

NEW UNITY MOVEMENT

20th ANNUAL CONFERENCE



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY CDE REGINALD FELDMAN

**LANSDOWNE CIVIC CENTRE
CHURCH STREET
LANSDOWNE**

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This Presidential Address will be delivered as the Key Note Address of the 20th Annual conference of the New Unity Movement, which will be held on Saturday 30th April, Sunday 1st May and Monday 2nd May 2005 in Cape Town

The Lansdowne Civic Centre will be the venue for the Address on Friday 29th April 2005.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the New Unity Movement I extend a cordial and comradely welcome to members of the Movement; our friends and supporters to this, an open session of our 20th Annual Conference. I hope you will find the contents of the Address interesting and appropriate for the times we are living in.

My theme is based on an extract from the Presidential Address delivered on the 25th of April 2003 by our late President, Abe Fortuin. He said the following: - " We are meeting at a time when Imperialism is on the rampage by not only making war against whomever it chooses but also impoverishing and enslaving more countries and people from the "Third World" through global capitalism (imperialism).

Imperialism and Human Rights

The times we are living through almost exactly two years after Cde. Abe's remarks have not changed. Events have, in fact, escalated in nature and intensity. As a further extension of our theme I wish to quote from "Human Rights Report" a publication of the Human Rights Foundation dated December 2001. The Report is 23 pages long and its subject is the " US War Crimes in Afghanistan." Dr. M Adam, the Chairman of the Foundation, writes the introduction. His opening paragraph reads as follows: -

" The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 after several years of discussions and negotiations. As far as implementation is concerned the declaration has largely remained merely a declaration and does not appear to be a binding legal document. (Note: As it still is today, in the year 2005). In fact it has become a political instrument for the US to demonize weaker countries by showing up areas of so-called "human rights abuses" with a view to further its own political and economic interests in a region.

These words were written with Afghanistan in mind. It must be clear to all of us, however, that the same could be said of Iraq where the US charged the nation of Iraq with being guilty of possessing weapons of mass destruction and a host of human rights abuses. The people who were wretched under Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and tyranny were made to suffer once more. The entire population was afflicted, for instance, when the US denied Iraqis certain equipment and chemicals leading to a water purification crisis, which increased the country's death rate. Tariq Ali, author of "Bush in Babylon – The Recolonisation of Iraq" says: - " One wonders what justification could have been offered for this murderous reprisal against an entire people." Dr Adam pointed out, in connection with the events of the 11th of September (9/11) that; "Within an hour of the WTC attacks CNN had already named Osama Bin Laden as the prime suspect even before an investigation could have been started." He said, " The attack on the WTC was an horrendous crime from several perspectives:

Firstly, it caused the deaths of 5000 innocent civilians.

Secondly, and as important, it provides motivation for the US to harass thousands of innocent civilians who had nothing to do with 9/11.

Thirdly, it would lead to further aggression against other countries, which it believed were guilty of "terrorism" in order to carry out its economic and strategic interests in the Middle East region. The Human Rights Foundation found the USA guilty of gross violations of human rights in the war in Afghanistan. If we study the human rights abuses committed later in Iraq there should be no problem finding the USA guilty there as well. The reasons are as follows: -

Firstly, as regards Iraq and the stated reasons for invading that country and waging war against the Iraqi nation. The USA accused Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction – falsely, as events unfolded. Iraq was also accused of human rights abuses as well as being a destabilizing factor in the Middle East with special reference to Israel, America's client state. It would have been necessary in such a case for the USA to prove its case in an International Court of Justice or the Belgium Courts, which have international jurisdiction. This USA refused to do.

Secondly, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were both acts of aggression totally contrary to the principles of the UN Charter and the United Nations. Tariq Ali notes that " On the 15th of February 2003, even before the war started, over eight million people marched on the streets of five continents against a war that had not yet begun. This first truly global mobilization – unprecedented in size, scope and scale – sought to head off the occupation of Iraq being plotted in the Pentagon. " According to certain sources it was also discussed in January 2001 at the first meeting of the NSC (National Security Council) of the USA – eight months before the September 11 attacks. The allegation at the meeting was that Iraq was busy destabilizing the Middle East Region. It was necessary, therefore, to "create a regime in Iraq aligned with US interests." An observer has pointed out; "plans were made, at

the meeting, in a cold, calculated way based on serving the interests of financial capital. " We might well ask, in passing, why the UN, under Kofi Annan, was silent regarding the flagrant disregard of their organisation and charter.

Thirdly, the Geneva Convention does not allow the harming of civilians in times of war. Thousands of civilians died in Iraq during the war and subsequent unrest. In the aftermath of 9/11 thousands of US citizens who just happened to be Muslims were rounded up, stripped of their basic human rights and kept in prison for months without recourse to the courts of law. In Iraq, homes of innocent civilians were raided on a daily basis. The occupants were humiliated and many were killed. Even mosques were reduced to rubble.

