

In White House meeting, Canada's Carney lauds America's would-be führer as Trump accelerates operation dictatorship

Our reporter
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Tuesday's meeting between US President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney was revealing in two respects.

First, Carney's effusive praise of the would-be US dictator underscored that the Canadian bourgeoisie's conflict with Trump is solely about defending its own predatory profit and geopolitical interests. Not only is it indifferent to and ready to collaborate in Trump's evisceration of democratic rights. As highlighted by the systematic assault on the right-to-strike and the morphing of the official opposition Conservatives into a far-right party, it is itself turning to authoritarian methods of rule and fascist reaction.

Second, Trump's repeated threat to make Canada the 51st US state—coupled with his declaration about a natural “conflict” between the two erstwhile allies—speaks to the sharp deterioration in inter-state relations amid a rapidly escalating scramble among the imperialist powers to redivide the world and seize control of resources, markets, production networks and strategic territories through trade war, aggression and global war.

Carney was visiting the White House for the second time in less than six months. But he left without any indication that an agreement will soon be reached to resolve the ongoing trade war between what were arguably the two closest imperialist allies for much of the last century.

This was not for want of trying. Carney began the meeting by genuflecting before King Donald, proclaiming him to be a “transformational” president and a “peacemaker” for his plan to turn Gaza into a colonial protectorate. He uttered not a word about Trump's far-advanced drive to erect a fascist dictatorship, which saw the President convene just one day later a “roundtable” with neo-Nazis and other Hitler lovers to openly discuss sweeping domestic repression against political opponents.

During their televised Oval Office press conference, Carney sat by, exchanging pleasantries with Trump, as he vowed to send the military into more US cities and accused his Democratic opponents of taking people's children away “in chains and changing their sex.”

“President Trump,” Carney declared, “has proven to be a transformational leader and, yes, a peacemaker—whether in the Middle East or in restoring economic balance through strength. Canada respects that kind of resolve.”

Coming from Carney, the former central banker and carefully selected political manager of the affairs of Canada's financial oligarchy, the praise of Trump's “resolve” sends an unmistakable signal. As he rides roughshod over legal norms, rounds up immigrants en masse, and threatens political opponents with vicious repression, Trump and the dictatorial regime he is establishing serve as models for what Canada's corporate elite is pushing for.

During his first six months in office, Carney has already moved to

impose Trump-style policies with his massive hike in military spending, pledge to impose a new round of public spending “austerity,” and criminalization of the Air Canada flight attendants' strike.

The sharp tensions that have erupted between Washington and Ottawa since Trump returned to the White House in January reflect not differences in the class-war agendas of the countries' respective ruling classes, but disputes driven by the competing ambitions of North America's two imperialist powers. After more than eight decades of a close military-strategic and economic partnership, American and Canadian imperialism increasingly view each other as rivals in the escalating global conflict for control over raw materials, markets, labour and geostrategic influence.

Trump's insistence that Canada should become the 51st state reflects the demand of dominant sections of the American ruling class to reorganize the North American continent into a giant supply chain for US global trade and military wars against its great power rivals. His administration's strategy of systematically weakening Canada economically to facilitate its annexation was underscored by the comments of Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. The day after Carney courted Trump, he told a conference on US-Canada relations hosted by BMO bank and the Eurasia Group that America intends to assemble all automobiles for the US market domestically. Canada's auto industry, closely integrated with the US since the 1960s, would be reduced to producing parts and, according to Lutnick, would be “second” to the US.

Trump told Carney that he is considering abrogating the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement (USMCA), the successor to NAFTA, in a move underlining that Washington's drive to redefine Canada-US relations is only in its initial stages. “We can renegotiate it, (USMCA) that would be good, or we can just do different deals,” that is separate deals with Canada and Mexico, asserted Trump.

The Canadian ruling class has been rattled by Trump's aggressive implementation of “America First” policies, not least because since the eruption of the Second World War it has used its close alliance with Washington to assert its own global imperialist interests. Even now, Ottawa's preferred course of action is to prevail on Trump and his fascist cabal to duly recognize Canada's “right and prerogatives” as America's junior partner so that the continent's twin imperialist powers can confront Russia, China and other rivals together. Hence Carney's attempts to flatter Trump, his insistence that, in spite of everything, Canada and the US share “common interests,” and his offer of \$1 trillion in Canadian investment in the US over the next five years.

On the domestic front, the Canadian ruling class has exploited Trump's trade war and annexation threats to adopt large chunks of the class-war agenda that he is pursuing in the US. This has been accompanied by a dramatic lurch to the right in official politics, as Carney has sought to

distance himself from his “centrist” predecessor Justin Trudeau by embracing many policies long demanded by the Conservative right, like oil pipelines, business deregulation and massive social spending cuts in the name of austerity.

