United States—which for decades championed protectionism and imported capital—emerged as a creditor nation, exporting goods and capital, and committing to an open global trading system institutionalized in the post-1945 Bretton Woods regime. U.S. imperialism, however, had little to do with globalization and free trade. The U.S. did not need to pry open closed economies in Latin America, because they had been opened up in the nineteenth century, and the U.S. became the major beneficiary of that opening in the twentieth. Latin American protectionism, or inward-oriented development as it was called, caused some concern in the U.S. from the 1930s onward, but U.S. corporations proved adept at supplanting European rivals (with the aid of World War II) and at making money in protected Latin American markets.

Meanwhile, U.S. interventions in the circum-Caribbean had little to do with markets or investments. Cuba was already within the U.S. economic orbit in 1898. The Nicaraguan and Haitian markets were minimal. The U.S. intervened for geopolitical reasons: to protect the approaches to Panama, to avert European (including Soviet) infringements of the Monroe Doctrine, and to prevent the establishment of unfriendly regimes in the region. Even in Mexico and South America, where the U.S. preferred informal mechanisms of control and influence, geopolitics and security have tended to trump globalization (meant here as the free movements of factors of production within a global trading system).

Globalization therefore remains partial, and the partiality reflects the balance of power. The United States continues to protect its agriculture, while policing its borders against illegal migrants (as does the European Union). Globalization is favored in some sectors (capital flows) but not others (labor). The Washington Consensus mandates fiscal stringency, while Washington runs up the largest deficits in history. Like previous Empires or “hegemons,” the United States wants to have its cake and eat it, too. We might recall how the old triumphalist British refrain “Britannia rules the waves” was reformulated as “Britannia waives the rules.” The U.S., clearly, can also make up—and bend—the rules to suit itself. As a White House aide told a bemused reporter in 2002, “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality.” That is, ultimately, the privilege and prerogative of an imperial power.

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**Inclusion Through Autonomy: Zapatistas and Dissent**

by Neil Harvey

The Zapatista movement is probably one of the best-known examples of dissent against the neoliberal model of economic globalization. On January 1, 1994, over 3,000 indigenous people staged an armed uprising against the government of then-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and issued a list of demands for basic social and political rights. The rebellion was timed to coincide with the start of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), an accord that reduced most tariffs on trade between the United States, Canada and Mexico. The Zapatista’s principal spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, argued that NAFTA represented a death sentence for Mexico’s indigenous people and called on all Mexicans to participate in their own ways for a more democratic, just and sovereign nation.

More than eleven years have passed since the Zapatistas first caught international attention. In that time, other social movements have expressed similar demands for social justice and greater participation in decision-making bodies. Meetings of the G-8, World Economic Forum and World Trade Organization have routinely been met with large-scale protests highlighting the common perception that economic globalization is occurring without the kinds of democrat-
constraints that are necessary for ensuring the defense of human rights and environmental protections. Although their precise demands and forms of organization may differ, activists have often referred to the Zapatistas as a source of inspiration. The possible reasons for this identification are worth noting, and they highlight the unique character of the Zapatistas' practices of dissent. In particular, their decision to maintain independence from political parties and the state has opened up new arenas for participation and experimentation in self-government. Disillusionment with existing forms of representation is not, of course, restricted to Mexico, and the Zapatistas' hope is that this situation can give way to the emergence of alternative channels for achieving social change.

Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the Zapatistas is the fact that their demands immediately resonated with so many people around the world. In part, this was due to the rapid-fire transmission of their communiques and letters through the Internet, but it was also related—perhaps more so—to the growing realization of linkages between decisions taken in one part of the world and events in another. The Zapatistas proved adept at connecting their own experiences with those of other communities facing similar experiences of economic exclusion and political marginalization—both within and beyond Mexico. Such connections were restated in the Zapatistas' "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle" released in June 2005. This document provides an analysis of the national and international effects of neoliberalism, calls for the development of a national alternative program from the left, and invites solidarity groups and social movements from other countries to help organize another "international meeting against neoliberalism and for humanity." (similar to previous meetings held in 1996 and 1997).

