

Us imperialism in the post-9 11 international order

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The history of the world is hitherto marked by the antagonisms in the economic aspects of the society. Since the existence of hierarchical orders in societal relations in political and economic relations were conceptualized, the contradictions between and among the decisive forces in the production process have long been made brutal and more explosive than any other points in human history. Hence, the development of the capitalist mode of production and its dominance as the world's economic system gave way for the advancement of nation-states into imperialist powers of the modern world.

Contradictions among the classes in the society, between the industrialized countries and industrialized versus the colonies and semi-colonies, only intensified the differences and irreconcilable economic interests of the nations. These contradictions gave way for most of the world's major catastrophic events like the First World War and the Second World War, being, in reality, war between imperialist and industrialized powers secure their insatiable interests for the control of the market.

Such nature of class antagonisms reflected the exploitation and oppression that the motive forces experienced in the light of these economic restrictions in the present economic condition (Lenin 1916: IX). This essay would settle on the issues raised by the presence of the United States' vast economic, political, and social sphere of influence on most regions of the world. As the world's only remaining superpower, the United States of America, maintains its structure in presenting and directing the course of global diplomatic, military and economic affairs.

US imperialist expansion would be studied in order to come up with the particular nature of the hegemony and provide necessary clarifications on the nature of imperialism, super-imperialism and inter-imperialism and if ever these terms are applicable and politically relevant in today's discussion of global relations. After the terror attacks become the focus of regional diplomatic and military roadmaps, United States role in overseas affairs became even more directed towards armed resolution of conflict as essential appendage of its imperialist hegemony (Stivachtis, 2007).

Marxist analysis of the society in general and political economy in particular could mainly present the foundations of this discourse by which we would draw the explanation for such concepts of imperialism and monopoly capitalist hegemony in the economic, political, cultural and other societal structures that are essentially intertwined with this. To Marxists, "imperialism" is not simply the "trend towards expansion" or the "conquest of foreign lands," as it is defined by most political scientists and sociologists.

The word is used in a much more precise sense to describe the general changes which occurred in the political, economic and social activity of the big bourgeoisie of the advanced capitalist countries, beginning in the last quarter of the 19th century. These changes were closely related to alterations in the basic structure of this bourgeoisie (Germain 1955). With this definition, there are still varied interpretations of imperialism even among Marxists.

Vladimir Lenin's theoretical exposition on this subject has long been accepted widely after the Soviet Union molded a formidable economic and military superpower and directly/indirectly influenced the outcomes of <https://assignbuster.com/us-imperialism-in-the-post-911-international-order/>

revolutions in third world countries. The first and second world wars were the major eruption of these antagonisms and the world experienced an imperialist war over territories for the acquisition of raw materials for the industries and market for the surplus products of the capitalist western powers. A polarized global atmosphere boiled into wars that in reality, wars of expansion.

The United States benefitted greatly from the war. It made the nation accumulate more neo-colonies after the defeat of the Axis powers in Europe and Asia. Hence, a conclusion can be derived from these events: the United States, after its economy faced a major crisis in the 1930's, needed war in order to boost its military industrial complex, obtain new territories as sources of industrial needs and market for overproduced goods, propel its strategic military positions overseas and contain the Soviet union's growing power and influence.

Kautsky and Luxemburg, famous Marxists in Europe, clarified imperialism and presented yet another perspective on imperialist stage of the bourgeois capitalist system. Kautsky stated that imperialism is an absolute terminology to be applied to the interests of an industrial nation to expand its commercial realm by arguing that precisely an industrialized nation cannot sell all its products within industrialized nations so it has to look for nations with backward economies that do not have the technology and capacity to produce similar goods or products (Germain 1955).

Cox stipulated the mechanics of how the United States was able to control foreign markets and flooded with surplus goods. He argued that the 'Empire' dominated these backward or lagging economies through intimidation by use <https://assignbuster.com/us-imperialism-in-the-post-911-international-order/>

of the military, alliance with the local elite thus assuring an elite's government friendly, if not servile, to United States' imperialist interests (Cox 2004: 309). The reality of the economic basis of imperialist hegemony has not really subsided at the turn of the 21st century and even after the Socialist block has collapsed in the 1990's.

