Globalization and Identities

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I

We have been accustomed during many years to iden-
tify megatrends, almost always based on technological in-
novations. These trends can be observed in most parts of a
world which is becoming global. Economic processes and
what we called civil society were dominating and explain-
ing the world so completely that political and even more in-
ternational problems seemed to have become marginal. This
view prevailed completely during the long decade which be-
gan with the destruction of the Berlin wall and ended with
the atentate against the towers of the World Trade Center in
New York city.

Three short years after 9/11 it is clear that our vision of
the world has completely changed. We passed from an eco-
nomic to a strategic and military view of the world. Our con-
fidence in science and development is running away while
fear of new attacks nourish pessimistic forecast about an un-
certain future and our consciousness to live in an unsustain-
able type of development.

Without these general transformation many different
images have been elaborated even if they have in common

to give a clear priority to political, national and international processes. The most pessimistic approach announces an apocalyptic catastrophe because the pressure of non western political regime and forces will increase and that it has been demonstrated how easy is this to destroy vital elements of a society and to scare a population which was not used to bloody attacks on its territory.

But few people actually share this pessimistic view. Some more accept the opposite view is optimistic. The United States and their allies will finally take hold of terrorist individual and groups which represent only a small number of people. In Iraq a civil war can be avoided and in Palestine, the conflict has been already so long and violent that it is little likely that it provokes a worldwide crisis.

The real choices are between these two extreme views. They can be classified in three main subgroups.

The first one is made of the large number of people who think that the US can maintain its hegemony by changing elements of its environment, by solving the Israeli Palestinian conflict, by transforming Saudi Arabia and eliminating wahabete influence. These victories will be made possible by the strong attraction exerted by American economic and intellectual life for many young people and thanks to the almost total domination of American mass culture all over the world. Movies, songs and internet sites making possible of a worldwide market for Hollywood products. These positive conclusion is well documented by many studies on Iranian youth. A second approach is more pessimistic. It says that the US can no longer be the only superpower because resistance to its hegemony is now not only ideological or

economic but first of all cultural and more specifically religious. The US must be prepared to accept these multiple worlds and be prepared to resist attacks coming from various directions. More concretely US, like all other cultural poles must be as creative as possible but at the same time well protected against hostile ideas. This analysis has become extremely influential because of the impact of Samuel Huntington writings which are discussed all over the world. A moderate pessimism is associated here with to a defensive orientation and to strengthen national identity by linking it more tightly to spiritual or even more religious values.

These two approaches have become political forces and exert an influence on public opinion and decision makers. For foreigners and in particular for Europeans the most visible aspect of these approaches is the rupture of the US government with the multilateral system they had themselves built in UN and other international organizations. The gap between US and Europe is widening rapidly, partly because Americans support Israel decidedly while Europeans criticize American policies and defend Palestinians in their struggles to create a national state.

It is useless for me to introduce in few words a third possible approach because this paper will be first of all a presentation and critical assessment of this approach. Its starting point is the central importance it gives to the process of globalization but interpreting it in a specific way.

II

By globalization, I mean much more than the internationalization of production and trade of material and cultural

goods and services, I mean growing separation between economic activities which are organized at the world level and political and social institutions which function at only a more limited level, local, national or regional. The best way to characterize globalization is to consider it as an extreme form of capitalism, if we accept the classical definition of capitalistic development as a process of loosening all kinds of controls and limitation which were imposed at economic activities. Liberation of economic forces which gives them the capacities to control other sectors of social life so that economic rationality or other kinds of economic behaviors are out of reach of all kinds of social control. These process of separation between what we could call the objective world and the subjective universes leads to the elimination of all institutionalized frames of actions, norms and rules. If we try to imagine what the final point of this evolution could be we can describe a situation in which all social and political categories, norms and controls will have disappeared, a situation in which a totally deregulated economy had become wild and at the same time when an obsessive search for identity and homogeneity leads to aggressive "communalist regimes". Such conflicts would be much more dangerous than the sixteenth and seventeenth European religious wars. It is actually difficult for us to figure out what such a situation would be because during centuries we have given a central importance to all kinds of social controls, institutions, processes of socialization and methods of punishment. It is very difficult indeed to conceive of such "post social societies," while we can easily describe pre social societies, societies where political categories dominated so-

cial categories; for example during the first centuries of European modernization. And even more easily societies dominated by religious or cultural categories and corresponding to what has been called communities or as holistic systems. Most classical sociologists have opposed achievement to ascription, modernity to tradition and society to community. We can not easily imagine a movement back from society to community and with even more difficulty a situation where society and community would have jointly disappeared and where the only possible social relations would be as a commercial or military without any degree of integration between buyers and sellers. Such a complete separation between economics and cultures, between networks and identities corresponds to the most extreme form of crisis and "desocialization" we can imagine.

