

■ PROGRAM ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Rizal's Geopolitical Analysis and its Implications for the National Struggle

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“La Solidaridad: Quincenario Democratico Sep 30, 1889”

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FILIPINAS DENTRO DE CIENTO AÑOS

Siguiendo nuestra costumbre de abordar de frente las más árduas y delicadas cuestiones que se relacionan con Filipinas, si importamos nada las consecuencias de nuestra franqueza nos pudiera ocasionar su porvenir.

Para leer en el destino de los pueblos, misterios que se reducen en grandes

Rizal's Geopolitical Analysis and its Implications for the National Struggle

George Aseniero¹

As the Philippines approached the last decade of the nineteenth century, Jose Rizal understood that the country was at a historic crossroads. In *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, he speculated on a possible bifurcation: either the Philippines would remain under Spain or break away from the Mother country. In the former case, she either remains a colony of the metropolis, her status unchanged for three centuries, or, through fundamental liberal reform both in the Peninsula and in the Archipelago, she accedes as a province of a federal Spain, with or without some measure of autonomy. In the latter case of separating herself from the Mother country, the erstwhile Spanish colony either succeeds to live independently, or she falls into the hands of other nations or allies herself with other neighboring powers.²

It is impossible to say which way the Philippines will go. Rizal contemplates this conjuncture, because it all depends on the timeframe. In politics, timing is everything, and the same is true in geopolitics. These divergent possibilities depend not just on the metropolis-colony bilateral dynamics between Madrid and Manila but also on the complex global relations as a whole, as they develop under conditions specific to the times. “If there is no unchanging state in nature,” writes Rizal, “how much less there ought to be in the life of peoples, beings

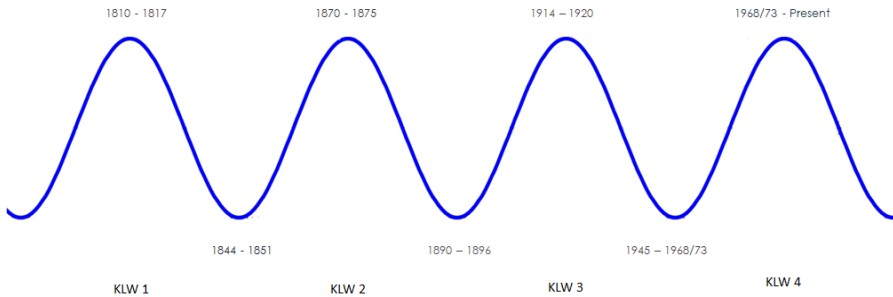
endowed with mobility and movement! Therefore, in order to reply to these questions, it is necessary to fix a limited space of time and, with reference to it, attempt to foresee future developments.”³ These are matters of geopolitics—politics at the global level, the actions of states in pursuit of national interests vis-à-vis each other within the interstate system: *Realpolitik*, as Bismarck called it, or, in Cardinal Richelieu’s phrase, *raison d’état*. Any theoretical disquisition and practical conclusions thereof regarding the course that the Philippines can or should take cannot be pursued without an analysis of ongoing world affairs.

In 1889-1890, Rizal wrote this geopolitical analysis for publication in *La Solidaridad*. Nevertheless, this is not the only source for us to know how he read world events and their impact on the Philippines. In letters to friends, unpublished research drafts, and public statements made at different times, Rizal expressed his deep preoccupations with what he perceived were conjunctural developments that Filipinos needed to be aware of. He believed that only by understanding these could they respond adequately and correctly to the challenges that would unexpectedly come their way as they contended with Spain for national emancipation.

Geopolitical Analysis in a Time of World Economic Crisis

Rizal wrote at a time of world economic crisis, known today as the “Long Depression,” following the Panic of 1873, which began in Vienna and quickly spread around the world. Economists refer to this crisis as the B-Phase of the Second Kondratieff Long Wave (KLW 2 downswing: 1873 to mid-1890s), when the world economy drastically slowed down after a historically unprecedented upswing during the A-Phase between 1850 and the mid-1870s (Fig. 1). The preceding period had seen the global triumph of modern capitalism, marked by the rapid expansion of industrialization (ushering in the Second Industrial Revolution) in Europe and the United States, and the consequent growth of the world market, driven by accelerating demand in Western countries for commodities of all kinds from near and far. These developments brought about profound social change in all aspects and in all parts of the world, including the Philippines.⁴ Having been opened up to foreign trade earlier on, the Philippine economy shifted gears towards export-crop agriculture, giving rise to a middle class engaged in the production of sugar, tobacco, abaca, and coffee. These

were colonial tropical commodities that were traded abroad mostly by British and American merchant houses established in Manila. From this middle class emerged the *ilustrados*—highly educated individuals who were persuaded of bourgeois ideologies of progress and civil liberties but were critical of institutions they believed were hindering the Philippines’ entry into modernity.



■ Figure 1. Kondratieff Long Waves.

What do we know now about that “limited space of time” that Rizal set for analysis, within which he would “attempt to foresee future developments”? In many ways, it was a time similar to ours, as we, too, have entered a period of world economic crisis—and we are still deep in it—following the greatest expansion in the history of the world economy. This contemporary (post-war) cycle is referred to as the Fourth Kondratieff Long Wave. Between Rizal’s time and ours, there was another full cycle: an A-Phase upswing (mid-1890s to 1914–1920) followed by a B-Phase downswing (1914–1920 to 1945), which constituted the Third Kondratieff Long Wave. This cycle ended with the Great Depression that followed the financial crisis of 1929–1931, ultimately leading to the Second World War.

A closer look at a comparison between the long wave of Rizal’s time and that of ours (KLR 4 downswing: 1968–1973 to present) will give us a measure of the perspicacity with which he analyzed geopolitical trends and their probable impact on the Philippines as his century came to an end. This comparative perspective may offer us valuable lessons, deepen our understanding of why he thought and acted the way he did, and reaffirm our appreciation of his continuing relevance in the twenty-first century.

The world economy had been growing fast for more than a decade when Rizal was born, and it continued to expand during his childhood. Thanks to the increasing global price of sugar, his family—among the first in the country to engage in large-scale sugar production, albeit on rented friar-owned lands—was financially confident enough to send the twenty-year-old José to continue his studies in Europe. However, by the time he was completing his medical studies, his elder brother Paciano was struggling to sustain his stay in the metropolis, as the price of sugar had peaked and was now in a free fall. The prices of agricultural commodities all over the world plunged, along with the profit rates of industries in Western countries. In the Philippines, reduced earnings from export crops made it hard for families renting farmlands to pay on time, resulting to penalties for late payment charged by landowners, who continually increased the rent (*canon*). This was the economic situation in which the *inquilinos* (tenants) of friar lands owned by the Dominicans in Calamba found themselves—in during the 1880s—the Rizal family among them.⁵

THE GREAT DEPRESSION 1873 TO 1896	THE PRESENT CRISIS 1973 / 2007 TO PRESENT
Generalized contraction	Slowdown of GDP growth rates in old core countries, rise of NICs
General deflation, bankruptcies	Stagnation of real wages, increasing inequality, polarization
Bank runs, crash of stock markets	Debt, Financial crisis (ASEAN 1997, Wall Street 2007-2008)
Declining rates of profit	Excess capital > productive investment (over-accumulation)
Exhaustion of the driving industries	Deindustrialization in core, relocation to semi-periphery
Monopolization of capital	Monopoly capitalism, rise of rentier cyber space FAAMG ⁶
Merging of banks and industries	Financialization, dedollarization
Export of capital: Imperialism	Industrial relocation: global supply chains (profitable, vulnerable)
Inter-imperialist rivalry	Hegemonic rivalry: rise of China, perceived as “systemic threat”

■ Table 1. The crisis of Rizal’s time and ours, compared.

The core countries of the world economy suffered a generalized contraction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates. In the United States and Europe, bankruptcies and bank runs occurred in quick succession following crashes in major financial centers. These crashes were triggered by the adoption of gold as a monometallic standard by Germany, France, USA, and others, leading to a squeeze on money supply in these countries.

Declining profit rates in economies that had been the pioneering leaders in industrialization required new methods of extracting surplus value from the production process. Technological innovations emerged as labor-saving mechanization, while wages of the working class continued to drop, fueling further labor unrest. Reorganization of labor was imperative during those years of deflation and instability. Only those corporations that were able to adjust accordingly and invest in the new technologies survived, gobbling up the smaller ones who could not. This shift marked a transition from old-style competitive capitalism to monopoly capital, characterized with the merging of banks and industries. The exhaustion of the older driving industries, such as the railroad industry in the United States, gave rise to new ones, with electricity and chemicals becoming key areas of growth. Unified Germany, home of companies like Siemens, BASF and Bayer, had a head start in these fields.

With the contraction of domestic markets, the imperative to export industrial goods became paramount, leading to protectionism at home and aggressive competition overseas. Declining profit rates in established industries compelled excess capital to seek investment opportunities abroad, driven also by the need to secure new sources of raw material. A shifting balance of power tended to destabilize the interstate system, as older powers felt threatened by challengers to their global supremacy, not just in economic terms but also in military terms. Indeed the two went together: much like the cross and the sword during the conquest of the colonies centuries earlier, economic expansionism (the logic of capital accumulation) and power aggrandizement (the logic of *realpolitik*, *raison d'état*) shaped foreign policy as the nineteenth century drew to a close. A new wave was sweeping across the globe that would acquire a name in the 1890s: *imperialism*. Rivalry among would-be imperialist powers threatened global peace and the fate of countries both big and small.

This was what preoccupied Rizal the most as he pondered on his country's fate.

Before delving into Rizal's geopolitical analysis, let us briefly consider the parallels between his "limited space of time" and ours. In his epoch occurred during what historians now call the golden era of capitalist growth, which began in Europe after the suppression of social revolutions in many countries in 1848 and reached its peak during the boom of 1871–1873.⁷ That period was followed by a crisis that spanned nearly a quarter of a century before recovery set in. As for our own epoch, it emerged from the devastation of the Second World War, marking a period of even greater transformation that lasted continuously for three decades—*les trente glorieuse*, as the French call it—an age no less golden than that of a century before, and even more far-reaching in its global impact.

The A-Phase of our present Kondratieff Long Wave ended with a drastic slowdown of the world economy, which started in the early 1970s. The B-Phase, in which the world economy remains stuck, has yet to be reversed and will soon have lasted half a century, despite the emergence over time of a few high-achieving, export-oriented economies in Asia (first Japan, then the newly industrializing countries [NICs], and now China), while the rest of the world stagnates or even deteriorates (Table 1). Like the crisis of Rizal's time, ours has been marked by successive crashes in the financial markets (Southeast Asia, 1997; Wall Street, 2007, 2008), the collapse of giant financial institutions (Goldmann Sachs, several huge banks) and the bankruptcy of mammoth companies (with Enron among the earliest, and now the Chinese real estate developer Evergrande among the latest). Real wages have stagnated since the 1970s, while inequality, both within and across nations, has reached astronomical heights: half of the world's net wealth is now owned by the top 1 percent of the world's population. Although new industries—the digital revolution—have arisen and amassed staggering wealth in the hands of a few individuals, the old industrial heartland in core industrial countries has remained hollowed out, a victim of falling profit rates. An over-accumulation of capital in the hands of a few monopolists, resulting from the boom of the A-Phase, ended up in banks instead of being reinvested in domestic industry. This gave rise to the phenomenon of financialization—a "decoupling" of financial markets from the "real world." Drowning in liquidity, banks aggressively lend to the hilt, causing ever-mounting debt defaults by states, corporations, and subprime borrowers. As in the crisis of the nineteenth century, capital has had to migrate to countries with lower labour cost: the industrial relocation that began in the late 1970s has turned into an exodus of profit-maximizing capital away from home countries towards NICs, acquiring a name that provokes polarizing reactions of people in all countries:—*globalization*.⁸

In Rizal's time, inter-imperialist rivalry began to upset the precarious balance of power that the major states had been trying to keep among themselves under the diplomatic principles and practices of the Concert of Europe. For nearly a century, hegemonic power had been firmly held by Great Britain, which was now in slow decline relative to emerging powers like the young United States and the recently unified Germany. Rizal sojourned in all three countries, staying the longest in Germany, the nation he admired most. In his geopolitical analysis, as we shall see below, he gave much weight to the practice of balance of power among them as he assessed their potentially interacting interests in the Philippines within their geopolitical strategies.

In our time, and as a long-term result of the ongoing crisis of the world-system, the hegemony of the United States is now in relative decline despite its military supremacy. It is threatened by what Washington sees as a "systemic challenge" posed by China, whose expanding economy is feared to be overtaking that of the United States. Striving to maintain its status as the unipolar power in a post-Cold War world order that is tending toward multipolarity, the United States has been programmatically pushing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to expand to the borders of Russia. It has used Ukraine as a *de facto* part of the military alliance, which was designed to contain—and, if necessary, confront—the USSR, and it has continued to treat post-Soviet Russia as an adversary. With Putin's "red line" crossed, the result is the ongoing proxy war with Russia, at Ukraine's expense, with no end in sight and presaging greater challenges to come.⁹

The danger of more wars breaking out is a concern for us as serious as it was in Rizal's time.

