

Marcos Explains Zapatista Intentions and Thinking to those on the Left

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Translated by irlandesa

[The following is a transcript of the words of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, from a recording made on August 6, 2005]

The Other Campaign Begins

Words of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos
Meeting with Political Organizations of the Left
August 6, 2005
Tzeltal Selva Region

I want to more or less explain to you about the format we're proposing: our proposal is that first we're going to talk and to explain some questions about the Sexta, about what we're proposing, and maybe there we'll be able to respond to some doubts you sent us, like what about López Obrador, like what happened with the CND, all that, and then we'll have a bit of a rest, and we'll listen to your words. Then there's two possibilities: those who want to speak in front of everyone, and those who want to talk with the Zapatista leadership behind closed doors, with the understanding that the closed door meetings aren't clandestine. Everything that's said we're going to make public with all those people who are joining the Sexta, but there are things that are better presented in brief, then the organizations which come can agree to speak their word here and have a meeting separately. Our work is serious, and we're going to be here all day and all night resolving your questions.

Let me again repeat the welcome from the *compañeros* of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee, the *compañeros* and *compañeras* who are here, *Comandantes* and *Comandantas* who are part of the Sexta Committee, in this case they're *compañeros* from the Tzeltal Selva region, as in this case, there are *compañeros* and *compañeras* who were volunteers for the work of the Sexta, from the Border region which is the Tojolabal region, from the region of Los Altos which is the Tzotzil region, the Northern region which is the Chol region, and the Tzotz choj region, which is the one you know as Altamirano. Some of them will be at some meetings, and you'll see others at other ones. Their main work is to present all of you, to inform the support bases as to what is being expressed. My work is to act as a bridge between the *Comandancia* and the Committee or the organizations, persons, groups, who are going to be working with us in the Sixth Declaration.

Today the meeting is with political organizations. A political organization is one which lays claim to being a political organization, as it says in the San Andrés Accords: indigenous is that which lays claim to being indigenous, political organization is that which lays claim to being a political organization. We know there are *compañeros* who are planning to come on their own, they'll all be well received, but at every meeting preference will be given to the word, attention to the proposals being made, which in this case will be political organizations. If, however, people come on their own, they'll be welcome, but we ask them to respect the *compañeros* whose turn it is, that's how the words will go. Now it's the turn of the political organizations of the left, and we want to thank them for having come. In the first place, because the relationship between the EZLN and the political organizations of the left has been bad, primarily because of our clumsiness and our inexperience starting in January of 1994 in figuring out what the national scene was and the work those organizations were doing in different places. Nonetheless, in spite of the fact that it was basically our fault that our relationship had been damaged, at no point have we questioned the legitimacy you have gained in the social movements with the people who have responded. The recognition and admiration you've provoked in us, at this stage of the game, with the entire neoliberal and capitalist offensive, people who define themselves as being leftist to participate no matter what happens, especially when it's the fashion to be centrist or moderate right. The majority of the organizations of the left which are present here are engaged in important work, they work with the base. You have our guarantee that we

recognize that work, not only are we not going to question it, we're going to publicly recognize it when we're participating.

We know that you ran risks in coming here, because no matter how much is said, the EZLN is still a different political-military organization, and it is weighed down by different kinds of threats - what are they called?... "rule of law." We know, then, that when you come here to be with us, or to establish a relationship with us, you are running a risk. I believe all those organizations which are present here are aware that we are going to be confronted with a very intense campaign of disparagement, greater than the one the UNAM Strike movement of 1999 received, and I'm sure that there are many bets in many places that this is going to fail, and that any attempt to make accords with the left is destined to failure by definition. And, therefore, the EZLN's initiative of trying to have relations with other organizations of the left is bound to fail. We're willing to fail, like we failed before in our relationship with that party - I believe, I'm not quite sure, it's the Revolutionary Democratic Party [PRD], with what was *cardenismo* a long time ago and with certain sectors, let's say progressives, intellectuals, civil society.