Fourthly, in Afghanistan prisoners' war were summarily executed without trial, in one instance, according to reports, with their hands tied behind their backs. In Iraq WE military police subjected prisoners of war to inhuman treatment in Abu Ghraib prison. Reports speak of humiliation and ill treatment unknown in the civilized world. Time magazine said " The medical system at the prison became an instrument of abuse, by design and by neglect." It should be mentioned that many of the prisoners at Guantanamo, a US prison in Cuba, were/are civilians accused of "aiding and abetting terrorists." They were not allowed the services of lawyers.

History of Imperialism

If we use the criteria just mentioned there is no doubt that Imperialist America and its coalition partners were/are guilty of gross human rights abuses in both Afghanistan and Iraq. It must be pointed out, though, that the two countries are mentioned here as they have been chosen as the subjects of discussion for the purposes of this Address. The USA and the other Imperialists/Colonizers have throughout history, in many

parts of the world been guilty of such abuses in their Imperialist "wars."

"Understanding Power – The Indispensable Chomsky," is a collection of Noam Chomsky's discussions which span a wide array of topics" (Preface) Chomsky is a noted linguist and commentator, analyst of current affairs and has been described as "one of the most remarkable political activists and thinkers of our time" (Preface). Chomsky describes the treatment of the Native Americans as "Pure Genocide" or "Mass Genocide." He says "There were about twelve to fifteen million Native Americans at the time Columbus landed. By the time the Europeans reached the continental borders of the United States there were about 200 000 ... finally the native population were basically stuck away in little enclaves." The American Colonists (this was in the seventeenth century) signed treaties with the Indians, which, in theory, had the same status as that of treaties among sovereign States but, in Chomsky's words: - Nobody paid the slightest attention to them – as soon as you wanted more land, you just forgot the treaty and robbed it. It's a very ugly and vicious history." Chomsky then discusses the development of the state system in Europe, which was finally sort of established in 1945, as the result of savage wars and murders and atrocities going back hundreds and hundreds of years. In fact, the main reason why the plague of European civilization was able to spread all over the world in the past five hundred years is that the Europeans were just a lot more vicious and savage than any one else, because they'd had a lot more practice murdering one another – so when they came to other places they knew how to do it, and were very good at it.' the word "rampage" used in the statement of our theme at the beginning of this Address turns out to be mild indeed, the understatement of the year!

Chomsky points out that right up to today there are wars all over the Third World (think in particular of Africa) because of the national boundaries the European invaders imposed on countries by force. These boundaries have nothing to do with affinities of language, custom and culture. They were drawn where one European power could expand at the expense of other powers.

In the case of Iraq most European governments refused to become part of the invading coalition force. They were not opposed to Bush's imperialist aims; they were merely concerned with the methods, having themselves, under the leadership of Tony Blair, adopted a strategy of exploitation via capitalist globalisation with a "human face." Time magazine refers to the countries as "refuseniks" or "stropky." Time sums it up as follows: "They did not agree with Washington's aggressive plan to rein in terrorists and bring democracy to the Middle East." The unity of the Brotherhood of the Exploiters and Oppressors was threatened to the extent where Bush was forced to pay three visits to Europe. In November 2003 he only went as far as Britain where Blair and the Queen warmly greeted him while he avoided the protestors in the streets. In June 2004 he visited Italy where he met the President while "virulent" (Time) demonstrations were taking place in the streets. At the end of February this year he met all 25 leaders of the EU in Europe. As a result some 50 foreign-policy experts from both sides of the Atlantic drew up a set of typical "new capitalist" compromises in respect of Iraq: -

- I. Instead of force by warfare Europeans should step up training courses, increase spending on reconstruction and write off the country's debt.

II. The US would give Europe a role in determining Iraq's economic and political future. This is Imperialist-speak for "sharing the spoils."

Tariq Ali, in his book mentioned, writes on the history of Imperialism and quotes Martin Luther King Jun. as saying that "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world is my own country" (the USA). Tariq Ali goes on to say: "This violence started long before the Russian Revolution, carried on during its peak and after its fall throughout the last century, and has christened the present one with the occupation of Iraq." He then mentions how "historical amnesia" is encouraged by official culture when invaders today assume that they will be welcomed as "liberators" because people have forgotten their past actions. This tally begins with the decision to use nuclear weapons on Japanese cities, partially as a warning to the Soviet Union not to overreach itself.