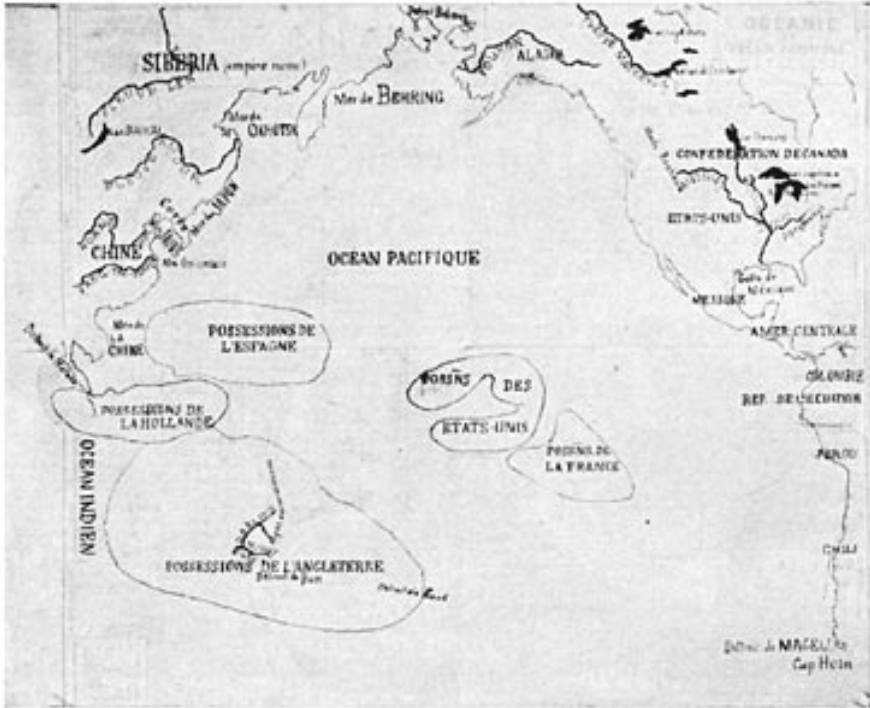
Rizal's Geopolitical Analysis

There is a new pattern observed in the behavior of the great powers, writes Rizal in an undated note:

... [I]n the present epoch, colonies are established in territories supposedly free or not belonging to some lord, such as those which are being formed at the center and the eastern and western coasts of Africa, with more honesty and less hypocrisy, in order to exploit the riches that those virgin lands conceal. The old pretext of conversion to Christianity has disappeared.¹⁰

In other words, this is not the same as the old form of colonialism known so far: where the invading power takes over a foreign territory for settlement; subjugates the native inhabitants therein and establishes administrative rule over them; transforms their material life to align with its economic interests and exploits their natural and human resources; and imposes its culture on them with the justification that this indefinite domination is for the salvation of their souls through the “one true faith” or for the modernization of their way of life through the colonizers’ “superior culture” (*mission civilisatrice*). This form of colonialism is direct, pragmatic, and brutal, requiring no justification to the conquered; they must bow to the superior strength of the invaders, who come solely to exploit what they can.¹¹ If there is a limit to the expansionism of the great powers, it comes from the other powers themselves: the risk of war stemming from inter-imperialist rivalry.

This is most blatant in the “Scramble for Africa” by and among the European powers, or “*el despojo de Africa*,” as Rizal puts it. A similar positioning of great powers is also observed in the Pacific, which is alarming given its possible impact on the Philippines, lying on the westernmost edge of the ocean. He had a sketched map of the Pacific world (Fig. 2), showing the lands that composed it and the great powers that possessed them (all the names were in French in his drawing) during this “limited space of time” as of his writing in 1890.



■ Figure 2. Map of the Pacific World, drawn by Rizal

Five great powers are shown to have possessions of territories and peoples. Note the term “*possession*,” which denotes a property relation—something that can be acquired, bought, sold, stolen, or transferred from one holder to another, irrespective of the will and fate of the inhabitants of those territories. Thus, there lies Filipinas on Rizal’s sketched map, a *possession de l’Espagne* at the moment of writing. Her immediate neighbors are also possessions of various powers: the Dutch, the French, the British, and, lately, the Americans. At the far eastern edge of the Pacific lies *les Etats-Unis* (the United States), it is not a possession of anybody—it is independent and free. Such, too, is the aspiration of the Filipino people: to no longer be a possession of anybody, as Rizal writes in *Filipinas dentro de cien años*. If, after all their struggle for change, they cannot become a province of a multi-nation Spain, endowed with all the political and civil rights enjoyed by the Spanish citizenry, there lies the rub: can the Philippines keep her independence if she succeeds in breaking away from Spain?

Rizal states the *problématique* positively:

If the Philippines attain their independence at the end of heroic and tenacious struggles, they can be sure that neither England, nor Germany, nor France, and Holland even less will dare to seize what Spain has not been able to keep.¹²

He reasons that the Scramble for Africa will completely absorb the energy of these European powers in the years to come, and none of them can be so lacking in sense as to gamble on some poor islands elsewhere when the immensity and wealth of the Dark Continent are still hardly exploited and poorly defended.

The British public, he has heard, is of the opinion that the United Kingdom already feels the burden of having too many colonies—think of India alone, a subcontinent in itself—and so he does not see her putting the equilibrium of powers at risk just to add more; besides, what need is there to go to war over Filipinas when she already has Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, trading cities more prosperous than Manila. For sure, an independent Philippines will bring benefits to British commerce; actual domination is unnecessary for “country trade” to prosper.¹³

Germany will avoid adventurism because any disequilibrium of her power, triggered by a war in far places, will imperil her existence in the Continent. Though as avid as others, she is nevertheless cautious, as observed in her actions in Africa and the Pacific, and she will get only what does not yet belong to others. Germany, Rizal concludes, avoids all foreign complication.¹⁴

France, he opines, has more to do now and in the future in Cochin and China than anywhere else. Moreover, she has her own problems demanding attention, both domestic and continental.¹⁵ As for national glory, which drives the French to heroic combat on European fields, this will come attenuated like a distant echo, if coming from any fighting breaking out in the Far East—the drive is simply not there, where the charm of glory does not resound in the heart of France.¹⁶

Sensible Holland is contented with the Moluccas and Java, and sees better prospects in Sumatra than in the Philippines. Yet, even with the East Indies under her belt, she treads carefully, fear of losing everything she already has.

Rizal then considers the two Asian powers. China will consider herself lucky enough if she can remain united and not be dismembered, given the danger of being repartitioned by the European powers already colonizing the Asian continent.¹⁷ Japan is in the same boat and is under internal diplomatic pressure from Europe that restrains her conduct of external affairs.¹⁸ Russia, to her north, covets and surveils her, while the British presence is felt everywhere, with English even intruding as an official language. Rizal concedes that Japan has a problem of excess population, for which there is Korea, easier to take and closer than the Philippines—but will the other powers let her?

Rizal then devotes a longer paragraph on the United States:

Perhaps the great American Republic, whose interests lie in the Pacific and who has no share in the plunder of Africa, may one day think of overseas possessions. It is not impossible, since the example is contagious, greed and ambition are the vices of the strong, and Harrison expressed himself in this sense over the question of Samoa. But the Panama Canal is not open, the territories of the United States are not swamped with inhabitants, and if she were to make this attempt openly, she would not be given free rein by the European powers, who know only too well that the appetite is opened with the first bite: North America would be too troublesome a rival, once it gets into the business. Moreover, this would be contrary to her traditions.¹⁹

There can be no doubt that the United States has interests in the Pacific, for this is what her leaders themselves declare as a matter of national importance, and the pattern is clear for all to see. In 1875, Hawai'i became a virtual US protectorate, much to the satisfaction of the American planters on the islands. In 1878, the United States acquired a coaling station at Pago Pago, Samoa, a vital port of call for its steamships traversing the Pacific Ocean. In 1889, the United States acquired Pearl Harbor as another coaling station and future naval base. So where next in the vast ocean will the Americans move into? It is true that, so far, they have *not acquired* any overseas possessions by the usual ways of conquest, annexation, and colonization, and have resorted instead to the legal instrumentality of a protectorate and the commercial transaction of leasing territory. But they *may* yet act like the Europeans and play their great-power game, he concedes: “*no es imposible*” (it's not impossible).

It is of note that the great American Republic has taken no part in the plunder or spoliation (*los despojos*) of Africa. However, could this not simply mean that her interests lie elsewhere, in oceans rather than in continents? Rizal remarks that the economic motive (*la codicia*: greed or covetousness) is there, as is the ambition of power to aggrandize itself. This double motivation is inherent in the dynamics of the interstate system at the core. Call it the force of example or the contagion effect, as Rizal puts it, but the logic of the interstate system is such that when one state increases its power through strategic positioning, territorial aggrandizement, or arms build-up, the others do so as well. Any increase in the power of one state disturbs the ranking system and affects the equilibrium, provoking the other affected state(s) to redress the balance by doing the same. Thus, during Rizal's childhood, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 arose, conceived by Bismarck as part of a grand design. It was triggered by a nervous France determined to restore her dominant position in continental Europe after Prussia's crushing victory over Austria in 1866, as well as by rumors that spread in 1868 that someone from the House of Hohenzollern was going to be the constitutional monarch of Spain to replace the deposed Queen Isabella. (Years later, in a park in Berlin, Rizal saw by chance, strolling like an ordinary citizen, unaccompanied, the aging victor of that war, Gen. von Moltke. Quite a contrast, Rizal remarked, to the Spanish bureaucrats in Manila with their retinue of servants wherever they went.) Thus, in his reading of the motives of the great powers, Rizal talks of "equilibrium" and "disequilibrium" as major factors in the calculations of their leaders. By the same logic, he expects that, like any other power, the United States may "follow the example" of others should they acquire strategic footholds overseas or embark on self-aggrandizement—another way of saying that Washington will not allow the power differentials among states to deteriorate to her detriment and will surely do the same. He cites the case of Samoa, whose ideal strategic location for a coaling station in the Pacific was the object of intense rivalry among the Germans, British, and Americans.

But then Rizal presents counterarguments to himself: even if it is not impossible, it is rather unlikely to happen, as he seems to be convincing himself and the reader. These are four reasons:

Firstly, the Panama Canal is not yet open. True enough, a decade has passed since construction began, with no sign that it will ever get done. But why should this matter? After all, this is a French project, so why should its nonrealization affect America's possible interest in the Philippines, which is an ocean away?

It is rather surprising that the French dare to encroach upon a hemisphere declared by the Americans as their hegemonic zone in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. President Hayes reasserted this policy in 1879, when the French plan was announced, stating that such a canal must be regarded as “virtually [a] part of the coastline of the United States.”²⁰ Rizal makes no comment on this and implies only that since the Canal is not open, the US cannot be expected to make any move that would have repercussions for the Philippines.

Secondly, the United States has no problem of overpopulation, which of course, is a major motivation for *settler* colonialism. Due to having too many inhabitants relative to livelihood opportunities at home, Spaniards settled in South America, the English moved to North America and Oceania, and Japan—as Rizal speculates in this essay—might settle her excess population in Korea. But the vast United States faces no such problems, so why should Americans want to settle elsewhere?²¹

Thirdly, should she aggressively expand overseas, North America will meet with resistance from European powers. This is how the European system of Balance of Power works—or is expected to work—in practice since the end of the Napoleonic Wars: any move by a state that disturbs the strategic equilibrium of the interstate system elicits a reaction from the others. Rizal mentions Samoa: President Harrison’s pronouncement of US interest in this Pacific island immediately drew a challenge from Germany, which also coveted it for the same reason—as a coaling station for its naval and commercial fleet. Rizal concludes from this standoff in the Pacific that aggressive expansionism by the United States anywhere else will not be permitted by the European powers. The certainty of such a reaction, he argues, will deter Washington from pursuing such policies. The Europeans can be expected to nip it in the bud, for once North America “has a first bite” and “gets into the business” it will be too troublesome a rival to contain. This, as Rizal refers to it, is “the colonial politics of European nations.” Very soon, a new word emerges to encapsulate this novel phenomenon—*imperialism*.²²

But finally, the biggest factor that makes it hard to imagine Washington actively participating in the colonial politics of European nations is that it runs contrary to America’s traditions. Contrary to which tradition exactly? It cannot be that of waging wars, because warfare has been part of American history from the beginning, and Rizal, of course, knows that. Just a generation after the Pilgrims came to New England in 1620, the extermination of the native Indians began and did not end until the massacre of the last Indians at Wounded Knee in 1890

(when Rizal completed writing *Cien Años*). Before the American Revolution, the colonists, allying themselves with the British, warred against the French (and their Indian allies) in the Seven Years' War, a global conflict that involved Spain on the French side, and led to the British takeover of Havana and Manila in 1762. After the Revolution came a number of wars: with the British again (War of 1812), the Barbary Wars (against the pirates in North Africa), the Seminole War (against Spaniards and their Indian allies for hegemonic supremacy in the hemisphere, which produced the Monroe Doctrine), the Mexican War (which completed territorial expansion westward to the shores of California), and the most bitter of all, the Civil War, to keep it all together. Decidedly, warring is not contrary to America's traditions.