Starting with these assumptions, we want to make it clear, first, that the Sixth Declaration posits two levels of relationship: direct participation, under equal circumstances with us in the planning and carrying out of the Other Campaign. I don't know what your thoughts are concerning the length of time, but we're not thinking about an action like the March of the 1,111 or the *Consulta* of '99, nor the March for Indigenous Dignity: we are thinking about political work of a decade - ten years - to refute the 6 year administration plan - if it's less, we'll give it our all. In this regard, even though it's being presented in the face of the 2006 election, what the EZLN is proposing in the Other Campaign goes beyond that, not just in its political positions, but also in its calendar, despite the fact that the EZLN comes and goes during the elections, and it will continue the work independently of what is going on in the electoral process. The invitation we are extending to those who are joining in with the Sixth is for them to participate with us under equal circumstances, in the framework of the preparation meetings, which is what this is right now. We decided, we're the hosts, we have the order of the day. Our thinking is that after these meetings are over, it won't be like this anymore, but in accord with the political and social organizations, NGOs and with all those people who are going to be coming, a kind of agreement will be reached, and then we'll be there sometimes in order to clarify things, as the work is being agreed to.

The other level of relationship with the EZLN is that of proposing bilateral relations, they could be separate from participation in the Other Campaign. The political organizations of the left would be interested in organization to organization relationships with the EZLN. This could be done through common accord. It doesn't involve having to be in just one. I would ask you, please, to announce in your organizations that you can be in both, in just one or in neither. I would like to repeat that we thank you very much for having passed through the communities in order to come here or where you're going to pass through, with the hope that things turn out well.

During this first meeting, we're going to give preference to those organizations which have said they support the Sexta. We know there are organizations which have come to express other problems, but the meeting that was convened is clear. We don't refuse to speak with others, but first we'll do so with those who are supporting the Sexta, then, if there's the time and the means, those who wish to propose something else can do so, and we're going to listen to them.

I am telling you clearly that we are going to listen with respect, but any argument regarding supporting López Obrador's candidacy or the PRD is doomed to failure with us. If anyone has the patience and the guts to hear arguments in favor of that, we won't object, not us.

There have been 12 years of seeing what a party has done. If anyone has any doubts as to what López Obrador is proposing, I have here the summary of the interview he gave the *New York Times*, and the *Financial Times*, along with the 50 commitments, along with his history as head of the government of DF and along with the history of the PRD. If anyone says there are bases inside the PRD which should be rescued, rescue them. Not us.

If you want to debate the possibility of the PRD and the left, we can bring the *compañeros* who were shot by paramilitaries in Zinacantán, all the committees who turned their backs when the indigenous law was voted on, the *compañeros* from these villages who have been attacked by the PRD ORCAO, the *compañero* who was kidnapped and tortured by the PRD CIOAC, and all those who have been systematically attacked by that party which says it's leftist.

We're not going there.

If someone wants to tell us something about this, then we'll listen to it and all that, but we're going above the PRI, against the PAN and against the PRD. No one should have any room for doubt, but if any of you think you can get a deputy seat in exchange for raising a leftist movement or has the futile hope that a large movement will move López Obrador to the left, agreed, we just ask that you be honest with us and with the people. If you're going to plan that, tell us and tell the people "our plan is this: we don't believe in López Obrador, but if we create a big fuss, he might give us a deputy seat." Agreed, it's a strategy, it can work or not, but be honest with us. Don't tell us "no, what you're saying is very good. And, below, what are you going to give us." We're not going to be frightened of anything, really, but yes, what we're not going to allow is for you to be dishonest with us, because we are indeed being honest with you. As of now, we are going to share everything: if a proposal from Fox comes saying he wants to speak with us, you're going to know. If Martha Sahagún wants the Other Campaign to support her, you are going to know. If at the very hour we decide to go with a suitable candidate, you're going to know. In this regard, anything that could be kept secret, we're not going to keep secret - we're going to share with you, and we're going to say what our position is. You might not be accustomed to that, but what the Sexta says is what it says, there's nothing else hidden.

There are many definitions still remaining. I believe we're going to be on the same wavelength - that a definition of the State is lacking, a definition of position in the face of State power is lacking, of the nature of the organic composition of capital, social classes, factions, the.... All of that is still undefined for a simple reason - it's not the place to define them. The Sixth Declaration doesn't say it's for socialism, because in reality our hidden agenda is that we want to reimpose feudalism. Any other definitions which are left unresolved there - in the Sixth Declaration - we think are going to be the product of two processes: the development process of the Other Campaign which means...and seeing what happens with the process of the relationships between the EZLN and the organizations of the left. We think that all those things which are unresolved in the Sixth Declaration are going to be defined along with you.

You can believe us or not, but we have been honest ever since we were born as the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, in that it is our conviction not only not to be the vanguard of a movement of transformation in Mexico, but we also think that the movement of transformation of Mexico is the result of the action of many political forces of the left, among which we are a part. This action strongly needs the participation of workers, *campesinos*, students, workers in the city and the countryside. We see as legitimate any organization of the left which aspires to build and to participate in the struggle of all these sectors.

