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**“MEMORY, HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN BOLIVIA’S FOREIGN POLICY  
TOWARD CHILE UNDER MORALES”**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The main source of instability and potential conflict in South America consists of those factors to which most international relations theorists (Holsti, Hoffmann, Keohane & Nye) have paid the least attention, namely, issues of memory, identity, and nationalism. The potential for inter-state conflict (not necessarily violent) between Bolivia and Chile largely involve disputes over history and territory, linked as they are to the unresolved legacy of the War of the Pacific: a landlocked Bolivia. The clash between an increasingly divergent Chilean posture and Bolivia’s new multilateral approach to the issue represents a new challenge for Bolivian policy on Chile. Using mostly secondary sources, this paper identifies the main issues and reflects on what could be done in order to promote a reasonable solution and thereby stability and peace.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The main source of bilateral instability and potential conflict in South America consists of those factors to which most international relations theorists (Holsti, Hoffmann, Keohane & Nye) have paid the least attention, namely, issues of memory, identity, and nationalism. The potential for inter-state conflict (not necessarily violent) between Bolivia and Chile largely involve disputes over history and territory, linked as they are to the unresolved legacy of the War of the Pacific: a landlocked Bolivia. The “history

disputes” that surround Bolivia’s lack of sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, continue to be a source of instability for the southern cone. The clash between an increasingly divergent Chilean posture and Bolivia’s new multilateral approach to the issue represents a new challenge for Bolivian policy on Chile. Similarly, the rise of a new nationalism in Bolivia is another key factor to consider. Linked to the rise of new and competing nationalisms in Bolivia, is Chile’s realignment with the United States. Bolivia’s deep mistrust of U.S. foreign policy in the region complicates the 13 point negotiating agenda started between Evo Morales and Michele Bachelet.<sup>1</sup> Bolivian handling of these issues, involving questions of identity and interpretations of history, and Chilean inflexibility under Piñera’s government, could wreak havoc with the entire apparatus of bilateral agreements and generate unforeseen conflict.

#### THE LEGACY OF DISPUTES

In 1836, Bolivia, under the rule of Marshal Andrés de Santa Cruz, invaded Peru to reinstall the deposed president, General Luis José de Orbegoso. Peru and Bolivia formed the Peru-Bolivian Confederation, with de Santa Cruz as the *Supreme Protector*. Following tension between the Confederation and Chile, Chile declared war on 28 December 1836. Argentina, Chile's ally, declared war on the Confederation on 9 May 1837. The Peruvian-Bolivian forces achieved several major victories during the War of the Confederation: the defeat of the Argentine expedition and the defeat of the first Chilean expedition on the fields of Paucarpata near the city of Arequipa.

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<sup>1</sup> The 13-point agenda: 1). Mutual Confidence Building Measures; 2) Border Integration; 3) Freedom of movement; 4) Physical Integration; 5) Economic Complementation; 6) Access to the Sea; 7) Silala and Water Resources; 8) Poverty Fighting Instruments; 9) Security and Defence; 10) Cooperation against Drug Trafficking; 11) Education, Science, Technology and Labor; 12) Culture; 13) Other issues: parliamentary contacts, social security, etc.

On the same field, the Chilean and Peruvian rebel army surrendered unconditionally and signed the Paucarpata Treaty. The treaty stipulated that Chile would withdraw from Peru-Bolivia, Chile would return captured Confederate ships, economic relations would be normalized, and the Confederation would pay the Peruvian debt to Chile. In Chile, public outrage over the treaty forced the government to reject it. Chile organized a second attack on the Confederation and defeated it in the Battle of Yungay. After this defeat, Santa Cruz resigned and went to exile in Ecuador and then Paris, and the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation was dissolved.

The countries of the America's have never experienced a balance of power; on the contrary, asymmetries have prevailed. Asymmetry is in evidence during the second half of the nineteenth century as well, when "a period of Chilean economic prosperity was guaranteed politically by a bellicose victory" (Duran: 1996) over Peru and Bolivia in the Pacific War of 1879. This prosperity rested on the exploitation of salt deposits, guano and minerals obtained from former Bolivian territories.

