



Eastern Europe, German reunification, and the consolidation of integrationist trends all through Europe. Subsequently, they gave rise to drastic changes, accelerating the evolution of the Soviet republics toward independence and emergent, though incipient, democratic models. The most eloquent manifestation of this has been the dismantling of the Communist Party apparatus. The economic consequences of these wide-ranging changes are worth noting. The "new" European regimes have become potential competitors, with privileges inherent to their geo-strategic condition and they may receive international technical cooperation and financial resources, to the detriment of developing countries. This has been the case not only with aid from industrialized countries, but also with the flow of private-sector investment and with the earmarking of resources from multilateral financial organizations.

3. As a consequence of the unexpected transformation in its role as a superpower with global interests, the Soviet Union made an about-turn in its policy of hegemonic control of the developing world. The most evident manifestations of this were the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the suspension of economic and military aid to many countries or opposition forces within them. The notable exception has been Cuba, though the future of this relationship is increasingly uncertain.
4. A direct effect of this has been a new climate of close cooperation between the two great powers in putting an end to situations of

conflict which had been a direct consequence of the Cold War. In Asia, Africa and Latin America, firm steps have been taken to put an end to long-time confrontations, support processes of national reconciliation and reduce sources of regional and global tension. The list during the last three years is impressive: the independence of Namibia; the end of complex conflicts in Central America; the cease fire and negotiated solution of differences between Iran and Iraq; the end of hostilities in Angola and Ethiopia; reconciliation between the parties in Cambodia, among others. Even the Middle East, a region continuing to challenge even the most imaginative peace efforts, advances slowly toward a diplomatic solution.

5. In multilateral forums, and specifically in the United Nations, a spirit of collaboration and consensus has emerged, only imagined in the most idealistic dreams of the drafters of the San Francisco Charter. The harmony demonstrated in the work of the five permanent Security Council members is not only unprecedented but has even gone beyond anyone's most reasonable expectations. Strictly speaking, all progress made in solving conflicts was possible because of the atmosphere of cooperation between the "Five," but especially between the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. The diplomacy of consensus prevailing during the conflict generated by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait constitutes one of the most significant examples of this new climate. Therefore, as in the past, it is the United Nations that permits us to make a realistic diagnosis of the current state of world politics. It is, at the same time, a forum for debate on the most important

issues of international politics; a stage where tendencies are defined and courses of action are drawn up for the future; and a catalyzer of many of the processes of change experienced by the international community today.

6. The United Nations is casting off more than four decades of crisis to fulfill the role imagined by the drafters of the San Francisco Charter. For example, at times when there seems to be a growing trend toward national fragmentation, the member states of the United Nations have proven themselves increasingly willing to strengthen the underlying principles that gave rise to it as a multilateral organization. Nevertheless, trends toward multipolarity, which would eventually replace the bipolar model, could already be distinguished before the end of the Cold War. It is clear today that the trend continues.
7. At the same time that the U.S. was guaranteeing its position as leader and driving force behind international change, the limits of its position were also surfacing. Germany and Japan have become first-rate economic powers, even though the recent Persian Gulf conflict revealed wavering on the part of both nations. The conclusion was that they are still unable to take the initiative and exercise authentic political power on the international scene. They preferred to play subsidiary roles, supporting the U.S. by covering war costs for the first time in their history. During the period, the European Economic Community assumed a more important political role, especially in relation to events in Central Europe and the definition of its position with respect to changes in what was the Soviet

Union. In any case, there has been consensus with American authorities on various points. The latter have preferred to adopt a lower profile concerning specific conflicts, such as in Yugoslavia, Albania and even the Soviet Union.

8. A legal and political discussion has cropped up in the U.N. on an essential point consecrated in the Charter. It is the product of the reality of the second post-war era, already outdistanced by events, namely, the Soviet Union as a permanent member of the Security Council. Moreover, the wisdom of maintaining the presence of a regional group such as Eastern Europe is being reconsidered. Evidently, the events of the last two years have radically modified both realities. In the first case, the accelerated disintegration of the USSR did not lead to a questioning of the right of the Russian Republic to occupy the former USSR's seat. From a strictly legal point of view, the disappearance of the central authority of the Soviet Union should require a review of the Charter to consider its seat on the Security Council. A Pandora's box would be opened

if there were a political discussion on who really should occupy that spot, opening discussion on making room for the aspirations of other nations. In the second case, the community of nations formerly accepted Eastern Europe ad hoc: as a special group that made room for ideological differences with Western Europe. These have now ceased to exist. Nevertheless, from the point of view of elections and the distribution of technical assistance provided by the United Nation's system, they will want to maintain their status, to the disadvantage of other regional groups, especially Asia, Africa and Latin America.

