

# SELF-RELIANCE: CONCEPT, PRACTICE AND RATIONALE

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One tremendous advantage with the term "self-reliance" is its open-endedness. The term has a certain nucleus of content, but it is up to all of us to give it more precise connotations (as a matter of fact, that would be the only self-reliant way of going about defining the term "self-reliance"). The following is one suggestion, one effort to fill it with content, even to build some kind of ideology around it; by no means a set of prescriptions.

Roland Berger has this to say about the Chinese origin of the idea:<sup>1/</sup>

"In his August 1945 speech Mao Tse-tung used the phrase 'tzu li keng sheng' which literally translated is 'regeneration through our own efforts'. This more accurately conveys the true meaning of the policy than the term 'self-reliance'. 'Regeneration through our own efforts' also makes it clear that this is a policy radically different from 'self-sufficiency' or 'autarchy'. It is in fact the mass line applied on the economic front and stems directly from Mao Tse-tung's consistent emphasis that 'the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history' and that 'the masses have boundless creative power'. (Italics ours).

Although nothing in what follows is contrary to what has just been said it would be less than self-reliant to give to the Chinese any kind of monopoly position relative to this precious idea. After all the idea of local self-reliance in the sense of the small community relying on its own forces, is as old as humanity itself: this was the normal form of human existence. Then something happened: above all the world-encompassing center-periphery formation built as a program into Western civilization<sup>2/</sup> (with the West in the center, of course), put into (1) cultural practice through the spread of christianity and later on Western science and other forms of Western thought; into (2) socio-economic practice through capitalism and (3) military-political practice through colonialism-- all of them wrapped together in the imperialism of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, and the neo-imperialism of our part of the twentieth century<sup>3/</sup>. The neo-imperialist experience informs us that center-periphery formation is a much deeper phenomenon than political-military colonialism. One basic theoretical assumption is that one has to find its roots in the economic infra-structure

e.g. in the centralizing networks and economic cycles spun by the transnational corporations. Another assumption, to which we would subscribe ourselves, working backwards with the list given above (also working backwards in history), would be that the roots above all are cultural/civilizational, and of a double nature. On the one hand there is one civilization in the world, the Western one, which not only considers itself the center of the world (that is natural) but to be universally valid, the center from which messages of all forms radiate to a periphery eager to receive the Western truth in material and immaterial forms. On the other hand, due to a number of geographical and historical circumstances the rest of the world has to a large extent let itself be impressed by the West and has to some extent accepted a position in the Periphery in exchange for some of the Center products, material and immaterial, that the Center has considered it not only its right, but its duty to distribute all over the world. In other words, we postulate an element of Periphery complicity in the form of a submissiveness it is up to the Periphery to change, to withdraw. In this factor a basic source of change is located.

This type of analysis serves to place self-reliance in a historical context. Self-reliance is not merely an abstract recipe, a way of organizing the economy with heavy emphasis on the use of local factors, but a highly concrete fight against any kind of center-periphery formation with the ultimate goal of arriving at a world where "each part is a center". Since the essence of center-periphery formation is vertical division of labor, with exchanges across a gap in level of processing where trade is concerned, a gap in level of knowledge where science is concerned, a gap in level of initiative where politics is concerned and so on - in short the difference between the sender and the receiver, the leader and the led - the basic idea of self-reliance would be to get out of this type of relationship. In order to obtain that three supporting mechanisms (of exploitation) have to be attacked - penetration, fragmentation and marginalization. And that leads one straight into the practice of self-reliance as a way of fighting center-periphery formation; including the penetration, fragmentation and marginalization.

Penetration, or dependency (the Latin American dependencia) is essentially a power relation: it simply means that what happens in the

periphery is a consequence of causes located in the center. Thus, it gives broader scope to "power" than is usually given in actor-oriented analysis where the "cause" referred to has to be somebody's intent to exercise power; it also takes in the type of power that is built into a structure. Since power of any type can be seen as being of one or more of three kinds<sup>5/</sup> normative/ideological, remunerative and punitive (persuasion, carrot and stick power to put it simply), the fight against penetration also has to have three ingredients. To withstand normative/ideological power emanating from some kind of center self-confidence, self-respect (the Latin American dignidad) is needed - a faith in own values and own culture and civilization; the traditional one and the ability to create new culture. To withstand remunerative power absolute self-sufficiency or autarchy is not needed. On closer analysis it is clearly seen that the point is to be able to produce for basic needs, particularly food, so that in a crisis food cannot be used as a weapon. Another aspect would combine the fights against cultural ideological and economic/remunerative penetration in the struggle for independent taste-formation, being less susceptible to "tastes" generated from the center and satisfiable with center goods only. And finally: to withstand coercive power a certain fearlessness is needed, both as an attitude and as a structure of defense, as an attitude and practice of invulnerability.

Thus, with the focus on such expressions as self-confidence, ability to be self-sufficient and fearlessness/invulnerability it is clear that self-reliance as a doctrine is located more in the field of psychopolitics than in the field of economics. It would be a gross misunderstanding to reduce it to a formula for economic relations alone although that would be in line with the economism of our times, and with the assumption that the root of center-periphery relations is in the economic infrastructure alone. More particularly, self-reliance is not a new way of "bridging the gap", "catching up" in the sense of equalizing GNP/capita or some similar measure. There are at least two good reasons why the latter would not be compatible with the idea of self-reliance: it means taking over the goal-structure of other societies which then become models to imitate; and it probably also means taking over the means used by the rich industrialized Western countries, including center-periphery formation within and between countries. The Third World does not become self-reliant by imitating the First and Second worlds, nor by exploiting some kind of

Fourth World, the Fourth World by exploiting the Fifth world (whatever that might be) etc.<sup>6/</sup> Self-reliance cannot be at the expense of the self-reliance of others; it only implies the autonomy to set one's own goals and realize them as far as possible through own efforts, using one's own factors.

