

UN Imperialism: unleashing entrepreneurship in the developing world

Paul Cammack

Manchester Metropolitan University

Acknowledgements

First published in Colin Mooers, ed, *The New Imperialists: Ideologies of Empire*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 2006. I would like to thank Colin Mooers for his comments on the original text.

UN Imperialism: unleashing entrepreneurship in the developing world

Introduction

Over the first five years of the present century, a new imperialist project took shape where one might have least expected it – at the New York headquarters of the United Nations. It was orchestrated around the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the General Assembly in September 2000, and installed at the heart of the UN system with the adoption of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report, *In Larger Freedom*, at the World Summit convened in September 2005 to review progress towards the Goals after five years.

The Millennium Goals may not have looked at first glance like the new face of imperialism for a new century. They seemed on the contrary to promise a new spirit of North-South cooperation aimed at alleviating ills and promoting human welfare across the globe: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. However, they came not as a new start but as the focal point of a project devised and implemented during the 1990s, intended to make capitalism global. Integral to this was the systematic institutional reform pursued by Kofi Annan after he became UN Secretary-General at the beginning of 1997 – one that effected a shift from security through peace-keeping (Annan's previous remit) to security through capitalist hegemony, and succeeded by 2005 in transforming the UN into the lead agency for the global dissemination of capitalist values and imperatives.

Although it bears a family resemblance to the imperialism identified by Lenin and others as centred on the export of capital, the new imperialist project differs from it in two respects. First, it is defined not by the export of capital, but by the export of *capitalism*: the social relations of production that define it and institutions devised to promote and sustain them. Second, as the central role of the UN suggests, it is led not by states but by international organizations committed to capitalism *as a global project*. The World Bank, in increasingly close partnership with the IMF, laid the basis for it in its reformulation of its mission over the 1990s in its Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative (1996), Comprehensive Development Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (1999). The EU, the EBRD, the OECD and the WTO have also been significant contributors to the enterprise, which has engaged the advanced countries, in the main, through their development and donor agencies and through multilateral groupings (the G8, the G20) rather than through their executives. It is not a project controlled by one or even a few leading states – its leading architects have generally come from *outside* the United States, and from across the developed and developing world: among them are Gordon Brown (UK), Trevor Manuel (South Africa), Paul Martin (Canada), and Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico); and insofar as there has been US involvement, it has come much more from the successive Clinton administrations than from the Republicans under Bush. Furthermore, the leaders of the project, in their efforts to embed and legitimize it, have worked as much through NGOs and 'civil society' as through governments. Against this general background, the assumption of leadership of

the project by the central UN organizations in the wake of growing global protests against the IMF and the World Bank, themselves somewhat semi-detached members of the larger UN family, represented a significant institutional development, a calculated transfer of authority from institutions whose legitimacy was perceived to be fragile. The reform of the UN's Economic and Social Council over the last decade, leading to the floating at the 2005 World Summit of the proposal for an Economic Security Council, reflects this development.

Advance notice of the new imperialist project was given when Secretary General Kofi Annan travelled to Davos within a month of his assumption of the post to outline it to the World Economic Forum, and it was spelled out in detail in a report in his name to the Economic and Social Council six months later. Two years of intensive institutional and programmatic reform followed, making it possible for the project to be 'rolled out' with impressive speed after the adoption by the General Assembly of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Among the key steps in the realization of the project thereafter were, in chronological order, the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action agreed at the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries in May 2001; the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Secretary-General's 'Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration' of 6 September 2001; and the adoption of the 'Monterrey Consensus' in March 2002 at the first International Conference on Financing for Development. The central elements of the project – country 'ownership' and the promotion of an 'enabling environment for business' – were built in to the conclusions of the September 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and the São Paulo Consensus agreed at the June 2004 meeting of UNCTAD.

In the lead-up to the 2005 World Summit, the publication under the auspices of the UNDP of *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor* and *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* revealed just how unashamedly pro-capitalist the UN as an organization had become. The story of their commissioning, publication and later insertion within the UN system provides in microcosm an insight into the manner in which the new imperialist project was orchestrated. *Unleashing Entrepreneurship*, the report of the Commission on the Private Sector and Development established by Annan in July 2003 at the instigation of UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, was published in March 2004 with an advisory note that it did not 'necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board, or the United Nations Member States'. In the run-up to the September 2005 World Summit, however, Kofi Annan issued his own report, 'Strengthening the role of the private sector and entrepreneurship in financing for development', in response to Economic and Social Council Resolution 2004/64 of 16 September 2004, which helpfully 'requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly on financing for development pertaining to the role of the private sector, taking into consideration the report entitled *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor*, to be considered at its fifty-ninth session'.¹ Similarly, *Investing in Development* was the product of the UN Millennium Project, an

¹ UN General Assembly, 'Strengthening the role of the private sector and entrepreneurship in financing for development', Report of the Secretary-General, A/59/800, 19 May 2005, Section I, para. 1, p. 3.

'independent advisory body commissioned by the UN Secretary-General to propose the best strategies for meeting the Millennium Development Goals'. It was set up in July 2002 in close consultation with UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, and directed by Jeffrey Sachs, appointed as Special Advisor to the Secretary-General. The report was published in January 2005 (in the UK, under the imprint of Earthscan), and in March 2005 Annan remitted its photocopied Executive Summary for consideration at the September 2005 World Summit.²

All this came about in the context of significant enabling changes in the way the UN is organized as an institution. In October 2000 the long-standing Administrative Committee on Coordination was converted into the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and its various subsidiary bodies were replaced by two High-Level Committees, on Management and Programmes respectively. The High-Level Committee on Programmes, which met for the first time in February 2001, operated from the start as the project board for the new imperialism, as the minutes of its twice-yearly meetings make clear. Since its inception it has brought together representatives of all the major international organizations in order to coordinate their activities around a small number of strategic themes unified around the Millennium Development Goals. The most prominent of these have been the creation of a single policy framework which integrates the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers with the UNDP's Common Country Assessments and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the establishment of the UN Resident Coordinator at country level as the key link between the UN system and the national government, and the promotion of 'country ownership' of integrated poverty reduction strategies revolving around private investment, entrepreneurship and competition. At the same time, it has taken a leading role in the preparation of key policy documents, most notably the Secretary-General's report to the September 2005 'World Summit' in New York.³ As a consequence of this closely coordinated activity, the 'World Summit' saw the consummation of the parallel processes of institutional reform and the reorientation of the UN towards the promotion of capitalism on a global scale, with the Millennium Development Goals as ever the focal point: the endorsement of the proposals for reform set out under Annan's name in *In Larger Freedom* set the seal on both the new imperialist project and UN's claims to leadership of it.

