

the government. Only dictatorships, with two exceptions (Mauritania and Sudan), supported the coalition. Anti-coalition feeling even gave Moroccan public opinion a chance of emancipation in opposition to Hassan II. This was to be expected, despite deliberate blindness on the part of intellectuals on the side clamouring for war. However, this hatred *could* have been forestalled. All it needed was a solemn Security Council undertaking to solve concomitantly the Palestinian problem on the basis of Resolution 242. But this would have been 'giving a ransom to the aggressor'! This is a strange argument, in that 242 predated 660 by a mere quarter of a century. Instead they went for the usual tactic – to deal with the 'creature of Frankenstein' (yesterday Iran, today Iraq), assemble a coalition of creatures who are just as respectable (from Fahd to Assad), and prepare for a third Gulf War.

Why this apparently absurd choice? Because the revival of Arabic and Islamic nationalism under Saddam was a much greater danger than the Baathist regime on its own. Behind the regime was the growing menace of the Iraqi nation-state – the only country in the Middle East which was more or less viable, since it had oil, water and a large population; and it was aiming at nuclear capability in an Arab world which itself was a prey to Islamic fervour – the latest challenge to Western arrogance after the collapse of Communism.⁹

The destruction of Iraq was therefore the primary aim of the war – Iraq as a *country*, and not as a Baathist regime or even Saddam Hussein's power base, and certainly not as a buffer state such as the British had set up. Of course, George Bush wanted a successor to emerge from within the dictatorship who was more presentable and more submissive. Yet the choice between keeping Saddam and having a revolution by an Iraqi opposition of Kurds, Islamic fundamentalists and Communists was an easy one – Saddam became less of a problem.

After the 17 January 1991 attack, the inhabitants of Baghdad were without water and electricity. Overall, the equivalent of half a dozen Hiroshima bombs were dropped on Iraq. Even after the evacuation of Kuwait, any reconstruction remained impossible. The people of Iraq, set back in time by several decades, wallowed in polluted puddles among ruined buildings, under the threat of famine and epidemics.

The cost of this victory, by which a people was torn apart, is clear: the hatred of a whole region, Western values discredited, the probable triumph of Islamic fundamentalism in several countries. It is very likely that this cost was taken on board by the decision makers; but it is greater than the advantage gained from the destruction of Iraq. What was decided in high places was that *in any case* tensions between North and South were bound to increase, and that higher interests were at stake, which prescribed the immediate use of a policy of strength. We must look at these higher interests, and discuss the two 'real motives' usually quoted to explain the shambles.

First, however, a methodological word of warning – wars cannot be explained by their end-results, even though these were the aims (acknowledged or not) in the minds of decision makers. The dynamic of the 'road to war' involves many determinants – psychological and even psycho-analytical. This is very clear in the case of the loser, but also in the case of the victors. Bush's 'macho' anti-Saddam speeches show the need to wipe out the humiliation of Vietnam, hardly achieved by the ridiculous operations in Grenada and Panama. This need to 'show you've got what it takes' was probably vital in gaining the eventual support (it was not clear at the beginning) of public opinion. The 'basic interests' which will now be analysed were vital in obtaining the support of 'reasonable people'. The word is 'interests' and not 'causes' – we are looking at the *expected results* of the war, which were more and more clearly

perceived during the lead-up to war, and not at the 'immediate causes', such as the invasion of Kuwait and the American desire for revenge.

A war for oil?

This was an analysis which was widespread among pacifists, but also generally accepted by public opinion, and sometimes cynically admitted by Western leaders, from George Bush to Michel Rocard, or even by intellectuals in the warmonger camp. It is obviously an analysis which is largely justified, but it needs significant qualification and refinement.

We can dismiss straightaway the crude version of this line of reasoning, whereby *in the short term* (that is, after 2 August 1990), Iraq had to be prevented from dominating the oil market. As early as autumn 1990, Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former Carter advisor, was saying that enough replacement oil could be sent quickly from Saudi Arabia, and it was not even necessary to liberate Kuwait.¹⁰ The figures prove this: Iraq represents 4.5 per cent of the world output of crude oil, and Saudi Arabia 12 per cent.¹¹ Overrunning Kuwait gave Iraq an extra 3 per cent. How ludicrous to die for 3 per cent!