Bolivia became independent from Spain on 1825, yet, it wasn't until 10 August 1866 that Bolivia signed with Chile a Boundaries Treaty (*Tratado de Límites*). In 1874, a new treaty was signed, confirming the boundary line at the parallel 24° of latitude south and exempting Chilean companies from any taxes as far as parallel 23°. Soon thereafter, a British company requested a concession to exploit Bolivian salt deposits, obtaining such permission but Bolivia imposed a 10 cent tax on every *quintal* of exported salt. Chile argued that the terms of the 1874 Treaty had been violated and on 14 February 1879, its troops occupied the Bolivian port of Antofagasta, followed by the occupation of other ports (like Cobija, Mejillones and Gatico) and the towns of Calama and San Pedro de Atacama and the mines of Caracoles. Bolivia sought the application of a defense treaty

with Peru and on 5 April 1879, Chile declared war on both countries. As a result, Bolivia lost 120,000 Km<sup>2</sup> of its territory and a sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

While a Peace Treaty was signed between Chile and Bolivia in 1904, this took place in the context of Chilean occupation and customs administration of Bolivia's ports (which strangled Bolivian commerce and trade), and under the duress of the military might of the successful regional power.

### **The case of Peru**

The invasion of Bolivian ports was followed by the Chilean military's advance toward the Peruvian provinces of Tarapacá, Tacna and Arica. The loss of these territories by Peru, led in 1880 to the ephemeral attempt to deal with the fundamental regional power asymmetry by establishing a new alliance and a Peruvian-Bolivian "Federal Union". Chile continued its military offensive, defeated both countries and occupied Lima. A few years later, Peru and Chile signed in 1929 a Protocol, according to which, "the governments of Peru and Chile will not be able to, without previous agreement among them, cede to a third party, in whole or in part, the territories that hereby fall under their respective sovereignty". This protocol introduced a new element in the equation, as Chile's interests were strengthened by interlocking Peru's veto power with any potential solution to Bolivia's landlocked status.

### **Bolivia's Identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bolivia was a predominantly rural and multiethnic Indian society. Political unity disguised its social, cultural and economic fragmentation. According to Klein, in 1846, 89% of the population lived beyond the cities and towns, and produced over two thirds of the GNP. Kechua was the prevailing language, and Aymara was a close second. "Spanish was, therefore, a minority language in the

republic, though it was the only [language] spoken in the political and economic life of the nation.” Thus, during the first few decades after Independence, Bolivian identity was marked by the long-standing contradictions between the “Indian” and “Creole” components. While the former was rooted in the pre-Columbian greatness of the Inca Empire, violently overturned by Conquest and colonialism, the latter wavered, on the one hand, between protectionist and liberal tendencies vis-à-vis the world order of the *Pax Britannica*; and on the other, between its privileged condition and minority social standing. Bolivian protectionism ran against Chilean and British *laissez-faire* policies; oligarchic control of the Bolivian state weakened it internally and projected a misleading image of its national “unity”.

Reproducing a pattern found in other Latin American countries, Bolivian creoles and *mestizos* had split into “accommodating” and “autonomist” factions. Thus, Olañeta, Linares and Melgarejo, were presidents that favored free trade, while Andrés de Santa Cruz, Manuel Isidoro Belzu and Agustín Morales stood for protectionism. The former group, rooted in the mining economy, expropriated Indian lands, organized bloody repressions, ceded Bolivian territory and weakened the nascent handicraft and textile industries of Cochabamba, La Paz and Chuquisaca. The latter group, rooted in the *haciendas* and emerging urban sectors, found support among Indians, mine workers, artisans, small businesses and urban *cholos*. By 1871, accommodating forces prevailed in Bolivia, so no matter who would come out victorious during the Pacific War, Bolivian tin-mining interests were already inextricably linked to Chilean and British capital.