The EZLN doesn't do work with workers, nor with students, their work is fundamentally with the indigenous. We are not going to fight with you for the moral direction or legitimacy which the popular worker *campesino* movement - or however you want to call it - has gained. Nor are we going to fight with you for the leadership of those movements. The Sexta is quite clear - we want to join our struggles with the struggles of the workers and *campesinos*, we don't want to lead the struggle of the workers and *campesinos*. You have the work you have, I'm not going to go into details here, you know, and you have earned the legitimacy and the recognition of those people. It doesn't matter if you don't appear in the media. The media and quantitative logic that an organization is important according to the number of persons it has doesn't go over well with us. We began with 6. When they say "don't talk with that organization, because it's very small." If they're more than 6, it's worthwhile, it can grow. And, if we're going with the quantitative, the PRI would be seated there - in any event, it's the one that has the most people. That's what we're asking you, to help us. We're not asking you to follow us, nor to do what we're going to tell you to do. You have your work with workers, work with students, with neighbors, with *campesinos*, with popular groups, non-governmental. We're asking you, then, to be the bridge so the EZLN can listen to what the *compañeros*

have to say about those points. The Sixth Declaration is clear - when the EZLN comes out, it's not going to say that wealth was formed because a little bee went and carried pollen to another. Wealth has its origin in exploitation. We're not going to help you in that - we want to listen to any word which is in keeping with an anti-capitalist movement against exploitation.

If the workers, *campesinos*, students and whatever are anarchists, it doesn't matter, we want to talk with them. If they are Trotskyites, it doesn't matter, we want to speak with them. Maoists, Stalinists, whatever they are, as long as they have a project and a proposal along the length of this great anti-capitalist band. We want to hear it, one, and, two, we want to see if it's possible to join our struggle with your struggle. That is what we want, and that's what we're going for. The Other Campaign's proposal is not one of drawing lines, it's not promoting armed struggle. It is going and asking the people what they think, how they see things. We're not guided by polls. If the polls say there's a large movement supporting López Obrador, it's López Obrador's problem, and the problem of those people being paid. What we want to hear is what the people think about their problems, how they're resolving them and, above all, for them to tell us of their experiences of struggle. You know about them, because you're working there. We aren't going to tell the *compañeros* of San Salvador Atenco how to oppose an airport, how to organize a resistance movement there. Nor are we going to teach the *compañeros* and *compañeras* from the Retired Persons Frente how to resist the offensive. We want to go and talk with you and to have you tell us what your history was like and where you see the path, and we might find points in common. And we're going to go everywhere we're invited. I'm letting you know: we are going to fulfill the Sixth Declaration even if we're alone and if no one wants to work with us. We're going to put up a sign that says: "Hammock cords cut, chickens plucked."

We would find it completely natural if we were to go to speak with some *campesinos* in a region, and the brothers of one organization or another were to say "come with us." What we aren't going to say is come with the EZLN. We're not going to do that. The work of the Other Campaign means not promoting the growth of one organization, but we would find it natural that you would promote it. Let us make it clear in that regard that the EZLN holds its line, it will continue promoting the appearance of new social subjects, the appearance of new organizations, of new forms of organization and of new worlds. We're not going to offer the people an organizational structure, but we'd find it natural, normal and necessary for disputes over the campaign's political options to indeed be offered to the people until they're persuaded and they enter into a new political program. The Other Campaign is not positing a method for transforming society - you are indeed clear on that.

We are not going to promote people entering political organizations, but neither that they not enter. It's not our problem. Our problem is trying to unite our struggles. If the struggle of those from San Salvador Atenco has a political leaning, it doesn't matter. What we want is to join our struggle with yours, with the pensioners and retired persons of the IMSS, with the students from UNAM, with the cultural movements, for the struggle for human rights.

But the Other Campaign is quite clear - we are not going to promote nor propose, we're not even going to toy with the possibility that perhaps, who knows, depending on what they give us, we would support the candidate of any of the parties. We are not going to do that. If someone here were to tell us I entered the Other Campaign, but López Obrador must be supported, we're going to be honest, and we're going to tell you that's how you see it, because we're going all out. We're not going to bespatter them, without firing a shot, *compañeros*, without campaign teams, without image consultants, without paid television ads, and, alive or dead, free or imprisoned, they're all going to pay for what they've done. We're either going together to hold them accountable, or we're going alone, but they're all a bunch of freeloaders, *compañeros*. They've mocked us and many other people, and they're going to pay because they're going to pay. It doesn't matter to us if they promise us something or other. This is what we want to say, and everything is welcome. We are honest, and we are asking you to be honest, *compañeros*. We don't know what's going to happen here, the movement might grow a great deal, it might not grow at all, we might end up fighting...