Although the Zapatistas emerged from complex and conflictive local histories of dissent, their rebellion is also a sign of the crisis and transformation of capitalist states around the world, particularly in Latin America. At the global level, we have witnessed the decline of state-led development models in which various degrees of national economic regulation allowed for redistributive programs of a broadly supported welfare state. The dismantling of this model in favor of greater deregulation, trade liberalization and private enterprise has been a common experience for many countries, including Mexico.

Political theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have argued that this transformation is best conceptualized as a passage from imperialism to Empire. In their analysis, imperialism refers to a system in which dominant nation-states compete for control of territory and resources in order to enhance their own national power. Empire, on the other hand, has no national home, although some nations are clearly more influential than others in directing its operations. Instead, Empire is a global network of power relations that perpetuate capitalism through the constant reorganization of social life and natural resources.

With Empire, dissent does not emanate from a space that is "outside" the global capitalist system (that is, in the sense of combating the imposition of a foreign power, for example), but rather it is located "inside" the system. Empire does not have an outside, so any alliances of political dissent must be made with the same goal in mind: to expose and transcend Empire, rather than reform national governments. Under this analysis, it no longer makes sense to talk about "national liberation." Hardt and Negri add that the way we think about dissent has also shifted away from the idea of a unified people to a greater emphasis on diversity. From their perspective, this change opens up greater possibilities for more novel and creative forms of political dissent. In doing so, value is placed on the uniqueness of each person and group as they confront Empire in their own ways. The unified "people" turns out to be a diverse "multitude" with little desire or need for centralized organization and leadership.

Are the Zapatistas an expression of the multitude? Some authors have adopted this line of argument. Mexico-based scholar John Holloway, for example, stresses the Zapatistas'
search for a different approach to politics itself. Rather than seeking power for themselves, the Zapatistas call on all people to construct new spaces for dialogue where the dignity of each is upheld. Their strategy is not to seize power and wield it over others, but to democratize power relations in every sphere of society. This, continues Holloway, will remain an "uncertain revolution" in which definitions, programs and theories will always be displaced by the ambiguities and contradictions of any social movement. The novelty is that the Zapatistas have recognized this uncertainty and, with a strong dose of irony, have turned it into one of their main sources of strength. In Holloway's words, "The Zapatista] revolution is a moving outwards rather than a moving towards." By this he means that the Zapatistas seek alliances in the construction of a broad and flexible agenda for social change, rather than claim to know in advance the final point towards which all actions should be directed.

How convincing are these arguments? Some would say not very. Why would any group, particularly one that aspires to change the basic structures of a highly unequal society, try to avoid the exercise of power? Argentine writer Atilio Borón claims that the postmodern celebration of diversity and local autonomy is symptomatic of the left's retreat from class struggle. For him, the popular movements cannot afford the luxury of ignoring the struggle for state power, especially in Latin America, where direct or indirect forms of U.S. imperialism have so often undermined national sovereignty.

It can also be argued that nationalism and imperialism have not given way to Empire, as conceived by Hardt and Negri. Instead, some would say U.S. imperialism is still the dominant force in international politics, particularly after the attacks of 9/11. U.S. policies have been deliberately unilateralist rather than directed towards a global concert of interests. In this context, activist and writer Tariq Ali has argued that the Zapatistas have failed to make serious gains, because the proposal to "change the world without taking power" is only a "moral slogan" that does not pose any threat to dominant groups in Mexico or their foreign allies.

As one might expect, local events in Chiapas do not conform entirely to these more global analyses. Nevertheless, the particularities do not detract from parallels with other instances of dissent throughout Latin America. What must be kept in mind is that the Zapatistas have been concerned not only with national or international alliances, but also with the consolidation of local and regional autonomy. To paraphrase Holloway, the Zapatista revolution is not solely about "moving outwards," but also about "moving inwards."

It can be argued that the Zapatistas have always been concerned with strengthening their local bases of support. This was evident during the peace talks in 1994 and 1995, and became particularly important in showing support for the Zapatista delegation as it negotiated with the government a set of minimal accords on indigenous rights and culture. The San Andrés Accords, named for the town where they were signed in February 1996, represented an historic moment for Mexico that many hoped would achieve political and peaceful solutions to the Chiapas rebellion. However, the government of Ernesto Zedillo failed to implement the accords, arguing that the provisions for indigenous autonomy potentially threatened national unity. Further talks were suspended and, as the conflict worsened in 1996, a multiparty legislative body (the Commission for Peace and Reconciliation in Chiapas, COCOPA) produced a revised document that met with the approval of the Zapatistas but still failed to get Zedillo's support.

