

Targeting Mexico, Humiliating Serbia

By [Stephen Karganovic](#)

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Among high profile defections from the "international community," due to its geopolitical stature Mexico stands out. But it is by no means the only notable recent defector.

African governments en masse are renouncing compliance with the "rules-based order." One of the most visible recent turncoats has been Rwanda's **Paul Kagame**, the long-time poster boy for neo-colonialist Western intervention and tutelage on that continent.

Prof. Edward Herman demonstrated irrefutably in his ground-breaking study "The Politics of Genocide" that far from being his country's saviour Kagame was actually the driving force behind the murderous violence that in the 1990s was triggered in Rwanda by US and French special services.

But now even veteran Western client Kagame is making defiant noises rebuking his erstwhile masters, for trying to bully him and impose their unwanted "values." Kagame's utterances ought to give some pause to those who until recently were this man's sponsors and avid fans. So should bold statements to similar effect by Turkey's (or shouldn't we say, to be politically correct, Türkiye's?) **Interior Minister Suleiman Soylu**, which also strongly suggests that something is brewing.

But to return to Mexico. With all due modesty, it does seem that our assessments made in March 2021 were remarkably prescient. Anticipating trouble for Mexico's **President Lopez Obrador** (or AMLO, as he is popularly known) we said then that

"AMLO has tried earnestly not to cross most of the red lines set by the irritable demi-gods to his north and to give just the barest minimum of offense. But inevitably, in trying to balance the needs and expectations of his people against incessant hegemonic demands, AMLO has made a few slip-ups."

The irritation caused by Lopez Obrador has now reached confrontational levels. Since we last wrote on this topic, the Mexican President, unforgivably, has gone even further on his rampage, asserting more state control over Mexico's natural resources (an absolute no-no in

the rules based order), nationalised his country's lithium reserves (tempting the fate of his Bolivian friend Evo Morales), and publicly opposing even the thought of threatened military intervention from El Norte (also here), ostensibly to stem the flow, through Mexico, of the narcotics that El Norte's addicted citizens are consuming in vast quantities. Finally, completing this panorama of stiff necked disobedience, Lopez Obrador has just announced that along with almost two dozen other countries Mexico was applying to join BRICS.

All the above is more than sufficient not just to earn AMLO the usual epithets of strongman, authoritarian and anti-democratic, but more importantly to also justify the battery of good-neighbourly threats of military intervention. That was already urged by (as Paul Craig Roberts would say) dumbass El Norte politicians of the calibre of Lindsay Graham. By Monroe Doctrine standards, however, fitting punishment for such disorderly conduct normally is much more than virulent denunciations. It should amount to a sentence of death, to be precise.

My Mexican informants have a very interesting take on AMLO's actuarial prospects. Their thesis is that since he successfully survived into the last third of his six-year term, he is out of the woods now. Disposing of him would be too risky, messy, and ultimately unnecessary. He cannot run for re-election and in 2024 he will have to hand over the Presidency to his successor. So in this case it would make eminent sense to focus on installing the right successor and reversing his policies, instead of bumping off an incumbent whose days in office are numbered anyway.

And it just so happens that an ideal replacement candidate to succeed Lopez Obrador is available. Her name is Claudia Sheinbaum, she is the head of Mexico City's administration and, conveniently, is also a functionary of the current President's Morena Party, which would ensure a smooth transition. (Another potential candidate who was considered presidential timber and also would have made the northern neighbours happy, has had to flee abroad, having been indicted for huge financial malfeasance.)

It remains to be seen what the plans are for Ms. Sheinbaum, but she is getting rave reviews in the media and all the usual suspects are eagerly coalescing around her. For the time being she is emitting cleverly modulated Lopez-Obradista rhetoric, but keep an eye on her. She may yet blossom into the Mexican version of Carlos Menem, the Argentine political con man who was elected on a fraudulent Peronist platform and then went on to implement a ruthless neo-liberal agenda, starting virtually from the day of his inauguration.

