

# **Against Imperialism and Colonization: Six Strategies for Sovereignty, Dignity and the Life of the People**

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**Translation, done by Richard Fidler [1], of large extracts of the resolutions adopted August 2 in Cochabamba (Bolivia) [2].**

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## **AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND COLONIZATION: SIX STRATEGIES FOR SOVEREIGNTY, DIGNITY AND THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLES**

An Anti-Imperialist and Anticolonialist Summit of the Peoples of Latin America and the world has been held in Bolivia at a time of imperial counter-offensive aimed at silencing the voice of rebelliousness of the people struggling for another possible world in which we will have achieved the emancipation of human beings and Mother Earth.

Therefore, assembled in Cochabamba from July 31 to August 2, 2013, we declare as follows:

The current crisis of capitalism is a crisis of multiple dimensions: a crisis of finance, production, the climate, food, energy, politics and ideology. In short, a crisis of civilization that threatens the life of capitalism as such, but also of humanity and the planet. However, faced with this crisis, and in desperate attempts to revive and strengthen this system, pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist governments are promoting further privatizations, the pillage of Mother Earth, the destruction of social rights, and the plunder of natural resources.

Amidst this crisis, the wars and coups promoted by the Empire are aimed at installing puppet governments and capturing strategic natural resources. Invasions of countries and sabotage of processes of change are the Empire's responses to the crisis of the capitalist system.

The imperial counter-offensive began with the NATO intervention in the dismemberment of many of the countries of the socialist camp and the former Yugoslavia, where it launched a territorial fragmentation strategy that imperialism has since been trying to use in Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador.

The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were another aspect of this historical period as the Empire sought to seize their natural resources and deploy a range of geopolitical strategies aimed at maintaining the pattern of North-South relations and preventing reinforcement of South-South relations.

Likewise, starting after 2008 with the administration of Barack Obama, imperialism has taken the path of a major military offensive aimed at overcoming the crisis of capitalism. Libya became the

first victim and now the focus is on Syria and Iran with the complicity of the United Nations, whose Security Council has been virtually kidnapped by the United States, England and France.

The transnational military arm of the United States is called NATO. Its new strategic concept has made the planet a global theatre for its operations. Latin America now finds itself threatened by Colombia's request to become a co-operative partner of NATO.

Another manifestation of the global counter-offensive of imperialism is the violation of the international conventions and treaties that emerged after World War II. Since the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. and its European partners in NATO have made it more than clear that their geopolitical interests in commandeering the world's natural resources prevail over the international order.

One of the latest violations of that international order is the kidnapping of President Evo Morales last July 2, when four European countries denied him the right to refuel and the use of airspace, putting his life in jeopardy. Clearly there is a before and after since July 2, 2013. Nor is it accidental that the only country that allowed the landing was Austria, which is not a member of NATO.

The world capitalist counteroffensive is expressed in Latin America with the opening of more military bases on our continent: the implementation of Plan Colombia, the Mérida Initiative, [3] the Andean Initiative [4] and the Caribbean Basin Initiative [5]; the failed and defeated coups against Chávez in Venezuela (2002), Morales in Bolivia (2008) and Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2010); the military coup against Manuel Zelaya in Honduras (2009), and the activation of the Fourth Fleet (to control the ocean through the possibility of rapid deployment).

Following the defeat of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) at Mar del Plata in 2005, imperialism has rearmed politically and economically, promoting the Pacific Alliance as a bloc of pro-free trade countries that is intended to counter politically, economically and ideologically the integration processes in the region; it is aimed especially at reconfiguring the geopolitical balance of forces and acting as a counterweight to the growing influence of ALBA, which relies instead on strengthening UNASUR and CELAC. The Pacific Alliance represents an attempt to replicate the neocolonial model of the FTAA.

Imperialism and colonialism are using the media as the most appropriate instruments to disorient our peoples and to undermine social support for our progressive governments. They are also developing sophisticated technological networks as part of the intrusion and interference of U.S. imperialism in our countries.

To confront this very difficult context, the movements and peoples of the world gathered in Cochabamba have agreed to oppose imperialism and colonialism by implementing six strategies for sovereignty and the dignity and life of our peoples.

*[From here on, I summarize the contents of this lengthy document. – Richard Fidler (RF)]*

## **STRATEGY 1**

### **STRENGTHENING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE WORLD'S PEOPLES BY FIGHTING THE IMPERIAL AND MILITARISTIC INSTRUMENTS OF DOMINATION LIKE NATO**

The introduction to this section recounts the formation of NATO in 1949 as the primary imperialist alliance during the Cold War, and its use since the fall of the Soviet Union as an instrument to uphold the worldwide geopolitical and economic interests of the US and other imperialist powers and to keep the world safe for capitalism.

