of structural adjustment in order to impose the system of profit and to protect the wealth and status of the powerful. And the war of the imperial forces on the lives of the poor people in the periphery deepens the crisis of the globe.

#### **Imperial Slogan:**

#### **Global Mission of a Great Nation using the Notion of Manifest Destiny**

One of the major ideas that justify the imperial domination of the United States is "Manifest Destiny." "The idea of *Manifest Destiny* has been the ideological rhetoric that poses as the guiding principle of American foreign policy, since the U.S. was confronted with the question of expanding its frontier westward in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> Every generation of American foreign-policy architects has stressed the significance of U.S. destiny and this nation's unique "global mission" as a "Great Nation" to extend the frontiers of democracy, freedom and civilization.

Accordingly, any so-called police actions of the U.S. to maintain order on these frontiers

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Parenti, *The Sword and the Dollar: Imperialism, Revolution, and the Arms Race* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 5-6.

<sup>39</sup> Larry L. Rasmussen recently showed a clear and radical understanding of the negative impact of the global economy of industrialization upon the life of the planet. He develops the idea of "Earth Ethics." *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998)

<sup>40</sup> Walden Bellow, *Dark Victory: The United States, Structural Adjustment, and Global Poverty* (London: Pluto Press, 1994). Though this negative definition of the U.S. imperial triumph, using the word "dark," contains cultural distortion of Afro-American self-identity, its original implication by Bellow is not racist. His analysis shows three meanings of U.S. rollback strategy: "The first was the resubordination of the South within a U.S.-dominated global economy. The second was the rolling back of the challenge to U.S. economic interests from the NICs (Newly Industrialized Countries), or from Japan. The third was the dismantling of the New Deal 'social contract' between big capital, big labor, and big government, which both Washington and Wall Street saw as the key constraint on corporate America's ability to compete against both the NICs and Japan" (3).

<sup>41</sup> Manifest Destiny was born in the period between 1830-1860 when white Americans felt their latent power as a nation coming to consciousness. This power was to be used, many felt, to improve the world via the expansion of U.S. borders and U.S. ideas, and becoming involved in world affairs – all to the end that the knowledge of God as white Americans understood would increase in the world, and thus make that world a friendly one to the U.S. It was expressly a Christian idea; God wanted, they felt, a new Zion built, and the new Zion could only be built in the United States.

have been justified. Manifest Destiny is the 19<sup>th</sup> century's political expression of national self-confidence, but its inner logic of glorified expansionism continues to operate in the contemporary U.S. foreign policy. Though it opposed European colonial dominance over Latin America as defined in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, what has been actually happening is sanctification of the U.S.'s own colonialism – the so-called gunboat diplomacy. Manifest Destiny was an explicitly religious justification for oppressive expansionism in the name of divinely assigned destiny. William Appleman Williams calls the mechanisms that constitute this behavior of the U.S. abroad “moral imperialism.”<sup>42</sup> In this sense, U.S. Manifest Destiny as a global power ironically means “manifest destiny of oppression”. It was a missionary movement, using the name of Providence to expand the historical achievements of America throughout the world. In reality, Manifest Destiny ultimately legitimized the spread of the Empire around the globe.

The term Manifest Destiny was coined by John O'Sullivan in 1845, when he wrote an editorial supportive of westward expansion in the *New York Morning News*:

Away, away with all these cobweb tissues of rights of discovery, exploration, settlement, contiguity, etc ... [The American claim] is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self government entrusted to us. It is a right such as that of the tree to the space of air and earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth – such as that of the stream to the channel required for the still accumulating volume of its flow.... In our hands ... it must fast fill in with a population destined to establish within the life of the existing generation, a noble young empire of the Pacific, vying in all the elements of greatness with that already overspreading the Atlantic and the great Mississippi valley.<sup>43</sup>

Manifest Destiny in this sense is the logic of expansion ordained by God for the well being of the American republic on a continental scale. It is nothing more than a re-tread of the “chosen people in the chosen land” theme. This religiously defined mission of the U.S. reflects the American sense of historical superiority compared to the “Old World” of Europe. Frederick Merk, the historian who investigated the origin of this idea of “Manifest Destiny,” researched its impact upon the history of American expansion. He noted the existence of a crusading ideology in this doctrine and pointed out its relationship to aspiring to build a new heaven on this land newly assigned by God.<sup>44</sup> This notion operates as a moral backbone of U.S. expansionist foreign policy ever since its conception. Bush's war contains this moral rhetoric.