- The use of nuclear weapons on the civilian populations Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Death toll: 200,00 Deaths from after-effects not computed.
- The destruction of every building in North Korea during 1950-53 war to destroy the whole infrastructure of region. Death toll of Koreans (North and South) 900,000.
- The 1960-75 war unleashed against Vietnam and fought with the regular use of chemical weapons of which the effects of Agent Orange are still visible in the country. Death toll 50,000 US soldiers; 2 million Vietnamese.
- The Third Oil War, 1990. Death toll: between 50,000 and 100,000 Iraqi soldiers.
- The effect of sanctions against Iraq. Death toll up to 1 million dead.
- The 2003 war against Iraq. Ali adds: "The de facto US protectorates throughout the second half of the twentieth century have, in the main, constituted some of the most

vicious dictatorships in the world. The Monroe Doctrine led to unceasing interventions in Central America to secure it for US Corporate interests many decades prior to the victory of Lenin's Bolsheviks."

Ali then mentions an extensive list of the less violent episodes involving the USA during the second half of twentieth century. Here are some: -

- A. 1953: CIA helps to remove Iranian democrat Mohammed Massadegh from power as punishment for nationalizing the country's oil. The Shah is put back on the throne. Massive repression of all opposition followed, but the mosques cannot be shut. They become centres of resistance to the regime.
- B. 1958: In order to prevent a general election, which it fears might produce a nationalist government the CIA/DIA authorize, first, a military coup in Pakistan. A decade of military rule leads ultimately to the break-up of the country in 1971.
- C. 1967: CIA operatives watch as captured prisoner is shot dead by machine gun bullets in Bolivia. His name is Ché Guevara.
- D. 1979: Closer links established with new Iraq leader Saddam Hussein who is armed and supported during the war with Iran in the course of which he uses chemical weapons against a Kurdish village. Close relations continue till 1990 invasion of Kuwait.
- E. NATO war against Yugoslavia. Time:- Feb.28 2000: "It took American resolve to rout the Serbs in Bosnia in 1995 and American planes bomb them out of Kosovo in 1999"
- F. 2003: The list of fifteen examples ends as follows: "US invasion and occupation of Iraq

Nature of Imperialism

The above are some examples of post 1944 imperial interventions according to Tariq Ali which reveal the effortless rise of the USA as the leader of the capitalist world and its determination to weaken, destroy and defeat not just the "communist" opponent but also those who refused to take sides in the cold war while maintaining their own independence. The sole aim is simple, in the words an anonymous delegate at a Congress; "to extend the area of capitalist class." As far as Britain is concerned Tariq Ali mentions South Africa as an example. When the British Empire declared war on the Boer Republic of South Africa, according to Ali, the prize was the gold mines of the region. The Boers were Dutch Settlers who had the same colonial right to the territories they occupied as any other colonizing power. He says: both sides disregarded the interests of the native population. The brutalities and reports of British concentration camps in which the Boers were being kept horrified British Socialists. The destruction of the homes of innocent civilians by US bombers, their deaths and other "measures" were watched by the outside world just as closely as events in Chechnya in Russia were watched and the world was convinced that it was part of the global "war on terror" waged by the US and its coalition forces. Time magazine calls such operations "freedom's march." Britain and the USA were working to make alliances with Russia and only muted criticism was heard from them regarding the human rights violations committed against the citizens and refugees of Chechnya. They, with the Russians, realized that the only "politically correct" way out of the quagmire was through a democratic process – even a fake one. In Chechnya in 2003 a referendum on a new constitution was followed by a presidential election. Those who were observers exposed

both as fraudulent. Similarly there are grave doubts and suspicions regarding the Iraq "elections." Election results are interpreted, after ostensibly "free and fair elections," as a mandate, to individuals and bodies, a license if you will, to commit the country and its people to harmonious relations with the colonizers. On the contrary, people vote because they are just desperately tired of war, poverty and corruption. Robert Fisk, the famous writer and Middle East Expert mentions how many times the Middle East has been "fixed" and yet he has spent "the last 29 years of my life travelling from one bloody war to another amid the lies and deceit of our leaders and the surrogates they have appointed to rule over the Arabs."

In 1904 the British Empire was defined as follows in a report: "The British Empire is pre-eminently a great Naval, Indian and Colonial power." The men and the material of the Indian sub-continent were essential supporters of Britain's colonial empire: -

1. Indian peasants, ex-slaves were worked in the plantations of Trinidad and Guyana.
2. Indian clerks helped to administer East and South Africa.
3. Sikhs and Gurkhas were used to crush the Boxer Rebellion in China and also in "disorders" elsewhere.
4. Indian troops were used in both world wars and in the colonization of the Arab world.
5. In 1917, the British with the help of the colonial soldiers from India took Jerusalem and Baghdad. In Egypt, the King's Protectorate was used to preserve Britain's monopoly of the Suez Canal, vital for the link with India.

