

Opposition grows to Bush's new order

At the U.N. General Assembly and elsewhere, spokesmen from the Third World are opposing the Anglo-American policies of economic devastation, violation of national sovereignty, and population control.

Here are some examples.

Iraq: History will judge the United Nations

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussain addressed the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 27:

"We have listened on Sept. 23 to the speech delivered by President Bush in the General Assembly, and we cannot but express our regret that a President of a state, indeed the biggest power, would resort to untoward attacks against the President of my country in a manner incompatible with diplomatic practice.

"In this context, if we were to call the American President names, as he has allowed himself to do to my President, we would wonder what to call one who killed women, children, and the elderly with his planes and missiles, who bombarded the Amariya shelter, killing more women and children? What could we call one who gave the orders to bury Iraqi soldiers alive, one whose forces targeted baby-food factories, and lastly one who insists on depriving a population of 18 million of food and medicine, and all other means of livelihood? . . .

"Notwithstanding the American President's repeated assertions that he does not want the Iraqi people to suffer from starvation, food shortages, and the lack of the basic requirements of civilian life, the fact remains that America is responsible above all others for the suffering of the Iraqi people. . . .

"Indications of the so-called new world order clearly suggest that this is going to be a unipolar type of order which does not take into account the needs and interest of developing countries. It is an order established on the basis of the stands and decisions dictated by a single country or a limited number of countries; stands and decisions designed to suit the narrow interest of these countries in a selective double-standard manner, alien to the principles of justice and fairness enshrined in the U.N. Charter. . . .

"I wish to draw the attention of the member states of the United Nations to the fundamental goal behind the founding

of this organization; the goal of preserving the sovereignty of peoples over territories and safeguarding their right to live in freedom and dignity.

"Now, you are faced with a tragic human situation that has befallen the people of Iraq, who have had their considerable contribution to progress, justice, and humanity for more than 6,000 years. This people is facing the specter of starvation and disease of the worst kind, as a result of an unjust economic blockade. . . .

"Therefore this organization, whose charter stipulates the preservation of the dignity of the individual, is facing a test of its conscience and humanity; and history will pass its judgment in light of the manner in which this organization conducts itself and addresses this tragic situation, to the creation of which this organization was itself party."

Algeria: Lift sanctions against Iraq

Lakhdar Ibrahimi, the foreign minister of Algeria, in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 27, stated that "the credibility of the United Nations required that actions taken should not lead to the punishment of a people. To be clear, Algeria appeals that the suffering of the Iraqi people be alleviated and the sanctions in Iraq be lifted as soon as possible."

He also denounced Israel's persistence in its policies of repression against the Palestinian people and its illegal occupation of Lebanon: "The Geneva Conventions are being flouted. Settlements are being erected in Occupied Territories. It seems that every Arab or Palestinian concession has met with a new Israeli demand." He called for the international community to ensure that Israel withdraw from southern Lebanon and to establish a national fund for the reconstruction of Lebanon.

India: Uphold national sovereignty

The minister of external affairs of India, Shri M. Solanki, told the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 26 that "the overall debt situation for the developing countries has assumed alarming proportions and poses a serious threat to their economic viability. A solution to the debt problem of the developing countries would need a comprehensive and integrated strategy encompassing all categories of affected countries and all forms of debt.

"Against this backdrop, the Secretary General's proposal for an international conference on the financing of development deserves support."

Solanki warned against the new "conditionalities" approach to economic aid:

"Attempts are being made to factor into the calculus of international and bilateral economic cooperation, non-economic considerations such as good governance, observance of human rights, environment, military expenditure, etc. . . . What is questionable is the linkage of these issues with development assistance of which the recipients are only the devel-

oping countries.”

Solanki opposed the sanctions against Iraq:

“The United Nations has the duty and responsibility to exert all its energies to remove the suffering, hunger, and squalor left behind by the war. This is particularly true of the Iraqi civilian population, whose misery is not lightened by the continuation of economic and trade sanctions. We commend the humanitarian assistance provided to the people of the region by member countries as well as U.N. agencies. At the same time, we believe that any outside intervention in a member country on humanitarian grounds constitutes an abridgement of national sovereignty and is, therefore, fraught with serious implications.”

