

# Now many understand hypocrisy of liberal imperialism

■ ■ Some observers argue that despite being nominally sovereign, many third world countries are still trying to establish their 'true' independence from foreign powerful influences, or "informal empires" in your words, which in some cases may come at the price of ideals of domestic governance. How do you see that argument?

I do tend to agree with this argument, but with qualification. Some developing countries have established their independence rather well, while others struggle. For example, China, India and Vietnam enjoy considerable autonomy within the global order. They may choose to sacrifice some of this autonomy to gain other valued resources but they do so on their own terms. By contrast, many countries in Latin America struggle to pursue their own path.



Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Former President of Brazil (1995-2003).

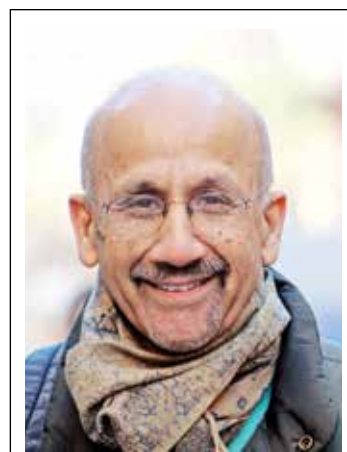
A few years back I made this argument is a small conference held in honor of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the former president of Brazil. He was part of the audience. I argued in front of him that many Asian countries came to globalization on their own terms while Latin American countries came to it on bended knees. He gently nodded his head in agreement.

■ ■ You refer to the increasing importance of multinational corporations in global affairs since the 1950s. To what extent can we say that they, as prime examples of "stateless powers" in our times, have grown into making informal empires of their own?



Fidel Castro and Salvador Allende, circa 1972.

I am afraid I do not agree with the thrust of this question. Yes, MNCs are powerful global actors. But on their own they are no match for actions of well construed states, even states in the developing world.



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