These actions prove that the Imperialists are not only interested in the material wealth and resources of their victim-countries; they also seek the human resources. To add to the above the Indian workers also manufactured sports goods for

the American Nike company- goods produced by slave labour and subsequently sold outside India (in America for instance) at exorbitant prices.

It is interesting to note a dictionary definition of "Imperialism." According to Webster's Lexicon Dictionary, "Imperialism is the policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries either by direct acquisition of territory, or indirect control of economic and political life; the policy of holding colonies or dependencies."

The USA, the world's only "superpower," and other imperialists inform the world that they are fighting for democracy and freedom (sic) when they fight imperialist wars. The irony is that the only "democracy and freedom" that America intends for Iraq, for instance, after the present carnage ends, is the freedom to sell off all the State assets and privately owned enterprises to powerful multinational corporate exploiters in a process termed "privatisation" in order to allow 100% or so imperial ownership. In 2003, for instance, 47% of the owners of stocks and shares in South Africa were foreigners and South Africa is not supposed to be an American or other "colony."

Noam Chomsky has said that "The main commitment of the USA in the Third World is to prevent the rise of nationalist regimes which are responsive to pressures from the masses of the population for improvement in low living standards and diversification of production – the reason is to maintain an investment – friendly country, (Our note: Is he speaking of South Africa?) One, which can guarantee the transmission of profits (known as dividends) to the mother country. The poor of the mother country pay off the rich in their own societies – they subsidize the rich. They pay direct and indirect taxes, which are used to "assist" the colonies in reconstruction and peacekeeping (sic). The rich in America then collect the

profits (dividends) from their country's "investment" in the colony. In addition the poor also pay exorbitant prices for the goods manufactured in the colonies. Oil in the Middle East is an example. Privatisation of oil in Iraq, will allow the Imperialist the "freedom" of taking over the 10 billion barrels of oil and repatriate the profits squeezed out of the Iraqi people by corporations such as Haliburton (the US giant oil company). A percentage, of course, will go to local Iraqi and/or Middle Eastern collaborators and domestic exploiters known euphemistically as "business-men" that form the "indirect control of economic life" referred to in Webster's definition of Imperialism above. They also run the country of behalf of the colonial power and the multi-national corporations.

All of this will "democratically" be decided by the Imperialists who will claim the freedom to do so. They will decide how much money is spent and how it is spent. Major US businesses such as Haliburton and Bechtel have already decided how much will be spent on large-scale electricity, water and oil in infrastructure projects. It should be remembered that the oil wells are "working" while Iraqi people and others are dying. It has been pointed out that not enough money had gone to smaller, decentralized reconstruction companies run by Iraqis. Much money has also gone to administration and management companies belonging to foreigners. South African companies are also in support services such as engineering and supplies. In fact a number of such workers have died in military actions while working on projects in Iraq. In spite of not sharing the profits as noted above, tax payers are traditionally convinced that foreign Aid programmes ultimately benefit them because most of the money goes to the US or other companies that employ them to work on reconstruction and other projects. (See earlier

references to Nike – the sportswear manufacturers). Revenue Watch – A US watchdog group analyzed contracts worth more than five million dollars that have been funded with Iraq oil revenue in 2004. They found that of the 39 contracts US and British companies received 85% of the value – Iraqis received 2% of the 7.1 billion dollars obligated to reconstruction projects, nearly a third of which would be spent on security. About 6% would be taken as contractor's profit; 10% will finance US government overheads and at least a quarter will be lost to mismanagement, corruption, insurance and high salaries of non-Iraqi workers according to the CSIS (the non-partisan Centre for Strategically International Studies based in Washington.) According to Noam Chomsky the basic goal of the USA in intervening in Third World countries is to prevent independence and not because they are left-wing or right-wing or communist according to the ideological or political meanings of these terms. After all the USA opposed the right-wing government of Peron. "Terrorism" he explains is what other people do. The USA as the global power has to make certain that the various parts of the world serve their assigned functions in the global system. These are: -

- (a) To be markets for USA business;
- (b) To possess resources (raw materials, etc) for American business and
- (c) To provide cheap labour for American business.

All this, according to Chomsky, is clearly and frankly explained in declassified US governments' documents. The reason for stipulating these functions is a good one: " If a country begins to pay attention to its own people, it is not going to be paying adequate attention to the overriding needs of the US investors." According to the US such a government has unacceptable priorities and it "will have to go." As South

Africans Chomsky's remarks re "prioritize" give us insight into, for instance, the introduction and reason for a measure such as Gear which pays attention to the needs of investors and not to our children's education. Organisations such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will apply "punitive" measures where too much attention is given by States, which are "responsive" to pressures from the masses of the population for improvements in low living standards. Such measures were applied to Zimbabwe.

