

International Matters of Concern

- **Trudeau Government's Foreign Policy Priorities as Revealed in Foreign Minister's Mandate Letter**
- *Margaret Villamizar* -
- **Measures to Establish New World Order to Oppose U.S. "Rules-Based" Order**
- *Pauline Easton* -
- **Growing Challenge to U.S. Dominance of Global Finance**
- *K.C. Adams* -
- **U.S. Pushes Hegemonic Policy in Wake of Humiliating Defeat in Afghanistan**
- *Steve Rutchinski* -
- **U.S. Ramps Up Anti-China Rhetoric**
- *Nick Lin and Philip Fernandez* -

International Matters of Concern

Trudeau Government's Foreign Policy Priorities as Revealed in Foreign Minister's Mandate Letter

- *Margaret Villamizar* -



Prime Minister Trudeau issued his "mandate letters" to the 38 Members of his Cabinet on December 16, almost a month after the 44th Parliament opened on November 22. According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), these mandate letters "outline the objectives that each minister will work to accomplish, as well as the pressing challenges they will address in their role." The PMO says the publicly available letters "help Canadians hold the government to account" by giving them a clear idea of how the government will deliver its agenda.

All the letters start off saying that finishing the fight against the pandemic remains the government's central focus and make mention of other issues the Liberals campaigned on in the election. They begin by outlining what are said to be the overarching priorities of the government and the expectations of each minister for the parliamentary session, followed by specific directives on the key work and priorities for their individual portfolios, including that they come up with a plan to implement those directives. They are indicative of what the government is up to as much for what they say as for what they leave out.

Mélanie Joly is the Trudeau government's fourth Minister of Foreign Affairs since the 2015 election when it replaced the Harper Conservatives. Mandate letters given to the Liberal government's first two foreign ministers, Stéphane Dion (2015) and Chrystia Freeland (2017) established as the first priority recognition of the U.S. as Canada's "closest ally and most important economic and security partner." The specific instruction to Stéphane Dion, ostensibly to repair damage done to this all-important relationship by Harper, was to "improve relations with the United States" as well as to "strengthen North American trilateral cooperation."

Chrystia Freeland, who worked as a journalist based in the U.S. for years before returning to Canada to run for the Liberals in a 2013 by-election, replaced Dion when renegotiating NAFTA became the burning issue after the election of Donald Trump as U.S. President in 2016. She was instructed to "maintain constructive relations with the United States" and "lead efforts to deepen trade and commerce relations" with it.

Freeland was replaced after the September 2019 election by François-Philippe Champagne whose appointment coincided with the launch of the Trudeau government's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council. The mandate letter he received framed his role as one of "advancing Canada's national interests in a more unpredictable world and leading Canada's contribution to address fundamental global challenges." The priority placed on advancing Canada's relationship with the U.S. in the two previous foreign minister's mandate letters was for all intents and purposes disappeared, the only direct reference to it showing up last on the list, almost as an afterthought, telling the minister to "Support the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in work on Canada-U.S. Relations."

Canada's bid for the Security Council seat was unsuccessful in June 2020 when the facts of what Canada was up to internationally told a very different story than Champagne's mandate letter was crafted to suggest. Now the veil has come off in the marching orders given to Trudeau's fourth foreign affairs minister, Mélanie Joly.

Foreign Affairs Minister's Mandate Letter

The priorities Global Affairs Canada is to uphold are contained in the mandate letter which instructs the foreign minister to concern herself with "promot[ing] peace and security, combat[ing] authoritarianism and counter[ing] foreign interference through collective international responses, including by expanding our cooperation with like-minded partners and Canadian, international and multilateral organizations." This puts Canada almost exclusively at the service of the U.S. agenda of interference, aggression and war under the pretext of combating "authoritarianism."

"Authoritarianism" is said to be represented primarily by China and Russia, but also by the leaders of other countries, no matter how small, who are said to threaten democracy and human rights around the world by refusing to allow the U.S., Canada and certain European powers to force liberal "representative democracy" on them.

Joly's mandate letter makes clear that in the name of high-sounding ideals like democracy and human rights, what Canada has agreed to do is step up its role as good cop to the U.S. bad cop. It has taken on the job of trying to sell those rotten wares as standing up for the interests and values

of Canadians.

Fully 18 of 26 priorities Joly is instructed to act on are explicitly or implicitly associated with longstanding U.S. foreign policy objectives and projects in furtherance of its aim of global dominance, with "multinational" entities like NATO, the G7 and a bevy of coalitions, institutes, foundations, NGOs and the like as tools for this. Some of the interfering "democracy promotion" outfits Canada has committed to lead and fund in the coming year were spelled out in the Trudeau government's submission to Biden's Summit for Democracy in December.



