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Bolivarian internationalism: The ALBA-PTA's struggle to negotiate a revolutionary approach to humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping

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Within a critical globalisation theory framework, this paper analyses the military dimension of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-PTA) and its agenda of 'peacekeeping' and 'humanitarian intervention' in Haiti. Since its launch in 2004, the ALBA-PTA has established itself as an increasingly institutionalized, multi-dimensional and pluriscalar counter-hegemonic Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) regionalism and globalization project. Integral to the pursued transformation of world order is the launching of a counter-hegemonic military agenda. Grounded in the Bolivarian philosophy of regional union, the paper explores the ALBA-PTA collective defence policies, institutionalised in the Permanent Committee of Sovereignty and Defence, and the ALBA-PTA-Haiti cooperation before and after the earthquake of January 2010. By interrogating the nature of the military alliance and its humanitarian agenda, I propose that the ALBA-PTA's revolutionary approach to internationalism, peacekeeping and intervention may be understood as employing an "enlarged conception" of humanitarianism that neither means militarized humanitarianism nor humanitarian assistance as isolated, short-term technical disaster relief, but long-term emancipatory structural transformation. Military alliance, however, is necessary to defend the project against imperialist aggression.

Introduction

In recent years, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-PTA) has established itself as an increasingly institutionalized, multi-dimensional and pluriscalar Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) regionalist project jointly driven by inter- and transnational state and non-state forces across the *de jure* (formal ALBA-PTA-members) and the *de facto* regions (the entire LAC) (Muhr, 2008a, b; 2010a, b, c).[1] Analyzed through a neo-Gramscian, critical globalization theory approach (Cox, 1981; Gill, 2008), that generates insights into how institutions and their

practices translate the ALBA-PTA ideological framework that is antagonistic to the capitalist imperialist and neo-imperialist logic, the ALBA-PTA can be understood as a counter-hegemonic globalization project.[2] Within this framework, this paper focuses on the military dimension of the ALBA-PTA to explore the possibility of a new, revolutionary approach to internationalism, intervention and peacekeeping. While notions of ‘revolution’ are contested, it is here conceptualized as a combination of structural theories of revolution, with their emphasis on outcome as the seizure of state power, with actor-centred theories and their view of revolution as a mass-based, open-ended “fundamental transformation of the state and social structure” (Stahler-Sholk, 2001) that implies a “significant restructuring of the social configuration of power” (Walker, 1985: 27).

The ALBA-PTA revolutionary approach to internationalism, peacekeeping and intervention departs from both the Cuban “export of revolution” to Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, i.e. Cuba’s military support to guerrillas during the 1960s and to ‘progressive’ governments in the 1970s (LeoGrande, 1982; Klepak, 2005), as well as from the contemporary form of humanitarian intervention as exercised by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). As an integral, explicitly anti-and de-colonialist development and international cooperation paradigm, the ALBA-PTA can be understood as employing an “enlarged conception” (Newman, 2009) of humanitarianism that neither means militarised humanitarianism, nor humanitarian assistance as isolated, short-term technical relief of suffering in emergency situations, but long-term, emancipatory structural transformation.

I will first introduce aspects of the ALBA-PTA that are of direct relevance to the issues under discussion. This means concentrating on the ALBA-PTA as an inter-state project, to the detriment of the “organized society” institutionalized as the ALBA-PTA Council of Social Movements, which complements the state as the second pillar of the emergent ALBA-PTA governance regime (see Muhr, 2010c). The case of the ALBA-PTA-Haiti cooperation before and after the earthquake of January 2010 is of particular analytical and theoretical interest as it illustrates the ALBA-PTA’s rising political economic profile within the context of global financial and aid crises and shows how countries that are not

members of the formal regionalism are integrated in the regionalist project. This provides a basis for understanding the revolutionary character of the counter-hegemonic form of internationalism, peacekeeping and intervention, that seeks the long-term reconfiguration (i.e. democratization) of the existing power asymmetries and state and social structures in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres. Military alliance, however, is necessary to protect the project against imperialist aggression.

The ALBA-PTA

The eight-member ALBA-PTA (Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela)[3] is a geostrategic project governed by the principles of solidarity, cooperation, complementarity, reciprocity and sustainability (Muhr, 2010c) - principles that economic theory regards as distinctly different to market exchange (Polanyi, 1944/2001; Gibson-Graham, 2006). To some observers, the ALBA-PTA puts forward a cohesive, human rights-based counter-vision of international trade law, thus pushing for an emancipatory transformation of the international legal regime (Al Attar & Miller, 2010). This should not suggest that power asymmetries among the range of actors involved would magically disappear. After all, political projects are advanced by those social forces with the material capability and discursive power to propose, mobilise, institutionalise and govern territorial, political and market-making claims that are able to secure new regional frontiers (Robertson, 2010). While Venezuela, due to its material capabilities, is a more powerful actor than other members within the ALBA-PTA, the aim of progressive politics, however, consists in the recognition of the existence and significance of unequal power-geometries as a precondition for emancipatory political action (Massey, 2009). The significance of this to peacebuilding and humanitarian intervention, for the purposes of this paper, does not consist in attempting to resolve the (inevitable) limitations in the practice of the mobilisation of the concept of power-geometries, but to recognise that the ALBA-PTA politics of solidarity are foundational of a new, counter-hegemonic framework for action of international relations on a global scale.