It was the gradual emergence of tin-mining interests after the Pacific War that provided the strongest foundation for a Bolivian dominant identity centered on mineral exports, an economically liberal ideology and strong-man politics. These ideological elements,

however, coexisted uneasily with remnants of the dominant rural order still in existence where patron-client relations, patriarchy and parochialism continuously fed protectionist interests and demands. Encompassing both, Bolivia's national identity, like that of its neighbors, was marked by 19<sup>th</sup> century European state-centric ideas and ideals, as espoused by South America's creole founding fathers like Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín.

## **20<sup>th</sup> Century Efforts to Redress Grievances**

Among the most important efforts on the part of one or more actors:

- The 1920 Act, signed by both the Bolivian foreign minister and the Chilean *Ministro Plenipotenciario*, which considered Bolivian sovereign access to the sea through Arica.
- The US Kellogg Proposal, which in his mediating role, presented to both Peru and Chile a feasible option favorable to Bolivia.
- The 1950 negotiations, undertaken by Bolivian ambassador Alberto Ostria Gutiérrez and the Chilean government, whereby Chile committed itself to undertake direct negotiations with Bolivia.
- The 1975 Charaña negotiation, between *de facto* presidents Banzer and Pinochet. At this time, dictator Pinochet agreed to give Bolivia a small corridor of land running between the Chilean city of Arica and the Peruvian border. However the Treaty of Lima between Peru and Chile specified that Chile must consult Peru before granting any land to a third party in the area of Tarapacá. Peruvian President General Francisco Morales Bermúdez did not agree with the Chañara proposal and instead drafted his own proposal, in which the three

nations would share administration of the port of Arica and the sea immediately in front of it. Pinochet refused this agreement, and Banzer broke ties with Chile again in 1978.

- The OAS resolution of November 1980 that was approved by consensus.
- The negotiations of February 1983, which aimed at a “fresh look”, involving Bolivia’s foreign minister Guillermo Bedregal and Chile’s foreign minister Jorge del Valle.

During this period, it has been argued that Chile, Peru and Bolivia guided their respective actions by a balance-of-power logic (Salazar Paredes, 2006: 70). While an informal alignment of sorts existed between Peru and Bolivia vis-à-vis the more powerful Chile, it is clear that Bolivia had no such thing as a state policy other than the rhetorical discourse of sovereign access to the ocean, repeated many fold in multilateral forums (Figueroa, 2007). In my view, rather than expressing a clear-sighted Bolivian policy, these claims and demands precisely indicated a lack of policy objectives. United by a single vision of a return to the ocean, Bolivian governments had no common policies, strategies or even tactical proposals to move forward effectively and consistently in this pursuit. Quite often, what determined the nature and content of official statements and actions in this matter were the momentary swings of local politics. A fragmented and conflictive civil society could hardly produce a united foreign policy.

From the standpoint of Chile, the 1904 Peace and Friendship Treaty with Bolivia amounts to a juridical end-point regarding any territorial, sovereignty or border issue among the two countries. At any rate, aside from the legal issue, which is thus settled for Chile, any discussions about Bolivia’s claim ought to take place bilaterally.

## EVO'S WATERSHED

The coming to power of Evo Morales, who obtained 54% of the votes in the December 2005 elections and a whopping 64.22% in 2009, brought about deep economic, political and social reforms throughout Bolivia. The implementation of a national project which reversed former governmental priorities and empowered large indigenous and rural sectors, chipped away at Bolivia's long standing fragmentation. The urban-rural coalition that sustained this process, under the impulse of the incumbent MAS party and his undisputed *caudillo*, gave particular strength and focus to Bolivia's foreign policy. Thus, under the leadership of foreign minister David Choquehuanca, Bolivia and Chile engaged in an unprecedented thirteen-point negotiation agenda.<sup>2</sup> Negotiations between the Morales and Bachelet governments proceeded successfully, through most of 2006, until unexpected leaks in *La Tercera* of Santiago cornered the Chilean president in mid 2007 as it prematurely disclosed details of the proposals on the table. Henceforth, the Chilean parliamentary right-wing made it practically impossible to advance on the one issue of the agenda that matters most to Bolivia: sovereign access to the Pacific. Secret discussions between 2007 and 2009 indicate (according to *La Tercera* - 02/06/2011) that, as the Bolivian newspaper *El Deber* had reported, the bilateral commissions discussed the possibility of handing over to Bolivia a 28 Km enclave, without