It is understood that along with the objectives of U.S. foreign policy, even as its ruling circles get closer to embroiling the country in civil war, a price will be extracted from any countries the U.S. deems to represent a "threat" to the realization of its aims. Everything from sanctions, "lawfare" or judicial persecution, through to full blown regime change operations, war and destruction are included in its arsenal for that purpose, with allies like Canada pressed to participate in meting out whatever punishment is brought to bear on those targeted.

The very first thing on the list of priorities Trudeau has given Joly to act on is to "Work with me, and in close collaboration with other ministers, to further strengthen our partnership with our closest ally, the United States." This is followed by such things as:

- Facilitate the safe passage and resettlement of vulnerable people from Afghanistan, with an emphasis on individuals who supported Canada and its NATO allies over the past two decades
- Develop and launch a comprehensive Indo-Pacific strategy to deepen diplomatic, economic and defence partnerships and international assistance in the region
- Work with G7, NATO and like-minded partners to develop and expand collective responses to arbitrary detention, economic coercion, cyber threats, foreign interference in democratic processes and egregious violations of human rights, including through the use of sanctions
- Advance support for democracy and human rights as a core priority in Canada's international engagement, including by:
 1. Establish[ing] a Canadian centre to expand the availability of Canadian expertise and assistance to those seeking to build peace, advance justice, promote human rights, inclusion and democracy, and deliver good governance
 2. Working with international partners to help establish an International Anti-Corruption Court, to prevent corrupt officials and authoritarian governments from impeding development that should benefit their citizens
 3. Expanding fast and flexible support for fragile and emerging democracies, increasing Canada's diplomatic presence in regions of strategic importance
 4. Continuing to support and implement Canada's Magnitsky Law, the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act* [a carbon copy of the *U.S. Magnitsky Act* -- Ed note], and promote the adoption of similar legislation and practices globally.
- Work to strengthen Canada's engagement and presence in the United Nations (UN) system in order to ensure a more effective, efficient, relevant and accountable UN that supports a rules-

based international system, particularly so that it can better address those who are seeking to undermine democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

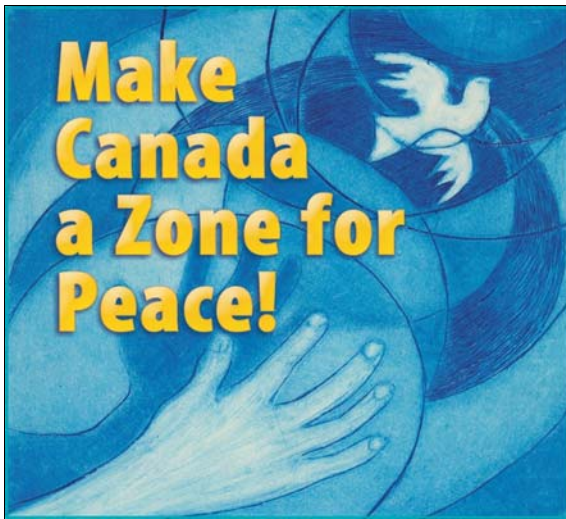
- Expand Canada's engagement with allies, partners and international organizations in order to promote peace and security

- Work with the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Northern Affairs and partners to defend Arctic sovereignty

- Work with the Minister of National Defence and NATO partners to establish a new NATO Centre of Excellence on Climate and Security based in Canada to ensure Canada and its allies are prepared to respond to climate-related threats and emergencies.

- Work with the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to support the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism [the Special Envoy is a Zionist who promotes the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism the Trudeau government has adopted. This bogus definition equates defence of Palestinian rights and criticism of Israel with "anti-Semitism" -- *Ed note*] in advancing their mandate.

Like with their failed attempt to win a seat on the UN Security Council where the position would have been used to undermine the authority of the UN Charter and the rule of law by pushing its replacement with the U.S. "rules-based international order," the Trudeau Liberals now aim to hoodwink Canadians into believing that serving as a front man for U.S.-style "democracy promotion" schemes to meddle in the affairs of sovereign nations and peoples has anything to do with their values or to contributing to human rights, the rights of women and girls, or to peace and security around the world. A government which is not seen to do these things at home can hardly be expected to defend them abroad.



What is unmistakable in considering the foreign minister's mandate letter is that Canadians have no say in deciding what role their country should play in the world. All matters of Canada's foreign policy remain the purview of an executive operating behind closed doors and away from Parliament, at the beck and call of the U.S. and supranational bodies ruled by narrow private interests. None of what the letter pertains to was raised by the Liberals, any of the other cartel parties in the Parliament or the monopoly media during the election campaign, which was notably devoid of any discussion on foreign policy whatsoever except that raised by the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada and other

small parties.

Like all matters which affect the lives of the people who comprise the country called Canada, the aim of its foreign policy must be set by the people themselves to further the cause of peace, freedom and democracy worldwide. Canada must contribute to upholding the rule of law internationally as contained in the Charter of the United Nations, stop interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign countries in the name of a fraudulent rendering of the values of Canadians and make Canada a zone for peace by getting out of NATO and NORAD as a first step.

