

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 اروپایی

Raul Zibechi

03.04.2022

Let us not be crushed by geopolitics

When the haze is so thick that it prevents us from distinguishing light from shadow, let us rely on ethical principles to move forward.



Geopolitics is about imperial thoughts and ways of seeing the world, at the service of the most powerful states. It emerged in this way and remains so, although some intellectuals insist on a kind of "left-wing geopolitics", or even "revolutionary".

Geopolitics emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century among geographers and military strategists from the north, who link geographical realities with international relations. The term first appeared in a book by Swedish geographer Rudolf Kjellén,

entitled *The State as a Way of Life*. U.S. Admiral Alfred Mahan developed the strategy of naval dominance, while Nicholas Spykman delimited the regions of Latin America where the United States must maintain absolute control to ensure its global dominance.



Seguridad alimentaria y guerra de Ucrania, por Ahmad Rahma, Turquía

La geopolítica tuvo un gran desarrollo en la Alemania de principios del siglo XX, alcanzando gran difusión durante el nazismo. En América Latina, los militares de la dictadura brasileña (1964-85), como Golbery do Couto e Silva, se basaron en la geopolítica para defender la expansión de Brasil, para terminar de ocupar la Amazonia y convertirse en el hegemón regional.

I am not interested in delving into this discipline, but in its consequences for peoples. If geopolitics is about relations between states, and in particular about the role of those who seek to dominate the world, the great absentee in this thinking are the peoples, the oppressed multitudes that are not even mentioned in their analyses.

Many of those who justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine fill pages denouncing the atrocities of the United States. One reminds us: "The United States conducted 48 military interventions in the 1990s and engaged in several endless wars, during the first two decades of the twenty-first century" (<https://bit.ly/36hrNbt>).



He adds that in that period, the Americans "carried out 24 military interventions around the world and 100,000 aerial bombardments, and in 2016 alone, during the Barack Obama administration, they dropped 16,171 bombs on seven countries."

The logic of these analyses goes something like this: Empire A is terribly cruel and criminal; but Empire B is much less harmful because, evidently, its crimes are much less. Since the United States is an imperial machine that murders hundreds or tens of thousands every year, why raise your voice against those who kill only a few thousand, like Russia?

This is the creeping and calculating way of doing politics that does not take into account human pain, that considers that peoples are only numbers in the statistics of death, or considers them only as cannon fodder, as numbers in a balance that only measures corporate and state profits.

On the contrary, those at the bottom put peoples, classes, skin colors and oppressed sexualities first. Our starting point is not states, nor armed forces, nor capital. We are not unaware that there is a global scenario, expansionist and imperialist nations. But we look at that scenario to decide how to act as movements and organizations from below.

In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written in 1916 during World War I, Lenin analyzed monopoly capitalism as the cause of war. But he took no side and strove to transform the carnage into revolution.

That's how Immanuel Wallerstein worked. His [theory on the world-system](#) aims to understand and explain how political and economic relations work on a globalized planet, with the aim of driving social transformation.



These are useful tools for people on the move. Because the understanding of how the system works, far from leading us to justify any of the powers in conflict, leads us to foresee the consequences it will have on those below.

Zapatismo names as a "storm" the systemic chaos that we are experiencing and also considers that it is necessary to understand the changes in the functioning of capitalism. Regarding the first, the conclusion is that we must prepare to face extreme situations, which we have never experienced. Have we thought that atomic weapons can be used in the coming years?



Regarding the latter, although the Zapatistas do not mention it explicitly from what I remember, it is evident that the richest 1 percent have hijacked nation-states, that there are

no means of communication, but of intoxication and that electoral democracies are fairy tales, if not excuses to perpetrate genocides. Consequently, they do not allow themselves to be entangled in state logic.

We are facing dramatic moments for the survival of humanity. We must look up and not let ourselves be dragged into the geopolitical quagmire. When the haze is so thick that it prevents us from distinguishing light from shadow, let us rely on ethical principles to move forward.

Raul Zibechi

Edited by María Piedad Ossaba

Source: [La Jornada](#), March 25, 2022, p.15

Available translations: Français

La Pluma.net 31.03.2022