He said that India “applauds” U.S. efforts to get parties in the Middle East to the negotiating table, and added: “We believe that a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question will be possible and durable only if it restores to the Palestinian people their fundamental rights, including their right to a homeland.”

Ghana: Poverty is a ‘grim enemy’ of peace

The secretary for foreign affairs of Ghana, Dr. Obed Y. Asamoah, warned in his speech to the General Assembly on Sept. 26 that “the world ignores at its own peril” the “monumental” problems of Africa.

“The 85% of the world’s population who live on 30% of the world’s income are not asking the world’s 15% for charity,” he said. “We do recognize our primary and ultimate responsibility for our own development. There is clear evidence that in many instances, some of us have achieved in decades what it took some of the industrial countries centuries to achieve. Some have adopted socially and politically difficult economic restructuring and reform measures. The increasing factor of external influences that are beyond our control has, however, inhibited these efforts.

“The international economic order, including the global financial and trade arrangements, that we were ushered into at independence still exploits our economies. Our restructuring and reform measures have in most cases resulted in increased production and productivity, but with diminishing returns. The unfavorable terms of trade, marked by falling commodity prices and increasing prices of industrial goods and services, coupled with high industrial-country fiscal deficits, and high international interest rates, have made debt-servicing a major burden on our fragile economies. In a situation where 45 to 80% of export earnings are diverted into debt-servicing, the prospect of many of our economies regressing into a state of subsistence is not idle speculation.”

He continued:

“A world that sincerely desires peace would have to rethink its attitude towards the present global economic imbalances. Poverty is a grim enemy of peace. . . . Developing countries have to be relieved of the burden of debt. Both the debt stock and debt service must be reduced or eliminated

completely. The recommendations of the secretary general’s Expert Group on Africa’s debt would have to be given serious consideration. Moreover, all measures that will stabilize commodity prices and promote the transfer of financial resources and technology to the mutual benefit of industrial and developed countries will have to be taken. . . .

“It is tempting, for some, to see the ideological collapse of eastern Europe as a victory for the inequitable global economic system that consigns the majority of the world to poverty. It has been remarked, more than once, that the industrial countries do not need developing countries. There is nothing farther from the truth. . . .

Italy, Austria demand suspension of sovereignty

While some Third World leaders were speaking out against Bush’s new world order at the U.N. General Assembly, there was also no scarcity of endorsements for the Anglo-Americans’ genocide policy.

Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis, in his speech on Sept. 27, called the “right” to intervene in another country for “humanitarian” purposes—as was ostensibly done in Iraq for the sake of the Kurds—“the most truly innovative concept of the remaining decade of this century. This must be the focal point of our efforts through the United Nations, which is also the main forum of the new ‘world order.’ Intervention that is primarily aimed at securing protection of human rights . . . is a prerogative of the international community, which must have the power to suspend sovereignty whenever it is exercised in a criminal manner.”

Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock called in his speech on Sept. 27 for U.N. intervention forces to monitor and settle human rights and environmental disputes, each with their own color helmets, to join the already existing “blue helmets.”

“The United Nations ought to have the possibility to quickly react to serious human rights abuses and to prevent any escalation of such abuses,” he said. “I propose that the Commission on Human Rights adopt an emergency procedure based on a permanent register of experts—who could be called ‘White Helmets’—and would be at the disposal of the Commission.” He also referred to a proposal made by Austria two years ago, “to establish ‘Green Helmets’ who could intervene in the framework of a system of dispute prevention and settlement concerning the environment.”

Dr. Asamoah also warned that nations must remain sovereign, and while the Non-Aligned Movement—whose summit meeting recently took place in Ghana—calls for political pluralism and respect for human rights, “there is no basis for making the promotion of these values new conditionalities for international economic cooperation. And it must be admitted that the notion that development is not possible without them has no historical foundation.”