The tradition that Rizal refers to is isolationism and exceptionalism. It is the belief among Americans that their place in the world (between two oceans) and their place in history (the landing of the *Mayflower*, which divides history into a "before" and "after") mark them as a nation destined to create a new world, isolated from the never-ending conflicts of old Europe. They believe that they have left behind in the Old World the propensity for war among the powers, which arises from their "entangling alliances" and their cynical methods of statecraft. Americans are far from that now, both geographically and morally, with a geopolitical premise and a moral promise all their own. George Washington stated it memorably in his farewell address: we Americans shall not "implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her [European] politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course."²³ A course so different that it is exceptional: just as divine providence has put Americans in a world apart, so shall they part from the ways of the world. Geographical isolationism and moral exceptionalism combine to make America unique, with a tradition and orientation all her own. This means, as a matter of policy, not to get involved in other people's wars; it does not mean, in practice, not to wage wars of your own.

Rizal leaves it at that.

What are we to conclude, then? That the United States can pursue territorial expansionism, engage in annexationist wars, and join the global power game of the European states? In short, can it be imperialist like the Europeans? *No es imposible*, Rizal states clearly. But that it will not, because all this is contrary to her traditions?

Rizal himself will answer this question.

Among Rizal's extant papers are many fragments of drafts, research notes, and unfinished manuscripts, covering a very wide range of topics that display the multiplicity of his talents and the diversity of his interests. One of them, undated, is simply labeled by the editors of his complete works as "*La política intercontinental*" (*fragmento de un borrador, sin fecha*)."¹ (Intercontinental Politics, excerpt from an undated draft). Most likely, it was jotted down in 1890, shortly after the fourth installment of *Cien Años* was published in *La Solidaridad* in February 1890, and was meant to be the beginning of a new essay—perhaps a fifth installment of *Cien Años*. Those were hectic months; we know for a fact that Rizal was finishing his exhausting work on the annotation of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. There was also the pressure to get on with *El Filibusterismo*, even as he still found time to respond to the continuing colonial discourse on "the lazy native" as the cause of his own poverty. To deconstruct this insidious myth, Rizal wrote "*Sobre la indolencia de los filipinos*," replete with very advanced ideas in what we would today call the sociology of underdevelopment. For some reason we can only speculate, he did not develop this draft on geopolitics into an essay.

We have only what he managed to jot down. A single paragraph, of the same length as the paragraph on the United States in *Cien Años*; it is, in some ways, a mirror image of that one. Which is to say, it is the reverse of what he says there. In stark contrast to the published paragraph, which starts with that adverb of uncertainty "*Acaso...*" ("Perhaps"...), that casts a sense of tentativeness to his observations throughout, this one starts with the certainty of stating a matter of fact, and carries that tone of conclusiveness all through the text.

Global Politics (fragment of a draft, undated)

Intercontinental politics marks the first step of a colossus: the United States, departing from its traditions, takes an active part in the colonial politics of European nations. So it has been understood in the last issue of Samoa, has been declared by President Harrison in his message, and has been interpreted by the first-ranked colonial powers of Europe. The Germans have met with an obstacle: the resistance of a young nation, robust, and not inclined to suffer failure; thus, the old Chancellor, seeing no usefulness in discord nor any assurances of success, prefers to seek the

resolution of the dispute by means of a conference. England sees in her brother Jonathan a worthy rival, who follows the same system as she does and is naturally alarmed. All these nations who look far dispute among themselves [over] the islands of the Pacific, there to establish bases, depôts of [illegible] so when [illegible] ...²⁴

He thus starts by negating the fourth of his own counterarguments, with which he ended that paragraph in *Cien Años*: reversing what he says there, he announces that the United States *has departed* from its tradition of isolationism and now actively takes part in the colonial politics of European nations. It does so with great force, that of a colossus. There is no longer any need for the diplomatic game of ambiguity to cover real motives. President Harrison himself acts differently: in *Cien Años*, he “expressed himself in this sense” (*se manifestó algo en este sentido*) of acquiring overseas possessions in the Pacific. Now, he boldly *declares* in his message to Congress his government’s intention specifically regarding Samoa, which is also coveted by the Germans. America will not be deterred by other powers and is prepared to go to war to acquire this island of great geostrategic importance.

There is a radically new element observable in interstate behavior. The old colonialism used force to conquer a militarily inferior people in order to subjugate them and take over their lands and colonize them. The emerging pattern now is the willingness to use force against other powers to wrest from them their colonial possessions (repartition of the colonies), repel them from one’s hegemonic space (division of the world), or to dispossess and carve up a declining empire such as Manchu China (spheres of influence). No island in the midst of the ocean is too small to fight over, nor is any territory too big to be carved up by the Powers: witness the Scramble for Africa, Britain’s great-power game with Russia over Central Asia, and even the threatened partition of China, as noted by Rizal. The objective is to amass power worldwide, to be in control of strategic positions for military and commercial purposes, and to gain access to the natural wealth of territories regardless of whose colony they may be. Recall what Rizal says about the partition of Africa—the economic motive drives all the Powers similarly, so there is no need to fool each other and the natives with religion or a civilizing mission as a screen or justification. The objective of exploiting the natural resources (*explotar las riquezas*) of these lands needs no justification other than what it is: economic self-interest. In this global power game, only the strong can play; in the age of rivalry among the Powers, might is right.

What convinced Rizal to reverse his stance on the United States was the unexpected turn of events on the issue of Samoa (*la última cuestión de Samoa*). He expected that Germany would deter America from this ambition. He was in awe with Germany, for its rapid economic modernization and industrial breakthroughs, for its intellectual and scientific achievements, and for the richness of its culture, which he had come to imbibe with great enthusiasm. This admiration also stemmed from the personal and respectful friendships he developed with a few of Germany's foremost intellectuals, introduced to him by Ferdinand Blumentritt. After *Vainqueur de la France* in the Franco-Prussian War, which occurred less than a decade earlier, and now unified under the hegemonic leadership of the most astute statesman of the epoch, Germany had become the rising star in Europe. Rizal was definitely not impressed with the United States as he traversed the entire continent from west to east by train. And yet, it was Bismarck who sued for peace. It was not North America that met with the resistance of the European powers, as Rizal had speculated in *Cien Años*; it was instead "the Germans [who] have met with an obstacle, the resistance of a young nation, robust, and not inclined to suffer failure." A war in the Pacific had been avoided at the last minute, thanks to a merciless super typhoon that destroyed naval warships and blew away war plans from the table. A pause for thought: the "old Chancellor, seeing no usefulness in discord nor any assurances of success, prefers to seek the resolution of dispute by means of a conference." The Americans prepared themselves well for the Berlin Conference; they were equally prepared to fight to pursue their agenda. This was the instruction of Secretary of State James Blaine to the American delegates of the Berlin Conference:

Our interest in the Pacific is steadily increasing; our commerce with the East is developing largely and rapidly; and the certainty of an early Isthmian transit from the Atlantic to the Pacific (under American protection) must create changes in which no power can be so directly or more durably interested than the United States.²⁵

This memorandum is exactly how Rizal analyzed the geopolitical intentions of the United States. The Americans got what they wanted from the Conference. Samoa was declared a joint protectorate or condominium of Germany, USA, and UK, all of whom professed to recognize a Samoan monarchy while running their respective affairs on the islands as they pleased. A decade later, they would do away completely with the "unstable" monarchy and partitioned Samoa among themselves.

Rizal also notes that England felt alarmed over America's entry into the power game—naturally—but surprisingly, it did not go beyond that. John Bull sees in Brother Jonathan a worthy rival, but not an enemy. *Paso libre* (a free pass) from the powers that mattered: there will be no restraining the American colossus. Rizal thus concludes that his third counterargument has been invalidated by events.

These are nations that look far ahead, notes Rizal, and for now they dispute among themselves over the islands in the Pacific for naval bases, coaling stations, etc. The draft ends here, with some words or phrases illegible. Just what he wanted to say after “*deposito de* [illegible] *para cuando* [illegible] ...” is anyone's guess, but one guess as good as any could be that “stationing of [...] so when [...]” has to do with logistics of men and materiel for any eventuality, including war.

We move to the second counterargument—that the United States is not overpopulated. By the usual understanding of the word, the USA cannot be considered as “overpopulated,” as the US Census of 1890 revealed. However, the same Census also declared that there was, in fact, no more frontier land to conquer, as the United States had reached the western limits of the continent.²⁶ With the massacre of the last Indian braves at Wounded Knee that same year, the Plains Indian lands were left defenseless for the taking, except that—a startling revelation to a people grown accustomed to endless westward expansion—there was no more frontier to expand into.²⁷ But where the land ends, the sea begins, and *that* is the new frontier. “Whether they will or no,” writes Alfred Thayer Mahan in the December 1890 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, “America must now begin to look outward.”²⁸

“*Naciones que miran a lo lejos*,” (Nations that look afar), says Rizal of the powers engaged in “colonial politics.” For the United States, one man looks farther than anyone else and singlehandedly sets the theoretical underpinnings for a paradigmatic shift in US geostrategic thinking: Mahan—then President of the Naval War College, chief naval strategist, and friend of future US President Theodore Roosevelt. His book, given as lectures in 1887 and published in 1890: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. No book is to have greater influence on the course of US geostrategic thinking than this theoretical distillation of the hegemonic conflicts between Holland, England, France, and Spain. Its major thesis is that command of the seas is the chief element in the power and prosperity of nations, and it is therefore “imperative to take possession [...] of such maritime positions as contribute to secure command.”

Sea power is the controlling factor of global events, as shown by history, from the conflict between Rome and Carthage in the ancient world to the Napoleonic naval wars between Britain and France: the power that rules the waves rules the world. Thus, the indispensability of taking possession of the Hawaiian Islands, “of unique importance” geographically for the “commercial and military control of the Pacific.” Thus, the imperative to have the Samoan islands as coaling stations and naval bases. And thus, the crucial significance of the Panama Canal: in the absence of adequate naval power, the Isthmian Canal—in Mahan’s view—constitutes more of a danger than an asset. The strategic policy is imperative: “We must, without delay, begin to build a navy that will at least equal that of England when the Canal shall have become a fact.”²⁹

This takes us back to what Rizal says in *Cien Años*—at the time of his writing, “*el Canal de Panamá [no] está abierto*” (The Panama Canal is not open), and for so long as it remains unfinished, the United States is not expected to make a move for more islands in the Pacific. He knows for a fact that the French project is getting nowhere after ten years of Herculean but Sisyphean efforts. Perhaps he concludes, like many others, that it will remain a failure and that there will be no fundamental change in the geostrategic equilibrium. As it happened, the French gave up three years later. But in 1899, the US established the Isthmian Canal Commission, and in 1901, at its recommendation, bought out the defunct French project. Americans took over the Canal in 1904, and finished it in 1914. However, on Mahan’s geostrategic policy recommendation, no time was wasted at all. That same year of 1890, the Navy began to build. In five years, starting from twelfth place in the world, it rose to the top. It was ready to rule the waves.

It is possible that in 1890, Rizal, who was in Europe at that time, was abreast of developments regarding the Panama Canal, specifically America’s intentions to take over the failing French project. But regardless of his actual knowledge thereof, his observation in *Cien Años* that the canal was not open was stated as an empirical fact, true at that time and therefore subject to future developments: *if and when* the Canal is finally opened, *then* the geostrategic value of the Philippines will loom large in Washington’s calculus of power. In 1890, Mahan was already arguing that a completed Panama Canal under American control was vital to the nation’s geopolitical strategy.

