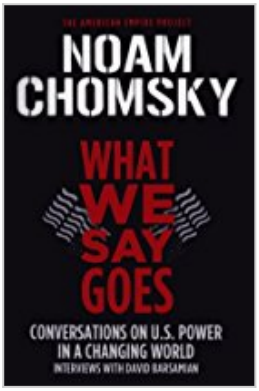

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project)

By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian

An indispensable set of interviews on foreign and domestic issues with the bestselling author of *Hegemony or Survival*, "America's most useful citizen." (*The Boston Globe*)

In this new collection of conversations, conducted in 2006 and 2007, Noam Chomsky explores the most immediate and urgent concerns: Iran's challenge to the United States, the deterioration of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of China, and the growing power of the left in Latin America, as well as the Democratic victory in the 2006 U.S. midterm elections and the upcoming presidential race. As always, Chomsky presents his ideas vividly and accessibly, with uncompromising principle and clarifying insight.

The latest volume from a long-established, trusted partnership, *What We Say Goes* shows once again that no interlocutor engages with Chomsky more effectively than David Barsamian. These interviews will inspire a new generation of readers, as well as longtime Chomsky fans eager for his latest thinking on the many crises we now confront, both at home and abroad. They confirm that Chomsky is an unparalleled resource for anyone seeking to understand our world today.

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project)

By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project)
By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian

An indispensable set of interviews on foreign and domestic issues with the bestselling author of *Hegemony or Survival*, "America's most useful citizen." (*The Boston Globe*)

In this new collection of conversations, conducted in 2006 and 2007, Noam Chomsky explores the most immediate and urgent concerns: Iran's challenge to the United States, the deterioration of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of China, and the growing power of the left in Latin America, as well as the Democratic victory in the 2006 U.S. midterm elections and the upcoming presidential race. As always, Chomsky presents his ideas vividly and accessibly, with uncompromising principle and clarifying insight.

The latest volume from a long-established, trusted partnership, *What We Say Goes* shows once again that no interlocutor engages with Chomsky more effectively than David Barsamian. These interviews will inspire a new generation of readers, as well as longtime Chomsky fans eager for his latest thinking on the many crises we now confront, both at home and abroad. They confirm that Chomsky is an unparalleled resource for anyone seeking to understand our world today.

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1036948 in Books
- Published on: 2007-10-02
- Released on: 2007-10-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .54" w x 5.50" l, .44 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

Editorial Review

Review
“Chomsky criticizes those journalists and public intellectuals who, in reporting and commenting on events, do not question the assumptions under which the country acts and have framed the debate so that only the details are fodder for discussion. Chomsky's points are challenging.” ?*Library Journal*

About the Author

Noam Chomsky is the author of numerous bestselling political works, including *Hegemony or Survival*, *Failed States*, *Imperial Ambitions* and *What We Say Goes*. A professor of linguistics and philosophy at MIT, he is widely credited with having revolutionized modern linguistics. He lives outside Boston, Massachusetts.

David Barsamian, director of the award-winning and widely syndicated *Alternative Radio*, is the winner of the Lannan Foundation's 2006 Cultural Freedom Fellowship and the ACLU's Upton Sinclair Award for independent journalism. Barsamian lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Chapter 1

James Traub, in the New York Times Magazine, writes, “Of course, treaties and norms don’t restrain the outlaws. The prohibition on territorial aggression enshrined in the UN Charter didn’t faze Saddam Hussein when he decided to forcibly annex Kuwait.” Then he adds, “When it comes to military force, the United States can, and will, act alone. But diplomacy depends on a united front.”1

As Traub knows very well, the United States is a leading outlaw state, totally unconstrained by international law, and it openly says so. What we say goes. The United States invaded Iraq, even though that’s a radical violation of the United Nations Charter.

If he knows that, why doesn’t he write it in the article?

If he wrote that, then he wouldn’t be writing for the New York Times. There is a certain discipline that you have to meet. In a well-run society, you don’t say things you know. You say things that are required for service to power.

That reminds me of the story of the emperor Alexander and his encounter with a pirate.

I don’t know if it happened, but according to the account from Saint Augustine, a pirate was brought to Alexander, who asked him, How dare you molest the seas with your piracy? The pirate answered, How dare you molest the world? I have a small ship, so they call me a pirate. You have a great navy, so they call you an emperor. But you’re molesting the whole world. I’m doing almost nothing by comparison.2 That’s the way it works. The emperor is allowed to molest the world, but the pirate is considered a major criminal.

Eighteen Pakistani civilians were killed in a U.S. missile attack on Pakistan in January 2006. The New York Times, in an editorial, commented, “Those strikes were legitimately aimed at top fugitive leaders of Al Qaeda.”3

That's because the New York Times agrees, and always has, that the United States should be an outlaw state. That's not surprising. The United States has the right to use violence where it chooses, no matter what happens. If we hit the wrong people, we might say, "Sorry, we hit the wrong people." But there should be no limits on the right of the United States to use force.

The Times and other liberal media outlets are exercised about domestic surveillance and invasions of privacy. Why doesn't that concern for law extend to the international arena?