The moment might come when the movement is going to have to define itself at a certain point. We're prepared to discuss all of this, but with these principles, that no one tells us "we're going to participate in the Other Campaign," and, just when they go up on the stage, says "*compañeros*, López Obrador has to be supported." We're not going to strike out, but we're going to say "Don't believe him." We're going to tell

him here it is, read *La Jornada*, but also the *New York Times*. Then say what he's proposing, at least those who say he wants to return to the populist past. He doesn't want to return to the populist past, he's going to give us the knockout punch... In an interview he gave to the *New York Times*, they asked him if he was known for being authoritarian, and he said that social movements demanded a strong hand...

They know what happened there with popular urban movement during his government, but even so, we made a bet. Not only did we lose it, but they betrayed us. Not only did they betray us: they mocked us, they didn't respect us. We're prepared for them to kill us, to put us in jail, to disappear us, but not for them to disrespect us. And that's what we're going to settle, and not just that, if we keep on hoping he can do it, hoping the other will, there's going to come a moment when there are no solutions, *compañeros*. The discussion you're having is serious. If we don't do anything, it's not going to matter anymore if you're a Trotskyite, Maoist, there's not going to be a program anymore.

The other thing we want to tell you is that we're going to respect the people in this process, like we respect you. We still have to speak with the indigenous, with the social movements, with NGOs, with collectives, with all of them, and everything will come from the collective. And there's going to be a whole series of suggestions and proposals which have to come out of everything that results from these *encuentros*. Now not just with the EZLN, but with the Other. The EZLN has a position internationally which means, in the case of Cuba, that we are with the people of Cuba. There's a lesson there, and we're taking a position. If someone doesn't agree, there's no problem. We can work in the Other Campaign if we're in agreement in Mexico. If someone thinks that they have to adjust their ways for neoliberalism, we don't think so. That if we lose this war, there won't be another war to fight. The generation of the link which follows is that of the penguin. Therefore, in that broad range of the international, there can be differences in how Bolivia is characterized, Ecuador, the resistance movement in Europe. Whether China is communist, or it isn't. I don't know what everyone believes. We don't have any reason to fight, otherwise this battle can take three months. Because it's quite clear in Mexico, from the other geometry and what we see in the administration, what it is we think.

I'm going to tell you a story which I hope might help to answer, among others, the question asked by the *compañeros En Lucha*: "What happened with the CND?" Because they ask, reasonably, "Why are those who weren't convened by the CND now the ones being convened, and those who were convened by the CND, aren't being convened now?" We explain it like this - with the general idea that the transformation in Mexico is not the result of one single force, but it requires alliances with our peoples. In 1994, we analyzed, and we defined that force of *cardenismo*. *Cardenismo* came out of that fraud of 1988, out of a large mass movement and out of the moral authority that had been built around a person who was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, the engineer, as we call him. It was in 1994, as we are now in an election, we weren't for the elections. We were for this movement, and two large positions were defined around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. There were more people saying that yes, a transformation process could be brought into place by what was *cardenismo* and Cárdenas with his candidacy. And there were those who said no, and, at the time of choosing, we chose yes, that it would be possible with *cardenismo* and the forces gathered around him, we could be able to achieve a transformation process that would include the demands of the 11 points along with the demands of the Indian peoples.

According to us, what happened later was a process of accelerated decomposition of the political class which reached the PRD at the moment it won the elections in DF. That decomposition process was so large it reached the point where personal commitment as a *cardenista* faction and as part of the PRD of promoting the demands of the EZLN and of the Indian peoples, were no longer worth crap. With a simple political calculation that went: "It suits us better if the EZLN stays in the mountains of the Mexican southeast than to have them here, fighting politically like any other organization." Then they decided: "It doesn't suit us to have them doing politics, if we recognize the San Andrés Accords, the EZLN will be engaging in open political work, it's better they stay there." That was clearly a political calculation made in secret meetings. And at some point, I don't know how, Cárdenas decided to support this proposal. For us, the breaking point with the political class, not just with the PRD, was April of 2001, at the moment when everyone agreed to vote on the Cocopa law, and, according to us - we could be wrong - they said "no, this is just the same old crap." According to us, it wasn't crap yet, it was still in process.

