

Canada and the US Empire

Reviewing Linda McQuaig's "Holding the Bully's Coat"

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Linda McQuaig is a prominent, award-winning Canadian journalist, sadly less well known in the US because she writes about her own country. She was a national reporter for the Toronto Globe and Mail before joining the Toronto Star where she now covers Canadian politics with her trademark combination of solid research, keen analysis, irreverence and passion. She's easy to read, never boring, and fearless. The National Post called her "Canada's Michael Moore."

McQuaig is also a prolific author with a well-deserved reputation for taking on the establishment. In her previous seven books, she challenged Canada's deficit reduction scheme to gut essential social services. She explained how the rich used the country's tax system for greater riches the way it happened in the US since Ronald Reagan, then exploded under George Bush. She exposed the fraud of "free trade" empowering giant corporations over sovereign states while exploiting working people everywhere.

She also showed how successive Canadian governments waged war on equality since the 1980s, and in her last book before her newest one she took aim at why the US invaded and occupied Iraq. It's catchy title is "It's the Crude, Dude: war, big oil, and the fight for the planet." It's no secret America's wars in the Middle East and Central Asia are to control what Franklin Roosevelt's State Department in 1945 called a "stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history - the huge amount of Middle East oil alone and veto power over how it's disbursed and to whom.

"Holding the Bully's Coat - Canada and the US Empire" is her eighth book. She writes about a country slightly larger than the US in geographic size with around one-tenth the population and one-twelfth the GDP. It also shares the world's longest relatively open, undefended border extending 3145 miles. In her book, McQuaig explains how corporate-Canada, its elitist "comprador class," the Department of National Defense (DND), and mainstream commentators want Canada to be Washington's subservient junior partner. The result is Ottawa abandoned its traditional role in peacekeeping, supporting internationalism, as a fair-minded mediator and conciliator, and it's continuing downhill from there.

Today Canada's allied with the Bush administration's belligerent lawlessness in its phony "war on terrorism." It's not part of the "coalition of the willing" in Iraq but joined Washington's war of aggression and illegal occupation in Afghanistan. In February, 2004, it partnered with the US and France ousting democratically elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti, then became part of the repressive Blue Helmet MINUSTAH paramilitary force onslaught against his Lavalas movement and Haitian people under cover of "peacekeeping." More on that below.

In "Holding the Bully's Coat," McQuaig further explains how Canada lost its moorings. As an appendage of the US empire, it abandoned its traditional commitment to equality, inclusiveness, and rule of law. She wants her country to disgorge this virus plaguing it – its uncharacteristic culture of militarism, loss of sovereignty and one-sided support of privilege, returning to its roots to reclaim its once proud status now lost. Its leaders might recall former Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz's lament saying: "Poor Mexico, so far from God, so close to the US." Closeness plagues Canada, too. It can't choose neighborhoods but can still go its own sovereign way.

This review covers McQuaig's important book in detail so readers can learn what afflicts America affects Canada as well. It's a cancerous disease, and all people everywhere suffer for it.

McQuaig starts off noting the "significant shift in how Canada (now) operates in the world (having) moved from being a nation that has championed internationalism, the United Nations and UN peacekeeping to being a key prop" in George Bush's "war on terrorism." It belies Canada's now sullied reputation "as a fair arbiter and promoter of just causes (and as a) decent sort of country." She laments how the conservative Harper government aids the beleaguered White House, joined its war of aggression in Afghanistan, and continues distancing itself from its European allies "with whom we have a great deal in common."

Canada and the continent have "compelling similarities" shown in stronger social programs, "aspirations for greater social equality," and wanting "a world of peaceful co-existence among nations." In contrast, America continues growing more unequal, focusing instead on achieving unchallengeable economic, political and military supremacy in line with its imperial aims for world dominance. Nations daring to step out of line, risk getting flattened the way it's now happening to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Canada's tilt to the right began in earnest in the 1980s under conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney and his relationship with Ronald Reagan. Corporate American elites fondly remember his December, 1984 appearance at the New York Economic Club where one writer said business heavyweights were "hanging from the rafters" to hear what he'd say. They weren't disappointed, and it's been mostly downhill since. Back then, the order of the day was mainly business, but it no longer would be as formerly usual with Mulroney delighting his listeners announcing "Canada is open for business." He meant US corporations were welcome up north, the two countries would work for greater economic integration, and America's sovereignty henceforth took precedence over its northern neighbor.

Before Stephen Harper took office in February, 2006, McQuaig notes Canada's foreign policies began tilting to the right under Liberal prime minister Paul Martin. He replaced Jean Chretien in December, 2003, stepping down after 10 years in office just ahead of the federal "sponsorship scandal" over improper use of tax dollars that doomed the Martin government after an explosive report about it was released in February, 2004. While still in office, Martin's April, 2005 defence policy review stressed the integration of Canada's military with the US. He also approved redeploying Canadian Afghan troops away from "peacekeeping" in Kabul to fighting Taliban forces in southeastern Helmand province. Based on Taliban gains, since its resurgence to control half the country, he and Harper may live to regret that decision.