(Photos: TML)

Measures to Establish New World Order to Oppose U.S. "Rules-Based" Order

- Pauline Easton -



Peoples of the world demand action at COP26 in Glasgow, November 5, 2021.

As 2021 came to an end, a matter of grave concern for the peoples of the world has been the inability of the United Nations to exert authority in matters of the relations between countries based on the principles enshrined by the UN Charter. There is a lot of talk about "strategic relations" and "strategic partnerships" and interpretations of the kind of new world order the world requires.

Everyone is coming up with different formulations around strategic partnerships, relations and strategy. According to some, the U.S. "rules-based international order" is the basis for a "strategic paradigm" which gives structure to "strategic thinking." Such thinking is different than having a policy objective. For their part, statements by both China and Russia on strategic partnership and that of the European Union (EU) on "Strategic Autonomy" talk about strategy in relation to some type of world order. The Chinese and Russians are saying it is a "new era," but how that is defined is as yet not clear.

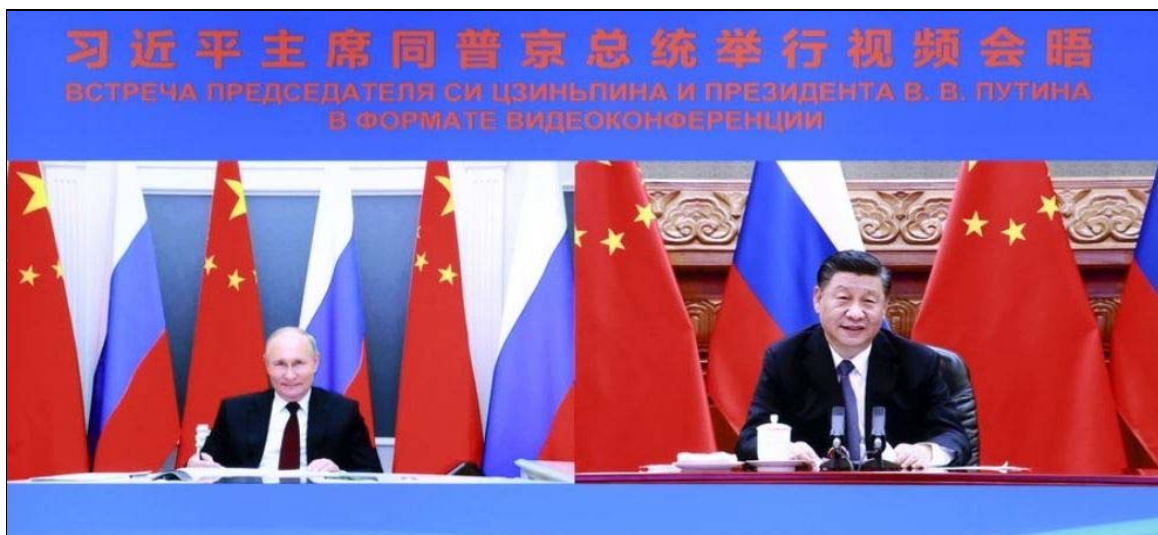
China-Russia Strategic Partnership

While the U.S. and countries such as Canada talk nonstop about establishing a "rules-based international order," where the U.S. sets the rules and decides who is and who is not breaking them, a significant development in 2021 was the announcement by China and Russia that they have extended the China-Russia Friendship Treaty which upholds the international rule of law as it is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.[1]

The current five-year pact is a continuation of the 20-year friendship treaty they signed in 2001. The Treaty outlines their notion of "strategic partnership" which they say is based on the UN Charter and international law. As one report put it, their friendship is to "develop a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era in a bid to take bilateral ties to a higher level and better benefit the peoples of the two countries and the world as well." [2]

They say they are developing relations that are going to be neither a military nor an economic bloc against anyone else, but rather focus on a "strategy of a new type." The Treaty and agreements are not in the form of them being allies, in the sense of military or political allies such as were

established previously during the Cold War. The Treaty and its extension are going beyond this old way of having relationships, they say. The relations are also very different from what the U.S. is promoting under its "rules-based international order" in which everyone is to submit to the U.S. as the indispensable leader.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin jointly announced the extension of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, June 28, 2021.

European Strategic Autonomy

For its part, the EU has been pursuing what it calls "European Strategic Autonomy." At a time China and Russia are addressing developments for Eurasia, the EU does not want to be left out. At the same time, the autonomy that the EU is referring to is not that of Germany or France, but of the EU which then raises the problem of the existence of NATO and its relationship with many of the European countries. The conception does nonetheless attempt to provide a rationalization for the EU having their own defence force within the ambit of the proposal to establish a "Global Concert of Powers," some forces in the U.S. are promoting. This Global Concert of Powers includes the EU -- not Germany or France -- along with Russia, China, India and Japan.[3][4]

There is concern expressed by the U.S. about the continuing and developing partnership between China and Russia in a manner which does not accord with its own conception of a tri-polar world -- a world as advocated by former U.S. President Trump in which the U.S. was to play Russia and China off of one another while it set the rules to which everyone must submit. The promotion of the U.S. "rules-based international order" notwithstanding, there is considerable confusion and incoherence at all levels of the U.S. government in terms of foreign policy.

