

EU Foreign Policy Chief Calls ‘Europe a garden, the world a jungle’

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On October 13, during the inauguration ceremony of the European Diplomatic Academy in Bruges, Belgium, [the European Union’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell stated that](#) “Europe is a garden” while the (rest of the) “world is a jungle”. The remark can hardly be described as anything else but racist, given the colonialist legacy of the political West. Worse yet, the very fact that Borrell was addressing an audience of the EU’s future diplomatic elite makes the statement even more concerning.

“Europe is a garden,” Borrell stated as part of a broader topic of building alliances to avoid conflicts and tensions with other powers and nations. “Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden,” he added.

Either not realizing or caring about the gravity of his remarks, Borrell continued expanding this “garden/jungle” analogy.

“We have built a garden. Everything works. It is the best combination of political freedom, economic prosperity and social cohesion that humankind has been able to build – the three things together,” he continued.

He went on to describe the “garden” in ways that were especially offensive towards anyone not just outside of Europe, but the EU as well.

“The rest of the world [is] not exactly a garden... The gardeners should take care of it, but they will not protect the garden by building walls. A nice small garden surrounded by high walls in order to prevent the jungle from coming in is not going to be a solution. Because the jungle has a strong growth capacity, and the wall will never be high enough in order to protect the garden,” Borrell stated. “The gardeners have to go to the jungle. Europeans have to be much more engaged with the rest of the world. Otherwise, the rest of the world will invade us, by different ways and means,” he concluded.

Although Borrell probably realized that the speech was at least “problematic” and thus made an attempt to ease the rhetoric, this only backfired, as it was still supremacist, at the very least. The analogy can only be seen from the perspective of those who are allegedly “civilized” and the supposed “barbarians” waiting outside. Anyone outside of the “garden” would have no other logical choice but to come to such a conclusion. As previously mentioned, the fact that the future diplomatic elite of the EU was listening to “guidelines” like these doesn’t bode well for the bloc’s foreign policy in the upcoming decades. Naturally, showing such blatant disrespect by viewing the world as a collection of “barbarians” will certainly do no good for the relations between Brussels and the rest of the planet.

Expectedly, many other diplomats and world leaders criticized Borrell’s statements, including Nasser Bin Hassan Al-Shaikh, the Director-General of Dubai’s Department of Finance, [who rightfully called the remarks a display of imperialism and racism](#). Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also condemned the statement: “The ‘garden’ was built by Europe due to the barbaric attitude to the plundering of the ‘jungle’.”

It should be noted that this is certainly not the first time that high-ranking officials from the political West are giving such statements. In mid-April, during an address at the Atlantic Council, United States Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen stated that [anyone who refused to follow anti-Russian policies is essentially a “fence sitter”](#). Needless to say, this effectively included approximately 80% of the world’s population, as the vast majority of countries refused to take sides in the ongoing NATO encroachment on Russia’s western borders, which provoked Moscow’s reaction in Ukraine.

Those who suffered (and continue to suffer) under the jackboot of Western neoliberal “freedom and democracy” are precisely the countries Borrell called the “jungle”. This is particularly true for the Global South, the most exploited part of the world, which has been subjected to exploitation by the “garden”. With its invasions, (neo)colonialism, currency dominance, etc. the “garden” has been destroying much of the world for centuries.

During the (First) Cold War, it was precisely Russia that was instrumental in the liberation of the Global South. The superpower invested massive amounts of resources to help these countries. Unfortunately, after 1991, Western (neo)colonial overlords returned in full force. But, this time, it was “different”. The masters were bringing “freedom and democracy”, yet another euphemism for colonialism.

In addition, the world should make no mistake that the “garden” treats other Europeans no better than the world itself. NATO bombed and dismantled European nations as well, such as Serbia/Yugoslavia before it went on to destroy countless other countries around the world. Although the “garden” has been suffering one humiliating defeat after another in the last nearly 10 years, as evidenced by the failed invasion of Syria, the failed takeover of Crimea and the defeat in Donbass, the botched invasion of Venezuela, the humiliating defeat in Afghanistan and the ongoing defeat in Ukraine, the damage inflicted is still quite severe.

If the world is indeed a “jungle”, it’s in such a state only thanks to the sheer magnitude and scale of death and destruction brought upon by the “garden”. And even if it was the case that the “jungle” wanted to take revenge for approximately half a millennium of brutal crimes of the “garden”, who could blame it?

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