But while an increasing number of countries clearly do grasp global trends and are employing all the means at their disposal to loosen their shackles and gain a modicum of freedom, there still are some holdouts that masochistically crave the hegemon's bullying, something that even Kagame is indisposed to any longer tolerate. And by delighting in their subjugation, they seemingly are asking for more.

In this category, Serbia is a conspicuous example. The highest ranking officials of the Serbian government have grown accustomed to humbly and respectfully receive and treat as equals assistant deputy undersecretaries, or whatever riff-raff are dispatched to them with Imperial marching orders. The latest humiliation to which Serbia, and the Serbian media to be exact, have been subjected is but a natural extension of that self-abasing and well established practice.

In that spirit, a few days ago an email was sent out to all Serbian news outlets by the Ukrainian embassy in Belgrade. In it, Serbian media were rather undiplomatically lectured on the proper terminology they always were expected to use when referring to the conflict in Ukraine.

Starting from the basics, the embassy admonished the host country's media that it was verboten to say "Ukrainian crisis, Ukrainian conflict, or war in Ukraine." Instead, the correct phrases that, unless they want to end up on the Mirotvorets hit list, Serbian media must use are "Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine" and "Russian aggression on Ukraine." Furthermore, the embassy frowns on "Russian special operation in Ukraine" and prefers the clumsier formulation, "unprovoked Russian military invasion of Ukraine, which began in 2022."

One example of erroneous phrasing that the embassy particularly reproves is the suggestion that ordinary Russians are not responsible for Russian crimes. To the contrary, the Ukrainian embassy insists, "every Russian is responsible for Russian crimes in Ukraine as long as they support the actions of the Russian state." The demand put to Russian cultural, sports, and artistic figures by Kiev Nazi junta's mentors to publicly denounce their country as the condition for being allowed to participate in international gatherings and competitions now comes into focus. Behind it is the primitive, racially based attribution of collective responsibility which, presumably, applies also to dead Russians such as Dostoyevsky and Tchaikovsky.

Oddly, these "recommendations" by the Ukrainian embassy in Belgrade, approved, one would suppose, by the Foreign Ministry in Kiev (which, as the recommendations require, must always be spelled Kyiv) were sent out to the Serbian media in English. Reinforcing suspicions about the ultimate origin of this unusual document is its insistence that Ukraine must always be referred to as "the Ukraine," even though Belgrade embassy staff should have known that Serbian grammar does not have articles, just as Ukrainian and Russian grammars do not. These are the sort of details that raise interesting questions about who the real authors of this text might be.

Like Dr. Goebbels' confidential Gleichschaltung directives to the German media, the Ukrainian embassy's outrageous attempt to coerce the media in the country, where it is accredited in a diplomatic rather than policing capacity, would probably have remained under the radar if one of the recipients, mass circulation daily Novosti, had not decided to publish it. It is not yet clear what impact these undiplomatic revelations have had on public opinion in Serbia, but polls do show that 68% of Serbian respondents blame NATO for the conflict in Ukraine, 83,7% are opposed to sanctions against Russia and 60% are in favor of concluding an alliance with Russia. Ukrainian embassy's clumsy conduct is unlikely to have changed any of those figures in Ukraine's or the collective West's favor.

Stunningly, for this unprecedented diplomatic *faux pas* the Ukrainian ambassador is in no danger of being summoned and declared persona non grata. The insolent demands forwarded by the embassy of a regime which is on its last legs, acting boorishly in similarly prostrate Serbia as the pathetic proxy for it is obvious whom, have provoked no official comment or reaction on the part of the Serbian government. True to form, accustomed and perhaps even happy to be lectured by the lowest ranking Imperial errand boys on most diverse subjects, Serbian officials remain mum about the insult inflicted on their country and disrespect shown to its press.

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Stephen Karganovic is president of "[Srebrenica Historical Project](#)," an NGO registered in the Netherlands to investigate the factual matrix and background of events that took place in Srebrenica in July of 1995. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Featured image: Screen shot of Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador from MILENIO broadcast of press conference on July 4, 2022

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