

The myths about the New World Order*

TAKIS FOTOPoulos

(15.12.2014)

Abstract: This article examines some of the various myths about the present New World Order of neoliberal globalization and shows that, in fact, the differences between the members of the Transnational Elite that administer it are only tactical and never strategic, i.e. they never refer to the very strategic aims of these elites to reproduce and expand their transnational political and economic power. As such, these differences are non-antagonistic and they have very little resemblance, if any, to the intra-imperialist differences mentioned in Marxist literature. This is a basic qualitative difference between the pre-globalization World Order based on nation-states and the New World Order that emerged in the era of globalization.

A basic characteristic of the present globalization era is the multiple confusion about the meaning and significance of the New World Order (NWO) and the role played today by the main power centers within it. In the context of this confusion, which is often deliberate, one may hear various myths about the present World Order that we shall examine briefly. Thus for some, what we face today is a conflict between the "goodies" and the "baddies," where the former are represented in geopolitical terms by "Europe" and the latter by "America." For others, the conflict is between two main power centers, a political-military one (USA) and an economic one (Germany). Finally, for others still, what we face is "many capitalisms" which are increasingly un-coordinated in the globalization era, raising, albeit implicitly, the issue of the need for a global governance. Clearly, therefore, the above confusions and corresponding myths play an important role in understanding today's reality and in deciding what to do about it.

* The article was also published simultaneously in Pravda.ru. It was edited by Jonathan Rutherford. <http://english.pravda.ru/opinion/columnists/15-12-2014/129299-new_world_order_myths-0/v>

The popular conception of the NWO is in terms of a conspiracy theory, according to which secretive power elites, usually defined in ideological, if not religious or ethnic terms, or, sometimes in geopolitical or crude economic terms, rule the world. However, in all these cases, the NWO is not interpreted in terms of systemic structures and the historical changes in them but, always, in terms of conspiracies by some elites. Yet, one may see, instead, the present NWO as the product of historical changes — for over two hundred years now — to the prevailing system of the capitalist market economy and the associated long-term changes in political structures. Roughly speaking, we may distinguish between the liberal phase of this system in the 19th century, followed by the statist phase in the last century that was generalized in the West in the form of social democracy, after an unsuccessful attempt for globalization at the beginning of the 20th century, and the present neoliberal phase which was associated with the advent and mass expansion of Transnational Corporations since the 1980s.¹ Furthermore, as this crucial socio-economic development coincided (not by accident!) with another epoch-making development, the collapse of USSR and the soviet bloc, the NWO could well be defined in terms of these two systemic developments, rather than of conspiracies. This does not of course mean that there are no conspiracies in History. Elites have always been conspiring but it is only when the appropriate subjective and objective conditions have been created that such conspiracies can lead to historical changes, as the outcome, always, of the social struggle.

In this context, the Transnational Elite (TE) consists of a network of interconnected transnational elites, which are mainly based in the G7 countries and control each major field of social life (economic, political, ideological and so on). In this sense, the TE plays the role that the national government used to play in the pre-globalization era, when governments had the function of expressing the general interest of the national elites, to which the specific interests of these elites had to submit. Similarly, in the present globalization era, the TE has the function of expressing the general interest of the elites controlling all forms of transnational power (economic, political, ideological, cultural e.tc.) to which the specific transnational interests had to submit, for the sake of the general interest of the New World Order. One may therefore argue that the TE is simply a new kind of informal (for now) global governance.

It is an **elite**, because its members possess a dominant position within society as a result of their economic, political or broader social power. And it is a **transnational** elite, because its members, unlike the 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

¹ See for a detailed analysis of this periodization, Takis Fotopoulos, *Towards An Inclusive Democracy* (London: Cassell, 1997), Part I.

worldwide reproduction of the capitalist market economy system integrated into the NWO. In other words, this elite draws its power (economic, political or generally social power) by operating at the transnational level — a fact which implies that it does not express, solely or even primarily, the interests of any particular state, even if this has a hegemonic position with regard to the control of a crucial transnational power, as is the case with the USA and military power. This is mainly because the transnational economic power, which in a capitalist market economy system is the dominant form of transnational power, is spread among thousands of transnational corporations (TNCs), out of which 1,318 core companies, through interlocking ownerships, own 80% of global revenues and, of these, 147 companies (i.e. less than 1 per cent of the network) form a "super entity," controlling 40 per cent of the wealth of the entire network!² This is why it is meaningless, if not deliberately disorienting, to talk of economic power in terms of what part of the global output a country produces, when it is TNCs which take the important economic decisions (what, how and for whom to produce) and not the host country, which usually may exercise very little, if any, control over them, as it happens with the BRICS countries!