The novel form of contemporary imperialism – the promotion of capitalism on a global scale by international organizations – reflects the fact that the phase of monopoly capitalism within which Lenin and others situated their analysis is long behind us. The 'neo-liberal revolution' of the late 1970s, with its objective of restoring the social efficacy of the law of value, and the phase of 'completion of the world market' which culminated in the incorporation of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into the global capitalist system, have combined to propel capitalism into a new age of competition on a global scale. This is the context with which the new imperialist project has emerged at the heart of the

² UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, New York and London, 2005; UN General Assembly, 'Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit', Note by the Secretary-General, A/59/727, 7 March 2005.

³ See in particular CEB High-Level Committee on Programmes, 'Report of the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) at its Ninth Session, Rome, Italy, 23-25 February 2005', CEB/2005/4, 21 March 2005, pp. 3-6.

UN, and it embraces rather than resists the logic of competitiveness. Entrepreneurship is to be unleashed everywhere, in developed and developing countries alike, among the rich and among the poor, as poverty reduction requires economic growth which in turn requires private investment, and '[g]overnments and intergovernmental agencies can facilitate private sector development only by fostering properly functioning competitive markets'.⁴ This chapter sketches the emergence of the project, analyzes its content and identifies its characteristic discursive strategies, with extensive direct reference to the official documents in which it is set out. Its central argument is that the Millennium Development Goals, far from representing a rejection or attenuation of the 'neoliberal revolution' of the late twentieth century, have been envisaged and deployed from the outset as a vehicle for its realization and legitimation on a global scale.

Imperialism in the context of global capitalism

My argument is not just that this project is imperialist, but that it represents imperialism in the most advanced form currently conceivable. To grasp its imperialist character it is pertinent to recall Lenin's insistence that imperialism emerges as the 'development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general',⁵ and to identify at the heart of the project precisely the commitment to the promotion of those 'fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general' to capture what makes it new, however, it is necessary to identify the double shift that has taken place since Lenin himself noted the emergence of a new form of imperialism a century ago: Lenin's 'new twentieth century imperialism' displaced its earlier manifestation which aimed at the export of *goods* to markets in colonised territories by a single empire in which industrial capital was dominant. In contrast, it featured the export of *capital* to sometimes colonised and sometimes 'quasi-colonial' territories by competing empires in which finance capital was dominant. The new imperialism of the twenty-first century features the export of *capitalism* to politically independent states within a comprehensive regulatory framework governed by co-operating international organizations and aimed at imposing the 'fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general' across developed and developing states alike.

I have described elsewhere how the World Bank developed systematically through the 1990s the project of turning the world's poor into a proletariat – with headlines that promised the abolition of poverty, but with the bottom line that it was to be 'abolished' by producing hundreds of millions of 'free workers' available across the world for exploitation at the bargain global wage of 1-2 dollars a day.⁶ It is easy to demonstrate that the World Bank's 'poverty reduction' was precisely what Marx had described over a century before as 'primitive accumulation': the production of a class of individuals with no option but to sell their capacity to work (labour power) in a competitive labour market, and 'empowered' to do so by the provision of basic education, primary health care in an environment in

⁴ Commission on the Private Sector and Development, *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor*, Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UNDP, 2004, p. 23.

⁵ V.I.Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1916] 1982), Ch. 7, p. 83.

⁶ P. Cammack, 'Making Poverty Work', in L. Panitch and C. Leys, eds, *A World of Contradictions: Socialist Register 2002*, 2001, pp. 193-210.

which the state was charged with the duty of 'supporting the market'.⁷ In increasingly close cooperation with the IMF, the Bank had produced by the turn of the century the intellectual and institutional framework through which the new imperialists would seek to impose their designs on the developing world.⁸

It might have been the case that the sole aim of this project was to renew and reinforce the scope for the export of capital from the advanced capitalist states, or by largely Western multi-national and transnational corporations. If so, whatever might be said about the manner in which the 'new imperialism' was promoted, its content would not be so new. However, it soon became clear that its goal was more ambitious: to transform the economies, societies and institutions of developing countries in such a way as to propel them into capitalism, and thereby to create the basis for sustainable indigenous capitalist accumulation across all states. What is more, this was not to be done as an act of benevolence, but *as a matter of necessity*. Of course, this did not exclude the prospect of profit for either finance capital or transnational corporations. What was new was the insistence that a necessary condition for such a prospect was the commitment of the international organizations to the full development of capitalism in the developing world. In terms that hark directly back to the words of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, written by Marx and Engels a little over 150 years earlier, their project 'compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production'.⁹ The 'new new imperialism', then, echoes the 'old new imperialism' in its interventionism, and its reflection of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general; but it is new in its endeavour to install the social relations of capitalist production and thereby the foundations for sustainable capitalist accumulation in the developing countries themselves through a project led not by imperialist states but by institutions oriented to the logic of global capitalism. Its ideology – its representation of itself as benevolent and inclusive, and oriented towards the elimination of poverty – is also new. Again, the vision conjured up in the Communist Manifesto points towards the meaning of the proposed transformation. Marx and Engels proclaimed that the bourgeoisies of the industrial nations of the day would compel other nations 'to become bourgeois themselves', and thereby create 'a world in their own image'.¹⁰ In fact, this project goes further. The transformation of the UN system and the international organizations into the custodians of the 'interests of capital in general' goes hand in hand with and is premised upon the 'neoliberal' revolution through which the advanced capitalist states seek to make capitalism work *in their own countries*: to restore to dominance there the disciplines and social relations of capitalist reproduction and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. With the so-called 'end of the Cold War' (the reclaiming for capital of spaces for a period beyond its reach, mystifyingly represented as a question of *security*), the call has gone out, from the United Nations of all places, for hegemonic domestic bourgeoisies to be installed everywhere.

⁷ P. Cammack, 'Attacking the Poor', *New Left Review*, Second Series, no. 13, Jan-Feb 2003, pp. 125-134.

⁸ P. Cammack, 'What the World Bank Means by Poverty Reduction and Why it Matters', *New Political Economy*, 9, 2, 2004, pp. 89-211.

⁹ K. Marx and F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' [1850], in K. Marx, *Political Writings, Volume 1: The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach (London: Penguin/New Left Review, 1973), pp. 67-98, p. 71.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The universal project attached to the Millennium Development Goals has as its objective, then, the creation in the developing world not only of markets and economies open to penetration, or even of new proletarians exploitable by foreign capital, but also of hegemonic domestic bourgeoisies, capable both of accumulating through capitalist production (in Marxist terms, through the increasing extraction of relative surplus value from 'free' workers), and of securing the legitimacy to govern by democratic means. It is these aspects of the project which open the way for such characteristic ideologues of the new imperialism as Jeffrey Sachs, Nicholas Stern and Joseph Stiglitz to present it as progressive. To gauge the limits of its progressive character, though, it is only necessary to recall the terms in which Lenin reminded Kautsky that capitalism is still capitalism: 'the *forms* of the struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively specific and temporary causes, but the *substance* of the struggle, its class *content*, positively *cannot* change while classes exist'; and therefore denounced 'that profoundly mistaken idea which only brings grist to the mill of the apologists of imperialism, i.e., that the rule of finance capital *lessens* the unevenness and contradictions inherent in the world economy, whereas in reality it increases them'.¹¹

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals are, then, the public face of a broader project embedded at the heart of a range of global institutions subscribing to a common purpose which can be summarized as the promotion of capitalism and competition on a truly global scale. Its ultimate logic, as capitalism becomes truly global in scope, is that the effort to restore the imperatives of capitalist reproduction to full efficacy in the advanced capitalist countries themselves requires it.