McQuaig notes the absence of any evidence Canadians approve. In fact, polls consistently

show they're "increasingly wary of our involvement in Afghanistan (and too close an alignment) with the United States." Their feeling may be heightened under Harper's "flag-pumping jingoism" aided by the country's dominant media championing the war effort much like their counterparts in the US. Public approval doesn't count in Canada any more than in the America. What George Bush wants he's mostly gotten so far, and Stephen Harper is quite willing to go along.

Anti-Canadians at Home and Abroad

Since taking office in February, 2006, Harper's been in lockstep with Washington, even abandoning Canada's traditional even-handedness on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of his first shameless acts was to cut off aid to the new democratically elected Hamas government. Showing his pro-Israeli bona fides, he failed to show concern for 50,000 Canadians in harm's way in Lebanon after Israel launched its summer war of aggression last year. Instead of calling for a ceasefire, Harper defended Israel calling their action "measured." In fact, it flattened half the country causing vast destruction, many hundreds of deaths, massive population displacement, and untold human misery and desperation still afflicting those in the conflict areas.

McQuaig notes Canadian internationalism evolved post-WW II. It showed in support for the UN, peacekeeping as opposed to militarism, the rule of law, distaste for imperialism, and by following a good neighbor policy toward all other countries. It was completely contrary to American belligerence, hardened under George Bush post-9/11, and now largely embraced by Stephen Harper just like Britain did it under Tony Blair. The UK leader is leaving office June 27 at the end of his prime ministership with an approval rating lower than George Bush's (at 26% in latest Newsweek poll nearly matching Richard Nixon's record low of 23%), maybe signaling what's ahead for Mr. Harper.

His government, Canada's elite, and its military support policies distinct from the public's. They want tax cuts for the rich, cuts in social spending, more privatizations and less regulation, increased military spending and closer ties to the US and its belligerent imperial agenda. That includes its policy of torture Canada's now complicit with as a partner in Bush's "war on terrorism" and how it's being waged. In contrast, the public "favours a more egalitarian agenda of public investment, universal social programs," and maintaining Canada's identity distinct from its southern neighbor. Most Canadians don't wish to emulate it, nor would they tolerate living under a system denying them the kinds of essential social benefits they now have even though they're eroding.

Their feelings are especially strong regarding their cherished national health medicare system. It's "founded on the principle that everyone should have access to health care (and) be treated equally," unlike in the US where everyone can get the best health care possible as long as they can pay for it. If not, too bad, and for 47 million Americans without health insurance it's really bad along with around another 40 million who are without it some portion of every year. For Canadians, that's unthinkable and wouldn't be tolerated.

It should be as unthinkable that the Harper government's so-called Clean Air Act of October, 2006 meant Ottawa's effective abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. The Chretien government accepted and ratified it even though little was done under Liberal rule, making it easier to do less under Conservative leadership. That's in spite of near-universal agreement global warming is real and threatening the planet with an Armageddon future too grim to ignore. Canada's doing it under Harper just like Washington ignores it under

George Bush.

A large part of the problem is both parties' support for industry efforts to triple oil sands production by 2015 to three million barrels daily. At that level, it's impossible meeting Kyoto targets, but Washington approves as most production is earmarked for US markets. It will feed America's insatiable energy appetite meaning planet earth's fate is someone else's problem, and maybe it will go away if we stop talking about it. And maybe not after we learn it's too late to matter. Canada's record is already disgraceful with one of the world's highest levels of greenhouse gas emissions per person. Unless it acts to change current policy, it risks being called an international scofflaw, no different than its southern neighbor, except in degree.

The Harper government is also massively ramping up Canada's military spending he plans to increase over 50% above 2005 levels to \$21.5 billion annually by 2010. That's in spite of the nation facing no threats and a public consensus favoring social spending. It's also contrary to Canada's traditionally eschewing militarism unlike the US with its long history of it since the nation's founding. It intensified post-WW II after it emerged preeminent and chose to pursue an imperial agenda for new markets, resources and exploitable cheap labor now endangering all planetary life by its recklessness. That's what Canada chose to partner with making it complicit with whatever happens henceforth.

Unsurprisingly, the Bush-Harper "war on terrorism" partnership now focuses on the Middle East where two-thirds of the world's proved oil reserves are located (around 675 billion barrels) and the Central Asian Caspian basin with an estimated 270 billion barrels more plus one-eighth of the world's natural gas reserves. It doesn't matter that claimed "terrorism" is phony and "war" on it against "Islamofascists" threatening our freedoms unjustified. It only matters that people of both countries believe enough of the daily media-fed fiction so their governments can pursue what enough popular outrage never would allow. Anger and disillusionment in both countries are growing but haven't reached critical mass.

