

Ottawa “welcomes” assault on Venezuela, but fears a rampaging America threatens Canadian imperialist interests

Keith Jones
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The two main parties of the Canadian ruling class, the governing Liberals and the official opposition Conservatives, have “welcomed” Trump’s criminal assault on Venezuela and the kidnapping of its president, Nicolás Maduro, claiming that they open the door to “freedom” and “democracy.”

This under conditions where the fascist, would-be dictator Trump has openly proclaimed his intention to seize Venezuela’s oil and “run the country until such time as we can do a safe, proper, and judicious transition.”

Abandoning any pretense the US adheres to international law and the “human rights” rhetoric the imperialist powers have long employed to camouflage their predatory actions, Trump has baldly asserted Washington’s “right” to impose its will by naval blockades, state terrorism and war on any country in “our Hemisphere”—that is the entire Americas from the Arctic Ocean to Tierra del Fuego.

Ottawa has long worked with Washington to bring about regime change in Venezuela. It worked to isolate, sanction and otherwise destabilize the Maduro regime, including by helping finance and organize the pro-imperialist opposition, during the first Trump administration and under his Democratic successor, Joe Biden. As Liberal Prime Minister Mark Carney boasted at the beginning of his statement on the events in Venezuela, one of the first actions he took on becoming prime minister last March “was to impose additional sanctions on Nicolás Maduro’s brutally oppressive and criminal regime.”

But the Canadian ruling class’s professions of support for Trump’s illegal assault on Venezuela, the killing of at least 80 people, and the kidnapping of Maduro belie sharp divisions and grave apprehensions. These go far beyond Trump having acted unilaterally, cutting its traditional Canadian imperialist junior partners out of any share of the spoils of Venezuela’s vast oil wealth, or even concerns that American imperialism’s attempt to effectively colonize Venezuela could spectacularly backfire, setting Latin America politically aflame.

Trump’s assertion of unbridled US domination over the Western Hemisphere threatens the core interests of Canadian imperialism and the very existence of its federal state, at least as currently constituted.

Not only has Trump vowed to use “economic force” to transform Canada into America’s 51st state. In the recently issued US National Security Strategy, the White House proclaimed that US imperialism “must be pre-eminent” in the Americas” and that it will intervene at will to ensure that key strategic assets and resources are controlled by the US and/or denied to China and all other strategic rivals, and that the hemisphere’s governments pursue policies in line with Washington’s wishes.

Trump and his henchmen, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, have explicitly cast the assault on Venezuela as the

opening shot in realizing this blueprint for US imperialist domination throughout the hemisphere. Directly referencing the National Security Strategy, Trump told his Saturday “mission accomplished” press conference, “American dominance in the Western Hemisphere will never be questioned again.”

This has been followed by a barrage of threats from Trump, Rubio, and Hegseth targeting countries across the hemisphere and indeed the world—from Cuba, Colombia and Mexico to China and Iran. On Sunday, Trump refused to rule out using military force to seize Greenland, an overseas territory of fellow NATO member Denmark that the White House says Washington needs to control to counter the Russian and Chinese “threat” in the Arctic.

In an extraordinary Sunday editorial, titled “Venezuela’s fate is a warning for Canada,” the *Globe and Mail*, the traditional voice of Canada’s financial elite, was forced to concede that Washington has now become an existential threat to Canadian imperialism. “Saturday,” it declared,

marked the formal debut of an imperial America, led by a president who recognizes no law, save that of the jungle. ...

Every country in the Western Hemisphere should be worried, particularly this country, which Mr. Trump so obviously covets as a 51st state...

It’s true that Mr. Trump has forsworn the use of military force in the case of Canada. Assuming for a moment that he keeps to his word, there are myriad ways in which to use economic coercion to accomplish the goal of turning Canada into a de facto protectorate. The threats, tariffs and rhetoric of the last 10 months provide all the proof that is needed.

Pierre Poilievre, the far-right leader of the official opposition Conservatives, rushed to endorse the US raid on Venezuela and in Trumpian language. “Congratulations to President Trump,” he tweeted early Saturday morning, “on successfully arresting narco-terrorist and socialist dictator Nicolás Maduro, who should live out his days in prison. Down with socialism. Long live freedom.”

Poilievre has since fallen silent, except to repeat his standard refrain that the Liberal government has left Canada in a “weakened” position by failing to push through the building of multiple oil and natural gas pipelines in the face of popular opposition. Undoubtedly, the Conservatives and their corporate backers are divided and perplexed at how best to respond.

There is a significant and growing pro-MAGA wing of the

Conservatives, especially in Alberta whose United Conservative Party Premier, Danielle Smith, has openly courted Trump. She has offered to put the province's vast oil resources at the disposal of his global "energy domination" strategy and fanned the flames of the far-right Alberta separatist movement.

At the same time, even before the assault on Venezuela, leading Canadian imperialist strategists long identified with the Conservatives were warning of the existential threat Trump's strategy of hemispheric domination represents to Canadian imperialism. Typical was a recent article by Derek Burney, Brian Mulroney's chief of staff and one of the architects of the 1988 Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. It warned the "Trump corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine "essentially asserts a neo-imperialist presence in the hemisphere and reduces all other states within it, including Canada, to something approaching vassal status."

Carney was more circumspect in his response to the illegal attack on Venezuela. In a statement that notably was released only 12 hours or more after Maduro's capture, the Prime Minister began by underlining Canada's longstanding support for regime change and the campaign of lies and selective "human rights" propaganda upon which it has been based. He highlighted that Canada has not recognized Maduro as Venezuela's president since 2018, then absurdly declared that his government "welcomes the opportunity for freedom, democracy, peace, and prosperity for the Venezuelan people."