Launching the project: Kofi Annan at the World Economic Forum

Kofi Annan's address to the World Economic Forum in Davos on 1 February 1997 gave advance notice of the new imperialist project that was about to unfold. It committed the institution under his leadership to the promotion of economic and political liberalization and the development of dynamic private sectors as the best strategy for effective peace-keeping across the world. First, he declared, the UN was unequivocally supportive of private enterprise: 'the programmes, funds and specialized agencies that make up the United Nations family are working with Member States, as never before, to foster policies that encourage further growth of the private sector and the free market'.¹² Second, these initiatives reflected three connected 'realities of a changing world':

First, there is the new universal understanding that market forces are essential for sustainable development. Second, the role of the State is changing in most of the developing world, from one that seeks to dominate economic life, to one which creates the conditions through which sustainable development is possible. Third, there is growing and compelling evidence that the poor can solve their own problems if only they are given fair access to financial and business development services.¹³

¹¹ Lenin, *Imperialism*, Ch. 5, p. 71, and Ch. 7, p. 89.

¹² 'Secretary-General, in address to World Economic Forum, stresses strengthened partnership between United Nations, private sector', press release SG/SM/6153, at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1997/19970131.sgsm6153.html>, accessed 8 September 2005; p. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Third, these changes were to be secured by means of a reinforced partnership between the United Nations, governments, and the international corporate community; and fourth, changed circumstances required a new understanding of peace-keeping and security and a new approach to it:

In the post-cold-war era, peace and security can no longer be defined simply in terms of military might or the balance of terror. The world has changed. Lasting peace requires more than intervention of Blue Helmets on the ground. Effective peace-building demands a broader notion of human security. We cannot be secure amidst starvation. We cannot build peace without alleviating poverty. We cannot build freedom on foundations of injustice. In today's world, the private sector is the dominant engine of growth; the principal creator of value and wealth; the source of the largest financial, technological, and managerial resources. If the private sector does not deliver economic and economic opportunity – equitably and sustainably – around the world, then peace will remain fragile and social justice a distant dream.¹⁴

Here, then, were the cardinal points of the new imperialist project: it proposed capitalism, on a global scale, as the lasting solution to insecurity; it put the private sector at the centre, and identified the state as an active force in support of it; it depicted the poor as agents, in the market, of their own security; and it deployed a legitimizing and mystifying rhetoric, shrouding the explicit class content of the project, which revolved around partnership, equity, security and justice, and centred on the alleviation of poverty. As noted above, none of this argument was new, nor was the United Nations the only site of its dissemination. Nevertheless, even with the limited hindsight of less than a decade, the capture of the UN as the lead agency for taking the project forward can be seen as a fundamental turning point.

Kofi Annan's argument was simple. The explosion in trade and capital flows linking people and markets in a new global economy was welcome, but it was essential that the world's poorest nations should not be marginalized. Hence the need for a new partnership amongst governments, the private sector and the international community, in which the UN could play a key role. Whereas rapidly growing flows of private investment went selectively to just a few countries, UN assistance went predominantly to low income countries, where it could pave the way for private sector development. In an unprecedented redefinition of the role of the UN, its new Secretary General then told the corporate leaders gathered at Davos that '[t]he United Nations and the private sector can and must work together to bring 60 per cent of the world's population into the market', and assured them that '[o]ur job is to help create the conditions that make your job successful'.¹⁵ His brief summary of UN work in pursuit of this ambition announced the Four Point programme of the new imperialist project: UN leadership; the reshaping of states in the developing world as agents of global capitalism, the provision of international regimes through which that global capitalism could be governed, and the creation of local bourgeoisies:

The United Nations has a vital role to play in supporting and preparing the ground for domestic and foreign private investment. Our detailed work in this area has included assistance for public administration reform, for economic restructuring, for privatization programmes and for essential infrastructure, as well as the strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks. We set the international norms and standards that make progress possible. The United Nations has played its part

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

in creating special economic zones, removing trade barriers, supporting entrepreneurs, and in the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. In all of these areas, we have a proud record.¹⁶

Having begun by suggesting that the age of security and the balance of power in its most recent manifestation in the Cold War and the 'balance of terror' was over, Annan closed with a succinct statement of the new imperialist project: 'For both the United Nations system and the private sector, our goal for the twenty-first century is nothing less than the creation of a true global economy, genuinely open to all of the world's peoples'.¹⁷ This rhetorical flourish, echoing the vision of the Communist Manifesto but at the same time stripping it entirely of its critical insight, registered a crucial shift from security to political economy as the focus of international politics and international relations, and did so in a way that sought to embed it immediately in a new legitimising framework neatly adapted from the old.

Of course, the delivery of this speech, significant though it was, did not in itself represent the hegemony of the new project. It was as much an attempt, by no means assured of success then or now, to win global corporate capital and the governments of the leading capitalist states away from the pursuit of self-interest narrowly conceived to a broadly inclusive project in which a regulatory and legitimizing role would be played by international organizations in an effort to minimize and manage the contradictions that capitalism inevitably involves. At the same time, the key to the project in world-historical terms, or at least in comparison to the reformist projects with which the United Nations and many of its central agencies had been associated since their inception, was that the objective was now to entrench the logic and the social relations of competitive capitalism on a global scale, rather than to block and resist them. This was a project erected not only upon the collapse of 'socialism' in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but also, unmistakably, upon the 'triumph of neoliberalism' in the West, and the series of class defeats associated with it. It spelled the conversion of the UN from a site of admittedly partial and equivocal opposition to the global sway of capitalism to its leading advocate and architect.