It's the job of the dominant media to prevent it getting there. So the beat goes on daily keeping it in check in both countries suppressing ugly truths and preaching notions of American exceptionalism. We're told it's unique in the world giving the US special moral authority to make its own rules, irrespective of long-standing international laws and norms it openly flouts as "quaint and obsolete." Because of its privileged status, it reigns as a self-styled "beacon of freedom" defending "democracy-US style," empowered to wage imperial wars using humanitarian intervention as cover for them. In the made-in-Washington New World Order, America answers only to itself, the law is what the administration says it is, and, the message to all countries is "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Thus, Spaketh a modern-day Zarathustra, aka George Bush.

McQuaig continues explaining how Canadians are used to their own media, academic and corporate elites pandering to Washington rather than taking pride mostly in their own country. She notes the National Post and C.D. Howe Institute serve as "spiritual home(s) for neoconservatism" favoring the same kinds of policies as the US-based bastions of conservative extremism like the Heritage Foundation, Hoover Institution and Wall Street Journal editorial page that's hard right enough to make a Nazi blush. She mentioned C.D. Howe's sponsored lecture in late 2004 by former Canadian ambassador to the US, Allan Gotlieb.

He stressed Canada is a faded world power needing to accept the "transcendant (reality of)

US power” and align with it. He said Canadians have a choice between “realism” and “romanticism.” The former means accepting US preeminence, even when it violates international law. Further, Canadians must “liberate themselves from the belief that the UN is the sacred foundation of our foreign policy.” According to Gotlieb, international law, embodied in the UN Charter, is obsolete and irrelevant including what constitutes legitimate armed intervention.

The “romantic” approach respecting international law and treaties, that are law for signatories, are “narcissistic” and “sanctimonious.” Following this course will marginalize Canada reducing its influence. It can only be enhanced by aligning with Washington so as its power grows, so will Canada’s opportunity to benefit from it. Advancing this kind of tortured logic guarantees Canada only trouble in light of George Bush’s failed adventurism and US status as a world-class pariah mass public opinion condemns nearly everywhere. McQuaig says “it’s hard (imagining) we’d be viewed with anything but contempt (for having chosen to “hold the bully’s coat” as its) unctuous little sidekick.” Not according to Gotlieb who scoffs at the idea of “remain(ing) committed to the values we hold....advance them to the world” regardless of what direction the US takes.

McQuaig compares her country’s government, business and military elite to the 19th century notion of a “comprador class” serving foreign business class interests. Modern-day Canadian compradors serve as intermediary junior partners for corporate American giants especially as so much of Canada’s economy is foreign owned or controlled – 28% of non-financial sectors with 20% by US companies in 2004. It’s much higher in the key oil and gas sector at 45% overall and 33% in US hands. Further, of the 150 most powerful CEOs on the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), about one-fourth of them are with subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies and 18% of them are American.

McQuaig stresses these numbers are significant but not overwhelming. What’s astonishing and overwhelming is Canada’s growing dependence on the US market now accounting for 87% of all exports. It explains why Canadian business championed its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) “leap of faith” in 1988, NAFTA in 1994, and the new Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) founded in March, 2005 by the US, Canada and Mexico. SPP aims to advance a common security strategy veiling a scheme to destroy Canadian and Mexican sovereignty under a broader plan for a North American Union under US control.

The plan is to create a borderless North America removing barriers to trade and capital flows for corporate giants, mainly US ones. It also wants to guarantee America free and unlimited access to Canadian and Mexican resources, mainly oil, of course. That will assure US energy security while denying Canada and Mexico preferential access to their own resources henceforth earmarked for US markets. Finally, it wants to create a fortress-North American security zone encompassing the whole continent under US control. The scheme, in short, is NAFTA on steroids combined with Pox Americana homeland security enforcement. It’s the Bush administration’s notion of “deep integration” or the “Big Idea” meaning we’re boss, what we say goes, and no outliers will be tolerated.

Stephen Harper and Canadian business leaders endorse the plan. Canadian businesses will profit hugely leaving the country’s energy needs ahead for future leaders to worry about. Today, it’s only next quarter’s earnings and political opportunism that matters. McQuaig notes how Canada’s elites want to push the envelope further by giving more tax breaks to business and the rich while cutting social spending for greater global competitive

opportunities. It's heading for the way it is in the US with a growing disparity between rich and poor economist Paul Krugman calls "unprecedented."