The historic defeat of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the 2000 presidential elections raised hopes that the new president, Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN), would get congressional backing for the COCOPA law. But the PRI-PAN majority passed a watered down version in April 2001. The new law restricted indigenous autonomy to communities within single municipalities and denied constitutional recognition of indigenous peoples as collective subjects with the right to determine their own forms of governance and development. It also maintained a paternalistic relationship in
which the federal government would provide social services to indigenous communities.  

The Zapatistas rejected these revisions and suspended all contacts with the federal government (a situation that continues to the present). Nevertheless, the constitutional requisite number of state legislatures subsequently ratified the reforms, although, significantly, it was rejected in those states with the largest indigenous populations— including Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero. In addition, anomalies in the ratification process led to a series of legal challenges concerning the validity of the entire procedure. Despite the fact that these appeals were still awaiting a ruling from Mexico's Supreme Court, President Fox decided to promulgate the new law, and it went into effect on August 14, 2001. A year later, the Supreme Court declared that it could not rule on the legal appeals that had been submitted and the new law continues to stand.

From the passage of the watered-down indigenous rights law in April 2001 to the recently released Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, the Zapatistas have focused their efforts more on the internal aspects of their movement. The consolidation of autonomy has been the main goal, and relationships with other groups have been organized with this task in mind. In July 2003, the Zapatistas announced the creation of five regional autonomous governments that encompass over 30 autonomous municipalities. In part, this reorganization was designed to ensure greater inclusion and fairer distribution of the resources provided by solidarity groups among all Zapatista communities.

The new Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Councils of Good Government) are experiments in local democracy, attending to the day-to-day conflicts that emerge in areas where Zapatistas coexist with supporters of other political organizations and parties. In making their services open to all, the Zapatistas aim to gain support for gradually establishing autonomy as a viable alternative to the official political system. Programs in health care, education and organic agriculture are supported through networks of community-level promotores. Autonomy may not have gained the kind of constitutional recognition that would demonstrate the impact of the Zapatistas at the level of the state, but this does not mean that it is a politically weak form of dissent. On the contrary, autonomous forms of government have emerged as the Zapatistas' most significant political achievement and have become a reference point for similar demands in other parts of Mexico. In Chiapas, the demand for self-government has only increased since 1994, as demonstrated by the large number of newly established municipalities, multi-ethnic autonomous regions or autonomous rebel municipalities (a few of these beyond the state of Chiapas).

The autonomous municipalities and regions are generally seen as the most tangible gain of the Zapatistas. However, as evidenced by the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle, external alliances remain an important element for achieving change in Mexico and beyond. The Sixth Declaration calls for groups on the left to work with the Zapatistas in developing a national program for the political and economic transformation of Mexico, the formulation of a new Constitution and the promotion of new forms of political engagement. In order to accomplish these goals, the Zapatistas have formed special sub-groups to travel throughout Mexico and meet with organizations and groups that declare their support for the Sixth Declaration. In addition, the Zapatistas called for an international meeting against neoliberalism, tentatively scheduled for December 2005 or January 2006. The Zapatistas acknowledge the risks associated with this effort. Previous experiences of national alliance-building have not been as successful as the local consolidation of self-governing Zapatista municipalities. However, the risks may be minimized if the national campaign builds on the experiences of grassroots organizations rather than competing for ideological leadership.

**In the Spring of 2002 I had the Opportunity** to meet with a group of indigenous farmers in the municipality of Tumbalá in northern Chiapas. The group included Zapatista supporters as well as members of other social organizations. We shared our views about the local effects of the Zapatista rebellion, the problems facing small producers and the potential impact of the then-recently announced large-scale development project known as the Plan Puebla-Panamá (PPP). “The PPP is not like the war in 1994, but it is a cold war,” said one of the men with concern. “It is carried out no longer with bombs and aircraft, but it is a cold war.... It is a war of low prices, so that we die off, but we are going to continue fighting. We have to create our own, new plans in order to defend ourselves.”

His use of the term “cold war” is obviously not in reference to the conflict between the capitalist and communist superpowers prior to 1989. Rather, he is describing the local experience with economic globalization, a phenomenon that conceals its inner workings as it pushes down
commodity prices, threatening the viability of indigenous communities. As such, this testimony is not unique to Chiapas, but could be recounted by millions of people around the world, many of whom have organized to demand inclusion and participation in the decisions that affect their lives, cultures and environments.