In general terms the way to fight penetration is not through counter-penetration, trying to do to the Center what the Center has always done to the Periphery (persuasion, threats and promises) but to become autonomous. There is much evidence to indicate that this is best done in a process of struggle; that the struggle itself generates patterns of attitude and behavior and new structures that not only serve to break down ties of penetration but also to build true self-reliance<sup>7/</sup>. This was certainly true for the Chinese and much of the success of their revolution was no doubt due to their ability and opportunity to combine liberation with practice of self-reliance during the long years of struggle. Whether this type of experience is a necessary condition for true self-reliance later is another question, however -- the Chinese, Vietnamese and partly Cuban experiences seem to indicate that it may be closer to a sufficient condition.

The double character of self-reliance -breaking up old relations in order to build new ones - comes out equally clearly in the efforts to counteract fragmentation and marginalization. The point is to break up the Center monopoly, or near-monopoly, on inter-action by initiating new patterns of cooperation, and to break up the Center near-monopoly on organizations by creating new organizations. These are both active, outward oriented aspects of self-reliance, showing clearly how different it is from self-sufficiency as a concept. The point is not to avoid interaction but to interact according to the criterion of self-reliance, which means in such a way that no new center-periphery relationship emerges. In practice this means **higher priority** to horizontal interaction - particularly trade - with others more or less at the same level; and a preference for organizations together with others at the same level - "level" meaning something like "degree of peripherization" rather than the highly misleading GNP per capita. The double nature consists in using the same horizontal organizations of people, districts, countries, even regions as solidarity organizations for collective bargaining and confrontations with the centre, and for internal co-operation to obtain a more equitable world. <sup>8/</sup>

So much for the general concept of self-reliance as a pattern of regeneration through own efforts, of fighting dominance by starting relying on oneself, meaning individual self and the collective Self of others in the same position. But concretely what is the practice of self-reliance? Two principles seem to be at work here in addition to everything said above: the principle of participation and the principle of solidarity. These principles are crucial as guidelines, but like all such principles become counter-productive when they degenerate into dogmatic prescriptions.

Self-reliance is a dynamic movement from the periphery, at all levels- individual, local, national, regional. It is not something done for the periphery; basically it is something done by the periphery. Thus, control over the economic machinery of a country by national, and even by local, state or private capitalists in order to produce for the satisfaction of basic needs is not self-reliance. It may be to "serve the people", but it is not to "trust the people" - to use Chinese jargon. Self-reliance ultimately means that the society is organized in such a way that the masses arrive at self-fulfillment through self-reliance - in participation with others in the same situation. Obviously this points directly to a decentralized society, e.g. in the form of the 70.000 (or so) Chinese people's communes with their subdivisions (brigades and teams), and sufficient autonomy locally to permit participation down at the grassroot level.<sup>9/</sup>

Hence self-reliance should ideally be seen as something originating in the antipode to the metropolises in the Center: the vast rural lands in which the larger part of the world population still lives. Concretely it takes the form of using local factors - local creativity, raw materials/ land and capital. Often the center has drained away so much of the conventional raw materials and the local capital that the task is to find forms that stimulate local creativity. This should not be confused with labor - intensive forms of production which may constitute a solution where there is scarcity of capital and excess of labor. Such factor-substitution is entirely compatible with centralized management and manipulation, professionalism and bureaucratization. Rather, the point would be to opt for those forms of production that permit local grassroots initiative and innovation yielding results compatible with local conditions tastes culture. The point would be that the loss in efficiency caused by sometimes

reinventing something already invented elsewhere is more than offset by the gain in self-confidence in accepting the challenge of being the innovator. To be the able recipient of a technology developed elsewhere casts the person/community/country/region in the role of the good pupil; a role which is very difficult to unlearn and is the very opposite of being self-confident.<sup>10/</sup>

The basic economic principle, then, would be to use local factors and produce for local consumption. Before producing anything, however, the basic question asked during times of crisis should always be asked: do we really need this product? The argument that it can be used for exchange even if we do not need it for any use presupposes that there are other communities that are not based on self-reliance - like capitalism assuming that there will always be a periphery somewhere that can serve as a market". Moreover, only with the masses in command is there a sufficient guarantee that first priority will be given to production for the satisfaction of the basic needs of those most in need, emphasizing use-value over exchange-value,<sup>11/</sup> not ruling out the latter entirely.

If the answer is yes, the product is needed, the task would be to try to produce it from local factors rather than getting it in exchange for some factor held to be available in excess quantities (labor, raw materials) or in exchange for some locally produced product. In so thinking, and acting, there is no doubt that self-reliance is profoundly anti-capitalist, for capitalism is based on mobility of factors and products in world-encompassing cycles. Capitalism generates trade, which in turn is good for the traders<sup>12/</sup>. If it had also been good for development all over the world that would have shown up already given the enormous increase in world trade during the last centuries. Hence the theory is that self-reliance will serve the purpose of development in the sense of satisfying both material and immaterial needs better.

But what happens if the product needed cannot be produced locally, from local factors, in a federation of villages with little industrial experience, only small scale industry? First, one might follow people in times of crisis, trying to find some new ways of using raw materials so as to get the product nevertheless (the Cuban use of sugar-cane as general

raw material for a vast variety of products), or one changes the product so that it still serves the purpose but makes better use of local factors (the Chinese use of hydro-electric energy for tractors in some regions).