It led to a Citigroup Global Markets 2005 report describing the developed world divided in two blocs – an "egalitarian" one made up of Europe and Japan and "plutonomies" in the other one. There the US, UK and Canada are cited as members where wealthy elites get most of the benefits and the disparity between rich and poor keeps getting more extreme. McQuaig mentions journalists like Murray Dobbin saying resistance to the US empire is futile and promotes "pre-emptive surrender(ing)" to it. McQuaig thinks Canadians in their roots have other ideas being "neither anti-American nor self-adoring – just resistant to bullies, on both sides of the border." But given the state of the world and how Canada today is closely aligned with Washington, ordinary Canadians have their work cut out for themselves standing up for their rights.

How they've been cheated shows in a study released in March backing up Citigroup Global Markets 2005 findings. It was conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) titled "The rich and the rest of us – The changing face of Canada's growing gap." It documented how Canada, like the US, is growing progressively more unequal with income and wealth gaps between the richest Canadians and all others widening dramatically. It's happening because all segments of Canada's political elite, even the New Democratic Party, have been complicit since the 1980s in reducing social services, attacking worker rights, cutting corporate taxes and supporting corporate interests, and redistributing wealth from the public to the privileged so that real, inflation adjusted, incomes for most Canadians have stagnated or fallen even while they work longer hours for it.

No More Girlie-Man Peacekeeping

Canada sunk from "peacekeeper" to partners in illegal aggression as McQuaig explains in this section. US General Thomas Metz stated it his way sounding the alarm that Islam was "hijacked by thugs" that could number in the millions posing the greatest of all threats the West faces – radical Islamic terrorism. It doesn't matter the threat is a hoax, and it's easy inventing this or any other one out of whole cloth by just repeating it enough.

Why now? The general explains that, too, noting America's energy security for its huge appetite. It needs one-fourth of world oil production for 5% of its population. And, by chance, two-thirds of proved oil reserves are in the Muslim Middle East and three-fourths of it in all Muslim states combined worldwide. How best to control it? McQuaig explains: by "old-style imperialism – plundering the resources of another country" using wars of aggression claimed for self-defense against "the scourge of (Islamic) terrorism."

McQuaig calls Canada's new Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, a "whole new kind of general – tough, brash, straight-talking....exuding a (new) kind of bravado." He eschews Canada's traditional "girlie-man peacekeeping" role opting instead for a "warrior ethic" and partnering with Washington to do it. Stephen Harper feels the same way, and so does defence minister Gordon O'Connor. They're on board together for ramping up military spending and getting knee-deep in America's "war on terrorism." All they needed was getting the Canadian public to go along that over the years showed a 90% enthusiastic endorsement for peacekeeping, not war-making.

McQuaig notes "Canada (for decades) was a star international (peacekeeping) performer, participating in virtually every UN mission (with) substantial numbers of troops." In recent

years, however, “Canada has virtually disappeared from the UN peacekeeping scene” along with the West’s declining involvement overall, preferring aggressive intervention instead through NATO or concocted “coalitions of the (coerced and/or bribed) willing.”

Enter the dominant Western media functioning the way they do best. Michael Parenti calls it “inventing reality” while Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky call it “manufacturing consent.” It means manipulating public opinion to go along with state and corporate policy, nearly always counter to the public interest. So we’ve had a warrior agenda post-9/11 invented out of whole cloth against “Islamic terrorism” threatening Western civilization unless stopped. It turns reality on its head portraying innocent Arab victims as victimizers and Western aggressors as targets acting only in self-defense.

Using CIA asset Osama bin Ladin as “Enemy Number One,” illegal wars of aggression are portrayed as liberating ones. McQuaig calls the “arrogance of this notion stupefying” including Western indifference to the “collateral damage” of huge numbers of innocent lives lost. Most go unreported, while the few getting attention are dismissively called “unfortunate mistakes.” Noted Canadian law professor Michael Mandel disagrees saying every death constitutes a grave international crime because the Iraq and Afghan wars are illegal aggression under international law.

No connection exists between 9/11 and those wars or that Saddam Hussein or the Taliban posed a threat to US or western security. Mandel also points out that prior to the October, 2001 and March, 2003 invasions, the Taliban and Saddam preferred negotiating with Washington but were rebuffed. Mandel stresses nations have an obligation to respect Article 33 in the UN Charter stating “the parties to any dispute shall, first of all, seek a solution by....peaceful means (through) negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration (or) judicial settlement.”

America flouts international law choosing imperial wars of aggression Canada chose to partner with. Mandel explains nations doing this are guilty of “very serious crimes, in fact, supreme international crimes.” But unlike at Nuremberg, he notes the “great big hole in the modern practice of international criminal law: its refusal to distinguish between legal and illegal war-making, between aggression and self-defence.” It’s “How America Gets Away With Murder” (the title of Mandel’s important 2004 book) with the developed world barely blinking an eye. But then, who’s brave enough to challenge the world’s only superpower ready to lash out against any nation that dares. It’s lots easier partnering in aggression, sharing in the spoils, or just staying silently complicit in the face of overwhelming criminality.

