

# My Take on the US Elections: Voting for Corporate Figureheads is not Democracy

Interview to the Swiss Journal "Zeitgeschehen im Fokus. In a democracy the citizen must demand genuine policy choices and a right to shape that policy.

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[Alfred de Zayas' Human Rights Corner](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

In-depth Report: [U.S. Elections](#)

*Interview with Prof. Dr. iur. et phil. Alfred de Zayas, international law expert and former UN mandate holder*

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Thomas Kaiser: Zeitgeschehen im Fokus Professor de Zayas, you are an American citizen. What do you think about the course of the election and Joseph Biden's victory?

Prof. Dr. Alfred de Zayas: First of all, I would like to say that I have been a member of the Republican Party since 1968. At that time I was a student at Harvard University, and my political persuasion aimed at a social, ethical market economy. Times have changed, and of course I am no longer a "Republican", although I have not formally abandoned my membership in the Republican Party. I no longer feel any necessity to "root" for any political party. In my opinion, the 2020 campaign was undemocratic, undignified, and spiteful. It was accompanied by a very high level of disinformation, fake news and skewed media coverage. It resembled a football match – and I mean American football (rugby) and not European football (soccer).

TK: What is your position on the Republican and Democratic Party today?

AdZ: I am beyond both – beyond right wing or left wing. Sometimes I agree with the Republicans, sometimes with the Democrats – and often I am enough against the policies of both. I am happy Donald Trump lost. I am not at all excited about Biden's victory. The next four years will be Obama redux, a disaster in the making. You can't teach an old dog new tricks – and here I include the whole Democratic Party Old Guard.

TK: Did you participate in the 2020 election?

AdZ: Yes, I voted – but not for Trump, whom I by no means consider a true Republican – nor for Biden, whom I consider incompetent. I consider Kamala Harris to be extremely dangerous. I took the opportunity to vote for a "write-in candidate" – as provided for on the ballot itself.

TK: Who did you vote for then?

AdZ: Actually for a female Democrat – member of the House of Representatives for Hawaii – Tulsi Gabbard, who is genuine and speaks her mind. That is why the mainstream media

marginalized her.

TK: With this you have expressed something...

AdZ: ...yes, I wanted to express my dissatisfaction with the two-party system and with both candidates. I took a similar approach in 2016, when I voted for neither Trump nor Hillary Clinton. I am tired of the fact that our “democracy” only allows for a choice between plague and cholera.

TK: What do you expect from a Biden/Harris presidency in terms of foreign policy?

AdZ: A continuation of many of Trump’s policies. In fact, Trump and Biden converge on the essential points – both advocate militarism, unilateralism, big banks, economic sanctions against rivals, arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and blind support for Israel. Biden will hardly bring the US Embassy back to Tel Aviv. And the unjust treatment of the Palestinians will continue.

TK: What will the relationship with Russia and China be like?

AdZ: I expect as much agitation and war propaganda against China and Russia as during the Trump administration. We will be served with 4 years of vulgar xenophobia, Putin-bashing, Xi-bashing. I also expect even more corrupt or borderline corrupt actions that will enrich the president and his cronies. Joe Biden and his son were already involved in an affair in Ukraine and have (corrupt) relationships there. Further provocations, aggressions and “false flag” productions (for example, first staging the fake use of chemical weapons by the Syrian army and then using this to justify an illegal bombardment) against the governments of Syria, Lebanon and Iran are also to be expected. Let us hope that there will be no major military interventions like in Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011, and hopefully no flagrant “regime change” aggressions or coup d’états in Latin America like in 2019 against Bolivia, and the ridiculous 2019 “Guaidó riots” in Venezuela. Nevertheless, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) will no doubt continue financing opposition parties in countries where the US wants regime change and will continue subverting and destabilizing other countries. Maybe the danger of a third world war has become a little smaller, but we will see.

TK: What do you expect in terms of domestic policy?