The Role of Secrecy

What is known is that their policy-making is based on secrecy. The claims being made around cyber warfare and cyber attacks, for example, and U.S. attributions of such to Russia or China, cannot be confirmed with evidence. It is not possible to attribute specific attacks to, say, China, given how readily the attacks can be made to appear to be coming from a certain place or to be initiated by this or that specific force when there is no evidence of this, as various examples have shown. The U.S. repeatedly simply claims it "looks like" something Putin or the Chinese would do; it "appears as if" it is done by them, and so forth. There is no evidence to back up these claims.

The U.S. is trying to impose a norm for what is and is not cyber warfare by providing their claims with a legality; as something valid in terms of law. It is similar to what they did with nuclear weapons by claiming the information to build a nuclear bomb was secret and then claiming that

there was espionage.

When Russia and China raise in their partnership agreement that it is a new era, they are in part saying there has to be a different world order now. On the part of the U.S., its determination to push the scenario for a major war now is to prevent the loss of the existing world order in which the U.S. dominates.

Notes

1. China-Russia Friendship Treaty, Article I:

"In accordance with universally recognized principles and norms of international laws and on the basis of the Five Principles of mutual respect of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence, the contracting parties shall develop the strategic cooperative partnership of good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation and equality and trust between the two countries from a long-term view and in a comprehensive manner."

For the full text of the Treaty, [click here](#).

2. An example of how relations for a new era are talked about is found in "China, Russia agree to upgrade relations for new era," *Xinhua*, June 6, 2019.

3. "A Crisis-Ridden Alliance Holds Crisis-Ridden Summit" by Pauline Easton, *TML Monthly*, June 11, 2021.

4. "U.S. Imperialist Proposal to Resuscitate a 'Concert of Powers' to Further U.S. Striving for Domination" by Kathleen Chandler, *TML Monthly*, June 11, 2021.

(With files from *Conversations: Ideological Studies Centre*. Photos: COP 26 Coalition, Xinhua)

Growing Challenge to U.S. Dominance of Global Finance

- K.C. Adams -



Mass actions in Ecuador against International Monetary Fund imposed reforms,
October 14, 2019.

An area of contention in the world today is U.S. dominance of global finance and its use of institutions to ensnare countries within their grasp. Russia and China have now agreed to establish a new shared international financial framework so as to make sure the U.S. can no longer control their trading relations or interfere in their internal affairs by imposing sanctions.



The U.S. controls and uses the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Bank for International Settlements and SWIFT system, credit cards and the U.S. dollar as weapons to dominate others and ensure its global hegemony.[1][2]

Glenn Diesen, a professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway and an editor at the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*, recently penned an article published in RT, which notes:

"China and Russia have been gradually moving towards such an arrangement since the Global

Financial Crisis of 2008 revealed the risks of excessive reliance on the U.S. However, American economic sanctions against both Moscow and Beijing appear to have intensified the search for alternatives."

Diesen details the immense power of what he calls "the American-centric financial architecture." He writes, "Most international trade is conducted in U.S. dollars, the transfer of payments goes through the SWIFT transaction system in which the country has immense sway, while financing derives from U.S.-led investment banks, debt is ranked by U.S. rating agencies, and even the main credit cards are American. These economic instruments of power enable Washington to run an empire -- it can manage huge trade deficits, collect data on its adversaries, give favourable treatment to allies, and crush its adversaries with sanctions."

Diesen contends, "The U.S.-centric financial architecture is no longer sustainable. The White House has lost control over its negative trade imbalance, debt is spiralling out of control, and rampant inflation is destroying the currency."



Within the situation Diesen says the foundations for the role of the U.S. dollar as the international reserve currency and to settle global trade and accounts "are quickly coming to an end." He writes:

"A financial partnership between China and Russia, the world's largest energy importer and the world's largest energy exporter, is an indispensable instrument for dethroning the petrodollar. In 2015, approximately 90 per cent of trade between Russia and China was settled in dollars, and by 2020, dollar-denominated trade between the two Eurasian giants had almost reduced by half, with only 46 per cent of trade in dollars. Russia has also been leading the way in cutting the share of U.S. dollars in its foreign reserves. The mechanisms for de-dollarizing China-Russia trade are also used to end the use of the greenback with third parties -- with advancements being seen in places such as Latin America, Turkey, Iran, India, etc."

Diesen explains, "The SWIFT system for financial transactions between banks worldwide was previously the only system for international payments. This central role for SWIFT began to erode when the U.S. used it as a political weapon. The Americans first expelled Iran and north Korea, and in 2014, Washington began threatening to expel Russia from the system as well. Over the past few weeks, the threat of using SWIFT as a weapon against Russia has intensified."