On Thursday March 4th 2004 "Sowetan" the newspaper, published an article headed: A Tale of two Economies. The following is taken from the article: - " Analysts say the different economic paths the two countries (South Africa and Zimbabwe) took from the first day of their revolutions mean they are unlikely to have similar outcomes. Zimbabwe embarked on a spending spree it could not afford while South Africa put its financial house in order." The article goes on to quote Tony Hawkins, professor at the graduate school of management at the University of Zimbabwe. He says: "Zimbabwe went on an unsustainable level of social spending in education particularly."

Such expenditure may have been morally justified to redress the imbalance of the colonial past and have paid off in many ways. The article goes on to say: "According to World Bank figures, Zimbabwe's literacy rate in 2000 was second only to Lesotho's in Africa, which stood at 80% at the time. But some analysts say fiscal recklessness sowed the seeds of economic destruction, as it could not be maintained in a country that failed to attract the capital needed for growth." Hawkins, quoted above, also said, in this regard, "Lots of donor aid came to Zimbabwe in the 1980's but almost no foreign investments."

Zimbabwe, according to the article found itself in an "uncomfortable embrace with the International Monetary Fund: - It then tried to swallow the rules enforced by the IMF, only to reject them, and deprived itself of much needed aid as poverty worsened." (My emphasis). What was South Africa's reward for putting its "financial house in order?" Zimbabwe, between 1980 and 1989, had budget deficits as a percentage of GDP averaging around 8% according to African Bank data. The ANC, in its first decade of rule after the first democratic elections had a budget deficit of "just" 1.1% of GDP in 2002/03 and its average since it took office has been "just" 2.9%. Figures of estimates for 2003/04 and 2005 are 6% and 3%. We note the following concluding sentence to paragraph just quoted: "but analysts say government can afford to loosen up now and, in fact should loosen up, given the country's gut-wrenching poverty." This refers to South Africa. The international uproar, the hysterical accusations and persistent vilification of Mugabe as the most incompetent, corrupt, political criminal on the face of the earth was not per se as a result of what is termed "the land grab" of white owned farms for redistribution to blacks. It was, in the eyes of the capitalist/imperialists, for the gross crime of assailing one of their most sacred, inviolable laws and that is that Zimbabwe (Mugabe) first paid attention to its own people and their needs and did not therefore pay attention to the overriding needs of the investors and their profits. According to the imperialist/capitalists such a government has unacceptable priorities and it "will have to go"(Chomsky). A significant number of the white settler farmers stopped producing food for the hungry Zimbabweans for some time before the confiscation of farms. They and their financial backers opted for the lucrative tourist business of establishing game-farms and organizing safari tours in a country

renowned for its scenic splendours. It is this "business" that Mugabe placed in jeopardy when redistribution took place. The fact that the land question is in Zimbabwe, as in the rest of Africa, the most crucial, most emotive, politically and socially challengeable issue confronting leaders and nations did not and does not concern those who value the dollar above all else. In South Africa business is flourishing in spite of the fact that the land question remains unresolved. The S.A. government appears to have "its priorities right." This commitment of the US regarding the functions of a government in the global system and its obligation to prioritize the interests of investors (read "imperialists") has had certain dramatic effects throughout the Third World (e.g. Zimbabwe) according to Chomsky: He says: "It takes only a moment's thought to realize that the areas which have been under US control are some of the most horrible regions in the world." He gives some examples: -

1. He terms Central America a "horror chamber." If a peasant in Guatemala woke up in Poland (under Soviet occupation) he'd think he was in heaven by comparison. America had 100 years of influence in Guatemala.
2. "Brazil had the curse of being part of the Western system of subordination. People there have shown the results of generations of profound malnutrition and neglect with about 40% of the brain size of human beings.

The countries that have developed economically are those, which were not colonized by the West. Japan managed to resist European colonization and it is one part of the traditional Third World that developed. He compares Japan with the Asante Kingdom in West Africa. Unlike Japan it was colonized by the British - so now "West Africa is West Africa economically, and Japan is Japan." Japan also had a colonial system including Taiwan (Formosa). Today Taiwan is one of

the commercial centres of the world. Right next door to Taiwan is the Philippines – an American colony that is a total basket case, a Latin-American style basket case. "They, the Japanese, developed their colonies economically; the West just robbed theirs." (Chomsky) Every country that has developed has done it by imposing high levels of protectionism and by extricating its economy from free market discipline according to Chomsky.

Our source here is "Understanding Power": - the material is from seminar style discussions or from question periods after public talks:

A woman: "Is there any hope for disbanding America's empire?"

Chomsky replies, comparing the situation to the possibility of an ecological catastrophe: "Either control is left in the hands of those who are in power now: The rest of the population just abdicates, goes to the beach and hopes that somehow their children will survive – or else people become sufficiently organized to break down the entire system of exploitation, and finally start putting it under participatory control." (Note, I understand "participatory control" to mean "genuine democracy.") The first possibility will mean complete disaster, with the other "you can imagine all kinds of things."