14. However, there are obvious limits to this, given the asymmetries in the world economic geography, and they are numerous indeed; the most important one probably being the asymmetry of water-distribution. Canals can be dug by people rather than by machines, but pumps are among the best devices made by man, and one should not necessarily wait till the industrial base for making pumps has been developed. The problem is where to go to get the pumps when they are indispensable and cannot be produced locally. And this is where the principle of **solidarity** enters: start the search for a partner in this type of cooperation with another community at the same level in the same district; if that does not work have the district cooperate with another district in the same province; if that does not work have the province search for another province in the same country; if that does not work cooperate with another country in the same sub-region (meaning Grupo Andino, ASEAN, West or East African communities etc.); if that does not work try the larger region (meaning the ECLA, the ECA, or the ACAPE regions); if that does not work try for Third World cooperation - and ultimately, if that does not work either: some type of exchange and co-operation with centre countries.

In a simplified version this leads to three levels of self-reliance: local self-reliance, national self-reliance and regional (sub-regional, regional, Third World) self-reliance. The relations among these three levels pose important problems to be studied below. Thus, far from being antithetical to trade and exchange and cooperation a consistent policy of self-reliance may even increase the exchange level in the world because it will engender much more cooperation between neighbors in geographical and social space. The point is not to cut out trade but to redirect it and recompose it by giving preference to cooperation with those in the same position, preferring the neighbor to the more distant possibility, cooperation to exchange, and intra-sector to inter-sector trade. Working outwards from oneself and oneself, in a set of oceanic circles as Gandhi might have said<sup>13/</sup> is just the opposite of the prevalent pattern today linking the periphery of the Periphery to the center of the Center through a series of costly middlemen with obvious vested interests

and power to fight for the status quo, including the intellectual power to rationalize the status quo through concepts like "comparative advantages". 14/

At this point let us summarize in a negative way by listing what self-reliance (SR) is not:

- (1) SR is not an abstract, general formula. Self-reliance is a part of an historical process, at the same time the fight against a certain global and domestic structure and a way of building a new one.
- (2) SR cannot be led from above. Self-reliance must probably be initiated from above, but is meaningless without mass participation. Through collective self-reliance necessary conditions may be created at the national level and through national self-reliance necessary conditions may be created at the local level, but it is only at the local level that self-reliance properly speaking can unfold itself as mass action.
- (3) Self-reliance is not the same as national/local processing of raw materials. This is usually a necessary condition, for one basic idea is to contract economic cycles and to use local factors. But national processing is entirely compatible with national capitalism and penetration of the national periphery from the national centers, just as local processing is compatible with local capitalism and all that implies in terms of division of labor between owners/labor-buyers/decision-makers and workers of all kinds, both in terms of deciding what to produce, how to produce it and what to do with the surplus created. Moreover, capitalism as it is known today is expansionist by nature and will tend to overflow the borderlines of any self-reliant unit, turning other units into sources of factors and markets for capital and products all of which would be incompatible with the self-reliance of those units.
- (4) Self-reliance is not the same as producing for the satisfaction of the basic needs of those most in need. Those are excellent priorities, but they are also compatible with managerialism and clientelization. SR implies another subject/object relation, that the masses are more the masters of their own need-satisfaction, not developing the "psychology of depending on the government for relief"<sup>15/</sup>.

(2) Self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency or autarchy. SR implies the building up of a system of trade and cooperation, not the building up of a system of self-sufficiency - although it may be argued that self-reliance is a necessary condition for living for.

The second aspect of the general idea of self-reliance let us briefly look at the economic and political rationale for self-reliance in the world. There are clear asymmetries in the world, between the centre and the periphery, and the east peripheries. More precisely, there are asymmetries in the world that lead to this kind of structure that make it difficult to see any other way of organizing the world that would be worth gambling on.

Self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency or autarchy. Towards production for basic needs the masses in control of the productive machinery, such ideas as using land for cash crops in order to "buy consumers goods, and some means of production) would less over the economic cycle were sufficient to not remain unsatisfied.<sup>16/</sup>

(3) Participation in the economy is ensured. A necessary condition for self-reliance is the control over the local economy - which is the main idea in SR. If the economy is steered by remote forces, participation will remain formal, e.g. municipal elections, electing a council over the economy as the local station-  
express train (it is the train that directs signals rather than vice versa). Thus mass participation is a necessary condition of the self-reliance, both as necessary and

Self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency or autarchy. This aspect of SR is also irrational in terms of its own criteria; it is the easy solution once and serves as a substitute for search and re-search,

for new ways of growing food, for new types of foodstuffs etc. Nobody who has been through a crisis, e.g. a war economy is in any doubt as to what this means: a mobilization of resources, some of them known before but un-or underused; others even unknown. The argument against this is often heard, "we do not want to live in a war economy". It is true that psychologically this kind of economy has been associated with crisis in the rich part of the world - for the poor in the poor part of the world it is just the other way around. For them the "normal" capitalist economy has been a state of permanent crisis and self-reliance, under one name or the other, the alternative at least capable of satisfying basic needs. But it is quite clear that the psychology of the "developed" countries, and of the overdeveloped pockets in the "developing" countries, would have to undergo some changes in order for SR to be more acceptable. These changes will probably come about in two ways, negatively as the result of crisis produced with the coming redirection and recomposition of world trade (and that would come even as a consequence of the much more moderate New International Economic Order), and positively as a desire for an alternative style of life where self-fulfillment is seen as something coming out of self-reliance than from mass consumption in an affluent, but clientelized, society.<sup>17/</sup>

(4) Through SR creativity is stimulated. We have mentioned above that the transfer of technology, however good the terms, casts the recipient in the role of the learner, the pupil - learning how to produce, even learning how to consume. Possibly this is the most devastating consequence of the present world order and the consequence most difficult to remedy. The way to go about it is definitely not through schooling alone since that would, with the present pattern, only increase the dependency on the Western centers rather than instilling faith and pride in own culture and confidence in own ability to innovate. The road to innovation probably goes through innovation, and by partly closing oneself off from some of the innovations and advice coming from global and domestic centers.<sup>18/</sup>