In the face of these attacks and threats, China, Russia and several European countries have created alternatives to SWIFT. Using these alternate financial institutions, countries have been able to some extent, as Diesen says, "to curb Washington's extra-territorial jurisdiction and thus continue trading with Iran. A new China-Russia financial architecture should integrate [the Chinese system] CIPS and [Russian] SPFS, and make them more available to third parties. If the U.S. expels Russia, then the decoupling from SWIFT would intensify further."^[3]



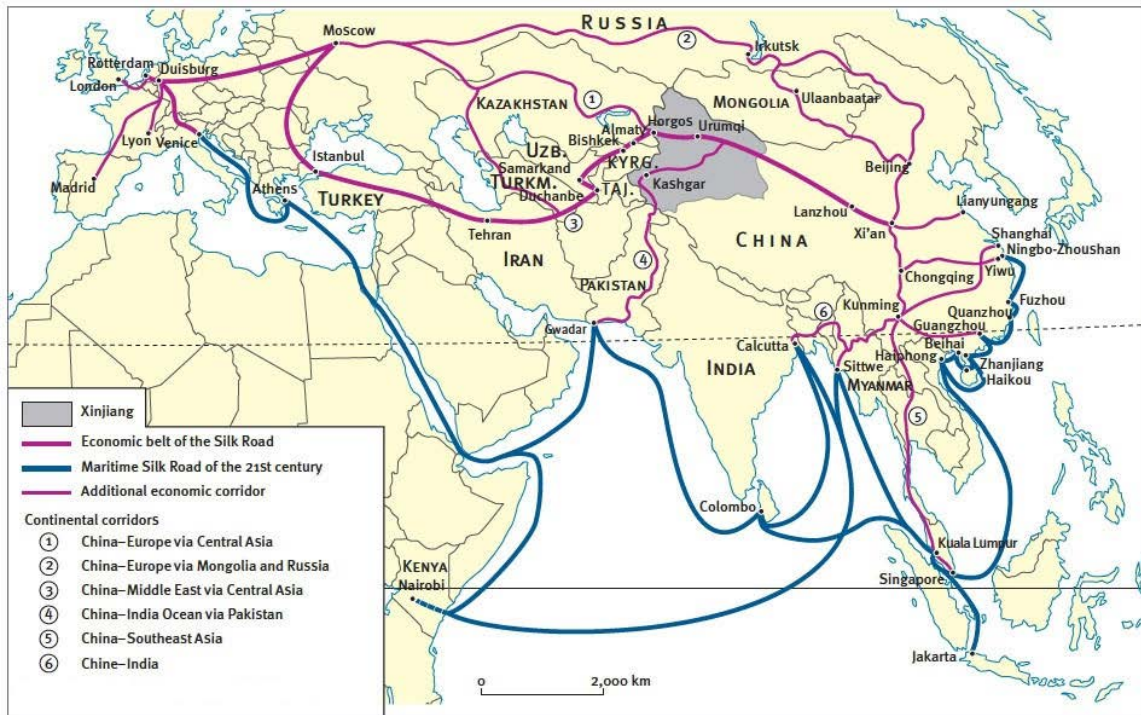
Diesen details the rising opposition to the U.S.-controlled development banks and other lending institutions writing, "The U.S.-led IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank are renowned instruments of U.S. economic statecraft. The launch of the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in 2015 became a watershed moment in the global financial architecture, as all the major allies of the U.S. (except Japan) signed up in defiance of American warnings. The New Development

Bank, formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, was a further step towards decoupling from the U.S.-led development banks. The Eurasian Development Bank and future SCO Development Bank are more nails in the coffin of U.S.-controlled development banks."

The contention has reached into other financial areas with China and Russia developing their own rating agencies and replacing the dominant position of Visa and Mastercard in their respective countries with their own credit cards such as the Chinese company UnionPay's credit cards and non-currency payment systems including the widely used Chinese mobile platform Alipay.

"Furthermore," Diesen writes, "China and Russia seek to avoid U.S.-dominated transportation corridors. China has invested trillions of dollars into its Belt and Road Initiative for new land and sea corridors, while Russia has advanced a similar but more modest program that includes developing the Arctic as a maritime route in partnership with China."

Diesen concludes: "The U.S. can use more sanctions to oppose the development of a multipolar international financial architecture, although continued economic coercion will only increase the demand for decoupling from America. The first rule of sanctions is that when they are enduring, the targets of sanctions will learn to live without the belligerent power. What began as an effort to weaken and isolate Washington's adversaries eventually ends up isolating the U.S."



China's Belt and Road Initiative ([click to enlarge](#))

Notes

1. Excerpts from "How the SWIFT System Works," by Shobhit Seth follow:

"[...] Behind most international money and security transfers is the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) system. SWIFT is a vast messaging network used by banks and other financial institutions to quickly, accurately, and securely send and receive information, such as money transfer instructions.