Manifest Destiny's logic and the moral basis of expansionism it offered was an Americanized version of the older European notion of the “white man's burden.” The later development of Manifest Destiny's logic in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century shared remarkable similarities to colonialist patterns of Europe. In 1910, the French advocate of colonialism Jules Harmand argued:

It is necessary, then, to accept as a principle and point of departure the fact that there is a hierarchy of races and civilizations, and that we belong to the superior race and civilizations, still recognizing that, while superiority confers rights, it imposes strict obligations in return. The basic legitimization of conquest over native peoples is the conviction of our superiority, not merely our mechanical, economic, and military superiority, but our moral superiority. Our dignity rests on that quality, and it underlies our right to direct the rest of humanity. Material power is nothing but a means to that end.<sup>45</sup>

Historian Charles A. Beard paid attention to the questions the American people asked as they tried to identify their historical identity after the early 19<sup>th</sup> century's development of democracy. He heard: “What is the social mission of this nation in its continental home? or What

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<sup>42</sup> William Appleman Williams, “The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy,” A *William Appleman Williams Reader*, 97.

<sup>43</sup> Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 331-32, quoting John O'Sullivan, “The True Title”, in *New York Morning News*, December 27, 1845

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi-4.

<sup>45</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 17.



duties and virtues are necessary to the fulfillment of its historic mission?”<sup>46</sup> Such questions belied concerned with building a new “civilization”<sup>47</sup> which, by definition, implied moral superiority over others. This is how Brooks Adams and Frederick Jackson Turner in the 1890s understood the notion of “civilization.” The *Pax Americana* is currently understood to be the truthful defender of this so-called civilization.

Every defining moment of U.S. interventionist foreign policy, aimed at expanding its imperial spheres of influence, in history has employed the moralism of Manifest Destiny – the historical mission uniquely assigned to the American people, with all others destined to be subordinate to this mission. It is a system of pyramidal integration by the forces of American supremacy.

### **The Lamb’s War against the American Empire**

The fundamental goal of the imperial policy of the U.S. is primarily to solidify the regime of capital, which tries to integrate the entire globe into one efficient system of hierarchical domination. This is the question of accumulating wealth and power in the hands of the ruling class of the U.S.

The Empire spares no expense to shore up the veneer that its actions are ones morally superior to, and capable and responsible of leading, the rest of the world. The periphery presents it as naturally destined, and morally deserving, to be subordinate to the interests of the Empire. Challenges by the periphery to the core must be pacified, physically and ideologically, for they are wrong. Force and lies serve as the imperial system’s necessary ingredients in order to persevere this unjust order for the dominant position of capital. Revolts of the poor at home and abroad have been, and remain, the abiding primary security concern of the capitalist distribution of power. Thus, Empire tries to regulate the poor and wage wars of various intensities against them in order to stabilize the order of accumulation for the benefit of the wealthy and the powerful.

The power of wealth or money in U.S. politics seeks the status quo, to keep its position secure against possible resistance by the poor. Global power of this kind stands against the power of democracy and demands of justice. Monopolizing as well as privatizing the political system commands police forces to surround, “enclose” and “contain” internal and international threats. International police actions and interventionist foreign policies against the Third World always find quick and easy support within the U.S. Each action is one more unconscious disclosure of the U.S. as a police state, concerned with controlling threats with security forces that must surround, “enclose” and “contain” the rich and powerful. Meanwhile, pauperization continues. Covert actions and other counter-insurgency programs find easy legitimacy as means to serve democracy, human rights, the “free market,” and the manifest destiny of civilized nations like the United States. Institutionalized violence and ideologically defined deception actually strengthen the structural dominance of capital and the dominance of fascism and dictatorships abroad. Public lies distort reality, make people poor, keep them in political chains, and provoke institutional violence.

The morally drenched rhetoric of Empire presupposes its unselfish benevolence, moral superiority and divine mission of global intervention for the benefit of humanity. It does this while sustaining underlying assumptions of peripheral peoples as moral inferiors, as politically and economically backward, and culturally underdeveloped. These attitudes remain at work within U.S. neo-liberal logic and strategy to globalize its economy and thereby justify its imperial status. It also works in the imperial paradigm of the neo-conservative militarism of the Bush Administration. The ethical foundation of the Empire is subservient to the interests of capital, and this structurally alienates human beings. The Empire produces oppression and poverty, multi-level violence and deception. The morality of Empire must one day collapse.

Then, what to do? A radical revolt against imperial audacity and cruelty is urgent. Resistance movements are growing everywhere, but they are still relatively weak compared to the Empire. Global solidarity of the oppressed should be a renewed priority. Their alternative

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<sup>46</sup> Charles A. Beard & Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1944), 225.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

views must be shared and used as the common property of liberation struggles.