Many studies have described the transformation of an economic system which was based on technostructure, companies, innovations to a market economy, a networks economy in which communications are neither controlled not even elaborated by economic actors according to R. Reich's brilliant description. At the level of public opinion, the main effect of these transformations is the rapid disappearance of loyalty to the company, the identification of individuals with their career. More and more often the Presidents of big companies are perceived by public opinion as speculators, and crooks or simply people we live outside any society.

It is more difficult but more urgent to describe the behavior of new actors who are defined in purely cultural, that is subjective, terms without any link with representative po-

litical institutions. We are dramatically conscious that representative democracy is weakened both by the triumph of globalization and by the predominance of communitarian values which consider themselves as superior to political individual rights and to citizenship itself. We will try in this paper to choose between two answers to these difficult problem: does the rupture between economic processes and cultural meanings lead to the triumph of closed and even totalitarian communities or on the contrary to the reign of violence and wildness. It is true that ayatollahs and gunmen are not exclusive from each other but in the present situation, the two outcomes are clearly different, and for all parts of the world including western Europe.

III

There are actually two very different answers to this question. The first answer describes a world which is divided into a certain number of cultural areas, within which a central city, has a role of attraction on marginal or relatively isolated social units which explains the general trends towards concentration of resources and division of the world into a small number of "civilizations" which maintain their own identity while participating more and more actively in economic or financial or even scientific networks. Is it a solution realistic? The example of north American western Europe as to major cultural areas has not been convincing until now because they had many more elements in common than specific separated and it is not cleared what kind of civilizations can maintain themselves as such, side by side by

the American civilization, even if this has received many advantages from its hegemonic position in many different fields. But what abut other parts of the world? What do we mean when we speak for example of a Chinese civilization or of an African civilization? Today China is defined as much by the heritage of the Maoist revolution and by its rapid process of economic growth and by the absence of political liberalization by religious and cultural traditions. It is even more difficult to speak of an African civilization which can so easily be reduced to some practices and believes which are generally different from one culture to another one? Africa like the rest of the world is constantly invaded by non African mass culture and dominated by markets on which they have no real power. At the same time, the situation of African States is probably better defined by corruption or civil wars than by references to an African culture or even to the culture of some African regions. All countries are more directly determined in their decisions by US policies than by their own cultural history. Cultures are not like icebergs isolated from each other in a vast ocean. The power of domination, the American trade and arms lead most countries powerlessness. References to old cultural roots appear very often as instruments of propaganda for very limited social and economic and political rules.

The Latin American case has been extensively studied and discussed. Concepts like structural dualism, dependency, internal colonialism and many others, moderate or radical, indicate the necessity to give priority to historical patterns of modernization, dominated both by foreign capital and by the constant marginalization of the Indian popula-

tion. What is Latin American culture? Should we speak of
an indo American, hispano America, ibero America or Latin
America or should we speak separately not only in Brazil
and spanish speaking countries of various groups of coun-
tries separately? And do we include the Caribbean region
into Latin America, or maintain them separately but linked
together like most international organizations do. Anyway
most of the people who live in these countries and express
their opinion and analysis about them give a strong priority
to political and economic factor or cultural factor because
these are complex almost contradictory between them-
selves. Are they any countries in the world which could be
named Christian countries? to a certain extent Italy but
probably more because of the presence of the Pope than be-
cause of all present tradition. Finally as a European I know
that most people in Europe and outside like to speak about
European culture. What do they mean by that my first defi-
nition of Europe would be other country. That it has never
been unified no politically nor economically nor culturally.
The roman catholic world and the Byzantine world have
been completely falling to each other. Protestant and catho-
lic countries or regions have been enemies or in the best of
the cases separate "pillar" of different national societies.
And all stereotypes about each European countries reveals
immediately their weakness and we are satisfied to say that
the level of communication in all aspect of public and pri-
vate life has increased very much among European coun-
tries thanks to the strong and during process of construction
of European, economic and political system. But nobody
believes that Europe can be one the pillar of an Atlantic alli-

ance because first of all Europe is extremely inferior to the United States in term of arms. And second because all Europeans fields are dependant of the United States and many European consider that is positive and other that it is negative but very few would analyze their continent situation in basically cultural terms. And when people opposed the old cultural tradition of Europe to the brutality or absence of tradition of a continent of immigrants they reveal their prejudices more than their ideas about what Europe as such should do.