The political complement of neoliberal globalization is representative "democracy," which in the NWO takes the form of a "parliamentary junta," i.e. a hybrid between representative democracy and a junta (in the sense of a committee that leads or governs). A parliamentary junta consists of a political party or parties elected to government through some sort of electoral and parliamentary process — a process that has very little to do with the electoral process involved in the parliamentary democracies of the past, where mass political parties with clearly distinct electoral programs were competing for the vote of an electorate that participated in the process en masse. Therefore, the TE sees its interests in terms of international "spaces" (markets, political and military institutions, media, etc.) rather than "national" ones, although the emergence of transnational forms of political and economic power does not imply the abolition of national forms. States are still needed for the local institutionalization and enforcement of transnational strategies and policies, which any country integrated into the NWO of neoliberal globalization, has to implement.

As the TE sees its interests in terms of transnational rather than "national" spaces, it is not based on any single state but rather it is a decentered apparatus of rule with no territorial center of power. This means that the transnational elite members are not necessarily based on a superpower like the USA, although of course they do not hesitate to utilize the power of a

² Andy Coghlan and Debora MacKenzie, "Revealed - the capitalist network that runs the world", *New Scientist Magazine*, issue 2835 (24/10/2011).

<<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21228354.500-revealed--the-capitalist-network-that-runs-the-world.html#.VI31QMmDkh8>>

particular state to achieve its aims — even more so when this state happens to be today's leading military power. In this sense, the paleo-Marxist approach that still sees USA as an "empire," albeit a declining one, is obsolete, as it is based on the outdated notion of the concentration of political and economic power at the state level. However, the transnational elite is not defined geographically and consists of members having a dominant position within the "world community," as a result of their transnational economic, political or broader social power, rather than as a result of holding power in any single nation state.

From this viewpoint, it is indicative that even when enlightened Marxist analysts (i.e. those who, unlike obsolete Marxists, have understood the significance of globalization as a new systemic phenomenon) use the term "empire," they usually give it a meaning that closely corresponds to the meaning of the transnational elite, as defined above. Thus, Hardt & Negri³ see the "Empire" as "a decentered and deterritorialising apparatus of rule" (although they do not include in it the NGOs and the UN!).⁴ Also, in a more recent study, Anthony Mustacich (who uses the term "trilateral imperialism" to refer to US, EU and Japan), stresses that "the neo-liberal empire of today is not the empire of one imperialist nation, but the empire of transnational corporations, based in the Triad, and enforced through U.S. and NATO military force."⁵

Naturally, as in the case of a national ruling elite represented by the government of a nation-state, when political differences between members of such an elite are far from rare, the same applies with the members of the TE. Yet, such differences, exactly as in the case of national ruling elites, are tactical, never strategic, i.e. they never refer to the very strategic aims of these elites to reproduce and expand their transnational political and economic power. The national government was supposed to play exactly this role: to accommodate the tactical differences between its members so that the strategic aims are not jeopardized. So, the silly arguments, put forward for instance by the liberal globalists in the Russian elite in favor of exploiting the differences between members of the TE (see e.g. their divisions with respect to invasion of Iraq) simply cannot grasp the fact that these are tactical differences, never strategic — they all agree on the primary aim to reproduce and expand further the NWO of neoliberal globalization. In this context, Russia is an enemy for all parts of the TE, although there are obvious tactical differences between them on how to

³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁴ See for a critique of *Empire*, Takis Fotopoulos & A. Gezerlis, "Hardt and Negri's *Empire*: a new Communist Manifesto or a reformist welcome to neoliberal globalisation?", in *The Communist Manifesto*, by K.Marx, ed by Frederic L. Bender (Norton, 2013).

