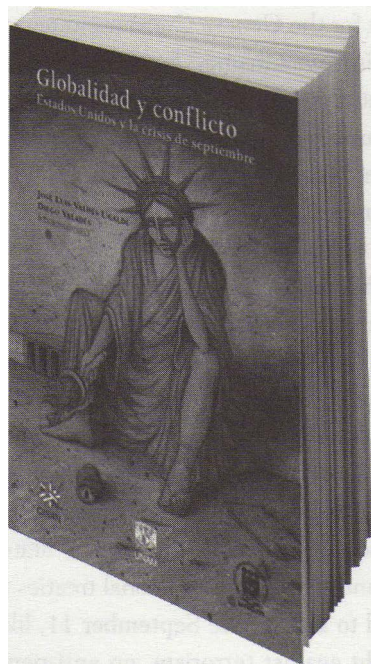


# Reviews



## **Globalidad y conflicto. Estados Unidos y la crisis de septiembre**

(Globality and Conflict. The United States and the Crisis of September)

José Luis Valdés-Ugalde and Diego Valadés, comps.

Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte and Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, UNAM  
Mexico City, 2002, 320 pp.

One of the problems facing researchers in the social sciences is the publication of their work. Analyzing current affairs rapidly enough to make the voice of academia heard among decision makers and being able to have an influence on them depends on the timeliness with which research results are disseminated. *Globalidad y conflicto. Estados Unidos y la crisis de septiembre* (Globality and Conflict. The United States and the Crisis of September) is a work published in a timely fashion by the UNAM's Center for Research on North America and Institute for Legal Research.

This book looks at the fundamental issue of our time. To what extent has globalization created more conflicts than it has resolved, both in the world and in our country, both in the political and economic spheres and in the area of international relations and law?

In the words of Marshall McLuhan, the world has become a global village. Distances have disappeared for the globalized elites, but have become gigantic for the marginalized. Economic globalization has concentrated wealth and spread poverty, causing the massive migration of entire peoples and, with it, sharpened xenophobia and racism. The abyss between the peoples of the North and those of the South has widened and ideologies have been replaced by different kinds of fundamentalism. Interdependency has turned into dependency and a new colonialism has emerged.

However, not everything has been negative in globality: what was positive until September 11 had been the quest for international cooperation to carry out global tasks, like the respect for human rights, the promotion of democracy, the conservation of the environment and the fight against drug trafficking. This positive side to globality is what has been mortally wounded since 9/11: now the human rights not only of the prisoners in Guantánamo are openly violated but also those of U.S. citizens apprehended as suspects and deprived of all their rights by being held incommunicado based on the so-called "patriotic law." Without respect for human rights, democracy loses its *raison d'être*.

The book looks at this situation from different points of view in 20 essays by specialists from Mexico's main universities: the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Autonomous Metropolitan University (UAM), the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM) and the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE). Internationalists, jurists, political scientists and economists analyze the international system after September 11, its implications for Latin America and Mexico, human rights, security, energy and the economy.

In his introduction, José Luis Valdés-Ugalde deals with the break-up of U.S. democracy and how its civil society has lost confidence in its security. He also reconstructs the history of Al Qaeda and Bin Laden.

Ignacio Díaz de la Serna alerts the reader to how violence generates more violence and hatred, and Luis María calls for international cooperation, since all countries must coordinate with each other to fight terrorism, which is why it is necessary to revitalize the United Nations.

Mónica Gambрил examines Henry Kissinger's article published September 12, 2001, in which he says that to destroy terrorism it is not enough to make reprisals against a specific state, but rather that what is needed is systematic anti-terrorist efforts throughout the world, for which international alliances are required.<sup>1</sup>

Alejandro Chanona analyzes France's efforts to stop simplistic anti-terrorism, while Lilia Bermúdez talks about how U.S. attention to Latin America is on the wane.

Mónica Vereá proposes that Mexico take advantage of "the terror of terrorism" to establish a society of security in exchange for a regional migratory system that would guarantee human and labor rights.

Ana María Salazar remembers in "El nuevo desorden mundial" (The New World Disorder) the "overlooking" of the National Security Clause in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Interamerican Reciprocal Aid Treaty in which Mexico recognizes that an attack from without on any of the countries in the Americas is considered a strike against all of them.

Roberto Peña emphasizes the blows that democracy has suffered; Leonardo Curzio states that the reason for the state's existence is security; Francisco Valdés-Ugalde talks about a clash of civilizations; Eduardo F. Ramírez García finds September 11 equally as unjustifiable as the war in Afghanistan.

Elaine Levine talks about the recession. Rosío Vargas points to the link between war and oil and gas resources and the pressure on Mexico to open up certain areas of its economy reserved for the state by the Constitution and not negotiated in NAFTA to private investment in order to facilitate access to its oil reserves, thus ceding national political sovereignty to global economic sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

José Luis Piñeyro proposes a change in the economic model. Marcos Kaplan analyzes the weakening of sovereignty. Raúl Benítez Manaut and Andrés Ávila Akerberg conclude that "the war on terrorism could block globalization."