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<sup>2</sup> On 24 March, 2006, the author of this paper had sent to David Choquehuanca (by the good offices of then cabinet minister Juan Ramón Quintana), a confidential document outlining most of the thirteen-point agenda and a detailed strategy to pursue it in a bilateral framework. The point was to encourage the new Bolivian administration to take the initiative. As stated in the document, "*The present moment is the most promising for an initiative of this nature. Bolivia has experienced a profound state crisis, with the corresponding social and economic crises. The cumulative effects of "capitalization" (mostly referred to the state revenue lost by privatization of natural gas and oil), the strengthening of social movements (stronger in Western Bolivia) and the recovery of these resources for national development purposes, together with the October agenda, and the resounding electoral victory of MAS, provide legitimacy, stability and credibility to the present government.*"



sovereignty, to the south of Quebrada Camarones, north of Iquique. The 2011 election of President Sebastián Piñera, who restated the traditional Chilean position on the matter, all but shut the door to any possibility of a win-win solution to the longstanding dispute any time soon.

### **From Multilateralism to Bilateralism to Multilateralism**

Taking Bolivia's claims to multilateral forums had not produced any tangible results in the past. Direct negotiations with Chile had the advantage of explicitly including discussions on Bolivia's possible access to the Pacific. Furthermore, it became evident that, judging from press interviews and statements on both sides of the Andes, the proliferation of bilateral meetings since 2006 was producing mutual trust. Indeed, the 13-point agenda was designed with confidence building measures. Not surprisingly, after one meeting of Chilean senators in La Paz (*El Diario*, 15/06/2007), Juan Pablo Letelier (PS) and Roberto Muñoz Barra (PPD), praised profusely both the Morales and the Bachelet governments for having promoted "a different kind of dialogue... no one feels threatened". As a result of this meeting, a joint bilateral statement was signed expressing parliamentary support for this process and highlighting the development of mutual confidence (also supporting advances on the Bolivian Maritime Claim, Physical Integration, Commercial and Economic Complementation and Culture). Needless to say, these were statements coming from parties of the *Concertación* coalition (not from the parliamentary right).

An essential condition of this process of building mutual trust was the discretion exercised by both parties. Whereas in the past, any Bolivian government was ready to use the maritime issue as a momentary political rallying-point to induce internal support, during the first year of his government, Evo Morales shun any politicization.

Another advantage of bilateralism had been the “level-playing-field” a full agenda entailed. The inclusion of the maritime issue in a 13-point agenda that touched on all key matters for both countries, and also Bolivia’s natural gas resources, improved the traditionally weak bargaining position of Bolivia. By placing on the table all elements of the bilateral agenda, Bolivia dealt with a full deck of cards and not just with the natural gas “ace”. Not the least, was the possibility of shared exploitation of water resources (crucial for Chilean mining in the Second Region), as well as agreements of economic complementation and investments. By highlighting the benefits Chile would gain by conceding sovereign access to Bolivia, the costs of a failure in the negotiations, or a return to the *statu quo*, were also made evident to La Moneda.

The intrinsic value of a diplomatic success for Bolivia went hand in hand with the essentially political matter of the government’s internal legitimacy. That is to say, the bilateral relationship was favouring a “diplomacy without exclusions” vis-à-vis Chile, for the sake of a return to the Pacific, but also (given the importance that this issue has acquired in Bolivia’s political culture) seeking to ensure the governments continuity in power.