Key actors in the transformatory processes are the bi-/multi-state-owned *grand-national projects* (GNPs), *grand-national enterprises* (GNEs), and *grand-national institutes*

(GNIs). By drawing on Simón Bolívar's vision of a "Grand Homeland" [*Patria Grande*], i.e. *Our America*, they are the counter-hegemonic responses to capitalist multi- and transnational corporations (MNCs/TNCs) in the creation of a regional economy, that also integrates private (e.g. cooperatives) and social (e.g. community-owned) forms of organization (small and medium sized enterprises) within and beyond the *de jure* region. At this moment, the effort of constructing an alternative political economy thus concentrates on targeting the power of global capital, rather than limiting private property *per se*.

Table 1 ALBA-PTA Dimensions and Institutions[4]

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As Table 1 shows, the *Permanent Committee for Sovereignty and Defence* institutionalizes the ALBA-PTA military security policies. The outlined ALBA-PTA development and cooperation dimensions, however, operate in a complementary and holistic fashion. This is perhaps most clearly manifest in the inter-relatedness of the social-humanitarian and energy security dimensions, which is of particular relevance to the proposed revolutionary notion of peacebuilding and humanitarian intervention. They are closely intertwined through the PETROAMERICA regional energy integration initiative (oil, gas, renewable energies), through which the social-humanitarian is largely funded.

Here, with respect to Haiti, the 18-member PETROCARIBE, which is one of the three sub-regionalist blocs that compose PETROAMERICA besides PETROANDINA and PETROSUR, is of particular interest. Founded in 2005 within the ALBA rationale, PETROCARIBE is one mechanism that puts the ALBA-PTA principles into practice by use of Venezuela's material capabilities derived from its oil resources, through: the elimination of intermediaries along the value chain; a long-term, low interest financing scheme; payment in kind and services; and, bi- and multilateral strategic development funds, such as the *ALBA Caribe Fund* (see Muhr, 2010a, b). Similar to European Union (EU) structural convergence funds, the latter serve the purpose of levelling out the

geographies of uneven development across the region, upon which successful integration hinges (cf Hettne, 2003: 361).

In addition to the institutionalisation, Table 1 draws also attention to the historical, ideological and legal as key coordinates of the ALBA-PTA, in which the initiative's ethos is rooted. In the effort of constructing an ideology counter to the predominant liberal-bourgeois values and norms, the ALBA-PTA discourse (selectively) integrates virtually all regional, national and local anti-colonialist/imperialist indigenous resistance and nationalist liberation fighters and *guerrilleros* of the past 500 years. This strongly points to the construction of a distinct identity, a set of common values - in this case a collective popular-revolutionary consciousness or a culture of resistance - mobilised around the Bolivarian "Grand Homeland" in the discourses and legal and normative frameworks of the ALBA-PTA countries, most comprehensively perhaps in Venezuela, but also in Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, in the latter case already in the 1987 constitution. Accordingly, Venezuela's constitutional mandates include "Latin American and Caribbean integration" and a common LAC foreign policy, the "democratisation of the international society", and the promotion of "peaceful cooperation" under the principles of "non-intervention and self-determination of the peoples", guided by the international human rights norms and the "solidarity between the peoples" (RBV, 2000, Preamble; Articles 152-5). Venezuela's national development plans thus express the objectives of a multipolar world order, "equitable interaction in global decision-making" (especially in the UN Security Council), a common Latin American security and defence policy, and the "construction of a new matrix of global power in the financial, media, military and political fields", within the maxim of a "New International Geopolitics" (RBV, 2001: 155-62; 2007a: 46).

Venezuela's *Law of International Cooperation*, awaiting ratification at the time of writing, adds to the agenda of Bolivarian internationalism to "*prevent and attend*" emergency situations via "humanitarian aid" (RBV, 2005a, Article 5, my italics). *Prevention* in humanitarian aid goes beyond the traditional understanding of humanitarianism, as it conceptually relates to development and geopolitics (Newman, 2009: 5). Subsequently, the *Exposition of the Motives* that accompany the Law states that unlike the traditional, so-

called ‘development cooperation’ by the world powers through their global governance regime, the ALBA-PTA seeks to develop an “innovative conception of international cooperation” in the “social, economic, political, cultural, and regional defense and security”, with the “principal objective of preserving Latin American autonomy and identity” (RBV, 2005a). Therefore, as the following sections will show, by recognizing the existing power asymmetries and by conscious application of the ALBA-PTA principles, ‘humanitarian intervention’ in the Bolivarian, revolutionary sense is conceived of as long-term structural transformation within the rationales of counter-hegemony and region-building, both in terms of social, human and economic development (reduction of poverty, inequality and injustice) and anti-imperialist geopolitics, rather than as (direct) political and/or military intervention in foreign territories.[5]