Without ever mentioning Trump or even the United States, Carney went on to criticize Trump's unilateralism. "Canada," he declared, "has long supported a peaceful, negotiated, and Venezuelan-led transition process" and urges "all parties to respect international law." Underlining the divergence with Washington, Carney added, "Canada attaches great importance to the resolution of crises through multilateral engagement," i.e. with Canadian imperialism having a "seat at the table" to assert its own interests.

On Sunday, Carney spoke with Maria Corina Machado, the far-right leader of the Venezuelan opposition and last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner. For months Machado begged Trump to invade Venezuela, but for the moment at least she has been sidelined by Washington.

Since taking over from his predecessor Justin Trudeau early last year, Carney has openly acknowledged the historic breakdown in the military-security and economic partnership between Canada and the United States that for the past eight decades has served as the cornerstone of Canadian imperialism's global strategy.

In the name of answering Trump's trade war barrage and annexationist threats and strengthening Canada's "sovereignty" and "economy," the Carney Liberal government has shifted politics far to the right. It has implemented Trump-style policies the ruling class long wanted but feared would provoke mass opposition. Carney's government has massively increased military spending, intensified public spending austerity, accelerated the already far-advanced attack on the right to strike, and slashed taxes for big business and the rich. He has committed to reaching the NATO target of spending 5 percent of GDP on the military within a decade, declaring that as a "middle power" Canada must become more aggressive if it is to avoid being feasted on by larger powers in a new era of global strategic conflict.

Carney and the dominant sections of the Canadian ruling class would still prefer an accommodation with Trump, since the US accounts for approximately three-quarters of Canada's exports. But in the face of the would-be Führer's "America first" agenda, Carney has turned to strengthening military security ties with Europe, whose imperialist powers likewise find themselves in an escalating conflict with Washington.

Carney met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday, and he will join a so-called "Coalition of the willing" meeting on Ukraine that he is hosting in Paris Tuesday. The format was set up after Trump made clear his intention to reach an agreement with Russian President Vladimir

Putin, at the expense of and over the heads of the other NATO powers, to divide up Ukraine and open up Russia to exploitation and investment by American companies. With the active support of the Canadian ruling class, which views Russia as a strategic rival, especially in the Arctic, the European powers—above all Germany, Britain, and France—want to continue the Ukraine war at all costs in order to secure their own share of the spoils by reducing Russia to the status of a semi-colony.

Like Carney, the response of the Bloc Québécois—the pro-Quebec independence party in the federal parliament—to the criminal attack on Venezuela has been two-faced. It voiced support for the longstanding US-led, Canadian-supported drive to install a more slavishly pro-imperialist government in Caracas, while expressing reservations over the manner in which Maduro was removed from power. The Parti Québécois, the senior party in the Quebec *indépendentiste*, i.e., separatist, movement and the favourite to win next October's election, has kept studiously silent on last weekend's events. However, its leader, Paul St. Pierre-Plamondon, recently affirmed that an independent Quebec would seek a "closer relationship" with a Trump-led America, declaring, "Our interests in Quebec are aligned with those of the United States."

The trade union-sponsored New Democratic Party was the only federal party that condemned Trump's actions, calling them "totally illegal and a breach of the UN covenants the US has agreed to uphold." But its opposition was entirely from the standpoint of Canadian nationalism and the defence of Canadian imperialist interests. The NDP has supported virtually every Canadian imperialist war of aggression over the past three decades, supports Canadian rearmament and like Carney and the European imperialist powers is determined that the war against Russia continue. Its statement, which notably made no call for working people to oppose the US attack on Venezuela, concluded with the lament that Trump's contempt for international law and seizure of Venezuelan oil would discredit the propaganda campaign used to justify the war on Russia in Ukraine.

The NDP and the trade unions are the biggest promoters of the ruling class's "Team Canada" response to Trump's trade war and annexation threats. Their nationalist fulminations serve to subordinate the working class to the Carney government and corporate Canada as they wage class war, and to divide Canadian workers from workers in the US, Mexico and around the world.

The *Globe's* Sunday editorial ended by proclaiming that Canada faces a "national emergency," saying in not so many words that after Venezuela it feared Canada could be next. In response to this "emergency," it is demanding that Carney move much further and faster to the right. In an editorial Monday titled "Canada does not have a moment to lose" it dismissed Carney's attacks on the working class and public services as a small down payment toward the wholesale restructuring of class relations necessary to fund Canada's military build-up, strengthen its competitive position and military-industrial base, and diversify its economic relations so it can prevail in the violent imperialist redivision of the world already well underway.

The global eruption of imperialist aggression, in which Canada is a significant player, is radicalizing millions of workers internationally. Workers in Canada must take up the fight to construct a global anti-war movement led by the working class to call a halt to the revival of colonial forms of rule expressed in Trump's attack on Venezuela, and the use of genocide and world war in pursuit of corporate profits and geostrategic dominance.

Canadian workers, like their class brothers and sisters in the US, are outraged by Trump's unrestrained aggression, brazen criminality, and erection of a dictatorship at home. But they cannot fight Trump and the financial oligarchy he represents by lining up with any faction of Canada's ruling class, which "opposes" Trump only to the extent that his "America First" Donroe Doctrine cuts across their own predatory

interests.

The only basis upon which fascism, world war, and dictatorship can be combatted is an internationalist and socialist program. The working class must put an end to crisis-ridden capitalism, which is the source of the numerous manifestations of barbarism evident today, and replace it with workers' governments committed to socialist policies. In this fight, the closest allies of workers in Canada are workers in the United States and throughout the Americas.



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