The general population gains very little or nothing from the imperial system. The British Empire may have cost as much to maintain as the profits that came from it. It is very doubtful if the profits that come from controlling Central America (probably ten million dollars a year in taxpayers' money) came anywhere near the cost. "Costs are paid by the poor while the profits are collected by the rich just as with every part of social policy. Under democratic (participatory) social planning there would be very little incentive for it, in addition

there would be the moral considerations, which would become a factor.

The following is an article dealing with the subject of Mercenaries. It appeared in the Sunday Independent of Sunday 6th March 2005:

"A startling fact has emerged from the battlefields of Iraq, providing powerful evidence that the conduct of war has been radically transformed during the past 15 years. In the 1991 Gulf War, one in every 100 soldiers deployed by the US-led coalition were mercenaries hired by private military companies. Today, in Iraq, more than one in five coalition soldiers are mercenaries. Since the mid 1990's the private military sector has been the fastest growing industry in the world. With the US as its biggest client, it was worth \$100 billion a year before the invasion of Iraq."

It is a well-known fact, however, especially in the case of a "mercenary" imperialist war such as the war in Iraq and many parts of the Third World, that there are many more elements involved than the soldiers who actually wage war in the country that was invaded. During the 1990's already, for instance, Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African company (see below for information on South Africa) pioneered the repackaging of mercenary activity as 'legitimate' private business by conducting "counter insurgency" operations throughout Africa in exchange for mining and oil concessions. There are bodyguards for political leaders and economists and other prominent "visitors" to the war-front in Iraq. There are drivers for the army and other participants such as reconstruction and construction companies, in addition to bomb disposal squads also ambulance services, technicians, etc. At this stage 13 South Africans have been killed in Iraq engaged in non-military

activities. " There were 130,000 US soldiers, 9000 British and 15,000 other coalition soldiers operating in Iraq according to the article referred to. It is estimated that there are more than 30 000 private "security experts" in Iraq. The vast oil resources and uncontrollable resistance have made the country a magnet for mercenaries according to the article. War profiteers such as the Bechtel and Haliburton Company hire private armies to protect their assets, paying mercenaries up to R6000 a day for special assignments, such as quelling uprisings in Iraqi cities. In addition many thousands of workers and security personnel are engaged in a myriad of duties at the oil wells, which are operating while people die. The amounts of \$100 billion and \$200 billion mentioned above are only for hired military assistance and not for other contracts. Further, from the article: "The Britain and US have unapologetically promoted the privatisation of repression and legitimization of mercenary activity. " As an example the article mentions the intentions of those who plotted the Equatorial Guinea "episode" (the one Mark Thatcher was involved in, and subsequently pleaded guilty to the charge of violating anti-mercenary laws in South Africa.) The intentions of the plotters were well known to Jack Straw, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Condeleeza Rice, the then US National Security Adviser and Donald Rumsfeld the US Secretary of Defence. "Yet" according to our source, "the US and Britain did nothing to stop them." The ultimate is mentioned that in Iraq, private military firms who were supposed to be providing staff support and translation in Abu Ghraib prison were, instead, implicated in the torture, rape and execution of prisoners yet no one has been charged with a crime. The mercenary activity in Iraq takes on further international/globalized dimensions when one mentions that Haliburton, the world's biggest oil services company which is

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engaged in oil drilling and maintenance operations in Iraq does the same work in Algeria, Angola, Brazil, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East. The Chamber's Dictionary definition which goes as follows, is not limited to soldiers and the army as is usually understood: "hired for money; actuated by the hope of reward; too strongly influenced by the desire of gain; having love of money as motive." The Imperialists- globalizes are themselves also included in spite of their claims of fighting for democracy and freedom whenever they wage "war." It is done for the enrichment (profit) of the powerful capitalist entrepreneurs of the aggressor countries. Invading a country for its mineral, natural and human wealth and resources in order to gain valuable new markets; (oil for insurance) killing its people (more than 100,000 Iraqi citizens); destroying their way of life and their country's infrastructure (hospitals, schools, etc) is now a "business, an "enterprise," an "industry" for which the ordinary, home-country tax-payers pay the attacking country (e.g. the US) without obtaining a "return" – a profit or a dividend. The Independent article was actually written to discuss the fact that "South Africa, after the United States and Britain, is the third largest supplier of personnel for private military companies operating in Iraq, according to a recent United Nations report. The number of South Africans in Iraq is estimated to be between 5000 and 10 000 and at least 10 South African based companies are believed to be involved. Most of those recruited operate as drivers and bodyguards, protecting supply routes and valuable resources. They have also fought alongside the Americans and the British in places like Fallujah and other "hot-spots" and in para-military units and there are construction workers. The article was written by Andy Clarno and Salim Vally, members of the Anti-War Coalition. The article says " The most heavily recruited S.