ALBA-PTA Military Cooperation

With Venezuela in many respects being the ‘hub’ of the ALBA-PTA (especially in economic and institutional terms), military integration has been a priority of the presidential diplomacy agenda. Between 1999 and 2005, several attempts were made to promote a regional “security, sovereignty and defense strategy”, a “South American Defence Council”, and the “fusion of the armed forces” in the conventional sub-regional fora, such as MERCOSUR (Otálvora, 2006). However, President Chávez also has recognised that both the historical role of the military on the continent and distrust and interests-related resistance at the commanding heights makes the issue not only a sensitive one, but a taboo to civil and military sectors alike. Therefore, Chávez early on identified two prerequisites for military integration: as outlined, political integration rooted in a Bolivarian philosophy, conceptualised broadly in order to increase its integrationist potential; and a re-definition of the role of the military within the national, through civic-military integration as done in Venezuela under Plan Bolívar 2000 (using the army for public works) and, as will be further detailed below, through the creation of the *International Civic-Military Rescue and Humanitarian Assistance Brigade “Simón Bolívar”* and the *Humanitarian Task Force “Simón Bolívar”* (Chávez, 2004; 2009).

The dynamics of military cooperation, however, only proliferated with Bolivia’s adherence to the ALBA-PTA in March 2006. Two months later, a Bolivia-Venezuela technical

cooperation agreement included the areas of military legislation, defence policy and humanitarian operations, as well as plans for the construction of civil and military installations in Bolivia and logistical support by Venezuela through donation and credit (e.g. asphalt processing plants) (ALBA, 2006). Within this framework, Venezuelan military equipment and personnel has been sent to Bolivia, including two helicopters for presidential use.[6] Similar technical-military agreements have been signed between Bolivia and Ecuador in 2008[7], and Ecuador and Venezuela in 2009 covering, *inter alia*, military intelligence, peace operations, technology transfer and defence industry development (ALBA, 2009e). Publicly available documentation of such bilateral cooperation, however, is scarce. One would expect similar agreements between Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, due to the stronger ideological affinities between the armed forces of these countries. Indicative of this is, for instance, Chávez' proposal on 27 January 2008 of Venezuela supporting the Nicaraguan army through maintenance assistance of Nicaragua's helicopters of Russian make, within the general discussion with Nicaraguan President Ortega of a "united army", a "joint defence strategy" and an "ALBA Defence Council" (*Aló Presidente*, 2008) - a proposal that also found Bolivian President Morales' support.[8]

In the aftermath of the coup d'état against Honduran President Zelaya in June 2009, calls for an ALBA-PTA "security council"[9] and a "regional military school with our own doctrine"[10] increased. Moreover, in September 2009, the 2nd Political Council of the ALBA-PTA warned of...

...the danger of concepts such as the responsibility to protect, responsible sovereignty, humanitarian intervention, preemptive wars, human security, amongst others, that can be manipulated by the great powers to assault countries of the South, violating their sovereignty, independence, self-determination and territorial integrity (ALBA, 2009d).

At the ALBA-PTA summits of October and December 2009, the Permanent Committee of Sovereignty and Defence, integral to a declared "counter-offensive" to the increased militarization of the region by the United States (US), was created, and the objectives of a "Joint Strategy of Popular Integral Defense" and a "School of Dignity and Sovereignty of the Armed Forces of the ALBA-PTA countries" were defined (ALBA-PTA, 2009a, b). In 2010, a civil-military "ALBA-PTA Defence School" has been announced to be opened in the Bolivian city of Sucre in 2011.[11]

At this moment, however, only Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela integrate the Permanent Committee for Sovereignty and Defence, as Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St Vincent and the Grenadines expressed their reservations due to their membership in the Regional Security System of the Eastern Caribbean States (ALBA-PTA, 2009a). Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2 display trends in military expenditure of the relevant ALBA-PTA countries in international comparison since Chávez' first election in 1998. These data are important in two respects: first, they contradict the US-driven propaganda of a supposed destabilisation of the region because of Venezuela's upgrading of its military equipment with purchases from Russia after the US's arms embargo against Venezuela in May 2006; second, the relatively low military budget of the ALBA-PTA members underscores the defensive character of their armies as part of the strategy of asymmetrical warfare, i.e. the use of non-conventional means (including a civilian militia for guerrilla warfare) against traditional armies.[12]

Table 2: Military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product[13]

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Figure 1: Military expenditure in constant (2008) USD million[14]

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Figure 2: ALBA-PTA and US military expenditure in constant (2008) USD million[15]

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ALBA-PTA Internationalism and Peacekeeping in Haiti

Since 2004, Venezuela has created two humanitarian intervention forces for both national and international (on diplomatic request) deployment: first, the *International Civic-Military Rescue and Humanitarian Assistance Brigade "Simón Bolívar"* (henceforth: International Brigade) was legally constituted in November 2004. The Brigade is composed of civil and military professionals (emergency medicine, nursing, fire-fighting,