Actually, the media are very concerned, just like James Traub, with violations of international law: when some enemy does it. So the policy is completely consistent. It should never be called a double standard. It's a single standard of subordination to power. Surveillance is bothersome to people in power. They don't like it. Powerful people don't want to have their e-mails read by Big Brother, so, yes, they're kind of annoyed by surveillance. On the other hand, a gross violation of international law—what the Nuremberg Tribunal called "the supreme international crime" that "contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole"—for example, the invasion of Iraq, that's just fine.4

There is an interesting and important book, which naturally has hardly been reviewed, by two international law specialists, Howard Friel and Richard Falk, called The Record of the Paper. It happens to focus on the New York Times and its attitude toward international law, but only because of the paper's importance.5 The rest of the press is the same. Falk and Friel point out that the practice has been consistent: if an enemy can be accused of violating international law, it's a huge outrage. But when the United States does something, it's as if it didn't happen. To take one example, they point out that in the seventy editorials on Iraq from September 11, 2001, to March 21, 2003, the invasion of Iraq, the words UN Charter and international law never appeared.6 That's typical of a newspaper that believes the United States should be an outlaw state.

Martin Luther King Jr., in his April 4, 1967, Riverside Church speech, said, "Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war."7 Is that true?

You see that anywhere you look. It's obviously true in the United States. But was the United States "at war" in 1967? King suggests it was. It's an odd sense of being at war. The United States was attacking another country—in fact, it was attacking all of Indochina—but had not been attacked by anybody. So what's the war? It was just plain, outright aggression.

Howard Zinn, in his speech "The Problem Is Civil Obedience," says civil disobedience is "not our problem.... Our problem is civil obedience," people taking orders and not questioning. How do we confront that?8

Howard is quite right. Obedience and subordination to power are the major problem, not just here but everywhere. It's much more important here because the state is so powerful, so it matters more here than in Luxembourg, for example. But it's the same problem.

We have models as to how to confront it. First of all, we have plenty of models from our own history. We also have examples from other parts of the hemisphere. For example, Bolivia and Haiti had democratic elections of a kind that we can't even conceive of in the United States. In Bolivia, were the candidates both rich guys who went to Yale and joined the Skull and Bones Society and ran on much the same program because they're supported by the same corporations? No. The people of Bolivia elected someone from their own ranks, Evo Morales. That's democracy. In Haiti, if Jean-Bertrand Aristide had not been expelled from the Caribbean by the United States in early 2004, it's very likely that he would have won reelection in Haiti. In Haiti and Bolivia, people act in ways that enable them to participate in the democratic system. Here, we don't. That's real obedience. The kind of disobedience that's needed is to re-create a functioning democracy.

It’s not a very radical idea.

Evo Morales’s victory in Bolivia in December 2005 marks the first time an indigenous person has been elected to lead a country in South America.

It’s particularly striking in Bolivia because the country has an indigenous majority. And you can be sure that the Pentagon and U.S. civilian planners are deeply concerned. Not only is Latin America falling out of our control, but for the first time the indigenous populations are entering the political arena, in substantial numbers. The indigenous population is also substantial in Peru and Ecuador, which are also big energy producers. Some groups in Latin America are even calling for the establishment of an Indian nation. They want control of their own resources. In fact, some of them don’t even want those resources developed. They’d rather have their own lives, not have their society and culture destroyed so that people can sit in traffic jams in New York. All this is a big threat to the United States. And it’s democracy, functioning in ways that by now we have agreed not to let happen here.

But we don’t have to accept that. There have been plenty of times in the past when popular forces in the United States have caused great change. You mentioned Martin Luther King. He would be the first to tell you that he didn’t act alone. He was part of a popular movement that made substantial achievements. King is greatly honored for having opposed racist sheriffs in Alabama. You hear all about that on Martin Luther King Day. But when he turned his attention to the problems of poverty and war, he was condemned. What was he doing when he was assassinated? He was supporting a strike of sanitation workers in Memphis and planning a Poor People’s March on Washington. He wasn’t praised for that, any more than he was praised for his rather tepid, delayed opposition to the Vietnam War. In fact, he was bitterly criticized.9

This isn’t quantum physics. There are complexities and details. You have to learn a lot and get the data right, but the basic principles are so transparent, it takes a major effort not to perceive them.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Clark:

Here thing why that What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good but it depends in the content of it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no guide that similar with What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project). It gives you thrill studying journey, its open up your eyes about the thing in which happened in the world which is probably can be happened around you. It is possible to bring everywhere like in recreation area, café, or even in your technique home by train. Should you be having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) in e-book can be your substitute.

Deborah Ryan:

Do you one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt when you are in the book store? Try and pick one book that you just dont know the inside because don't assess book by its deal with may doesn't work this is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not as fantastic as in the outside look likes. Maybe you answer might be What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) why because the excellent cover that make you consider with regards to the content will not disappoint you. The inside or content will be fantastic as the outside or cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly direct you to pick up this book.

Robert Carroll:

The book untitled What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains the girl idea with easy way. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was compiled by famous author. The author will take you in the new period of time of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice go through.

Linda Harris:

Is it a person who having spare time and then spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) can be the respond to, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Read What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian for online ebook

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian books to read online.

Online What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian ebook PDF download

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian Doc

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian Mobipocket

What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World (American Empire Project) By Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian EPub