Until the beginning of 2007, Bolivia maintained a firm posture of obtaining sovereign access to the Pacific, and Evo Morales gave every indication of optimism and discretion. However, the probability of national elections in 2008 forced a new political twist and turn and gave renewed urgency to Bolivia’s claim. Thus, foreign minister Choquehuanca started referring to a “deadline” to complete negotiations, and during the 2007 CAN (*Comunidad Andina de Naciones*) meeting in Tarija, Evo Morales stressed to then president Bachelet his desire to “jump to the second phase” of negotiations. According to reports, he was aiming at obtaining an enclave in the Antofagasta region and a corridor, without immediate sovereignty, north of Arica. According to Gastón

Cornejo, MAS senator, “the only thing we ask for is some degree of sovereignty, whether it be placing a flag, setting up our civil service, or applying a part of our legislation” (*La Tercera*, 06/24/07, pp.10). Such publicly displayed flexibility gave rise to a predictable outcry in Bolivia (*El Diario*, La Paz: July 10, 2007.)

Rushing and press leaks made it more difficult for both governments to advance this point of the agenda, especially taking into account that at the moment at least, Chilean public opinion, according to polls by *La Tercera*, was unwilling to accept a sovereign corridor for Bolivia.

As a consequence, the increasing politicization of the matter displaced the original focus on integration as a possible mechanism to bypass the zero-sum game of “sovereignty”. Evo Morales public appeal, in the sense of obtaining a corridor in the Chilean north and also an enclave north of Antofagasta, distorted any integral negotiation between Bolivia and Chile that could produce a bilateral agreement or treaty within the framework of the formation of a Latin American bloc.

The writing was on the wall, and on March 2011, the Morales government announced a change of policy. Henceforth, Bolivia would seek redress to its longstanding grievance at any and all international forums. While Vice President Alvaro García Linera sought public support, President Morales appealed to all intellectuals, experts and professionals to join the new *Dirección General de Reivindicación Marítima*, a body that would undertake the mission to seek international arbitration and redress. In the view of the Bolivian government, this approach could go hand in hand with bilateral dialogue (*El Día*, 25 March, 2011).

The return to multilateralism on the part of Bolivia is both an indication of frustration and a realization that at least under Piñera’s government the maritime agenda is a moot

point. Regardless of multilateralism's past failures, the Morales government has enthusiastically embarked on an international public relations campaign to pressure Chile into accepting Bolivia's sovereign right to access the Pacific. Whether from a neo-realist, or a systemic international relations theory, it is taken for granted that wilful attempts to bend more powerful states by moral pressure alone are doomed to failure. Socio-historical theories (such as Marxism and historical structuralism) while acknowledging power and interests, go beyond them, and add further complications. For one thing, the present world order is somewhat fluid, and the region's hegemon is rapidly losing its influence. But the momentary affinity between a Chilean neoliberal regime and a US liberal democratic administration unwilling to go the way of the "occupy Wall Street" movement, will not likely favour a Chilean concession that would be deemed to weaken an increasingly important hemispheric ally; especially, considering that Evo Morales is one of the key new socialists behind the creation of UNASUR and CELAC, multilateral institutions that many believe pose a threat to the inter American system and particularly, to the OAS. One could consider these political changes as regional efforts to change Latin America's identity as a "backyard" of the United States.

## MEMORY AND IDENTITY

The memory and identity of states change as territories are lost, redrawn or given new meanings and functions, through warfare, occupation, destruction or agreements, and subsequently reorganized or replaced to either continue or dim one's memory and identity. It is not, however, simply the existence, characteristics and construction of boundaries that shape identity; it is also the memories of destruction and absence of territories, as well as the possible reconstruction or recovery of lost structures and

qualities. As Gregory Dowell points out (June 5, 2008), “The ability to remember comes not only from what is still visible but also from what is absent.”

