

THE GREAT GAME REVIVED AND THE GEOPOLITICAL WAR OF CIVILIZATIONS

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US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson's visit to China on April 2nd was indicative of the almost schizoid turn taken by relations between the USA and China. While practically imploring his hosts in Beijing to help America's struggle with a massive recession by letting the Renmibi rise faster, he also chastised them over their Tibet policies. The PRC's leadership pointed out to Paulson that, like every other government it had to repress riots, ethnic or religious, and prevent civil unrest from degenerating into civil war. It is unlikely that Paulson saw the irony of his preaching restraint and pacifism as a spokesman for the nation that sponsors the "global war on terror", runs secret, illegal detention camps and torture centres on four continents and has attacked and occupied two sovereign countries in defiance of international law, apart from routinely conducting or supporting bloody "counter-insurgency" in foreign states around the globe since more than half a century.

Indeed, the United States and China, with Russia on the side of the latter, have embarked on a global struggle, both economic and political, that increasingly reminds us of the Cold War of the fifties and sixties. However the tables have been turned since then. The US was the economic hegemon then, with a near monopoly on advanced technologies and an overwhelming commercial dominance. Today it is a

sick, financially bankrupt and socially decaying nation which has only its 600 billion Dollars a year sabre left to rattle to try cowing others into submission. China and Russia on the other hand are growing at a very rapid pace and are dynamic economies served by increasingly powerful military machines. China has already become the factory to the world –what America was a century ago - in which it is the biggest exporter with over 1,6 trillion Dollars of foreign exchange reserves, while Russia holds major reserves of fossil energy and strategic minerals as well as huge human and agricultural resources.

Recent reports quoting prominent economists such as Bernard Connelly, global strategist at AIG Bank, London and Nouriel Roubini from NYU's Stern School of Business foresee a great or "a very great depression" (in the words of the Global Europe Anticipation Bulletin) which has already set on the US. Roubini predicts that losses in the American financial system will exceed one trillion and most analysts agree that this will mean a collapse of the real economy resulting in a situation without historical precedent, leading to a global systemic crisis. The galloping costs of Middle Eastern wars (three trillion according to Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz) are also to be factored in as the White House is getting the rest of the world to partly pay for them, thus dragging everybody down as well.

In Europe, Latin America, the Pacific and South Asia, America's stars are fading and despite its 800 military bases abroad, the Pentagon is drowning in the red ink and

blood generated by its endless and hopeless campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan where ultimate defeat can be postponed but not eluded by an incompetent and self-serving leadership, increasingly alienated from domestic and world majority opinion. The White House, Westminster and other headquarters of the Western alliance may claim that they uphold democracy in the world but they act increasingly in contradiction with the expressed wishes of the majority of their own electorates, at least when it comes to foreign and military policies.

Faced with the looming threat of ultimate decline, American strategic planners decided at the close of the 20th century that it was time to go on the offensive and they seized the opportunity provided by the events of 9/11 to launch a ready-made series of global initiatives meant to ensure that the future would remain American or rather would become ever more so. Those plans are described in a number of official documents and memos which have been widely publicized by now. In order to justify its military operations abroad the Bush regime fabricated or manipulated intelligence in order to allege major threats to its security from Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction” and Afghan terrorist armies in the making.

Any offensive requires an enemy just as every answer needs a question. The selected enemies were Islamic radicals who were given a symbolic shape in the mysterious and polymorphous “Al Qaida” bogeyman. The fight or “crusade” against those green terrorists had the advantage of rallying many of the Western Christians and

Jews behind a common cause, said to be the survival of western civilization, but it also gave perfect cover for the USA and its NATO vassals to move their forces on the strategic theaters of Asia and Africa where they intended to roll back the old and new potential rivals and successors i.e. China, Russia and major Islamic nations such as Iran.

The Bush administration made clear in the hours and days following the September 11th strikes that they were readying to go into Iraq, Afghanistan but also eventually, in one way or another into Syria, Sudan, Iran and even Saudi Arabia, if warranted for the protection of their strategic and economic interests. By proclaiming that “you are either with us or against us” George W Bush preempted the possibility that some countries would want to remain uncommitted to the global war for predominance.

Predictably the revival of the great game, which also rekindled the cold war was meant to involve the old allies and assets of the West. The USA had kept its relationship with a number of counter-revolutionary and secessionist forces in various enemy-states and it could still count on many of its old friends and surrogates. Apart from NATO members, Pakistan, ASEAN countries, East African states, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Egypt and the Arab monarchies were drafted into the revived Western alliance. In South America the situation was more difficult for Washington because the demise of most military regimes in the region and the rise of Leftist nationalist leaders viscerally opposed to the haughty neo-colonialism practiced by the “gringos” meant that the Bush

administration could not rely on most of its former satellites.

