

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپائی

AUGUST 2, 2018

by JIMMY CENTENO
03.08.2018

AMLO and Mexico's Future



Photo source Gabriel Flores Romero | [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

Will the new progressive President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) appoint members of the Indigenous community to his cabinet as suggested by activist and Priest Alejandro Solalinde? [1] Or will AMLO be indirect and select experts on Indigenous matters? The question is up in the air.

In *The Grand Finale* letter [2] written by the dissident Zapatista National Liberation Movement (EZLN) published on July 6, 2018 declared non-alignment with the new administration. The Zapatista's open letter compared this unprecedented historical victory

by *MORENA* (Movement for National Regeneration) represented by AMLO as a World Cup Soccer Game Finale with lots of cheering and euphoria in the process of dissipation.

Is it too early to tell if groups like the Zapatistas and other Indigenous communities will integrate AMLO's Administration?

The multi-millionaire business man Alfonso Romo Garza who gracefully benefitted from previous neoliberal administrations as AMLO's chief of Cabinet will be mediating between the Indigenous pueblos and the new administration .[3] Is Romo prepared to enter the realm of discussion that departs from an Indigenous foundation or will it be the same patronizing model of take it or leave it and more of the same: glass beads for land, resources and empty promises? Renowned writer and founding member of *MORENA* Paco Ignacio Taibo II questions on whose behalf Romo will speak for.[4] Will AMLO care to engage in any of the sixty eight existing original Indigenous languages spoken all across Mexico? [5] Or is this asking too much for those who feel it not possible to do so.

The EZLN interprets the outcome of the 2018 election as a *yes* in change of managers, overseers, and lords while the *finqueros* (landowners) remain the same. At the final leg of the presidential campaign, AMLO referred to Mexico's historical debt with the Indigenous. Will he be provided a blank check to correct the debt or will the check bounce around with no funds for another 6 years. Is the land and regions inhabited by the Indigenous too valuable and rich in resources for exploitation to be governed and cared for by them? Can a six year term mend a 500 year old open wound?

While AMLO seeks the reunification of the many Mexico's within its territory, his biggest challenge will come from the one ideological entrenched system that has waged all war with the first peoples of the continent; global capitalism, the very same totalitarian ideology many progressive presidents have attempted to humanize. Surrounded by a new version of *los científicos* (see note), the test is if this new administration can circumvent the path it has been on for the past 30 some years of neo-liberal politics. Or will the focus be in bringing the goods, fertilizing a middle class, and continue to extract vital resources to the benefit of the global north and its business associates in Mexico.

Why is Romo the leading advisor for AMLO when his interest in exploiting the biodiversity in Chiapas with his companies dates back to Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's administration is a fact who believes in making Mexico an "*investor's paradise*?" Yes, the same businessman who gained from the modification of article 27 of the Mexican Constitution that came with the signing of the unpopular North American

Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, U.S. and Mexico. For writer and journalist Gavin O'Toole:

Salinas saw the protections afforded communal property as a barrier to investment incompatible with his efforts to court the U.S. He thus modified Article 27 to allow for private ownership of *ejidolands* and end any further distribution of land. [6]

The consequences of such modification had a dire result for Mexican farmers while deepening Mexico's dependency to the U.S economy. In the 1990s importation of goods for national consumption were no more than ten percent. Today more than fifty percent is imported. [7] Article 27 declared all land, water, mineral the un-alienated rights to be property of the people of Mexico. [8] The changing of article 27 during the signing of NAFTA permitted the denationalization and privatization of Mexico's resources and the end of communal ways of owning land. Mexico was to enter the globalized order with a neoliberal blueprint of: "export-oriented growth models, removal of trade/investment barriers and price controls, sweeping privatization of the public sector, deregulation of industry and finance, and removal of state-provided social services." [9] Sixty percent of farmable land is under lease to agribusinesses and mining companies. 2 million farmers were forced to migrate and 8 million small scale farmers were forced to sell their land close to nothing. [10] Romo is quoted as saying, "el proyecto Chiapas es el que más me gusta de todos mis negocios "(The Chiapas Project is the one I like the most of all my businesses)". [11]

Many desire a progressive Mexico, a regenerated Mexico for all, including those forced to migrate. Five centuries of accumulated doubt and 500 years of resistance are apprehensive means of engagement with AMLO's national developmental plan. It is fair and expected to be hesitant every step of the way until proven otherwise.

Will the modernizing of the Mexican state follow the lines of progress and order be the same that has led modern societies into believing that idle lands are useless until they are exploited, cut, and bulldozed to make way for roads and highways without any regard towards the existing delicate nature inhabiting those ecosystems? Case in point is the New International Mexico City Airport being built without the consultation from local communities and any consideration toward the environmental impact such mega project entails. [12] Is this a version of eminent domain to the advantage of well of transnational and national elites in power?

Has Mexico forgotten its rich plural nationality composition of multiple peoples including the Afro-Mexicans despite AMLO's victory for the progressive forces of Mexico and all

across Latin America? Indigenous Poet Martin Tonameyotl states, “is it posible (for new elect President AMLO) to sit and dialogue with individuals without corrupt backgrounds nor who never occupied any government position.” [13] Why continue to select from the same revolving door politicians that jump from administration to administration?

AMLO’s appointee of Esteban Moctezuma Barragan as Secretary of Public Education and Victor Manuel Villalobos as Secretary of Agriculture has raised many doubts. According to the article, “Escucharon (Did You Hear)?” by Sociologist Raul Romero, states under the administration of ex President Ernesto Zedillo, Barragan pretended to engage in a peace dialogue with the Zapatistas while strategizing an operation of seek and detain their leadership. Furthermore, the article also states Villalobos has lobbied for transnational GMO business corporations for the past 20 years.[14]

These questions bring us closer to understanding the dual relation between trust and distrust at hand with this election. If anything to be skeptical does not equate hopelessness much less does it imply sectarianism? It is the obligation of this new administration to reach out to all the dispossessed, those removed from their ancestral lands and the forgotten Indigenous communities to correct this historical injustice. The Indigenous wait and have waited with silence and patience as a form of resistance to truly sit down as equals and have a transparent dialogue regarding their future and the future of their Mexico as well, without trinkets or career politicians passing as Indigenous. This is a most crucial moment for AMLO to integrate the indigenous leadership women and men near and close to him. Without them all conversations will depart from global market policies and western colonial thought. The Indigenous presence will add balance to the many upcoming discussions and debates on the economy, biodiversity, trade, autonomy, customs, environment and ecological areas in need of protection, preservation, justice, education and so on. The upcoming challenges are mighty for AMLO. *He will need every inch of support from below to balance the power from above!*

The twelve year dialogue that AMLO engaged throughout Mexico from small towns to big cities should not end at the voting booth; where is the leadership deriving from all these meetings? Instead, we see rehabilitated politicians from PRI, PAN, PRD, and so on; the same faces that have contributed to Mexico’s current situation taking position in this new government.

If bankers, investors, technocrats and men like Romo from above and others have direct access to the president why shouldn’t Indigenous collective leaders be at the same table as consultants, direct participants and represent!

We see AMLO's desire to bring change to Mexico. Will the appointees carry this same weight in their hearts and contribute to a new Mexico with dignity and bring about social justice?

Note: A nickname for the group of leading positivist politicians and modernizers during the Porfirio Diaz era 1880 – 1910 (The Mexican Revolution by Adolfo Gilly).

This article is dedicated to poet and journalist John Ross.