It is interesting to note that since Independence in 1825, Bolivia has lost territory to Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Chile. Notwithstanding, only the loss of a sovereign access to the Pacific has been considered sufficiently meaningful so as to have become engraved in Bolivia`s collective memory as a an amputation of its very identity. As Fernando Salazar Paredes (2006: 102) points out, “Chile... deprived Bolivia of its condition as a maritime nation.” The contrast with the Chaco War (1932-1935) between Bolivia and Paraguay is striking, precisely because even though Bolivia lost about two-thirds of the disputed territories, a good part of the Gran Chaco continued in its possession. This eventuality maintained both geographic continuity with the Río de la Plata basin and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as historic continuity in terms of Bolivia`s identity as an Andean nation with tropical low-lands.

Bolivia`s recollection of the past is marked by the qualitative loss of its maritime status. School children hear about Eduardo Abaroa, the great defender of Calama, before they learn to add and subtract. The Armed Forces have stamped on all its letterhead, the great motto, “Recovering our access to the Ocean is our duty”; September 23rd is the national commemoration of *Día del Mar*, an event only second in importance to Independence Day; Bolivia`s coat of arms still bears a tenth star, representing the *Departamento del Litoral*, lost to Chile in the war. In sum, Bolivia`s memory of the loss is reproduced and transmitted from generation to generation, with the sea as one of the most important sources of identity, not so much because of its physical memory (most Bolivians have never been to the coast), but because of its absence. This absence has profound implications for the psyche of most Bolivians, as a defining element of their national identity is marked by the symbology of deprivation.

Bolivia's attempted reproduction of a collective memory and identity on an absence contrasts with Chile's memory of denial. As Aquiles Gallardo put it, "there is no pending territorial or boundary issue between Bolivia and Chile". Or, as president Sebastián Piñera recently restated at the OAS, "There are no pending territorial issues with Bolivia"; they were ultimately solved by the peace and friendship treaty of 1904, which "was validly negotiated" (*Chile-Hoy*, 24 September, 2011).

Evidently, the territories lost to Chile, and in particular, cities like Calama, Antofagasta and San Pedro de Atacama, have been utterly transformed since the war and today bear all the hallmarks of the Chilean state. Nevertheless, the reorganization and alteration of spaces does not always tell the full truth. The urban reconstruction and evolution of these territories during the last 100 years is able to tell a completely new story that would not have been possible without the occupation of the land and rewriting of the boundaries. What cannot be altered, erased, or forgotten, is the shoreline.

Not surprisingly, after the OAS appeal, President Evo Morales indicated that Bolivia will file a lawsuit to the International Criminal Court in The Hague against Chile in February 2012, demanding an access to the Pacific Ocean (*La Segunda*, Dec. 15, 2011). During a press conference in the government palace, Morales said the team of Bolivian lawyers was working to prepare an official claim and he himself was seeking "some information, some procedures for the application."

"I want to be honest. He [Chilean President Sebastián Piñera] told me that we should continue holding talks and I responded that the solution was in their hands, Chile. We only want to recover free and sovereign access to the sea," *Prensa Latina* News Agency quoted Morales as saying.

### **The New Nationalism, Memory and the Future**

During the Cold War, those in Latin America that favoured change usually came to grief before the onslaught of military dictatorships and the National Security States supported by the US. Today, the enhanced US military interventions in Irak, Afghanistan and Libya and the shift of significant financial and military resources to Asia and the Middle East, has meant a reordering of US global priorities and a window of opportunity to press forward with policies of change in Latin America.

Thus, the coming to power of Evo Morales has coincided with a historic convergence of anti-neoliberal national and social struggles throughout Latin America (in Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua, among others).<sup>3</sup> In this context, Latin America has moved to found and consolidate political and economic integration agendas at an accelerated pace. The agenda of integration in some cases is given impetus by local social and ethnic nationalist movements, which, while seeking to empower themselves in a framework of expanding rights, also share the current leadership's regionalist objectives. In Bolivia, the introduction of ethnic issues, concerns and approaches to traditional conflicts revolving around land-tenure, production and policy-making, has entailed a modification of traditional *criollo* nationalism. But nationalism remains a key factor in the evolution of inter-state relations.