AdZ: I fear even more corporate corruption, white-collar crime and leftist populism, especially in socio-political developments. I expect a deterioration of the situation regarding freedom of opinion – also in the universities, a systematic domestic indoctrination on socio-political issues and total intolerance towards traditional values, Christian ethics, the family and the Catholic Church. The power of the mainstream media will grow, and Orwellian National Security Agency’s citizen monitoring will be intensified. We remember Edward Snowden and his warnings of 2013. His book, *Permanent Record*, published in 2019, reminds us of our slippery slope into the arms of Big Brother.[1]

TK: Where do Trump and Biden differ?

AdZ: Trump is an elephant in a porcelain shop. He pursues a personality cult – narcissistic, impulsive, megalomaniac. Biden is more moderate and boring. Trump thought he could afford to break several international treaties, to advocate blatant militarism. Biden – like Obama in his days – does imperialist politics with a smile. But under Biden, the exploitation

of the world by the US will certainly continue. Only not as blatant and brazen. The “default position” among Trump and Biden is imperialism. Biden will continue meddling in the internal affairs of other states, will continue bullying trade “partners”, try to impose US products on Europe, sabotage Russia’s Nordstream 2, will continue building pipelines through indigenous territory, fracking, etc.

TK: What else can we expect from Biden except a continuation of imperialist policies?

AdZ: In Biden’s case, political correctness in the USA will reach truly Orwellian levels and lead to a weakening of the traditional values and ethical foundations of Christian culture. Censorship practices with Google, Twitter and Amazon will be intensified. Self-censorship will become the “New Normal”. Biden also wants to continue the war against whistleblowers in general – not only against Julian Assange and Edward Snowden.

TK: If you take stock, can you see anything positive in Trump’s policy?

AdZ: His fight against the mainstream media, which he has lost, was an important signal against the omnipotence of the media. They get away with everything, even cutting off a president’s microphone in a discussion. Today people know more about the manipulation by the press. Many in America today know that CNN, the “New York Times” and “Washington Post” are spreading fake news and suppressing crucial information – only few people dared to say this before Trump took on the media. This is certainly something that can be seen as a positive development. He has also placed three excellent judges on the Supreme Court and helped expose the corruption in the “woke” word, including at “Planned Parenthood”.

TK: Where do you see Trump’s biggest foreign policy mistakes?

AdZ: He has continued and even intensified the inhumane and illegal practice of imposing crippling economic sanctions on countries where he wanted “regime change”. Here we should mention the severely affected states such as Cuba, Venezuela, Syria and Iran. But also against Russia and all companies that cooperate with these mentioned states. It is a terrible weapon that Trump operated with. Sanctions kill people! And judging by the hundreds of thousands of victims in the world, this clearly amount of crimes against humanity for purposes of article 7 of the Statute of Rome of the International Criminal Court.

TK: How do you judge his Middle East policy?

AdZ: It is much influenced by the disregard for all international legal foundations and UN resolutions concerning the Middle East. The absurd “Deal of the century” between Israel and the Palestinians – which must therefore be rejected – as well as the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights are part of Trump’s arbitrariness, just like the new treaties between the United Arab Emirates and Israel – whereby the rights of the Palestinians are completely disregarded. The so-called “Abraham Accords” or “normalization agreements” are anything but benevolent.

TK: With Trump and his predecessors of every hue we have seen that democratic principles are hardly respected. How could this respect be achieved?

AdZ: The citizens must demand the right to have greater control over policies, such as budgetary priorities, the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, the sanctions policy, etc. The Swiss state model is much better – the people have the right of initiative, and they practice it, as

well as the right of referendum on federal and cantonal laws and projects. This can be introduced without changing the US Constitution. Unfortunately there is no direct democratic tradition in the USA. A referendum culture would first have to be developed, at the municipal and state levels, before it could be introduced nationwide.

TK: Shouldn't we also change something about the electoral system?

AdZ: We should finally abolish the so-called "Electoral College". The election should be direct. It was hardly democratic when, for example, Al Gore had many more votes than George W. Bush, and yet Bush became president. The same happened in 2016, when Hillary Clinton had more votes than Trump.