The Carney government’s “austerity and investment” plan, set to be expanded in early November with the tabling of a new budget, aims to hike military spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2034, spur the expansion of Canada’s military-industrial base, slash spending on healthcare and social programs, and boost incentives for the financial oligarchy and big business to generate profits through investments. A foretaste of the conditions which Carney and Co. plan for the working class is illustrated by the fate facing 55,000 Canada Post workers. The government is backing the enforcement of a management-dictated restructuring plan that would eliminate tens of thousands of secure jobs, expand the use of gig work, and set the standard for the gutting of all public services so they prioritize profit generation.

In the federal election last April, Carney was able to overturn a massive Liberal deficit in the polls and secure an election victory by posturing as an opponent of Trump. With the help of the trade unions and New Democrats, which assisted in whipping up a Canadian nationalist hysteria that presented the country as united against Trump, Carney exploited the obvious political affinities between the would-be dictator and the far-right leader of the Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre.

In addition to pivoting post-election to waging war on the working class, Carney’s Liberals have junked most of the retaliatory measures taken against Trump’s tariffs on Canadian exports. This includes the removal of a proposed digital services tax aimed principally at American companies and the reversal of most of the retaliatory tariffs.

While Poilievre, in bellicose language akin to that of the trade union bureaucracy, has harangued Carney for abandoning “elbows up” in favour of “elbows down,” the dominant sections of Canadian big business have signaled their approval for this more conciliatory approach to Trump. The Business Council of Canada has insisted that with Japan, the European Union and Britain all abandoning their threats of retaliatory tariffs and making trade deals with Trump, Canada must follow suit.

The government has responded by indicating its readiness to accept a limited reduction in the US tariffs on steel, aluminum, auto parts, softwood lumber and non-USMCA-compliant goods—rather than their full removal—and the imposition of export quotas, terms similar to those Trump has negotiated with the other imperialist powers. The goal is to preserve preferential access to the US market by avoiding the total collapse of the USMCA trade agreement.

In what is an olive branch to Trump, but also a move expressing the predatory designs of Canadian imperialism, the Carney government is negotiating Ottawa’s participation in the “Golden Dome” missile defence shield. Notwithstanding its name, this project aims to create the conditions for American imperialism to wage and “win” a nuclear war against its rivals.

The tensions unleashed by Trump’s drive to annex Canada and big business’ attempt to appease him are exacerbating deep-rooted regional frictions within the Canadian bourgeoisie. Far-right Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, whose province depends heavily on oil and energy exports south, has welcomed Carney’s more conciliatory policy towards Trump compared to Trudeau. Speaking to the BMO Eurasia Group conference Wednesday, she said, “I never thought ‘elbows up’ was going to get us to a deal with this particular president, and I think that (Carney’s) beginning to see that ... putting some of the credits in the bank account is going to get us a lot further.”

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who heads the province where Canada’s auto industry is based, wants a more confrontational response. Warning that Trump would not “annihilate manufacturing in Ontario,” he demanded that Canada hit Trump “back twice as hard” in the absence of a

deal to end auto tariffs.

Workers should not take sides in these squabbles, which ultimately boil down to tactical differences over how best to defend the interests of competing and often hostile factions of Canadian capital. Workers know from bitter experience that, irrespective of their differences over how to handle Trump, Smith and Ford enforce no less ruthless attacks on the working class of their respective provinces. The same could be said of Francois Legault and his right-wing, “national-autonomist” CAQ government in Quebec.

The fraud of “Team Canada” united against Trump is underscored by the brutal class war ongoing within Canada itself. Over the past 15 months, the Liberal government has repeatedly outlawed strikes by workers using draconian powers in the Canada Labour Code. Currently, over 100,000 workers are on strike across the country, from the postal workers, to Alberta teachers, British Columbia government employees and Ontario college support staff. All are demanding major improvements in pay and job protection, as social inequality and poverty skyrocket.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* previously stressed, workers in Canada must oppose Trump and everything he represents. However, to do so they must implacably oppose the Canadian bourgeoisie and all its rival factions as they work to uphold their mercenary class interests. As we declared,

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. Canadian workers must assist their American colleagues in breaking free of the Democratic Party, which no less than Trump’s fascist Republicans is a party of Wall Street and the CIA, and its trade union allies.

This perspective assumes renewed urgency as mass protests and other forms of opposition escalate in the US against Trump’s Operation Dictatorship. Workers in Canada can and must supply this movement with critical international support by taking up the fight for the socialist reorganization of economic life across North America and worldwide.



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