

INTRODUCTION

Arturo OROPEZA GARCÍA*

I.

In 1916, after the deaths of more than 10 million people and the atrocities of a First World War that looked for, among other objectives, the new hegemonic definitions of the 20th Century, a belligerent solution line begun, which would not be resolved until 1945, almost at the middle of the century, with the military, economic and political victory of the United States. In 1815, the English leadership of the 19th Century was decided, among other factors, in the face of the forceful victory of Great Britain over France in the Battle of Waterloo, together with the momentum that was the Industrial Revolution, a new way of generating wealth, which began in 1750.

In the second decade of the 21st Century, which has gone beyond the fatidic line of the first three lustrums of the last two centuries, a more communicated and active global society, observes with concern the construction process of a new global order that debates between the ratification of what is known, through a renewed Western leadership headed by the United States, and the emergence of the new, by means of the economic position-

* Mexican academic specialized in international economic law, comparative law, and regional integration systems. He graduated PHD with honors from UNAM-Mexico's National University. He's Researcher at the Institute of Legal Research of the UNAM. Mr. Oropeza has appeared as an arbitrator in Mercosur dispute resolutions panels appointed by Brazil. He also has lectured at diverse universities and institutions around the world, as well as participated in more than 20 publications regarding legal and economic impact in globalization. The list of publications include: "North America in the XXI century", "North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), 20 years", "The Transpacific Partnership" (TPP); "Mexico-India: Legal and cultural comparative systems", "Mexico-China: legal and cultural comparative systems", "Mexico-Brazil: Legal and cultural comparative systems"; "Brazil, Russia, India, China (the BRIC system)". He is also a regular commentator and columnist, and has been published in several newspapers and magazines in Mexico and Latin America.

ing of the current Asian reality, which in the past four decades has meant the economic, political, and military strengthening of China.

Certainly, there are many circumstances and multiple vectors that factor into the evolution of the pre-eminence of everything geopolitical in these last centuries.

As an example of the foregoing, the *global order* of the 19th Century was debated before a misinformed and disjointed social conglomerate that just reached one billion human beings, after ten thousand years of modern history. The society of the 20th Century, which already exceeded two billion people, already had the telegraph and telephone, as well as wider maritime and terrestrial communications. However, its new environment of technological communications was by no means comparable to the over-communicated village of the 21st Century, which already has more than 7,600 million people.

The West versus the West, for the world hegemony, was a constant for the fight for the economic and political leadership of the last 500 years. This occurred after the Pre-industrial Revolution (15th Century) through which the new maritime powers displaced the Asian leadership that had prevailed over the last 1500 years. Since the first discoveries of 1492 (Christopher Columbus), 1498 (Vasco Da Gama), etc., the West, through the new maritime hegemonies like the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, etc.; was substituting, little by little, economically, politically and territorially, for the previous Asian Powers that dominated the ancient world such as India and mainly China.

From the second half of the second millennium, everything Western became a constant in the economic and political world of its time. Similarly, through its Renaissance movement and its Enlightening period, the Western culture recreated a cosmogony that had been truncated since the 5th Century A.D. with the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Subsequently, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-18th Century, this Western domination of the second millennium was consolidated, both because of its overwhelmed economic control at the time (80% of the world GDP, Ferguson, 2014), and because of an interpretation of the world and life which, by way of civilization, gave origin and destination over a period of approximately five centuries, to the global world of the moment.

Significantly, this competition for the leaderships, in its latest 20th Century version, differed from previous editions by the aggregates that arose after the war; by the creation of new institutions of global character, such as the World Bank (1944), the International Monetary Fund (1945), the Gen-

eral Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947), and the United Nations (1945), which as a whole generated a structure for the global solution to the different conflicts within a community increasingly intertwined in all its fields; which has managed to reduce in an important way the armed and violent *solution* of previous editions.

An infinite range of new forms of coexistence and communication were added to the institutionalization described above. This made the term global society move away from its subjective academic concept and land on a series of countless exchanges —economic, communication, commerce, tourism, etc.— among the nearly 200 nations of the world. Among these new forms of relationships stand out the world trade of agricultural products and industrial goods among countries, which together represent a business of approximately 28% of the world economy. Similarly, the new forms of communication technology make it possible for today's modern society to communicate anytime, anywhere, 24 hours a day. The financial transaction flows that cross the countries daily show a *village* that speaks, does business, and is visited every day in a world that is increasingly smaller.

As a result of what was mentioned previously, from the profound inter-relationship in which the present society lives, the struggle for the leadership of this century is unprecedented.

New relationships, new technologies, and intricate economic crossings, no longer allow the automatic repetition of the historical leaderships.

II.