This brings us to Spain's remaining possessions in the Caribbean, as the purpose of the Panama Canal was to link the Pacific to the Atlantic, and its realization would redefine geostrategic imperatives in both oceans: Cuba and Puerto Rico stood right at the opening of the Atlantic side of the Canal. Mahan's strategy takes on actuality: the opening of the Isthmian access to two oceans demands the rapid build-up of the US Navy. This necessitates the construction of iron-hulled steamships and naval bases in the most strategic places. In the Senate, in 1895, Henry Cabot Lodge drew the conclusion for all: once the Panama Canal is built, "the island of Cuba will become a necessity" for the United States, not just for strategic purposes, as argued by Mahan, but also because fundamentally

our immediate pecuniary interests in the island are very great. They are being destroyed [in the ongoing revolution]. Free Cuba would mean a great market for the United States; it would mean an opportunity for American capital, invited there by special exemptions; it would mean an opportunity for the development of that splendid island...³⁰

Other senators could not agree more.: "Cuba should become an American colony," echoed Sen. Morgan, to which Sen. Frye added a finishing touch,: "We certainly ought to have the island [of Cuba] in order to round out our possessions. If we cannot buy it, I for one [would] like an opportunity to acquire it by conquest."³¹

Even as he worried about the United States' intentions on the Philippines, Rizal became concerned with Japan's pan-Asian interests earlier on. His wide-ranging reading of contemporary world affairs gave him mixed feelings about Japan in particular. He felt admiration for what they were accomplishing in modernizing a tradition-bound feudal country, but he also harbored suspicion about what they, as an industrializing economy with great needs, could be up to in the years ahead. This preoccupation was well reported by his close friend Maximo Viola, who wrote years later about his travels with Rizal through Europe in 1887. It reads:

Regarding the political question, it is well to bear in mind some of his ideas regarding the anomalous situation of the Philippines in that era. He said that he did not subscribe to any idea of armed revolution; his reasoning being that a revolution would excite and foment the greedy desire for colonies of other potential powers. He was particularly worried

about Japan. He mentioned Japan's proximity to the Islands, its greater population and advanced military equipment. He assured me that if the Philippines overthrew Spanish rule by force and violence, she would only land in the clutches of Japan, where she would have far less chance of ever obtaining her freedom.³²

Rizal would get to know Japan in the spring of the following year. It was a stopover on his way back to Europe via America, after a brief and disrupted sojourn at home in Calamba. He was greatly impressed with the speed and supreme determination with which the Japanese were transforming their political system, industrializing their economy, and absorbing elements of modernity into their ancient culture and social life. In Dapitan years later, Rizal would speak to his students about Japan in admiring terms, encouraging them to follow the example of the Japanese in pursuing progress and modernity as the goal of one and all. But he also observed, in his two-month stay in that country, how rapidly it was militarizing. It was understandable that the Japanese were doing so to defend their islands from external threat—one needed only to recall the US Navy's show of force at Tokyo Bay 35 years earlier. However, it was worrisome that they might resort to military force overseas to solve their critical problems of overpopulation and lack of natural resources at home. Rizal reflected on this concern in his essay, *Filipinas dentro de cien años* ("The Philippines a century hence"): Japan might be tempted to play the game of the European powers in contending with its problem of excess of population. For this, there lies Korea which, fortunately for the Philippines, is closer to Japan and presumably easier for the Empire to take.

Continuing his voyage across the Pacific towards San Francisco, Rizal had ample time to converse with a fellow passenger, a Japanese writer, about how Japan saw herself in relation to Asia. That man was Tetchō Suehiro, whom Rizal described in a letter to Mariano Ponce as "a Radical [who had been imprisoned in his country for his political views] and editor of an independent newspaper. As [he] knew no other language but his own, I acted as his interpreter until our arrival in London."³³ The two stuck together for a month and a half as they traveled across the Pacific, then across continental USA, and finally across the Atlantic. This was time enough for Rizal to presumably improve his proficiency in Nippongo and to get a good measure of Japan's overseas ambitions from his newfound friend.³⁴ Rizal found Tetchō's pan-Asianism disturbing for what it portended for the Philippines. He would recall this (with an error as to the reference date) at his trial:

Already some time ago, in July 1887, certain Japanese personalities were asking me why we were not rebelling, saying that they would help [us]. I answered them that we were fine with Spain and that we did not want to pass from one hand to another: that with Spain *in spite of everything* we are conjoined by three centuries, the same religion and bonds of affection and gratitude, something we don't have with any *other* nation. They replied that Japan had no interest at all in the Philippines and they would help purely for reasons of race; I smiled and showed them from history that their ancestors had not thought the way they did.³⁵

He wrote this in 1896, part of his defence brief in his trial. A year earlier, an event had occurred that stunned the world: Japan defeated China after months of warfare in the Korean peninsula. In the Treaty of Shimoneseiki (April 1895), China relinquished to the Empire of Japan all its historic tributary claims on Korea, gave up Formosa, and also ceded the Liaotung peninsula with its all-important naval base, Port Arthur. Korea was now “free” for the Japanese to take over as its colony—and Taiwan as well. The shocked recognition of Japan's military might deployed overseas reverberated around the world. Hearing of it in Dapitan, Rizal saw in that event the inception of Japan's pan-Asianism: the wave of the future for Tetchō, a trend for apprehension to Rizal. To his young students he said something they could not understand: that he feared that in fifty years or so, the Philippines would also fall into Japanese hands.³⁶

One can imagine what Rizal might have said to Pio Valenzuela who, in secret, visited him in Dapitan in late May 1896 to tell him of the existence of the Katipunan and its plan of an armed uprising. Rizal was said to have asked where the weapons were to come from, from whom to expect support, to which Valenzuela responded “Japan.” Could Rizal have explained to Bonifacio's emissary that Japan, of all countries, could not be trusted, that the Philippines could be the next Korea and Formosa? However, such assertion by Rizal cannot be found in Valenzuela's recorded testimony when he was interrogated by Spanish authorities, nor in his subsequent statements. That is, other than the message for the Supremo that the time was not right for a revolution. We can only speculate on that conversation in Dapitan, if more was said than was actually reported, or understood as to its full import by the emissary. Or if Rizal chose instead to keep his silence on the implications of his geopolitical analysis.

The broader question, in any case, begs to be raised: why did Rizal not expound his geopolitical analysis in a completed essay for publication, as a revised sequel to *Filipinas dentro de cien años*? Between that publication in *La Solidaridad* in 1889/1890 and his final return to the Philippines in mid-1892, during which it had become evident to him that the world had entered into a dangerous period of inter-imperialist rivalry, he could have done so. But he didn't. The answer to this is that this was a stark dilemma before him, one with no acceptable solution conceivable, the very same dilemma that, on the other side of the globe, confronted the Cuban revolutionary José Martí. "What is becoming apparent," wrote Martí in New York in 1889, "is that the nature of the North American government is gradually changing its fundamental reality. Under the traditional labels of Republican and Democrat, with no innovation other than the contingent circumstances of place and character, the republic is becoming plutocratic and imperialistic."³⁷ Six years later, he led the revolution in Cuba but fell dead from a hail of bullets as he charged on horseback against the colonial army; this unfinished letter to a friend was found in his pocket.

I am in daily danger of giving my life for my country and duty, for I understand that duty and have the courage to carry it out—the duty of preventing the United States from spreading through the Antilles as Cuba gains its independence, and from overpowering with that additional strength our lands of America. All I have done so far, and all I will do, is for this purpose. [...] It had to be in silence and sort of indirectly since the achievement of certain goals demands concealment for, if proclaimed for what they really are, obstacles so formidable would rise as to prevent their attainment.³⁸

This was the dilemma: Martí could not tell his people the deeply demoralizing truth that the United States had intentions to grab Cuba for herself and that whichever way their revolution against Spain might turn, the Americans were certain to make their move. As a journalist who lived fifteen years in New York (he founded the Partido Revolucionario Cubano there), he closely felt the wildly beating pulse of Washington, how America's ambitions for supremacy over the western hemisphere were shaping up with ever bolder determination, and Cuba—along with Mexico—was on the frontline. There was no stopping the revolution now; the Cubans would have to fight the Spanish Army to the bitter end. However, to tell the revolutionaries even as they fought that a Goliath

waited for them at the gates of victory would have been utterly defeatist. He could say this only in private, to his closest associates. "It had to be in silence and sort of indirectly," he wrote to his friend, to tell him in advance that this tiny island of theirs, huge in their zeal to win freedom at all cost, would have to be as brave and resolute as David to fight a giant many times bigger and whose appetite for extraterritorial domination was just opening up. In that letter found in his pocket are these famous last words: "I have lived in the monster and I know its entrails; my sling is David's."³⁹

That was exactly Rizal's dilemma. He could not openly explain to his countrymen his geopolitical analysis: that other powers were intent on seizing the Philippines for themselves—we have seen that he mistrusted the United States and the Empire of Japan the most. He did not know how to articulate this without weakening the resolve of the Filipinos to aspire for independence from Spain, especially since the Katipuneros were hoping for arms to come from Japan. Neither could he let the Spanish authorities see his post-revolution and post-independence concern that other powers would snatch away from the Filipinos their hard-won victory, without reducing to empty threat his warning that if Spain continued to turn a deaf ear to Filipino demands, the people would rise up in arms. Based on Rizal's premises, both colonizer and colonized could say the same thing, as a logical consequence: of what use is a pyrrhic victory if, after all the sweat and blood, a third party comes along to take away the fruit of the struggle? In that case, why revolt at all?

That was precisely Rizal's message to the Katipunan: it was "untimely" for an anticolonial revolution to break out just then; such a project, as he was quoted in Valenzuela's testimony, "would be detrimental to the interest of the Filipino people, advancing at the same time, other arguments against it" and "citing a principle in philosophy [which Valenzuela] did not recall."⁴⁰ The Katipunero did not elaborate what those arguments were; he was thrown into prison right after the authorities discovered the Katipunan. That cited confession was extracted (October 1896) under duress, with lives hanging in the balance. Hence, the less said, the better.

Implications for the National Struggle

Santiago V. Alvarez, General of the Katipunan, has more to say on the matter in his memoirs: “Dr. Valenzuela reported at once to the Supremo, but neither would talk about the result of the interview with Dr. Rizal.” He introduced himself in the Preface as “one of those who guided the Revolution,” and as such, was “often in the company of the Supremo Andres Bonifacio, Dr. Pio Valenzuela, and Mr. Emilio Jacinto.” Alvarez recounted the event of that day:

Restless and anxious about their precarious situation [i.e., the fear of the KKK plot being discovered], the Katipuneros were eager to know Dr. Rizal’s opinion [on] an armed revolution. Was he for or against; if against, what should be done to avert the reprisals with which the enemy threatened them? The silence of the Supremo and Dr. Valenzuela about the much-awaited views of Dr. Rizal was interpreted by many as tacit proof of his disapproval of the Revolution. This situation gave rise to a new wave of apprehension among the Katipuneros, for it meant that they could neither rise up in arms nor enjoy peace, and that the only certainty left for many was the firing squad. Thus, like a sick person who is to die anyway despite medication, the Katipuneros opted for the Revolution. The rallying cry was “Better to die fighting!”⁴¹

As had been feared, the Katipunan was discovered, mere weeks after that fateful meeting in Dapitan. The two physicians had spoken of the possibility of such a discovery before the revolutionaries could acquire arms. Rizal advised: “In this case, you have no alternative but to take to the field without waiting for the arms.” Effectively, the Katipuneros did fight back if they had to die anyway.

Accused of being the leader of the Katipunan, Rizal now had to defend himself. What he had not wanted to happen had happened, and now he was charged of having planned it. To be sure, neither did the Katipuneros want to launch an assault under those circumstances in which they found themselves—unprepared, ill-equipped, with little firepower, without domestic and external support. However, the discovery of their existence forced their hand to fight. There was no choice on the matter. Rizal evidently thought that there was still a choice: either to revolt, which he thought would be catastrophic, or pull back and save lives. Consistent with this position, he distanced himself from the armed outbreak. He submitted to the authorities a draft for public

dissemination, manifesting his opposition to the “*rebelión*,” (rebellion). He pleaded his countrymen to abandon this “*sublevación absurda*” (absurd uprising). He denounced the violence that had broken out “despite my counsel,”⁴² but did not explain why. He would do this at the trial. *His reasons for opposing a revolution against Spain were all geopolitical.*

My dream was the prosperity of my country. I knew that, through arms, it was impossible to have liberties and much less independence, because this would not be permitted by the other colonizing nations like England, Germany, etc. Japan would swallow us up afterwards.⁴³

There is no longer a need to prevaricate. Rizal asserted the reality of the times: inter-imperialist rivalry drives the actions of the great powers. Countries struggling for their emancipation from colonial domination are but pawns in a global power game. Rizal elaborated:

This is the meaning of what I said: that it was essential that we be worthy and united, so that when these developments come to pass, we shall not fall into the hands of Japan, nor England, nor Germany.⁴⁴

“*Ser digno, unirse*,” Translated inadequately into English as “be worthy and united,” this exhortation has been interpreted by present-day critics of Rizal as a meek concession to the colonial masters that the Filipinos must first prove themselves to be meritorious of freedom before they can aspire to independence. This is not at all the meaning. “*Ser digno*” is to be possessed of dignitas, an inner moral strength, a manifest authoritativeness, a principled resolve, that compels respect from others. “*Unirse*”: be united as a people, to be resolutely one. These are the imperatives of a nation aspiring to freedom, and primed to defend that freedom from other powers. But the reality of this “*espacio limitado de tiempo*” conspires against a successful anti-colonial revolution, international conditions were adverse to the Filipinos’ goal.

Rizal concluded *Filipinas dentro de cien años* with what seems to be an afterthought.

Nevertheless, it is not good to stick to the probable. There is a logic at times imperceptible and incomprehensible in the workings of History. It is well that both peoples and governments adjust themselves to it.⁴⁵

We cannot have it just because we want it so. The Filipinos want freedom now, and they are willing to die to attain independence. But such an eventuality—at most a probability of success in the scheme of history—will not be permitted by the other colonizing powers. That is Rizal’s reading of the international situation. He has delved into the motives of states, the pattern of their behavior, the trends they have set into motion, their discourse of foreign policy and the views of their articulate citizens. He also understood that they emanate from the same goals, the same demands generated by the circumstances of the times. They are all marching to the same drumbeat. To express it in other terms, the dynamics of the world-system in crisis is such that economic expansionism, driven by the logic of capital accumulation (*la codicia*, or greed), and territorial security, impelled by the logic of power politics on the global scale (*realpolitik*), work together to shape the geopolitics of the great powers into a collision course against each other. They are, as today’s Structural Realists would put it, all responding to the conjunctural exigencies of the structure of world order in which they are all embedded in complex interrelationships. As in the world economic crisis during Rizal’s time, so is it today amid the present crisis: the great powers risk war with each other in pursuit of their national interest defined economically, politically, and militarily; under the impact of a crisis that is destabilizing the international order.

