

## **POLICY AGAINST HATE**

Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira

The monstrous attack on the American people last September 11 caused manifestations of solidarity from the civilized world because we are all being threatened. The American government is considering punitive measures; but it must also reexamine its international policy. In both cases the objective should be to increase American and international security by reducing hate. Generalized retaliatory actions against Arab countries, and the maintenance of a cold-war policy of dividing the world between friends and enemies will worsen the present insecurity instead of improving it.

Much has been said against the mistake of large-scale military actions against Middle-Eastern countries. Besides implying in violence against innocent people – that contradicts the basic democratic principles of the American nation –, this would provoke an undesired consequence, an increase of the hate and its expression through terrorism.

Why is this hatred so great? Just because the United States is the hegemonic country in the world? Although many – for instance, the historian Paul Kennedy – will be tempted by this explanation, I am sure that it is wrong. The United States is the first democratic country in the history of mankind to become hegemonic, and therefore some degree of anti-Americanism exist everywhere, even in the countries that are friendlier to the United States. This sentiment should not, however, be confused with the deep hate that bred the September 11 terrorist acts.

Is it because Middle-Eastern countries follow the Islamic religion? Nonsense. Many other people besides the Arabs are muslims – they sum up 1.3 billion – and only in the Middle East muslim fundamentalists bear so much hate. Is it because globalization is provoking an increase instead of a reduction of economic inequality? This also makes no sense; there are many more poor people in the world besides those in the Middle-East.

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Is it because American international policy was unable to recognize that the cold war ended, and continues to act in a biased way in relation to the countries that it considers friends, particularly in relation to the state of Israel? I believe that the basic answer to so much hate among the Middle Eastern people - including non-Arabs, such as the Afghans and the Iranians - lies in this mistake.

September 11 demonstrated what the collapse of the Soviet Union, 11 years ago, indicated: not only that the cold war ended, but also that the United States will no longer have nation-states for enemies. At most one can say that some countries are friendlier than others. But none are real enemies since none consider attacking and trying to impose major losses to the United States as a serious policy option. The hurry showed by the Middle Eastern countries, starting with Afghanistan, in denying involvement in the terrorist attack, is a demonstration of this fact. Long over are the times in which one country – the Soviet Union – was able to endanger the military and the political security of the United States.

Nations used to have other nations as enemies. Now the enemies are not nation-states, because all governments, even those of the countries that we may view as rogue states, are minimally rational. They know that if they attack the United States, their country will suffer a disproportional retaliation. Disproportional to the attack, but legitimate.

Now the enemies are terrorist groups. Moved by hate, their actions are not rational – there is no trace of the use of adequate means to achieve specific ends. And, in contrast to governments of nation-states, terrorist leaders do not fear widespread retaliation. They may even look forward to it, since it will only breed more hatred.

To advocate an isolationist policy for the United States is as non-realistic as expecting that it does not intervene in regional conflicts. Thus, if the United States is the all powerful hegemonic country in the world, if it no longer faces enemy-countries, but enemy-terrorists, its strategy of limiting terrorism and assuring national and international security should change. Instead of siding up with friends against enemies, which was rational in cold war times, it should move to a new policy of acting as an unbiased arbiter in regional conflicts.

The American government understood this new reality when it intervened in the ex-Yugoslavia. In its action together with NATO it did not favor Bosnians or Serbians or Croats. It acted in favor of peace. Thus, even if many were unhappy with the American action, I believe that in the end most people in the region came out with friendly sentiments towards the US.

In the case of the State of Israel, however, the American policy has not been that of an international arbiter, but of a biased player. This could be understood in the context of the cold war; not anymore. Since this position ceased to be justified by the

American interest in having a friend in a region where other countries tended to side with the Communist block, its antagonism against the Arab people became apparent. As a consequence, hate among them could only increase.

It remains essential to guarantee the security of Israel. Just as it is no longer in the interest of the American people, neither is it in the interest of the Israeli people that the United States favor Israel openly in the peace negotiations. Peace in the region is essential, and the United States will have a major role in achieving it adopting an impartial attitude towards the parties. This change in policy will eliminate a major source of hate. The international organizations, starting with the United Nations, will have to be strengthened, but the leadership will have to be American.

We live in a global world where market competition is central, but competition must be counterbalanced by cooperation and solidarity. Yet, instead of a global solidarity, what we are seeing is global hatred. Consistent action to countervail this tendency must be undertaken. A democratic world requires international security, and the United States can count on the other democratic nations to secure it. In the short run, the question is how to punish the terrorist organizations. In the medium run, it is how to define an arbitral international policy for the United States. In both circumstances, the challenge will be to reduce hate, and establish civilized relations among all.