



Science for Peace

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## President's Column



Dear Members,

In a recent press conference, Trump repeated his threats of retaking the Panama Canal, and of occupying Greenland. When asked by a reporter, he refused to rule out the use of military force to achieve his goals. It is highly unlikely that Trump will invade Panama and Greenland. More likely, Trump is using these threats to extract economic and security concessions from these countries. Trump's menacing words clearly represent a new chapter in the long history of US imperialism, which includes more than 50 military interventions in Latin America, most of which were directed to protect the interests of US-based multinational corporations.

Trump's territorial ambitions also remind us of the duplicity of the US foreign policy: Putin's invasion of Ukraine is a violation of international law (which it certainly is), but the invasion of Panama, or Greenland, or Iraq, etc., is not. American governments justify this blatant hypocrisy on the grounds that the US is an "exceptional" country.

In the case of Canada, if we don't accept to become the 51th US state, we are being told that Trump will spare us a military invasion, and that, instead, he will use "economic force". In other words, he will annex Canada through crippling economic warfare that will at least include high tariffs on Canadian imports.

Unfortunately, the initial reaction of the Government of Canada to Trump's threats has been very weak. First, Trudeau rushed to Mar-o-Lago where he was received by Trump in a restaurant, and he was invited to incorporate

Canada into the US. The first reaction of the Canadian officials to this insulting invitation was to describe it as “a joke”. Trump is a bully, and the worst thing you can do with a bully is to try to appease him.

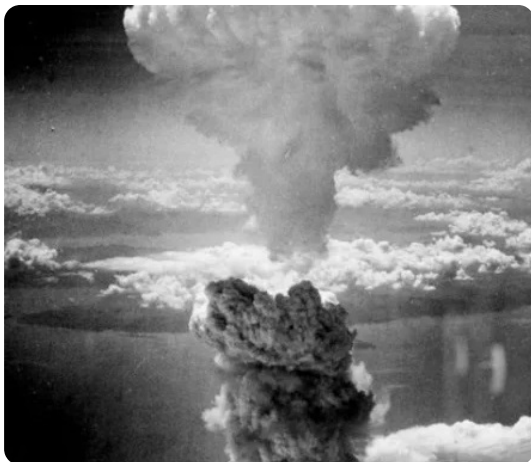
The reaction of the Conservatives to Trump’s threats of economic warfare has also been pathetic. Poilievre immediately supported Trump’s false assertions regarding the lack of “security” at the US-Canada border by claiming that Trudeau “lost control of the border”. It seems that Poilievre is very reluctant to criticize his American conservative cousins. Certainly, this behavior has already been rewarded with the endorsement by Elon Musk of Poilievre’s candidacy for Prime Minister in the coming elections.

The many ideological convergences between Canadian Conservatives and American Republicans, and the obvious disposition of Poilievre to acquiesce to Trump’s requests, are alarming. How far will Poilievre go in placating Trump? Recently, in a press conference, Trump said that NATO countries’ military expenditures “should be at five percent, not two percent” of the GDP. After strong pressures from Trump, the current Canadian government has recently promised to increase our military expenditures to two percent, which will require adding 41 billion dollars to the current budget. Now, it turns out that this is not going to be nearly enough to satisfy Trump. Will Poilievre, if he is elected Prime Minister, rush to further increase Canada’s military budget to reach the requested 5 percent of the GDP? What would be the consequences of such a dramatic increase in military expenditures? What would be left for social programs, medical care, clean energy development?

It is obvious that there are no easy or quick solutions for Trump’s threats to Canada’s economy and autonomy. At a minimum, Canada should take the appropriate retaliatory measures that must include the energy sector. In the longer term, it should be one of the government’s priorities to reduce our economic dependency on the US. One necessary step in this direction will be to diversify the markets for our exports. Having more than 76 percent of our products going to the US places us in a very vulnerable position, and Trump is now exploiting this weakness in the economic war he has declared on us. At the political level, we need a government that will stand up against US bullying. Since it’s very unlikely that a government led by Poilievre will do that, maybe we should consider the possibility of an electoral convergence of all the political parties that are willing to fight back against Trump’s attempt to annex Canada by “economic force”.

Jorge Filmus  
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