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## *The Hackneyed Imperialist Tool of Demonization*

The systematic dehumanization of the leaders of other countries; the routine exaggeration of their military capabilities; the monotonous falsification of the nature and attitudes of other peoples; the reckless application of double standards in comparing the conduct of others with our own, as well as the inability to recognize the common character of many problems of others with our own, and the consequent tendency to see all aspects of the relationship with others in terms of a total and irreconcilable conflict of concerns and purposes. These, I believe, are not signs of the maturity and discernment that can be expected in the diplomacy of a great power...

Although the above description may seem applicable to Washington's current foreign policy, it is a warning that George Frost Kennan (1904-2005), a long-serving diplomat and American historian, reminds us of the fact that it was Kennan who formulated and advocated a "policy of containment" against alleged Soviet expansionism, but later changed his theory.

Kennan enunciated his "containment policy" in February 1946 in a text that is remembered as the long message ("the Long Telegram") he sent from Moscow in 1946 against so-called Soviet expansionism at the end of World War II. The text, signed with just one "X", appeared in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, intended to analyze the structure and psychology of Soviet diplomacy at that time. It was widely disseminated by Washington and brought Kennan a lot of popularity in the academic world.

Shortly after that same year, he was appointed director of policy planning at the State Department and, in 1949, advisor to that department. He returned to Moscow in 1952 as his country's ambassador and in the following year, he had to return to the United States after being declared *persona non grata* by the Soviet government.

In the late 1950s, Kennan revised his views on "containment" and began advocating a program of "disengagement" from areas of conflict with the Soviet Union. He later emphatically denied that containment was applicable to situations in other areas of the world, such as Vietnam.

Kennan is identified as one of the architects of the Cold War. His postwar writings about the supposed Soviet threat nurtured the U. S. policy of containment that led to the devastating arms race that still threatens the world with utter destruction.

But the development of events and variables in Washington's foreign policy led Kennan to reconsider his initial views and to formulate those with which he begins this article.

Kennan then suggests that, although the Russians were still fundamentally opposed to peaceful coexistence with the West and inclined to achieve the extension of the Soviet socialist system around the world, they were particularly sensitive to the logic of military force and will respond or retreat in the face of skillful and determined resistance to their wishes for expansion.

Thus, Kennan goes on to advocate a policy of "counter-pressure" where the Soviets threatened or it could be predicted that such counter-pressure could lead to the Soviets being willing to cooperate with the US or, eventually, be seen to lead to an internal collapse of the Soviet government. This point of view would eventually become the focus of US policy towards Russia.

It is remarkable how much the imprint of Kennan's policy of containment has influenced U. S. imperial policy, despite its belated retraction. It is something that can be noticed in the current stage of Washington's hegemonic decline with an almost identical performance in the manner of demonizing its enemies or those who do not agree with its designs.

It is as if the complacent media and the two political parties that govern alternatively could only agree to attack their opponents when they have fabricated an image that fits into certain diabolical and perverse preconceived patterns.

In Latin America, the current U. S. offensive against dissident governments in its hegemonic area goes through a period of great intensity in which Bolivarian leader Nicolás Maduro Moro, president of Venezuela, occupies the prominent place that for half a century had Cuba sitting in the chair of the accused. The head of the Caracas government

has reached, if not surpassed, the level of gossip that Fidel and Raúl Castro used to have, although the latter do not escape today from the diarrhea of lies and dehumanizing insults of Donald Trump.