rescue, engineering, architecture, paramedics) (RBV, 2004a), and has gradually extended its field of operations in geographical and functional terms: from emergency assistance principally in Central America and the Caribbean, such as reconstruction work in Cuba, Grenada, Haiti and Jamaica in the aftermath of Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne (RBV, 2004b), to deployment in Guyana, Ecuador, Suriname, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, the Lebanon, as well as involvement in preventative measures, such as a housing project in Mali[16]. Second, the *Humanitarian Task Force “Simón Bolívar”* (henceforth: Task Force), formalised in June 2005, explicitly recognises international cooperation as a “foreign policy tool” designed “to coordinate and execute operations of prevention and attention of natural and man-made disasters” (RBV, 2005b). While it is not clear from the statutes why two different intervention forces have been created, both the International Brigade and the Task Force echo Venezuela’s *Law of International Cooperation* in emphasizing the need for prevention in addition to rescue and emergency. Although originally both intervention forces were staffed by Venezuelans exclusively, a military cooperation memorandum between Bolivia and Venezuela of May 2008 points to internationalisation within the ALBA-PTA, in this case through the participation of Bolivian navy personnel in operations of Venezuela’s International Brigade.[17] Subsequently, a regional “ALBA international brigade of humanitarian aid” has been proposed (ALBA, 2009b).

ALBA-PTA-Haiti Cooperation

Haiti - the country with the lowest human development index in the region (UNDP, 2009) - is of particular social, geopolitical, and historico-ideological importance to the ALBA-PTA. The notion of a “historical debt” that Venezuela has with Haiti due to the nation’s support to Bolívar’s liberation struggle (RBV, 2007b) was mobilised in the aftermath of the earthquake of 12 January 2010 when Chávez (2010: 16), by reference to Toussaint L’Ouverture and Alexandre Pétion, constructed Haiti as the bedrock of “South American revolution” since the country was the first in the region to gain independence through “the world’s only successful slave revolution” (Aristide, 2008: vii; also RBV, 2010c). Furthermore, the US-led coup against Aristide on 29 February 2004, supported by Canada and France, was of the same pattern as the ones against Chávez (2002) and Zelaya (2009). In all three cases, destabilisation (illegal external opposition funding through the ‘development aid’ apparatus, a discrediting corporate media campaign, etc.) preceded and

accompanied the forceful removal of constitutional presidents who epitomize structural transformation in the interest of the dispossessed masses, their kidnapping under the guise of supposed resignation, followed by the installation of dictatorships - 'civilian' (elite-entrepreneurial) governments backed by the repressive military and security forces (e.g. Golinger, 2005; Rossier, 2006; Pina, 2007). In contrast to the post-coup scenarios in Venezuela (11-13 April 2002) and Honduras (since 28 June 2009), however, Haiti has been occupied on request by the "Transitional Government" of Boniface Alexandre, initially as the US-led UN Multinational Interim Force, replaced by the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) since June 2004. MINUSTAH is officially defined as "humanitarian assistance", "development" and "peacekeeping" (UN, 2004a, b).[18]

Of concern here are the liberal and neoliberal underpinnings of the MINUSTAH mandate. Underlying to the hegemonic notion of peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention is the ideology of 'liberal peace' as postulated by liberal constitutionalism and internationalism; that is, the contention that domestic and international peace evolves through the reproduction of (neo)liberal democracies, more appropriately however referred to as *polyarchy* or *low intensity democracy*, as the political complement to global neoliberal economics (Robinson, 1996; Gills et al, 1993): free market, sovereign state, and the liberal normative and institutional system of government and international/global governance, that fosters global trade, international cooperation, and respect for international law (Lidén et al, 2009). This agenda has been incorporated in the 1992 UN *Agenda for Peace*, and the various MINUSTAH resolutions are replete with the neo-imperialist conditionalities of official (North-South) development cooperation, integral to what Stephen Gill (2008) has termed "disciplinary neoliberalism": "democracy", "good governance", "rule of law", "institutional reform", "human rights", and "economic development" to "combat poverty" (UN, 2004a, b; see Richmond, 2009: 559; Klein, 2005). The 'liberal peace' may thus represent another tool of the neoliberal project for global governance that often is at the root of conflict (Pugh, 2005; Lidén et al, 2009), as is the liberal project of 'development' by definition (Duffield, 2007). Especially when considering that Aristide had been removed from office with CIA backing before

(Cavallaro, 2005), Haiti emerges as a particularly instructive case of the mobilization of humanitarian intervention for regime change (see Newman, 2009: 84-87).[19]

Venezuela joined CARICOM in not recognising the regime of Gerard Latortue (that followed Alexandre's interim government), installed by the US from March 2004 to May 2006 (Pina, 2007). Only with René Preval as President-elect (late 2005), a significant qualitative and strategic shift occurred. On 15 May 2006, the Venezuela-Haiti PETROCARIBE Energy Agreement was signed, with a trade volume of 7.000 bpd[20], doubled to 14.000 bpd a year later by the *ALBA Energy Agreement*, that also established a mixed (Venezuela-Haiti) enterprise in charge of the operations (ALBA 2007b). The *ALBA-Haiti Framework Cooperation Convention Bolívar, Petión, Martí* (Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba) ratified the participation of Venezuela's International Brigade in what has been defined as "integral development" cooperation for the transformation of historical structural problematics (ALBA, 2007c). While the more specific *Haiti Cooperation Plan* was proposed in the areas of health and education, agriculture and fair trade (ALBA, 2007a), three energy GNPs (regasification; power plant; refinery) were approved for Haiti by Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, as well as an ALBA House as part of the GNP ALBA-Culture and an ALBA air connection to link Puerto Príncipe with Caracas, La Habana, La Paz, Managua and Quito (ALBA, 2007f).