Russia under Putin presented a new challenge which the US planned to confront by recruiting new NATO satellites in Eastern Europe and among the former USSR Republics while striving to engineer “coloured” democratic revolutions in those that remained close to Moscow and in Russia itself, coordinated and funded by Pro-Western NGOs and supported by the “Free world” media. These plans were successful in Ukraine and Georgia but failed in other states and especially in Russia.

Regarding China, the USA planned for a long-time to fan the fires of secessionism in the Tibetan and Uighur autonomous regions of the country in order to weaken Beijing and possibly precipitate a new civil war which would put paid to the PRC’s dreams of global supremacy.

The IOC’s decision to accept China’s candidacy for the 2008 summer games has turned out to be a golden opportunity for the Western US-ruled axis to embarrass and destabilize the Government of the Middle Kingdom by holding it under a constant threat of boycott which would inevitably lead the games to fail and would cause a huge loss of face for the Communist Leadership while possibly stirring nationwide unrest and a Western-backed popular call for “regime change”.

Reasons were easily found for promoting anti-Chinese drives. The growing resentment of the Yellow Peril in the

West, revived by widespread fear of Chinese economic dominance made many of the commercial and political claims against the PRC's policies, whether justified or not, very popular in much of the world.

The accusations that China exported substandard and toxic goods had some merit but the charge that it was indirectly or even directly responsible for the massacres in Darfur's region of Sudan is patently absurd. Yet it is more power for the course since the USA, Europe and industrial states in other regions are concerned about China's rapid and successful expansion into the West's traditional African backyard. However, Myanmar first and Tibet now provide the perfect opportunity to demonise China by making it the target of a global human rights coalition while improving the US Government's very tarnished image at least in Western popular opinion, and allowing the ruthless conquerors of Iraq and Afghanistan to reclaim the moral high ground at little cost to themselves.

Thus concerted moves were planned with the Tibetan government in exile and particularly with Tibetan youth exile groups, generally funded by Western NGOs and hence very close to American and Israeli interests. The goal was to trigger a worldwide "non-violent" campaign against China's "brutal occupation" while inside Tibet and other parts of China inhabited by Tibetan minorities riots would erupt, involving monks as in Myanmar and forcing the authorities to crack down.

The campaign was so obviously organized and planned with ulterior motives that its timing and execution left little of them in doubt. Some Tibetan youth leaders had stated to the press that, if Tibet could not achieve independence on its own and if India did not want to annex it, they would support it becoming a state of the USA! By demanding independence and calling for an internationally supported armed struggle to expel the Chinese from Tibet, those “leaders” undermined the Dalai Lama’s long-standing position on autonomy within China and put His Holiness in a very difficult position. They also were inciting a direct confrontation between India and China as they accused the New Delhi Government of “timidity” in opposing Tibet’s annexation by the PRC when in fact India has all along taken the position that Tibet is a part of China, a statement based on historical and diplomatic facts.

The sincerity of most Tibetan protestors is not in question but does not change the ulterior motives of many of the powers that support them. The white Russians who had fled to the West in the wake of the Soviet Bolshevik Revolution had very good reasons to accuse the Communist rulers and to support a “White Counter-Revolution” but Britain, France and the USA had nonetheless obvious geopolitical and capitalistic motives to back them up.

The USA is not worried about historical realities or treaties as it reserves the right to decide when a country deserves to remain whole and sovereign and when it should be carved up, depending upon its “human rights record” and America’s own perceived interests and preferences. In the

early sixties the USA, inheriting British India's policies saw Tibet as one square on the global checkerboard, like Palestine, Yemen, Katanga, Biafra, Indochina, Indonesia, South Africa or Kashmir, where it was backing its own pawns against what is perceived as Soviet or Chinese ones.

The Dalai Lama had been under virtual British tutelage since the Younghusband expedition of 2003 and in Dharamshala as in Lhasa (where the 1959 insurrection and the Tibetan Pontiff's subsequent flight were made possible by the CIA's support) he remained closely controlled by the US advisors who saw him as a precious flag-bearer for Buddhist Tibetan and possibly Pan-Asian resistance against Communism. In Asia and in Europe, the USA took over the anti-Bolshevik and anti-Russian strategy of the pre-World War II Triplice heralded by General Ungern von Sternberg in Central Asia in 1917.

The inevitable corollary of that policy was the USA, despite its claims to stand for freedom and democracy groomed, installed and supported military dictators and trained death squads in several countries. Unwittingly the Dalai Lama and his clerical advisors became tools and victims of that system which was financially generous to them but kept them in a kind of limbo for four decades. They found themselves in the company of the many reactionary US-funded or assisted unelected strongmen who were fighting socio-economic upheavals, in Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Indochina, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Greece and all over Africa and Latin America in the name of political neocolonial stability and liberal capitalism.

Paradoxically, for Tibet in the name of freedom and democracy, America and its allies supported a theocratic and feudal regime that, despite all the spiritual and cultural merits of its Buddhist heritage, rested on serfdom and slavery. In 1957, the CIA flew Tibetans to Dhaka, then in Pakistan and started a guerilla training program in Camp Hale, Colorado while stockpiling arms and military supplies in Thailand in preparation for a Tibetan war of national liberation. From 1959, the American government provided 1,7 million Dollars in funding annually to the Tibetan refugee leadership and 180,000 to the Dalai Lama's himself.

