



TRANSCRIPT: Reexamining History with Noam Chomsky: New World Order and the Grand Area

NOTE: This transcript may not be 100% accurate.

Zain Raza:

Let's take a step forward there in history. In your speech "Who owns the World" that you held in the University of Massachusetts you surfaced from internal documents a scheme known as the "Grand Area". Could you talk about the "Grand Area" and specifically what role Germany was assigned within it?

Noam Chomsky: This is scholarly work on the Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department. The Council on Foreign Relations is the major, non-governmental institution concerned with foreign affairs. It draws from a wide range of elite elements, business, politics, academics and so on. It publishes the journal Foreign Affairs, which is the main establishment foreign affairs journal. From 1939 until 1945 the Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department held regular planning sessions in which they tried to analyze the wartime situation and laid plans for the postwar economy and they developed a concept, which they called „Grand Area.“ The Grand Area was defined as a region that the U.S. must control in the post war era. It included of course the Western Hemisphere, it included the former British Empire which the U.S was intending to largely take over, maybe Britain would be a junior partner. And as much of Europe, the commercial and industrial center of Europe, as much of that as possible. Certainly western Europe, its industrial, technological, commercial center.

In the early stages of the war it was assumed that there would be an American controlled area, "Grand Area" and a German controlled area. They thought in the early stages of war, it looked as if Germany would be successful in carving out an area.

After Stalingrad and at the time when the Russian forces were beginning to grind down the Germans, drive them back towards central Europe, the conception changed, and they realized increasingly that Germany would not survive as a dominant force in the world so their conception of the Grand Area extended beyond. This area was defined as one in which the United States would have pretty much complete economic and political control. An exercise of sovereignty by others, which challenged this control, would not be permitted, I can't do the exact wording right off hand, but something like that, you can easily find it. The major study of this was done by two young American political scientists, Larry Shoup and William Minter in a book called "Imperial Brain

Trust". Larry Shoup incidentally has just come out with a new book studying the Council on Foreign Relations programs in the later period but that's the general conception and it was pretty realistic. If you look at the power relations in the world it was not a unrealistic picture. Remember that the United States emerged from the Second World War in a position of power that had no historical parallel. The U.S. had literally 50% of world wealth. It had incomparable security, controlled the Western Hemisphere, controlled both oceans, controlled the opposite sides of both oceans. It had overwhelming military power and economic power. Other industrial societies had been either seriously harmed or sometimes virtually destroyed by the war. The war was very beneficial to the U.S. Economy. It's industrial production virtually quadrupled, war time spending ended the depression which had not been ended before, enormous stimulus to the economy. The technology that was developed just laid the basis for postwar growth. In that context „Grand Area“ planning of the kind I described was by no means unrealistic. And furthermore it was put into effect, it was implemented. If you look at the policies implemented and developed in the early post war period they follow these prescriptions pretty closely.

Read for example the policy documents of the State Department policy planning staff, headed by George Kennan by then and they had more or less spell out, in particular, variants of these programs. Each region of the world was assigned what was called its function. So, the function of Southeast Asia would be to provide the raw materials and resources, not just for the United States but primarily for the former colonial powers, which needed them, in order to get dollars so that they could purchase the U.S. manufacturing...

Zain Raza:

And Germanys particular function?

Noam Chomsky:

Well it took a couple of years. But within a few years Germany began to be reconstituted as a central part of the Grand Area – it wasn't called Grand Area anymore, it was part of the U.S. dominated global system. By the early 1950s there were steps towards rearming...Incidentally part of this program I should say beginning actually in 1943/44 was to undermine the anti-fascist resistance almost everywhere – first in Italy. The first place where the U.S. and British forces penetrated. The Italian resistance was holding down nearly half a dozen German divisions and parts of Italy were beginning to reconstruct an independent society and all of this was dismantled as the U.S. and British forces moved through the peninsula and pretty much reinstated the traditional order, including fascist sympathizers and similar programs were adopted in other parts of occupied Europe as the United States took over, including Germany. In fact Kennan at one point, top postwar planner, said that the West ought to “wall off”, that's his phrase „wall off“ Western Germany from the eastern zone because the danger or what they regarded as danger of the labor-based - what they called communist - policies affecting the West, might affect them.

In Italy where there was a strong communist party and it was probably gonna win the first 1948 election, the U.S. poured enormous resources into making sure that they wouldn't win that election, making it very clear to Italians in many ways that if they allow the communists to take control they'd be in deep trouble. One state department official said the policies have to be clear enough, so that the dumbest wop can understand; we are going to strangle them, unless they vote the right way in their first free election. In Greece at first the British moved in, and they faced a strong, they tried to crush the anti-fascist resistance, they weren't able to do it. The Americans came in to join them and there was a major war, where probably a 160 000 Greeks were killed. The end result was a restoration of something like the traditional society, including fascist elements and the tragedy of Greece goes on from there. Later in the 1960s there was a real outright fascist coup in Greece, a

military fascist coup strongly supported by the U.S., continuously supported until it was overthrown by the Greeks in the mid 70s.

END OF TRANSCRIPT