

Star Wars and Earth Infantrymen

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Reagan's television 'revelations' offer the cue for an analysis of the alleged new doctrines and for some considerations on how some minor imperialisms such as Italy move.

Beyond the publicity method, the military content of these doctrines has nothing clamorous about it, being at least 15 years old, and has little 'space' about it if photos of more terrestrial targets than ever were shown to demonstrate its necessity.

The fuss about 'breakthroughs', 'star wars', 'sci-fi' weapons raised with imbecilic journalistic phraseology, hides a spontaneous tendency of the bourgeoisie to overcome the doctrines of balance due to their respective deterrents. As conditions ripen for ever more serious conflicts, doctrines are arrived at that are more in keeping with the waged war than the 'cold' war. The photographs and arguments used by Reagan refer to an unquestionably tactical scenario and there the infantry is needed, not the spaceship.

In articles from the 1980s, we pointed out how the national bourgeoisies no longer thought of armaments as elements of 'deterrence' against reciprocal attacks, but intended to descend to the terrain of forecasting, producing and adopting a whole series of weapons, from the spaceship to the individual fantasy-land, suitable for the conquest of real targets. The first theoretical assumption of the doctrinaires of nuclear strategy was that nuclear weapons should not be used to fight an atomic war, but to prevent it. But as soon as the demands dictated by inter-imperialist relations dictated this, when people began to talk about tactical nuclear weapons, the doctrine of deterrence began its decline, even though no one officially repudiated it. And in the end, in parallel with the maturing of major conflicts, the two highest imperialisms defined their strategy perfectly and clearly by identifying their 'vital zones' to be defended and conquered even preemptively in the event of tension and danger to their 'national security'. It goes without saying that, from the perspective of a world-scale imperialism such as the American one, 'vital zones' are practically everywhere, which obviously leads opposing imperialism to respond with the same tune.

Let us recall in passing that between the spring and summer of 1982, no less than four major wars were underway simultaneously, and all of them, directly or indirectly, closely related to the change in the world situation that is taking place and which is causing the obsolescence of the abstract military doctrines of the times of 'peace'.

Today's military doctrines are unmistakably pragmatic in nature and it would be wrong to interpret them as doctrines of militarism designed to provoke an increase in orders to industries or to favour extremist political alignments. Instead, it is true that military doctrines are always a belated reflection of a material situation that is ripe for real war scenarios. Of the four wars mentioned, Falklands, Lebanon, Iran-Iraq, Afghanistan, not one originates and is fought on exclusively local ground, and a conflict of a certain magnitude that only originates from local tensions and only has repercussions in the area where the clash physically takes place is becoming increasingly unlikely.

These wars have involved and continue to involve forces far beyond the two contenders on the opposing sides.

The eyes of imperialisms are constantly on every conflict, whether through the traditional means of diplomacy and espionage, the high-resolution targets of satellites, or the gigantic network of listening and electronic countermeasures constantly active on land, at sea, and in the air.

Reagan's 'new' strategy does not even have the deception of deploying a defensive apparatus: when the ABM agreement (on anti-missile missiles) was signed in 1972, the discussion centred precisely on the fact that anti-missiles, despite appearing to be defensive weapons since they were designed to destroy incoming enemy missiles, were in fact ultra-hardy weapons because they enabled their owners to launch an attack with impunity without having to fear reprisals. It was therefore pretended that the deployment of ABM defences was limited by leaving the most populated and industrialised cities 'hostage' to reprisal. In reality, this generous show of goodwill for peace was simply due to the fact that the technologies of a dozen years ago were not capable of ensuring ABM defence at a cost acceptable to society in relation to the real danger of war fought. Today, the cost remains high, but the technologies, and especially the international situation, allow the adoption of a clear, highly offensive doctrine.

We use these terms (defensive - offensive) for brevity, but we must point out that for Marxists the usual meaning with which they are used does not make sense. Faced with a real danger, the weaker contender is forced to defend himself by attacking before the threat is too serious to avert it with a passive defence. After all, not even in Homer's time did wars unfold according to the will of men, let alone today, when millions of concatenations of material interests and even randomly appearing emotional events are added together that escape the comprehension of the protagonists.

Moreover, Reagan's strategy is not being adopted now. Not only is it not new, but it has already been in place for some time. Reagan is merely recording, as have the American specialists and government who have been grooming him.

Space research is one of the most genuine products of militarism: it originated in the Peenemünde military projects in Germany and later developed in parallel with military doctrines, influencing them and being influenced by them.

On the TV show, Reagan spoke of a permanent defence system capable of destroying any weapon aimed at the United States. Such a system would be based on the use of the latest technology being developed, basically a trinomial satellite-missile-laser-emission in an ECM - ECCM environment (i.e. electronic warfare: measures, counter-measures, counter-countermeasures). Well, all the paraphernalia required for this type of warfare was fine-tuned and developed during the Vietnam War, in an attempt to somehow make up for the difficulties that overwhelmed the 'American boys' bogged down in the rice fields. The use of lasers, electronic warfare, orbiting satellites, and all those weapons that the technical literature calls PGMs (precision-guided munitions, tactical guided weapons) were devised and introduced in that great laboratory that was Vietnam so that the infantry could conquer or hold a few positions in the malarial swamps or desolate mountains.

There are no 'breakthroughs', there are no new 'star wars' doctrines, on the contrary: the more conventional warfare practices and productions are dusted off for the concrete needs of potential or ongoing battles, the more the general staffs and industry scramble to study PGMs, perhaps linked to satellite information, to flush the enemy's fantasy out of its hole and replace it with their own.

Let's look at the South Atlantic war, let's think about what has been mobilised around the entire planet to dislodge a few thousand cold infantrymen and replace them with thousands more cold infantrymen who will have to stay there, with all the logistics and 'space' detection necessary to keep them there.

The so-called new doctrine does not mislead us: firstly because as materialists we follow the real processes that disrupt the capitalist world and are reflected in armies and doctrines; secondly, because on the basis of this analysis, we find precise confirmations both in the official texts of the military apparatuses and in the television dramatisations aimed at appeasing public opinion at the same time as new billions of dollars are being allocated to armaments.

It is precisely in the present context that we see how pacifism, the watchword of disarmament, and the claim of shifting public spending from the military to the welfare sector, are utterly ridiculous. Modern warfare suffers, more than that of the past, from a fundamental contradiction between the destructive power of the fighting units or the means employed, and the impossibility of moving, relocating, and supplying the masses of millions of men

necessary to bring the war itself towards the achievement of a concrete, tangible result, negotiable with the enemy or usable to impose unconditional surrender.

This is the contradiction on which the communist revolution can rely, perhaps the most favourable, since, as Lenin states, nothing is more favourable to revolution than a mass of millions of proletarians in arms.