Indeed, we can speak of a "nationalism" of a new type, as it has some characteristics of the old, but differs from it in substantial ways.

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<sup>3</sup> As Andreas Tsolakis (13 June 2006) has pointed out, *it can be argued that the continental logic of governance informed by the 19th century "Monroe doctrine" which sought to establish the region as the United States' protectorate, is dissolving at an accelerated pace.*

*This dissolution is symbolised by the effective burial of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and the US's reluctant return to its historical strategy of signing bilateral free-trade agreements with "friendly" administrations; currently these cover nine of the thirty-six countries, including the three Andean states of Peru, Colombia and Ecuador.*

- 1) The new nationalism, like the old, rests on the hard core of a wave of partial nationalization of key resources, such as oil and natural gas. But, instead of outright expropriations, the state has negotiated compensation agreements and joint ventures with former owners. In some cases, new partners have been found (like the Brazilian *Petrobras* state oil company). This has provided the hard cash needed for social reforms and productive policies.
- 2) The new nationalism, unlike the old, does not aim solely at the consolidation of the nation-state vis-à-vis other states; or to the strengthening of the state vis-à-vis civil society. It seeks to enhance the state's autonomy in a framework of a stronger civil society and a regional integration effort.
- 3) The new nationalism embraces a plurality of local national identities, as it pursues internal decolonization policies and empowers traditionally neglected or disenfranchised ethnic and social groups.
- 4) The new nationalism, unlike the old, is torn between its developmental drive and the awareness that development is not always in agreement with the environment –nor necessarily compatible with given indigenous *weltanschauungs*.
- 5) The new nationalism, like the old, tends to look back at past inter-state conflicts as zero-sum games, where one's gain is somebody else's loss.
- 6) The new nationalism has an anti imperialist and pro industrialization bent, but oddly enough it is ridden by contradictions. For example, it gives a blind eye to some pillars of neo liberalism (like the infamous Decree 21060) and its state-owned oil company is ever more inserted into the global capitalist logic.



In the end, the new nationalism is like Janus: it looks back at old obstacles and enemies to supersede them; and it looks forward toward a vision of greater equality and justice -- Good Living (*Sumaq Kawsay*, in Quechua). The memory of the past shapes the outline of the desired future. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690, Book II, Chapter 27), John Locke had identified the self with memory. Whereas Descartes had found the self in the immediate conscious experience of thinking ("cogito, ergo sum"), Locke found identity in the extension of consciousness backward in time.<sup>4</sup> Vico, for his part, took an even more interesting turn, as he posed identity as a social process rooted in a broader historical context with both *corsi* and *ricorsi*. That is, he posed identity as part of a hermeneutical process where the given is not all there is, or all there was. Humanity's creative imagination is a key to access not only the remote past, but also, to forge the not-so-clear future (García Argañarás, 1991). A future inextricably and determinedly linked to the past.<sup>5</sup> Pointedly, the new nationalism pervading much of Bolivia today is almost defined by a collective and self-critical retrospection, which is, at the same time, a projection of present and past aspirations into the future. That is, the political, economic and social changes that the country is undergoing were preceded by years of cognitive and social confrontation between dominant neoliberal and emerging national-popular ideas, institutions and structures; critical confrontation and retrospection being followed by critical proposals and new policy-making in every field. What is the final aim? To create a new society. To do this, old grievances and

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<sup>4</sup> This is open to further theoretical considerations. Recent research critically questions the idea that the self is a single, monolithic entity, existing in isolation from mental representations of other people. Because we identify ourselves partly in terms of kinship and other interpersonal relations and group memberships, other people must form a substantial part of our self-concept (Markus & Cross, 1990; Olgivie & Ashmore, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Cognitive studies of amnesia cases also indicate that our ability to anticipate our futures is tied to our ability to consciously reflect on our pasts (Atance & O'Neill, 2001; E. Tulving, 1985; Tulving, 1999).

outstanding issues must, to a significant extent, be resolved. Every solution must be preceded by reflection.