(5) Through SR there will be more compatibility with local conditions. That factors will be better utilized has already been mentioned, that ecological concerns stand a better chance will be indicated below. The

type of conditions we have in mind here are not economic/ecological but structural/cultural. Self-reliance does not build walls in the sense that people are no longer given access to knowledge about production and consumption patterns outside the community/nation/region, but it should foster, indeed be based on, more self-confidence. One important aspect would be to reverse the relation between technologies of production and consumption on the one hand and the local structure and culture on the other from assuming (as western social science has tended to do) that the latter have to yield to the former to a search and re-search for those technologies that are compatible with the structures and culture one wants to have. Thus, if people want to be together and talk with each other when they are working then individualizing and noisy means of production should not be chosen: there would be a search for other technologies. Under the condition of SR the local population will tend to trust their own intuitions more and respect foreign technology less.

(6) Through SR there will be much more diversity of development. This is almost a tautology: when development comes out of local conditions, and co-operation is based on the principle of solidarity, local factors and local culture, values, traditions will force much more diversity into our world. Self-reliance is incompatible with imitation of model countries, and also counteracts the silent subversion of local culture through the culture and structure that always accompany the import of foreign techniques and material things in general. One of the most important proofs of this hypothesis is given by China today: had China relied on technical assistance from either or both of the standard model countries, on trade, on transfer of technology etc. as the basic factor in her development the world would have been given one more big copy - instead world diversity has increased tremendously, to the inspiration of all in search of a richer basis for inspiration. For just as for trade SR does not rule out exchange of ideas; it is rather a question of redirection and recomposition of the idea-flow, learning more from cooperation with equals than from imitation of (self-appointed) models.

(7) Through SR there will be less alienation. This also borders on the tautologous: with self-reliance economic cycles will contract because of the principles of local production (as far as possible)- and of horizontal solidarity. However, it should be pointed out that local economic cycles can also be highly alienating if there is no mass participation and no focus on production for one's own needs, particularly then for

the basic needs. The point is rather that a negative factor is eliminated: the vertical, world-encompassing cycle, practically speaking incomprehensible except for the very few who, precisely for that reason, get considerable power. Thus, SR is incompatible with the transnational corporations as we know them today but not incompatible with some type of regional, horizontal, organization for economic cooperation as long as it does not impede the type of mass participation whereby people in general produce and consume in such a way that higher needs are also satisfied (for creativity, togetherness, sense of competence)<sup>19/</sup>

(8) Through SR ecological balance will be more easily attained. When ecological cycles contract the consequences of production and consumption, in terms of depletion and pollution will be not only more visible, but also more direct. The farmer who by and large produces what he consumes and consumes what he produces has the gut knowledge that pollution and depletion will be detrimental to him and his offspring, and this very knowledge initiates the type of negative feed-back that may prevent ecological problems from surfacing at all. Depletion cannot be relegated to some far-off corner of the world, because in that corner they are also practising self-reliance and do not let raw materials out except to neighbors at the same level. Pollutants cannot be dumped on somebody else's territory, including "empty" nature, if SR includes, as it should, a spirit of compassion, partnership with nature (this does not follow from the economic principles alone). Of course, one may still deplete and pollute oneself, as people have always done - the argument being that if this is the case counter-acting forces may more easily come into action than when depletion and pollution take place in remote and defenseless corners of the economic cycles.

(9) Through SR important externalities are internalized or given to neighbors at the same level. This is, of course, one of the most important arguments in favor of SR: by relying on one's own forces a genuine development of oneself, individually and collectively takes place. Much less is lost by reinventing something invented elsewhere already than by casting oneself in the role of a learner and imitator. In more conventional terms: the research and development facilities may be clumsy - whatever that means - but they are one's own, as are the mistakes, and it is from own mistakes, not from those made by others, there is more to learn. Through the mechanism of exchange with others at the same level (say, primitive tractors for

primitive transistors) externalities are given to others at the same level instead of being added to the high level of the Center countries. The principles of redirection and recomposition would under inspired leadership distribute the externalities more evenly inside today's vast global Periphery.

(10) Through SR solidarity with others at the same level gets a solid basis. The indication just given for trade redirection, with a simple distinction made between local, national and regional (Third World) self-reliance, the focus is already on Periphery solidarity. For the time being this is best articulated at the inter-governmental regional level and through increased trade later on, through increased cooperation and innovative behavior of a type that respects local conditions a horizontal infra-structure will emerge as a basis for true autonomy. Through mutual aid the Periphery of today will be weaned off its dependency on the Center of today - through partial withdrawal from the Center and increased reliance on itself - in which case the terms "Center" and "Periphery as applied to the global system will no longer be valid. But they may still be highly valid as applied to the domestic system of the countries in today's Center and Periphery. The principles of self-reliance are as valid for cooperation between districts/states/provinces/departments inside countries as for cooperation between countries. To wean districts off their dependence on capitals is a process which involves the same patterns of thought and action as the corresponding global action. We would agree, however, with those who argue that the basic contradiction in the world of today resides in the structure of global capitalism. However, after that contradiction has been overcome a necessary condition for attacking the domestic structures, will obtain; international contradictions so far having overshadowed the national ones.