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Africans are those with backgrounds in the elite apartheid era special forces. They mention among others, the following: - Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) the 32 Buffalo Battalion, the Parachute Brigade, Re-action Unit 9, Koevoet, and Vlakplaas. Many received amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Koevoet is described as a "brutal wing of the military whose members were reportedly paid bounties for the bodies of Swapo activists in Namibia." A Vlakplaas member admitted that he petrol bombed the homes of anti-apartheid activists.

"The brutal foot-soldiers of the apartheid era are much in demand (in Iraq)" according to the article. They come from a long tradition of mercenary activity throughout Africa according to our source and play a prominent role in Iraq. As a matter of interest Erinys International (a British company) was mentioned in the article as having a R500 million contract to train Iraqi soldiers and protect oil installations. The week after the appearance of the article Erinys wrote an indignant letter to the newspaper in response to the article. The letter was published under the headline: "Role of Guards in the rebuilding of Iraq is not the role of mercenaries." They objected vehemently to being called mercenaries for guarding oil installations with a force of 16 000 Iraqi men and women. Our audience can be the judge in this instance: - Are they or are they not mercenaries?

It should be mentioned that the South African government insists on its opposition to foreign military activity for private gain. The Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act is being drawn up "in order to discourage for their own good and the good of the country those who seek to profit from conflict and human suffering such as in Iraq." The writers of the article feel that South Africa's legacy as a country of people who overcame oppression through resistance and

human solidarity is fast being squandered in the streets of Baghdad.

To sum up one can say that, the wars of exploitation conducted by the Imperialists are being privatized in true globalized, neo-liberal fashion via the use of mercenaries (not only soldiers) of all nationalities.

The New Imperialism

We read so often that "we live in an age when scientific and technical progress is not accompanied by equal progress in compassion and universal caring," or words to that effect. Capitalism, now known as globalisation or neo-liberalism is an example of "scientific and technical progress." It is driven by a human weakness, to wit "greed": immeasurable greed. "Immeasurable" can be replaced with other equally descriptive words, such as: immense, boundless, inestimable, inexhaustible, etc, all words to describe the degree of existing greed.

Capitalism cannot and will not, succeed in making the world a "happy" (in all its connotations) place for most, if not all, people on earth i.e. people with full stomachs and contented faces. This week, in Business Report of 4 April we read that a certain Mr Lakshmi Mittal of Mittal Steel tops the annual list of the wealthiest people in Britain. He was worth, personally, £14.8 billion (R171, 8 billion). The richest 1000 people were worth jointly, the equivalent of £250 billion – a jump of 23% over the previous year.

To satisfy this greed consistently, it is necessary, vital rather, for the Capitalist system and its consequence, Imperialism, to be reinvented, refurbished, overhauled or renovated from time to time to meet various challenges. The latest repair job has been in the planning stage for the past few years starting with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) discussed in

1999. The European Union and the G8 nations have also been active in fashioning and introducing the MDGs, which we can term "the New Imperialism" or "Capitalism without War/Bloodshed."

The war in Iraq has given the initiative an impetus because the partnership of the leading imperialists, Britain and the USA, was disrupted over the use of brutal, bloody force especially in Iraq but in the past in the Middle East, Vietnam, Hiroshima and Nagasaki (nuclear weapons) and in the Third World generally, in order to attain the objectives of their Imperialism. President of the USA, George W. Bush was forced to visit Europe on two occasions to mend the fences and get the alliance back on track. In the compromise arrived at the US promised to give Europe a role in determining Iraq's economic and political future: that means sharing the spoils and making political arrangements which would ensure "benefits" for the Imperialist twins in the years to come. The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) referred to above, set 12 targets to be achieved by 2005. The targets might be summarized in the one target and that is: a goal to halve the number of people living in abject poverty by 2005." Other relative targets were that Africa will have to improve its governance; will have to increase investment in infrastructure such as roads; to liberalize (neo-liberalism?) its markets with other African countries, in order to meet the MDGs; for the attention of donor countries aid would have to be doubled within five years; donor countries would also abolish trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, as well as lowering tariffs and other barriers to African products (trade). It also called for 100% debt cancellations, as soon as possible, for poor countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The details of the development plan would be as follows: an additional \$25 billion (about R142 billion) per year in official development

aid by 2010, stepping that up by another \$25 billion to \$50 billion (R284 billion) a year by 2015. There was a radical requirement that donor countries should not insist for instance, that aid be used to establish profit-making undertakings where donors are involved and share the profits. The MDGs would also ensure that every child will be in school and also prevent avoidable infant deaths by 2015.