The document calls on the peoples and countries of the South to mobilize in opposition to NATO and related imperialist alliances and to oppose invasions of sovereign countries and the plunder of natural resources. "Without nationalization of natural resources there is no sovereignty," it says. And it calls for the creation of an "Observatory of the Neo-coupism and Military Interventionism of the United States and its Armed Wing, NATO."

Among the efforts it recommends to free the peoples of the world from colonialism it calls for sustained campaigning against the US blockade of Cuba and its revolution, "a revolution of all the world's peoples," and for the return of the Malvinas (a.k.a. the Falkland Islands) to Argentina. And it calls for international mobilization to modify the composition of the UN Security Council and to "democratize" it by increasing the representation of the "developing countries" on the Council.

The workshop on this topic adopted a number of proposals that were not included in the final text. Among these:

- Establish July 2 as an International Day Against Imperialism, to represent emancipation of peoples and especially of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in rejection of the attack on President Evo Morales;
- Hold the second Anti-imperialist, Anticapitalist and Anticolonialist Summit for the Sovereignty of the Peoples and Security of Human Rights in Venezuela on March 5, 2014, in homage to the memory of Hugo Chávez; and
- Participate in the World Youth and Student Festival in Quito, Ecuador, December 7-13, 2013.

## **STRATEGY 2**

### **ALLIANCE AND MOBILIZATION OF THE PEOPLES TO PREVENT THE RESTORATION OF NEOLIBERALISM AND THE FTAA**

This section singles out the Pacific Alliance as an instrument for the restoration of privatization of services and natural resource development based on so-called free trade and investment agreements, an attempt to recreate the frustrated Free Trade Area of the Americas and to counter the efforts toward unification and political unity in Latin America through such alliances as ALBA, MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC.

Among the specific actions it proposes are "the promotion and recognition of development models defined in sovereignty by the peoples of the world based on solidarity, complementarity, *vivir bien*, and harmony with Mother Earth..." It calls for "alternative economic projects that recognize, respect and strengthen the communitarian, indigenous and ancestral structures of our peoples, and that promote socialism, the economy of *vivir bien* distinct from capitalism."

The capitalist model, it says, should be countered by building along socialist lines, "based on socially-owned enterprises and recognition of the plural, state and communitarian social economy." This entails "state support for a productive sector based on associated small and micro enterprises, communitarian social associations, and a solidaristic and cooperative social economy" – all of which, it says, are major job creators – along with "state enterprises committed to the sovereignty and dignity of the peoples and the democratization of wealth."

To fight "consumerism and commercialization [*mercantilismo*]," it is fundamental to "consume our own products, our own safe and healthy foods."

Technological sovereignty, the statement says, involves developing knowledge and innovation in a

framework of a dialogue between ancient communal indigenous and peasant knowledges and modern learning and technologies.

It urges support for the people of Bolivia in that landlocked country's fight to regain the access to the Pacific that it lost to Chile in the War of the Pacific in the 1870s. This can best be achieved, it says, through creation of a Trinational Coordinating Committee of the Peoples between Bolivia, Peru and Chile that can secure this demand in a context of justice and solidarity.

Finally, the statement calls for building "an instrument of political action of the social movements to discuss actions in defence of those governments advancing progressive options for Latin America, and in support of the struggles of other progressive revolutionary processes."

The workshop on this topic adopted a number of proposals not included in the final declaration. Among these:

- To solve the problem of the land and to recognize the right of the indigenous peasants to administer their own lands, the development of comprehensive agrarian reform processes is key to guaranteeing food sovereignty. Sale of land must be prohibited, and the economic function of the land must be recognized.
- Monetary sovereignty. Colonization also proceeds through monetary policy, hence the imposition of the dollar. Rescue the Sucre as our regional currency and move toward monetary integration, making the Sucre currency of common use.
- Strengthen the Bank of the South (Banco del Sur) so that it can finance undertakings to achieve food sovereignty, freeing us from transgenic seeds and preventing Monsanto from invading our territories.
- Create an ALBA parliament.
- Create a continental coordination of the peoples between Peru, Chile and Bolivia to help achieve Bolivian access to the sea.

### **STRATEGY 3**

#### **DECOLONIZATION AND ANTI-IMPERIALISM**

"It is not possible to speak of national liberation and to recover economic and political sovereignty," states the preamble to this section, "without posing the need to build an alternative vision to unfettered, extractivist and plundering capitalism." This involves "strengthening our diversity and interculturalism to achieve a sovereignty of thinking and consciousness, recovering the ancestral knowledges of our peoples."

