

Canada's diversity imperialism

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Canada's trade union-backed, ostensibly "progressive" Liberal government is playing a key role in the regime-change coup that Washington has launched against Venezuela's elected president, Nicolás Maduro.

Canada quickly seconded US President Donald Trump's announcement Wednesday recognizing Juan Guaidó, Venezuela's self-proclaimed "interim president," as the country's head of state.

The cabinet Trudeau named after winning office in October 2015 was hailed as an exemplar of diversity and inclusiveness. With an equal number of women and men, newspaper columnists lauded the "gender-balanced cabinet." It boasted an indigenous Justice Minister, an Indian-born Sikh defence minister, a former Somali refugee as immigration minister, a gay Treasury Board president, and a quadriplegic Veteran Affairs Minister.

Particular acclamations were given for the selection of a female minister of foreign affairs, Christina Freeland. In an article in September on Canada's "feminist foreign policy," *Foreign Policy* magazine wrote that last year Canada hosted "the first-ever meeting of female foreign ministers, as part of a package of commitments it made to prioritize women's issues under its G-7 presidency this year."

The meeting, *Foreign Policy* wrote, was "unprecedented in its display of female power on the world stage."

"It is important—and historic—that we have a prime minister and a government proud to proclaim themselves as feminists," declared Freeland. "Women's rights are human rights."

In reality, as underscored by Canada's role in aiding and abetting the US-orchestrated regime-change operation in Venezuela, the only "identity" that matters is that all the members of the Trudeau cabinet are defenders of imperialism.

Trudeau has been enthusiastically promoted by the *New York Times* and *Guardian* as a poster boy of contemporary liberalism. That is a liberalism that has renounced all social reform, is pro-austerity and pro-war,

and which privileges issues of racial, ethnic and gender identity, as a means of rallying the support of sections of the affluent middle class.

Trudeau and Freeland are recycling and amplifying the foul propaganda emanating from the CIA and the likes of Brazil's new ultra-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, that Guaidó—a representative of the country's traditional US-aligned oligarchy—is the incarnation of the democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people.

Ottawa's role, however, goes far beyond trying to provide a smokescreen for yet another "made in USA" coup and obscuring the inexorable connection between Washington's current intrigues in Venezuela and the succession of invasions, occupations and coups it has orchestrated in Latin America since 1898.

Ottawa, according to news reports, will soon host a meeting of the Lima Group, a coalition of US allies in the Americas, to plot the next steps in the "regime-change" operation against Maduro and the bourgeois nationalist regime he heads.

Since its establishment in August 2017, Canada has acted as Washington's principal agent inside the Lima Group. Last September, Canada was conspicuous in leading opposition to a Lima Group "pledge" to oppose any foreign military intervention in Venezuela—i.e. a US invasion.

Wednesday's US-fomented coup has pushed the impoverished South American country to the brink of civil war and, with Trump demonstratively declaring "all options on the table," brought the US to the brink of a military assault on Venezuela.

There is every reason to believe that Canada will participate in any US military action against Venezuela, reprising, albeit almost certainly on a larger and bloodier scale, its 2004 role in assisting the US in overthrowing Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Washington has spearheaded the resurgence of imperialism, waging a never-ending series of wars since 1991 in an increasingly desperate attempt to offset the decline in its global economic position. But all the

imperialist and aspiring great powers, big and small, are rearming and reviving war as a vital instrument of state policy.

A major belligerent and, from an economic and strategic vantage point, beneficiary of the two imperialist world wars of the last century, Canadian imperialism is no exception. Long gone are the days when Canada's ruling elite, with a view to politically and ideologically harnessing the working class to its rule, promoted the myth that Canada and its military have a special "peacekeeping" vocation.

Since 1991, Canada, under Liberal and Conservative governments alike, has played a leading role in one US-led war after another, including the first Gulf War, the 1999 NATO war on Yugoslavia, the Afghan War, the 2011 regime-change war in Libya, and the ongoing US war in the Middle East.

As in Venezuela today, Canada's government and military have, in the course of these wars and interventions, repeatedly aligned with extreme right-wing and outright fascist forces. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel involved in the bombing of Libya described themselves as "al Qaeda's air force." Similarly, in the Ukraine in 2014, Canada helped orchestrate, in concert with Washington, a fascist-spearheaded coup against the country's elected president.

Canada's longstanding and rapidly expanding military-security alliance with Washington and Wall Street enjoys all but unanimous support with the Canadian ruling class, as the best means to assert its own predatory imperialist interests and aims on the world stage.

Canada's banks and resource companies are important players in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Canadian ruling elite shares Washington's determination to roll back Chinese and Russian economic and geopolitical influence in the Americas.

Under Trudeau and his purported "feminist foreign policy," Canada is playing an even more rapacious and reactionary role in world affairs than under the neoconservative and onetime Iraq war enthusiast, Stephen Harper.

Declaring that Canada must prepare for the wars of the 21st Century and play a larger role in sustaining a US-led world order, the Trudeau government announced in June 2016 plans to hike military spending by more than 70 percent to almost \$33 billion by 2026.

Already Canada is playing a leading role in US

imperialism's three main military-strategic offensives, any one of which could rapidly spiral into a war between nuclear-armed powers: in the Middle East, against Russia and against China.

Canada is leading one of NATO's four new "forward deployed" battalion-sized battlegroups on Russia's borders; routinely deploys warplanes and battleships to patrol the Black Sea, Baltic States and Eastern Europe; and is training Ukrainian Army and National Guard personnel to, in Trudeau's words, "liberate" Eastern Ukraine.

And long before Ottawa ordered, at Washington's behest, the December 1 arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou on trumped-up charges, Canada was closely aligned with Washington in its escalating confrontation with China. Building on a secret 2013 US-Canadian military agreement on coordinating operations in the Asia-Pacific, the CAF has greatly expanded deployments in Asia. CAF head Jonathan Vance now routinely describes the South China Sea and Malacca Straits, key chokepoints in US war planning against China, as of vital strategic importance to Canada.

There are vital lessons to be learned from Trudeau's role in Trump's coup attempt in Venezuela, applicable in every country all over the world. Replacing one set of representatives of the financial oligarchy with another, regardless of their race, gender, or sexual preference, will not lead to a more "humane" outcome. The struggle against imperialism and social inequality must base itself on the social force capable of opposing capitalism and imperialist war: the working class.

Keith Jones

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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