Reforming the UN system

The UN system is bewilderingly complex. Connections between its various agencies are multiple, and the sheer volume of activity in which they engage, and the amount of documentation their activity generates, threaten to defy comprehension. The following sketch of organizational reform relevant to the emergence of the new imperialist project is necessarily selective, and subject to correction on the basis of future research. However, the broad thrust of what has been happening since Kofi Annan became Secretary-General is clear. The key bodies of the UN, and especially those which in the past have been institutional resources for national developmentalism and resistance to global neo-liberal reform, have been or are in the process of being subjected to a new logic and a new programme which had its origins in the Bretton Woods institutions, themselves formally part of the UN system but relatively autonomous in their operation. The process of reform overseen by Kofi Annan and engineered through the Central Executives Board and its two committees has tied a range of UN bodies and initiatives closely to what was initially the World Bank/IMF

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

agenda. After inaugurating an annual high-level meeting (first held in April 1998) between ECOSOC, UNCTAD and the Bretton Woods organizations (IMF, World Bank and WTO) Annan has reformed the central administration of the UN, reshaped the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, and coordinated its activities with those of the UN Commission on Trade and Development, UNCTAD, and the five regional commissions; and given the UNDP under Mark Malloch Brown a central promotional role. This process builds on developments already under way before he became Secretary-General, dating back to the Paris Declaration of the Second UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 1990. They culminated in General Assembly resolution 50/227, adopted in 1996 prior to his appointment,¹⁸ and the decision of ECOSOC in late 1996 that the Secretary-General should submit to the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1997 a report on the theme of 'fostering an enabling environment for development', prepared in collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

It fell to Annan to present the resulting report to the Economic and Social Council in June 1997 for its consideration. This marked the beginning of increasingly close formal cooperation between ECOSOC, UNCTAD and the Bretton Woods organizations led by the World Bank, and laid out an agenda not merely for global neoliberal macro-economic reform, but for the active promotion of local capitalist development. The highly orchestrated Spring Meetings of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO that have taken place annually from 1998 onwards have provided a forum for this increasingly close cooperation behind the scenes, principally through the agenda-setting reports made by the Secretary-General to each meeting.

Much of the 1997 report was concerned with the need for international cooperation on policy coherence and new regimes on trade, aid and debt, strongly endorsing initiatives under way at the IMF and the WTO in particular. Before turning to such issues, however, it spelled out what it termed a 'new consensus' regarding the character and objectives of domestic policy in developing countries. It noted that a majority of developing countries now accepted and pursued the macroeconomic and outward-oriented policies required to foster rapid economic growth, including structural adjustment and economic reforms, and that entrepreneurship and the private sector were widely recognized as dynamic factors of growth. This reflected the emergence of 'a general consensus on the policies required to foster an enabling environment for development at the national level', and agreement that 'these policies are also the ones most conducive to investment (domestic and foreign), capital inflows and successful integration into the world economy through trade'.¹⁹

The central message of this section of the report was that while international cooperation and partnership had a vital role in creating a favourable climate for capital flows, investment and trade to flourish, *each country had the primary responsibility for its own development* (emphasis mine).²⁰ Central to this was government action, in cooperation with NGOs and the private sector, in support of entrepreneurship and investment:

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, Resolution 50/227, 24 May 1996.

¹⁹ 'Fostering an Enabling Environment for Development: financial flows, including capital flows; investment; trade', Report of the Secretary-General, 5 June 1997, at <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/1997/e1997-67.htm>, accessed 8 September 2005; section I, para. 14.

²⁰ Ibid, section I, para. 11.

Non-governmental actors and, in particular, the private sector are playing an increasingly important and dynamic role in promoting development, with the result that Governments are re-examining and adjusting the extent and scope of public sector involvement in the economic sphere. However, Governments have a definite economic role: they must ensure an appropriate policy environment, encourage entrepreneurship, create favourable conditions for the business sector and for attracting foreign direct investment, provide basic infrastructures and develop human resources.²¹

Four principal recommendations were made to the Council, all uncompromising in their support for the active promotion of capitalist development across the global economy. The first reiterated the need for strengthened economic cooperation. The other three read as follows:

The Council may stress the importance of sound and stable macroeconomic policies for accelerated growth through better integration in the world economy. Equally important is the need for the rule of law, a stable and transparent legal framework and public administration, and policies that promote entrepreneurship, savings and investment. The establishment of realistic exchange and interest rates, reform of the trade and payments system, as well as the liberalization of other domestic prices should continue as they provide an appropriate incentive structure for producers and encourage outward-oriented growth strategies.

The Council may urge that structural reforms aimed at establishing a competitive domestic financial system, privatization and/or restructuring of public enterprises continue to be implemented in order to enhance the efficient allocation of resources and support private sector development; such reforms are also expected to boost domestic savings and investment and thereby contribute to higher economic growth.

The Council may emphasize that the availability and proper maintenance of adequate economic infrastructure, in particular a trained workforce and telecommunications and transportation facilities, affect the pace of integration of countries in the world economy and should be of high priority. High-quality communications are essential for countries that aim to participate in the globalized production structures established by multinational corporations, to respond promptly to rapidly changing market conditions in industrialized countries or to participate in new export markets. The Council may wish to call for innovative policies designed to promote public-private partnerships and opening up the social and infrastructure sectors to private investment to meet the enormous needs in these areas.²²

By this point in mid-1997, then, the UN system was seeking to develop a new project which actively endorsed the promotion of local and global capitalism, and placed the 'enabling' state as defined by the World Bank at much the same time at the centre of the project. The authority of the Secretary-General was placed behind the explicit proposal that the UN agencies concerned with social and economic issues should become active agents of intervention across the developing world in order to create and sustain the conditions for bourgeois hegemony and capitalist development. At the same time, the report endorsed the new disciplinary regimes being developed by the Bretton Woods institutions, inviting the Council to call on the IMF to work with the World Bank to develop 'a more comprehensive international regulatory and supervisory regime' for banking and financial markets and to 'encourage IMF to fully exercise its role of overseeing the international monetary system to ensure its effective operation,

²¹ Ibid, section I, para. 18.

²² Ibid, section I, recommendations 2-4.

inter alia, through symmetric surveillance of the macroeconomic policies of each of its members'.²³ It urged UNCTAD to cooperate with the WTO and the other organizations to devise and promote rule-based investment regimes, called for continued concerted action to remove all remaining obstacles to free and open trade, and concluded with a final recommendation that linked trade and competition:

The Council may wish to note that work is under way in WTO and UNCTAD in the areas of trade, investment and competition, and invite these organizations to cooperate in studying all the implications of the relationship between trade and investment to lay the basis for developing sound and equitable rules in this area. In addition, UNCTAD could be invited to pursue and advance its work on the linkages between trade and competition policies.²⁴

Close coordination between the newly oriented ECOSOC and UNCTAD on the one hand and the IMF, World Bank and WTO on the other was systematically pursued over the following three years, with a significant link forged in the chain by the recruitment of World Bank Vice-President and Director of External Relations Mark Malloch Brown, as UNDP Administrator (Chief Executive) in 1999. Brown, a 'completely self-confessed liberal free trader', had worked for the London-based *Economist* as its political correspondent in the 1970s before making his way via the UNHCR to the World Bank. There he served as its chief propagandist (Vice-President and Director of External Relations).

