

Canada must be inside Trump's "walls," declares voice of financial elite

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The *Globe and Mail*, Canada's so-called newspaper of record and the traditional mouthpiece of the Toronto-based financial elite, has declared that Canada must be inside US president-elect Donald Trump's "walls."

In a recent editorial entitled "What the election of Donald Trump means for (Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau," the *Globe* drew a parallel with the post-9/11 period, when the Bush administration dramatically increased security screening of people and goods entering the US, as part of a massive expansion of the US national-security apparatus. "Ottawa's goal today, as it was then, must be to ensure that the Canada-US border, Canada-US cargoes and Canada-US travelers continue to be treated differently," declared the *Globe*. "The more the US thickens its border with the rest of the world, the more the border with Canada must be relatively reduced. If American walls go up, Canada has to be inside those walls."

Under conditions of the emergence of a far-right administration in the United States committed to pursuing an America First policy of economic nationalism and military aggression, the message could not be clearer. Canada's ruling elite, which has long viewed its military-security partnership with Washington as pivotal to advancing its own predatory interests on the global stage, is ready, indeed determined, to maintain and expand that collaboration as US imperialism pursues confrontation with its main economic and geopolitical rivals.

Such a "Fortress North America" strategy, as the *Globe's* editors well know, will require Canada to align its foreign, military, domestic security, and trade policies still more closely with a Trump-led Washington. It will require Canada to further integrate itself in the wars the US has mounted virtually without interruption over the past quarter-century to shore up its rapidly eroding global hegemony. As it is, Canada, under Liberal and Conservative governments alike, has participated in one US-led war after another and is playing a major role in Washington's military-strategic offensives against Russia and China.

The *Globe's* call for the Trudeau Liberal government to ensure Canada is inside Trump's "walls" policy is all the more significant given its own repeated and increasingly shrill denunciations of Trump as a demagogue and authoritarian in the run-up to this month's election.

Like the vast majority of Canada's ruling elite, the *Globe's* editors expressed profound dismay at Trump's election. Although Prime Minister Trudeau avoided criticizing the Republican

candidate publicly, it was an open secret that the Liberals were in close contact with Hillary Clinton's campaign and were both rooting for, and banking on, a Democratic victory.

However, as with the Democrats in the US, who have pledged to do everything to ensure the "success" of Trump's presidency and are now offering to cooperate with him in enacting protectionist policies, the Trudeau government responded to Trump's election by immediately extending a friendly hand. Less than 24 hours after the election result, Canada offered to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which Trump had vehemently denounced throughout his campaign.

The *Globe* editorial welcomed Trudeau's NAFTA announcement. Several of its columnists have also endorsed the Trudeau government's suggestion that Canada and the United States could revert to the 1989 Canada-US Free Trade Agreement, which was subsumed into NAFTA, should the Trump administration insist on scrapping NAFTA. This suggestion is an effective acknowledgement that Canada's ruling elite would be willing to unceremoniously dump its supposed Mexican ally and pummel the Mexican people, if this is the price for maintaining a "privileged" relationship with US imperialism under Trump.

In this regard, the *Globe* editorialists' explicit reference to the "walls" Canada must get inside and the parallel they drew with the post-9/11 period are highly revealing.

Trump made the building of a wall along the border with Mexico a key plank in his xenophobic and semi-fascistic campaign, along with vows to deport millions of immigrants, attack democratic rights, strengthen the police and massively hike military spending.

After 9/11, the Chretien-Martin Liberal governments fully embraced the Bush administration's phony "war on terror," and mimicked Washington in using it to justify a more aggressive foreign policy and sweeping attacks on democratic right at home. They gave Canada a leading role in the Afghan War, hiked military spending, expanded the powers and reach of the national-security apparatus, and dramatically increased its integration with that of the US.

A pivotal factor in this shift was pressure from big business for Ottawa to strengthen Canada's military-strategic partnership with Washington. Counteracting US security measures that were impeding or threatening to impede the more than three-quarters of all Canada's exports that flow south of the border was a huge concern for Canada's ruling elite. But so also was ensuring that Canadian imperialism was positioned, through its partnership with

Washington, to advance its rapidly expanding global economic and strategic interests.

In policy papers issued in 2003 and 2004, the country's most powerful business lobby group, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, urged Ottawa to give Canada's military "credible capacity ... to respond meaningfully and rapidly to crises anywhere in the world" and to press for a common Canada-US security perimeter. Canada, insisted the CCCE, must stop "being a free rider on American (security) coattails and a toothless advocate of soft power."