In July 2007, the Haiti-Cuba-Venezuela intergovernmental Office of Tripartite Cooperation was set up in Haiti. Its executive organ (Directive Council) is in charge of the administration of resources and provision of technical assistance and training (ALBA, 2007d). The following August, at the 3rd Presidential Summit of PETROCARIBE, Haiti joined the subregional project as a full member (ALBA, 2007e), and signed up for the PETROCARIBE Energy Security Treaty (oil, gas, electricity, renewable energies) on 11 August 2007 (PETROCARIBE, 2007). The confluence of energy and social security in ALBA-PTA/PETROCARIBE has further meant Haiti's participation in the ALBA-PTA food sovereignty and security programme, that responds to the global food crisis through comprehensive and integral agricultural and environmental policies and projects, including the ALBA-Foods initiative and the creation of the GNE ALBA-Foods (PETROCARIBE, 2008; ALBA, 2008a, b; 2009a). In April 2009, USD 5.0 million were

allocated to Haiti in support of the Cuba-led literacy campaign, as well as over USD 9.3 million for agricultural development in the L'Artibonito region, including a rice cultivation project and processing plant (ALBA, 2009b, c). At the 6th PETROCARIBE Summit in June 2009, Haiti was among those countries selected for pilot projects within the Master Plan for Gas Supply for the Caribbean (PETROCARIBE, 2009, RES05.14-06). Within the rationale of the GNP ALBA-Education (see Muhr, 2010a), Haiti has been offered participation in the Grandnational Programme of Formation in Integral Community Medicine (ALBA-PTA, 2009c).

Contested Terrain: The ALBA-PTA Offensive in Haiti in 2010

Between 2007 and early 2010, the ALBA-PTA-Haiti development cooperation administered by the Haiti-Cuba-Venezuela Tripartite Commission amounted to USD 154 million (RBV, 2010b). This cooperation volume has been dwarfed by the humanitarian aid and reconstruction and development cooperation funds released by the ALBA-PTA in response to the earthquake of 12 January 2010. In the days following the earthquake, ALBA-PTA governments, including Ecuador and Nicaragua[21], reacted individually by sending military disaster relief personnel, and Venezuela's navy and air force established an air and sea 'corridor' with Russian participation to ensure aid supply, distributed in Haiti by both the International Brigade and the Task Force (RBV, 2010a, b). However, by late January, a more concerted approach had been developed. At the Emergency Meeting of the ALBA-PTA Political Council and a delegation of the Embassy of Haiti in Caracas on 25 January, the "ALBA National Coordination" was established to "organise in a rotary fashion the joint tasks of the Alliance in Haiti" (ALBA-PTA, 2010). The specific tasks are outlined in the eight-point *Plan for the Solidarian Contribution of the ALBA Countries to the Effort of Reconstructing Haiti*, covering the areas of health (emergency, epidemiology, rehabilitation); financial aid via the ALBA Humanitarian Fund for Haiti, administered by the ALBA Bank; guaranteed free-of-charge energy supply; agriculture and food security within the ALBA-Foods initiative (supply and production; reforestation; water; seed, tool and machinery donations; a school for agroecological education); migration amnesty (regulation of the status of Haitians in ALBA-PTA countries to facilitate family reunion and the formation of solidarity brigades); education (literacy; technical; infrastructure); reconstruction; and the coordination of transport and

logistics to maximise the efficiency and security for the Haitian people (ALBA-PTA, 2010).

The eight-point plan of reconstruction reiterates the long-term, preventative character of the cooperation by emphasizing that the ALBA-PTA humanitarian aid provision is not an isolated act in response to the earthquake, but the short-term component of the larger, “collective effort” of structural transformation that has been going on since 2006 (RBV, 2010b). That is, as earlier stated, the notion of humanitarian intervention as social, human and economic development and counter-hegemonic geopolitics, rather than (direct) military intervention. This explains, as previously indicated, why the deployed ALBA-PTA military contingents are composed of professionals (technical personnel, etc.), rather than soldiers in battle gear (as the US and MINUSTAH forces). It is noteworthy that Cuba and Venezuela present the intervention operation as a *collective* enterprise, considering that they are the only ALBA-PTA members that contribute in real material terms: Cuba via in-kind contribution to Haiti’s national health system, valued at USD 691 million in four years; and Venezuela with USD 2.42 billion, which includes the cancellation of Haiti’s total PETROCARIBE debt of USD 395 million (RBV, 2010b). The ALBA-PTA contribution to the reconstruction and development of Haiti thus amounts to almost a quarter of the total of USD 9.92 billion, as pledged by the UN members and international financial institutions.[22] In comparison, the US and EU contributions are stated at USD 1.15 and 1.67 billion, respectively. The ALBA-PTA share appears all the more impressive when considering the relatively small size of the ALBA-PTA economies. MINUSTAH, on its part, stepped its force levels up to 8,940 troops and 3,711 police (UN, 2010), while the US reportedly deployed more than ten thousand additional troops - an act the ALBA-PTA has criticised as the “military occupation” of Haiti (RBV, 2010a, d; ALBA-PTA, 2010).