(11) Through SR ability to withstand manipulation due to trade dependency increases. Dependency on import (e.g. of foodstuffs or oil) and on export (e.g. of manufactures and capital) constitute an important sub-class of the entire dependency syndrome. Decisions made in one country (to double prices, to stop export, to deny import) have profound effects on other countries in ways that are well known today. When the effect is submission to the will of another country one can talk about manipulation. The obvious countermeasure is, as pointed out above, to inoculate oneself against this type of power by developing a capacity for self-sufficiency (not only self-

reliance) in times of crisis (i.e. when the weapons of export and/or import denial are used), particularly in the field of basic commodities. It may well be that this will lead, in some cases, to a double economy - a regular one with import of foodstuffs and oil and other commodities, and a reserve economy where new patterns of growing food, and new forms of energy production, conservation and conversion are developed. Better still would be a combination in times of non-crisis of both economies, a "walking on two legs" policy, because of the obvious benefits to be derived from this type of diversity. Moreover, it will blur a distinction between the patterns of production and consumption in ordinary and extraordinary periods thus contributing to changes in life-styles and patterns of development. Innovations along such lines as kitchen-gardens everywhere (including on the roofs of high-rise city buildings), three-dimensional agriculture, aquaculture, bio-gas energy generators, use of human manure combined with waste products from agricultural production and consumption etc. should not be seen as crisis devices to be dispensed with when the crisis is over so as to return to patterns of dependency, wasteful overconsumption and ecologically harmful practices, but as good in themselves, e.g. for the many reasons already mentioned. And one of the reasons, as mentioned, is to increase the power of today's Periphery - collective, national, local by making it less susceptible to import/export manipulations, more able to withstand pressure.

(12) Through SR the military defense capability of the country increases. A decentralized country with many units capable of sustaining themselves in times of crisis, meaning not only producing their own food and other essential commodities but also their own leadership and guidance and will to resist, is a much less vulnerable country. Vulnerability being one of the key (and therefore least analyzed) parameters of any military balance makes some countries virtually indefensible today, Japan being an extreme example because of its very high import/export dependency and heavy concentration of all kinds of institutions for the production of goods and decisions along the Tokyo-Osaka line. In a country where the economy is organized according to the principles of local self-reliance there is little or no domino effect to be obtained by knocking out a center, e.g. the capital (which often is the political/military/economic/cultural/structural/communicative capital all in one). A SR country would have to be conquered part by part, but these parts will have much higher capacity

to organize para-military, guerrilla-type resistance as well as non-military forms of defense even after an occupation has taken place. Knowledge of this may deter effectively a would-be attacker; as it may have done both in the US/Cuba and the Soviet Union/China cases. A country knowing its own invulnerability to be high may also be less tempted to enter into pre-emptive military adventures, threatening postures, military encirclement through alliance-formation and bases and "forward defense lines" (in order to make the fighting take place far away from one's own vulnerable homeland) - and, consequently, become a much less aggressive country. In other words, just as there is a basic compatibility between capitalistic growth and modern hierarchical, technocratic military organization there is also a basic compatibility between self-reliance as the basic mode of production and paramilitary/guerrilla/satyagraha forms of defense whereby the civilian population is mobilized and becomes less vulnerable and less clientelized through dependence on vertical military organizations that in turn depend on Center countries for supplies of military hardware and software through hierarchical "alliance" systems.

(13) Through SR as a basic approach today's Center and Periphery are brought on a more equal footing. The word-pair "developed/developing" is a part of the Western syndrome whereby west defines itself as completed and the rest of the world as a periphery waiting to become like West. The word-pair "underdeveloped/overdeveloped" does away with this asymmetry defining either as maldeveloped, one because there are too few means available for the satisfaction of human needs, the other because there are too many<sup>20/</sup> (Needless to say, there are underdeveloped pockets in the overdeveloped countries and overdeveloped pockets in the underdeveloped countries).

Regional self-reliance in today's Center is more than a mechanism of defense against regional self-reliance in today's Periphery: "if you deny us raw materials we shall use synthetics; if you quadruple the prices of your oil we shall develop nuclear energy and other alternatives (in addition to making use of Norwegian oil resources)", and so on. This is a highly foreseeable consequence and by and large to the good because it will, not unlike an economic boycott, force the Periphery into even more self-reliance, thereby gradually making the terms "Center" and "Periphery" obsolete. The same, incidentally, applies to the present pattern of Center

countries to withdraw or withhold money and personnel to intergovernmental organizations, including falling back on their own organizations (EC, OECD, ad hoc meetings etc.): it will pave the way for a Third World Secretariat, even a Third World UN in addition to (not to the exclusion of) the present system. But self-reliance in the Center, particularly when practised at the local level, also gives the overdeveloped, capitalist West a chance to regain so much of what has been lost in recent times: a sense of mastery of local destiny, mobilization of local creativity, less dependence on professionals, less clientelization generally speaking, new technologies (intermediate, soft, appropriate, human) with smaller economic cycles that are more aligned with middle-range ecological cycles, mass participation, societies less vulnerable to military attack: in short the list we have just gone through. Some lowering of purely material standard of living is a very low price to pay for that - and as the contradictions sharpen the probability that Center populations (not only some intellectual elites) will consider that trade-off favorably will probably increase rapidly.

It is felt that these arguments carry a certain weight and are already being reflected, increasingly, at the global, domestic and local levels of political thought and action. If put into practice there will be implications for world interaction in general and world trade in particular, as indicated in this Table:

	intra-sector trade	inter-sector trade
Center-Center	UP	?
Center-Periphery	?	DOWN
Periphery-Periphery	UP	?