Of course, the matter becomes more serious when the Kuwaiti 3 per cent is considered as part of the *exportable* volume available to the world market, and particularly to the armoury of the main body regulating this market – OPEC, with 36.9 per cent of world output. It must not be forgotten that the world's main producer, the former USSR with 19.5 per cent, is less and less able to export, and the second largest producer, the United States with 13.7 per cent, already imports nearly half of its oil requirements.

Within OPEC there have been two conflicting approaches since 1973. On one side are countries with a small

population whose needs are already met, which are trying to maximize and spin out their oil revenues. Their strategy is to prevent excessive prices (higher than \$15 a barrel) forcing consumer countries into energy saving or energy substitution. The Gulf 'oil kingdom' bloc, with a good third of OPEC production, champions this approach. On the other side are populous countries which try to maximize short-term profit in order to reinvest (soundly or otherwise – industrialization or arms). Algeria, Iran and Iraq (nearly a third of OPEC production) represent this second approach and aim at a price of around \$25 a barrel. The two groups were at loggerheads at the July 1990 OPEC Conference, where Iraq won a \$21 target price, and Kuwait increased its output to bring prices down. This conflict was one of the precursors of the war and doubtless the direct cause of the Iraqi invasion.

The effect of the annexation of Kuwait was to shift about 10 per cent of OPEC output from one camp to the other. Moreover, Iraq gained control of revenue from Kuwait, which in fact served as an enclave for Western finance in the Arab world, since the Al-Sabah family accumulated most of its income in the West. The annexation was therefore both a 're-Arabization' of a significant proportion of oil revenue, and an extra point for the 'high price' camp.

However, all this was immediately thwarted by sanctions and a rise in Saudi oil production. After the outbreak of war (17 January 1991), oil prices stabilized at the 'Vienna July 1990' level, *without* Iraqi and Kuwaiti output, and despite a rather cold winter. Moreover, the military defeat of Iraq led to a significant price collapse. The truth is that the Western world did not need a little Kuwaiti discount merchant for it to get its surfeit of oil. Not in the short term, at least.

It was only very late in the day that President Bush gave the real clue, and confirmed the analysis of ecologists opposed to the war. On 19 February 1991, he revealed

United States energy plans for the following twenty years. Against every expectation, he called for a general acceleration of oil consumption and rejected a fuel tax, thus throwing retrospective light on his opposition to stabilization of CO₂ emissions at the World Conference on the Atmosphere held at Geneva in autumn 1990. The crucial concept was no longer flows but stocks; and by 2030, Saudi Arabia would have 40 per cent of proven reserves, and an Iraq-Kuwait bloc 30 per cent. All this, of course, on the assumption of a continuation of the 'energy-greedy' development model for which the United States is famous – their consumption of energy per dollar of GNP is twice as high as in Germany or Japan.

The Gulf War was therefore well and truly a war *for* oil, but *against* energy saving; *for* increased greenhouse effect and *against* the choice of a sustainable development model. In fact, at this rate (one which would give the Gulf countries a decisive role in crude oil markets in the run-up to the first quarter of the next century), the earth's average temperature will have risen by between two and four degrees – the extent of fluctuation of the glaciation cycle. However, whereas there were only a few million human beings at the time of the last climatic upheavals (stretching over tens of millennia), ten billion people over the next forty years will have to migrate to cope with climatic changes, in the context of a 'finite world' with increased racial tension.

This choice prompted a French diplomat to say 'United States energy policy is the Gulf War.' This can be understood in two ways: the Gulf War was the first step in a United States strategy to deal with the tense world which their energy policy (but not just theirs) implies. And this leads to the second theme in anti-warmonger interpretations of the second Gulf War – that it was a war for US hegemony.

