

Canada's New Democrats stoke intelligence agency-incited furor over alleged Chinese election interference

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Canada's social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) has thrown itself unreservedly behind the intelligence agency-orchestrated propaganda campaign over alleged Chinese interference in recent federal elections.

When NDP leader Jagmeet Singh justified his right-wing “confidence-and-supply” agreement with the big business Liberals less than a year ago, he said it was necessary to create “political stability”—by which he meant, stability for Canada's ruling elite to wage war on Russia abroad and on the working class at home. Over the past week, Singh has openly toyed with the idea of pulling the NDP's support for the Liberal government if Prime Minister Justin Trudeau does not call a public inquiry into “foreign interference” in Canadian “democracy.” Such an inquiry would be used as a platform by the military-security apparatus and the most right-wing and belligerent factions of the political elite to whip up animosity toward China and press for Canada to assume an even-larger role in Washington's military-strategic offensive against Beijing.

The NDP's rapid rallying behind the anti-China propaganda campaign only goes to show that, no less than the Conservatives and Liberals, it is a mouthpiece for the financial oligarchy that controls Canada's political life lock, stock, and barrel, and subservient to the intelligence agencies that protect their imperialist interests. Indeed, there is growing sentiment within broad sections of the corporate media, from the editorial pages of the far-right sympathizing *Toronto Sun* and neo-conservative *National Post* to the nominally progressive *Toronto Star* that Justin Trudeau's days as prime minister are numbered.

The lurid campaign incited by the intelligence agencies has been spearheaded in the media by the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's “newspaper of record,” and Global News. Day after day for several weeks, unsubstantiated reports based on anonymous, illegal leaks from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) have been retailed by the media as proof Beijing is intent on subverting Canadian democracy. The sustained and apparently coordinated character of the leaks—which document Beijing's reputed attempts to promote select Liberal candidates over their Conservative rivals in the 2019 and 2021 elections—strongly suggest that they are being orchestrated by high-level operatives within the national security apparatus with an interest in destabilizing, if not overthrowing, the Liberal government.

The lack of evidence and trumped-up character of the claims, many of which now date back years, is demonstrated by the fact that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has yet to open an investigation into any wrongdoing.

Although not a single document backing up the claims of Chinese interference has been made public, the media and opposition parties are effectively ordering the population to treat CSIS, and especially the element unhappy with the government that has orchestrated the leaks, as

the purveyors of the gospel truth. In other words, they should forget the actual record of CSIS, which is notorious for its involvement in mass spying, torture, systematic violation of democratic rights in the so-called “war on terror” and lying to the courts.

The NDP's championing of the pro-war, anti-China campaign has emboldened the official opposition Conservatives and its newly minted, far-right leader, Pierre Poilievre, in their efforts to claim the Liberals have colluded in the alleged Beijing interference campaign for electoral gain and portray Trudeau as all but treasonous. On Tuesday, Poilievre delivered his most incendiary denunciation of Trudeau to date, saying the Liberal leader was “working against the interests of his own country” and “acting against Canada's interests and in favour of a foreign dictatorship's interests.”

Singh first expressed support for the right-wing media and Conservatives' call for a public inquiry into the interference allegations on February 27. Last Sunday, four days after a *Globe* editorial urged the NDP to tell Trudeau it would end their “confidence-and-supply” agreement unless he called a public inquiry, Singh told the Roy Green Show that he was not “ruling out” ending the agreement to prop up the Liberals over the public inquiry issue. “I'm not,” remarked Singh, “ruling out that it could come to a point that we've got to exercise that ability. That's something we absolutely have the ability to do.”

Speaking on Wednesday, Singh said claims that Trudeau had ignored intelligence reports were “eroding public trust” in Canada's institutions. “Right now, the prime minister seems like he's hiding something, and he could just answer those questions by launching a public inquiry.”

The NDP's role in abetting the ferocious anti-China campaign illustrates the overwhelming support within Canada's ruling establishment for Washington's ongoing all-sided campaign of economic, diplomatic and strategic pressure on Beijing and advanced preparations for war. Although the precise source or sources for the CSIS leaks remain unclear, the hysterical campaign has served two purposes: to demonize China with the aim of whipping up a base of popular support for war; and to pressure the Trudeau government further to the right and replace it with a regime headed by the war-hawk and current deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland or Poilievre himself.

In recent months, US imperialism has dramatically ratcheted up tensions with China. Last fall, major US-based companies, supported by a vociferous media campaign, bullied the Chinese Stalinist regime with threats of the withdrawal of investments into scrapping its Zero COVID policy, a horrendous crime that has resulted in the deaths of well over a million people in three months.

In early February, the US military shot down a Chinese weather balloon and various other private flying objects amid a saturation-coverage media campaign about purported Chinese attempts to spy on North America.

This was quickly followed by the pledge to triple US troops stationed in Taiwan and comments by a top US general predicting war with Beijing would begin in 2025. Last week, the inaugural meeting of the House of Representatives' Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the US and the Chinese Communist Party declared Washington to be locked in an "existential" struggle with China.