The most important dynamic tendency will be in the direction of decreased Center-Periphery inter-sector trade (i.e. across genuine gaps in the level of processing) as an expression of increased Periphery tendency to process their own raw materials and use their own tertiary sector, their own services. As a consequence of this and equally much as an expression of self-reliance one may hypothesize increased intra-sector trade (raw materials against raw materials, (semi)manufactures against (semi)manufactures, services against services) both in the Center and in the Periphery. In doing so the Periphery

will not only preserve more of the positive externalities for the Periphery and distribute them more evenly among themselves; they will also be better protected against terms of trade fluctuations since there will be more focus on intra-sector trade. What will happen in the other three cells in the Table is hard to postulate but the general hypothesis is certainly that increased self-reliance involves redirection and recomposition of trade and, consequently, will have an impact of the total world trade picture. Whether the total world trade volume will go up or down or remain about the same under a system of self-reliance is another matter, however - there is hardly any basis for knowing.

The same, needless to say, applies to everything else said above: it is highly hypothetical. The thirteen rationales should be seen as hypothesis about positive effects that would derive from a policy of self-reliance, but there are also hypothesis about negative effects. To mention five of them:

(1) Through SR inequities may yield but inequalities will remain. There are many types of inequalities, e.g. due to different factor endowment, different ability to mobilize creativity if the masses, different levels of mobilization of the population in general for action, and so on. Self-reliance takes only care of inequality insofar as it is interaction-induced, e.g. derives from the accumulative effects of unfavorable (to the Periphery) terms of trade and/or spin-offs from vertical division of labor, or externalities, in general. Through SR center-periphery relations will be cut down (and if the center reacts sufficiently angrily it may quickly be cut down to almost zero), but that only guarantees that whatever inequality remains is not interaction-induced. Consequently there is also an argument for mechanisms of global redistribution that will "take from the rich and give to the poor" at the same time as the poor become more autonomous. The politics of coordinating this will be extremely complex, to say the least, and the complexity will serve as an argument in favor of small revisions of the present system whereby the Center will promise some transfers (not only stabilization of the terms of trade) in exchange for keeping the present (inter)national division of labor.

(2) Through SR at the regional level, and also at the national level local exploitation may solidify as long as basis is unchanged. The term "self-reliance" should not be used unless there is genuine mass involvement.

National and regional self-reliance should be seen as means towards this goal. As such they are necessary, for local units would be much too exposed to, say, transnational corporations unless there is some national protection available, just as the single Periphery country would need regional solidarity in order to bring about changes in the global structures of trade, politics, military action, culture and communication. The argument is not in favor of anarchy in the sense of a world divided into small, local communities, but in favor of a world where more power, initiative and the level of needs-satisfaction are better distributed at all levels of organization: individuals, groups, local communities, countries, regions. What is not wanted is the use of the rhetoric of self-reliance to conceal contradictions that have to be overcome, between local elites and the people.

(3) Through SR organic ties between units may be reduced. SR should not be interpreted to mean isolationism but redirection of interaction in general, as argued many times above. Nevertheless, the argument that the world might be cut into two halves, the former Center and the former Periphery carries a certain weight - not because that a trend in that direction may not be a short term necessity, but as a long term trend it should be counteracted.

SR policy calls for a certain amount of decoupling from the Center, for some time, but it also calls for recoupling on more equal terms, e.g. for intra-sector exchanges. The time for recoupling is not necessarily when the former Center is willing to import manufactured goods on equal (tariff and non-tariff) terms - that is a very limited perspective on the matter. Equally important is probably the level of general population autonomy, of sufficient self-confidence no longer to be afraid of meeting challenges from other self-reliant units.

(4) Through SR mobility between units may be reduced. SR should not be confused with a system of serfdom tying people to a geographical community, nor with a nomadic system. SR should be compatible with mobility, especially according to the principle of solidarity - meaning a preference for exchange with people in units that are geographical and social neighbor. The Chinese seem to be practising a high level of mobility at least between neighbouring People's Communes as a way of exchanging experience and as a way of providing individuals with new experience and, consequently, with the raw material for a richer life. What would not be legitimate under an

ethos of self-reliance, however, would be to build the systems, particularly the economy in such a way that the unit depends on an input on experts and/or cheap labor from the outside (or depends on the export of such people because of the postal remittances they send back). Again, it is obvious that any anti-mobility principle becomes meaningless if it is adhered to too dogmatically, among other reasons because of the needs for communication between such groups.

(5) Through SR a new vertical distinction be created between self-reliant and not self-reliant units. The argument is very often heard that not all units can be self-reliant and it is easy for China to be self-reliant with those masses of land and people and history. The argument usually confuses self-reliance with self-sufficiency and also overlooks the important circumstance that China practices self-reliance inside the country, probably with the consequence that intra-Chinese trade is lower that it would have been in capitalist economy of the same size and the same level of conventional development. Nevertheless it is obvious that there is a problem of delineating the self-reliant units. Sometimes they will be sub-national, sometimes national and sometimes super-national (Nordic countries, Grupo Andino, etc.)- and SR being a psycho-political in addition to a socio-economic category old cultural borders, ethnic groupings and so on will play considerable role. Since the "integration" of ethnic minorities (that sometimes add up to majorities) during state formation is a part of the general center-periphery syndrome the idea of self-reliance should also be considered in the context of the striving for increased autonomy by such groups - and there are many of them around the world.

In conclusion, then, some words about the problem left untouched in the preceding paragraphs: the problem of the size of a self-reliant unit. There are many good reasons for leaving the problem untouched. First among them is the fear of dogmatism: the idea that a self-reliant unit has to be located somewhere between 500 and 50.000, preferably have around 5.000 members may close rather than open for human imagination and social creativity. Moreover, there is the idea that self-reliance does not only mean local self-reliance. Local self-reliance alone would make the unit too vulnerable, e.g. to transnational corporation penetration. But correspondingly: protection of the local unit through some mechanism of national self-reliance may constitute a carte blanche for local national elites to exploit their masses. And regional self-reliance, at the regional or sub-regional Third World level, might also leave the scene open for exploitation by their potential powers of dominance. Hence, the idea would be that just as local self-reliance has to be protected by national self-reliance and national by regional self-reliance the purpose, the raison d'être of the latter two is to provide a basis for the local self-reliance, and the raison d'être of that again is human self-reliance, the self-reliance of the individual and/or the group.