The major change of the 1980s

At the G7 summit in Paris on 15 July 1989, it seemed that the 1980s were ending with the sorry failure of the 'socialist camp'. There was a new dawn over the world. The West magnanimously offered its hand to the Third World, and promised to lift the debt burden; already George Bush was making his generous gesture to the new 'Third World' to which the Second World was being reduced as the socialist gloss fell away. A few months later, the fall of the Berlin Wall completed the victory of the 'American camp'. In the same vein, Security Council resolutions after 2 August 1990 showed a single superpower orchestrating, in the name of a new international order, countries which calmly accepted its leadership. A few months later, the United States and some of its coalition partners (European or Arab) seemed to wage a private war of destruction, with the wary reproof of the then Soviet Union, Japan and most other European states (including some coalition members), and with cries of opposition heard in the streets of Arab capitals, a sign of a fresh wave of anti-Americanism in the Third World.

In fact, beneath the end of Cold War with the collapse of the 'Soviet camp', a completely new interpretation of the 1980s became possible. A mighty battle had been secretly going on right inside advanced capitalist countries, between the two options for countries to emerge from the Great Crisis of the 1970s. This battle – between 'liberal-productivism' and models based on 'negotiated involvement of workers' – has been the subject matter of this book. Moreover, we have already said that the big event of the end of the 1980s was the crushing victory of the second approach over the first – a victory judged, of course, on the criteria of capitalism: per capita GNP, profit margins,

currency appreciation and, above all, trading surplus.

After 1985, the United States, despite a virtual 50 per cent devaluation against the yen and the mark, had a fairly regular trade deficit of \$10 billion a month. By the early 1990s, its foreign debt was more than half that of the whole of the Third World. Moreover, like Brazil in the 1970s, this debt was self-sustaining. Disaster on the domestic front was even more spectacular – collapse of the loan system, education and health-care, an appalling social polarization between ‘winners’ and marginalized losers, an enormous increase in urban crime . . . and massive penetration by Japanese (and European) capital of key sectors of the American economy. This clear ‘Brazilianisation’ of the United States¹² has already happened in the United Kingdom. The fact that, in the early 1990s, France joined the camp of those countries with a deficit of industrial production, income polarization and ‘inner-city violence’ shows (allowing for time lag and other adjustments) where the wrong choice for ‘restructuring’ has inexorably led.

There is, however, a major counterpart to the American collapse – overwhelming military power. It has even been claimed that the level of defence spending in the ‘liberal-productivist’ countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, France), by diverting funds from civilian research, has led to their defeat by Germany and Japan, which were ‘absolved’ from paying for their own defence. In any event, it is a proven fact that defence spending has none of the knock-on effect promised for the civilian economy.¹³ However, let us not mislead ourselves – American (and British and French) decline is not the result of military overspending, but of a more fundamental mistake in the way society deals with the relation between capital and labour. For me, the link between these two independent causes (excessive military spending, and wrong choices in recasting the capital–labour relationship) lies in the influence of the military hierarchical model

on civilian work relations, and not directly in the wrong allocation of technological research. I would even go so far as to say (though with more circumspection) that the same was *also* true for the Soviet Union.

We still have this huge military machine, the only one in the world which can counter any geo-political threat, from any quarter. It constitutes the major advantage allowing the United States to maintain its position as the new century begins. 'To be top dog, keep Japan in check, break up Europe, and curb any Third World move for autonomy' is the frequent cry of anti-war people, but also of the most triumphalist of the pro-war camp. This is another statement which needs to be qualified and analysed more closely.

One particular paranoiac fantasy can be immediately discounted: that the United States, by controlling the Gulf, has a stranglehold over Germany and Japan. There will only ever be one single oil price on world markets, the same for American or Japanese imports. Experience showed that it was at the time of 'dear oil' (the period 1973-85) that Japan and Germany drew ahead of the United States, which is quite normal - when customers are rich, the most competitive exporters win out. Moreover, if (as their energy policy suggests) the United States, as masters of the Gulf (assuming they are!) impose cheap oil, this is hardly likely to worry Japan and Germany, which are now able to develop, outside OPEC, their own 'co-prosperity zones'.