Although the demand for inclusion is a common one, its meaning is not reducible to any single form. The appeal of earlier forms of inclusion, such as those put forth by official labor unions and mass parties, has been increasingly eroded—in part as a result of the shift towards pro-market economic policies. These older forms of inclusion were also limited in most Latin American countries due to the relatively small size of the formal workforce, and they tended to reproduce authoritarian control to the benefit of co-opted leaders rather than workers, campesinos and voters. Independent unions and grassroots movements have long struggled for inclusion by trying to expand the number of channels for public participation. In Chiapas, such struggles were traditionally met with arrests, harassment and violent repression of dissent, leading many to support the Zapatistas as they prepared to rebel.

The comments by the farmer in Tumbalá also reveal a desire to build and defend viable alternatives to current processes of globalization. Rather than see their communities dismantled by the impact of low prices, indigenous people are experimenting with their own distinct forms of economic and political organization. Access to common property and social solidarity are central to such dissent, because globalization advances through the enclosure of more and more areas of social activity, dividing up tasks and resources among specialized groups of community members.

The flexibilization of rural labor is a necessary part of contemporary capitalism as production is geared to particular segments of global markets. In this model, labor is still seen as another factor of production, but it is valued for particular skills in unregulated markets rather than as a permanent feature of a stable economy. This precariousness is expressed in the way people become interchangeable and frequently disposable. Autonomy can therefore be seen as an attempt to defend access to common property in the face of corporate strategies that rely on flexible labor, competitive specialization and cultural fragmentation.

At first glance, these twin demands for inclusion and autonomy seem to contradict each other. However, the contradiction only arises if it is assumed that the two are mutually exclusive, a form of reasoning that continues to block the full recognition of indigenous rights in Chiapas and around the world. Until the 1980s, the political importance of cultural diversity tended to be subordinated to other concerns related to matters of state formation and economic development. In Mexico and other Latin American countries, inclusion assumed adherence to a single national identity that was decidedly non-indigenous.

Attempts to depoliticize ethnic identities were not entirely successful, however, and the government's own social programs led to the emergence in the 1970s and 1980s of new indigenous leaders that began demanding a much greater role in the design and implementation of policies. By the end of the 1980s this demand was voiced in local, national and international arenas. In 1992, the Mexican government amended Article 4 of the Constitution, recognizing the country's multicultural nature for the first time. For indigenous organizations that had emerged in the day-to-day battles over land, crop prices, bilingual education and health services, inclusion first required reform of the legal and institutional forms of the state. This effort was given a huge boost by the Zapatista uprising, although, as demonstrated by the 2001 indigenous rights law, the results are uncertain and highly contested. At stake is the scope of indigenous autonomy along with its relationship to the existing form of constitutional government in Mexico.

This issue is not unique to Chiapas and Mexico. Throughout Latin America, national governments have responded in different ways to demands for indigenous autonomy. In some cases, constitutional reforms were more far-reaching—at least on paper—because of more favorable circumstances that allowed indigenous organizations and leaders a greater presence in national debates. The depth of political crises in Colombia and
Ecuador, for example, led to the holding of constitutional assemblies in both countries in the 1990s. At the time of the constitutional debates, indigenous movements could count on an important bloc of allies in political parties that were sympathetic to their goals. This moment of political opening allowed the ratification of some provisions for indigenous autonomy. In contrast, Mexico has not held a constitutional assembly since the constitution was first written in 1917, and the opportunities to present proposals for constitutional reforms have been limited. Moreover, the majority of current deputies and senators belong to parties that, for the most part, opposed the San Andrés Accords after they were signed in 1996. However, the long-term viability of indigenous autonomy may depend more on its appropriation at the local level rather than on the revision of legal statutes. In this regard, autonomy is best thought of as a marker of political identity rather than a legal concept. Autonomy can even encompass the relations established between communities that span long distances, such as the networks of migrant workers who cross national borders but retain important ties to their home communities.

