

Why Canada's media is fawning over the war criminal John Bolton

By Roger Jordan
4 July 2020

Canada's mainstream media outlets have been fawning over the unindicted war criminal John Bolton, since the publication last month of *The Room Where it Happened*, his insider account of the Trump administration.

Bolton's remarks in lengthy Canadian television interviews and print articles on everything from Trump's acumen to Russian "aggression," the "threat" posed by China, and the supposedly "non-political" character of the extradition of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou have been served up to the public as the considered observations of a respected statesman.

Bolton, who was lauded in Democratic Party-aligned publications like the *New York Times* for his supposedly "withering" portrait of Trump, is one of the chief US warmongers of the past two decades. An architect of the 2003 Iraq war, which claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians and left a complex society in ruins, Bolton has advocated the savage bombardment of at least half a dozen other countries during the past decade, including Venezuela, Iran, North Korea and Syria. He is also notorious for his opposition to the United Nations—he once suggested the top 10 floors of its headquarters should be lopped off—the International Criminal Court, and other multilateral institutions that Canada's governing Liberals and much of the ruling class claim to staunchly support.

Why then is the Canadian corporate media lavishing so much attention on this Republican Party operative and aggressive proponent of American imperialist violence in every corner of the world?

In the most immediate political sense, Bolton's revelations have been seized upon to bolster the Canadian elite's aggressive anti-China campaign, which has reached fever pitch in recent weeks.

In interviews with CBC and a CTV-affiliated radio show hosted by Evan Solomon, Bolton attacked Trump for his "transactional" view of the US-China relationship and his purported failure to take a principled stand on Meng's extradition. Canada detained Meng, Huawei's chief financial officer and the daughter of its founder and

principal shareholder, at Washington's behest, on fabricated charges of violating Iranian sanctions. Bolton complained that Trump had raised the prospect of doing a deal with Beijing based on exchanging Meng for Chinese concessions on trade.

Bolton, like the dominant factions of the US and Canadian ruling elites, firmly rejects such an approach. They view Meng's detention as part of a broader campaign—backed by ever-escalating diplomatic, economic and military pressure, and ultimately the threat of war—aimed at thwarting China's emergence as a global force in high tech industries and, more generally, a challenge to US imperialism's global hegemony.

Trump's former National Security Adviser stressed that Washington is "concerned" by the growth of Huawei and telecommunications equipment manufacturer ZTE. "They are arms of the state of China, they're not commercial telecommunications firms in the sense that we in the West understand it and they have a much larger mission than good telephone connections," claimed Bolton. "So when they put pressure on a small country like Canada, it's important for all of us to stand together and present a united front."

This would have been music to the ears of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and former Tory Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Trudeau recently dismissed out of hand a proposal that his government "reset relations" with Beijing by exercising its prerogative to block Meng's extradition to the US. Mulroney, speaking for key sections of Canada's ruling elite, called earlier this week for the government to strike a "blue-ribbon committee" to "redefine" Canada's relations with Beijing so as to deal with the "strategic threat" from China (see: "US anti-China campaign intensifies factional conflicts within Canada's ruling elite").

The enthusiasm within ruling circles for Bolton's proposal that Ottawa and Washington form an anti-China "united front" flows from the benefits that have accrued to Canada's capitalist elite from its eight-decade-long military-strategic partnership with US imperialism. The Canadian bourgeoisie's close alliance with Washington in

the post-Second World War period provided it with the economic power and military clout to pursue its own predatory imperialist interests and ambitions around the world.

For the Liberals and New Democrats, together with significant sections of the Conservatives, Trump's "America first" policies and erratic behaviour have fuelled the fear that the current occupant of the White House is fatally undermining this global "united front" partnership. To be sure, the Trudeau government has gone out of its way to collaborate with Trump, as shown by its readiness to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement to consolidate a new US-led trade war pact directed against external rivals, and its cooperation with Trump's vicious anti-immigrant crackdown. The Liberal government has substantially expanded Canadian military involvement in US imperialist aggression around the world, including by deploying forces to Eastern Europe, the Asia-Pacific and Middle East.

Even when Trump responded to the eruption of mass multi-racial protests against police brutality in late May by initiating a military coup, Trudeau dared not utter a word of criticism of the US president. His 21 seconds of silence when responding to a reporter's question on the prime minister's opinion of Trump's incitement of violence made global headlines.

Trudeau's silence, which was applauded as a clever response by most media outlets, graphically revealed that the Canadian ruling elite's disagreements with Trump do not revolve around his shift towards authoritarianism, cultivation of fascist forces, and ruthless persecution of immigrants and political opponents. Rather, like Bolton, other dissident Republicans, and the Democrats, they fear that he is badly mismanaging US foreign policy.

This is especially true of Trump's approach to Russia, which they consider far too conciliatory. This is in line with the Democrats' impeachment of Trump, which focused on his alleged failure to stand up to Moscow. Studiously avoiding his real crimes, the Democrats denounced Trump's prioritizing of his personal reelection bid over the bipartisan US-led, Canadian-backed, effort to transform Ukraine into a client state of NATO and a base of operations against Russia.

It is an open secret that the vast majority of Canada's ruling elite has its fingers crossed for a Joe Biden presidency following November's elections.

The consequences of such an outcome can be seen in the venomous anti-Russia campaign currently being orchestrated by the *New York Times* and endorsed by Biden. After publishing unsubstantiated and transparently fabricated intelligence agency leaks that Russia paid the

Afghan Taliban to attack American soldiers, the led a chorus of demands for American retaliation, with Biden chiming in to assail Trump from the right for his "dereliction of duty" (see: "The New York Times fabricates Russian murder plot").

What the Canadian ruling elite is really yearning for is the prospect of a more stable partner in the White House, so that Canadian and American imperialism can get back to what they do best: bullying, threatening and intriguing against rivals, and waging wars in pursuit of markets, raw materials and spheres of influence. This was the unmistakable message sent by Bolton in his CBC interview, when he said, "The negative consequences caused by the Trump presidency can be overcome. ... Those who are anti-American will pick on Trump as an example of America in decline, and they would be wrong." America, he went on to declare remains a "force to be reckoned with."

Canada has assisted US imperialism in proving that it is a "force to be reckoned with" over the past quarter century. Under Liberal and, Conservative governments alike, the Canadian military has participated in virtually every US-led war of aggression, as well as numerous covert regime-change operations. This includes NATO's savage bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999; the neocolonial occupation of Afghanistan beginning in 2001; the invasion of Haiti in 2004; the air war in Libya in 2011; the ouster of Ukraine's elected president in a fascist-spearheaded coup in 2014; the ongoing war in Iraq and Syria; and the 2019 military coup in Bolivia. Canada has also played a major role in the US-led build-up of NATO military forces against Russia in Eastern Europe, as shown by its leadership of a 1,000-strong battalion in Latvia and its training of Ukrainian army units for the far-right regime in Kiev.

In light of this record, it should come as no surprise that Canada's leading media outlets have rolled out a figurative red carpet for Bolton.

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