There is a journalistic cliché which can also be discounted: that Germany and Japan are 'economic giants, but political pygmies'. Germany and Japan are not political pygmies - on the contrary, they operated remarkably skilfully in coping with the Gulf War. It is simply that their brand of *imperium* is not the same as that of the United States, or France, or Great Britain.

Reference has already been made to the German case. The reason why the Germans seemed to play, until

February 1991, a background role was that they were otherwise occupied – in absorbing and rebuilding a country of 18 million people, which Kohl's popularity-seeking policy of unification without transition had managed to ruin. The United States, on the other hand, was preparing for the much simpler task of destroying another country of the same size. Moreover, Germany had to keep an eye on its future zone of expansion, where the then USSR had been given a brief free run by Bush in return for its support in the Security Council. Neither could it cut itself off from the former Ottoman Empire, the southern flank of its traditional zone of influence, for which France was in theory responsible. An attempt will be made later to understand why France, as the 'European Ministry of African and Middle Eastern Affairs', failed to uphold the interests of Europe. Let us turn first, however, to Japan, where I was fortunate enough – and it was a very instructive experience – to spend half of the autumn in the lead-up to war.

In September and October 1990, the front page of the two Japanese English-language dailies covered three stories: the debate on the religious nature of the emperor's coronation, the Gulf War and the 'rice crisis'. The first of these served as a focus for all those, such as trade unionists, feminists and ecologists, who opposed the constitutional amendment proposed by Prime Minister Kaifu to allow Japanese military intervention in the Gulf. After a month of bitter conflict, the matter was settled in just two days when, in a way which was doubtless coordinated, all the countries of the future Japanese 'co-prosperity sphere' – South Korea, North Korea, both Chinas, Indonesia and Malaysia – declared that it would be 'unfortunate if Japan were to return to the international scene in the role of military power'. Immediately the bosses of the party in power (LDP) made it clear to Kaifu that it would be absurd to lose the friendship of our esteemed customers for such a trifling matter . . .

There remained the question of *financial* support for the war, and the 'rice crisis'. By this was meant the final US offensive to break through the wall of agricultural protectionism in the last phase of the Uruguay Round in the GATT trade talks. Japan, like South Korea and much more so than Europe, had in fact decided after the war to guarantee its self-sufficiency in food through comprehensive subsidies to small-scale agriculture. This system, which sets the price of rice in Japan at ten times the world level, guarantees the smallest rice grower a sizeable income – and any blue-collar worker can reconvert to rice growing. The result is that despite a notoriously low level of state welfare provision, Japan is a country almost as egalitarian as Sweden. This 'rice growers' welfare state' would have simply disappeared if Japan had given in to the demands of the Bush administration.

If we recall the situation in October 1990, it will be remembered that the US administration was then on the defensive, literally incapable of balancing the annual budget, and having to resort to the temporary lay-off of museum attendants and National Park rangers. However, by buying Federal Treasury bills, Japan made it possible for this bankrupt administration to make ends meet. There was a crying need to 'buy something' from the Americans, whereas Japan was much more competitive than the United States over the whole range of industrial production, apart from aeroplanes. This was when the Americans gave them the choice – buy American rice, or pay for an army to defend 'common interests' in the Gulf.

If one thinks hard about it, it was a hallucinatory situation. The former victor, former master of the world, was in the absurd position of a raw-material-exporting country trying to sell off its produce to pay for high-tech imports, or of barbarians laying siege to the Roman senate to get it to hire legions of mercenaries to defend the empire against other, more distant, barbarians, or, more accurately, of

those pre-Renaissance Italian *condottieri*, hiring out Grand Companies of mercenaries to rich bourgeois cities to complement the local militia.

In December 1990, Japan decided not to allow the rice in, and to take the mercenaries as security. The result was the collapse of the Uruguay Round in GATT. In February 1991, it was announced that the money for the mercenaries (\$9 billion) would be deducted from the Japanese Defence Force budget. Nothing had to affect the real weapons on which Japanese power was based – finance and technology.

