

Our World Review

Unquestioned Right to Dominate

by Lamis Andoni

Doha, Qatar

America is a modern Rome: an arrogant empire that does not understand the limits of power. I guess no empire really does. This is why they rise and fall. It is not an American trait; it is the nature of unchecked power. Yet in his book, Murphy tries to construct a moral ethos for American hegemony and aggressive drive to dominate the world. Unfortunately the basic premise of his argument goes against history.

Murphy's comparison between Rome and America is void of historical perspective. It nullifies world history of social, economic and political development. Humanity has gone through many struggles to move toward democratic systems and expand universal rights. The fact the Rome was not a democracy should be seen in the context of human development and not the self-serving lens of American exceptionalism. It took centuries to abolish slavery, and America has only recently shed the shame — if we are comparing with the Roman Empire timeline, this is an important element.

Modern technology, oil and advanced sciences have enabled our latest global empire to become the most powerful in history, the most devastating, the most dominating

and domineering. Murphy's thesis, as presented in several interviews, is that the U.S. is different in its moral imperative and system. He argues that although the country could be veering towards self-destruction, it still has a chance to learn from Rome.

There is no doubt that at least in theory, democratic institutions should provide a moral if not a political check on excesses of imperial power. But the empire has been subverting those institutions, international law and its own declared values to ensure its hold on power and continue its expansion. One would like to take solace in the fact that an elected Congress could end the war in Iraq — that is a clear difference between a democratic American empire and slave-driven Rome.

But if we read well into the dominant American discourse — with the exception of the anti-war movement — there is no questioning of imperial notions and goals. The talk is all about whether America can succeed or not; the main point is whether America is winning or losing. There is little discussion in the establishment about whether and why America is entitled to win and to dominate.

Empires all reach a point where aggression, plunder and subversion become an unquestioned entitlement, an inherent prerogative fed by self-declared and self-serving claims to moral superiority. The American empire is not original in embedding itself in the self-serving morality of «taming the savages;» old Rome needed no high-tech computers or laser-guided weapons to justify its conquests and its cruelties. In the end, empires share the same imperative of power.

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Caricom urged to grow more

Caribbean nationals have been encouraged to avoid fast foods.

Caricom nations are not producing and eating enough vegetables and fruits, a regional conference on food security in Guyana has heard.

The shortfall is taking a toll on their health— driving up the number of people falling ill with non-communicable diseases like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and obesity.

Agriculture contributes between 10-40% of the Gross Domestic Product of several Caricom member-nations but the region still has much to do, the conference was told.

Caricom's assistant secretary general for trade, Irwin La Rocque, reported that there had been a slight improvement in the prevalence of under-nourishment some Caricom nations.

He added however that that progress was slowed by the love of fast-foods by Caribbean nationals.

Food Economist at the Jamaica-based Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), Dr Ballayram says at least 60% of

FARC Urges Handover of Dead Deputies

Bogota, Jul 10 (Prensa Latina) The Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) reiterated their decision to deliver the bodies of the 11 deputies from Colombia's Cauca del Valle Department to their relatives as soon as possible.

A FARC communiqué dated July 5 and published Tuesday by Colombian Nueva Colombia (ANNCOL) agency said the delay in turning over the bodies of the deputies who died June 18, responded to searching for a mediator.

FARC asserted that no state institution could be a mediator, since all of them are influenced by the accusation order dictated by the government.

Monday the Red Cross International Committee said it had received a FARC message to proceed to the recuperation of the remains.

The guerrilla organization said it failed in its mission to care for the prisoners and bring them to and exchange, due to more than five years of government negation, and said it would continue investigating what kind of force carried out the attack on the camp where the hostages were confined. •

Churches Discuss LatAm Challenges

Havana, Jul 10 (Prensa Latina) The Fifth International Meeting on Social and Religious Studies tackled poverty, social injustice and challenges to believers in Latin America and the Caribbean in a world in crisis, at their encounter in Havana Tuesday.

Some 212 guests, including 163 Cubans, plus Latin Americans, Europeans and Asians will discuss until Thursday the effects of neoliberal globalization on culture and religion, presence and features of eastern religions in the new world context and the path toward a more humanistic perspective for religion.

Ramon Torreira, head of the Socio-Psychological Department from the Sociological and Psychological Studies Center, said at the opening that the US prevented attendance of three religious.