The most complex case is certainly the case of Israel during a first phase of existence of the new Israeli state, before and after 1948 the legitimacy of Israel and the hopes put into its creation were basically cultural: it was a direct consequence of the shoah so that Israel was considered as the heir of a Diaspora or at least of a Diaspora in Europe which had been almost entirely destroyed by the nazi regime. But even this first period of time another image of Israel was equally important. Israel was considered as created by workers coming from different social categories sharing a philosophy of creative labor had been to a very large extent opposed to the domination of religious authorities over Israel. But progressively from war to war, from victory to defeat and from a lower level to a higher level of protest by Palestinian the central topic has no longer be the existence of Israel but the right of both Israel and the Palestinian to live in a national state and during the last ten years especially since the beginning of the second Intifada the national problem is recognized as a central one. So that Israel is better defined by its relationships with the Palestinian authority and population

than by its own values, and traditions. And numerous Arabs in Palestine and outside Palestine consider that the constant reference to the shoah is dangerous and should be stopped because there is no reason for Arabs to pay for the crimes of Europeans or even to highly self conscious Europeans like the nazi were.

A general conclusion can be applied to all cases. Each one of them combines at least three dimensions: the first one is its participation in a modernity which is defined by universalistic principle but combined with a plurality of paths of modernization; the second is the position in a web of conflict in a globalized world and especially these countries relationships with the United states; the last one is the reinterpretation more than the transmission—of a cultural heritage—create and forms of cultural control of social relations. This third component is becoming less and less important. It reaches a pick in the nineteenth century when so many countries were trying to become national state and legitimized their independantist movement by the necessity to maintain or revive a language, and create new institutions.

Cultures as civilizations can no more be defined entirely by themselves than nations. The main weaknesses of multiculturalist theories are a) that they believe that each culture is unified and homogenous and b) that this culture can not be defined out of internal social relations and external international relations. In one world it is not possible to define a civilization by itself; in a global world each of us depends at least as much on an international system of power on its own past.

IV

A special attention should be paid to a very special situation which can be observed in only few countries but which is interesting as examples not of cultural determinants of contemporary society but of the capacity for some countries as a consequence of their modernization and of the specific features of it to create a new culture. In the nineteen century this was a case of the United States, heterogeneous country where Italian, Irish or German influences were strong but which created in a rapid way an American culture which has been diffused all over the world through mass medias. In our early twenty first century a conspicuous case is Brazil. In spite of the fact that many people in Brazil and outside emphasize the necessity for this country to be part of an integrated Latin America it seems that it appears that a specifically Brazilian culture has appeared and is clearly identified in many different parts of the world. The consequence is that Brazil is joining the club of the "big powers," and will be able to discuss its own orientation with the most powerful countries because its cultural identity is now generally accepted. The same judgment can probably be applied to Australia. Bust the most interesting cases are small countries which are often quite successful economically, maintain Welfare policies and are very well integrated in world economy. Israel is one member of this group Finland, Iceland, and probably tomorrow one or two other former communist countries will be recognized as owners of specific culture. In some cases the construction of the specific culture is a strong argument for political independence or more concretely for a guarantee given by the main world

power to this country that its independence will be pro-
tected. One of the most difficult problem is Taiwan which
hopes to gets its independence and not to be reintegrated
into China Republic and which tries to build a culture which
is different from continental China's culture.

We are now faced with the central problem. It is possi-
ble to give two opposite answers to the question which can
be now formulated: populations and governments which re-
sist to their complete subordination to global economy, do
they mobilize national feelings or even nationalism to orga-
nize their resistance; or is it possible to find example of
resistances which are based on culture more than on na-
tional or economic forces?

