

Trudeau leads Canadian establishment in hailing Biden's election victory

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Canada's ruling elite is elated with the Democrat Joe Biden's victory over Donald Trump in the US presidential election.

The Trudeau Liberal government, much of the Conservative opposition, and most of big business and the corporate-controlled media are eager to see the back of Trump. This is because they view Trump as a liability to the common interests of North America's twin imperialist powers, including Canada's long-standing military-strategic partnership with Washington; and because they fear that his rampage against the working class, wanton indifference to the mass suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and coup plotting will trigger a social explosion that would quickly spill across the Canada-US border.

They calculate that a Biden-led Democratic administration, should it come to office in January, will be better able to divert, defuse, and politically suppress mounting social opposition, and will pursue a more consistent and thought-out world strategy, enabling the US and Canada to more effectively advance their imperialist interests and ambitions, including through heightened aggression and war.

The Trudeau government gleefully boasted Monday that the Prime Minister was the "first world leader" to speak with Biden following his victory speech Saturday evening. Underscoring the Trudeau government's hope that a Democratic administration in Washington will facilitate the pursuit of Canadian imperialism's predatory interests around the world, the Ottawa press release reporting the call said that the pair had discussed "trade, energy, NATO, anti-black racism, and China's arbitrary detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor."

Kovrig and Spavor were arrested by Beijing after Canada seized Huawei's Chief Financial Officer, Meng Wanzhou, in December 2018 at the behest of the Trump administration. Wanzhou remains under house arrest in Vancouver awaiting the outcome of a judicial hearing, in which Ottawa is arguing she should be deported to the US on spurious charges of breaking Washington's punitive sanctions against Iran.

Federal Conservative leader Erin O'Toole was also quick to send his congratulations to Biden following the US television networks' declaration Saturday that he had won the election. "Canada and the US have a historic alliance," he tweeted.

"Canada's Conservatives will always work with the US to advance our common values and close economic ties."

Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne spoke with similar enthusiasm Sunday about the prospects for a close partnership with a Biden administration. Invoking Canada-US collaboration in a series of bloody military conflicts over the years, stretching back to the two world wars of the last century, he told CBC, "We've seen for more than a century now this close relationship between our two countries. And we can be a force for good in the world."

These honeyed phrases will sound like a cruel joke to the millions of people across the Middle East and Central Asia who have experienced death and destruction on a truly staggering scale over the past two decades in brutal US-led wars of aggression in which Canada has played an important role. From Afghanistan to Libya, Syria, and Iraq, Canadian and US forces are responsible for the deaths of millions, the forcing of millions more from their homes, and the destruction of entire societies. During the time Biden served as Barack Obama's vice-president, Canadian troops were involved, alongside their US counterparts, uninterruptedly in aggression and war—all waged in the name of "democracy," "human rights," and doing "good in the world."

During the past four years, the Trudeau government proved more than willing to collaborate with Trump on some of his most right-wing and reactionary initiatives, including his vicious witch-hunting of immigrants and refugees, and the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement to consolidate a US-dominated trade-war bloc against China and other international rivals.

Champagne paid tribute to this close cooperation in his Sunday interview, when he declared that Canadian officials would not rush to have meetings with Biden and his aides, because it is necessary to be "gracious" to the outgoing administration. Political niceties aside, the real reason for Champagne's caution is bound up with the fact that Trump has refused to concede the election and is taking steps, with the support of the vast majority of the Republicans, to overturn the election and remain in power.

While Trump had, and still has, support among a minority faction of Canada's ruling elite, the dominant faction strongly

supported the right-wing campaign the Democrats mounted against him in league with sections of the US military-intelligence apparatus focusing on questions of foreign policy, not his real crimes against the American people. This included their denunciations of Trump for allegedly being too soft towards Russia, and ineffective in establishing an international coalition of “democracies” to confront China economically and militarily.