Analysis and intention lead us to expect what is probable to happen, but imperceptibly and incomprehensibly, history might take a different course. It might follow its own logic, away from our expectations and suppositions. As Rizal cautioned, it is not good to get stuck on the probable, because something completely different might happen. A whole philosophical discourse lies behind this thought, but clearly it was not Rizal’s intention to philosophize. He wanted to advise his people and their leaders that, as history takes its course, they can only adjust to it. Flexibility is key to responding to changing circumstances beyond our control. Certainly, both the United States and Japan, and perhaps England and Germany as well, have their sights set on the Philippines in their expansionist geostrategy, as they compete with each other. As such, what does one do in the meantime? To respond adequately, “it is necessary to fix a limited space of time, and with reference to it, attempt to foresee future developments”—and then plan one’s course of action accordingly. Anticipating such *futuros acontecimientos* (future events), Rizal opposed the rebellion

not just because it is absurd and inopportune, but also because I have been hoping that Spain would give us liberties soon enough, as I said to Pío

Valenzuela, because I saw that *in order to prevent such future developments, it was necessary to have the closest union between Spain and the Filipino people.*⁴⁶

In 1896, such a scenario was unthinkable: a close union between Spain and the Filipino people as demanded by geopolitical circumstances, and Spain giving Filipinos the rights they have been demanding. That was because nobody thought of global politics beyond the bilateral colonial bond between Spain and the Philippines, which had reached a breaking point. Within the nationalist movement, it was Rizal alone who had the global perspective to know that it was not a matter of starting or ending a revolution, but of its consequences. Less than two years later, nobody understood why the US Navy showed up at Manila Bay and why this putative ally turned against the Filipinos in their fight for freedom.

Rizal understood that the world had entered a new epoch as the last decade of the century began. He had peered as far as he could into the future, analyzed as objectively as he could the current global events and what they portended, and prognosticated on what is possible. However, he would not elaborate further—*no es bueno fijarse en lo eventual* (It is not good to focus on what is next). Despite this, one must still prepare and organize.

This was what Viola remembered of their conversation back in 1887:

In place of an armed revolution, he proposed the following plan: the asking of liberal reforms from the mother country; arousing the spirit of Filipino nationalism that was being obstructed by the ruling friars; stimulating the creation of diverse societies, and the building of instructive institutions, etc. Through this method, Rizal believed that the spirit of liberty could be instilled in the Filipino people. Once this was done, he said, then Spain being a nation kept backward by the follies of her ruling class, would, for better or worse, have no other alternative but to renounce her sovereignty and recognize our independence. In this way, our independence will be legitimate and assured on a firm foundation.⁴⁷

No matter how immediately desirable a goal, Filipinas as a nation-state was not possible now. An attempt at conquest of state power would only incite the great powers to grab the country for themselves. But if statehood is off the agenda at the moment, the building of the nation surges as the most urgent task of all. And

here the entire project remained to be done: as Rizal wrote to Ponce in 1888, “our arduous mission [...] is the formation of the Filipino nation.”⁴⁸

The equation is simple enough: nation + state = nation-state. A state alone without a nation is but a power construct, as dangerous a structure as it is weak for being bereft of foundation, subject to deformation. This, therefore, occasions a situation where, as Rizal wrote in *El Filibusterismo*, the slaves of today can become the tyrants of tomorrow. Only the existence of a nation—a compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body, well instructed of its rights, aware of its liberties, and impregnated with the spirit of nationhood—in tandem with a state can governance emerge for the good of all.

Rizal returned to the Philippines in 1892 with his masterplan: the Statutes of La Liga Filipina (The Philippine League). The objective is to unite the entire Archipelago into a compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body. La Liga Filipina was to be the institution by which Civil Society was to be created from the bottom up, a nationwide association of mutualist self-help associations that would tend to the economic welfare, security concerns, educational needs, and moral compass of its members. The basic unit was to be, on the municipal level, People’s Councils (*consejos populares*), which were local associations of people of all arts and trades, irrespective of occupation, religion, social status, education and regional ethnicity. These were to be established across the archipelago, committed to the principle and practice of mutualism in all spheres of civic life. Each one an association in itself, the councils were to integrate with all the others in a hierarchical order from local/municipal to provincial levels all the way up to the national level of one Supreme Council. Economically, the consejos were to function as producer-consumer cooperatives, tying together economic processes from production of basic commodities to their marketing via coop shops. This would promote agriculture and commerce tightly together, allowing capital to build up internally. Socially, the consejos were to function as mutualist associations, where they came to the aid of fellow members, in all kinds of urgency and necessity. Bypassing governmental instrumentalities, especially the abusive law-enforcement agencies, the consejos themselves would provide their members defense against all kinds of violence and injustice. Educational institutions would be built, a development fund raised, lending agencies developed, consultative bodies established—all in view of fomenting socioeconomic development. Politically, la Liga would study and promote reforms for the effective nationwide administration of the vertically

integrated association of associations, hand in hand with the functioning of self-management on every level of the institutional hierarchy.⁴⁹

When interrogated at his trial about la Liga, Rizal affirmed that it had no insurrectionary purpose, and insisted rather on its economic nature:

Its objectives [are to promote] unity [and] develop commerce and industry, [because] ... I do believe that a people cannot have liberties without first having material progress; that to have liberties but to have nothing to eat is to hear speeches and fast.⁵⁰

It is true that la Liga did not assert any opposition to the state. But this was because it had made the state irrelevant to itself. Nowhere in the Statutes of la Liga did the state appear. It simply had no role to play in this civil society that was being created out of the fundamental principle of individual volition. la Liga was literally *a social compact*, individuals joined as members on their free will. Their sworn allegiance was to the Association. Loyalty was strictly enforced, penalties for violation severe. They had duties to perform to each other and to the whole. Oneness was the goal. *Unus instar omnium* was the motto. Each one for all the others. Each is equal to all.

With the consciousness of what he owes to his fatherland, for whose prosperity and through the welfare that he ought to covet for his parents, children, brothers, and sisters, and the beloved beings who surround them, [each member] must sacrifice every personal interest, and blindly and promptly obey every command, every order, verbal or written, which emanates from his Council or from the Provincial Chief.⁵¹

Effectively, la Liga functioned as a self-government. It upheld security, peace, and order in the nationwide association, dispensed justice in the consejos, protected victims of injustice, and promoted the welfare of one and all. Every member “has the right to moral, material and pecuniary aid” from his consejo and the Liga. He may invoke all the aid he needs “in any want, grievance, or injustice” and a social welfare net is provided so that those who have suffered loss can be assisted to recover. The designated officer in the consejo shall dispense justice in every dispute or litigation, and no one shall be judged without first being allowed his defense; by the same token, litigants shall not have recourse to the

state's court of law for redress of grievances. The impoverished shall be defended "in his right against any powerful person (*algún poderoso*)"—virtually a challenge to the abusive holders of power in the colony. This Civil Society that governs itself is self-reliant, autonomous, and free. Secrecy was the key to the survival of the Association that, in effect, was a parallel government—a state within a state, something akin to Lenin's "dual power."⁵² Also like Lenin's vanguard party, the hierarchical leadership structure functioned as one monolithic organization, dictatorial in its directives top-down. However, it also participated in the decision-making of self-governing *consejos*, which are federally organized and functioning integrally bottom-up. La Liga Filipina, by any reckoning, was a revolutionary institution, conceived to become in due course a collective force for the fundamental transformation of society.

Having no role in their daily lives and the collective activities of la Liga, the State—whether Spanish or Filipino—can wait.

When the times are more propitious for its emergence, the Filipinos will create their own sovereign state. This will most likely be a *federal republic*. As Rizal wrote in *Cien Años*, it is "the freest form of government."⁵³ La Liga Filipina would have laid the foundation, as a nationally federated association of members bound to each other by a pact. This vision Rizal owes to his mentor, Francesc Pi y Margall, one-time President of the Spanish Republic, Proudhonian in political economy, Hegelian in philosophy, and "simultaneously a democrat-socialist-anarchist" by political self-identification. He declared, "The pact is the legitimate origin of all juridical relations among men who have reached in life the plenitude of reason."⁵⁴ On the foundation of the pact the State arises, one that is truly of, by, and for the people. The pact is the principle of consent that binds together different types and levels of collectivities (Rizal's *consejos* and cooperatives, and a host of local communities, civic organizations, and industrial associations as they come into being). These collectivities ranged from the local to the provincial and national levels, confederating them as autonomous but interdependent bodies with common goals and under conditions agreed upon in a *Federal Constitution*. Federalism comes from the Latin word *foedus*, which means a pact, alliance, and/or social contract. The federative system of governance cannot come into existence unless the contracting parties are free, that is to say, *sui juris* (of age). Therefore, a federation means an equal and perfect autonomy of the constituencies from the bottom up.⁵⁵ Governance is not the business of government alone; it is the dialectical interrelationship between State and Civil Society.

The Federal Republic that Rizal envisioned for the Filipino nation was based on a social contract of a distinct kind. It was not that of Rousseau, which postulated a bond between Government and Citizen, where the individual freely placed his person and authority under the supreme direction of the General Will. In current practice, such social contract is reduced to the routine of swearing allegiance to the Republic at every flag-raising ceremony, and the right of suffrage exercised during elections. Rather, the conceptual affinity pointed towards Proudhon, for whom the social contract was “an agreement of man with man; an agreement from which must result what we call society.”⁵⁶ Proudhon’s concept accurately describes Rizal’s *la Liga*:

The Social Contract is the supreme act by which each citizen pledges to the association his love, his intelligence, his work, his services, his goods, in return for the affection, ideas, labor, products, services and good of his fellows; the measure of the right of each being determined by the importance of his contributions, and the recovery that can be demanded in proportion to his deliveries.⁵⁷

It is uncertain if the Spanish colonial authorities discovered Rizal’s efforts to found *La Liga Filipina* and understood what it was all about—the historical evidence is inconclusive but suggests that authorities saw the activities surrounding his return to the Philippines confusedly as a Masonic conspiracy in the making.⁵⁸ Whether or not Rizal was discovered, his abrupt deportation to Dapitan left the national project in limbo. It fell to Bonifacio, who was present at *la Liga*’s founding and a fervent Rizalist, to create the *Katipunan* structurally modeled after *la Liga*, and to carry forward Rizal’s ideas of nationhood towards statehood by conquest of state power, through revolution.⁵⁹ The pact—*la Liga*’s fundamental unit of social relationship from individuals to collectivities—remained the basis of Bonifacio’s nationhood through *brotherhood* in the *Katipunan*, forged in the common struggle for freedom. But even the nurturing and maturing of a revolutionary organization in secret was overtaken by events.

The unraveling of the *Katipunan*’s existence that led to the premature outbreak of the rebellion rapidly acquired a momentum of its own beyond anyone’s control. Rizal’s drafted Manifesto calling for the Filipinos to return to their homes was not permitted to be published by the Spanish authorities. They saw in it not a denunciation of a revolution but simply a pragmatic offer of a truce until

a more propitious time. His *Datos para mi defense* (Data for my defense), which states clearly his geopolitical stance that a revolution would only play into the hands of other colonial powers, did not see the light of day; the notes were to be used by his defense lawyer but were not given weight in the trial. His ideas also did not come out to the public. His worries about inter-imperialist rivalry went with him to martyrdom.

Would it have mattered to the Katipuneros to be counseled by Rizal that a revolution was not advisable in 1896—for that *limitado espacio de tiempo* (limited space of time)—given the clear interest of the Americans and the Japanese in grabbing the Philippines for themselves? Did Rizal, in fact, say this to Valenzuela? We do not know if he did, for the emissary reported nothing of this sort in his affidavits other than the cryptic “other arguments against [a revolution that Rizal advanced] at the same time.” Did Valenzuela understand what those arguments were? Could Rizal have uttered the unthinkable to the Katipunero: let’s stay with Spain for now; together, we have to oppose a common enemy out there? If Rizal published his drafted essay on America becoming the new global colossus (following the publication of the hugely influential *Filipinas dentro de cien años*), would it have swayed his people to see *los futuros acontecimientos* (future events) in his cautionary way?