Lastly, Manuel Becerra Ramírez calls for Mexico's peace policy to prevail in the face of temporary alliances among those who govern.

Maurice Duverger wrote that repression exercised abroad puts an end to domestic freedom. In that sense, Norman Birnbaum said that U.S. freedom was "an unnecessary victory for terrorism,"<sup>3</sup> and Jimmy Carter condemned the fact that the United States was forgetting its fundamental principles: international law and human rights.

The republic has become an empire with the sacrifice of constitutional freedoms and rights.<sup>4</sup> The right to punitive intervention to win the war and not the peace, with no respect for the Geneva Convention regarding the prisoners of war in Guantánamo,<sup>5</sup> has become an extra-judicial practice that allows for the transfer of prisoners to other countries for torture. Indefinite detention for suspicion of committing a crime, the denial of council, harassing people by charging them with minor offenses under immigration law are all typical of a police state.

At the same time, at North Carolina University, Protestant fundamentalists oppose teachers' assigning readings about Islam because they consider it a violation of Christian students' rights, and critics of Bush policies are accused of being unpatriotic.

These are some of the unfortunate effects of 9/11. As U.S. intellectuals and politicians say, and as the authors of this book put forward, the United States should join the world and sign the international treaties that it ignored and refused to sign before September 11, like the treaty about the fight against terrorism, on anti-personnel mines, the Kyoto treaty about global warming, the Río Pact on biodiversity and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. And it should not, via bilateral agreements with states that still have not signed the Statute of Rome about the International Criminal Court, decide not to apply the terms of that statute to U.S. citizens. Unfortunately, international relations, today more than ever, are based on the ability to inflict damage and destroy.

The nation-state is no longer a guarantee of peace and security without cooperation among countries since terrorism is an international network that no nation can control alone. If the terrorists in Iraq are put a stop to, they will reappear in some other part of the world. It is cheaper to educate a child than to murder a child turned terrorist. The axis of evil will only be overcome when the axis of inequality is broken.<sup>6</sup>

As exclusionary nationalisms have reappeared, the new face of the U.S. government has made anti-Americanism reemerge. As Noam Chomsky writes, there have been "two horrifying crimes: September 11 and Bush's response." Anti-terrorism runs the risk of becoming what anti-communism used to be.<sup>7</sup>

Our proximity to the United States makes it indispensable to reflect on this situation since we carry out 90 percent of our trade with it, 90 percent of our tourism comes from and goes there, 80 percent of the foreign investment

in Mexico comes from there and 20 percent of our work force is employed there.

After 9/11, when human rights and democracy have been stepped on, when autocratic, two-faced unilateralism prevails, amidst the clash of racist fundamentalisms, we are experiencing a moment of grave jeopardy since the coordinates that used to be our reference points have changed. Mexico always had a menacing international framework as its reference point, but today the risk is of being used, thereby destroying our pacifism. We have to look both to the past and to the future.

Globality attempted to hide the underlying hegemony that since September 11 has been revealed. The negotiation of sovereignty affects the autonomy of the state, but also the freedom of its citizens.

We should keep our Latin Americanists' postulates in mind before universal integration. Bolívar aspired to the integration of Latin America, but an integration among equals because, otherwise, he said, "Once the pact is signed with the strong, the obligation of the weak is eternal." Gabriela Mistral raised her voice against the armed forces of a state that wanted to lead the world and demanded that freedom of the spirit not be reduced to servitude.

Today more than ever, these reflections may seem utopian, but it is utopias that have moved the noblest part of the human race.

*Globalidad y conflicto* answers and sparks many questions at the same time that it spurs debate. That is why I invite you to read it and reflect upon it.

Patricia Galeana  
Historian, UNAM

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger, "Destroy the Network," *The Washington Post*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamín R. Barber, "Lo que Estados Unidos ha aprendido y lo que no," *El País* (Madrid), 7 September 2002, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Birnbaaum, "¿Guerra por la libertad o guerra contra ella?" *El País* (Madrid), 11 September 2002, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Juan Luis Cebrián, "El mundo tras el 11 de septiembre. Que América vuelva a ser América," *El País* (Madrid), 11 September 2002, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Luis Fernández Galiano, "Peatonos en la Zona Cero," *El País* (Madrid), 7 September 2002, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> It is very significant that the area destroyed September 11 in New York has been dubbed "ground zero," since that was the name given to the test perimeter of the Manhattan project that produced the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Joseph Ramoneda, "André Glucksmann: Ahora la responsabilidad del fin del mundo se ha democratizado, es inmediata," *El País* (Madrid), 7 September 2002, pp. 2-5. Glucksmann, author of *El discurso de la guerra, cinismo y pasión y la estupidez: ideologías del posmodernismo* (The Discourse of War, Cynicism and Passion and Stupidity: Ideologies of Postmodernism), was one of the protagonists of the 1968 May events in France; his most recent essay is "Dostoyevski en Manhattan" (Dostoyevsky in Manhattan).

<sup>7</sup> Javier Valenzuela, "Biblioteca imprescindible del 11 de septiembre," *El País* (Madrid), 7 September 2002.