I do not personally believe that this cultural resistance
based on culture more than on national forces corresponds
to observable facts because there is no possibility to stop
half-way the process of social decomposition which was
born form the triumph of a global economy and hegemonic
political system. When the United States moved from hege-
mony which was first of all a strategy of war as an answer to
9/11 and then to a second war which can any day be trans-
formed into a civil war or into chaos in Iraq, a point of no re-
turn has been reached and we have entered into a world
which is dominated not only by military operations but what
is even more important, by the absolute hatred of the others,
by the negation of the others in several cases we are beyond
the war as some observers say not in a clash between cul-
tures.

Let's consider two important cases. The first one is the
evolution of the Islamist movements. After the fall of the

Shah in Iran and the success of Khomeini, an Islamic republic was founded which was directly defined in cultural and religious terms and similar attempts were launched in Afghanistan, in Sudan and in Algeria where the FIS won the election but was impeded the FLN to seize power. But rapidly these culturally defined states failed change their nature. Iran almost immediately because of the war with Iraq. Many observers explain theses failures by the fact that "national bourgeoisie" abandoned these project to integrate itself into a worldwide economy because it was profitable for it. At the same time, western culture penetrated theses countries, especially through internet so that the cultural control of the population actually disappeared.

The Turkish case is much more complex. After the Kemalist revolution which made illegal most public aspects of Islamic culture, some new Islamist movements gained ground again, especially in connection with nationalist movements in Kurdistan. Turkey has then invented and worked out a solution which combines the rule of an Islamic party with most elements of the Kemalist process of modernization. These fragile compromise is made workable because Turkey has decided to join European Union and is rapidly transforming many of its institutions to comply with European requirements.

We are now faced with the central problem. Various approaches to each other mainly because give opposite answers to the question which can be now formulated: What are the population or governments which oppose their culture, their subjectivity to the objective rationality of a global economy? A first answer emphasizes national dimensions

of their population which resist the domination of higher powers for accepting the opposite hypothesis we must find examples.

I do not believes that this process can actually be observed because there is no possibility to stop half way the process of social decomposition which was born from the triumph of a global economy and hegemonic political system. This can be more precisely formulated: When the United States, as I remind it at the beginning of this paper passed from an economic domination to the choice of a war, as an answer to 9/11 and then to a second war which can any day be transformed into a civil war or into chaos in Iraq, without mentioning than the tension is increasing with Iran which has been characterized himself as belonging to the world of evil a certain point of no return has been reached and we will observe, the development and maybe a radicalization of two complementary size of a processes of desocialisation and depolitization. We have already entered a world which is dominated by endless conflicts in which, even when some problems can be solved, the absolute hatred of the other, the negation of the other, makes impossible to find solutions.

To illustrate this solution, which corresponds to the second of the situation I have just mentioned, I briefly refer to two regional cases. The first, the most important one today is the evolution of the islamist movement. After the fall of the Shah in Iran or the success of Khomeini—probably perceived as a political leader as much as a religious figure—we observed a series of islamist republic from Iran to Afghanistan, from Sudan to Algeria at least if the elections

which were won by the FIS in this country has been re-
spected by the FLN. This seems to be a perfect example of
the creation of new political and economic societies which
are linked together and dominated by a common religion
and a common hatred for American imperialist domination.
But rapidly, this solution lost strength. Some observers say
because the national "bourgeoisie" preferred in a period of
globalization to integrate into a worldwide economy then to
transform itself into a national bourgeoisie limited to small
internal markets and unable to find a equilibrium between
religious populist and repressive regimes and an interna-
tionalized economy. The penetration of western culture, es-
pecially form internet, became a major fact of political
change especially in Iran. The Turkish case is the most com-
plex and that's why its importance is decisive. In Turkey,
Kemal Ataturk has wiped out Islamic culture. Islamic resis-
tance after the end of this period grew up again together es-
pecially while Kurdistan which was a strong hold of a
Muslim culture and social organization so that Turkey was
faced with multiple movements in which hard-liners com-
munist, local or religious leaders join their forces against the
political of "laicité" which was mainly supported by the
army. But the evolution of Turkey during the last decade, in
spite of political crisis, violent fight against the Kurdist
movement and measures of repression in prisons which
were unacceptable for a Europe which was asked to open its
door to the country has invented and worked out a solution
which combines Islam and the post communist process of
modernization. Turkey can be just defined as an ambivalent
country which is both western and Islamic, and which is not

satisfied with anyone of its type organization and behavior but which have avoided a civil war which has even progressed in most aspects of its internal life. The PPK has lost great part of its fighting capacity and the Turkish prisons slowly lose some of there terrible reputation.