And that brings in the question of size. The two basic considerations behind any theory in this field are obvious enough. On the one hand there is the problem of viability: there is some element of self-sufficiency in the idea of local self-reliance, however much one insists that it does not exclude co-operation, even some kind of trade with other units, and there is obviously a lower limit, a minimum size for this to obtain. Thus, if one has four thousand families of poor farmers with one acre each the farm is hardly viable, nor are the four thousand farms. But if the plots are combined into four thousand acres and two thousand families work the land, one thousand are engaged in small scale industry and one thousand in "tertiary sector" activities this unit of, say, twenty thousand persons may be viable. In concrete terms this might be a federation of villages, and if we say that India has close to 600.000 villages, out of which 300.000 have less than 300 inhabitants the federation might include something like forty villages - possibly divided into something corresponding to brigades and teams like in the Chinese system, or their equivalents. Thus viability has at least two components: that the internal structure permits rational use of all resources, and a minimum size.

But then there is the problem of maximum size, related to the problem of meaning, identity, participation. What is the maximum size if some type of direct democracy is wanted/needed in order to guarantee meaningful participation of everybody? Of course, the classical answer is a succession of levels, a vertical hierarchy with indirect representation upwards, perhaps also direct elections of some key leaders such as a president. But too much of that is not self-reliance; this quickly becomes reliance on others. In the principle of delegation of power, even very basic, crucial power, there is also a delegation of self-reliance away from the masses to the elites. The system may be called democracy but it is not a system of self-reliance.

The problem is how to obtain meaningful contact for decision-making made by all, which may be said to be a problem of how many can be in a meeting together, communicate with each other, articulate and somehow arrive at a decision - whether by voting according to the Western individualist model, or according to a consensus model, more compatible with many other cultures. Clearly the number is higher than five hundred, lower than fifty thousand. There are national assemblies in the world based on more than five hundred members and even if key decisions are made by small cliques within this group they may at least on some crucial occasions arrive at a pattern of collective decision-making. Even five thousand people may have a meeting in a stadium, a sports arena and divide themselves into ten, or fifty, working groups. With the assistance of cable television, walkie-talkie etc., the possibility of mutually visible and audible articulation, in a dialogue fashion, may be extended to a high percentage of even mass meetings. It should be noted, however, that the point here is dialogue which implies at least the sequence position-opposition-reaction, repeated many times, with new actors in the three roles.

In general, however, really direct decision-making is hardly possible at these orders of magnitude. Something between fifty and five hundred will sound more reasonable, possibly with a committee down to five (the classical panchayat) in a facilitating role; not necessarily to yield ultimate power. And this brings us very close to the Chinese model where the team, not the commune seems to be the working team, the accounting unit and the unit that actually makes most decisions - and it has that order of magnitude (2-300 being fairly typical). This is also a "natural" unit in the sense that it coincides with the size of villages in many parts of the world. 21/ But it is not viable, hence the need for the federation of villages which is the commune. If 80% of China's 800 million or so live in the 70,000 communes the average size of a commune is something between eight and ten thousand - perhaps the size needed for viability. There is something interesting in this: the team is necessary and sufficient for basic viability, for elementary forms of food production, and for basic participation. But for services like health and education, and for small scale industry etc., a bigger unit is needed. On the other hand, it is hardly necessary to have direct participation every day for decision-making at that level as long as there is provision for some type of direct democracy - and for that purpose even that level must not be too big, not more than the ten to twenty thousand families mentioned in the directive establishing the people's communes in 1958 (it should be noted that the real average size is much smaller, this serves to indicate the maximum size).

Thus we have arrived at some reflections on minimum size, and some on maximum size. The optimistic conclusion is that the minimum is below the maximum - there is a positive window so to speak, giving some leeway for social experimentation. It should be noticed

how different this is from the theory and practice of the modern nation state. On the one hand there is the ideology of economies of scale and the need for size in order to play a role internationally. On the other there is the ideology that real human contact can only take place in very small groups, say in families or collectivities of the order of  $10^1$  - certainly not of the order of  $10^2$  and  $10^3$ , even  $10^5$  discussed above. Of course, in a certain sense this is true: capitalist production presupposes a certain market, power politics a certain size at least when there are others around of some magnitude. And there is a type of human nearness that probably can evolve only in very small units out of which the bi-sexual dyand is certainly the most famous - one might assume in China too (although one does not hear too much about that dyand). But the point is that this should be seen as an ideology, not as anything near the status of a law of nature. Big state'ism combined with fragmentation of the population into small units, families and individuals, willing and ready to "delegate" their power at regular or irregular intervals is a coherent ideology highly compatible with strong centre-periphery gradients of a cultural, political, economic nature; but is certainly not the only possible way of organizing the human existence. There are other ways, more self-reliant ways, and if our present technology is incompatible with smaller units this means we have to change the technology, not to permit it to steer us in one direction only. 22/ Which does not mean that all technology has to be of the local, beta-type variety - but that conscious choices have to be made so as to arrive at an acceptable mix of alpha and beta structures and techniques.

