

The Meaning of Trumpism for Mexico and the World

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DONALD TRUMP'S SECOND victory in the 2024 U.S. presidential elections, with more social and legislative power and experience than his first presidency from 2017 to 2021, is a political milestone that has shaken the world because of what the arrival of such a reactionary, toxic and malignant character to the White House in Washington represents for the world – and specifically for Mexico, the direct southern neighbor of the North American power.

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Trump proclaimed that his MAGA movement (Make America Great Again) was the beginning of a new USA, the beginning of the USA's "golden years." What has happened in the USA? How has the American power elite changed? Where is the USA going?

Democratic Defeat

Trump's victory represents, first and foremost, a colossal defeat for the Democratic Party, which many polls considered could hold on to power with its candidate Kamala Harris. In fact it was crushed more than electorally, above all politically, not only in the peculiar and anachronistic Electoral College that decides the results of presidential elections in the USA but, for the first time in 20 years, even in the popular vote.

There are numerous facts that make Trump's second coming to power a representative case of powerful political changes whose consequences are visible and very worrying for a complex and already very dangerous world situation.

The pro-Trump vote cut across all social sectors, from the traditional white working class who turned their backs on the Democrats, to large sections of the Hispanic population (including those of Mexican origin) and inroads among Asian and even Black communities. Women who might have been expected to support Kamala abstained in large numbers and many voted for Trump.

An explanation of these events is vital in order to gauge as precisely as possible what has happened and what the outlook is. The complex and contradictory nature of this situation has led to a flood of information and interpretations.

Let's start by explaining the causes of the Trumpist Republican victory. Everything indicates that the main one is in the economy, specifically in the inflationary explosion that began in 2022 as a consequence of the Biden administration's measures to quickly bring about the economic recovery that was needed to overcome the depression caused by the ravages of the Covid epidemic.

In fact, the result of these measures was contradictory because the U.S. economy did indeed recover with great success, expressed above all in the extraordinary profits of powerful capitalist sectors. Further, this recovery coincided with the two wars that broke out during the Democratic administration of Biden, in Ukraine and the genocidal Zionist offensive of the Netanyahu government against the people of Gaza and other places in Palestine.

These wars required huge amounts of weaponry. The resulting spectacular economic boom in the key military-industrial complex of the U.S. economy also had inflationary effects. The resulting high cost of living hit the working population hard.

The punishment of the Biden administration was expressed in various ways. For example, the vote for Harris was lower than that obtained by Biden four years earlier, showing higher than traditional abstention, and the Democrats lost in key states they had previously won, such as Arizona, Georgia and Pennsylvania, among others.

The harshness with which the Democratic government navigated the four years of Biden's presidency also played a notable role, and the astute manipulator of popular sentiment that is Trump took great advantage of it. The actions initiated against Trump for his numerous violations, both criminal and political, especially his participation in the coup staged by his supporters in January 2021 in the Capitol in Washington to prevent the proclamation of Biden's victory, was turned by the orange tycoon into a spectacle in which he was the victim of a "witch hunt."

The way in which the liberal establishment dealt with the two wars that broke out in Ukraine and Palestine exposed their blatant hypocrisy. The onslaught against Putin, the Russian invader of Ukraine, was paralleled by absolute support for the genocide of the Zionist government of Israel against the Palestinian people, painting Putin as a sinister gangster figure and Biden embracing Netanyahu in Tel Aviv.

The grotesque spectacle certainly weighed on the Democratic defeat and was evident in the wave of protests against Washington's support for the Israeli government at many American universities. In this situation, where did "truth," human rights, pluralism, democracy and reasoned dialogue lie? This blatant cynicism did not pass the test in November 2024.

The Orange Gale

At his inauguration ceremonies as the new tenant of the White House, Trump presented the most over-the-top version of himself, just as he had shown in his campaign. It was in his speeches, starting with his main address, that he expressed his political positions... up to that moment.

He spared no fierce criticism of the administration of Biden, who listened to him with contrition. Tactically, he did not talk about the wars in which the U.S. government is currently intervening decisively, albeit indirectly. Instead, he referred at length to what he called "the invasion" of immigrants treated as criminals who are infiltrating through the southern border with Mexico, endangering U.S. security, for which he has immediately militarized it with thousands of soldiers.



Donald Trump caricature by Donkey Hotey CC-BY-2.0

His arrogance made it clear that all the previous and subsequent statements he has made about buying Greenland, reclaiming the Panama Canal, annexing Canada as a new state of the American Union, changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, and imposing high tariffs on imported goods were not just provocations but are the expression of a prevailing situation which is also marked by struggles within U.S. ruling groups.