Mark Malloch Brown gave an early indication of his orientation in the post of UNDP Administrator, and of his vision for the UN's potential to act as an instrument for legitimizing global capitalism, when he addressed the New York Chapter of the Society for International Development in January 2000. Speaking in the immediate aftermath of the Seattle meeting of the WTO and the protests that surrounded it, he identified a 'crisis of legitimacy' facing the IMF and the WTO, offered the opinion that the UNDP had lost ground over recent years to the World Bank, and defined a new role for the UNDP: 'If we can use our development assistance to create the environment of laws, physical infrastructure and education which will attract private capital, there is a potentially powerful partnership between public development assistance and private capital which can leverage our reserve way the heck beyond what has been possible in the past'.²⁵ Agencies such as UNDP were no longer to be seen as 'instruments of transfer of development assistance from North to South, but as a catalytic force for helping the South seize the opportunities available to it in this changing world'; and the present moment, despite the widespread sense of crisis, could be 'a really historic moment for development': a moment where, even with modest means, an organization like UNDP, which enjoys an extraordinary global platform and convening power, a bully in the pulpit from which to argue for change in the world, that the possibilities of driving change have never been better'. Identifying himself at this point as 'a completely self-

²³ Ibid, section II, para. 61, recommendations 1 and 2.

²⁴ Ibid, section II, para. 69, recommendation 9.

²⁵ Mark Malloch Brown, 'Development and Globalization: UNDP in the 21st Century', keynote address to the New York Chapter of the Society for International Development, 16 February 2000 (no page numbers) at <http://www.undp.org/dpa/statements/administ/2000/february/29afeb00.htm>, accessed 8 September 2005. All quotations in this paragraph are from the same source.

confessed liberal free trader' (and attributing his convictions to Barbara Ward and the *Economist*), he set out the agenda that he had promoted at the World Bank under Wolfensohn: free trade will promote growth only if the government provides the right environment and management; the UNDP, now, should therefore help countries 'develop the right policies and the right institutions that will allow them to manage their successful integration into the global economy'; this required it 'to help them with the national institutions of political governance that they want to see strengthened when they ask it of us', and 'to help them develop the institutions of managed market economies'. This is the authentic voice of the new imperialist project: interventionist in the extreme, and committed to engineering fully-fledged market economies in the developing world at the request of the leaderships of those countries themselves; intended to create states capable of leading a process of integration into the global capitalist economy; and led by the international institutions in accordance with a universal model. By the time that the Millennium Development Goals were proposed and agreed, an enabling framework for achieving them was fully in place, promoted by the Secretary-General, overseen by the High-Level Committee on Programmes, and involving the concerted action of the principal development arms of the UN (ECOSOC, UNCTAD and the UNDP), closely coordinated with the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, with the explicit purpose of building the capacity for capitalist development around the world.

The High-Level Road to Monterrey

The terms of reference of the High-Level Committee on Programmes approved by the UN's Administrative Committee on Coordination in October 2000 make explicit the broader strategic context in which the Millennium Development Goals were set from the start. The HLCP was made responsible to the ACC/CEB for 'fostering system-wide cooperation and coordination as well as knowledge and information sharing in policy, programme and operational areas'; it was to 'foster and support the integrated and coordinated preparation of and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits, *including in particular the Millennium Summit*' (emphasis mine); its focus would be on emerging issues and challenges around globalization and poverty; and it would address effective programme implementation at country level.²⁶ Its character as the nerve centre of the new imperialism emerged clearly from the delineation of the manner in which this was to be achieved. It would 'share experiences on policy development, programming and monitoring modalities, such as results-based approaches and the integration of statistics and indicators into policy formulation', with special attention to 'enhancing the capacity of the system and member countries to assess and measure progress in the pursuit of agreed international goals, and to streamlining requirements for national reporting'; it would 'foster dialogue and propose ways in which the collaboration and interaction with the private sector, NGOs and other parts of civil society can be enhanced, and can contribute to the achievement of agreed system-wide goals'; it would 'facilitate dialogue on the implications of the reform processes within the system for programme and operational activities, and identify best practices; and adopt innovative, timely and cost effective working mechanisms, including the consideration of policy

²⁶ United Nations, Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), 'Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee on Programmes', ACC/2001/CP/INF.2, at http://ceb.unsystem.org/hlcp/documents/hlcp_tor.pdf, accessed 8 September 2005. All quotations in this paragraph are from the same source.

themes and clusters, the establishment of time-bound task forces and other ad-hoc machinery, and the related designation of lead agency or agencies'; and it would 'review existing subsidiary structures with a view to their streamlining and ... keep any new arrangements under review'.

At its first meeting, the High Level Committee on Programmes took as the first substantive point on its agenda the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, considering in turn three strategic topics: poverty eradication and development, Africa, and the global agenda and global public goods. On poverty eradication and development it agreed that the 'comprehensive and authoritative policy framework provided by the Millennium Declaration' created the opportunity for the Committee to become 'a key agent of system-wide change and progress', and for the Millennium Goals themselves to be 'the driving force of the work of the system as a whole'. It was essential, for this to be achieved, that 'each organization should "internalize" the poverty eradication goals embodied in the Millennium Declaration and for all organizations to join in a major advocacy effort in support of those goals'. Each one should assess the analytical contribution it could make, and 'the analyses should provide the basis for the development of a comprehensive framework within which relevant initiatives and activities would be introduced and placed in relation to each other'.²⁷ On Africa, it identified 'strong imperatives for working towards a unified framework of action by the United Nations system', in which the guiding principle should be 'realism, urgency, efficiency, and, most of all, African leadership and ownership of programmes'; and it noted the 'recent initiative of three African Presidents (Presidents Bouteflika, Mbeki and Obasanjo) for an African recovery and renaissance plan' as a promising point of departure – the plan that would eventually become NEPAD.²⁸ On the global agenda and global public goods, it considered a note prepared for the World Bank, and agreed to initiate a discussion with outside experts in order to identify priority public goods related to the poverty eradication agenda.²⁹ The record of this and subsequent meetings of the High-Level Committee on Programmes provide rich evidence of the systematic development of the new imperialist project outlined here, and the effort to infuse the same comprehensive logic through the strategic initiatives leading to the 2005 Summit.

If the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals laid the institutional framework for the new imperialist project and for selling it as a humanitarian venture, the decisive steps in developing its content, and generating the environment in which the governments of developing states would be led to embrace it, came with a series of other initiatives: the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries in May 2001; the Secretary-General's 'Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration' adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2001; and the report of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development appointed by Kofi Annan in December 2000, leading to landmark 'Monterrey Consensus' in March 2002. While it is not possible, or necessary, to detail every aspect of the coordination of the new imperialist project across UN agencies and other international organizations in the

²⁷ ACC, 'Report of the high-Level Committee on Programmes on its first regular session of 2001', ACC/2001/6, 13 August 2001, paras. 4, 7, 8 and 10, pp. 2-3.

²⁸ Ibid., paras 15 and 17, p. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., paras 19-22, p. 5.

immediate aftermath of the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, these initiatives require specific attention, not only because they confirmed the commitment of the UN system to capitalist development worldwide, but also because they put in place and endorsed a system of UN monitoring and review explicitly aimed at constructing bourgeois hegemony in least developed and developing states.

