

# Trump reveals foreign policy of annexation and global conquest

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On Tuesday, US President-elect Donald Trump addressed a press conference, nominally on economic policy, in which he threatened to use military force to annex the Panama Canal and Greenland. He vowed to compel the annexation of Canada through economic pressure and to force Europe to double its military spending in order to receive “protection” from the United States.

“We’re going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America,” Trump said. When asked whether he would consider using “military coercion” to annex Panama and Greenland, Trump replied that he would, adding, “We need them for economic security.”

Asked by a reporter to explain his earlier references to Canada as the “fifty-first state,” Trump doubled down on his annexationist threats, pleading to “get rid of that artificially drawn line” between Canada and the US.

Trump also refused to rule out a full-scale US attack on Iran and threatened war throughout the Middle East unless the Palestinians give up resistance to Israel, saying, “All hell will break out.”

During the election, Trump appealed to popular opposition to the Ukraine war, accusing Biden of starting “World War III” and highlighting the massive decline in workers’ living standards amid a spiraling cost-of-living crisis intensified by the wars against Russia and in the Middle East.

Now that he is about to assume the presidency, Trump is making clear the true aims of his administration, which will be devoted to war-making on an unprecedented scale. His criticism of the war in Ukraine is rooted in tactical conflicts within the ruling class. His threat that “All hell will break out” in the Middle East makes clear that his administration will be one of daily escalating crisis and global war.

Critical to the Trump administration’s striving for global hegemony is the effort to reorganize the Americas under direct US domination, modeled on Hitler’s *Anschluss* (joining) of Austria and Germany in 1938. Trump is seeking to shore up America’s power base in its near abroad, which is seen as essential for projecting power against American imperialism’s principal rival: China.

Canada and Greenland, with their significant mineral resources, energy deposits and access to Arctic seaways, are critical to this effort, as is the Panama Canal, a central choke point between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Trump is declaring that the era in which the operations of US militarism will be bound by any legal constraints or the fig leaf of “international law” is over. From now on, it is the law of the jungle in which “the strong do what they will, and the weak suffer what they must.”

Trump’s remarks constitute the death knell of all claims that the imperialist age is over. Imperialism, as the Russian revolutionary and Marxist theorist Vladimir Lenin explained, constitutes the highest stage of capitalism. The massive concentration of wealth in a narrow financial oligarchy and domination of economic life by monopolies is inseparable from the drive for annexation and colonial domination.

The second Trump presidency is the consummation of over three decades of continuous imperialist war initiated following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, aimed at ensuring the economic and military hegemony of the United States. George H.W. Bush proclaimed the “New World Order” in which there were to be no constraints on the unbridled US imperialist domination of the world.

Over the subsequent decades, the United States invaded Iraq twice, broke up Yugoslavia into tiny statelets, invaded and occupied Afghanistan, destabilized and overthrew the governments of Libya and Syria, provoked a war with Russia over Ukraine, and is in the midst of reorganizing the Middle East through war and genocide.

Throughout this period, the United States clothed its essentially predatory aims in, alternatively, the language of “human rights” and “national self-determination,” or, as George W. Bush did in launching the war on terror, as a response to “terrorism.” But Trump is dispensing with any altruistic or defensive pretenses for the operations of American imperialism. America has the largest, most powerful military and substantial economic power, and it will wield it to extract what is essentially imperial tribute

from its “allies,” coupled with territorial expansion and annexation.

Trump’s rantings about annexing Greenland, Panama and Canada and forcing the US’s European allies to pay protection money were presented within the framework of a global struggle, particularly against China.

In this, Trump’s press conference substantiated the words of a Trump adviser, who explained to the *Washington Post* the logic behind his threats. The *Post* wrote, “An overarching mission of countering Russia and China is the common thread tying together Trump’s comments about Canada, Mexico, Greenland, and Panama.”

Ryan Berg, an analyst at the CSIS think tank, told the *Post*, “There is worry about Chinese influence of the canal and the reliability of U.S. operations,” adding, “It could be one of the main routes to deploy U.S. naval vessels from the Atlantic to the Pacific in a contingency situation where we have national security interests—such as Taiwan.”

Confirming this assessment, Trump declared in his press conference, “China’s running the Panama Canal.” He added, “The Panama Canal was built for our military.”

Trump likewise confirmed the report published in the *Financial Times* in December that his threats to cut off military aid to Ukraine are based on an effort to have the United States’ NATO allies double their military spending.

The FT reported that Trump will “demand NATO member states increase defense spending to 5 percent of GDP, but plans to continue supplying military aid to Ukraine.”

Trump declared at his press conference, “Europe is in for a tiny fraction of the money that we’re in now. ... I said, you have to pay your bills. ... I think NATO should have 5 percent ... they should be at 5 percent not 2 percent. ... If we don’t pay our bills, will the United States protect us from Russia?... if you don’t pay, you mean you’re delinquent. ... If you’re delinquent, we will not protect you.”

Trump presents his policy toward Europe in the form of a protection racket, in which the global war against Russia and China is the framework for squeezing tribute from United States’s “allies,” who are increasingly being treated as vassal states.

Trump’s press conference validates the assessment made by the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, who declared in 1928:

In the period of crisis, the hegemony of the United States will operate more completely, more openly, and more ruthlessly than in the period of boom. The United States will seek to overcome and extricate herself from her difficulties and maladies primarily at the expense of Europe, regardless of whether this

occurs in Asia, Canada, South America, Australia, or Europe itself, or whether this takes place peacefully or through war.

Trotsky subsequently warned, in 1934:

US capitalism is up against the same problems that pushed Germany in 1914 on the path of war. The world is divided? It must be redivided. For Germany, it was a question of “organizing Europe.” The United States must “organize” the world. History is bringing humanity face to face with the volcanic eruption of American imperialism.

Trotsky’s words are even more timely now than when they were written. The “volcanic eruption” of American imperialism will at the same time be an eruption of class war. The working class will be made to pay for Trump’s economic and military warfare, and workers will be the ones sent to fight and die, whether it be in Panama, Mexico, Ukraine or Taiwan.

It is for this reason that the struggle against war, as with the struggle to defend democratic rights, must be based on the fight of the working class to defend its social and economic interests on the basis of a socialist program.



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