Towards a Revolutionary Approach to Humanitarian Intervention

Bolivarian internationalism and its approach to peacebuilding and humanitarian intervention appears as contradictory, which is not surprising in periods of transformation: on the one hand, while the values of national and regional sovereignty are defended, ALBA-PTA members Bolivia and Ecuador participate in MINUSTAH as well as other UN

missions.[23] Despite the participation of troops from countries of the South in such international missions, however, the normative and political demands remain being set by the liberal imperialist project (see Duffield, 2007). On the other hand, the ALBA-PTA refutes the neo-conservative humanitarian militarism, whether legitimized by the UN Security Council, as in the case of MINUSTAH, or unauthorized, as unilaterally enacted by the US in Haiti in 2010 within the rationale of “disaster capitalism” (Klein, 2005).[24] Given that the UN Security Council is controlled by past colonial and present (neo-)imperialist powers, a revolutionary position from the periphery, that seeks the “construction of a new matrix of global power” (RBV, 2007a: 46), legitimately warns of “humanitarian intervention” and “peacekeeping” as tools of a disciplinary framework (ALBA, 2009d). This is not to argue that the ALBA-PTA does, or should, categorically reject the use of warranted military power for human protection in the most exceptional circumstances, such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. However, as the liberal peace prescriptions avoid exploring the root causes of armed conflict, the “crisis of legitimacy” of liberal peacebuilding manifests itself in questions of its efficiency, lack of international and local legitimacy, aggressiveness, coercion and militarism, individualism, and the social and environmental crises (Richmond, 2009).

I suggest here that the ALBA-PTA embodies and perhaps transcends what Oliver P. Richmond calls a “post-liberal peace”; a form of peace that broadens its focus from the liberal elite and institution-centred international or regional peace to an “ontological commitment to care for others in their everyday contexts, based upon empathy, respect and the recognition of difference”, thus allowing for “genuine self-government, self-determination, democracy and human rights” (Richmond, 2009: 566, 568). Rather than seeking emancipation *after* providing security and building institutions, a preventative post-liberal peace recognises that the “responsibility to protect” encompasses non-military politics and action to address “gross violations” of the human person arising from acute poverty (Richmond, 2009: 568). This requires abandoning the limited understanding of humanitarianism as supposedly apolitical disaster relief, as embodied in international law, and build on an “enlarged conception of humanitarianism” that confronts and seeks to transform international and global power structures - that is, global capitalism - guided by the emancipatory Right to Development and the idea of a

New International Economic Order, for which the ALBA-PTA stands, to transcend the victimising notions of rescue and protection altogether (Newman, 2009; also Hauge, 2009). Such “sustainable peace” can hardly be brought from outside, but will be an endogenous project, constructed from within - in this case by the Bolivarian, *Our American* philosophy and ideology of resistance and liberation. Looking at the world from this angle, the liberal ideology stands for elitism, tyranny and totalitarianism through its construction of the ‘illiberal other’ that has to be fought by any means (cf. Lidén, 2009; Duffield, 2007).

Grounded in a politics of solidarity, Bolivarian internationalism, upon which the revolutionary conception of intervention and peacebuilding rests, neither means militarised humanitarianism, nor humanitarian assistance as isolated, short-term disaster relief, but long-term, emancipatory structural transformation. Despite limitations in its full realisation due to structural and contextual constraints, as well as human shortcomings, the agenda stands as outlined in this paper. The US’s re-militarisation of the region and resuscitation of the coup-and-dictatorship-policy of past decades speaks for itself, and explains the defensive, rather than interventionist, ALBA-PTA military doctrine.

Notes

[1] This paper is grounded in an interdisciplinary doctoral and post-doctoral research programme made up of discrete projects (multiple cases), funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, PTA-030-2003-00417; PTA-026-27-1902). Within a critical theory research approach (rather than problem-solving, Cox, 1981), I use Michael Burawoy’s reflexive science research model and extended case method (Burawoy, 2009). A set of data gathering tools, including participant observation, were employed during a total of 16 months of fieldwork (Venezuela, 2005/2006/2007/2009/2010; Nicaragua, 2006/2009; El Salvador, 2009). Critical discourse analysis techniques (Fairclough, 2003) were used on policy strategy papers, 400+ ALBA-PTA-related cooperation and integration documents (2000-2010), and over 60 semi-structured open-ended interviews with officials, coordinators, legal advisors, academics, and civil and organised society actors. In accordance with the objective of the extended case method, I seek theory reconstruction - extension of preexisting theory, in this case (counter-)globalization theory - through multiple dialogues (intervention, process, structuration, reconstruction). Each study (ALBA-PTA country and policy cases) on its own only provides a ‘slice’ of the bigger picture, and has to be linked with the other studies in search for common patterns in the region (around the world) and the forces that create them. Therefore, this paper only gives partial answers to the many

questions that arise from this complex and under-researched phenomenon. See Muhr (2008b) for the application of Burawoy's methodology to this research field and the attempt of extending the extended case method to global ethnography; Muhr (2008a; 2010a, b, c) for other case studies. References and quotations from primary sources serve to underscore key analytical findings. They are carefully selected and should be understood as a counter-colonizing practice, rather than unreflective romanticization, to counter effects of power: domination, silencing, objectification, normalization. Translations from originals in Castilian are my own.