The Zapatistas have raised important questions regarding the future of indigenous peoples in Mexico. At the same time, many of their demands have resonated with individuals and groups from other parts of the world. The lack of secure access to work, education and adequate health care are common problems facing many people today. If the nation-state was traditionally seen as the main political guarantor of human security, it is becoming increasingly apparent that this is no longer the case. The privatization of social services only benefits those who can afford to pay, while the rest find their situation increasingly precarious.

While it is important to keep reminding the state of its social obligations, it is also necessary to recognize the role played by social movements, indigenous organizations and transnational migrant networks in the continual experimentation with novel and alternative forms of social inclusion and political autonomy.

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**Empire of Knowledge**

by Ricardo D. Salvatore

For the past century, U.S. domination over Latin America has been a multifaceted process with military, economic, technological, financial, cultural and intellectual dimensions. Depending on the historical moment, the United States has employed particular aspects of this power through a mutually reinforcing pattern of persuasion and coercion. The informal U.S. Empire has shaped its rhetoric regarding its mission in the world to justify this contradictory array of generosity and extortion, benevolence and violence, justice and paternalism.

U.S. intellectuals and scholars have helped shape the contours of imperial discourse by making significant contributions to major foreign policy discussions. They were instrumental, for example, in defining the incorporation of territories in the Caribbean and in determining the implications of the Monroe Doctrine. They have also shaped U.S. public opinion on the meanings of Latin America. Perhaps their most profound impact, however, was in Latin America itself. They counseled governments—as well as the U.S. State Department—on everything from the eradication of tropical diseases to central bank reform.

These scholars and the institutions supporting their work have been crucial agents in the dissemination and consolidation of benevolent con-
such an approach be doomed by compromise and stagnation? Broadly stated, the two competing left currents in Bolivia are generally associated with Evo Morales, on the one hand, and radical Aymara leader Felipe Quispe and his allies on the other.

Since the 2002 elections in which Morales lost by less than 2%, he and his cocalero-based party, the MAS, have focused on local elections as a springboard for winning the presidency. Quispe leads the much smaller Indigenous Pachakutik Movement (MIP) party and is closely linked to the militant Aymara communities of the altiplano. When asked about his relationship with Morales and the MAS, Quispe charged, "Evo Morales wants the presidency; we want our autonomy.... While we're fighting in the streets, they are there, happy, on the balconies watching us, and then at the last minute when we're about to overthrow the government they join us."

At the June 17 meeting of the MAS, its bases called for an allegiance, "principally, with other sectors of the social movements." Morales has subsequently begun constructing an "anti-neoliberal coalition" for the December elections. But in an effort to gain middle class support, Morales' first move was to ally with the Movement Without Fear (MSM) party, which opposes the nationalization of the hydrocarbons industry. It seems like the beginning of a now-familiar Latin American story.

Regardless of the electoral outcome, the social movements will continue to be a dominant, oppositional force no matter the government in power. Moreover, the all-or-nothing ties between political parties and the social movements are currently much more fluid and flexible in Bolivia than in other Latin American countries. But for now, the country's fate is sealed in the outcome of the constituent assembly that will convene in 2006 to rewrite the Constitution. Only then will it be seen if the new country that emerges from that process will be capable of translating the demands from the street into the actions of the government.

NOTES

Empire, Hegemony and Globalization in the Americas


3. Though the usual phrase is "collaborating elites," the collaborative arrangement may also involve non-elites: however, it requires elites to make it work.


5. The Roosevelt Corollary stated that since the Monroe Doctrine vetoed European interventions in the Americas, the U.S. would police the region, thus removing the justification for European intervention.


8. While recognizing the Spanish legacy, we should be very careful not to perpetuate crude cultural stereotypes of Spanish-American backwardness, superstition, corruption, patrimonialism, machismo and all the rest. Though enduring, this legacy was neither uniform nor immutable (which is why Costa Rica is very different from El Salvador, or Chihuahua from Chiapas).

9. "Between consent and force stands corruption/fraud (which is characteristic of certain situations where it is hard to exercise the hegemonic function and where the use of force is too risky)." Antonio Gramsci, in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., Selections from the Prison Notebooks (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 80.


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3. This attitude went beyond the Venezuelan opposition. An article in Foreign Affairs, for example, ended ominously with the statement: “the political clock in Venezuela is running out.” Kurt Weyland, “Will Chávez Lose his Luster?” Foreign Affairs, Nov-Dec, 2001.