Canada chose the easier route, its dominant media’s on board selling it, and it’s no small factor that 87% of the country’s exports go to US markets. That means Canada’s economic well-being and security depends on America’s willingness to accept them. McQuaig argues if long-standing trade and security ties obligate Canada to partner in Washington’s wars, it’s a “compelling argument for loosening (them), for developing more independent economic and military policies....” Otherwise, it amounts to committing war crimes “to protect our trade balance.”

McQuaig wants Canada to renounce its warrior status and return to its traditional role of internationalism and peacekeeping as a member in good standing in the world community of nations. Her book touches on peacekeeping without going into what this writer covered in detail in a February, 2007 article called “UN Peacekeeping Paramilitarism.” It documented

how often Blue Helmet peacekeepers end up creating more conflict than resolution or became counterproductive or ineffective. In the first instance, they became paramilitary enforcers or occupiers for an outside authority. In the second, they end up causing harm because they fail to ameliorate conditions on the ground ending up more a hindrance than a help. The record post-WW II makes the case.

The UN's first ever peacekeeping operation in 1948 was and still is its greatest failure and outlandish disgrace. It's the UNTSO one undertaken during Israel's so-called "War of Independence." The operation is still ongoing, peace was never achieved, the UN is still there playing no active role, and Israel gets away with mass murder with world approval by its complicity and silence.

Over five dozen peacekeeping operations have been undertaken since the first one with far too little or nothing to show for at least most of them, including where peacekeeping was most needed. The article couldn't cover them all so chose five other examples:

- UNAMIR IN Rwanda
- UNMIK in Kosovo
- MONUC in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- UNMIS in Sudan, and
- MINUSTAH in Haiti the article focused mainly on.

They all were and are dismal failures or worse.

No country on earth suffered more than Haiti from its unparalleled legacy of 500 years of colonial occupation, violence and exploitation. It's still ongoing today horrifically with Canada having an active role to its discredit and disgrace based on the facts on the ground. It was complicit along with France and the US in the February, 2004 coup d'état ousting democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. His "crime" was wishing to serve his people, not the imperial master in Washington who engineered his forcible removal for the second time.

The UN Security Council voted in April, 2004 to establish MINUSTAH peacekeepers with Canada in an active role. From inception, its mission was flawed as it had no right being there in the first place. In principle, peacekeepers are deployed to keep peace and stability though seldom ever achieve it, in fact. In the case of Haiti, Blue Helmets were deployed for the first time in UN history enforcing a coup d'état against a democratically-elected leader instead of staying out of it or backing his right to return to office. Today, Haitians are still afflicted by its US neighbor and world indifference to its suffering. Canada shares the guilt acting as a complicit agent in America's crimes of war and against the humanity of the Haitian people.

McQuaig stresses how Canadian elites want to move the country away from its traditional peacekeeping role opting instead for supporting American exceptionalism and its right to "impose a Pax Americana on the world" that's, in fact, a "Pox." As Washington flouts international laws and norms, "they want us to stand by, helpfully, holding the bully's coat."

All Opposed to Nuclear Disarmament, Please Stand Up

McQuaig highlights the difficulty of achieving nuclear disarmament by showing how hard it is eliminating land mines. They're mostly used as terror weapons inflicting most of their damage after conflicts end. So in spite of a Canada-led Ottawa Process agreement in 1997, it failed because the Clinton administration refused to sign it. It acceded to Pentagon obstructionism in spite of most of the world backing it including Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams and Princess Diana before her death. They both spearheaded the effort without success.

Canada was on the right side of this issue exercising what its lead proponent, Lloyd Axworthy, called "soft power." His efforts led to a December, 1997 signing ceremony accepted by two-thirds of the world's nations, an extraordinary achievement by any measure. And as Axworthy noted: "No one was threatened with bombing. No economic sanctions were imposed. No diplomatic muscles were flexed....Yet a significant change was achieved in the face of stiff opposition."

Using "soft power," Canada initially played a small role, Washington opposed, on nuclear disarmament. The Bush administration was so determined to thwart any efforts in this direction it refused even to allow any resolutions being placed on the agenda for discussion at the May, 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in Geneva. As a result, nothing was accomplished, and NPT was left in shambles with nuclear disarmament derailed.

Canada then led an effort circumventing the failed Geneva talks by going to the UN General Assembly with voting rights but no enforcement authority. Washington's opposition was intense enough, however, to get Ottawa to back down just hours ahead of the October 12 deadline. The Martin government acceded to Bush administration demands it do so, and "the moment had been lost." But it likely didn't matter as America under George Bush claims no need to ask permission from other nations to do whatever it wishes in the name of "national security" that can mean anything.