What's more problematic is the present, as public policy is never smooth. In the end, nations follow a course neither dictated by ineluctable market forces, nor by the intentions behind any conscious decision-making. The question of Bolivia's potential access to the sea, is therefore a political matter that can be pushed along within deeper channels of economic, social and international relations --these are presently favorable to regional integration and the creation/dilution of new/old layers of sovereignty. The fate of Bolivia's claim will respond neither to willful unilateral attempts to bring about a distant reality, nor disappear just because Chile's government considers the juridical issue settled. In a sense, the Bolivian demand to have sovereign access to the sea is in the collective consciousness of Bolivians not just as inter-subjective meanings that are transmitted through individual memories. It is there, essentially, in the fabric of social relations, of mutual action and as constitutive of social practices. As such, it will remain amenable to political action.

#### A FEASIBLE COURSE OF ACTION

Any long-term solution to Bolivia's claim will be one that counts with the agreement of Chile's government and the support of its voters. This precludes any course of action that pursues a zero-sum game where Bolivia regains sovereignty at the expense of Chile's. This option might hypothetically exist if Bolivia had the military wherewithal to impose its will on the reluctant neighbor. This is not the case. The idea that multilateral pressure on Chile in support of Bolivia's claim will bring Chile to concede sovereignty is also wishful thinking, judging by past efforts and Chile's alliances with powerful states (the US and Canada) in this hemisphere. What remains, is the option of

a two-track Bolivian policy that weaves together multilateral efforts and the interests of both nations. That is, a policy that moves forward, very rapidly, the regional integration agenda of CELAC, while advancing comprehensive bilateral Bolivia-Chile negotiations.<sup>6</sup> For one thing, CELAC aims at the creation of a regional bloc of nations; for another, it includes all regional governments plus Caribbean nations, regardless of the ideological and political orientations of its various member states.

Globalization, or the expanding web of relationships among the countries of the world, is a process grounded on technological and scientific advances, the development of communications and changes in capitalist production. Without delving into the strictly economic aspect of “Transnationalization”, present reality indicates that a key aspect of it is the formation of geo-economic blocs. Part and parcel of this process is the generalization of free-trade agreements, of regimes of economic complementation, and the more clear definition of geographic areas which liberalize and integrate regional economies while building a new layer of “regional sovereignty”. Such is the case with the European Union and the North American bloc after NAFTA. The increasing liberalization of national economies within such blocs, and the existence of significant elements of economic competition and rivalry among emerging blocs, indicate clearly that the 19th and 20th century nation-state is being transformed and subsumed under the framework of the Region-State.

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<sup>6</sup> Bilateral negotiations without exclusions between Bolivia and Chile, aiming at an integration agreement or treaty projected toward a Latin American bloc, would turn a zero-sum game into a mutually beneficial outcome. A corridor under Bolivian sovereignty, or one with “shared sovereignty,” can be conceived in such a framework. A treaty with these features, which would enlarge the bi-oceanic potential of both countries, may result in significant additional revenues for Bolivia and Chile, and greater geo-strategic weight for the region. The greatest challenge today, is to convince both governments that bilateral negotiations accompanied by a process of integration are the means to achieve the national interest; and certainly, much more promising than the current *statu quo*.

A two-track Bolivian policy would fit very well with the all-encompassing process of globalization, and the emerging processes of geo-political bloc formation. It could put on the table all key bilateral issues and interests and strive to obtain a win-win outcome in the framework of an integration agreement. The construction of a new (regional) layer of sovereignty is the only way to supersede the zero-sum game of national sovereignty. It is not the case that national boundaries will be thereby erased. But they will lose their present significance as national sovereignty would necessarily diminish. Integration will therefore facilitate the Chilean transfer of a corridor to the sea to Bolivia in the measure that both nation-states accept limits to their individual sovereignty under a CELAC umbrella.

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