Condottieri or policemen?

This therefore was the first way in which US military power was 'cashed in' – the enforced sale of mercenaries. And it was not insignificant: in fact, US military spending in the Gulf (estimated at \$500 million a day) can be regarded as a straightforward export. Arms and personnel, with their munitions and canned meals, are American domestic produce (though the imports have to be deducted; one third of the electronics in US 'intelligent weapons' is said to use Japanese microchips). Since the cost of all this is paid for by foreigners, they are well and truly 'exports of goods and services', just like Boeing 747s sold to Japan, or the repatriation of money by Portuguese guest workers in Germany. The United States received \$41 billion from their backers for the loan of this mercenary service (of which \$9 billion came from Japan, \$5 billion from Germany, \$15 billion from Saudi Arabia and \$12 billion from Kuwait). This paid for 80 days of military conflict, and, more importantly, for 5–8 months of trade deficit!¹⁴

I am in no way saying, however, that the United States is planning to bring its foreign trade back into balance on a permanent basis by the enforced sale of mercenaries to

countries in surplus. I am simply repeating that this kind of deal might in future be a significant item of annual revenue; and that if this is so, it is in the US interest for any tensions, in a world where these are increasing on the periphery of wealthier areas, to be solved by force rather than negotiation. I am also saying that, like any *condottiere* worried about the future, the United States will try to hire out armed forces for a *fixed payment* (by the year, and on a lease renewable by tacit agreement) to wealthy 'cities' which have no forces of their own.¹⁵ I will even go so far as to say that it will try to make this role *official*, institutionalize it, and make sure it obtains a permanent hold over its 'customers' from this monopoly of legitimate violence. The US will try to become, not *condottieri*, but the world's policemen.

The two are not the same thing. A policeman is a public employee, on the permanent payroll. It is of course desirable, as far as the police budget is concerned, for crime to stay at a level which justifies the money set aside for it. More importantly, it is vital for the police always to observe the legal procedures which legitimate its carrying of weapons, for its actions to be within the law and the peacekeeping function as laid down by any legislature, and to be under the authority of an executive which allocates resources from a government budget.

This is why the United States attached so much importance to the United Nations and the Security Council during the first six months of the Gulf crisis, until Resolution 678 and even for a short time afterwards. The United Nations, the 'thingamajig' to which Reagan was reluctant to pay his dues only a short time before, came to be accepted as a kind of 'legislative body' responsible for approving the budget of the world's police force. 'Desert Shield' had to be seen as a proper police operation within the confines of the planet.

A *condottiere* is quite different: his job is to provoke

disorder in order to suppress it; he is a troubleshooter, virtually a racketeer, hand in glove with other *condottieri*, and with the Grand Companies of roving bandits who provide the need for his own services. It is disastrous for a mercenary when a robber band submits, or a gangster surrenders. This is why the Bush administration was in panic during the crazy week of 15–23 February 1991, when Saddam the bandit threatened to give in at the behest of the then Soviet Union, that former great power trying to get back into the centre of things by acting, with the inevitable intervention of Iran, as ‘Ministry of the Humiliated and Dispossessed’. I have just indicated how such a surrender would have been ‘disastrous’, but that is not all: if Iraq, as the US military claimed, was about to collapse, there was nothing disastrous in letting its broken army return to a country in ruins . . . except for the *condottiere* whose job it was to attack it! That is why all serious reference in the Security Council to law, or the liberation of Kuwait, was dropped. Hired for 80 days, George Bush’s Grand Company insisted on seeing the deal through.¹⁶

Condottiere or policeman: the two aspects of US power in the run-up to the twenty-first century will remain indistinguishable for a long time. The United States will always go for ‘flat-rate work’ alternating with limited-objective contracts; they will try continually to establish a style of international relations requiring resort to force, and they will always try, but always in vain, to legitimate and perpetuate this need. The ‘general intifada’ throughout the whole Arab world, indeed the whole Islamic world, which is what the ‘victory of the West’ in the second Gulf War could lead to, is therefore, in all possible cases, something the United States would welcome. The scene is even set for a third Gulf War – Turkey, Iran, Syria, the remains of Iraq, not forgetting the Kurds, Israel, and many more, and worse, and the US army is already in place. All it

needs to do is choose its future employers, and enemies.

