

The world is changing and we have an important role to play

By [Michel Collon](#)

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After the Latins, the Arabs. And tomorrow, the Africans ? Why Washington and Paris had to draw back in Tunisia and Egypt. How they are going to save the foundations of the neo-colonial system. And what is our role in seeing that the world truly transforms itself.

For a long time the Empire seemed to be invincible. The United States could at will, using the most absurd pretexts, violate the United Nations Charter, impose cruel embargoes, bomb or occupy countries, assassinate heads of state, provoke civil wars, finance terrorists, organize *coups d'état*, arm Israel for its aggressions...

It seemed that the US could do anything it wanted and pessimism prevailed. How many times have I heard people say : "They are too strong, how can we get rid of these corrupt Arab regimes that are accomplices of Israel ?" The response has come from below : the peoples are stronger than the tyrants.

But we all feel that the struggle has not ended by only eliminating Ben Ali and Mubarak. It has just begun. To wrest real changes, those who are pulling the strings from behind must be neutralized. Hence it is vitally important to figure out the mechanisms of this system that produces tyrants, protects them and, when necessary, replaces them. And to understand why this Empire is weakening and how it will try to maintain its power at all costs.

No Empire is eternal

No Empire is eternal. Sooner or later, the arrogance of their crimes provokes general resistance. Sooner or later, the cost of 'maintaining order' is greater than the profits that these wars bring to the multinationals. Sooner or later, the investments in the military will be at the expense of other sectors of the economy, so that they will lose their international competitiveness.

And the United States is no exception to the rule. The rate of profit of their multinationals has decreased since 1965 and the indebtedness and speculation bubbles have only delayed and worsened the situation. Their share in the world economy has dropped from 50 per cent in 1945 to 30 per cent in the 1960s. Today it is around 20 per cent and it will be about 10 per cent in 20 years' time. No army can be stronger than its economy and the United States are therefore increasingly less able to be the world's policeman. Now the planet is becoming multipolar : there is a different balance between the United States, Europe, Russia and,

above all, the large countries of the South. China in particular has proved that to be independent is the best way to make progress. The USA and Europe cannot impose their will as they used to do. Their neo-colonialism seems to be heading for an early demise.

In fact, this US decline has been increasingly visible over the last decade. In 2000 the Internet bubble burst. In 2002, the Venezuelan population foiled the 'made in the USA' *coup d'état* and Hugo Chavez embarked on his great social reforms that led to peoples' resistance all over Latin America. In 2003 Bush's war machine bogged down in Iraq, as in Afghanistan. In 2006 Israel failed in Lebanon and in 2009 in Gaza. The defeats are mounting up.

After the Latinos, the Arabs. And tomorrow the Africans ?

The wonderful revolt of the Tunisians and Egyptians has wrought miracles : we now hear the United States extolling the 'democratic transition' while for decades they have been supplying tyrants with tanks, machine guns and training seminars in torture ! It is the same with France.

And this revolt is creating anguish about the strategies of the Great US Empire, the Little French Empire and their Israeli protégés. Thank you, Arab people !

The subject of this anguish : how to change a little, so that nothing essentially changes ? How to maintain domination over Middle East oil, raw materials and the economies in general ? How to prevent Africa too from emancipating itself ?

But we must go into the roots of the situation. Rejoicing over the first steps must not mean overlooking the path that remains to be pursued. It is not only Ben Ali who plundered Tunisia, it was a whole class of profiteers, Tunisians but above all foreigners. It was not only Mubarak who oppressed the Egyptians, it was the whole regime around him. And behind this regime, the United States. What was important was not the marionette, but who was pulling the strings. Washington, like Paris, is only trying to replace the worn-out marionettes by other, more presentable ones.

There is no real democracy without social justice

What the Tunisians, Egyptians and others want to resolve is not : "which 'new' leader will make new promises that he will not keep before beating us down as used to happen ?" Their question is rather "Will I have a real job with a real wage and a decent life for my family ? Or will I have to choose between taking a boat that will sink into the Mediterranean or finding myself in a European prison for people with no documents ?"