"More than 11,000 SWIFT member institutions sent over 35 million transactions per day through the network in 2020. The organization recorded an average of 42.5 million messages per day on a year-to-date basis in March 2021. Traffic grew by 9.8 per cent compared to the same period of the previous year. [...]"

"This payment network allows individuals and businesses to take electronic or card payments even if the customer or vendor uses a different bank than the payee.

"SWIFT works by assigning each member institution a unique ID code that identifies not only the bank name but country, city, and branch."

For the full item [click here](#).

2. The *Wikipedia* article "Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication" explains:

"[SWIFT] sends payment orders, which must be settled by correspondent accounts that the institutions have with each other. To exchange banking transactions, each financial institution must have a banking relationship by either being legally organized as a bank or through its affiliation with at least one bank. While SWIFT transports financial messages in a highly secure manner, it does not hold accounts for its members nor perform any form of clearing or settlement.

"As of 2018, around half of all high-value cross-border payments worldwide used the SWIFT network, and in 2015, SWIFT linked more than 11,000 financial institutions in over 200 countries and territories, who were exchanging an average of over 32 million messages per day (compared to an average of 2.4 million daily messages in 1995).

"Though widely utilized, SWIFT has been criticized for its inefficiency. [...] SWIFT has also attracted controversy for

enabling the United States government to monitor, and in some cases interfere with, intra-European transactions."

3. Below are excerpts from the article "Kremlin reveals new independent Russian-Chinese financial systems," by Layla Guest, published by RT on December 15, 2021:

"Russia and China will develop shared financial structures to enable them to deepen economic ties in a way that foreign states will be unable to influence, the Kremlin has announced following talks between the countries' leaders.

"The move appears to be a response to a series of warnings that Western nations could push to disconnect Russia from the Brussels-based SWIFT financial system as a form of sanctions.

"... During the talks..., Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping called for increasing the share of national currencies in mutual settlements and expanding cooperation to provide Russian and Chinese investors with access to stock markets, said Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign policy advisor.

"Ushakov said *'particular attention was paid to the need to intensify efforts to form an independent financial infrastructure to service trade operations between Russia and China.'*

"*'We mean creating an infrastructure that cannot be influenced by third countries,'* the Kremlin aide added. [...]

"Both Russia and China are said to be increasingly looking to move away from using the U.S. dollar as the main currency of international trade, instead using their own denominations to underpin the booming volume of Moscow-Beijing trade.

"[At a December 7 hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,] U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland said that the White House, along with a number of Western European nations, was mulling completely isolating Moscow from the global financial system should Russian troops dare to invade Ukraine.

"Just the day before, Bloomberg had suggested that Washington could target the country's major banks and even disconnect Moscow from the SWIFT network.

"At the end of November, the boss of Russia's state-run oil giant Rosneft, Igor Sechin, accused Washington of manipulating the dollar to further its own interests and said the currency was losing its appeal due to the U.S. Federal Reserve's policy of quantitative easing -- essentially flooding the global economy with an excess supply of money.

"Earlier this year, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov suggested that Beijing and Washington *'need to move away from the use of Western-controlled international payment systems.'* The top diplomat also accused the U.S. of seeking *'to limit the technological development opportunities of both the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.'*" [The sanctions against using the Chinese company Huawei's products are a case in point. The attacks include the arrest of its Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver at the behest of the U.S. authorities, where she was held under house arrest for three years. -- TML Ed. Note]

(Photos: redfishstream, peoples Global Conference Against WB, ILPS, Xinhua)

U.S. Pushes Hegemonic Policy in Wake of Humiliating Defeat in Afghanistan

- Steve Rutchinski -

The U.S. rout and humiliation in Afghanistan, besides other things, seriously undermined confidence in the U.S. as a "reliable partner." As the U.S. scrambled to save itself, it abandoned all its NATO "partners" as well as collaborators, to fend for themselves.

The U.S. started emphasizing plans to focus on the Indo-Pacific region, including efforts to integrate countries there into the U.S. military and financial machinery. U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris visited Singapore and Vietnam the week of August 23. It was her second international trip, having visited Guatemala and Mexico previously as part of contending with immigration issues. Part of the trip then was to direct considerable fire against China, engaging in a brinkmanship that is dangerous for all concerned. Conditions of humiliation and desperation drive thirst for revenge to the brink of war.

Stopping in Singapore first, Harris met with Singaporean President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. She made a point of visiting the warship USS *Tulsa* at the Changi naval base. She did not mince her words when she spoke to the sailors. Denying what happened when the U.S. tried to dictate what kind of democracy would exist in Afghanistan, she said: "I do believe a big part of the history of the 21st century will be written about this very region where you now serve. And we want to be the ones who are helping to shape and dictate that history."