Twenty-seven panels will discuss 95 papers on the links of the structure of the different beliefs with the state, popular religions, coexistence and integration of different beliefs.

Among ideas that speakers at the event highlighted were that people's awareness has led them to challenge the ruling system with support from movements such as Liberation Theology, that poverty calls for analysis so as to find solutions, and a true alliance with the poor is necessary. •

Haiti cracks down on fake drugs

The government of Haiti has prohibited the roadside sale of medicines, after several people died from the use of counterfeit or expired drugs.

Officials announced the crackdown in the capital, Port-au-Prince, where street vendors sell unmarked antibiotics and cold medications out of buckets and plastic bags.

BBC Caribbean reporter Joseph Guyla Delva said several pharmacies or clinics involved in the trade have been closed within the last month.

He said at least four recent deaths have been linked to fake medicine sold by street vendors.

The Minister of Health, Ausbert Auguste said hawkers who don't comply with the new

ruling will be arrested and charged.

«Enough is enough,» the minister said.

No penalties were announced for people caught selling the medications.

Cough Syrup

But our reporter said the illicit trade may continue because many Haitians are unable to read and may find the low cost irresistible.

In 1995, nearly 90 children died in Haiti after they ingested a cheap cough syrup laced with a chemical used in antifreeze.

Counterfeit pharmaceuticals are rampant in under-developed countries, according to the World Health Organisation.

BBC CARIBBEAN 10 July, 2007

deaths across the region are due to lifestyle disease.

This he blamed on a laid-back lifestyle and a diet consisting of excess fat, salt, and sugars.

Rancid

As a first step, the CFNI official wants Caricom governments to create incentives to prohibit the use of certain ingredients, including trans-fats that scientists say raise the risk of heart disease.

Several major fast-food chains in the US are moving to phase out the use of trans-fats which are vegetable oils that have been combined with hydrogen to prevent them from becoming rancid.

The Caribbean director for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, Dr Barbara Graham, says the region is still not eating enough fruits and vegetables.

She says this dietary imbalance can be corrected only through a public education campaign combined with farmers using appropriate technology and processes.

This approach, she says, will increase the amount of produce while lowering cost of production and slashing the price that consumers pay for fresh fruits and vegetables. •

US Iraq War Opposition Hits Record

Washington, Jul 10 (Prensa Latina) The number of US citizens opposing the Iraq occupation has reached a record high, while approval of President George W. Bush's management dropped to a low of 29 percent, a poll revealed on Tuesday.

According to a Gallup poll for USA Today daily, more than seven in ten US nationals interviewed favor removing nearly all US troops from the Arab country by April 2008.

As many as 62 percent of those polled consider the Bush government made a mistake sending military forces to Iraq.

The survey also disclosed that President Bush's 29 percent approval is the lowest received since he assumed the presidency in January 2001. •

Pakistani Cleric Killed in Red Mosque

Islamabad, Jul 10 (Prensa Latina) The number of deaths reached 58 on Tuesday when Pakistani security forces broke into the Red Mosque, where students and Islamic clerics have remained entrenched for a week.

Clergyman Rasheed Ghazi, who led the resistance in the Lal Masjid or Red Mosque of Islamabad, was gunned down by the soldiers, said an Interior Ministry note.

Ghazi was wounded on his right leg hours earlier, and hid himself in a bunker.

After being located, the government troops gave him a last chance to surrender and the cleric accepted, but his followers would not let him.

Army spokesman Gen. Waheed Arshad said 50 occupants died and dozens were wounded inside the religious temple, while eight soldiers died and 29 were injured. •

Ecuadorean Prez Kicks off Visit to Spain

Madrid, July 10 (Prensa Latina) President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, started on Tuesday an European tour with a first stop in Spain, where he is expected to meet his peer Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and be received by King Juan Carlos.

His first action was to pay tribute to two Ecuadoreans killed on December 30 in the ETA attack against Terminal 4 of the Barajas Airport.

The program of this private visit also includes taking part in the reception of the ship-school «Guayas» as it arrives to Barcelona, an official note says.

Correa is also expected to meet with First Vice President of the Spanish Government, Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega as well as with Ecuadoreans living in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, the document adds.

The Ecuadorean president's European tour will also take him to Italy, and Belgium. •