For many years, Canada was more even-handed than Washington on matters concerning Israel and Palestine. While fully supportive initially of a Jewish homeland and the rights of Israelis thereafter, Canadian leaders also respected Arab peoples and their interests. McQuaig noted by 1987, Canada had tilted heavily toward Israel, refused to support Arab UN resolutions condemning its crimes, and was ranked by observers as "second only to the US in support for Israel."

Now, under Stephen Harper, Canada's Middle East stance is as hard line as Washington's. It views everything in the region from the perspective of "Islamic terrorism" while ignoring the plight of Palestinians and the illegal occupation of their land. Harper also joined western nations cutting off all aid to the democratically elected Hamas government in 2006 and supported Israel's summer illegal aggression against Lebanon last year. He also supports the US-Israeli coup against the democratically elected Hamas government co-opting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to shamelessly participate in it. Ottawa and Washington approve of his defying Palestinian Basic Law and international law. He dissolved a duly constituted legitimate government, and replaced it with his own headed by illegitimate new prime minister Salam Fayyad, the pro-Western former IMF and World Bank official chosen by Washington and Jerusalem.

The Most Dangerous Man in the English-Speaking World

It's not George Bush, at least not in this section of McQuaig's book. It's former Canadian statesman, diplomat and prime minister (from 1963 – 1968) Lester Pearson, but not because he was a menace. After being elected to Parliament, Liberal Prime Minister St. Laurent appointed him minister of external affairs. In that capacity, he supported an internationalist approach to foreign policy highlighted by his determination to reduce Cold War tensions with Moscow and Peking. That stance so irritated American cold warriors, it got Chicago Tribune owner Colonel Robert McCormick to denounce him in 1953 as "the most dangerous man in the English-speaking world." It was because Pearson refused to cooperate with Senator Joe McCarthy's witch-hunt communist hearings. They produced nothing but destroyed lives and ruined careers, all to serve his own corrupted political agenda.

Pearson also thought NATO should be more than a military alliance to be able to deal with economic and social issues as well as defense. He wanted the alliance to encourage western ideas and free market alternatives to communism. Pearson was bold in ways unimaginable today in Ottawa or nearly anywhere in the West. He spoke out against Truman's threat to use nuclear weapons in Korea and challenged Washington when he thought its positions were dangerous and provocative.

In 1955, he became the first western prime minister to visit Moscow. He spoke out against colonialism and the rights of Third World nations to their own sovereignty. Overall, he supported internationalism, conciliation and peace including helping in 1956 create the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) following the Suez crisis that year. It was formed after Israel, Britain and France's war of aggression in October, 1956 against Egypt following President Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal. For his efforts, Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize the following year. In his Nobel lecture, he stressed nations faced a choice – "peace or extinction." He continued saying nations cannot "be conditioned by the force and will of a unit, however powerful, but by the consensus of a group, which must one day include all states" and that predatory ones can't be tolerated.

McQuaig notes Pearson's "trickiest" relationship was with the US, even at a time Washington's footprint was less obtrusive and aggressive than now. He supported sitting administrations and their aim to contain communism. He even stood with Lyndon Johnson's military aggression in Vietnam "aiding South Vietnam....resist aggression." For that, he shares Canada's complicity in Washington's illegal war effort that had less to do with containing communism and more about America's imperial ambitions ramping up in those Cold War years following the Korean stalemate. For his actions, Pearson exhibited an "early example of Canada holding the bully's coat" even though he later publicly challenged the US role in Vietnam in a Temple University address.

Pearson supported peace and peacekeeping. His Nobel lecture cited "four faces of peace" – prosperity, power, diplomacy and people. As prime minister, peacekeeping was one of his four top priorities that later began to erode when pitted against the powerful Department of National Defence (DND) bureaucracy. By the early 1980s (long after Pearson's tenure), peacekeeping amounted to less than 0.5% of Canada's defense budget.

Earlier in the late 1970s, DND's aim to regain a war-fighting orientation got a boost from NATO that Canada participates in as one of its founding members. At its 1978 summit, member nations agreed to increase their military budgets 3% annually to offset a supposed Soviet threat. The real aim was to accede to defense contractors wanting bigger profits.

In the 1980s, Reagan administration militarism helped Canada's defence lobby "emerge as

a potent force in Canadian politics.” Most important in it is the Conference on Defence Associations (CDA) functioning as an “umbrella group representing military and retired military personnel as well as business, academic and professional types with military interests.” CDA has enormous influence at the highest levels of government and key to it is the involvement of corporate Canada, including the nation’s multi-billion dollar arms industry. CDA and weapons makers are closely tied to the Pentagon and America’s defense industry. It’s a natural fit as many large Canadian companies are US-owned including half of Canada’s top 10 military contractors.

