

White House meeting between Trump and Carney underscores historic breakdown in US-Canada relations

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Tuesday's White House meeting between the fascist US President Donald Trump and Canada's recently elected Liberal Prime Minister, Mark Carney, underscored the historic breakdown in relations between Ottawa and Washington that has taken place with stunning rapidity over the past six months.

At an Oval Office press conference Trump reiterated on several occasions his goal of destroying the Canadian economy so as to take over the country and lay the basis for waging world war against China. Carney, while obsequiously complimenting the would-be dictator, urged the President to accept Canadian imperialism as a duly recognized subservient partner in the scramble to redivide the world among the major powers.

Underlining a strategy akin to Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler's Anschluss (joining) of Austria to the Third Reich in 1938, Trump stated at one point with reference to the suggestion of Canada becoming the 51st state of the US, "This is not necessarily a one-day deal. This is over a period of time. They have to make that decision." He countered Carney's statement that Canada would "never" agree to become part of the US with the retort, "Never say never!" What's more, he referred once again to the "artificial border" dividing the two countries and compared the acquisition of Canada to a real estate deal.

That these remarks were anything but rhetorical flourishes was demonstrated by Trump's comments on his economic policies, specifically the 25 percent tariffs on autos, steel, and aluminium imports from Canada. He stated,

We want to make our own cars. We don't really want cars from Canada. And we put tariffs on cars from Canada. And at a certain point, it won't make economic sense for Canada to build those cars. And we don't want steel from Canada because we're making our own steel and we're having massive steel plants being built right now as we speak. We really don't want Canadian steel and we don't want Canadian aluminum and various other things, because we want to be able to do it ourselves.

For over eight decades, the Canadian ruling class has advanced its global imperialist interests first and foremost through a close

military-strategic and economic partnership with Washington. From the late 1980s onwards, bound up with the development of the globalization of production, continent-wide supply chains brought a dramatic integration of the two countries' economies, together with that of Mexico. But this period has clearly come to an end.

Trump made no specific demands for trade concessions from Canada, either publicly or according to Canadian officials in private talks, and suggested that rather than renegotiate the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)—the successor to NAFTA—which is due for renewal next year, he might simply scrap it altogether. This is because the only "negotiations" Trump wants to pursue will concern the terms by which Washington can dominate and annex Canada over time. His conviction that the US relationship to Canada should be that of a colonial overlord was illustrated when he asserted that he and Carney were having a "friendly discussion," in contrast to when "we had another little blow-up with somebody else." The clear reference was to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was sent packing by Trump in February after a spat between them in front of the press at a meeting where the pair were supposed to have signed an agreement to facilitate America's plundering of the country's raw materials.

While it can by no means be excluded that Ottawa and Washington will conclude some sort of "agreement" in the coming weeks or months, it will do nothing to change the reality that Trump's strategy remains the annexation of Canada. Under conditions of a complete breakdown of inter-state relations, and a resurgence of the trade warfare and frenzied rearmament that characterized the build-up to World War II in the 1930s, such an agreement would be worth little more than the Munich Agreement between Chamberlain and Hitler in September 1938, which the "Führer" broke six months later to dismember and annex the remainder of Czechoslovakia before launching World War II in September 1939.

Carney, who sat silently during most of the press conference as Trump delivered a series of rambling fascist tirades, used his opening remarks to effusively praise his host. Trump is a "transformational President, with a focus on the economy, with a relentless focus on the American worker, securing your borders, ending the scourge of fentanyl and other opioids, and securing the

world,” declared Carney. “...The history of Canada and the US is we’re stronger when we work together. And there’s many opportunities to work together.” Later, he applauded Trump for “revitalizing NATO,” before adding, “My government is committed to a step change in our investment in Canadian security and our partnership.”

A subsequent statement from the Prime Minister’s Office on Carney’s summit with Trump confirmed the Liberal government’s commitment to massively divert resources to building up Canada’s military-security apparatus to ensure Canadian imperialism’s role as a protagonist in the repartition of the world, preferably at Washington and Wall Street’s side. It declared:

As the Prime Minister returns to Canada, he remains focused on reinforcing Canada’s strength at home. His new government will transform border security, Arctic security, and Canada’s investments in national defence.

Carney’s unrestrained endorsement of Trump came just two days after the President asserted in an NBC interview that he does not believe he is obligated to respect the US Constitution and as the far-right Zionist regime, with Trump’s approval, is implementing the genocide in Gaza. As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained in a recent perspective, “Trump is declaring, in so many words, a presidential dictatorship. The United States is led by a political criminal who views the Constitution—and with it every democratic right—as given or taken away at his own pleasure.”

The fact that Carney and his visiting entourage—which included several leading members of his cabinet—not only have no problem sitting down with the would-be dictator, but positively praised him to the skies exposes whose class interests the incoming Liberal government really serves. Like Trump, Carney—a lifelong servant of the super-rich as a central banker and investment manager who never held elected office until he won his seat in the April 28 election—represents the financial oligarchy that dominates all aspects of social and political life. To the extent that this oligarchy and its political mouthpieces “oppose” Trump, they do so exclusively from the standpoint of his failure to take account of Canadian imperialism’s interests as a junior partner of American imperialism in the plundering of the world.

If there is no constituency for the defence of democratic forms of rule within the American ruling class—a fact underscored by the Democrats’ refusal to mount any serious challenge to Trump’s dictatorial moves—this is all the more true for the Canadian ruling class. A class that consolidated its control over the northern tier of North America by explicitly denouncing the revolutionary traditions of the American bourgeoisie, Canada’s ruling class never associated itself with the fight for democratic rights. The bourgeoisie’s motto upon Canadian Confederation—carried out under the auspices of the British Empire on the basis of “peace, order, and good governance”—does not need much updating to express its current drive for peace and order for corporate Canada under an oligarchic dictatorship.

Carney’s performance Tuesday provides a devastating indictment of all of those organizations and individuals who claim that opposition to Trump must be based on “Canadian values.” The trade union bureaucracy, Liberals, New Democrats, and many of their pseudo-left satellite organizations repeated this claim incessantly throughout the recently concluded federal election campaign and have championed the retaliatory tariffs adopted by corporate Canada in the ongoing trade war with the US. Carney heads a government that, in addition to seeking close cooperation with the would-be dictator in the White House, intends to slash public spending to invest tens of billions of additional funds every single year in the military to prepare Canadian imperialism for war. His government also plans to dismantle existing labour and business regulations in the name of keeping Canada’s economy “competitive” and establishing “free trade” between its thirteen provinces and territories.

As the Socialist Equality Party explained in our election statement,

The vast gulf between the super-rich and the working class, and the sharpening domestic and international tensions produced by the capitalist crisis, are driving the financial oligarchy in Canada, as in the United States, to turn to authoritarian forms of rule. The normalization of the use of the “notwithstanding clause,” which allows governments to violate basic democratic rights supposedly guaranteed in Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms; the virtual abolition of the legal right to strike; the police-state crackdown on anti-Gaza genocide protesters; and the promotion of far-right and fascist forces—all of these developments expose the putrefaction of bourgeois democracy in Canada...

Trump is a menace to the workers of Canada and the world. But workers can’t fight him and all he represents—oligarchy, dictatorship and imperialist war—by lining up with the Canadian bourgeoisie, any of its rival factions or political representatives.

Rather, they must assert their independent class interests by forging a movement for workers’ power and fighting to fuse their struggles with the mass opposition to Trump now emerging within the American working class.



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