TK: One has the impression that many wars were fought in the last decades of the US presidency. – Is this true?

AdZ: Yes, both parties are militaristic and interventionist. For example, two Democratic presidents, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, are responsible for the Vietnam War. The aggressions against Grenada and Nicaragua are on Republican Ronald Reagan's conscience. The Republican George H.W. Bush pushed the "regime change" in Panama, killing 6,000 civilians and staged the 1991 war against Iraq with at least a hundred thousand deaths among the overwhelmed Iraqis. The Democrat Bill Clinton carried out the aggressions in the Balkans, especially the NATO attacks against Yugoslavia, and the mainstream media helped with disinformation and fake news. The Republican George W. Bush is responsible for the genocidal aggression against Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. The Democrat Barak Obama has his hands full of blood because of Libya and Syria, the "regime changes" in Ukraine and a constant drone war against "terrorists", which countless civilian have fallen victims to.

TK: Were there no American presidents in recent decades who wanted peace?

AdZ: Although the system always strives for hegemony, some presidents have also tried to promote peace. On the Republican side, President Dwight Eisenhower stopped the aggression of England and France against Egypt in 1956. Eisenhower also recognized the danger to democracy in the "military-industrial complex". In fact, in his farewell address to the nation in January 1961, he formulated the dire warning and thus coined the term we all use today.[2]

TK: With the Democrats there was none?

AdZ: On the democratic side, Jimmy Carter tried to enable a just peace between the Israelis and the Arabs. He also wrote two books about this: "We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land" and "Palestine Peace, not Apartheid". The fact that he was not 100% on the Israeli side probably cost him re-election in 1980. I have had the opportunity to discuss many international law crises with Carter personally at the Carter Center in Atlanta. I consider him ethically the best US president in the last 100 years.

TK: What kind of policy would a president of the USA have to pursue?

Image on the right: *Jimmy Carter and Alfred de Zayas. "I consider him ethically the best US president in the last 100 years."* (picture zvg)



AdZ: He should adhere to Christian ethics and fundamental Christian values, the US Constitution, the UN Charter and international treaties. In terms of foreign policy, this means reviving multilateralism and working with the UN to protect future generations from constant wars, as stated in the preamble of the UN Charter. He should respect the sanctity of life, not instigate wars, but resolve conflicts peacefully through negotiation and compromise. The inviolability of treaties must also be upheld. And when treaties become obsolete, they should be replaced by international negotiation.

TK: Which treaties do you have in mind?

AdZ: This is particularly important in the case of the treaties on the limitation of nuclear weapons. In fact, this applies to all military programs, including conventional weapons. In 2013 the US signed the UN “Arms Trade Treaty”, but never ratified it. In 2019 President Trump rescinded the US signature. What we need is a treaty to limit the production of weapons, not just their sale. We need to revive START, the Open Skies Treaty and other agreements that Trump threw in the bin. We need total nuclear disarmament and general disarmament so that life-enhancing policies can be pursued, especially in the health sector. In the USA we were totally unprepared for the Covid 19 crisis, partly because the budget priorities in the USA were wrong and research funds were spent on the development of terrible weapons, the so-called lethal autonomous weapon systems or “killing robots” etc. In contrast, research on pandemic prevention, hospital modernization, etc., lagged behind.

TK: What kind of policy would Europe have to adopt towards the USA?

AdZ: Europe itself should not pursue imperialist or neo-colonial policies in the world. Europe should adhere more to the UN Charter and international law. It should stop applying international law selectively and arbitrarily, stop provoking Russia, stop financing “color revolutions” and stop trying to integrate Ukraine or Georgia into NATO. Europe should lift its own sanctions against Russia, Belarus and Syria. If Europe does so, it will have more credibility in advocating retortion against the USA. Europe should take retaliatory measures if the US presumes to apply US laws extra-territorially, if German or Swiss companies are threatened or punished by the US when doing business with Russia or when building Nordstream 2.