Mr Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister visited African countries at the beginning of 2002 in order to popularize and promote the MDGs. His tour started in Abuja, Nigeria where he was enthusiastically received by his audience because these expeditions are opportunities for the world's chief capitalists to brief and motivate their proxies and surrogates who already run or will run countries on behalf of the Imperialists and in their own selfish interests. Blair and others like him truly speak to the converted while the workers, the most important people, are sweating in the factories. He pointed i.a. out that the per capita income on the African continent was now lower than at the end of the 1960s and that nearly half of Africa's 600 million people live on less than one dollar a day. In addition, 200 million people do not have access to health services.

There is general agreement that it would need an annual economic growth of 7% in order to achieve the MDGs. He promised that agricultural subsidies paid by the G8 countries would be phased out. More than \$320 billion was paid annually in subsidies to farmers more or less equivalent to the entire GDP of Africa as a whole. The subsidies create a serious barrier to trade between the two blocs: Africa and the G8.

While Blair was travelling in Africa, French President, Chirac, also held a meeting with African leaders on the NEPAD initiatives. The US Treasury Secretary was planning to visit

Africa before the July G* Summit. The Canadian Prime Minister, who chaired the G8 summit, was also selling the G8 action plan for Africa at the World Economic Forum in Davos. An International Commission for Africa was set up by Tony Blair and presented a "giant" report laying out a blue-print for the continent. The Irish rock star, Bono and Bob Geldof were also very busy with the question of poverty in Africa and the world.

The UN will have a conference in September "in order to figure out why progress towards the MDGs- some simple measures of success in fighting poverty - has been so lousy." (Time Magazine). The names of Bill Gates, George Soros and Bono are mentioned for funding efforts to "build political support for fighting African poverty." (Time) The issue of Time magazine referred to here had a chapter/section on its cover story entitled "How to End Poverty." It was headed: "The US has promised repeatedly to give a larger share of its annual output to help poor countries. But year after year, America has failed to follow through." According to more than one expert observer/analyst the MDGs cannot succeed. One writer in the Sunday Independent was courteous enough to head his contribution: "Blair's Africa Plan: Let's limit our expectations." He goes on to say: It is already clear that the Japan and US for example, are not going to go along with the key recommendations for doubling aid. And it is hard to imagine France abandoning all agricultural subsidies in a hurry. Other G8 countries will undoubtedly have problems with the Commission for Africa plan too. The danger is that Blair has created very high expectations which may lead to grave disappointment in Africa when they are not all met." (Peter Fabricius).

One of the most respected writers and analysts writing for Business Report (Ann Crotty) is more blunt, more honest.

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She heads her column on the 23rd March 2005 as follows: "UK's big plans for Africa are doomed." In connection with the Millenium Development Goals she says "it contained very big plans for the way Sub-Saharan Africa would look in 2015. At the current rate of progress universal primary education will be achieved not in 2015 but 115 years later in 2130. Halving poverty will take 135 years longer than planned and is set to happen only in 2150. She uses as reference, an article in the magazine, New Africa. The MDGs have been compared to the Marshall Plan, which was successful in reconstructing Europe after the war. But it has been pointed out that a Plan was needed to construct Africa, and to start building economies and institutional capacity, according to Ann Crotty and other observers and analysts. The US gave \$13 billion (equal to \$100 billion or about R600 billion today) to the Marshall Plan to rebuild and underpin strong economic growth in Europe.

She quotes News Africa as follows: "Canceling all current debt and increasing aid alone is not enough to rescue Sub-Saharan Africa from its present plight."

Blair and his African Commission declared and emphasized that it means that there should be a huge reliance on trade as the predominant means of securing Africa's development. Our comrades in the Movement know very well the reason for this "reliance" on trade and not aid. It was predictable. The Commission for Africa (referred to above) in its report refers to "governance and capacity building" as well as "more trade and fairer trade". In this respect the Report must be distinguished from its rival (as Crotty terms it) the US led initiative to save Africa known as the Millenium Challenge Account. The Commission also speaks of Africa's need to improve its capacity to trade; improving its transport infrastructure, eradicating corruption, etc. All measures to

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facilitate trade. They admit, however, that the rich nations must also dismantle the barriers they have erected against African goods such as agricultural subsidies, which give the farmers of rich countries an unfair advantage over poor African farmers but even slight concessions to the common agricultural policy of the rich countries are being matched by demands such as those from the EU trade commission UK-appointed Peter Mandelson, that Africa open itself to the "benefits" of free trade within the EU, Ann Crotty concludes her column as follows: - " Until the UK government is prepared to challenge the vested interest of its own voters, it should save us all the headache of no more big plans that are doomed to fail." Another writer ends his column thus: "Indeed we can brace ourselves for lots of infighting, lofty promises and lack of delivery from the West." (Chris Landsberg)