**Who rules the world?**

Zafar Aziz Chaudhary January 29, 2020

Recently the Metropolitan publishers of New York released the book of [Noam Chomsky](https://dailytimes.com.pk/229552/noam-chomsky-among-academics-concerned-over-stifling-of-speech-at-pakistani-campuses/), ‘Who Rules the World?” in aPDF form for the convenience of readers who had no earlier access to the book which was actually written at the end of 2016. The book in its ebook format has become handy to Pakistani audience which recently I had the privilege to read. This is one of the latest books of Noam Chomsky which contains in a condensed form his entire political philosophy, for which he has been called the social conscience of America.Chomskyas an ardent champion of free speech and democracy, challenges the established order, the mainstream news media, and neoliberalism. By doing so, he criticizes both the Democrats and Republican Party administrations with their imperialist foreign policies of ‘democratic terrorism’ around the globe, starting from America’war against South Vietnam under Kennedy’s administration through to the global drone assassination campaign under Obama.

I have found the book rather a difficult exercise for a reader who is not fully abreast of his earliest books (which are now hard to come by). Thus most of the references of the book and myriads of his technical political propositions were beyond me either because of their being recondite in nature or appearing abstruse to a fresh reader like me. However since I had seen numerous reviews and programmes explaining Chomsky’s political philosophy on the internet, I was able to followa large part of the book.

In the earlier chapters of the book, due to a plenty of American machinations in world affairs, Chomski feels enraged to the extent that he is led to compare them with those of despotic North Korean leader or an Al-Quaida terrorist. But in later chapters of his book, much of his vitriolic hyperbole wears off and he has nothing much of substance to say beyond this.

Chomsky demonstrates how neoliberal programs have concentrated wealth and power in fewer hands while undermining democracy. Public opinion is ignored and the powerless in society are shown contempt by the wealthy metropolitan elites. Real power shifts from elected politicians to the multinational conglomerates, and huge financialinstitutions. Thus rather than attributing a country as ruler of the world, Chomsky holds the trends, policies and institutions which were the result of this new world order, as the rulers of the world. Incidentally, these new trends were shared by many other countries under the leadership of the United States.

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But Chomsky also points out thatdominating the opponents of western state policy is nothing compared to the brutalities suffered by those who challenge states backed by the US and its allies in the Middle East.

He thinks that the third world people are disappointed at how President Obama had changed his campaign rhetoric of hope and change and made it entirely vacuous. “There was no principled criticism of the Iraq war which was a strategic blunder.” The veteran activist has described the US invasion of Afghanistan as “one of the most immoral acts in modern history”, which united the jihadist movement around al-Qaida, sharply increased the level of terrorism and was “perfectly irrational.” He argues that since the U.S. government officials first formulated plans for a “grand area” strategy for US global domination in the early 1940s, successive administrations have been guided by a “godfather principle, straight out of the mafia: that defiance cannot be tolerated. It’s a major feature of state policy.” “Successful defiance” has to be punished, even where it damages business interests, as was done in the economic blockade of Cuba.

In Chomsky’s view, the gap between the interests of those who control American foreign policy and the public is also borne outby the US’s unwavering support for Israel, because according to Chomsky, Israel protects U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Chomsky being an outspoken opponent of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, saw it as an act of American imperialism.In 1967, Chomsky’s fame rose to national attention for his antiwar essay “The Responsibility of Intellectuals”. Associated with the New Left, he was arrested multiple times for his activism and placed on President Richard Nixon’s Enemies List.He thinks that Vietnam was not a strategic victory for the US in Southeast Asia; it was on the other hand its humiliating defeat as it had to withdraw from Vietnamin 1975 after many innocent killings. Chomsky describes himself as an anarchist or libertarian socialist, but often sounds more like a radical liberal. He is a keen supporter of the wave of progressive change that has swept South America in the past decade. He also believes that now there are new constraints on the imperial power which didn’t exist in the past:

He remains a leading critic of U.S. foreign policy, neoliberalism and contemporary state capitalism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and mainstream news media. His ideas have proven highly influential in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements, but have also drawn criticism at home, as anti-Americanwhich he strongly denies. According to him an “anti-American” is one who only sees the crimes of his own government while ignoring the crimes of others around the world? “Anti-Americanism is a pure totalitarian concept,” he retorts. “The very notion is idiotic. Of course you don’t deny other’s crimes, but your primary moral responsibility is for your own actions, which you can do something about.”

Chomsky is one of the founders of the field of cognitive science. He holds a joint appointment as Institute Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Laureate Professor at the University of Arizona, and is the author of more than 100 books on topics such as linguistics, war, politics, and mass media. Ideologically, he is a libertarian socialist.

Chomsky had long publicly criticized Nazism, and totalitarianism of all types, and is a staunch advocate of freedom of speech even if it tends to deny Holocaust.

Chomsky is understood as the definitive intellectual giant of our time. His book, “Who Rules the World?” is the culmination of all of Chomsky’s work packed into a tight, well-researched volume, in which he underlines US atrocities, and the very real possibility of the annihilation of civilization. He slowly builds his case, considers logical counterarguments, and convinces his readers with a mind-boggling amount of records. His basic premise is thus: the US has ruled the world for the last 75 years, committing terrible atrocities and killing millions to maintain that rule. Now that power is slipping away, being dispersed globally. He recounts two other gravest threats to human existence, nuclear war and global climate change. This is the epic scope of the book which is a must for every American in particular and for all other readers in general.

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While he makes some comparisons and analogies that are quite strained, his indictment of the ruling class and their insulation from democratic processes designed to keep their power in check is especially pertinent to the present American policies.

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