TK: What role can international organizations play here?

AdZ: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) should issue one or more Advisory Opinions on the illegality of US and EU sanctions policies under international law, and on the responsibility of the US and EU to make reparation to the victims. A resolution would first



have to be adopted in the UN General Assembly (according to Article 96 of the UN Charter). The questions of international law must finally be clearly defined, and one must act accordingly.

TK: What possibilities do you see with regard to sanctions policy that is contrary to international law?

AdZ: The International Criminal Court should initiate an investigation in accordance with Art. 7 of the Rome Statute to ascertain that the economic sanctions against Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Syria and Venezuela constitute crimes against humanity because they have already caused hundreds of thousands of deaths – through a lack of food and medicine and through the weakening of the health systems of these states, especially today with regard to Covid-19.

TK: This is a loss of all human foundations...

AdZ: Yes, these economic sanctions can be compared to the murderous siege of cities during the Thirty Years War or the Nazi siege of Leningrad from 1941 to 1944. President Biden should properly finance and participate in good faith in the multilateral activities of the UN specialized agencies including the World Health Organization, Unesco, etc. And the United States should return to the Human Rights Council – because we need the voice of the United States, too. Trump wanted to “make America great again” – I say: To make America respected and maybe even loved again, one would have to revitalize the initiatives and examples of Eleanor Roosevelt and adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There are enough decent human rights activists and experts in America – including Professors Noam Chomsky, Jeffrey Sachs, Dan Kovalik, John Quigley, Francis Boyle, among others – but they are not likely to be consulted and certainly not appointed by Biden. I expect “business as usual” – or continued exploitation of the world by Biden and his neo-conservative or neo-liberal team.

TK: You nevertheless see possibilities to improve the coexistence of the peoples?

AdZ: Yes, that is why the UN and the special organizations were established. Humanity has created countless instruments that could guarantee peaceful coexistence among peoples. We only have to implement them and bring them to bear, and then we could move into a more peaceful future. Europe and the USA have a responsibility to promote and adequately finance these bodies.

TK: What can Trump do until the end of his term?

AdZ: To make a dignified exit, Trump could immediately stop the persecution of Julian Assange, Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden and other whistleblowers. An amnesty for all whistleblowers would be the Christian thing to do. I cannot help but think of Richard Strauss' opera “Der Rosenkavalier” (The Knight of the Rose with a libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal), where in the third act the scandalous Baron von Lerchenau loses everything and must exit empty-handed. There the Marschallin tells him: “try to keep your dignity and leave quietly ... only thus can you remain a person of rank — so to speak.”

TK: As an independent UN expert for the promotion of a democratic and just international order, you have worked hard for a more peaceful coexistence of peoples. Your speeches before the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council were received with

applause, which is highly exceptional. What personal feedback was there from States, and how did the USA, your country of origin, behave?

AdZ: When I was Special Rapporteur (2012-2018), I was in constant contact with many ambassadors in Geneva, especially ambassadors from Latin America, Africa and Asia. There was a mutual, even friendly exchange of ideas and initiatives, and I always insisted on my independence. I constantly tried to inform my ambassador from the United States, and regularly provided the US Mission in Geneva with reports and suggestions. I also tried to maintain good contacts with the European ambassadors as well as with the ambassadors of Switzerland, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, etc., among others at social events and panel discussions. It was clear to me, of course, that the European Union did not quite appreciate my independence. They would have liked me to sing their song.

TK: What were the reactions when your mandate ended?

AdZ: After I had ended my mandate, I was encouraged by many ambassadors to make myself available for other UN assignments. I did this twice, my candidacy was put on the first short list, I was interviewed by 5 ambassadors for 50 minutes each time. The interviews went well – but I was not appointed. This is understandable, because I am not a “blank slate” anymore and my reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly have not only garnered applause. Of course I remain closely attached to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, where I entertain many friendships, and I am ready to serve the cause again. But, as I said, the independence of the experts is hardly in demand in many states.

TK: Professor de Zayas, thank you for the interview.

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