China's policies in Tibet were often far from edifying and like the rest of the country, the roof of the world fell in the turmoil caused by Maoist policies, especially the cultural revolution which was no kinder to Tibet's people and cultural heritage than to China's own. While the Red Guard ruthlessly implemented the national programme launched by the Chinese to abolish all vestiges of feudalism and capitalism at immense human and economic costs, the more conservative pragmatic elements in the Communist Party engineered a counter-revolution after the demise of the "great helmsman" in 1976 and sought to reverse the damage done to their society. They freed the Tibetan feudal and religious leaders who had cooperated with Beijing's rule after the flight of the Dalai Lama and restored them to prominent positions. Deng Xiao Ping, the new national ruler also started secret talks with the Dalai Lama's entourage to explore the possibility of his return.

Lamaism was rehabilitated as a legitimate expression of Tibetan culture, naturally under tight Communist Party supervision but it is doubtful that the ultra-reactionary and isolationistic policies followed by the Tibetan clerical government in Lhasa before 1950 and by the semi-sovereign grand lamas and feudal lords were desirable. The fact that there probably are now some 45,000 monks in Tibet's monasteries should give cause for reflection to those who allege that a "cultural genocide" is being committed there, unless they believe that those monks are not genuine unless they are under the authority of an "indigenous" Buddhist government. Those who hold that view may or may not be Buddhists themselves but they definitely should agree with the Catholics of the nineteenth century who held that the Pope's absolute sovereign powers were sacred and that Italy had no right to become politically united by annexing the Church's state and its capital, Rome.

It is interesting to point out that, while the promoters of Mao's cultural revolution fought to "liberate" the Tibetan masses from their feudal rulers by marshalling them into self-ruled agrarian communes, the economically conservative reformers who arrested the Gang of Four and put an end to their policies were far more conciliatory to the traditional hierarchy and land owning classes of Tibet and sought to make them allies of their rule even while they took a rather conventional "colonial" approach to the social and economic problems of that backward region. The threat posed by massive ethnic Han immigration into Tibet stems

from Deng Xiao Ping's Reformist policies more than from Mao's plans.

Those who condemn Communism for the ills that the Chinese have inflicted on the Tibetans should realize that much of what is wrong with Tibet today comes from Beijing's peculiar implementation of state capitalism on the roof of the world. The Americans who fostered and encouraged China's evolution in that direction since the early seventies are hardly qualified to revile its effects.

That the Dalai Lama and the exiled leadership community did not accept the Chinese proposals to return home may be due to their legitimate suspicions of further possible reversals in the PRC's policies and to their assessment that Beijing was not prepared to grant real autonomy to Tibet but it is clear that the Western backers of the Dalai Lama did not wish him to go back, as it would have been a tremendous ideological and diplomatic victory for China while the USA and its allies would have lost their leverage on him and on Beijing.

Washington wished to keep Tibet as another sword of Damocles on China's head, along with Hong Kong and Taiwan which however turned out to be of more benefit to Beijing than to the USA in the long run once the PRC was able to integrate them into its economic sphere of influence. The dormant Tibetan issue is now being revived since the visit in November 2007 to the Dalai Lama by US Under-Secretary of State Paula Dobryanski, who played a role in other "coloured revolutions" backed by her country. She

preceded House Speaker Nancy Pelosi who came to Dharamshala in March 2008 and issued a bellicose message highly hostile to China.

Foreign visiting eye-witnesses to the Lhasa riots of last March have reported on the extreme violence used by the “demonstrators” who killed defenceless civilians and burned shops, venting their rage in particular at the Muslim commercial area of the city. The apologists for the Tibetans have conceded that unlawful acts were committed by the rioters but claim that they were inevitable or even legitimate reactions to foreign oppression. Accordingly Western powers pressured Beijing to open a dialogue with the Tibetan Government in exile, implying that more autonomy or even independence is on the cards.

The US, Britain and associated states are trying to build an Asian NATO on the four legs of a “democratic quartet” made up of Japan, South Korea, Australia and India primarily intended to contain China just as the European NATO is still intended to surround and eventually smother a recalcitrant Russia while occupied Middle Eastern states play the same role around Iran. All those plans for encirclement and conquest of countries that don’t accept submission to the “world’s only –but insolvent – superpower” are however fraught with uncertainty and doomed by the overreaching hubris of their authors. Bush’s schemes for a new American century and McCain’s vow for 100 years of US occupation in Iraq and equally endless colonial rule over Afghanistan and Pakistan sound like echoes of an earlier leader’s promise of a thousand year

Reich. It is not surprising that the hegemonic successors of the German “Herrenvolk” are likewise guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, under the very terms defined at the Nuremberg Trial. END