[2] I follow Robert Cox's (1981) argumentation that hegemony is constructed and reconstructed through the dialectical interaction of forces - material capabilities, ideas and institutions - that are both products and facilitators of a particular world order. Counter-hegemony involves offering a new commonsense, i.e. new understandings and practices capable of replacing the dominant ones (Santos & Rodríguez-Garavito, 2005). Traditional imperialism principally exercises direct control over foreign states through territorial conquest; the neo-imperialist global capitalist governance regime relies on Gramscian hegemony (rule by consent and only exceptionally by force) and seeks control over spaces, resources and specified people through a dialectical relationship between territorial and capitalistic logics of power (Harvey, 2003; Callinicos, 2009).

[3] 'ALBA-PTA' (rather than 'ALBA') has been adopted in the official documentation especially since the 7th ALBA-PTA Summit in October 2009. Honduras joined ALBA in 2008, but was withdrawn in January 2010 by the unconstitutional regime following the military-entrepreneurial coup d'état against President Manuel Zelaya on 28 June 2009.

[4] Based on ALBA-PTA-related integration documents. Listed institutions are exemplary rather than exhaustive.

[5] This paper is not concerned with providing empirical evidence of the significant social, cultural and economic democratization (necessary for the exercise of political democracy) of the societies within the ALBA-PTA space. For example, in 2009, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua were declared illiteracy-free in accordance with United Nations standards (Muhr, 2010a).

[6] 'Min. Defensa informó sobre traslado de 2 helicópteros Superpuma a Bolivia', *ABN*, 29 May 2006.

[7] 'Bolivia y Ecuador firman convenio de cooperación militar', *Redacción Ministerio de Defensa*, 6 June 2008, <http://www.midena.gov.ec/content/view/5994/209/>.

[8] 'Diputado César Navarro dijo que la aspiración es de largo plazo Bolivia apoya fuerza armada del Alba', *Aporrea*, 29 January 2008, <http://www.aporrea.org/internacionales/n108285.html>; also see the announcement of joint Venezuelan-Nicaraguan military manoeuvres, 'Ejército de Nicaragua y Venezuela realizarán maniobras militares', *Aporrea*, 3 December 2009.

[9] 'Chávez propone creación de Consejo de Seguridad para países miembros del ALBA', *Aporrea*, 17 October 2009.

[10] 'Países del ALBA aprobaron eleborar nueva doctrina militar', <http://www.vtv.gov.ve/noticias-internacionales/24991>, 16 October 2009; 'Evo Morales propone un Colegio militar regional para el ALBA', *El 19 Digital*, 23 July 2009, http://www.el19digital.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5190:evo-morales-propone-un-colegio-militar-regional-para-evo-morales-propone-un-colegio-militar-regional-para-alba&catid=24:internacionales&Itemid=15.

[11] 'Ejército presenta proyecto de creación de la escuela de defensa y soberanía de los ejércitos del ALBA-TCP', 17 November 2010, <http://aneb.ejercito.mil.bo/>.

[12] For this argument with respect to Cuba, see Klepak (2005).

[13] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 18 June 2010, <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>. Cuban figures not available.

[14] SIPRI, <http://milexdata.sipri.org/> (18 June 2010). Bolivia's 1998 figure is an estimate. Cuba is the 2008 value, 1998 figure is not available. The Venezuela 2009 value is the initial budget and is likely to be substantially higher. For comparison, the US's arms spending almost doubled between 1998 and 2009, rising from USD 362,277 to 663,255 million.

[15] SIPRI, <http://milexdata.sipri.org/> (18 June 2010). The Cuban 2008 value is used in the ALBA total.

[16] See, <http://www.fmh.gob.ve/node/981> (accessed 30 November 2010).

[17] 'Bolivia apoya fuerza armada del Alba', 29 January 2009, <http://www.aporrea.org/internacionales/n108285.html>; 'Venezuela y Bolivia firman Acuerdo de Cooperación Militar', *Prensa Presidencial*, 22 May 2008, http://www.minci.gov.ve/noticias_-_prensa/28/178179/venezuela_y_boliviairman.html.

[18] In international law, 'humanitarian intervention' is associated with coercive force by a state or group of states *without* the consent of the state in question in order to prevent or end grave and widespread violations of fundamental human rights (Holzgreffe, 2003: 18; see Duffield, 2007, for a critique grounded in the liberal civilized/barbarian dichotomy and its contemporary effective/ineffective state variant). Coercion, obviously, was not necessary in the case of Haiti, where the coup installed an imperialist-friendly regime in the first place.

[19] Also see the forum 'The 1994 U.S. Action in Haiti', *The American Journal of International Law*, 89(1), pp. 58-84.

[20] See http://www.petrocaribe.org/index.php?tpl=interface.sp/design/union/readmenu_acerca2.tpl.html&newsid_obj_id=632&newsid_temas=4.

[21] ‘Unidad militar humanitaria viaja a Haití’, *Radio La Primerísima*, 14 January 2010, <http://www.radiolaprimerisima.com/noticias/general/68528>; ‘Tercer Vuelo de Ecuador a Haití’, *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*, 28 January 2010, <http://www.mmrree.gov.ec/2010/bol023.asp>.