In conclusion, he cited the papal encyclical issued in May, *Centesimus Annus*:

“The new name of peace is development. Just as there is a collective responsibility for avoiding war, so too there is a collective responsibility for promoting development.”

Tanzania: No to political ‘conditionalities’

The foreign minister of Tanzania, Ahmed Hassan Diria, in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 30, declared his country in staunch opposition to the new conditionalities being imposed on economic aid.

“Aid conditionalities have been a source of controversy between the donor community and recipient countries,” he said. “The new conditionality linking aid to political reform exacerbates the controversy. For instance, on April 15, 1991, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established, with the proviso that the acceptance of a multi-party democracy and free market would be a condition *sine qua non* for getting aid from the Bank. . . . The linkage between the provision of foreign aid and the implementation of political reforms is undesirable.”

He also detailed the catastrophic economic situation of Africa, and noted that “the last three decades have also witnessed the acceleration of disinvestment in Africa. . . . It is unacceptable that there continues to be a net capital flow from the developing countries to the industrialized nations. According to a 1990 World Bank report, developing countries paid \$27.5 billion more than they received in new credit and grants. Sub-Saharan Africa alone retransferred \$500 million more than it received.”

Gabon: IMF’s programs make matters worse

Pascaline M. Bongo, the foreign minister of Gabon, addressed the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 30, denouncing the effects of the International Monetary Fund’s “structural adjustment” programs on the developing sector. She cautioned that “the international financial institutions have called for the implementation of structural adjustment programs. Unfortunately, these programs result in social costs with negative consequences for our populations. The concomitance of these programs with the social demands linked to liberalization in the African political systems, adds a considerable intensity to the difficulties confronting the governments of African countries.”

Africa’s economic situation will only begin to improve, she said, if there is a restructuring of international relations

“to take into account not only the interests of the North, but also those of the South, whether it be the constant drop in the prices of raw materials or the ever-present question of the debt.”

Senegal: The South is financing the North

The foreign affairs minister of Senegal said on Sept. 24 that despite the alarm bells being rung for years now, “poverty persists and is spreading.”

“Constantly aggravated by the continuous drop in the price of raw materials, the foreign debt, and the requirements of structural adjustments, this phenomenon shows that international cooperation for development is outside the renewal that characterizes the new international relations. . . .

“Crushed by the weight of the debt and the deterioration of the terms of exchange, the countries of the South are working harder and producing more, only to receive less, in order to pay interest which is itself subjected to the fluctuations of foreign currencies. Thus, the South continues to finance the North to the tune of several tens of billions of dollars per year.”

Pakistan: Jamaat-e-Islami rejects population control

Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami party of Pakistan, issued a statement on Sept. 5 denouncing a new government policy to expand population control measures. The Jamaat-e-Islami is a member of the ruling coalition and Pakistan’s largest religious party. The statement of Amir Ahmad follows:

“Terming ‘family planning’ as ‘population welfare,’ is an absolutely misleading misnomer. The government has included the establishing of family planning centers among the development projects whose funds have been allocated by senators and members of the National Assembly of Pakistan. These centers have nothing to do with the development of an area. Family planning is misguidance and a conspiracy hatched by western nations. Western society has been deprived of the merriment and bustling of youth and children due to its materialistic attitudes, selfishness, and fashion-mongering. The West thinks the growing population of Muslims is a threat to it and wants to disseminate this misguidance in Muslim communities through the disciples of the West. But the fact remains, that a newly born child comes with one mouth and two hands to earn his livelihood and is gifted with a fertile mind. If necessary arrangements are made for his proper education and useful training, every newly born child would certainly contribute towards a tremendous increase in the national product.

“I strongly protest the establishment of family planning centers in the garb of population welfare. The religious circles already think that these centers are misleading, and pave a way for speedily spreading immodesty in the country. So these centers should be closed down.”