Only recently Latin America was experiencing the same poverty and the same despair. The enormous profits from oil, gas and other raw materials went to swell the coffers of Exxon and Shell while one Latino out of two lived below the poverty threshold, without being able to pay a doctor or a good school for the children. Everything started to change when Hugo Chavez nationalized the oil, changed all the contracts with the multinationals, demanding that they paid taxes and that the profits be shared. The following year 11.4 billion dollars were paid into the State Treasury (for 20 years the figure was zero !) and this started the implementation of social programmes : health care and schooling for everyone, the doubling of the minimum wage, support for cooperatives and small businesses that create jobs. In Bolivia Evo Morales is doing the same thing. And the example is

spreading. Will it reach the Mediterranean and the Middle East ? When will there be an Arab Chavez or an Arab Evo ? The courage of these masses of people who are rebelling deserves an organization and a leader who is honest and determined to see it through.

Real political democracy is impossible without social justice. In fact the two problems are intricately linked. No one sets up a dictatorship for pleasure or simple perversion. It is always to maintain the privileges of a small clique who grab all the wealth. The dictators are the employees of the multinationals.

Who is it that absolutely does not want democracy ?

Confronted by the fury of the Tunisians, what 'new man' has Washington proposed ? The prime minister of the former dictator ! Confronted by the will for change among the Egyptians, who are they trying to put into power ? The former head of the army, a creature of the CIA ! Do they take the people for fools ?

Five years ago, Védrine, former French minister of foreign affairs, had the gall to claim that the Arab peoples were not ready for democracy. This theory remains dominant among a French elite who, more or less openly practise anti-Arab and Islamophobia.

In fact, it is France that is not ready for democracy. It is France who massacred the Tunisians in 1937 and 1952 and the Moroccans in 1945. It is France that has led a long and bloody war to stop the Algerians from exercising their legitimate right to sovereignty. It is France who, through a statement by their revisionist president, refused to recognize its crimes and pay its debts to the Arabs and the Africans. It is France who protected Ben Ali right up until he got on to the plane that took him away. It is France which has imposed and maintained the worst tyrants in the whole of Africa.

The current anti-Muslim racism kills two birds with one stone. First, in Europe, it divides the workers according to their origin (a third of the French and Belgian workers are of recent immigrant origin) and while there is all this fantasizing about the *burqa*, the employers happily attack wages, the conditions of work and the pensions of all the workers, with veils or without. Instead of wondering "But who imposed these dictators on them ?" and replying "Europe, Europe at the top, Europe of the multinationals" the Arabs are portrayed as "not being ready for democracy" and hence, dangerous. By reversing the victim and the guilty one, the former is demonized.

This is the fundamental debate and it depends on all of us to see that it is highlighted : why the United States, France & Co. - who have the word 'democracy' always on their lips - absolutely do not want real democracy ? Because if the peoples can themselves decide how to use their wealth and their work, then the privileges of the corrupt and the profiteers will be in great danger !

To hide their refusal of democracy, the United States and their allies agitate in the media about the 'Islamist peril'. What hypocrisy ! Do we see them alerting us and leading huge media campaigns about the Islamists who are submissive to them like the odious regime of Saudi Arabia ? Do we hear them excusing themselves for having financed the Islamists of Bin Laden in order to overturn a leftwing Afghan government that had emancipated the women ?

Our role is important

Our world is changing very quickly. The decline of the USA opens new prospects for the liberation of peoples. Great upheavals are likely ...

But what direction will they take ? If they are to be positive ones, it depends on each of us circulating genuine information and that the shameful stories of the past become known, that the secret strategies are unmasked. All this will help to establish a great debate, popular and international : what is the economy, the social justice that the peoples need ?

The official information on this issue is catastrophic and it is not by chance. So if the debate is to be started and spread about, each of us has an important role to play. To inform is the key. How should this be done ? We'll come back to this in another article in a few days' time.

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