More serious is the question, the *only* question: how far can the United States in the end achieve geo-political domination from this vital role of *condottiere* or policeman? Certainly not world 'hegemony' – the undisputed management of world affairs, which they still had twenty years before. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world is firmly fixed in the *multipolar* mould.

We must be clear about this concept as well. The 'multipolar scenario' was conceived in the 1970s by those experts most aware of the incipient decline of the American empire. However, they were thinking of a purely geographical multipolarity – the United States had the American continent and the Middle East Europe had the Mediterranean and Africa, Japan had East Asia. The huge 'soft centre' of the world (the 'socialist' countries, already economically defeated, and the Indian subcontinent) would probably be fought over by a German-led Europe and Japan. This analysis is still valid, but another multipolarity has just been superimposed on it, this time a *functional* one, where Japan and Germany dominate in technology and trade terms (with some nice pickings for the US), and the United States dominates militarily. The question which interests us here is whether the 'world Ministry of Police' will not just pay the American '*condottiere*' for mercenary services, but will allow it to extend the boundaries of its geographical orbit, and even influence the rules of the game in world economic terms.

The Italian metaphor which has been used is not very illuminating. It is true that some Italian city-states fell under the temporary sway of an ambitious *condottiere*, a servant turned master; but by the end of the sixteenth century the major centres of the world economy – Pisa, Genoa, Florence and above all Venice – were controlled by capitalist elites; the Medici, rulers of Florence, were first and foremost bankers. More importantly, world order has

always been established by economic powers like these. As Fernand Braudel said,¹⁷ 'Taking the long view, only merchants count.' Even the essentially military power of the Spanish monarchy did not prevent it, and all its American colonies, falling to the forces of Genoa, Antwerp and Amsterdam.¹⁸

The lead-up to war had already, as we have seen, induced the Americans to give way to Japan and Europe over GATT. Of course, we must not rule out revenge scenarios – another round of trade talks where the Americans explicitly threaten to use force; but it is hard to see how American military superiority could be converted into economic advantage. It is easy to occupy Grenada or Panama, but less easy to crush Iraq, and it is unlikely that gunboat diplomacy could open up the Japanese rice market.¹⁹ Regionally, however, there has been a clear extension of the American sphere. It may be that Arab markets are more amenable to American military exports, but they are not likely to be closed to Japanese or German non-military exports.²⁰ Moreover, through Turkey, the United States could drive a wedge between Europe and its south-western flank.²¹

Once again, it is probably from disruption in the South (as well as from the mega-Iraq that a disintegrating former Soviet Union could become) that the United States can expect to be given more 'contracts': sanctions against bad payers, 'execution' of assertive powers, and so on. This again is the policeman or the *condottiere*, and not really hegemony; neither is it the 'new international legal order'.

What about France?

In the new international regime, France operates only through the filter of its role in Europe. This, however, is

not necessarily a weakness; it can be a source of strength.

Europe is in fact a microcosm of the world system, but better coordinated. Its major states retain a sphere of influence on a global scale, and this geographical multipolarity is matched by a functional multipolarity. Germany's role is that of Minister of Industry and Finance (so, *de facto*, that of prime minister), and France had the Ministry of the Third World, more particularly in respect of the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East. When François Mitterrand, on 24 September 1990, made his famous speech at the United Nations, which could have changed things considerably ('Iraq has only to announce withdrawal for everything to become possible . . . including an examination of the Palestinian question'), he clearly had the tacit and well-disposed support of Germany. How, therefore, could France move to a position of accepting Resolution 678, but then be absorbed totally in the American diplomatic and military set-up, to the point of a curt rejection of the Soviet plan and a commitment to a military thrust towards As-Salman?

The argument that 'Saddam rejected everything' does not hold water: the then Soviet Union managed to extricate itself in time from the diplomatic manoeuvring. The problem lies in France's shift of position, represented by opposition to the war on the part of its present and past ministers of foreign affairs and defence.