Among the specific steps proposed in order to promote decolonization and anti-imperialism are:

- the greater involvement of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist social movements within formal and informal international alliances and councils;
- the establishment of Constituent Assemblies in all Latin American countries as well as on other continents in order to found Plurinational States, the models here obviously being Bolivia and Ecuador;
- creating social movement media on a Latin American scale, with headquarters in Bolivia, to report

on the various experiences in their struggles;

- holding annual International Anti-imperialist and Anticolonial Summits, preferably on July 28 to commemorate the birth date of Hugo Chávez; and
- the creation of a University of the Peoples of ALBA to “decolonize educational, institutional and mental structures and develop our own Latin American projects and programs capable of developing the region with its sovereignty, dignity, equity and identity.”

This section also calls for demanding that imperialism pay its ecological debt; supporting the peace process in Colombia, and supporting Puerto Rico’s independence. The workshop (mesa) on this topic added a call for the withdrawal of Minustah [\[6\]](#) from Haiti.

## **STRATEGY 4**

### **STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE PEOPLES**

“Human rights from imperialism’s perspective,” says the preamble to this section, “are a means of consolidating a model of society that is individualistic, privatized, hierarchical and in which the market has control and domination over our peoples.” This is the outlook that has been incubated in the OAS’s Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and in other international bodies. “But the international actions taken recently against Evo Morales are not only an infringement of international law by the states involved, they also demonstrate the decadence of the European societies.”

The new vision of human rights must reflect the thinking of the social movements, and states must be accountable to those movements for their exercise of these rights. Human rights must be based on anti-imperialist criteria and respect our cultures and our indigenous and Afro-descendant identities. The new vision of human rights has to be based on three pillars: universal recognition of the rights of Mother Earth; effective recognition of the individual and collective rights of the peoples; and full enforcement of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.

In terms of specific actions, the statement calls for discussion of a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, recovering the cosmovision of our aboriginal rights as the basis of the civilizing horizon of Vivir Bien; creation of an intercontinental organ of social movements parallel to the United Nations; promotion and strengthening of basic services as a human right; and “highlighting the importance of the human rights of women and the need to struggle to eradicate femicide in our region.”

And it calls for the immediate and unconditional end to the inhuman economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba and for its exclusion from the list of state sponsors of international terrorism; the freeing of the four Cuban heroes unjustly imprisoned in the United States; and the definitive closure of the centres of violation of human rights installed in Latin America by the United States, such as the Guantánamo prison.

The workshop on this topic added a call for independence of Puerto Rico.

## **STRATEGY 5**

### **FIGHT AGAINST EXPIONAGE AND INTERFERENCE, TO FREE THE PEOPLES FROM THE DOMINATION OF IMPERIALIST TERROR**

The introduction to this section analogizes the US counteroffensive in Latin America to “low-intensity warfare.” In addition to the “international espionage” of the CIA, well-documented in many countries, the recent revelations of Edward Snowden have shed light on the extensive global network of digital spying “in violation of the privacy and sovereignty of the progressive countries.”

To combat this imperialist espionage, the declaration recommends the following actions, among others, to strengthen popular and state sovereignty:

- the prompt creation of an ALBA communications infrastructure to serve as an alternative and independent internet network, linking the Latin American and Caribbean countries through fibre optics technology;
- the construction of a Latin American civilian and military intelligence and counter-intelligence centre, as part of the ALBA Defence Doctrine, that can “train revolutionaries to confront the imperialist espionage”; and
- the achievement of computer sovereignty by nationalizing and developing state-controlled national telecommunications firms and developing continental computer technology networks using their own free software.

The workshop on this topic also call for monitoring foreign NGOs in countries of the South, to ensure that they do not service imperialism in their activities.

## **STRATEGY 6**

### **TO COUNTER THE COLONIALISM OF DISINFORMATION, PEOPLE’S CONTROL OVER THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA**

Most of the private media in Latin America, notes the preamble, are hostile to the anti-imperialist, anticolonialist and anticapitalist positions of the progressive governments. They work constantly to create social unrest. Examples cited are the “media coup d’état perpetrated in Venezuela against Hugo Chávez in 2002, the systematic media campaign in Bolivia in opposition to the process of change led by Evo Morales..., and the political and media opposition in Ecuador to Rafael Correa,” who has initiated legislation to undermine the private media dictatorship in that country.

There is a great need, the declaration says, to promote a system of independent communications spaces through the establishment of alternative community media, using networks of popular communications. Among the steps that can be taken, it adds, are:

- extending the TeleSUR and Radio del Sur broadcasting networks throughout Latin America and the Caribbean;
- establishing and strengthening popular communications networks (radio, television, social media networks) in collaboration with the social movements and the communications media that already exist; and
- establishing access to a state and community media satellite network that “integrates radio and television stations of the various social movements in our countries, broadcasts content related to the liberation struggles of our peoples, and promotes the design of communications content in native languages.”