1. Roland Berger, "Self-Reliance, Past and Present", Eastern Horizon, Vol. IX No. 3, pp. 8-24. Also see the paper prepared for the 25th Pugwash Conference (Madras, 13-19 January 1976) "The Role of Self-Reliance in Alternative Strategies for Development", by Ashok Parthasarathi with a summary by the Secretary - General of Pugwash. One particular aspect of self-reliance is analyzed in Surendra J. Patel, "Collective Self-Reliance of Developing Countries (WFUNA Annual Summer School, Background Paper 8). Also see the Cocoyoc Declaration for the general philosophy of self-reliance.
2. This is a basic theme of the "Trends in Western Civilization" research program of the Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo.
3. The standard term is "neo-colonialism", but the phenomenon is broader in scope; it is actually imperialism no longer supported by military-political colonialism in the classical sense.
4. From the Cocoyoc declaration: "The ideal we need is a harmonized cooperative world in which each part is a center, living at the expense of nobody else, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations".
5. Power is then seen as a relation between a sender and a receiver, not as something existing in the sender alone - that would be power potential.
6. Extreme care should be taken in using concepts like the "fourth world" usually introduced to indicate divisiveness inside the Third World. On the other hand there is no reason to conceal that dominance relations also develop inside the Third World. If one should talk meaningfully about the "fourth world", however, it would probably make much more sense to see it as located within all Third World countries - the vast periphery of the Periphery- than to see it as a group of countries, e.g. the 25 designated as least developed countries.
7. This is probably a contingent relation, though. It is hardly absolutely necessary, but that it is not absolutely sufficient is seen from the Algerian case today, and probably also from the Soviet case. In both cases a tremendous struggle preceded independence and transition to socialism, but the systems can hardly be characterized as self-reliant.
8. Thus, the UNCTAD 77 is certainly more than an organization for global articulation and collective bargaining; it is also a setting within which new cooperative structures are emerging.
9. This is developed in some detail in Johan Galtung and Fumiko Nishimura, Learning from the Chinese People (Oslo, 1975), chapter 4.
10. At this point a Western preoccupation with the loss of inefficiency in multiple innovation, or re-innovation, enters. Great efforts are exercised to avoid this through "coordination and documentation". Without denying the value of that approach in some fields it should be noticed how this serves the function of reinforcing the Center as a Center because they have the largest capability, e.g. in pure R and D, science and technology, terms for creating new science and technology.

11. However, no absolute dogmatic position about only producing for use, never for exchange will be taken here. When one produces for the use of others there is always an exchange element present which makes it hard to draw an absolute borderline. But the concept of production for socially beneficial goals, including the satisfaction of basic material needs of oneself and others might be seen as a basic ingredient in self-reliance as a concept.
12. This is probably one of the few absolutely safe statements one can make about capitalism, from which it follows that capitalist patterns will be maintained not necessarily only by countries with a dominant private sector, but by countries that base their economies to a large extent on trade, whether most of the economy is in the private or public sectors.
13. Gandhi may be seen as one of the ideologists, and practitioners of self-reliance, through the sarvodaya concept (local level) and swadeshi concept more applied at the national level) - inside a pattern of local capitalism, but of the type normatively regulated through what Gandhi referred to as the "horizontal" aspects of caste.
14. The concept is probably, as Myrdal has argued, meaningful for countries at the same level of development, making exchanges of products at roughly speaking the same level of processing, thus balancing the externalities and keeping terms of trade relatively stable.
15. Berger, op.cit., p. 9- the quotation is from a cable by Mao to some local headquarter in 1948.
16. See the very interesting analysis by K. N. Raj, et. al., Unemployment and Development Policy - A Case Study of Selected Issues with Reference to Kerala (Trivandrum, March 1975) where it is argued strongly that food should be produced locally in order not to become too expensive for the people, and in order to utilize fully marginal resources.
17. It is probably only when the quest for a new life style in rich countries, less consumptive, crisis is seen as a quest for a higher quality of life (and not as a reaction to changing trade patterns etc.) that sufficient momentum will be generated.
18. The individual level paradigm for this is, of course, the way in which most people grow up through a phase of withdrawal from parental authority, establishing their own personalities through more autonomously guided trial and error. From the parental point of view this is known as "the difficult years" and "the puberty crisis".
19. These more ephemeral, higher and immaterial needs are more difficult to define and for that reason usually left out of economically guided analyses. The result is clearly seen in the high level of alienation in the working conditions of developed countries, one eloquent testimony being Studs Terkel, Working (New York: Avon Books, 1972).
20. See Johan Galtung et al, Measuring World Development, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo, Oslo 1974.

21. Lacas, in his article on Quiroga, in The Americas, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 57-86 makes some use of the finding by Doxiades, i.e. that there are 14.10<sup>6</sup> human settlements in the world, that 53.5% of the world population lives in rural settlements, including 4.10<sup>6</sup> single farms and 10.10<sup>6</sup> rural settlements with less than 5,000 inhabitants. Above that there are 32,700 settlements with more than 5,000 inhabitants, 1,460 above 10<sup>7</sup>, 141 with more than one million and 3 megalopolis (with more than ten million). These figures are now a bit old, but the general conclusion still holds: it is normal in the sense of frequent for human beings to live in relatively small settlements.
  
22. Anthony Jay, in "Who Knows What Primitive Instincts Lurk in the Heart of Modern Corporation Man?", New York, 20 September 1971 concludes (p.35) after having examined a large variety of forms of organization that something around five hundred seems to be about the maximum that can be managed from the point of view of participation and meaningful decision-making. Beyond that bureaucratization sets in, and stereotyped thinking and action become abundant. This, according to him, is the size of tribes in Australia, of what Romans ended up with as the practical unit of warfare, of what executives say they can "handle" (not to be confused with the concept of participation mentioned above), and of the famous French marriage circles, the groups of people from which one finds a spouse (about 1100 in rural communities, 900 in Paris - obviously to a young person in Paris not all of Paris is eligible, only a very small part, and the size is about the same as to a person living in the countryside). Obviously this size has something to do with the human capacity for sending and receiving information - but we would prefer not to have too strong opinions on the size since this capacity may depend on factors we do not know enough about.