That said, it is widely recognized in Canadian ruling circles that even if Biden comes to power, the United States will remain mired in political and economic crisis, rooted in the vast erosion in the world position of Washington and Wall Street; and that if the Canada-US military-strategic partnership is to retain its effectiveness, Canadian imperialism will have to invest more militarily and politically.

The Democrats’ combination of a more aggressive foreign policy with reactionary identity politics is well suited to Trudeau and his Liberals. They will seek to use it to legitimize a further growth of the Canadian war machine, including the modernization of NORAD. While claiming to pursue a “feminist foreign policy” and fight “anti-black racism,” the Trudeau government, during its five years in office, has initiated plans to boost military spending by more than 70 percent by 2026; deported thousands of impoverished refugees to the Caribbean, Central America, and Africa; and further integrated Canada’s military into Washington’s military-strategic offensives against China and Russia, and in the oil rich Middle East.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland gave an initial indication of the type of political rhetoric that will be used to conceal the continuation and intensification of these reactionary policies in the years to come with a eulogy to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Freeland hailed this right-wing ex-chief California prosecutor as an “inspiration to women, girls and people of colour.”

These sentiments were echoed by New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh and Green Party leader Annamie Paul. Singh enthused that Harris has “sparked the imagination for generations of young women to come.” Singh, whose NDP has propped up the Liberal minority government during the pandemic as it bailed out the banks and financial oligarchy with over \$650 billion in financial aid, resorted to the vapid slogan of the late NDP leader Jack Layton in a bid to convince people that the declaration of Biden’s victory changes everything. “As the Trump Presidency comes to an end I’m reminded of Jack’s final words, ‘Love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair.’ So let us be loving, hopeful & optimistic. And we’ll change the world’,” he tweeted.

This is all hogwash. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly insisted, Trump did not emerge from the depths of hell, but merely expresses in the most crude, finished form the depravity and criminality of the American capitalist class and

its social order. It reveals a great deal about the inanity and unseriousness of Singh and the NDP’s politics that at the very point where he informs his supporters that a Biden presidency can “change the world,” Biden’s deliberate and systematic downplaying of Trump’s coup plotting is creating the best conditions for the fascistic occupant of the White House to nullify the vote and cling to power.

Even if Biden manages to accede to the presidency on January 20, his government will be one of stepped-up austerity for the working class, attacks on democratic rights, and a further eruption of US militarism and war around the world.

Whatever their disagreements with the current American president, the main concern and fear of the Trudeau government and the Canadian ruling elite has never been Trump, but the potential emergence of a mass working class movement in opposition to the growth of social inequality, police violence, and his disastrous handling of the pandemic. Workers and young people will not forget that when Trump first indicated his coup plans by trying to illegally deploy the military last June to crush the mass protests triggered by the police killing of George Floyd, Trudeau refused to condemn his flagrantly anti-democratic actions.

Throughout the election campaign and in the days immediately following the vote, Trudeau and other leading ministers insisted that Ottawa would cooperate with whomever emerged victorious, Trump included. Trudeau studiously avoided making any comment on Trump’s explicit preparations to launch a presidential coup, and stated merely that his government was prepared for “disruptions” following the election. Unlike political leaders in Europe, who for their own reasons have criticized Trump’s refusal to concede defeat, Trudeau and other government members continue to avoid all comment on the matter.

This approach enjoys the full backing of big business, whose principal goal remains ensuring unhindered access to the US market, which continues to account for three-quarters of all Canadian exports. Reiterating the *Globe and Mail*’s infamous call, in response to Trump’s 2016 election and his trade war threats, for Ottawa to ensure that Canada is “behind Trump’s walls,” Mark Agnew, senior director of international policy for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, argued last week that Canada’s focus must remain on market access no matter who occupies the White House. Pointing to Biden’s “Buy American” commitments, Agnew stated, “Canada needs to make the case for the role we play in America’s economic security, and why North America should be treated as a region when thinking about supply chain security.”



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