The primary reason seems to me to lie in the crisis of the Europe-system. Clearly, the Paris-Bonn 'lever' was countered, and spectacularly so, in the first week of January 1991, when two other EEC countries, Britain and the Netherlands, blocked any European approach which diverged from the American one. There are inherent reasons for this opposition to a Paris-Bonn axis – fear on the part of these two countries of a German-dominated Europe. But beyond this, the Amsterdam-London-Washington axis harks back to a much more significant

historical trend; these are the three capitals of the 'capitalist world-economy' (in the sense in which Immanuel Wallerstein and Fernand Braudel use the phrase). Not only have these three centres, in succession, governed the world, but they are also the home of the 'Seven Sisters' – the major oil companies which controlled the Middle East until 1973. The 'imperial culture' of these countries is radically different from the kind of hegemony sought by Germany and Japan. The Dutch and British empires were true colonial empires, sustained by a navy capable of military intervention. The United States divested itself of the need to occupy territory, but maintained a culture of direct military intervention. Although they were later on the scene, Germany and Japan also tried to establish empires, but these were dismantled – twice in the twentieth century in the case of Germany. After this bitter experience, the two countries are going back to the Italian tradition of a disarmed empire – the straightforward capitalist domination of a 'co-prosperity sphere'.

As for France, and more particularly its social democracy, it is imbued with the 'military' culture of the *imperium*. Suez and Algeria – two operations by governments which included François Mitterrand – might have brought a cure. However, because of insufficient support by the EEC for an alternative policy, a long-standing reflex action could only induce France to fall in line with . . . Great Britain, so much so that it shared Anglo-Dutch fears of German power. Like Britain (and in the final analysis like the United States), France could try to bank on its military power and its Security Council membership to counter German economic hegemony. Moreover, as the third biggest arms exporter in the world, it could not go completely for a policy of negotiated disarmament by its customers. The contradiction was at its most acute because of the Gulf crisis, but the circumstances were such that the same reasons which made the United States act as

condottiere to Germany and Japan led France to adopt the same attitude – because the French had *also* lost out in the economic war of the 1980s.

However, one cannot become a *condottiere* simply by wanting to be one. France received only \$1 billion from Kuwait, and some loose change from Germany and Belgium (more perhaps than the real cost of joining the expedition, but less than the sum received by the British). Having therefore become merely another Britain, and having sacrificed priorities such as education and research to military spending, thus committing itself to its new role for the foreseeable future, France simply threw away, in the eyes of Arab opinion and present and future governments in the region, all the gains from the Gaullist policy of 'backing both horses'. Europe's Ministry for the Third World was left out in the cold.

For ever? Of course not. Just as Mitterrand sacked Defence Minister Chevènement because, as someone who preferred the other side of the contradiction, he was the wrong person to be Minister of Police, so Germany, momentarily shaken by France's desertion, began to look for a replacement 'Minister for the Third World'. There were plenty of candidates.

Straight after the 'massacre in the bunker' in Baghdad on 15 February 1991, Spain and Italy applied for the post by suggesting an end to the bombing of Iraqi civilian targets. But more importantly, Gorbachev rushed in to fill the vacant post. A very significant event was the direct telephone link between Chancellor Kohl and Gorbachev *during* the decisive talks which the latter was having with Tarik Aziz. In the hours which followed, Gorbachev tried to coordinate his approach with the Italians, and contacted President Mitterrand only on Saturday 23 February ('during lunch', as the latter noted in irritation), some hours before the slaughter. De Michelis was then able to put forward his plan to reform the Security Council, giving

a seat to Germany, Japan and Italy – an old ‘Axis’ with, no doubt, a bright future.

The War of the Environment

The twenty-first century therefore begins against a backcloth of North–South tension. A contradiction which overlies even the rivalries within the developed North: conflicts in the North are about relations with the South. It is not a matter of Manicheism: the South was represented in the Gulf War by the Saddam dictatorship, by the local imperialism of the Iraqi Baath. However, this North–South battle is part of a wider context of tensions, in which the North’s responsibility is overwhelming.