⁵ Anthony Mustacich, "Imperialism, The Cold War, and the Contradictions of Decolonization", *Global Research* (12/5/2013). <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/imperialism-the-cold-war-and-the-contradictions-of-decolonization/5334692>>

integrate Russia into the NWO, whether through economic warfare, or, as some would argue, through war itself.

Therefore, the non-antagonistic nature of the tactical differences between members of the TE implies that they have very little resemblance, if any, to the intra-imperialist differences mentioned in Marxist literature. This is a basic qualitative difference between the pre-globalization World Order based on nation-states and the New World Order that emerged in the era of globalization. An indicative example is the recent case when the leading country in the TE, the US, fined a French multinational, BNP Baribas \$9bn for helping countries like Cuba and Iran to avoid sanctions. This forced even Michel Sapin, the French finance minister, to call for a "rebalancing" of the currencies used for global payments (at the moment the US dollar is the main world reserve currency accounting for about 85% of global transactions) stressing that the BNP Paribas case should "make us realize the necessity of using a variety of currencies."⁶ The implication was obvious: EU countries should use also Euros as a reserve currency — an obvious torpedo to the hegemony of US dollar as a reserve currency, an arrangement which allows US to adopt policies that non-reserve countries cannot follow. Yet, within hours of the above statement members of the transnational economic elite (mainly bankers) "restored order," as the following extract from the same *Financial Times* report made clear:

"Despite efforts to diversify, many central banks say that they still see no real alternative to the safety and liquidity of the US Treasury market, and hold more than 60 per cent of their reserves in dollars. A senior French official cast doubt on the government's ability to stimulate the further use of the euro in international trade: "In the end it is hard to know what they can really do. The market really decides these things."⁷

Yet, some politicians and obsolete Marxists attempt even today to dismiss an analysis like the above on globalization and the Transnational Elite, either with reference to a supposed conflict between "Europe" and the US, or alternatively to the existence of two main imperialisms, or even 'many' capitalisms.

Thus, Gorbachev, for instance, had no qualms about stating (when celebrating — next to Merkel — the unification of Germany), that "*Europe can have a very positive impact on the situation. After all, it must become the locomotive in the creation of the new world.*"⁸ In other words, for Gorbachev and the globalist part of the Russian elite, there is nothing wrong with the EU and

⁶ Michael Stothard, "France hits out at dollar dominance in international transactions", *The Financial Times* (6/7/2014).

⁷ ibid.

⁸ "Gorbachev- It's up to Europe to prevent new Cold War between US and Russia," RT (1/12/2014). <<http://rt.com/news/210463-gorbachev-us-russia-europe/>>

there is, in fact, no need for a new world pole expressing the need for a new democratic world order based on sovereign nations, like the one expressed by the Eurasian Union. Presumably, it is only the neocon Americans who have to be blamed, and Russia (with or without the other members of the Eurasian Union) could well live together in the same unipolar world defined by the NWO and run by the TE, of which the EU is an integral part!

For others, the present situation could be described in terms of two imperialisms or two power centres, a military one, i.e. USA, and an economic one, a Germany-controlled EU, which somehow collaborate to rule the world. Thus, for Petras,

"While President Bush and Clinton were heralding a "new world order," based on unipolar military supremacy, Germany advanced its new imperial order by exercising its political and economic levers. Each of the two power centres, Germany and the US, shared the common quest of rapidly incorporating the new capitalist regimes into their regional organizations — the European Union (EU) and NATO — and extending their reach globally".⁹

However, the fact that in this analysis the NWO is defined in purely geopolitical terms, as if we still live in the pre-globalization era of nation states and imperialisms based on them, inevitably leads to ignoring the role of US and German TNCs in forming the backbone of the respective collaboration of USA and Germany respectively, within the TE. It is clear that although there may be some tactical divisions between USA and Germany on several issues, including the issue of how best to integrate Russia into the NWO, there is full agreement between them on the strategic aim of reproducing and expanding the present order all over the world, by integrating any countries resisting the crucial elements of neoliberal globalization, i.e. the opening and liberalization of markets for capital and commodities (and to some extent of labor as well). This, necessarily, implies, as I tried to show in the past,¹⁰ the loss of economic and national sovereignty and the creation of a new kind of transnational sovereignty, controlled, at the economic level, by the TNCs.