Trump immediately set about issuing “decrees” for immediate execution:

- * banning the right to citizenship by birth for the children of undocumented immigrants
- * cancelling the so-called CPOB Plan that scheduled appointments for thousands of immigrants who wish to enter legally and who are now staying in Mexico
- * a general pardon for more than 1500 defendants, many of them already in prison, for participating in the occupation of the Capitol to prevent the proclamation of Biden’s victory in January 2021
- * U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords and the World Health Organization

The cruelty of many of these measures is evident. They are directed against five million fellow citizens and as many more from the Caribbean, Central and South America, and even against immigrants from Asia and Africa. The authoritarian unilateralism of these measures was immediately expressed in the renewal, without any consultation with the Mexican government, of the Remain in Mexico Plan repealed by Biden.



Photo: Sara Jane Rhee

The discussion about the viability of Trump’s stated goals of expelling millions of undocumented immigrants is ongoing, as are the reactions of the workers themselves who are under threat. However, whatever the practical development of these measures, one thing is already certain: much damage, pain and suffering will be the reality for tens of thousands of workers and their families.

In Chicago, for example, there has already been a demonstration against these anti-human and anti-democratic measures. “We have been working here for 40 years and we are not leaving,” many millions of immigrant workers are already saying, and others will soon say the same as the fear of the announced repression, persecuting all immigrants in churches, in shelters, in workplaces, is transformed into resistance and a fighting spirit.

For Mexico the challenge is great for many reasons. The situation that may arise in the northern border region, with those expelled and the caravans of those who want to cross, will not be easy to manage. A possible decrease in remittances will also affect thousands of families who depend on them for their subsistence. Embryonic chaotic situations will be inevitable.

The policy during president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's government from the beginning in 2019 was to agree to collaborate with the U.S. Border Patrol in controlling the flow of immigrants entering through Mexico's southern border, preventing them from reaching the north. Thousands of national guards were sent by AMLO to contain the flow. How will President Claudia Sheinbaum react?

The Threats to Mexico

As was evident in the same central speech of the inauguration on January 20th, Trump considers Mexico as one of the fundamental spaces in which to deploy his toxic policies. There are two areas in which Trump's threats represent a real danger: the economy and security.

The previously renegotiated U.S.-Canada-Mexico trade agreement will be brought up for discussion by Trump's decision to raise tariffs on imports into his country. Since last year, Mexico has become the USA's main trading partner, so it is clear that the challenge for the Mexican government and companies that do business with U.S. companies is enormous.

Many things will depend on the agreements or disagreements that arise. Trump believes that in his fierce commercial competition with China, surveillance of the southern border with Mexico is fundamental. The Mexican government has begun to react and has closed busy Chinese shopping centers.

But it is in the area of security where the most delicate situation has arisen, with the potential for tough and dangerous confrontations. This is the executive order in which Trump declares the Mexican cartels Foreign Terrorist Organizations that represent a danger to US national security, controlling huge territories of Mexico and acting as de facto governments in them.

The order signed by Trump on January 20 set a maximum period of 14 days for the State Department, after consulting with the Justice and Treasury Departments, and the Intelligence Directorate, to recommend whether the cartels should be designated as such organizations. For the purposes of the aforementioned order, these cartels work with China as fentanyl distributors.

It is a threat to national sovereignty because the interpretation of this type of law allows for U.S. intervention anywhere in the world where such organizations operate. Such is his concern that Trump resorted to invoking an Act Against Foreign Enemies issued in Washington in 1798, more than two centuries ago!

This type of law is broad in its application, aimed at punishing any physical or moral entity that has relations of any kind, from financial to personal for example, with the cartels. Today, the Trump administration's relationship with the cartels will be very different from that of AMLO's six-year term, both with Trump's first term and later with Biden.

In fact, it was in the latter's last term that these relations underwent an abrupt change with the arrest of Mayo Zambada in Sinaloa as a result of an operation in which U.S. law enforcement agencies clearly intervened.

The situation is serious because the interpretation of this law can affect the “hugs not bullets” treatment that the cartels received throughout the six-year term of the AMLO government. The result, which was not at all positive, was that there was indeed no policy of fighting the criminals (“hugs”), but the “bullets” did not stop — and at the end of AMLO’s government the murders of the cartels exceeded the numbers under both the Calderón and Peña Nieto administrations.