This assures Canadian government support for and involvement in America’s war agenda that keeps profits flowing. Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney’s election in 1984 provided and “energizing tonic for....Canada’s defence lobby” as he supported a strong military, wanted Canada to be “open for business,” and “accepted Canada’s branch plant role in the US military-industrial complex....”

McQuaig noted the danger then that’s now even greater. A stronger Canadian defense industry and military establishment favors not just diverting “the country’s resources towards the military but ultimately” pressuring the country to use it for war-making. In the 1980s, the phony “Soviet menace” was portrayed as the threat while today it’s “Islamic terrorists” involving Canada in Washington’s imperial agenda of reckless foreign wars and occupation.

The Threat of Peace

The thought of it chills the marrow of the defense establishment in both countries. It happened in November, 1989 when East German authorities announced entering the West would be permitted, and the rest is history. The “wall” came down paving the way for German reunification, and peace broke out. Keeping it depended on a strong UN that wouldn’t take long to prove mission impossible, but for a short interregnum, anything was possible. In 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at the behest of the Security Council, prepared an Agenda for Peace. It was an ambitious plan promoting diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace-making and peace-building.

In the early years of the nuclear arms race, there were various efforts to achieve disarmament and promote peace, some far-reaching and anchored by strong UN enforcement mechanisms. Despite the best efforts of peace visionaries with good intentions, it was all for naught. Distrust and a prevailing culture of militarism, especially in the US, trumped reason and sanity. But with the dissolution of the Soviet empire, there was never a better time to achieve what always failed earlier, if only the moment could be seized.

It wasn’t, as McQuaig explains because “the opportunity (for peace) fell....to two men who....viewed the concept of ‘disarmament’ through world law’ with ferocious contempt.” They represented Republican extremist thinking resenting the notion of internationalism the UN represented. That body was to be rendered impotent under US control, even more than in the past, especially its agenda for social progress and peace-making.

With George HW Bush president, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and his undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz were tasked to shape America’s post-Cold War strategy. Boutros-Ghali’s Agenda for Peace was doomed with two hard line US high officials committed to America’s imperial supremacy enforced by unchallengeable military power from the world’s sole superpower. In George HW Bush’s final year in office, Paul Wolfowitz and convicted Richard

Cheney aide Lewis Libby drafted the scheme in their Defense Planning Guidance some call the Wolfowitz doctrine. It was so extreme, it was to be kept under wraps, but got leaked to the New York Times causing uproar enough for the elder Bush to shelve it until his son revived it in 2001.

In the early 1990s, public sentiment and high officials in Canada's Senate and House of Commons supported Boutros-Ghali's agenda embracing diplomacy, peacekeeping, peace-making and peace-building. The country's DND felt otherwise fearing promoting peace meant marginalizing the nation's military establishment. Wanting to remain a fighting force, the military was threatened with good reason. Strengthened by international support, Canadian NGOs established the Citizens' Inquiry into Peace and Security. They travelled the country holding public hearings. They drew large supportive crowds influential enough to get the Liberal Party to highlight peacekeeping in its Foreign Policy Handbook in May, 1993. Liberals were backed by some prominent academics, enlightened business leaders, and even some media commentators in the Canada 21 Council they formed to direct Canada's defence policy toward peace efforts.

It was a threatening time for the military establishment closing ranks to resist change harmful to its interests and vision of what a fighting force is for. DND fought back with a Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies (CSIS) watered-down counter-proposal, the Liberals bought it, and the party's 1994 defence review ensured no meaningful change from the status quo. The defence interests were served meaning public sentiment for peace efforts lost out to militarism. They were reinforced by a Committee of 13, composed of generals, hawkish academics and defense industry officials, countering the Canada 21 Council ending up on the losing side.

McQuaig speculates whether wars are an expression of human nature and inevitable consequence of human aggressiveness. She used an analogy to dueling, once considered a proper way to settle disputes. No longer, and anyone in civilized society trying it will end up afoul of the law. So why might not wars one day also be seen as an anachronism no longer practiced? She cites political philosopher Anatol Rapoport and political scientist John Mueller who think so, believing this practice only exists because we give it legitimacy. They point to other once widely accepted practices failing to survive over time – slavery (illegal everywhere but still widely practiced sub rosa even in the West), absolute hereditary monarchy, gladiatorial combat to the death, human sacrifice, burning heretics, segregation and Jim Crow laws, and public flogging among many others. Over time, customs changed and these practices ended, or mostly did.

So why not wars, and Europe post-WW II shows it's possible. The horror of two world wars on the continent combined with the emergence of super-weapons underscored what Einstein said half a century ago on future wars: "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." European leaders apparently feel likewise as the continent was relatively peaceful for the past 62 years, with the Balkan wars a major exception, yet a localized one. In lieu of more wars, the European Union was formed and continues expanding. McQuaig strikes a hopeful note: Maybe "war among European nations lost its legitimacy."