To write a postscript to a conclusion in a changing world is not easy: one has to hope that it will not lose its relevance in the months after publication. However, I think I can say that the three years between the publication of the original French edition and this English translation in no way invalidated my analysis, and indeed provided significant confirmation of the validity of my proposals. I am even prepared to say that 1992 will be a spectacular illustration of what I have said in a vital area. It will mark the *first North–South battle in the global war of the environment*.

The threats to the planet which I denounced in Chapter 5 became a matter of common sense after the end of 1989. The martyrdom of Chico Mendes, the Amazonian peasant murdered by Brazilian landowners because he called for a ‘sustainable’ model for exploiting the tropical forest, was a significant influence in this increased awareness. We have seen the beginning of major diplomatic moves to establish a new world law of the environment, and the first boost to these efforts was the 1992 World Environment Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

I have made it very clear in this book that this new law

of the environment is absolutely vital. The fate of future generations depends on it. Enforcement measures, with penalties against breaches, are extremely urgent. Already, the more hyper-productivist countries of the South oppose such a move, explicitly condemning measures such as I suggested – the ‘ecological and social clauses on free trade’. To these the Malaysian prime minister made this reply: ‘Environment, democracy, human rights – these are the new obstacles which the developed countries want to put in the way of their future competitors.’²² The dramatic thing is that the Gulf War, in identifying the idea of an international law with the principle of ‘dual weights, dual measures’, did not completely refute his statement.

When it comes to the greenhouse effect, for instance, it is clear that the increase of CO₂ in the atmosphere has to be stopped, and quickly. However, there are two ways of going about this.

The first method is to start from ‘established rights’, proposing the stabilization, then the reduction, of CO₂ emissions over the next thirty years, country by country. In this way, countries which have ravaged the biosphere for a hundred years and whose population is stable keep their ‘share’ of the world’s right to pollute. Countries which have up to now been minimally responsible for the greenhouse effect, and whose population is rising rapidly, will have to share out the remainder. They are not allowed an industrial revolution.

The second approach starts with the idea of equality of rights for all human beings. It establishes a global annual pollution quota compatible with the regeneration capacity of the world ecosystem, and shares it between countries according to population. Each country is free to choose how to adapt to the quota, in return for a pooling of technology which restricts pollutant energy use. This is the way of autonomy and solidarity.

The first way implies that ecological imperialism still exists. The second implies a huge transfer of the ‘right to

pollute' from the North to the South, and a reform of development models which is much more restrictive for the North than for the South. The same argument is valid for the whole range of problems under discussion: protection of forests and biological diversity, and so on.

Bolstered by what they thought was a leadership crowned by the Gulf War, the United States' position in the Rio battle was one of radical eco-imperialism. As far as the greenhouse effect was concerned, they had already rejected (at the Autumn 1990 Geneva Conference) any 'precautionary principle', and on 19 January 1991, when the Gulf bombing was at its height, they reiterated that their development model was one based on oil. On bio-diversity, they made it abundantly clear that genes from virgin forests and farmers' fields were free of charge, whereas those from their own laboratories had to be paid for. However, they very soon came up against resistance. Countries of the South asserted their sovereignty, Europe and Japan challenged US hegemony by suggesting to the South a middle way, and powerful non-governmental organizations in the North (WWF, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth) backed the ecologists and the popular movements of the South. Rio was a diplomatic Vietnam for the Bush Administration, since it was obliged to sign the Climate Convention (though it had managed to water it down significantly) and it was alone in its refusal to sign the Bio-diversity Convention, enshrining countries' right to their natural or traditional bio-diversity.

The twenty-first century began with a North-South war. It will continue with a battle fought by all humankind for the collective survival of the planet. To stop this battle of all humankind for itself turning once more into a North-South war, an alternative development is needed, in North and South. Its main elements will of necessity be akin to those put forward in this book. Today, choosing peace implies choosing a new, alternative, social and ecological model.