9. For developing countries, the disappearance of the East-West conflict poses new challenges and opportunities. The triumph of liberal ideology, with its emphasis on democratic principles in political questions and on free trade in economic ones, has spurred internal reforms in the great majority of nations. At the same time, it has led to a reexamination of foreign-policy strategy by the countries to the South, both individually and

jointly. Evidently, traditional patterns of clientelism vis-à-vis either of the two past superpowers have become obsolete. The policy of equilibrium long underlying the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is now adrift since it lost its points of reference. There are important trends and initiatives underway consolidating alliances that respond to the new profile of international politics.

These new alliances or common-interest groups today constitute the essential axes of policies between nations. They include, among others, the integration of blocs, such as the European Economic Community; the ASEAN nations; and in Mexico's case, the Trilateral Free-Trade Agreement with the U.S. and Canada, as well as the bilateral treaty with Chile. Moreover, other groups have formed or are doing so. This process is far advanced in Latin America, as evinced by the Rio Group, the Group of Three, Mercosur, and the Ibero-American Summit. It is not pretentious to underscore the fact that Mexico identified these new trends far enough in advance and has been in the vanguard with its initiatives to create some of the most innovative and effective regional and international alliances.

10. Hence, the Group of 77, a mechanism for furthering the interests of developing countries within multilateral forums for more than two decades, is growing weaker and less effective. The dynamics of today's international reality has gone beyond a discourse that needs up-dating. Its limited influence in the economic sphere and the influence of the non-aligned in the political sphere have strengthened groupings of countries acting in defense or promotion of specific interests



Archivo Gráfico de El Nacional.

Berlin Wall, November, 1989.



Yeltsin and Gorbachev: a reversal of roles.

without greater ideological pretensions.

11. The aforementioned changes, offered not as an exhaustive but as a representative list, have led to discussions on the varying forms of a "new order." In reality, it is premature to speak of a new order at a time when we evidently find ourselves in a state of constant transformation. The final product will undoubtedly be an international structuring quite different from what has prevailed since 1945.

Global transformation has challenged Mexico to find a way onto the international scene best suited to her interests. We have already mentioned her active participation in new plans for integration, by advancing toward the consolidation of a North American market, with a view toward strengthening and guaranteeing her sustained development. At the same time this move affirms the political ties uniting her with Latin America and explores new forms of economic cooperation. In the forum of the United Nations, Mexico also follows policies destined to strengthen her contribution in the transition

toward global equilibrium. Mexico is trying to direct consensus within the Rio Group through emphasis on points of common interest. This exercise at consensus is vastly important, since, at present, only the nations making up the European Community, EFTA, CANZ, the Nordic Group, and ASEAN, act in this way. If this trend takes hold, the Rio Group will emerge as a first-rate power in international politics.

12. The end of bipolar confrontation has also led industrialized nations to focus anew on the developing world. This postulates the advisability of applying the principles and norms of Western political development in analyzing the benefits of modernization. Attempts have been made to suggest adopting uniform norms in electoral processes. Moreover, they have tried to keep a close watch on human rights in several states, setting criteria for determining how governments are doing, thereby conditioning the granting of technical assistance and cooperation. Similarly, attempts have been made to impose universal criteria for protecting the environment, without taking different levels of

development into account, and to set aside the concept of international borders with the justification of administering emergency humanitarian aid. All the above share the common denominator of tending to ignore the traditional sovereign rights of states and affirm the intent to consecrate or legitimize the right to interfere in questions that, until now, have been considered to fall within the internal competence of nations. We consider that an effective transition toward a new order requires the maintenance of respect for the sovereign rights of states as an inviolable principle.

### Conclusion

It should be noted that, in view of the fluidity of events, apparently contradictory realities make up the emerging framework of new equilibriums throughout the world.

Though there are a multiplicity of actors on the international scene (new nations, specific interest groups), it is also a fact that there are integrationist tendencies reducing the number of political participants (the diverse groupings that join nations).

At the same time, there is a phenomenon of power diffusion, to the degree that there is no single element of worldwide control. However, the U.S. role as the focal point for developments of worldwide change cannot be ignored.

It is evident that some time will pass before there is a new international order to replace the one currently in the changing. The world community will continue to search for equilibrium providing stability and security to the international system. The trends delineated above suggest an emerging view of a new order and its implications for Mexico 