The era of the unique hegemonies ended during the nineties of the last century, precisely when the perpetuation of the Western leadership was under discussion. Just 27 years after the end of the story, a narrative begins and demands a new form of global management. About 10 billion people in 2050, almost four times more than 150 years ago, of which around 85% will correspond to underdeveloped countries, that is, living in poverty; will use the new media at their disposal to demand with a single voice decent housing and clothing and enough food; but also water, energy, security, etc., within the framework of a scarcity of raw materials and natural resources that will test both the new leadership and a highly demanding global society.

In the coming decades, the Industrial Revolution, which led to the birth of the *industrialized countries*, will see a decline in its importance as the sector of the economy that stands out for being the major job generator. In this re-

gard, Oxfam warns that 50% of the current work positions of the sector will disappear in the next 30 years (Oxfam 2015), derived from the sector's own sophistication, which will ignore the traditional labor force through a technological substitution of human labor.

The end of the carbon era, understood as the exhaustion of conventional fossil fuels, along with the unsustainable pollution that it generates, will also be causing a pressure that has not been registered before on the conformation of the hegemonies and the survival of human beings themselves. The depletion of conventional fossil fuels, in fact, is one of the factors directly responsible for what has been already called the *third world war*, which refers to the armed conflict that involves multiple Western and Asian Nations in the area of Asia Minor, which has already caused more than 400,000 deaths and around 11 million immigrants or displaced people. The 2, 3, or 4 degrees of temperature, which stand as the greatest threat to the survival of the global ecosystem, is a topic that is already part of a global agenda. However, the advance of the environmental problems that occur every day, together with the lack of direct links to the commitments adopted in Paris in 2015 (COP-21), will cause the world to return repeatedly to review an agenda not yet exhausted.

III.

Although the transfer process of the economic axis from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that in light of the figures, speeches, and strategies proves evident with regard to the thinning of the West in face of the strengthening of East Asia, and of the United States with regard to China, is not a settled issue; the degree of its important advance can in no way be seen under the viewpoint of preceding centuries or as the mere economic and political competition of two nations or regions that at the end of their discussion or hegemonic struggle will sit to negotiate, as before, their particular vision and their group interests with respect to a divided global society.

As already mentioned, the era of absolute historical leaderships has concluded, and whatever the result may be from this struggle between the Atlantic and the Pacific, from both, or from any other alternative that may emerge out of the orphanage of the breakdown of the global order of the 20th Century, the challenges and shortcomings of eight or ten billion human beings, well-communicated and expectant, already marked by economic inequality, will not allow different versions of the repetition of previous imperial editions.

IV.

The new economic and political realities that open gradually toward East Asia and Pacific Asia, without forgetting the strategic value of Asia Minor and Central Asia, leave no doubt about the asset reallocation in central issues such as economic growth, per-capita growth, manufacturing, export of goods, accumulation of world reserves, contribution to world growth, etc., which before were dominated by the Western European countries and the United States, and have now passed to be led by East Asia and China. These changes are generating a new economic reality, as well as a new economic, commercial, political, and social mixing difficult to predict, since they involve in their transformation not only economic goods and services, but also include powerful civilizations that share and compete day-to-day in their exchange.

For Mexico and Latin America, today absent from this historical phenomenon of economic and political transfer among countries and among regions, the immediate responsibility to become actors and not witnesses of this change is generated. They must turn to the accumulated experience and move away from the easy recourse of the fascination for the other; the false political comfort of a hegemon change; of demonstrating their adulthood exercising with maturity the defense and promotion of their national and regional positions, transcending from the ancestral practice of 500 years of only selling raw materials, to fully enter into the only successful economic door of the 21st Century, which is that of intelligence services.

East Asia, along with China, and the West with the United States, live with intensity a geopolitical struggle that already draws long-term strategic positions. BRICS and One Belt One Road (OBOR), are the current policies of a bold and inclusive East Asia and China. The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), are the old solutions of the 20th Century to the new challenges of the 21st on the part of the United States.

None of these strategies is Latin American or is aimed at improving or strengthening a region of commodities and factories such as Latin America.

It falls, therefore, to the region to propose an agenda to both geopolitical options that favor its interests based on its *not weak* demographic, geographic, economic, natural resources, and energy strengths. From this perspective, Latin America and Mexico have ample opportunity to influence the geographic and political center between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

V.

The economic-political transfer from the Atlantic to the Pacific is an event of the greatest importance, which impacts directly on the public and private agenda of all the nations of this new global society.

In any scenario, its effects will continue to be felt directly in the economic, political, and social life of the countries, as already happens to date.

We hope that the edition of this book, that was made through the integration of several global essays on the topic, prepared at different times (2010-2016) on an individual basis, which when incorporated into this publication under a comprehensive view, fulfills the aim of joining with the first expressions that are being carried out by various authors, with the objective of revealing a new *Eurasian* era that will be prevalent during the first half of this century.