We do not observe the formation of a culturally redefined country but on the contrary, how a country which gives a clear priority to its possible participation to the European Community and which is transforming itself economically at a rapid speed, without been exposed to a religious civil war.

At the same time, Iranian regime is rejected by large part of the population; in Afghanistan the Talibans after having defeated the soviet army have been almost eliminated; the Sudan is judged responsible for a mass-murder of a large part of the population by the Muslim in power in Khartoum and the impact of the FIS in Algeria decreases while a similar movement has been crashed in Tunisia. In Morocco, the king Hassan II had survived a dangerous atentate and has created populist Islamic regime and his son has maintained the same moderate policy which has avoided a major crisis.

But the downfall or loss of Islamic republics influence has led in many parts of the Arab world to military conflict, especially in Iraq which after the destruction of a non-religious didactureship it fell in a situation of political disorganization. Instead of observing the formation of a new Islamic republic in Iraq, we see that internal conflicts increase, especially between radical Sunnites groups and the chiites majority. The Sunnites will never accept a chiite re-

gime in Iraq which will create a tight alliance with Iran. Month after month, and in spite of American efforts which not all of them have failed, Iraq is entering more and more into chaos, violence and terrorism which much be defined here as the exact contrary of a culturally defined society. Terrorism—we know that this world is rejected by many people who consider the terrorist, especially the ones who sacrificed their own life to destroy enemy lives—as martyrs- terrorist are no longer soldiers of a war, they express the absence of political unit, of cultural unit, political program and economic resources which put together could make possible a new type of state, governed as a community in the name of religious values. So that, even if these people refer to religious value against the west, they do not act as members of a religious society.

The second example, is even more important because of its symbolic value, of his lasting symbolic value. Israel was created both as a homeland for the Jewish nation which has been identified strictly with its religion and as a Heimat for survivors of the Shoah but it was, at the same time the creation of a new kind of social democracy in which the central union, the Histradruth played the central role and in which kibbutz represented a non capitalistic kind of economic organization and defended and threatened frontiers. The Palestinian movement had passed trough a nationalist revolutionary period during which orthodox Christians played an important role as leaders of the most radical groups; much later the difficult creation of the Palestinian authority demonstrated the predominance of national over religious motivations. But since the beginning of the new

Intifada which followed the failure of the negotiation for peace which had began in Oslo, violence and terrorism led by subgroups linked with the Fatah or with the radical wing of Hamas and many others sub-groups are gaining ground every day. But again the problem is first of all a national one. In all Arab countries, the vast majority of the people who were asked in a survey: what is the main condition for the creation of a Palestinian state? answered: the destruction of Israel and the dissemination of the Jewish population in other countries. On the Israeli side, not only the colons, who have settled recently in the Gaza strip but a growing number of people no longer believe a solution is possible. The idea of a lasting war did not come from the most conservative sectors and if the Israeli government could accept the frontiers which has been accepted by both camps in the preceding decade and it is possible that the separation of two national states will be an alternative to a constant development of terrorism on both sides but on both sides the "good" solution is to eliminate the other.

Terrorism is violence separated from all kinds of political and military project and from cultural values. Terrorism can be very efficient; it can scare a large number of people all over the world but it does not; carry a positive project; it is a force of disintegration of an organized social or cultural movement; it is not a way of building a new collective action.