The workshop on this topic proposed in addition that strategic proposals along these lines be taken to the Second World Summit on Indigenous Communications, to be held October 13-17 in Oaxaca,

Mexico.

## **STRENGTHENING THE EMANCIPATORY POTENTIAL OF THE PEOPLES**

This final section notes “the legacy of the Cuban revolution,” which “opened the way” to all of today’s “people’s governments and defenders of the social majorities.” And it recognizes “the legacy of Chavismo, which allowed the development of a political project of Latin American integration with socialism as its horizon,” adding that this is a communitarian socialism born from our own peoples – indigenous and workers – whose long memory and wisdom reaffirms for us not only the need but the real possibility to construct a social order outside of the logics of capital.”

“Latin America is experiencing one of the most extraordinary cycles in its entire history,” the declaration says.

“The peoples of Abya Yala, [7] in terms of both their position as a class and their position as originary campesino indigenous peoples, have risen up and are moving toward their final and full independence. This possibility of achieving emancipation, more than 500 years after the European invasion and 200 years after achieving state independence, has never before been presented with the force that it now has in the present conditions: a rise in the degree of organization and consciousness of the peoples, revolutionary and progressive governments, leaders with a great historical dimension, and the emergence of initiatives of Latin American unity and integration.”

But added to the structural problems, which are simply the unpleasant residues of the old colonialism, are other challenges in confronting the problems of the new colonialism. One is the need to recover popular control over natural resources. Another is the need to further “relations of collaboration, cooperation, solidarity and complementarity between peoples and states.” And still another is to “develop technology to change our productive matrix without affecting Mother Earth.”

To strengthen the emancipatory potential of our peoples, the statement says, there must be a permanent solidarity among them, expressed in concrete actions aimed against all forms of oppression and domination; respect for the self-determination of the peoples, national and popular sovereignty, etc., to build a society that is more inclusive, more participatory, more democratic, more complementary and solidaristic – one that allows us to live in harmony with Mother Earth.

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**P.S.**

\* <http://lifeonleft.blogspot.fr/2013/09/bolivias-cogent-responses-to-recent.html>

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## **Footnotes**

[1] See on ESSF (article 29871), [Bolivia’s cogent responses to recent provocations from the Empire](#).

[2] See Documento final de la Cumbre Antiimperialista y Anticolonial de los Pueblos de América Latina y el mundo:  
<http://enclavesur.blogspot.fr/2013/08/documento-final-de-la-cumbre.html> and  
<http://www.noticiaspia.org/cerca-de-un-millon-de-personas-en-cierre-de-cumbre-de-cochabamba-r>

[3] The Mérida Initiative (also called Plan Mexico by critics) is a security cooperation agreement between the United States and the government of Mexico and the countries of Central America, with the declared aim of combating the threats of drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and money laundering. The assistance includes training, equipment and intelligence. (Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9rida\\_Initiative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9rida_Initiative))

[4] The Andean Counterdrug Initiative (ACI) is a program operated within the US State Department that is responsible for supporting anti-drug initiatives in Colombia and other South American countries. ACI grew out of a controversial legislation, Plan Colombia, which supported various drug wars in South America. The program seeks to eradicate coca and induce local farmers to plant alternative crops. But for all the money that has been spent towards stemming the flow of illegal drugs into the United States from South America, little progress has been made in reaching this goal. (<http://tinyurl.com/ks6qb6n><http://tinyurl.com/ks6qb6n> )

[5] The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) was a unilateral and temporary United States program initiated by the 1983 “Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act” (CBERA). The CBI came into effect on January 1, 1984 and aimed to provide several tariff and trade benefits to many Central American and Caribbean countries. It arose in the context of a U.S. desire to respond with aid and trade to leftist movements that were active in some countries of the region, such as the guerrillas in El Salvador and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Provisions in the CBERA prevented the U.S. from extending preferences to CBI countries that it judged to be under the influence of Communists or that had expropriated American property. (Wikipedia, <http://tinyurl.com/k6h58ez>)

[6] The United Nations Stabilisation Mission In Haiti (MINUSTAH) is a United Nations “peacekeeping” mission (actually occupation force) in Haiti that has been in operation since 2004, following the overthrow by France, the US and Canada of the elected government headed by Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The mission’s military component is led by the Brazilian Army and the force commander is Brazilian. The force is composed of 8,940 military personnel (including a small contingent from Bolivia) and 3,711 police.

[7] Abya Yala is the name used by many indigenous peoples to refer to the American continent since before the arrival of Columbus.