The Brussels Declaration agreed at the Conference on Least Developed Countries began by endorsing the new imperialist project in what was already its standard form. The conference participants pledged, in the 'first years of the new millennium, to free our fellow women, men and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty', drawing on the Millennium Declaration to commit themselves to 'working for the beneficial integration of the least developed countries into the global economy'.³⁰ There followed a ten-point declaration which stated that 'the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the quality of lives of people in LDCs' would be achieved 'by strengthening their abilities to build a better future for themselves and develop their countries'; and that this could only be achieved 'through equitable and sustained economic growth and sustainable development based on *nationally owned and people-centred poverty reduction strategies*' (emphasis mine):

Good governance at the national and international level; the rule of law; respect for all internationally recognised human rights, including the right to development; promotion of democracy; security through preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of armed conflicts; gender equality; investment in health, education and social infrastructure; strengthening of productive capacities and institution building are all essential in order to realise the vast and untapped human and economic potential in LDCs.³¹

The declaration then went on to insist that the primary responsibility for development in LDCs rested with LDCs themselves, although they required 'concrete and substantial international support from Governments and international organisations in a spirit of shared responsibility through genuine partnerships, including with the civil society and private sector'.³² After endorsing measures to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and other communicable diseases, and to address desertification, the preservation of biological diversity, the supply of safe drinking water and climate change, it then itemized one by one the elements of the new imperialist consensus and the means by which they were to be achieved: *increased trade*, to be pursued on the basis of a 'transparent, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system' and the accession of LDCs to the WTO through the fourth WTO Ministerial meeting in Doha in November 2001, and through the recognition of trade and growth issues in [World Bank] poverty reduction strategies; *increased domestic and foreign financing*, to be pursued on the basis of the creation of 'an enabling environment for savings and investment, which includes strong and reliable financial, legal and administrative institutions, sound macro-economic policies and the transparent and effective management of public resources' through the Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico;

³⁰ UN General Assembly, 'Brussels Declaration', A/Conf.191/12, 2 July 2001, at <http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/aconf191d12.en.pdf>, accessed 8 September 2005; p. 1.

³¹ Ibid, paras 1 and 2, p. 2.

³² Ibid, para. 3, p. 2.

increased official development assistance; improved aid effectiveness; and debt reform and relief, to be pursued through the HIPC framework and the enhanced HIPC initiative.³³

The last of the ten points stressed the critical importance of 'effective follow-up to the Conference at the national, regional and global level', and placed responsibility for it in the hands of the Secretary-General.³⁴ What this meant was spelled out in the much more detailed Programme of Action that accompanied the Declaration. It detailed as was by now to be expected the entrepreneurial, productivity- and competition-oriented character of the strategy to be pursued at national level, but also devoted a section to 'Arrangements for Implementation, Follow-up and Monitoring and Review'.³⁵ As the title suggests, it proposed a comprehensive framework for the close surveillance of the development programmes of the least developed countries, linking the UN's own Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and adding regional and global layers of surveillance to the scrutiny of programmes at the national level, topped off by peer review:

The goals and targets set out in the Programme of Action will be used to review and evaluate performance of LDCs and their development partners in implementing the various commitments. Besides follow-up mechanisms identified below, such performance reviews could be facilitated by independent peer reviews of the application of commitments by individual LDCs and their partners as part of the follow-up at national, sectoral, subregional, regional and global levels.³⁶

Such schemes, characteristic of meta-regulatory frameworks at all levels of contemporary neoliberalism, are common enough in the Bretton Woods institutions. The point of interest here is that the UN System proposed for *itself* a new role as midwife of capitalist development and promoter of global bourgeois hegemony. The Secretary-General was requested 'to ensure at the secretariat level the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system to facilitate coordinated implementation as well as coherence in the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action at the national, regional, subregional and global levels', and governments were instructed to ensure 'the involvement of civil society, including the private sector, on the basis of a broad-based inclusive dialogue'. The following paragraph disclosed the logic of the framework of surveillance and mutual emulation:

In some LDCs, national arrangements are already in place for broad-based and inclusive dialogue on development issues and policies. These forums are critical to ensuring genuine consensus and national ownership of national programmes of action and need to be fully supported. Other LDCs should follow this example by developing such national forums.³⁷

What was to be imposed and monitored was not simply the adoption of an appropriate set of macro-economic policies, but a process of building the national hegemony of a government committed to capitalist development. As part of the

³³ Ibid, paras 6-9, pp. 2-3.

³⁴ Ibid, para. 10, p. 3.

³⁵ UN General Assembly, 'Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010', A/Conf.191/11, 8 June 2001, Section III, pp. 57-64.

³⁶ Ibid., para. 94, p. 57.

³⁷ Ibid, paras 98-100, pp. 58-9.

process, 'model' apprentices were to be accorded the honour of reviewing their peers and spreading 'good practice' – precisely the strategy adopted, inter alia, for the promotion of competition policy in Latin America, and, through the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), for the dissemination of neoliberal reform in Africa.³⁸

Kofi Annan's September 2001 Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration took the same line, stating at the outset that 'States need to demonstrate the political will to carry out commitments already given and to implement strategies already worked out'.³⁹ Section III of the Road Map, 'Development and poverty eradication: the Millennium Development Goals', not only set out once again the elements of the programme, but also insisted at the outset that 'It is crucial that the millennium development goals become national goals and serve to increase the coherence and consistency of national policies and programmes'.⁴⁰ Buried in the middle of the document were two paragraphs that encapsulated the whole of the new imperialist project and the leading role proposed for the UN system in its implementation and monitoring:

The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in May 2001, adopted a programme of action that provides a framework for a global partnership to accelerate sustained economic growth and sustainable development in least developed countries. The least developed countries and their partners are committed to fostering a people-centred policy framework; good governance at the national and international levels; building productive capacities to make globalization work for least developed countries; enhancing the role of trade in development; reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; and mobilizing financial resources.

The programme of action recognizes the important role that Governments, civil society and the private sector have to play in its implementation and follow-up, through stronger public-private partnerships. There is a critical need for an effective mechanism to support intergovernmental review and follow-up of the implementation of the programme of action; to mobilize the United Nations system, as well as other relevant multilateral organizations; and to facilitate substantive participation of least developed countries in appropriate multilateral forums.⁴¹

The High-Level Panel on Financing for Development, chaired by ex-President of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo, was a key component of the mobilization of the United Nations system behind the proposed programme to which Annan's Road Map referred. It illustrates further the core strategy in the development and legitimization of the new imperialist project noted above in relation to *Unleashing Development* and *Investing in Development* – the production by a carefully assembled team of 'experts' of an arms-length 'independent' commissioned report pre-set to deliver a message scripted in advance. As stated in the press release that announced the formation of the panel, it was a response to the UN Millennium Declaration and its development and poverty eradication goals. It was

³⁸ On the first of these, see Paul Cammack, "'Signs of the Times": Capitalism, Competitiveness, and the New Face of Empire in Latin America', in L. Panitch and C. Leys, eds, *The Empire Reloaded: Socialist Register 2005*, 2004, pp. 256-270.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, 'Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General', A/56/326, 6 September 2001, para. 7, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., para. 81, p. 19.