In *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, Rizal spoke of the “logic of History”—the forces of history dictate the course of collective action. It is imperative that we understand the operations (*las obras*) of this logic that is sometimes imperceptible and incomprehensible to guide our decisions. He also spoke of the “law of destiny” (*ley del destino*). By this, he means that there comes a moment in history when a need, a demand, or an impulse, takes shape and takes hold of a people, and this moral force becomes so overpowering that no other force can resist it. That moment has come. If Spain continues to ignore the demands of the Filipino people, if the Government refuses to assimilate Filipinas into the Mother country with all the rights and liberties enjoyed by her citizens, if “equitable laws and honest and liberal reforms do not make [Spaniards and Filipinos] forget that they are of different races, or if both peoples do not fuse together to form one socially and politically homogeneous body that is not bedevilled by opposite tendencies and antagonistic thoughts and interests, the Philippines will one day declare as destined and ineluctable her independence.”⁶⁰

Against this law of destiny, no opposition is possible, neither Spanish patriotism, nor the uproar of all those petty tyrants overseas, nor the love for Spain of all Filipinos, nor the doubtful prospect of dismemberment and domestic struggles within the Islands themselves. Necessity is the most powerful divinity known to the world; necessity is the result of physical laws set into motion by moral forces.⁶¹

Rizal himself was responsible for that tsunami of moral forces unleashed by his martyrdom. With his death, the spirit of revolution swept furiously across the country. He had counseled against it, fearing unforeseen and more dismal consequences for his people. But he would have known for certain, as he faced the firing squad, that the volley would mark the end of Spanish rule over the Archipelago. What would have haunted him in his last thoughts was which Great Power would come to fight the Filipinos the day after. Here we have Gramsci's famed disjunction: pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.⁶² Rizal's geopolitical analysis was pessimistic in its rationality. The logic of the world-system in crisis and the consequent inter-imperialist rivalry doomed an anticolonial revolution beforehand. But the law of destiny is irresistible. Nothing could deter a people roused to fight for their freedom and willing to die for it as their hero had died for the nation's cause. Rizal, who read Schopenhauer, would have understood profoundly that this fury to revolt is the expression of the people's will, and *der Wille*—according to the German philosopher—overrules the intellect.⁶³ The way of the will is the law of destiny, and it will find its way even in the dark side of despair. Sartre expressed it well: “*La vie humaine commence par l'autre côté du désespoir.*”⁶⁴

Addendum: Rizal's Geopolitical Analysis Applied in Our Times

Rizal wrote in 1890 that China was in danger of being carved up into spheres of influence by the Great Powers, and should consider herself lucky if she escaped such an eventuality. That was China during her “century of humiliation” and in the years of intense inter-imperialist rivalry which led eventually to the Great War of 1914. Today, Napoleon's “sleeping giant” is wide awake and is similarly rousing her economic competitors to an alarming reality; that in the last two decades, China's economy has grown so fast and so huge that she now perceivably poses a “systemic threat” that requires a vigorous and coordinated response from all of them. The United States, as the current hegemon, is leading

the charge of protectionism by setting up a host of trade restrictions, pursuing industrial policies designed to attract globalized capital back home to hollowed-out old industrial zones. These policies also aim to shift “long” supply chains from China to shorter ones back to themselves, protecting home-generated cutting-edge technologies (AI and advanced superconductors being the most that matter today) from technology transfer or industrial espionage. Moreover, the US wants to ensure that, in the world of finance, the dollar remains supreme. In the view of the current crop of Western political leaders, and those who may replace them in succeeding elections, globalization has fostered a Frankensteinian monster in an aggressively competitive China.

Globalization has been long opposed by the Left in the Global South for what they analyze as its disarticulating effects on national economic structures.⁶⁵ But now it is also the enemy of populist/rightist political parties in the Global North, whose globalized industrial capital has benefitted from it to the utmost, but to the detriment of domestic labor and national economic growth. The world economic crisis (which has become the “new normal”) lingers into its fifth decade soon. With it also comes the crisis of globalization as its current mode of international division of labor. Thus, populism is on the rise in the industrialized countries as they grapple with the five major crises that dominate domestic electoral politics: the global economic turmoil, climate change, the migration crisis since 2015, COVID, and the war in Ukraine.⁶⁶ A neologism, even clumsier than the one it seeks to replace, is “glocalization,” a concept that came out in Harvard Business Review in the 1980s. This term initially meant the simultaneity, the co-presence, of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in business. However, the term is now changing its content and thrust to mean recoiling from certain aspects of globalization in order to address political problems at home. Trumpism is its other name. “America First” is its battle cry.

As in Rizal’s time, economic competition drives military competition. Germany’s economic ascendancy was seen by Britain as a move towards regional hegemony in *Mitteleuropa* and a fatal disruption of the global balance of power under Pax Britannica. Similarly, China today is seen aiming at regional hegemony in East and Southeast Asia, comprehensively over the Indo-Pacific. On the other side of the ocean, the world’s hegemon cannot permit a regional hegemon to emerge anywhere in the world. This was Washington’s bipartisan response. *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the US foreign policy elite’s Council of Foreign Relations, consistently argues: sustained by countless thinktanks there and abroad, and

supported by both political parties in USA professing patriotism in unison, the “pivot to Asia” to confront China is the primary imperative to US foreign policy since the Obama presidency. This shift, however, has been hampered by a costly misadventure of a proxy war in Ukraine. This is further diverted to the intensifying and broadening war in the Middle East, while President Joe Biden has effectively pushed Russia into the embrace of China, thereby uniting the second and third most powerful militaries in the world into a “no-limits strategic partnership.”⁶⁷ Biden wants to rally the world into seeing this state of affairs in ideological terms as an existential contest between democracies and autocracies. However, Graham Allison of Harvard University and Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Clinton presidency summed it up in realist terms:

Over the past decade, Xi has built with Putin’s Russia the most consequential undeclared alliance in the world. The U.S. will have to come to grips with the inconvenient fact that a rapidly rising systemic rival and a revanchist one-dimensional superpower with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world are tightly aligned in opposing the USA.⁶⁸

Concerned above all with the strategy implications of an increasingly powerful China as peer competitor to US hegemony, John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago is tireless in excoriating America’s foreign policy makers for extending NATO membership eastward towards Ukraine, ever since the Clinton presidency. This ignores the old pledge to Gorbachev of “not an inch” of expansion, and Putin’s protestations of an existential threat posed by a NATO-bolstered neighbor. This led to Russia’s pre-emptive strike against Kiev and the coordinated reaction of NATO countries to punish Russia and bring down Putin. The net effect of this mishandled strategy is that instead of driving a wedge between the two giants, which have had their spats over the years, the USA and her allies have pushed them to weld together. This goes against all the logic of geopolitical strategy.⁶⁹

Rizal studied his own sketch of the Pacific world and interpreted the westward expansion of the USA across the Pacific, with Filipinas in line of sight, as the grand design of a geopolitical strategy in the making. Today, all the dots (i.e., the military bases of the United States and its allies) are in place, surrounding China from the north, east, and south. The Philippines is at the forefront, a mere 350 kilometers at its northernmost point from Taiwan’s southernmost tip (and only 200 kilometers to Basco, Batanes). Should war be fought over Taiwan between China and the US military alliance system, the US bases in the Philippines will be the first line of attack.

The sweep of US power in the western Pacific

Places where the US has bases or access to host-nation bases and facilities



■ Figure 9. Source: *Financial Times*, 1 June 2023

China's vulnerable underbelly is the South China Sea through which commercial shipping passes from Europe through the Suez Canal, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and exiting Malacca Strait directly to China. Of utmost importance to her security in particular and her energy needs in general is that it is also through the SCS that petrol from the Middle East comes to China. Control over this vast body of water speckled with islands, atolls, and shoals is therefore of existential importance to Beijing, which is bent on militarizing the entire area inside their Nine-Dash Line without compromise. But inside that configuration lie the Exclusive Economic Zones of other adjoining countries, the Philippines among them.

Like in Rizal's time, the Philippines is caught up in Great Power rivalry which requires extreme caution in policy formulation and diplomatic action. For years,

the Philippines has had offshore confrontations by the Chinese Coast Guard. These confrontations are premised on Manila's counterclaim over Scarborough Shoal and the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG). Neither side is willing to give in to the other, despite the 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in favor of the Philippines, which Beijing completely rejects. What is to be done? How should Manila react to the systematic provocations of Haijing—China Coast Guard—which is the world's largest coast guard to boot?⁷⁰ Rizal's reply to the geopolitical questions of his time, "to respond to these questions, it is necessary to....."⁷¹

In the limited period since the Obama presidency and Xi Jinping's ascension to power in 2012, the world has seen a dramatic change in Beijing's approach to international relations: first, Deng Xiaoping's traditional low-profile foreign policy ("Hide your strength, bide your time") that was pragmatically focused on domestic economic development; and second, Xi's assertive, nationalistic, and openly combative approach ("Wolf-warrior diplomacy") that takes a pronounced proactive posture in pursuing an ambitious foreign policy agenda. Xi has been vociferous in asserting Beijing's strategic interests to prevail over territorial disputes in the South China Sea and the China-India border. The bone of contention remains to be Taiwan, which is left in a deliberate "strategic ambiguity" by the Nixon-Kissinger "One China Policy" (Shanghai Communiqué of 1972). Taiwan is thus open to interpretation by both USA and PRC, but is now the site of imminent conflict after Xi's pronouncement in 2019 of China's determination to unify with Taiwan—by force if necessary.⁷² This seismic shift in Beijing's foreign policy is because of the changing world order, brought about by differential growth rates among the biggest economies since the turn of the century. Another reason is China's redefinition of its global role. To Washington and its allies, this is an open challenge to US hegemony. In 2022, President Biden declared, in the midst of the Ukraine war, that the USA would defend Taiwan if China invaded the island.

Here we have a probable *futuro acontecimiento* (future event). A war between China and the United States and her allies over Taiwan cannot be discounted as improbable or inconceivable. It is quite the contrary. How soon or how far into the future could this happen? China's military power is only getting stronger over the years, as she aims to narrow the huge gap in weaponry between her and the US. An early clash would not be in her favor. The US, with her current military supremacy, has far better chances of winning a war now rather than

later, so an early clash is better. Given the contrasting temporal perspectives, a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would not happen within preferred time frame of the US, so this event might not trigger a war. Instead, without waiting for an invasion to happen, the US could take a pre-emptive strike, on the premise of an *imminent* Chinese invasion. It does not matter if this premise is factual or not, just as the war of choice against Iraq was justified on the false imminence of Saddam's attack against his neighbors, with fake weapons of mass destruction. As President Bush led the "coalition of the willing" to a war unauthorized by the UN Security Council, President Biden, or his successor, could justify a war against China on the grounds of "collective self-defense" of Taiwan against an imminent—or invented—threat of invasion. On the other hand, Xi repeatedly stresses that the administration intends to reunify China within its chosen timeframe. Such forceful action could be deliberately implemented in due course or may be triggered by some other eventuality. Xi's word, and the possibility of war in East Asia, must be taken seriously. If the US were to strike sooner rather than later, or if the PRC were to decide that the time to invade Taiwan had come, what possible scenarios—*otros futuros acontecimientos*—could follow? During his recent state visit to the United States, President Marcos asserted that he does not want the Philippines to serve as a "stage post" for military action. But if all hell breaks loose, the US bases in the Philippines are the immediate targets. The Ukraine proxy war has highlighted the need to pre-position weapons in military bases in and around Taiwan, the Philippines being the closest, because of the complexities of supplying arms to the island once fighting has begun. Therefore, destruction of those sites is the enemy's first course of action.

Is China an enemy of the Philippines? It is certainly a bully in the West Philippine Sea. Yet President Marcos routinely emphasizes, the Philippines is "a friend to all and enemy to none," despite the territorial disputes with China. From China's perspective, this purported "independent foreign policy" flies in the face of Manila's delivery to the United States in just a year's time of multiple military bases where there are pre-positioned weapons ready for war against them. This was what NATO⁷³ had been doing in Ukraine: pre-positioning advanced weaponry along the border of Russia since 2014, even as they trained Ukrainian forces in the latest techniques in warfare through the years. Ukraine has become a *de facto* NATO country. It was justified as deterrence, aimed at keeping Russia outside the wall. But it is a thin line, a thin wall, that distinguishes deterrence from an actual threat to the security of the state. This red line was ignored. A proxy war⁷⁴ was

on invitation and the enemy stepped in. Now, NATO is fighting up until the last Ukrainian.

Here is a *futuro acontecimiento* (a scenario of the future) that is to be avoided at all cost. The Philippine government has to rethink its “defensive” military alliance with the United States. The US military bases are purposively offensive for simply being there, with weapons aimed at China and no one else. China has no reason to attack the Philippines in itself; there is no supervening conflict between them so existentially menacing to the one or the other as to occasion a war. Therefore, there is no reason to bring in allies for defense. The Philippines must pursue its legal rights to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZs) that the UNCLOS defines as part of her sovereign territory and no one else’s. Other claimants are also asserting such rights, as China continues to deny their claims to EEZs in the South China Sea. Malaysia and Vietnam have begun to explore and utilize the natural resources within their respective EEZs. Other than the Philippines, none of the claimants have internationalized their issue with China by forming a military alliance with external powers who pursue strategic interests of their own. Instead, other countries have persevered in exercising their sovereignty, while staying unfettered to forces with extraneous motives.⁷⁵ The Philippines should do the same. It should not be intimidated by China in protecting its territorial integrity. Depending on another country for defense makes the Philippines appear less credible. President Biden declared that the United States would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.⁷⁶ As such, it would be reasonable to think that the Philippines may get sucked into a war, even if the *casus belli* was not the infringement of its territory, but of someone else’s.