Finally, for others still, the problem is the existence of a variety of capitalisms in the globalization era:

The "American century" is over, and we have entered a period in which multiple centres of global capitalism have been forming. In the US,

⁹ James Petras, "The Rise of German Imperialism and the Phony 'Russian Threat,'" *Global Research* (7/12/2014). <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-rise-of-german-imperialism-and-the-phony-russian-threat/5418498>>

¹⁰ "BRICS and the myth of the multipolar world", *Pravda.ru* (6/10/2014).

Europe, China and maybe Latin America, too, capitalist systems have developed with specific twists: the US stands for neoliberal capitalism, Europe for what remains of the welfare state, China for authoritarian capitalism, Latin America for populist capitalism. After the attempt by the US to impose itself as the sole superpower – the universal policeman – failed, there is now the need to establish the rules of interaction between these local centres as regards their conflicting interests.¹¹

On the basis of this description (which was not based on any kind of analysis), Zizek concluded that the “principal contradiction” of the New World Order is the impossibility of creating a global political order that would correspond to the global capitalist economy. Yet, Simon Peres, the recently retired arch-Zionist president of Israel, has already given an answer on how a kind of global governance can be created out of this seemingly disorder. Thus, Peres celebrated as follows globalization in front of a highly enthusiastic audience of the entire European Parliament:

Globalization put an end to racism. It empowers the individual. Global companies do not impose their will upon people. On the contrary, they respect the will of their clients. They can provide scientific know-how for growth. They can assist young people to acquire high education. To create jobs befitting their skills.¹²

Then, following Gideon Rachman, chief foreign affairs commentator of the *Financial Times*, who in a well-known 2008 article entitled “And now for a world government”¹³ provided the ideological background for global governance (which many commentators have cited as proof of an elitist plot for its establishment) Peres went on to describe how the future world based on globalization should be. Namely, the same New World Order as at present, plus an informal global governance:

“Our global world has no global government. It has become almost ungovernable. We have to look for an alternative. I believe the future ways of governing shall rely on three pillars: National governments will continue to be in charge of the husbandry of the national state. Global companies will invest in research and development. And the individual will enjoy the capacity to govern themselves by knowing the way their brain functions. Science today is more telling than politics. It is universal

¹¹ Slavoj Zizek, “Who can control the post-superpower capitalist world order?” *The Guardian* (6/5/2014).

¹² “Full text of Peres speech to European Parliament in Strasbourg,” *Haaretz* (13/03/2013).

¹³ Gideon Ranchman, “And now for a world government,” *The Financial Times* (8/12/2008).

and borderless. Armies cannot conquer wisdom. Police cannot arrest science. (...) Facing the lack of global governance, we can foster close cooperation between governments and global companies. Facing the dangers that threaten the values for which we stand, we shall fight terror wherever it is, relentlessly".¹⁴

So, in almost identical words with the ones used later by Žižek to describe the "principal contradiction" (who simply added a supposedly Marxist slant to Peres' argument), Peres has also shown the way out of this contradiction in terms of course of the present NWO!

Yet, there is, in fact, a real alternative to this, as I described it elsewhere:

"Therefore, the fundamental aim of the social struggle today should be a complete break with the present NWO and the building of a new democratic order in which economic and national sovereignty have been restored, so that peoples could then fight for the ideal society, as they see it (...) In this sense, the completion of a Eurasian Union, as originally designed, (i.e. as an economic union of sovereign states having the ability to impose whatever social controls on markets they decide), would have been an event of a tremendous global significance for the development of a new democratic global order to replace the present NWO of neoliberal globalization, which has already destroyed the lives of billions of people all over the world."¹⁵

¹⁴ ibid.

¹⁵ "The imperative need for popular fronts of national and social liberation in the globalization era" (extract from the forthcoming new book by Takis Fotopoulos, *Ukraine: The Attack on Russia and the Eurasian Union*, published shortly by Progressive Press)