⁴¹ Ibid., paras 139, 140, pp. 27-28.

noted that the 2002 Financing for Development meeting to which it would make its recommendations was 'mandated by the UN General Assembly to involve the active collaboration of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector', and endorsed in the Millennium Declaration, and within these tightly defined parameters the panel was charged with 'advising the Secretary-General on 'measures he can recommend to fulfill the finance needs of the world's developing countries'.⁴² Its membership, also announced in the press release, reflected the strategy of engaging developed and developing countries, 'civil society' (business), and NGOs: it comprised Abdulatif Al-Hammad, the President of the Arab Fund for Economic Development; David Bryer, the Director of OXFAM; Mary Chinery-Hess, former Deputy Director-General of the ILO; Jacques Delors, former Finance Minister of France and President of the European Commission; Rebeca Grynspan, former Vice-President of Costa Rica; Majid Osman, former Finance Minister of Mozambique, turned commercial banker; Robert Rubin, former Secretary of the US Treasury under Clinton and architect of the 'rescue' of Mexico in 1994; and Manmohan Singh, former Indian Minister of Finance, and architect then and since of India's neoliberal reforms.

The March 2002 conference to which it duly reported, the First International Conference on Financing for Development, culminated in the adoption of the 'Monterrey Consensus', the founding public document of the new imperialist project. The proponents of the conference were absolutely clear about the character of this intervention in the global political economy, the innovation which it represented, and the key actors involved. It is still advertised on the home page of the Conference as the 'first United Nations-hosted conference to address key financial and development issues', and 'the first quadripartite exchange of views between governments, civil society, the business community, and the institutional stakeholders on global economic issues'; and the presence of the leaders of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, Horst Kohler, James Wolfensohn and Michael Moore, identified as 'institutional stakeholders', is noted.⁴³ They were there to give their blessing to what was unequivocally the culmination of a process of colonising the core UN institutions, including, as it happens, such one-time strongholds of national developmentalism as the Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD and the regional agencies ECLAC (the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) and ECA (the Economic Commission for Africa), and re-making them as the promoters of global capitalist development.

Right at the outset, the Monterrey Consensus, prepared in advance of the meeting and adopted by acclamation, made the fundamental connection between the headline commitment to poverty reduction and the bottom-line commitment to the all-out promotion of capitalism on a global scale which is the key to the ideology of the new imperialism. Its first article declared roundly: 'Our goal is to eradicate poverty, achieve sustained economic growth and promote sustainable development as we advance to a fully inclusive and equitable global economic system'; and this key document went on to call for 'a new partnership between developed and developing countries, committed to 'sound policies, good

⁴² United Nations, International Conference on Financing for Development, 'High Level Panel on Financing for Development', Press Release, 15 December 2000, at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/PRZedillo1200.htm>, accessed 8 September 2005.

⁴³ United Nations, International Conference on Financing for Development, Home Web Page, at <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdconf/>, accessed 8 September 2005.

governance at all levels and the rule of law'.⁴⁴ It acknowledged that 'each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized', then spelled out precisely what those policies should be:

An enabling domestic environment is vital for mobilizing domestic resources, increasing productivity, reducing capital flight, encouraging the private sector, and attracting and making effective use of international investment and assistance. ... We will pursue appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks at our respective national levels and in a manner consistent with national laws to encourage public and private initiatives, including at the local level, and foster a dynamic and well functioning business sector, while improving income growth and distribution, raising productivity, empowering women and protecting labour rights and the environment.⁴⁵

As the following paragraphs made clear, the 'enabling domestic environment' was to facilitate foreign and domestic investment on equal terms, and to expose each to an environment made competitive by regulatory intervention:

Private international capital flows, particularly foreign direct investment, along with international financial stability, are vital complements to national and international development efforts. Foreign direct investment contributes toward financing sustained economic growth over the long term. It is especially important for its potential to transfer knowledge and technology, create jobs, boost overall productivity, enhance competitiveness and entrepreneurship, and ultimately eradicate poverty through economic growth and development. ... To attract and enhance inflows of productive capital, countries need to continue their efforts to achieve a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate, with proper contract enforcement and respect for property rights, embedded in sound macroeconomic policies and institutions that allow businesses, both domestic and international, to operate efficiently and profitably and with maximum development impact. Special efforts are required in such priority areas as economic policy and regulatory frameworks for promoting and protecting investments, including the areas of human resource development, avoidance of double taxation, corporate governance, accounting standards, and the promotion of a competitive environment.⁴⁶

If the Millennium Development Goals had become the obligatory points of reference for the intended *outcomes* of development, the Monterrey Consensus has become the obligatory point of reference for the policy framework adopted by the developing countries themselves as the means of achieving them. But as we have seen, it was the product of long and careful preparation within the UN system itself. Its adoption signalled the success of the new imperialist project within the UN system and across its membership, and established the entrepreneur, preferably indigenous and ideally female, as its emblematic figure. From this point on, it was the specific content of the Monterrey Consensus that drove the development of the UN's imperialist project forward, rather than the means-neutral Millennium Development Goals.

Towards the end of July 2003, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called a press conference to announce the setting up of a high-level Commission on the Private

⁴⁴ United Nations, International Conference on Financing for Development, 'Final Outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development', A/Conf/198, 1 March 2002, paras 1 and 4, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid, paras 10, 12, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁶ Ibid., paras 20-21, pp. 5-6.

Sector and Development. According to the press briefing issued at the time, its task was 'to develop strategic recommendations on how to promote strong indigenous private sectors' in the developing world.⁴⁷ The Commission had been proposed by UNDP administrator Mark Malloch Brown, who told the press conference that 'the issue of building a private sector in developing countries was the critical next development challenge', adding later that 'while Africa was a challenge to all involved in development, the report would not be limited to Africa. The issue of private sector development was common to the whole developing world'. One of the two co-chairs of the Committee, former Chief Executive of Canada Steamship Lines and Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin, would become leader of his country's Liberal Party and then Prime Minister later in the year. The other was ex-President of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo, of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development which had prepared the way for the Monterrey Consensus.