The Filipino people have to understand that the real meaning of “friend to all, enemy to none,” a slogan surely to be welcomed especially in times of heightened tension worldwide, is a foreign policy that bespeaks *neutrality*. The conjunctural situation—the struggle for hegemony, which historically has led to world wars—has been brought about by the structural crisis of the world system. This is where the established hierarchy of power, in its many dimensions, is undergoing fundamental changes that threaten the Great Powers determined to keep the world order. This is the pattern of modern history, as it was in Rizal’s time of inter-imperialist rivalry, caused by the Great Depression which overhauled the existing world order under Pax Britannica. The Filipino patriots ignored, or were ignorant of, the broader setting—what we now call the “world system”—in which their action was to take place, and consequently paid the painful price of losing

their freedom just as they were on the cusp of attaining it. Rizal's insight in his time should guide our actions in ours: "There is a logic at times imperceptible and incomprehensible in the workings of history. It is well that both peoples and governments adjust themselves to it."

Endnotes

- 1 George Aseniero worked for a number of years with the United Nations University, first in Geneva, later in Tokyo, and was research fellow at Starnberger Institut (previously Max Planck Institute–Starnberg) in Germany. Educated in the Philippines, Sweden, and Switzerland, he first taught at Stockholm and was affiliated with Uppsala Universitet Avdelningen för fredsforskning (Peace Research Institute) before joining UNU. He has written extensively on world systems theory. He lives in retirement in Dapitan, where he is at work on various book projects. To contact George Aseniero, kindly email the AltDev at upad.cids@up.edu.ph
- 2 “¿Continuarán las Islas Filipinas como colonia Española, y en este caso qué clase de colonia? ¿Llegarán a ser provincias españolas con o sin autonomía? Y para llegar a este estado ¿qué clase de sacrificios tendrá que hacer? ¿Se separán tal vez de la Madre patria para vivir independientes, para caer en manos de otras naciones o para aliarse con otras potencias vecinas?” José Rizal, “Filipinas dentro de cien años (Philippines A Century Hence),” in *Escritos políticos e históricos* (Edición del Centenario, Manila, 1961), 138; hereafter EPH. All translation in this essay is mine.
- 3 “Es imposible contestar a estas preguntas, pues a todas se puede responder con un sí y con un no, según el tiempo que se quiera marcar. Si no hay un estado eterno en la naturaleza, ¡cuánto menos lo debe de haber en la vida de los pueblos, seres dotados de movilidad y movimiento! Así es que para responder a estas preguntas es necesario fijar un espacio limitado de tiempo, y con arreglo a él tratar de prever los futuros acontecimientos,” EPH, 138.
- 4 For a one-volume history of this period, see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975).
- 5 A contemporary scholar, Isabelo de los Reyes, attributes the rise of a revolutionary mood in Filipinas to the prevailing economic condition. “During the past decade the country has been suffering a business recession that has deteriorated these last years. Indigo production is completely paralyzed, and hemp and sugar prices have fallen so much that they can scarcely cover costs. A canker has attacked the coffee plantations and coffee has disappeared from the market. Only rice, which is precisely the article of prime necessity, being the staple food of the Filipinos, has risen in price; and, because of the unfavourable exchange, imported goods.” Both the *inquilinos* and the *kasama* bore the burden, made heavier by increased rental payments to the friar hacenderos who owned the leased lands. “... [A]nd so the peasants, driven to desperation, swelled the ranks of the revolution.” *La Sensacional memoria de Isabelo de los Reyes sobre la revolución filipina* (Madrid: J. Corrales, 1899), 48, quoted in Horacio de la Costa, *Readings in Philippine History* (Makati City: Bookmark, 1965), 205.
- 6 This stands for Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Google
- 7 Hobsbawm, op cit., *The Age of Capital*, Chapter 2 “The Great Boom.” During Rizal’s lifetime, the world-economy was on an upswing in his childhood, but in crisis when he was politically active in Europe (1882–1892) and in exile.

- ⁸ On the rise of the NICs and China, see George Aseniero, *Asia in the World-System* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1995); also in Sing C. Chew and Robert Denmark (eds.), *The Underdevelopment of Development: Essays in Honor of Andre Gunder Frank* (Beverly Hills & Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications, 1995).
- ⁹ I discuss this in “2022 – The Long View” (forthcoming).
- ¹⁰ “Por último, en la época presente se establecen colonias en territorios que se suponen *libres* o no pertenecientes a ningún señor, como las que se forman en el centro y en las costas oriental y occidental del África, con más pudor y menos hipocresía, para explotar las riquezas que aquellos terrenos vírgenes encierran. Desapareció el antiguo pretexto de la conversión al cristianismo.” *EPH*, 441.
- ¹¹ This is what the French called *colonie d’exploitation économique* (literally, colony for economic exploitation) to distinguish it from a *colonie de peuplement* (settlement colony).
- ¹² “Si las Filipinas consiguen su independencia al cabo de luchas heroicas y tenaces, pueden estar seguras de que ni Inglaterra, ni Alemania, ni Francia, y menos Holanda se atreverán a recoger lo que España no ha podido conservar.” *EPH*, 161.
- ¹³ Rizal was right in expecting Britain to profit *economically* from an independent Philippines. He must have had in mind what the UK’s Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister) George Canning famously said in 1825 of the Latin American countries, whose revolutions against Spain had won them independence: “Spanish America is free, and if we do not mismanage our affairs she is English... the New World established and if we do not throw it away, ours.”
- See H.W.V. Temperley, “The Later American Policy of George Canning,” *The American Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (July 1906): 779–797. But Rizal was wrong in expecting Britain to accept *politically* an independent Philippines. According to diplomatic archives, after the American conquest of the Philippines, the British were pressing the Americans not to let the former Spanish colony step into the world as a free country, fearing this would give a bad example for the many nations under the British Empire, who might just follow suit. In effect, this was an early version of the “domino theory”—not a falling domino, as Vietnam was seen in our epoch by imperialism, but a liberating one, if the Philippines were to break away from colonialism.
- ¹⁴ “Alemania rehuye toda complicación exterior,” *EPH*, *ibid.* Exterior to Europe, yes, but on the old continent, ignoring the Concert of Europe, Chancellor Bismarck resorted to war twice—with Austria in 1866 and with France in 1870—as moves designed to unite the Germanic principalities into a single state under Prussia’s leadership. However, it was with the United Kingdom that the rise of the German economy posed the most destabilizing trend, which the German leadership had to be particularly conscious.
- “The United Kingdom exercised world governmental functions [i.e., hegemony] until the end of the nineteenth century. From the 1870s onwards, however, it began to lose control of the European balance of power and soon afterwards of the global balance of power as well. In both cases, the rise of Germany to world power status was the decisive development.” Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of our Times* (London: Verso, 2010) 59.

- ¹⁵ For sixty years, France had experienced a series of revolutions since 1789, with the Napoleonic Wars in-between, and a humiliating defeat to Prussia in 1871, which resulted in another revolution, the Paris Commune of that year.
- ¹⁶ Is this insight perhaps a reason why the French gave up on Vietnam without a further battle, after their defeat in Dien Bien Phu in 1954?
- ¹⁷ With Napoleon's "sleeping giant" having arisen from its "century of humiliation" by the imperialist powers, China today is the equivalent of Germany in Rizal's time, seen by the hegemonic United States, Japan, Western Europe and their Pacific appendages as the "systemic threat" to world order.
- ¹⁸ "Encuentrase, además, bajo una diplomática presión europea tal que no podrá pensar en el exterior hasta librarse de ella, y no lo consentirá fácilmente." *EPH*, *ibid.* This was Japan's dilemma: forced to open up to the world economy by the Western powers—the demand to end two centuries of isolationism delivered in no uncertain terms by US Commodore Perry's squadron of warships at Tokyo Bay in 1853—she could not freely pursue her new overseas interests without regard to the reactions of those militarily superior powers. The accelerating pace of militarization, which Rizal observed during his stay in Japan, had precisely that objective: to be militarily capable of challenging the diplomatic pressure exerted on her by Western powers. This would be tested, and decisively overcome, in 1894 when the Empire of Japan fought China over Korea. As anticipated by Rizal in this paragraph, neighboring Korea was a logical target for an expected expansionism of a modernizing Japan beset with the problem of excess population—and lack of natural resources.
- ¹⁹ "Acaso la gran República Americana, cuyos intereses se encuentran en el Pacífico y que no tiene participación en los despojos del África, piense un día en posesiones ultramarinas. No es imposible, pues el ejemplo es contagioso, la codicia y la ambición son vicios de los fuertes, y Harrison se manifestó algo en este sentido, cuando la cuestión de Samoa; pero ni el Canal de Panamá está abierto, ni los territorios de los Estados tienen plétora de habitantes, y caso de que lo intentara abiertamente, no le dejarían paso libre las potencias europeas, que saben muy bien que el apetito se excita con los primeros bocados. La América del Norte sería una rival demasiado molesta, si una vez practica el oficio. Es, además, contra sus tradiciones." *EPH*, 162
- ²⁰ Cited in *The Times Atlas of World History* (London: Times Books, 1984), 246.
- ²¹ We might comment here that in imperialism, it is not poor migrants and oppressed minorities who move in and take over the land (like the Pilgrims in New England); it is capital (what Lenin calls "the export of capital") that comes to dominate. In Hawaii, it was capitalist agriculture—the sugar trust—that took over the islands and later, with the support of the United States Marines, deposed the native monarchy, Queen Liliuokalani, paving the way for Hawaii's annexation. This was in 1893; thus it still lay ahead when Rizal wrote *Cien Años*.
- ²² Hobsbawm gives a history of the word: "[T]here is no doubt that the word 'imperialism' first became part of the political and journalistic vocabulary during the 1890s in the course of the arguments about colonial conquest. Moreover, that is when it acquired the economic dimension which, as a concept, it has never since lost. [...] The word (which does

not occur in the writings of Karl Marx, who died in 1883) first entered politics in Britain in the 1870s, and was still regarded as a neologism at the end of that decade. It exploded into general use in the 1890s. By 1900, when the intellectuals began to write books about it, it was, to quote one of the first of them, the British Liberal J A Hobson, ‘on everybody’s lips... and used to denote the most powerful movement in the current politics of the western world.’ In short, it was a novel term devised to describe a novel phenomenon.” Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*, 60.

- ²³ George Washington’s Farewell Address, September 17, 1796, cited in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) 32. Biden is far removed from that philosophy now in the Ukrainian crisis, as he intervenes on ideological grounds (“in defense of liberal values”) and for domestic political consumption within Russia’s historical, cultural, and strategic sphere of influence, which has no direct security threat to the United States.
- ²⁴ “La política intercontinental señala el primer paso de un coloso: Los Estados Unidos dejando sus tradiciones para tomar parte activa en la política colonial de las naciones europeas. Así lo han dado a entender en la última cuestión de Samoa, así lo ha declarado el Presidente Harrison en su Mensaje y así lo interpretan las primeras potencias colonizadoras de Europa. Los alemanes se han encontrado con un obstáculo, la resistencia de un pueblo joven, robusto y no acostumbrado a sufrir derrotas, y el Viejo Canciller no viendo en la discordia ni utilidad ni seguridad en el éxito prefiere dar solución a las diferencias por medio de un Congreso. La Inglaterra ve en el brother Jonathan un digno rival, que sigue el mismo sistema que ella, y naturalmente se alarma. Todas estas naciones que miran a lo lejos se disputan las islas del Pacífico para establecer estaciones, depósito de [illegible] para cuando [illegible] ...,” *La política intercontinental (fragmento de un borrador, sin fecha)*, in *Escritos Varios*, por José Rizal, Tomo VIII, Segunda Parte (Edición del Centenario, Manila, 1961), 433.
- ²⁵ Blaine to Kasson, Phelps and Bates, April 11, 1899, *Foreign Relations*, 1889, cited in Stuart Anderson, *‘Pacific Destiny’ and American Policy in Samoa, 1872–1899* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii at Manoa), JL12053.pdf
- ²⁶ “Frontier” was defined conventionally as “the outer edge of the area with a population density of at least two persons per square mile. [...] After the census of 1890, the superintendent of the census observed that, for the first time in American history, a single frontier-line was no longer visible on his map. The frontier, in that sense, had come to an end.” *The Times Atlas of World History*, 221. In this sense, the continent-state had become “overpopulated.”
- ²⁷ *The Times Atlas of World History* sums up this historic conjuncture in a way that perfectly fits the thrust of this essay: “As the great powers of Europe pursued their imperial dreams in Africa and Asia, the United States enjoyed the luxury of a built-in empire. The westward movement may be understood as a type of domestic imperialism, with many of the same motives as the imperialist movement in Europe but with profoundly different results. The native culture of North America was not merely conquered but destroyed; an integrated capitalist democracy developed in its place.” 220. Rizal thus understood it this way: for as long as there was a frontier westward to conquer, the USA would not step out into the world to grab colonies elsewhere; the corollary of course is that once the “built-in empire” was exhausted, it was time to engage in “external” imperialism. He obviously thought, in *Cien Años*, that the frontier had not yet been exhausted and the territories were not yet “overpopulated.”