The Contest for World Domination

The colossal transformations that have taken place in the world over the last three decades, let’s say since the fall of the Soviet Union, the restoration of capitalism in the vast territories that made up the Soviet Union, but above all this restoration in the People’s Republic of China, have culminated in the emergence of two main blocs, one led by the USA and the other by China, with their respective satellite allies. The hegemony of the USA as the dominant central pole of imperialist-capitalist globalization, exercised for more than a century, came to an end.

During the Cold War era of 1945-1991 the challenge of the Soviet bloc was above all political and ideological rather than economic, because these countries in transition between capitalism and socialism were not integrated into the capitalist world market. But the latter of course influenced them, largely causing their failure as was demonstrated precisely by the capitalist restorations that took place in most of them.

The USA more than maintained its dominance until the new situation, emerging in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, made it clear that China, together with Russia, was successfully starting to compete economically in world markets. U.S. world domination was clearly maintained in the military sphere with its army and its control over the production of the Pentagon’s military-industrial complex, which accounts for half of the world’s arms.

But the United States was beginning to lag behind China in technological and industrial production. Although financially the dollar was still the unchallenged universal monetary equivalent, powerful sectors in the United States realized that China had become a real rival in the struggle for world domination.

This new situation began to be a matter of discussion and the emergence of currents within the two hegemonic ruling parties of the U.S. imperialist class. But it has been in the Republican Party where this current of thought has emerged, which considers that the USA must react to China with determination and force to prevent it from snatching U.S. dominance of the world.

This situation became evident already in Trump’s first term in office, and is being corroborated today at the beginning of his second term. The not very transparent plans that have emerged in economic matters speak of a protectionist thread that is at the heart of his vision in this respect.

Trump is a man of the U.S. oil lobby. Extractivism and contempt for issues of environmental care, as well as those of health, are present.

But this protectionist thread is most evident in his vision of economic renewal. An outstanding fact that clearly points to the direction of Trumpian strategic initiatives is his aim to strengthen the fundamental and powerful core of the industrial-technological complex, in which U.S. hegemony is almost total — a decision that has been very well received by most of the companies that have changed their previous preferences for the Democratic Party and have moved closer to Trump.

Apple, Microsoft, Alphabet (Google), Amazon, Oracle and Meta (Facebook) are all American and

leaders in their fields. Just two days after his inauguration he met with the heads of a project called Stargate, which focuses on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) led by Softbank, owned by Japanese magnate Masayoshi Son, and involving Oracle and OpenAI.

They stated that their initial investment is 100 billion dollars, which they consider will reach 500 billion dollars in the coming years. They also said that they would not have started such a project if the Democrats had won the elections.

And what can be said about the exhibitionist presence of Elon Musk at the inauguration ceremonies, next to the president, boasting of his closeness to power — he, the richest man in the world who, flaunting his arrogance without shame, gives the Nazi salute, showing with his mere presence who the orange man really represents?

Twenty-first Century Anti-Imperialism

Four days after Trump's inauguration, the global shock he has caused is still raging. In Mexico, a country directly affected by what he does and does not do in his presidency, the strategic position of those of us who are fighting for a new Mexico and a new world will be to assert our democratic, socialist, libertarian, feminist and internationalist program.

Our anti-imperialism is anti-capitalist, it is internationalist because it fights and will fight with the millions of Mexicans and other immigrants threatened in the USA, and we demand humane and dignified treatment by the Mexican government of the men and women who will arrive in our country expelled from the USA. Because they are workers, because only united here and with them across the border in a single struggle, will we be able to overcome and win the hard class battles that are to come.

In the face of direct threats to intervene directly with their police and military agencies in Mexican territory, we call for a United Front to defend ourselves together against imperialist aggression with all those who fight against possible intervention. We, the Mexican workers, will be in charge of cleaning the country of the scum and evil that the hypocritical policy of the bourgeois governments has allowed to strengthen and expand organized crime.

We will be struggling together with all those who oppose Trump and his agents, above parties and ideologies but maintaining our political and ideological independence, especially with respect to the current Mexican government which, like the previous ones of the PRI, the PAN, the PRIAN and AMLO, have been responsible for the situation in which we find ourselves with their conciliatory and complicit policies.

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Manuel Aguilar Mora

P.S.

• Against the Current. January 31, 2025 :
<https://againstthecurrent.org/the-meaning-of-trumpism-for-mexico-and-the-world/>

- Manuel Aguilar Mora is the author of several books on Mexico's social and political history. A veteran revolutionary left activist, he's a member of the Socialist Unity League (LUS). This article is slightly edited for clarity from a machine translation of the Spanish text.