The case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is so central that it has direct effects in many different countries. For example, in France a noticeable increase of antisemitic acts — and of anti arabic acts too — is a direct effect of the mid-

dle-east conflict while in the past Jewish and Arab population which in many cases lived near each other had not created nor been involved in violent conflicts. These examples, even if they are limited show clearly that the relationship between Islam and the Western world which had been first economic, because of oil then has become more heavily loaded with a cultural conflict now disintegrate themselves into violence, terrorism and the murder of hostages even when they had no links with the United States and its allies. They killed victims only to make impossible the search for an agreement

The second case, I would briefly mention here is the European, just to say that the short period during which some European hoped that the European Community could become a real nation state defined in cultural as well as economic terms is over. Such an idea was never popular except among German old people who maintained a highly understandable fear and hatred for a German national state. The meeting at Nice and the difficult elaboration of a constitutional treaty which should be ratified by all countries shows the predominance of national interests. Some countries insisted for mentioning the Christian origins of Europe in the preambule of the constitution. Other countries like France opposes it in the name of their own constitution. Anyway, Europe is massively considered by its inhabitants as an instrumental device necessary to be able to resist some how American hegemony and to get rid of internal conflicts; Europe is not conceived by European as a moral and a religious state comparable to United States. On the extreme Islamite side the main orientation is to world violence and Terrorism

is a main obstacle to the formation of a religiously based central conflict. In Europe cultural values and goals have a very limited importance, in spite of so many statements and speeches which oppose European culture and American culture or absence of culture. Such statements should not be taken too seriously, on either side of the Atlantic. The real conflict between the United States and Europe is not a moral or religious one, it results from American decision to abandon the multilateralism they had created and to rely only on one radical unilateralism.

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I am convinced that western countries, the United States, Canada and Australia as well as Great Britain and France do not consider that their own solutions, could be applied to the whole world. Many people speak so constantly of multiculturalism but we don't know whether they refer to the integration of immigrants in good conditions as XIX and XXth century in America or for the more painful settlement of immigrants in Europe more recently. But all of them are looking for a combination of unit and diversity: ex pluribus unum, classical formula which suppose both the defense of cultural diversity and stronger institutions which maintains the unity of the nation, the republic and its citizenship.

A great merit of Samuel Huntington's book is to have come back to a realistic image of a world which can not be considered as living a process of formation of united states of the world. I try to show that the image of the world which is elaborated by S. Huntington is not satisfactory and corre-

sponds more to a central preoccupation for the defense of the United States more than affirming a satisfactory description of the processes which are transforming the whole world today. Because I maintain that the main factor of change is the widening gap between a global economic system and a plurality of cultures which can less and less become a basis for religious states and risk, on the contrary, to lead us to political violence in which terrorism gains ground against military actions which were still recently considered by the classical tradition of being part a national policy.

One of the most visible feature of today's world situation is a constant weakness of all institutional and political systems. In many parts of the world, corruption, nepotism and dangerous ideologies make impossible the success of any general project of government.

Many countries depend on more powerful countries, it is impossible for many agricultural productions to survive in the so-called third world because rich countries heavily support their own agriculture.

Maybe in the future it will be possible to interpret the present day situation as a step towards the decline of American empire because of the growing influence of religiously based states.

Because many of the countries which are supposed to be communities which are ruled by religious principles while a country like China belong to a different category. Moreover for non religious and cultural reasons represents a major problem of threat for the American empire, it is difficult to name a powerful country which defines itself by a religion view while everywhere in the world on the contrary we can

see that disorganization of societies as a consequence of globalization, fasters on one side the growing strength of economic and financial networks and what is even more dramatic, the growing impossibility to maintain a certain institutional integration for populations which are in a situation comparable to that of refugees in their own country.

Our most urgent duty is not to accept more or less diversity within our national states or regions; it is to construct or reconstruct a bridge between the economic world and the cultural worlds, between the universe of objectivity and the world of subjectivity, because both of them when they are separated from each other by the process of globalization become on both unable to control oneself.

The most important goal to reach is to reinstitutionalize economic life as many prominent economists have said, according to them, economic development can not be reached by the elementary recommendations of the Washington consensus. In spite of the fact that European and other countries are living a deep crisis of the welfare-state, which was created at the end of the second world war, we will not go out of the present day difficulties by following a policy which has already increased inequalities and all forms of exclusion in many parts of the world. A new European social model, to use Jacques Delors old expression, may be found and worked out. The same is true for the United States which have not succeed yet in creating a modern system health insurance a few years ago.

But the most difficult problem by far, is to reincorporate cultural values and economic instruments into the same political and institutional system. The attempts made to create

a decision making system and for instance to reach a higher degree of economic integration among Latin America states have failed. The conclusion is that solutions are no longer local or national and can be find only at a global level. Is it possible to fill at least partially the gap which is every year widening between a global economy which become wild and culturally defined societies which are hit by process of decomposition which leads towards uncontrolled violence and self-destruction.