In calling for Trudeau to act as the post-9/11 Liberal governments did so as to ensure Canada is behind Trump's "walls," the *Globe* is saying it is ready to support the militarization of North America's state borders, the strengthening of the surveillance state, and other sweeping attacks on democratic rights, so long as it helps secure the profits of Canadian big business.

This is not to say the *Globe* is not deeply worried about the economically destabilizing and socially incendiary impact of Trump's America First policy.

It obviously fears that Canadian exports and profits will be damaged by US protectionism. It considers Trump's scuttling of the Trans-Pacific Partnership as both a setback to Canadian business's drive to expand its "footprint" in Asia and a strategic blunder in countering China's growing economic and geopolitical influence in East Asia.

During the election campaign, the *Globe* joined with the liberal establishment in the US in attacking Trump from the right, claiming that he was a stooge of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In a provocative post-election editorial entitled "Donald Trump won the US election. So did Vladimir Putin," the *Globe* complained bitterly that Trump has dismissed the importance of NATO, indicated he might accept Russia's annexation of Crimea, and suggested sanctions on Moscow could be lifted. "The situation is grim," declared the voice of Canada's Toronto-based financial elite. "Trump's indifference to national sovereignty plays directly into the hands of Mr. Putin, a master manipulator who learned in the KGB how to destabilize regimes (his fingerprints are all over the release of damaging e-mails stolen by Russian hackers from the Democratic Party's computers.)"

The claims of Russian interference in the US election were repeated incessantly by the Washington political elite and military establishment, without their ever offering a shred of evidence to back them up. They were a McCarthyite amalgam aimed at portraying Russia as an enemy and preparing the political ground for a massive US military escalation in Syria, where the Kremlin has intervened to prop up the Assad regime, derailing Washington's efforts to overthrow it.

The *Globe's* embrace of this fraudulent narrative underscores that Canada's ruling elite, which views Russia as a competitor for control over the Arctic and in the global energy market, is fully on board with this war agenda.

Under the Conservatives of Stephen Harper and now Justin Trudeau's Liberals, Canada has adopted a virulently anti-Russian stance. Ottawa emerged as one of the closest international allies of the far right regime that came to power in Kiev in 2014 in a US-

orchestrated, fascist-spearheaded coup. Under Trudeau, Canada has continued to back the Ukraine government to the hilt and is playing a leading role in NATO's encirclement of Russia. At the most recent NATO leader's summit, Canada assumed leadership of one of the four "forward" battalions NATO is establishing on Russia's borders in the three Baltic states and Poland.

The revival of Canadian militarism has been bound up with Canadian imperialism's ever-closer partnership with Washington and Wall Street. Canada is fully implicated in US imperialism's three major geostrategic offensives around the world: in Eastern Europe against Russia; in the Middle East to consolidate US hegemony over the world's most-important oil-exporting region; and in the Asia-Pacific against China. In 2013 talks were held at the highest levels of the Canadian and US military about the creation of a joint intervention force capable of deploying anywhere around the world.

The continued pursuit of this agenda in alliance with Trump will inevitably lead to catastrophe. Even before Trump demanded that US allies contribute more in money and materiel for the US-led military alliances, Canada's ruling elite was baying for sharp increases in military spending. The Liberals' current "defence policy review" is expected to recommend increased military spending as well as participation in Washington's highly destabilizing ballistic missile defence shield and the purchase of killer drones and other new technologies.

Workers in Canada must develop their own strategy to counter the war drive of Canada's ruling elite in alliance with US imperialism. Such a strategy must be founded on opposition to all sections of the Canadian bourgeoisie, their political representatives, and their common Canadian nationalist ideology. The portrayal of Canada capitalism as "kinder and gentler" than its southern neighbour has always been a fraud, designed to divide Canadian workers from their US counterparts and enable the Canadian bourgeoisie to ruthlessly advance its rapacious global interests behind a "humanitarian" mask.

The real ally of Canadian workers in the struggle against Trump and the drive to war is the American working class. The far-right program that will be implemented by the incoming administration has no broad popular support. Trump is set to lose the popular vote by an unprecedented 2 million votes and under conditions where nearly half of the electorate voted for neither the Republican or Democratic candidates.

Forging an alliance between workers throughout North America in opposition to war, austerity, anti-immigrant bigotry and authoritarian forms of rule can only take place on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program. This is the perspective fought for by the Socialist Equality Party in Canada and its sister party in the US.



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