For that to be true, however, requires these nations renounce wars everywhere, not just in their backyard or on their soil. With today's super-weapons, nations have the capacity to end what Noam Chomsky calls "biology's only experiment with higher intelligence." It can happen and once almost did during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October, 1962. Forty years

later, we learned only a miracle saved us because a Soviet submarine captain, Vasily Arkhipov, countermanded his order to fire nuclear-tipped torpedos when Russian submarines were attacked near Kennedy's "quarantine" line. Imagine the consequences if he'd done it.

Today, we're back to square one with a group of American rogue leaders usurping the right to unilaterally use first strike nuclear weapons. They claim it's part of the nation's "imperial grand strategy" threatening everyone with extinction if they follow through – and don't bet they won't.

Back From the Abyss

McQuaig highlights the secret September 13, 2006 American, Canadian and Mexican elitist meeting in Banff, Alberta, Canada held to discuss the Bush administration's scheme for a North American Union. Such an eventuality would mean US North American hegemonic control. It would have enormous consequences on matters of political, economic, social and national security issues adversely affecting everyone on the continent except the privileged plotters benefitting at everyone else's expense.

McQuaig called the meeting "the ultimate expression of treachery" as two key themes were North American energy security and Canada-US military and security cooperation. These are US priorities, not Canadian ones, so Ottawa's acceding to American demands amounts to a national betrayal of the public trust. The fact that the meeting was secret only underscores the threat. That it was held at all shows the Harper government placed "holding the bully's coat (above) Canadian public interest in energy, military and security matters (crying) out for an independent Canadian course...."

Even worse, McQuaig notes, is that the centerpiece Alberta oil sands development part of a North American energy strategy undermines responsible Canadian global warming efforts. By fall, 2006, the Harper government proved no better than the Bush administration as a leading climate change obstructionist. Unlike European nations cutting greenhouse gas emissions, Canada's are rising and are now among the highest levels in the world per person. In the age of George Bush, Canada, under conservative leadership, is heading in the wrong direction on this and most other vital national and world issues. Included among them is being "complicit in some of the worst aspects of the US 'war on terrorism.' "

Torture is one of them, even of Canadian citizens, like the outrageous case of Maher Arar. He was detained at JFK Airport in September, 2002 on his way home, based on false Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) information about him US authorities had. It was the beginning of "delivering an innocent Canadian man into hell" because of Canada's role in Washington's "war on terrorism."

Arar was initially held in solitary confinement in the US for nearly two weeks, interrogated and denied access to legal help. He was falsely labeled an Al Qaeda member, "renditioned" to Syria where he was born, ignored by his government, held under appalling conditions, brutally tortured for a year before being released in October, 2003 and allowed to return home. A subsequent thorough investigation proved his innocence provoking outrage across the country. Canadian authorities treated him with contempt, even leaking false information to the media suggesting he was a terrorist and his claims about being tortured were untrue. That underscores Canada's moral depravity under Stephen Harper's leadership umbilically linked to the roguish Bush regime in Washington.

McQuaig stresses Harper's cooperation with Washington's "war on terrorism" "lies at the very heart of (his) agenda." Maintaining that close relationship with America on all matters important to Canada depends on it. Defiling the rights of its citizens and ignoring international law are minor matters by comparison and easily ignored as Canada sinks into the same moral swamp as America. It's partnered with Washington's war on the world, now directed at Islam, but pointing in all directions against any nation unwilling to become a subservient client state. Washington demands no less from all nations, and those refusing risk the Marines showing up followed by regime change. The lord and master of the universe tolerates no outliers.

Canada's on board under Stephen Harper, so it needn't worry. McQuaig's book, however, sounds the alarm all Canadians and Americans need to hear. At book's end, she stresses how "Powerful forces in this country are encouraging us to accept the notion of American exceptionalism and a role for Canada as adjunct to the US empire." She then quotes Rudyard Griffiths, Dominion Institute's executive director, saying "the country's most cherished myths seem to be melting away. If we are not what we were, what now defines us as a nation?"

McQuaig asks if Canadians will allow war-making to replace peacekeeping and will sacrifice its social state to pay for it. Her answer is no, that Canadians want none of neoconservatism, and instead want its political leaders returning to the nation's traditional values now abandoned. Her own views likely mirror public sentiment: "a vision committed to fair treatment and equality, to decency and to the rule of law." That's what being Canadian means for her. It's not serving "a helpmate's role, with a lucrative perch inside the US empire, obligingly assisting the bully as he goes about trying to subdue the world." She can take comfort knowing most Americans likely share her views and don't want that either.

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