- ²⁸ Quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War: 1890-1914* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 149.
- ²⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 150 and 153.
- ³⁰ Quoted in Page Smith, *The Rise of Industrial America: A People's History of the Post-Reconstruction Era, Vol. VI* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1984), 543. See also H W Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), particularly the first three chapters on the US takeover of the Philippines.
- ³¹ Quoted in Tuchman, 156.
- ³² Maximo Viola, "My Travels with Rizal," *Manila Times*, 1913, reprinted in "Theme Issue, Rizal in Retrospect," *Historical Bulletin* 5, no. 1-4, 1961: 28-46.
- ³³ Rizal to Ponce, 27 July 1888
- ³⁴ Greatly impressed with Rizal, Tetchō wrote admiringly of him in his memoirs *Oshi no Ryoko* (*Travels of a Deaf-mute*), filled with humorous anecdotes of his trip abroad and intimate glimpses of his polyglot friend in whose company alone he was not "deaf-mute." Back in Japan, he wrote two novels markedly influenced by Rizal's two works: *Nankai-no-Daiharan* (*Storm over the South Sea*), whose hero Takayama personifies Rizal, and *O-unabara* (*The Big Ocean*). See Ceasar Z. Lanuza and Gregorio F. Zaide, *Rizal in Japan* 1961, 62.
- ³⁵ "Hace ya mucho tiempo, en Julio de 1887, ciertos personajes japoneses me preguntaban por qué no nos sublevábamos diciendo que ellos nos ayudaría, etc. etc. Yo les contesté que estábamos bien con España y que no queríamos pasar de una mano a otra: que con España a *pesar de todo*, nos ligaban tres siglos, una misma religión y vínculos de afección y agradecimiento, cosa que no tenemos con *otra* nación. Replicaron que el Japón no tenía interés ninguno en Filipinas, y sólo ayudarían por cuestiones de raza; yo me sonreí, y les demostré por la historia que sus antepasados no habían pensado como ellos." "Datos para mi defensa," (Data for my Defense), in *EPH*. See also Caroline S. Hau and Takashi Shiraishi, "Daydreaming about Rizal and Tetchō: On Asianism as Network and Fantasy," *Philippine Studies* 57, no. 3 (2009): 329-88.
- ³⁶ *Memorias de José Aseniero* (Memoirs of José Aseniero) is an unpublished manuscript written by one of Rizal's students in Dapitan. His son Francisco wrote: "My father and I were listening over the radio in the mountain fastness of our evacuation place in the crucial days of the Japanese invasion when, of all heart-breaking news, it was announced 'Bataan has fallen.' Tears welled in our eyes. My old man suddenly remembered and said: 'Dr. Rizal's prediction has come true.' [...] He told me that he had kept it all to himself as he was afraid he would be misunderstood for a Japanese propagandist. And when the stories of the atrocities were told, he could hardly believe them. [According] to him, Dr. Rizal had always spoken highly of the Japanese people for he had lived with them in their own country. He used to tell his pupils how polite, how courteous, how clean and industrious the Japanese people were. He wanted his people to emulate the good traits of the Japanese. They were well disciplined, patriotic, and law-abiding people. In fact, there were only two peoples Rizal, in all his travels, highly admired: the Germans and the Japanese" in Francisco G. Aseniero, Sr., *Rizal's Retreat: Dapitan 1892-1896* (unpublished manuscript), 1960.

- ³⁷ This was drawn from an article in *La Nación* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1889.
- ³⁸ Unfinished letter, 18 May 1895, <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/marti/mercado.htm#:~:text>
- ³⁹ I discuss this in some length in the monograph, “The Game of the Great Powers: Rizal on Imperialism” (University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, Quezon City, 2020).
- ⁴⁰ Pio A. Valenzuela, “Testimony of Dr. Pio Valenzuela (1896),” quoted in Floro Quibuyen, *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism* (Ateneo de Manila University Press: Quezon City, 1999), 52.
- ⁴¹ Santiago V. Alvarez, *The Katipunan and the Revolution: Memoirs of a General*, trans. from Tagalog by Paula Carolina S. Malay (Ateneo de Manila Press: Quezon City, 1992), 14.
- ⁴² The phrase, originally written in Spanish as “a pesar de mis consejos...,” is from his work, “Manifiesto a algunos filipinos” (Manifesto to Certain Filipinos).
- ⁴³ “Mi sueño era la prosperidad de mi país. Yo sabía que por las armas era imposible tener libertades y menos independencia, pues no lo consentirían las otras naciones colonizadoras como Inglaterra, Alemania, etc. El Japón nos comería después.” Manifesto to Certain Filipinos, 338, *EPH*, *ibid*, 338
- ⁴⁴ “Este es el sentido de lo que dije: que era menester ser digno, unirse, para que cuando lleguen los acontecimientos, no caigamos en manos del Japón, ni de Inglaterra ni de Alemania,” Manifesto to Certain Filipinos, 333, *EPH*, *ibid*, 338
- ⁴⁵ “Sin embargo, no es bueno fijarse en lo eventual; hay una lógica imperceptible e incomprensible a veces en las obras de la Historia. Bueno es que tanto los pueblos como los gobiernos se ajusten a ella.” *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, 164.
- ⁴⁶ “Yo siempre he sido opuesto a la rebelión no sólo por lo absurda e inoportuna, sino también porque esperaba yo que España nos diese libertades pronto, como así se lo dije a Pío Valenzuela, porque yo veía que para prevenir futuros acontecimientos se hacía necesaria una estrechísima unión entre España y el pueblo Filipino,” Manifesto to Certain Filipinos, 332. Italics mine.
- ⁴⁷ Viola. *Ibid*. Francesc Pi y Margall’s Federal Republican Party, if it still had a chance to regain political power as it did briefly in 1874, would favor decolonization for Filipinas as envisioned by Rizal. This would happen if the Filipinos opted for separation rather than assimilation into a federal Spain as an “*expresada región*” (i.e., incorporation into the federation as the expressed constitutional will of the people thereof). Pi y Margall was the strongest supporter for Philippine independence amongst the Spanish political elite. He understood that the Filipinos had given up on assimilation into the Spanish body politic. I discuss this in “From Cadiz to la Liga: The Spanish Context of Jose Rizal’s Political Thought,” *Asian Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2013.
- ⁴⁸ Rizal to Mariano Ponce, 27 July 1888, *Epistolario Rizalino*

- ⁴⁹ George Aseniero, "La Liga Filipina in Rizal Studies," *Asian Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2013.
- ⁵⁰ "[S]us fines eran la unión, el fomento del comercio, de la industria, etc. porque yo entendía y entiendo que un pueblo no puede tener libertades sin tener antes prosperidad material; que tener libertades sin tener que comer, es oír discursos y ayunar." Datos par mi defensa, *EPH*, 333.
- ⁵¹ "Statutes of La Liga Filipina: Duties of the Members," para. 2
- ⁵² Vladimir Lenin, "The Dual Power," in *Lenin: Collected Works Vol. 24* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964), 38–41. To paraphrase Lenin: "What is this dual power? Alongside the *Colonial Government*, the government of the *colonizer*, another government has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the *consejos populares*." Italics are my insertions into the paraphrase. Refer also to Fredric Jameson's videotaped lecture, "An American Utopia," which discussed dual power as a prospect for social transformation. He talked of the Chiapas experience in Mexico. The Graduate Center, CUNY. The recorded lecture may be accessed through this link: <http://youtu.be/MNVKoX40ZAo>
- ⁵³ "... [P]or una ley de la reacción las Islas se declararían probablemente en república federal..." 161. *EPH*, *ibid.*, 161.
- ⁵⁴ Francisco Pi y Margall, *La Reacción y la revolución*, Madrid 1854, cited in Florencia Peyrou "Federalism as an 'Imagined Community'" in Juan Pan-Montojo and Frederik Pederson (Eds.), *Communities in European History: Representations, Jurisdictions, Conflicts* (Edizioni Plus: Pisa University, Pisa, 2007), 101.
- ⁵⁵ Pi y Margall 1882, 295.
- ⁵⁶ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, 1851, 114, <http://fair-use.org/p-j-proudhon/general-idea-of-the-revolution>
- ⁵⁷ Proudhon, 114.
- ⁵⁸ For an insight into how the authorities perceived Rizal's initiatives upon his return to Manila, see Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla, "La 'Cuestion Rizal' Memoria del Gobernador General Despujol (1892)," in *Revista de Indias*, 1998, Vol. LVIII, núm. 213, 365–384.
- ⁵⁹ The Katipunan as a *separatist association* was conceived in January 1892, preceding by five months Rizal's announcement of the la Liga. Jim Richardson, *The Light of Liberty: Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892–1897* (Ateneo de Manila University Press: Quezon City, 2013) Chapter 1. But the *organizational form* the Katipunan eventually took came after la Liga, and was patterned after it. For a discussion of la Liga's institutional transition to Katipunan, see my essay "Ang La Liga, ang Katipunan, at ang Pakikibaka para sa Kalayaan ng Pilipinas, 1890–1900," in Lloyd B. Ranises and Ryan V. Palad (Eds.) *Kagawaran: Mga Institusyon at Paglilingkod-bayan sa Kasaysayan at Kalinangang Pilipino, 1898–1946* (National Commission for Culture and the Arts: Manila, 2017).

- ⁶⁰ “[S]i leyes equitativas y reformas francas y liberales no les hacen olvidar a los unos y a los otros de que son de razas diferentes, o si ambos pueblos no se funden para constituir una masa social y políticamente homogénea que no esté trabajada por opuestas tendencias y antagónicos pensamientos e intereses, las Filipinas se han de declarar un día fatal e infaliblemente independientes,” *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, 158.
- ⁶¹ Contra esta ley del destino no podrán oponerse ni el patriotismo español, ni el clamoreo de todos los tiranuelos de Ultramar, ni el amor a España de todos los filipinos, ni el dudoso porvenir de la desmembración y las luchas intestinas de las Islas entre sí. La necesidad es la divinidad más fuerte que el mundo conoce, y la necesidad es el resultado de las leyes físicas puestas en movimiento por las fuerzas morales. *Filipinas dentro de cien años*, 158.
- ⁶² Gramsci, or Romain Rolland, it doesn’t matter who said it first: Gramsci delivered its full import in *Prison Notebooks* and transformed the world lucidly, recognizing the real state of affairs however bad it may be, in full rationality, but without ever losing hope for its transformation. Never despair.
- ⁶³ Rizal had Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* in his personal library. Arthur Schopenhauer, *Ausgewählte Werke* (vol. 2, Leipzig, 1891).
- ⁶⁴ The sentence means, “Human life begins at the dark side of despair.” From Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les Mouches* (Librairie Gallimard: Paris, 1943).
- ⁶⁵ Samir Amin is one of the foremost analysts of what he terms “extraversion” of national economies of the Third World as a result of its peripheral function in the international division of labor.
- ⁶⁶ “Crises have split European voters into five ‘tribes,’ survey suggests.” From *The Guardian*, 17 January 2024.
- ⁶⁷ This was how Putin characterized the China–Russia partnership during his visit to Beijing in February 2022, days before launching what he called the “special military operation” against Kiev. Since then, he has been speaking of a “comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination” on regional and global issues, a deepening of economic cooperation between them, and the alignment of their mutual interests in an emerging world order heralded by the BRICS.
- ⁶⁸ *Reuters*, 15 October 2023. “Putin to visit China to deepen ‘no limits’ partnership with Xi” by Guy Faulconbridge and Laurie Chen
- ⁶⁹ For the most concise summary of Mearsheimer’s arguments, see “The Myth That Putin Was Bent on Conquering Ukraine and Creating a Greater Russia,” *Antiwar.com*, 18 December 2023.
- ⁷⁰ “China Creates a Coast Guard Like No Other, Seeking Supremacy in Asian Seas,” *The New York Times*, 13 June 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/world/asia/china-coast-guard.html>

- ⁷¹ [P]ara responder a estas preguntas es necesario fijar un espacio limitado de tiempo, y con arreglo a él tratar de prever los futuros acontecimientos, EPH, 138.
- ⁷² Xi declared in his speech that China seeks a peaceful reunification with Taiwan under the “One Country, Two Systems” framework. He added: “We make no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means.” The speech can be read through this link: <https://interpret.csis.org/translations/speech-at-the-meeting-marking-the-40th-anniversary-of-the-issuance-of-the-message-to-compatriots-in-taiwan/>
- ⁷³ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, is a military alliance of member states from Europe and North America. They are committed to protecting each other against external threats.
- ⁷⁴ A proxy war is a war that takes place on someone else’s territory, and fought by the people therein.
- ⁷⁵ There have been various initiatives to adopt a *regional* approach to dealing with the multiple and overlapping claims, such as the ASEAN–China Dialogue Relations, Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and the South China Sea Code of Conduct. Although they have not borne fruit so far, they remain a forum for diplomatic engagement and constructive cooperation. These are better alternatives to internationalization that involves external powers with a geostrategic agenda of their own.
- ⁷⁶ “Biden says US forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion,” *Reuters*, 19 September 2022.

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