The report of the Commission, cited at the beginning of the chapter, proposed to 'unleash entrepreneurship' across the world. With its publication the new imperialist project moved into the sphere of public relations, packaging the Monterrey message in a glossy brochure full of pictures, figures, and lyrical prose, courtesy of the make-over given to it by Bruce Ross-Larson, President of Communications Development Incorporated, and author of such guides to effective writing as *Stunning Sentences*, *Powerful Paragraphs*, and *Riveting Reports*:

This report is about walking into the poorest village on market day and seeing entrepreneurs at work. It is about realizing that the poor entrepreneur is as important a part of the private sector as the multinational corporation. It is about acknowledging that the private sector is already central to the lives of the poor and has the power to make those lives better. It is about using the managerial, organizational and technological innovation that resides in the private sector to improve the lives of the poor. It is about unleashing the power of local entrepreneurs to reduce poverty in their communities and nations.⁴⁸

The 2005 World Summit: the imperialist project unleashed

As noted at the outset, the analysis and recommendations of *Unleashing Entrepreneurship* and its more comprehensive companion-piece, *Investing in Development*, were fed directly into the September 2005 World Summit by the Secretary-General. His report, *In Larger Freedom*, placed security and human rights in the context of development, and interpreted development precisely in the terms of the Monterrey Consensus and its subsequent elaboration:

Each developing country has primary responsibility for its own development — strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place the policies and investments to drive private sector-led growth and maximize domestic resources available to fund national development strategies. Developed countries, on their side, undertake that developing countries which adopt transparent, credible and properly costed development strategies will receive the full support they need, in the form of increased development assistance, a more development-oriented

⁴⁷ United Nations, Press Briefing, 'Secretary-General launches Commission on Private Sector and Development at Headquarters press briefing', New York, 25 July 2003, at <http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2003/UNDPbrf.doc.htm> (no page numbers) accessed 8 September 2005. Subsequent quotations in this paragraph are from the same source.

⁴⁸ Commission on the Private Sector and Development, *Unleashing Entrepreneurship*, p. 5

trade system and wider and deeper debt relief.⁴⁹

However, with everything apparently in place for the consecration of the UN's ambitious imperialist project at the World Summit in September 2005, intense conflict broke out over the wording of the document to be agreed by Heads of State at the Summit. The draft outcome document was first circulated in June 2005, and by the time the second revised version was produced in August, it strongly endorsed both the Millennium Development Goals and the Monterrey Consensus, along with a range of specific commitments on the part of the developed countries. It also included numerous references to the need to strengthen and extend the authority of the UN itself and its Secretary-General.⁵⁰ At this point the US government, in the person of newly-appointed Ambassador to the UN John Bolton, proposed extensive revisions to the text, with a clear logic: they removed all explicit commitments binding upon the US government, and all references to the output targets enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals, and removed or watered down all references to enhancing the authority of the UN. At the same time, however, they left in place the policy commitments of the Monterrey consensus, and the multiple references to the need to improve the climate for investment and support entrepreneurship in the developing world.⁵¹

The proposed US amendments had the merit of revealing the two rival imperialist projects that were now in contention. The first was the 'old' US imperialism focused narrowly on national interest which refused to be bound by supranational authority; the second was the 'new' UN imperialism which sought to place supranational authority behind a project aimed at stabilising and legitimising capitalism on a global scale, and demanded that *all* states commit themselves to the project. Significantly, despite their differences, both supported the export of the social relations of capitalist production and of institutions to promote and sustain them. In the end, the US backed away from its attempt to remove all references to the Millennium Development Goals, but maintained its refusal to commit to an increase in US aid towards the target of 0.7% of GDP. However, to return to the central point, the document fully reflected the strategy of promotion of an enabling environment for both domestic accumulation and foreign investment, as spelled out in the Monterrey Consensus.⁵² What is more, President Bush's address to the General Assembly underlined US support for this aspect of the project. His one tepid reference to US commitment to the Millennium Development Goals contrasted with his enthusiasm for the Monterrey Consensus:

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all', Report of the Secretary-General, A/59/2005, 21 March 2005, para. 32, p.12 (this passage in bold in the original).

⁵⁰ 'Revised draft outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005 submitted by the President of the General Assembly', Future document, A/ 59/HLPM/CRP.1/Rev. 2, released at 9.30 pm, 5 August 2005, at <http://www.un.org/summit2005/documents.html>, accessed 8 September 2005. Representative references to the need to enhance the authority of the UN appeared in paragraphs 55, 124 and 129.

⁵¹ At the time of posting (1 December 2006), a facsimile of the document as amended by the US was available on the website of the Global Policy Forum at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/msummit/millenni/m5outcomedocindex.htm>.

⁵² UN General Assembly, '2005 World Summit Outcome', A/60/L1, 15 September 2005, especially paragraphs 24 and 25, pp. 6-8.

At Monterrey in 2002, we agreed to a new vision for the way we fight poverty, and curb corruption, and provide aid in this new millennium. Developing countries agreed to take responsibility for their own economic progress through good governance and sound policies and the rule of law. Developed countries agreed to support those efforts, including increased aid to nations that undertake necessary reforms ... I call on all the world's nations to implement the Monterrey Consensus. Implementing the Monterrey Consensus means continuing on the long, hard road to reform. Implementing the Monterrey Consensus means creating a genuine partnership between developed and developing countries to replace the donor-client relationship of the past. And implementing the Monterrey Consensus means welcoming all developing countries as full participants to the global economy, with all the requisite benefits and responsibilities.⁵³

Bush may have had his fingers crossed behind his back when he went on to support the Doha Round and pledge that 'The United States is ready to eliminate all tariffs, subsidies and other barriers to free flow of goods and services as other nations do the same',⁵⁴ but the pledge was given all the same. Nevertheless, the commitment to the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Round and the elimination by all states of barriers to trade reflected acceptance by the US of the inevitable logic of a genuinely global capitalist system, and to a broader imperialist project than it could possibly control. Whatever else had fallen by the wayside, the uncompromisingly pro-capitalist project developed by the UN over a decade had won universal acceptance. What is more, the endorsement of the UN's global imperialist mission passed without comment.

⁵³ 'President Addresses United-Nations High Level Plenary Meeting ', 14 Sept 2005, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/09/20050914.html>, no page numbers, accessed 16 September 2005.

⁵⁴ Ibid.



Papers in the Politics of Global Competitiveness

Institute for Global Studies
Manchester Metropolitan University
e-space Open Access Repository
<http://www.e-space.mmu.ac.uk>

- | | | |
|--|--------------|----------|
| 1. The Politics of Global Competitiveness | Paul Cammack | Nov 2006 |
| 2. UN Imperialism: unleashing entrepreneurship in the developing world | Paul Cammack | Dec 2006 |

© Paul Cammack 2006. May not be used for commercial purposes. May be freely copied and distributed provided that the author and original and present publishers are given credit.

Cite as:

Paul Cammack, 'UN Imperialism: unleashing entrepreneurship in the developing world', *Papers in the Politics of Global Competitiveness*, No. 2, Institute for Global Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, e-space Open Access Repository, 2006. First published in Colin Mooers, ed, *The New Imperialists: Ideologies of Empire*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 2006.

This document was produced using Open Office Writer, an Open Source programme which is part of the Open Office Suite (<http://www.openoffice.org>)

Papers in the Politics of Global Competitiveness, No. 2, December 2006