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Rule of Law – Canada Style.

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Well, that didn't last long. Yesterday Canada's ambassador to China, John McCallum, presented three arguments concerning Meng Wanzhou, one of the leading executives for Huawei, who was arrested in December in Vancouver airport, at the request of U.S. authorities. Today he recanted, saying he created confusion, misspoke, that his comments are not accurate – yet at the same time he did not outright deny the truth of his comments.

> "I regret that my comments with respect to the legal proceedings of Ms. Meng have created confusion. I misspoke. These comments do not accurately represent my position on this issue. As the government has consistently made clear, there has been no political involvement in this process… .Canada respects its international legal commitments, including by honouring its extradition treaty with the United States. The rule of law is fundamental to all free societies, and we will continue to defend and uphold this principle." (John McCallum, Canada's ambassador to China. Thursday, January 24, 2019).

His three points from yesterday were,

- Political influence/interference from the U.S.
- U.S. laws were being applied extraterritorially, in other words out of their jurisdiction.
- the supposed criminal action occurred because Huawei executive Meng had dealt with a country under U.S. sanctions – sanctions not supported by Canada as they result from the U.S. abrogation of the Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed along with Russia, France, Germany, China, and the U.K.

All three points are still valid today so while he misspoke and created confusion, perhaps that stems from the truth of his statements. PM Justin Trudeau stuck to his usual rule of law platitude but also did not negate the statements, allowing a degree of wondering if the comments were vetted, or if they were being allowed to pass for concerns about foreign policy political relationships with China.

And then we come to the "rule of law" so beloved of political leaders attempting to side step an issue. McCallum repeated the mantra, perhaps to save his own skin, but also to allow domestic politics to play out as Trudeau wants to manage them.

There is much that can be presented about Canada's real "rule of law" both domestically and internationally, ranging from the bombing of Serbia and the bombing and overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya to the denial of indigenous rights across Canada. But the real example of operating outside the law is Canada's response to another hotspot – Venezuela.

Rule of law for Venezuela

Ben Rowswell, former Canadian ambassador to Venezuela (2014-2017) was a guest on CBC's Power and Politics today. He supported Canada's proclamation that the Maduro government was not the real government of Venezuela and that Juan Gaido was the acting president. His reasoning revealed either ignorance (not likely) or complicity with U.S. interests (most likely) – his main argument was that this was neither a Canadian nor a U.S. issue but a Venezuela issue. It is absolutely a U.S. issue as the U.S. has interfered in Venezuela at least for the past two decades, using covert operations and sanctions against the government.

The main issue is not dictatorship versus democracy as the U.S. is quite willing to be friends with dictatorships (see Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt). The problem is about oil and U.S. global hegemony (see also Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan). Without being able to control oil and its pricing in U.S. petrodollars the U.S. economy would sink rapidly into recession/depression.

Canada has long supported U.S. hegemony, indeed is an important pawn in the whole situation, and it is in that sense that Canada's declaration on the Venezuelan opposition leader comes into play. Therefore it is very much in line with Canada's foreign policy to abrogate international law, international customary law, and declare Maduro's government to be invalid.

Venezuela looks like Chile

Another red-herring argument presented by those supporting Trudeau's position is one of Canada's support being in synch with the Lima group of countries. If the latter are looked at closely they are all countries in which the government has at one time or another been overthrown by U.S. interests, covertly or overtly, and are all now right wing sycophants of the Washington consensus. Columbia in particular for decades has been essentially a U.S. operations base for the so called "war on drugs". Most of these governments use militaries and paramilitaries who have received their training at WHINSEC, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, where a good schooling in subversion, torture, interrogation and extra judicial 'rules' can be obtained. Venezuela is looking a lot like Chile during the Allende-Pinochet coup.

The main rule of law throughout this whole scenario are the rules of law as established by CIA/NSA cronies supporting the ability of U.S. corporations to extract whatever they want from the countries, using U.S. dollars for trade, and sourcing cheap unprotected labour.

Clear, disciplined and principled?

Returning to the China fiasco (at least it is in Canada's position), the CBC also had the former ambassador to China, David Mulroney on as a guest. He described McCallum's action and words as a "bad idea that went badly wrong," a judgement that is at best premature and not very nuanced as to what might have occurred behind the scenes before and after the comments. He further thought that the comments might raise "questions over our integrity", and that Canada operates in a "clear, disciplined, and principled manner." All his talking points sound academically fine and well spoken, but are only the usual cover for Canada's attempts at creating the global perception that we are the good guys.

Are we clear? Clearly between a rock and a hard place – the U.S. and China, and clearly on the U.S. hegemonic side when it comes to cases such as Venezuela. Clearly not wanting to offend the U.S. government – not Trump himself as such, but the deeper state.

Are we disciplined? For sure: disciplined by our status as a pawn within the U.S. global empire, tied to them economically and increasingly politically. To be sure, we are self-disciplined when it comes to imperial projects around the world, a large part of our British inheritance.

Principled – Oxford definition a "personal code of right conduct."? Not at all. Canada survives on the support of the US$, in terms of its overall economic ties, in terms of its oil exports priced in US$. Canada supports U.S. foreign policy which at its base is a militarized economy supporting corporate adventures anywhere in the world that it can – and in those areas that it cannot, it will do its best to subvert the government and place their 'owned' cronies in place.

In all areas of foreign policy and in many areas of domestic policy, Canada remains servile to U.S. interests, mostly willingly as those in power very much wish to stay there. Much of the world surely recognizes this, while the "western" world continues to play out its myths.

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Jim Miles is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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