Twitter Thread by Idrees Ahmad



Idrees Ahmad
@im_PULSE



Thread: You probably aren't surprised by Noam Chomsky's comments on Ukraine, blaming Ukrainians for the bloodshed by refusing to accept "the way the world works." Chomsky's intellectual blindspots are also the blindspots of most "anti-imperialists", so a few thoughts.

> Sage old Noam Chomsky patiently explaining to Ukrainians, few of whom I suspect he's actually spoken to about this, that they really have no choice but to surrender and concede to Russia virtually everything it demands "because that's just the way the world works."
>
> Disgraceful. pic.twitter.com/40rV882BMg
>
> — Vincent Artman (@geogvma) April 15, 2022

The main problem with this worldview is that, as Chomsky and his comrade Tariq Ali said, they believe that Russia can't be imperialist. They think imperialism is what the US does—ergo, anti-imperialism is anti-Americanism. See, for example. https://t.co/i8ZYEhoVXL

Because the concept of "imperialism" has been divorced from a set of practices and reconceptualized as the innate condition of a particular state, when others carry out actions that meet the definition of imperialism, they are instead approached with realist solutions.

So where "imperialism" (as understood by them) is seen as an inherently evil category worthy of moral condemnation, imperialism in practice is treated as a political problem calling for a "realist" solution, without the distorting influence of morality.

This leads people like Chomsky into a kind of moral bifocalism. They rightly condemn human rights abuses committed by the US or its allies like Israel & Saudi Arabia using moral categories; but they always use political categories to rationalise the crimes of others.

This is why he can't relate to dissidents abroad—unless they are fortunate enough to be persecuted by a US client...Such dehumanising binaries erase struggling peoples if the regime oppressing them is seen as an objective ally by virtue of being in the bad books of Washington.

Here's the second part of the article I wrote after a long exchange with him, in which I found him dogmatic and petulant, and utterly incapable of admitting error, even after I showed him the factual accuracies in his statements.
https://t.co/XLWWJjzik8