[22] Country contributions to the reconstruction of Haiti at <http://www.haiticonference.org> (last accessed 30 November 2010).

[23] On 31 December 2009, contributions to MINUSTAH’s force level were: Bolivia, 208 contingent troops; Ecuador, 67 contingent troops. Total troops and military experts in UN missions were 441 (Bolivia) and 82 (Ecuador) (<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/>). Both countries started participating in MINUSTAH prior to their membership in the ALBA-PTA. Whilst the apparent contradiction is interesting, it has not been possible to investigate the issue within the scope of this paper due to lack of funding for field research in the respective contexts (Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti).

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Table 1 ALBA-PTA Dimensions and Institutions[4]

Dimension	Institutionalisation
Cultural	TELESUR. ALBA Houses. RADIOSUR. Bookshops of the South. Sports Tournaments.
Education & Knowledge	GNP ALBA-Education. GNP Literacy and Post-Literacy. GNI Geology, Mining and Metallurgy. UNIALBA and other higher education institutions.
Energy	PETROAMERICA (PETROANDINA, PETROSUR, PETROCARIBE). OPPEGASUR. GNE-Petroalba, GNE-Petrosuramerica, GNE-Energy.
Environmental	Mission Energy Revolution International. GNE ALBA-Timber. Environment GNPs.
Financial	ALBA Bank. SUCRE Common Monetary Unit (Unitary System of Regional Payment Compensation): Regional Monetary Council; Common Account Unit SUCRE; Central Chamber of Payment Compensation; Regional Reserves and Trade Convergence Fund.
Industry & Trade	Mixed Enterprises. GNE Aluminium. GNE Iron and Steel. GNE ALBATEL. GNE ALBA-Timber. GNE Export and Import (ALBAEXIM). Recuperated Factories.
Legal	An international juridical and regulatory framework (GNE jurisdiction, SUCRE, recognition of diplomas and titles, democratic norms).
Military	Permanent Committee for Sovereignty and Defence.
Politico-ideological	ALBA Houses. TELESUR. RADIOSUR. GNE ALBA-Culture. GNE ALBA Cultural Fund.
Social-Humanitarian	Health, food, and housing missions (e.g. <i>Operación Milagro</i>). GNE ALBA-Foods. GNE-Soya. GNE ALBA-Med. GNP ALBA-Health. PETROAMERICA (social and humanitarian funds, e.g. ALBA Caribe Fund).

Table 2: Military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product[13]

	1998	2008
Nicaragua	0.7	0.7
Bolivia	2.3 (estimate)	1.5
Ecuador	2.4	2.8
Venezuela	1.6	1.4
ALBA (average)	n/a	1.6
Brazil	1.7	1.5
Chile	3.4	3.5
Colombia	2.6	3.7
USA	3.1	4.3

Figure 1: Military expenditure in constant (2008) USD million[14]

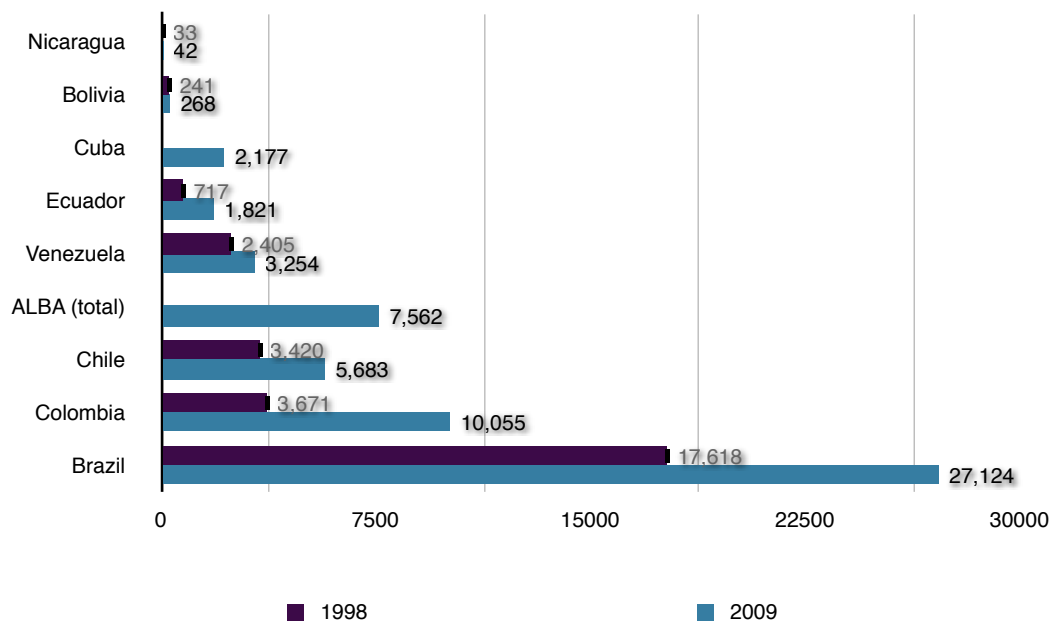


Figure 2: ALBA-PTA and US military expenditure in constant (2008) USD million[15]