The hysterical anti-China campaign being fomented by CSIS operatives and Canada's media and political establishment is aimed at stampeding the public behind a dramatic intensification of Canadian imperialism's role in the US offensive against China, including through massive military spending hikes and further militarization of the Arctic. A similar campaign is underway in Australia, whose ruling class, like Canada's, views its close partnership with Washington as crucial to advancing its own predatory imperialist interests.

NATO's escalation of its war with Russia in Eastern Europe—a war that Washington and Wall Street view as a stepping stone to war with China—has underscored that the imperialist madmen in Washington, Ottawa, and the European imperialist capitals are prepared to risk the lives of millions in a nuclear exchange.

Trudeau has responded to his ruling-class critics by touting his government's hardline stance towards Beijing, which includes the recent elaboration of an Indo-Pacific strategy developed in close consultation with Washington, and by insisting his government takes the threat of foreign interference in elections seriously. He has fully endorsed an ongoing investigation by the House of Commons Procedures and House Affairs Committee into allegations of Chinese interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections. On the motion of NDP House Leader Peter Julian, members of the committee from the Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc Québécois voted March 2 to demand a public inquiry into the allegations.

Last Monday, Trudeau asked the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP) and National Intelligence Services Review Agency (NISRA) to launch their own probes into the intelligence agencies' response to the alleged interference. NSICOP consists of members of the House of Commons and Senate, Canada's upper chamber of parliament, who are sworn to secrecy about the information they receive on the spy agencies' activities. NISRA is a panel of government-appointed experts responsible for overseeing the intelligence agencies. These bodies were created as a democratic fig leaf to legitimize the vast anti-democratic powers granted to the spy agencies in the Liberal government's Bill C-59.

Trudeau also announced he would be appointing a special rapporteur into foreign election interference, to "make expert recommendations on combating interference and strengthening our democracy." He committed to consider proposals for the position from the opposition parties and said he would call a public inquiry if the rapporteur recommended one.

Trudeau also committed to soon announcing the parameters of a "foreign influence registry" that will compel all individuals and organizations deemed to be working on behalf of a foreign state to add their names to a public registry.

Trudeau's multiple announcements manifestly failed to lessen the anti-China furor within the establishment. They were pilloried by a raft of media commentators. Underscoring the dissatisfaction of a faction of the national security apparatus, further leaked documents were promptly provided to Global News.

Citing anonymous intelligence sources, the news channel reported Wednesday morning that two high-level intelligence agency reports on election interference were provided to the Liberal government in 2019 and 2022. The latter was reportedly prepared by the Privy Council Office and included the allegation that Chinese officials in Toronto funded a "covert network" for the backing of election candidates. Global News quoted the report as saying, "A large clandestine transfer of funds earmarked for the federal election from the PRC Consulate in Toronto was transferred to an

elect provincial government official via a staff member of a 2019 federal candidate." The report was largely a rehash, with additional details, of a Global News story from November 2022.

This report provided further ammunition for Poilievre, who continued at Wednesday's Question Period to suggest that Trudeau was betraying Canadian interests. At one stage, Poilievre provocatively demanded that Trudeau declare "how much his party got in illegal donations funnelled from Beijing." His claim amplified a March 4 *Globe* opinion piece by influential commentator Andrew Coyne that suggested the real target of any inquiry should be the Liberal government. "What we need a public inquiry to look into" is not foreign election interference, wrote Coyne, but rather "domestic complicity in foreign interference."

Such remarks, coupled with accusations about Trudeau serving a "foreign dictatorship," underscore just how far the entire political establishment has shifted to the right over recent years and embraced the propaganda of far-right forces. Poilievre's rantings echo claims made by the fascists who instigated and led the Jan.-Feb. 2022 far-right "Freedom" Convoy, which was able to occupy downtown Ottawa for more than three weeks, because sections of the political establishment, media and state security forces seized on it as a means to push politics sharply right, beginning with the scrapping of all anti-COVID public health measures.

Poilievre's fulminations against Trudeau are also reminiscent of those of Corey Hurren, the Canadian Armed Forces member who justified his attempted assassination of Trudeau in July 2020 by accusing the Liberal leader of establishing a "communist dictatorship" in Canada.

Concerned that a further escalation of the anti-China furor could damage Canadian imperialist interests, several senior national security figures, including Wesley Wark, who has previously served on the Prime Minister's Advisory Council for National Security, have spoken out in support of Trudeau's new investigations. The main concern driving these trusted representatives of Canadian imperialism's national security apparatus is that a public inquiry, however well controlled it may be, could become a liability if it inadvertently reveals too much about the source of the anti-China campaign and raises public awareness of the imminent threat of a military conflagration with a nuclear-armed power. They view the existing committees, staffed by hand-picked representatives of the political establishment who are prevented from speaking publicly, as a more effective mechanism to exploit the current crisis to justify the ongoing preparations for war with China.



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