Also according to us, the decomposition process of the political class is so great that there is no longer anything to do there. Certainly López Obrador doesn't steal, but there's more than a capacity to show it exists, unless they're betting on López Obrador being a dictator, then yes. We understand, then, that it's just useful, because a popular movement is going to be generated around López Obrador. We think not, but we can understand that some people might make this calculation. If they want to go, go, we're not. To those who say there are bases which should be rescued in the PRD, like Mario Saucedo says, that they wear Zapatista shirts...then keep them well saved. If they're honest people, then they're going to leave. We're not going to keep waiting, Zedillo, failed, Fox failed, López Obrador, hell, failed, and then, who's next, the *niño verde*?

Many things are beginning to happen in this process on different sides, social security.

This meeting is a symbolic place for us. This was a *finca* prior to 1994, this symbolic place. The *finquera* lived there (in the building), the peons didn't enter it. The foreman was the one who gave orders. The people living here are the ones who were the peons. They are the ones who are now living on these lands. What the EZLN did here was to run off the *finqueros*, and the land was divided up, in collective work. I don't remember who said that the land belongs to he who works it...We think that is going to be the process at the national level, for *campesinos* as well as for workers.

And that's how it is, there will be many options. We're inviting you to discuss it, but we're telling you clearly, if you tell us the same thing as in 1994, that the PRD is an option of the left, there are other platforms, and not with us. What we saw is that we did everything we could, and we ran out of patience, for all the support which reached the national and international level, what we think is that we need to join together with other struggles. That is the spirit of the Sexta. The other clear definition of the Sexta is that we think that an alternative for transformation in Mexico is only going to come from the left. It's not going to come from the center, nothing is going to come out of the right, only from the left. That's why we're interested in talking with you yourselves. Of course, we're going to have a lot of time when they put us in jail. We have to listen to all your proposals, your analyses and to learn.

The backbone of the Other Campaign is going to be the Indian peoples. Next week we have a meeting with them, and we're going to suggest to them that they be the headquarters for when the Zapatista delegation passes through when it does its work with the *compañeros* and *compañeras* who join the Sexta. If the Zapatista delegation wants to visit UNAM, it will go to those political organizations which it has a relationship with, which it has worked with. There won't be a committee formed like before.

We're going to go about talking with the organizations which participate, but we won't have any problem with you being in front of us. There are just things we don't have to put up with. The Sexta's proposals are to ally itself with other unregistered political organizations. It doesn't say they don't fight for power, nor that the electoral struggle isn't part of their strategy. Since the Other Campaign isn't engaging in elections, we don't want it to be used for registering a candidate by those who are registered. The problem we see is that, during the elections, they want to involve that problem of supporting some of their candidates. The first meeting with you is open, you can decide not to support the Other Campaign. However, you can have bilateral relations, because the position and attitude you assume are going to depend on many things. Because if you decide to involve another area of discussion in the campaign with the ideological enemies of the same band, they're going screw up, and the proposals are going to fail, and the people who approached are going to move away.

We are proposing places of discussion, which, in the Other Campaign, we are centering on making a national plan for listening to the main points where struggles exist. We are not asking you to abandon the work you have in front of you, but to help us speak with them. That you share your proposal for social transformation with us, and, as well as in these 2 proposals, we will build something else - we don't know what it will be. In addition to the penguin, we are also putting our lives into this process. We're not asking you to risk your lives nor your organizational structures as organizations. We are asking you to respect us and to be honest with us. If you want to deceive the gringos and lie that we're neoliberals, and at just the right time we'll turn around, say so, and we'll discuss it. Let's be honest, not registered candidates, or NGOs with registered support, or PRD...be honest...

The way we're thinking about the campaign in these organizational tasks, we're asking who's going to come in. Some here are going to say "yes, we're in," and others "we're not coming," deciding who's coming, sending delegates to the meetings which follow so they can have their delegates from their organization for the Sexta.

Once all the meetings are over, in mid-September we'll put out a document, a pronouncement. That will no longer be from the EZLN, not just from the EZLN, instead it will be signed by the organizations, individuals and persons who are in agreement with it.

Our idea of the campaign is, first we're going to send a person to measure how deep the river is - if they don't kill him, if they don't disappear him, or take him prisoner - according to the agreement we have with you and with other organizations.

We have to resolve that problem of what is going to happen to us. That, in broad strokes, is what the Sexta proposes.

[Please note: this is taken from a transcription of a verbal presentation, not a written document, and it reads as such. Except for punctuation, I have translated it literally - irl]