The U.S. considers Singapore the anchor of the U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia and a main base for the Indo-Pacific region, along with Japan and south Korea. Two U.S. strike groups -- one centered around the carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* and the other around the assault ship USS *America* -- were in the South China Sea, an area of dispute, in June. The *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group and USS *America* remained in the western Pacific. On August 10, 2021, the U.S. organized war games in the Singapore area involving the navies of 21 countries, 10 ships and more than 400 personnel.

Military threats are integral to brinkmanship, a means to see how China and other countries will respond. The difficulty, as evident in Afghanistan, is that the U.S. has no ability to predict what will occur. Will "the enemy" submit or will the threats escalate the conflict and even unleash a war?

Harris pushed things further. Referring to China's contested position in the South China Sea, she said: "[...] Beijing's actions continue to undermine the rules-based order and threaten the sovereignty of nations."

At the same time the U.S. made efforts to further integrate Singapore into its military and security structures, a less obvious form of undermining sovereignty.

On cyber security, the Treasury and Defense Departments, as well as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, secured a memorandum of understanding with their Singaporean counterparts to expand "information sharing and training" to combat what the U.S. deems are cyber threats. The White House also announced additional agreements fostering what they term cooperation on space exploration and defence issues.

The Japanese, Koreans, Canadians and many other peoples are well-versed in the reality of what this "cooperation" means. When it comes to military matters, the U.S. calls foreign forces into action and embroils other countries in their war efforts and machinery.

In addition, the U.S. organized to "create a partnership focused on strengthening trade throughout a handful of key industries," particularly as it related to supply chain issues for the U.S.

Harris again emphasized that the partnerships are based on U.S. interests to "shape and dictate" in the region:

"Our intention is to strengthen our partnerships and reinforce our shared vision, so that the United States with our partners can together continue shaping that history. In doing so, there should be no doubt we have enduring interests in this region, and we have enduring commitments as well. Those commitments include, of course, security. Yesterday I visited Changi Naval Base. The U.S. Navy ship, the USS *Tulsa*, is docked there right now, a symbol of a deep and enduring security partnership between our nations. A statement of America's security commitment to this region."

The difficulties the U.S. is contending with to impose these partnerships were also evident in Harris' remarks. After threatening China she added, "Our engagement in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific is not against any one country, nor is it designed to make anyone choose between countries. Instead, our engagement is about advancing an optimistic vision that we have for our participation and partnership in this region."

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, in the joint press conference where the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan was referred to, publicly expressed doubts about the U.S. "What matters is how the U.S. repositions itself in the Asia Pacific, engages the broader region and continues to fight against terrorism, because that will determine the perceptions of the countries of the U.S. global priorities and of its strategic intentions," Lee said.

In addition Lee warned the U.S. against pursuing an aggressive approach to China. Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said in a recent interview prior to Harris' visit that Singapore will "be useful but we will not be made use of" in its relations with both countries.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin also countered, saying Southeast Asian countries are reluctant to choose sides between China and the United States. He said the U.S. approach is based on "outdated Cold War thinking and is intended to provoke troubles in their relations with China, create division and confrontation, and try to create a ring of containment" around China.

The U.S. "can smear, suppress, coerce, and bully other countries at will in order to maintain America first, without paying any price," Wang said.

Speaking to the U.S. so-called rules based order and its rout in Afghanistan, he added: "This is the order that the U.S. wants. The U.S. always tries to make use of the rules and order to justify its own selfish, bullying and hegemonic behavior, but who will believe it now?"

In travelling to Vietnam, Harris persisted in her efforts to provoke China while also seeking to involve others in U.S. actions. At a meeting with Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc she said, "We need to find ways to pressure and raise the pressure, frankly, on Beijing to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to challenge its bullying and excessive maritime claims."

Vietnam was not drawn in. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh held a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Xiong Bo just before Harris' arrival. The Vietnamese government said in a statement, "The Prime Minister affirmed that Vietnam adheres to an independent, self-reliant, multilateral, and diverse foreign policy and is a responsible member of the international community."

"Vietnam does not align itself with one country against another," the statement said and added that

territorial disputes in the South China Sea should be settled according to international law and "high-level common sense."

Both the U.S. and China talk of this being a "new era" and both are striving to put in place a world order and structure which suits them. Harris put it this way:

"I believe our world is embarking on a new era; an era with new challenges, like cyber security, and an era with new opportunities, like clean energy. The fact is, our world is more interconnected and interdependent, and in order then to embrace this new era, nations must be willing to take on challenges together and create opportunities together. That is why our partnerships in Singapore, in Southeast Asia, and throughout the Indo-Pacific, are a top priority for the United States."

Despite its defeat in Afghanistan, the U.S. persists in threatening to use the most extreme violence and actually use it in the hopes of maintaining its role as "indispensable nation." Harris' comments could not erase the perception that U.S. use of violence determines what the U.S. says about rights and laws.