In fact, the same contradictions in the political economy of the world, however, significant alterations have pervaded since and the resulting events are what the current United States' ruling class faces. Robert Cox noted the events which shaped the present international order as end products of centuries of societal evolutionary and revolutionary processes. First, he refreshed what French diplomacy baptized as 'hyper-power' of the United States of America due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of a bipolar world.

Second, environmental concerns have taken the center stage of international affairs because of unstable conditions in the biosphere, biotechnology and genetically modified organisms. Along with these, there is the economic dilemma which suggests that capitalism continues to contain a tendency of widening the gap between the rich and the poor; ethnic, national, religious and other reason for polarization have been reaffirmed and; the emergence of 'irregular' activities pertained to terrorism and other organized crime.

Hence, in the light of the authority's inaction regarding these concerns, the public developed skepticism towards established institutions (Cox 2004: 318). Further delving on this particular reasons for the establishment of a new international order, Cox asserted that with all these, there must be a

'power' holding all these things completely so that this 'power' could set forth the destruction or the genesis of an established reason.

This 'power' poses a dilemma as to what nature does this power hold that even Cox tried to provide an acceptable definition. Power... [Is] in a very general sense to mean whatever force can intentionally bring about change in the behavior of any of the diversity of agents in world political economy. States are obviously to be included among the agents. Military strength and the capacity for economic coercion are obviously to be included among the relevant forces.

The problem is to infer from observation of what has happened what the key forces are and what agents are capable of wielding those forces (Cox 2004: 308). Current international scene is dominated by the United States but the economic and diplomatic influences are fast rescinding because of US hegemony in many aspects of world affairs. The US led war on terror and its coalition of the willing is a manifestation of an inherent crisis in a monopoly capitalist system.

Military power now assumes the greatest role in preserving the existing order while its continued intervention in domestic and regional conflicts only isolates US hegemony from the collective of nations. This fragile condition of artificial harmony in a US controlled international scene radiated greater conflicts and majority of the nations initiated their independence from the economic influence of the US through the formation of a regional economic and political cooperation.

The euro for example, attempted to present an alternative to the US dollar. Even if this attempt did not gain head on with the US dollar, its presence already showed that economic regionalism was developing into more stable formations and poses formidable challenge to US unilateralism (Cox 2004: 314). The war on terror has unveiled the nature of US imperialism that it is an 'Empire' that sought to expand its influence and domination wherever necessary and possible.

Conflicts in the Middle East and the terror attacks in the US re-opened the debating floors to the concerns of terrorism and the 'dialectic' relation of 'terrorism' and 'war on terror'. As Robert Cox puts it: ...terrorism is a violent reaction to 'Empire'; and for dominant power the response to 'terrorism' is an expansion of 'Empire'. The two are joined in dialectic without end since the two contestants are not of the same order... The physical elimination of 'terrorists' by police and military action does not eliminate 'terrorism'.

It encourages more people to take up the role of terrorist. The only way this quagmire dialectic could end would be by transcending the conflict in a reestablished legitimacy (Cox 2004: 318). Accumulating the economic, political, cultural and ideological crisis of the United States' monopoly capitalist empire, various thinkers attempted to explain the nature of this 'Empire'. The most common of these terminologies used to refer to US imperial structure are 'super-imperialism', 'ultra-imperialism' and 'inter-imperialism'.

Super-imperialism is more concerned with the mechanics of the economy and that evolution from classical imperialism to super-imperialism was caused by a reverse in the international scene where US surpassed its

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preeminent creditor status to a debtor status, hence, the worsening crisis of finance capital under the capitalist system. Ultra Imperialism is a term coined by Karl Kautsky as a theoretical conception of imperialism in the September 1914 issue of Die Neue Zeit. Kautsky articulated that capitalism could exist without wars and these industrialized nations need not to divide territories and markets rather form a cartel.

Lenin quickly repudiated this assertion and stressed that ultra-imperialism understates the class antagonisms in an imperialist system and the contradictions were disregarded. Inter-imperialism on the other hand does not really offer a new conception of imperialism but only an earlier term used by Hobson to what Kautsky referred to as ultra-imperialism. In broadest sense, US imperialism maintains the exploitative conditions at present, the contradiction between and among industrial nations and between industrial nations and third world.