Who can succeed rebuilding institutions and societies? Who can impose to United States and to "poor countries" to become partners in the reconstruction of institutionally control societies? Who is able to give a central importance to the reconstruction of citizenship in countries, in regions where the elements of decomposition are every year stronger and the elements of unity and integration weaker?

The first victim of the period which has been opened by 9/11 attentate and then by the American military intervention is the United Nations. The system of the united nations has lost its strength and the trust that so many people especially in America had put in it has disappeared.

The only possible solution can come from countries or regions which are at least directly involved in the present war of religious. But is too big, too young, too busy building its new economy to play such a difficult international role. The least and realistic solution seems to hope that the European could finally play an active role.

When we say Europe it's difficult to know what we exactly mean. If we call Europe the Brussels commission or the Council of the chief of States, it seems almost impossi-

ble that a European institution allows its leaders to play such an important role, most of all because many members of the European Community would accept to define themselves as go-between let's say the united states and the Islamic world. As far as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is concerned it seems clear that the Israeli government is absolutely opposed to any role of the European Union because it has always considered the United States as its only secure friend. The Palestinian, even if they are supported by European public opinion, are certainly not willing to give the impression that they share with some European countries which support the United States the same preoccupation for an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian authority.

Should we just drop this idea which has been mentioned in few words, in a marginal way? This pessimistic answer is certainly the most realistic one but it is impossible to recognize it because once it has been dropped there is no barrier to a complete victory of violence and to the defeat of all instruments of political and social controls.

Europe is to big and too small to take useful initiatives but Europe can give a new life to the United Nations, a first step to transform the Security council so that the main countries and regions of the world would feel responsible for the whole world. The Europeans are probably the only one 5 who can propose a transformation on United Nations not for them, but which would give stronger voice to countries like Brazil which must be associated to European initiative.

It is not the purpose of this paper to describes the possible diplomatic and institutional solutions but if have given some very shortly indications about possible ways of re-

constructing which could be useful in world affairs it is just to make clear that there is no spontaneous equilibrium between various cultural ideas. Relations of power are always more important than differences and we can cannot recognize differences and make them compatible with a peaceful order if we do not eliminate first of all both hegemony and its dissolving consequences on most countries.

I must unfortunately conclude that the most pessimistic hypothesis is the most likely to correspond to the coming situation.

There is a real danger for all of us to enter into a world in which we all would be swallowed and destroyed by violence. Or we could easily imagine a Europe which would be paralyzed by its basic conflicts about its relationship with United and an American society accepting easily without these negative tendencies. The most conservatives elements of the republican party defend a society which is deeply isolationist but the one which controls in New York, Boston, Washington, or on the contrary San Francisco and Los Angeles feel still responsible for the whole world, African American is still tempted by secession especially when they see a very large and rapidly growing Spanish speaking population becoming. More dramatically, we can already see in various parts, the world non-existing countries. In almost part of the world they are territories which are considered as states which have no participation in legal economy, which survive with resources coming from outside or from illegal activities, they are many countries in which: at midnight the government does not cover. It is painful to recognize that thirty years ago we didn't feel with the same anxiety this process of disintegration of the world.

I am very far from judging this evolution inevitable but I consider as necessary to accept the kind of analysis which leads to these gloomy predictions. I consider as more likely a designation of the parts of the world which are directly involved in global conflicts

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Than a clash of civilizations that is the reason which are themselves consequences the basic dissociation a global economy and subjective politics why I give such a large importance to all processes of reconstruction of conditions which make possible to limit processes of designations which are progressing now.

But most of us we could agree on a much more elementary conclusion. We have entered not on 9/11 but much before a situation which has become conscious after 9/11: The world system is out of control. What used to be considered a society: network of relations between various sectors of collective life and the control of institutionalized political authority over social life is falling into pieces and not only in the poorest countries. How can we take part in the necessary reconstruction of political institutions, and trust again democratic rules. More concretely, we need to be more and more actively convinced of the necessity of a group like this one, which has been imagined by Candido Mendes and other people to dedicate its reflexion and initiative to reintegrating, reconstructing links as the top as well as the bottom of world order. Institutional controls which will allow us not to be engulfed in this violence.