To replace the ethics of Empire that subordinate the powerless to serve the powerful, I first of all advocate the *ethics of faithful listening to the suppressed voices of the victims* as the primary task for the liberation struggle. This is no passive, non-committal attitude toward the victims, but active communication that seriously involves God and what God has said about the poor and oppressed. It is dialogue committed to those whom the Empire has victimized. God acts decisively when he listens to voices of sufferings or *Han*. Without listening to those voices, we could not learn anything important about the ethical hypocrisy and terrifying brutality of Empire. When we listen to their stories, we have little choice but to open our eyes to the underside of imperial domination. Christian political praxis overturns the “politics of exclusion.” This is the subversive restoration of excluded, marginalized memories. This requires “revaluing the visibility of the oppressed in public discourse”, instead of keeping the oppressed invisible. The existence of victims becomes “significantly visible” in public awareness, and renders invalid official interpretations of reality that disguise the invisibility of victims. It is a question of choosing the side of the oppressed, not the oppressor.

Second, I advocate the *ethics of autonomous development with self-affirmations by the oppressed as the subjects of history*. This means, simultaneously, refusing to accept the moral hierarchy consciousness of the Empire. It means rejection of imperial manifest destiny principles that deny any possibility of indigenous development in the periphery, as well as its sovereignty. We must discover the inner possibilities of the oppressed. Jesus empowers those who have lost self-confidence or who suffer moral inferiority. They will need that empowerment; struggle against the ethics of Empire is to be carried out by those confident in their own power to radically transform society and confront the paternalistic authority of Empire.

Third, I advocate the *ethics of public and democratic control over wealth and power*, and reject the capitalist ethics of privatization of wealth and power that seriously disrupt communal life. This issue relates critically to the building of a community of justice and equality. Privatization by the wealthy and the powerful, which encloses the rich and fences out the poor, is the historical basis of capitalist exploitation. An ethics that emphasizes the value of democratic realignment of wealth and power could pave the way to overcome the ideological justification of those market imperatives which destroy communal solidarity.

Fourth, I advocate the *ethics of solidarity among the victims*, and reject any discourse that blames victims. Such ethics constitutes the basis of local resistance to the global power of Empire, and will help us to serve each other’s needs, needs which have been excluded by the Empire’s power. This is a way to build a community of brotherhood and sisterhood in need of healing. Furthermore, this ethics enables proclaiming God’s coming Kingdom with the power of love, which is the heart of Christian ethics. My methodological assumption for these ethics is Marxist political economy, especially when global capitalism dominates the life of the people anywhere in the world. Marxist analysis contributes to strengthening solidarity among the victims, by helping them to appreciate the mechanisms of their oppression.

Finally, I advocate the *ethics of life-affirmative actions that refuse to submit to the power of death of the Empire*. This is concerned with the question of how we Christians seriously relate ourselves to the Spirit of God who protects the life of the weak, the oppressed and the vitality of the ecological/environmental, which global capitalism threatens. The historical and theological significance of the Jesus movement in the ancient Palestinian world<sup>48</sup> exemplifies a Christian model of liberation struggle against imperial domination. It requires a courageous act of faith in the power of God that affirms life. The Jesus movement requests we radically discontinue unquestioned loyalty to the existing Empire order, and turn to the “God of life.” Then, those who are so spiritually empowered will refuse integration of the periphery into any further imperial subordination.

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<sup>48</sup> Richard A. Horsley deals comprehensively with the question of popular Jewish resistance in Roman Palestine in his two books, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) and *The Liberation of Christmas* (New York: Crossroad, 1989). He tries to apply the core-periphery framework in highlighting the nature of the conflicts between the Roman imperial domination and the Jewish resistance movement. Based upon his findings, he proposes a critical modern analogy that exposes the imperial nature of U.S. foreign policy that deepens the sufferings of Third-World people.

We truly believe that God will empower us with the spirit of resurrection that will never know defeat, even in the face of death. Christian faith conclusively signifies the ethical affirmation of life against death. It is a question of praxis. Struggles against the Empire's ethics thus restore (and even purify) the Christian moral mission to serve the needs of the dispossessed, the disinherited, the poor and the excluded. Our faith in the final victory of this struggle is the invincible hope that we can share it together, and with fearless courage stand against the power of death. While Empire is destined to its demise, the Kingdom of God will come on earth, as it is in heaven. This is our ultimate source of courage and hope.

The power of resistance movements against forces of oppression will grow continuously under the grace of God, even though they may seem powerless upon first emergence. This is our faith in the liberative act of God. And this is the Lamb's War.

As Jesus says, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shades." (Mark 4:30-32) The seed of liberation, though small and in the minority, once sown upon the ground of suffering and faith, will grow up to make remarkable differences in history. Let us not despair in the face of dismal reality, but have courage to work toward an alternative future beyond our imagining. The spirit of God will guide us throughout the struggle for justice.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10) As crucifixion brings new and everlasting life, so "being oppressed" is but a stage to becoming powerful in the grace of God. This is the secret of Christian faith in the struggle of liberation against Empire.