With its rout in Afghanistan, great uncertainty and unpredictability continue to exist. The impunity and arbitrariness unleashed with the "war on terror" show that anarchy was raised to authority and this remains the case today.



The inability to predict what comes next is being widely promoted. Various ruling factions within the political establishment and media are saying the military was incompetent, unable to predict the speed of the Taliban takeover, etc. Promoting this high level of uncertainty and unpredictability is partly to say that the world is unknowable under the false hope and belief that this will make the people of the U.S. and other countries and their military and policing agencies line up with the U.S. military and economic blocs.

Instead, the growing demand of the peoples of the world is for the right of the people to deliberate and decide on issues of war and peace, for an end to war governments and war economies and for the establishment of anti-war governments. The peoples of the region, including those of Vietnam, Japan, Korea and Philippines, with their long experience with U.S. military bases, occupations and wars, have taken the stand that the U.S. must close its bases, withdraw its troops and respect the anti-war stands of the peoples and their demands for relations based on mutual respect and benefit.

U.S. Ramps Up Anti-China Rhetoric

- Nick Lin and Philip Fernandez -

The U.S. is ramping up its anti-China rhetoric as well as its military and political efforts to show China and Russia that the U.S. is top dog, the indispensable nation that sets and interprets its so-called rules-based international order according to its interests at any given time, and that it will brook no opposition.

To make this point, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman travelled to China for meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other state officials at the port city of Tianjin in July 2021. Sherman was the highest ranking U.S. diplomat to visit China after the Biden

administration took power six months earlier. Sherman said that the U.S. still upholds a one-China policy. Despite this, the U.S. Senate was passing legislation in support of Taiwan's participation as a member of the World Health Organization.



Demonstration in San Francisco July 22, 2021 demands end to targeting of China.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made it clear China has no intention of living under a "rules-based international order" where the U.S. makes and acts as the global enforcer of "the rules." Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng said, "the so-called rules-based international order put forward by the U.S. is a disguise that packages rules set up by a few Western countries. It is the U.S. version of the 'law of the jungle' where it abandons the widely accepted international law and tramples on the international system, so that it can profit and bully others."

According to China, the fundamental reason for the deadlock in China-U.S. relations is that some in the U.S. portray China as an "imagined enemy." Minister Wang Yi plainly stated that China is not seeking hegemony, and is willing to realize common development and prosperity with all countries, including the United States. He said that China was one of the founders and has been one of the beneficiaries of the international order since the Second World War and that it would work to "safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core, uphold the international order underpinned by international law, and defend the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter."

China put forward three specific demands to Deputy Secretary of State Sherman to prevent further deterioration of China-U.S. relations. First the U.S. must not challenge, slander or attempt to subvert the path and social system the Chinese people have chosen for themselves. These are matters for the 1.4 billion Chinese people to decide for themselves, he said. Second, the U.S. must lift all unilateral sanctions, technology blockades, etc. intended to block China's development and the right of the Chinese people to modernization. Third, the U.S. must stop interfering in China's internal affairs, its sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Minister Wang Yi expressed a commitment from China to find a way for the two major countries with different systems, cultures and stages of development to coexist peacefully on this planet through dialogue. He said it would be even better if it could be mutually beneficial.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Sherman for her part once again played the U.S. cards of "human rights" and "western liberal democratic values." She reiterated President Biden's position holding Beijing responsible for cyber threats and alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong and what the U.S. calls actions across the Taiwan Strait and in the East and South China Seas.

Immediately following Sherman's visit to China, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin travelled to India and countries of Southeast Asia. Their aim was to strengthen military and diplomatic arrangements aimed at containment of China. While this was going on, the U.S. again sent a warship through the Taiwan Strait -- the seventh such provocative transit in the first six months of 2021 -- while holding a separate military exercise in the South China Sea. At the same time, the UK Carrier Strike Group's HMS *Queen Elizabeth* entered the South China Sea proclaiming its intent to challenge China's territorial waters in defence of "freedom of navigation."

Speaking at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence on July 27, President Joe Biden used the matter of cyber security to say war is a real possibility. Without directly naming China he said, "I can't guarantee this, and you're as informed as I am, but I think it's more likely we're going to end up -- well, if we end up in a war, a real shooting war with a major power, it's going to be as a consequence of a cyber breach of great consequence."

The question immediately arose of Biden's aim in speaking in this manner. Discussion is usually considered to be talking or writing about something, in order to solve a problem or resolve a question. When the President of the United States can so cavalierly say he sees "a real shooting war with a major power" down the road, and top U.S. diplomats keep repeating that the whole world is to be governed by "our values," that is not discussion. It is the U.S. asserting itself as the indispensable power and arbiter of an international order based on its own rules. China, as is also the case with Russia, is having none of it.

(With files from U.S. State Department; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China; Global Times. Photos: Code Pink, redbraid)

Website: www.cpcml.ca Email: editor@cpcml.ca