

The Future of War: Canadian Propaganda for More Military Spending

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I had not intended to watch this program, a CBC special documentary hosted/narrated by Peter Mansbridge, the CBC's retired chief correspondent and national news anchor. However, as it came on during prime pre-dinner time viewing I thought that I should watch it in order to find out some of the current political spin within Canada's establishment.

It was rather underwhelming but also informative, not for what it said, but for what it did not say. A general summary of its main points covers three main ideas: first it is great support for the military industrial complex; second, it promoted active militarism; finally it supported the concept that we have been at peace for 75 years.

The introduction was a whirlwind through World War II, its aftermath in setting up the Bretton Woods group, the Washington consensus to control global finances, and then on through a precise of today's "threats". What was missing was context, and a whole lot of other information.

Along with U.S. right wing commentaries from Robert Kagan (husband of Victoria Nuland of Ukraine's Maidan cookie fame) and the RAND organization, Max Hastings, a British "journalist" served as one of the prime speakers. From Canada's right wing think tank, the Munk School, Margaret MacMillan offered some anodyne platitudes relating to the overall topic.

Planned for a D-Day presentation, the documentary starts there, as one of the greatest battles of human history. While Russia is given some credit for its participation in the war, it was not recognized as being the force that broke the German war machine, turning the tide at Stalingrad. While Hitler was pictured as the evil icon, nothing was mentioned of the large support U.S. corporations gave to Germany in the prewar years for the development of industries useful for a military power – automobiles, trucks, armaments, planes, synthetic oil, all saw technology transfers from the U.S. The ultimate goal was not German conquest, but the conquest of the Soviet Union.

A whirlwind through recent events followed. Russia, "a declining power", under Putin wanted to regain the glory of the Soviet empire, and demonstrated its new bravado when "invading Crimea". According to Hastings, Russia did not want to join the west in its liberal democracy achievements. Except – in spite of the "shock doctrine" imposed by the Harvard boys during the Yeltsin years when the west did its best to divest Russia of its wealth, creating the very oligarchs now derided by the west – Russia did want to become a part of the western order, wanted to belong to NATO, had been promised that NATO would not move eastward after German reunification. The west, led by the intransigence of the U.S.

rebuffed all attempts to accept Russia as a trading partner wanting peace.

Then on to North Korea, where Kim Jong Un was chastised for having nuclear weapons. Here the RAND boys indicated within their war games there was no scenario in which North Korea would not use their nuclear weapons for defending themselves, which is of course obvious and exactly why North Korea has nuclear weapons – to keep the U.S. out. Because of that, North Korea is a “threat” to the U.S.

Finally China became the topic, and as if on cue from the U.S., it suddenly has become the largest “threat” to the U.S. and thus the west in general. Of course for the western military establishment China should not be building bases in the South China Sea, and should not be claiming Taiwan as Chinese territory. Mansbridge then goes on to say that “War is on China’s mind these days.” Well, um, yeah, with the U.S. attempting to control the world through its military and its militarily supported corporations and financial institutions they should have war on their mind. Two statistics are then cited, that China has the second largest military budget in the world and the largest budget in Asia.

The fast rise of China over the past several decades is viewed as a surprise, but anyone following China-U.S. trade would know it involved a willingness on the part of U.S. corporations to offer up technological information in order to get a grip on the Chinese market as well as to find cheap labour and resources. In hindsight, it was not quite as fast as Germany’s rise from poverty with the assistance of U.S. corporations during the 1930s global depression.

What is not said is that the U.S. defense budget is about 3 times larger than China’s without including all the nuclear and security related monies with that. Also not mentioned are the U.S.’ 800 or so military bases of all kinds scattered around the world, with most of them oriented towards containing China and Russia. Nothing is mentioned of current U.S. interventions in the Middle East nor the even more current examples of the U.S. openly extolling the desire to get rid of other countries’ governments, regardless of international law. Israel is mentioned in passing shortly after in the presentation of cyber warfare with the stuxnet virus, but no mention is made of its role in U.S. interventions in the Middle East nor its manipulations and meddling of the U.S. government in its domestic elections.

At this point Mansbridge introduced the idea of Russian election meddling, citing “cyber trolls” as the problem. And Russian “micro targeting” Ukrainian soldiers in order to find their field positions saying also they have “nothing on China” who watch their own people and spy on others. Well golly....nothing the U.S. nor Canada does of course.

After the discourse on cyber war and artificial intelligence in war, none of it very informative, the discussion comes to “no one wants to end up at war” – except maybe John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Mike Pence and millions of other evangelical rapture warriors.

Canada’s Chief of Defense Staff, Jonathan Vance is among those who would not be bothered by a good little war. He strongly supports NATO as it stands for peace and stability – except for places like Yugoslavia, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Turkey, Ukraine. Hastings returns with a call to educate everyone to be able to see the threat – in other words to see the need to keep the military industrial complex alive and well.

Mansbridge’s final platitude is about “an enduring peace” as he had witnessed during his lifetime. But what he “witnessed” is a lie, with the “peace” only being available to those

countries that bowed down to U.S. demands and had something the U.S. wanted in the way of resources, mostly oil, but also many other agricultural and non-renewable resources. Iran, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Vietnam, Chile, Granada, Zaire/Congo, Brazil, Iraq, Syria, Libya, North Korea, Venezuela and many others did not find “peace” within the western liberal order but mostly destruction, hostility, and destructive sanctions. It never was about freedom and democracy as witnessed by the absolutist monarchies of Saudi Arabia and the Arab gulf states along with the many covert operations overthrowing popularly elected governments, but about control of oil, and control of the power of U.S. financial institutions and corporations.

The Future of War is a window into the shallow rationalizations that keep the western world – the U.S., NATO, and other allies (notably Australia) – priming the pump for war. Not a war caused by their own imperial efforts when losing control of their empire, but a war supposedly caused by the militarization and imperial desires of both China and Russia. It is a shallow presentation suitable only for ignorant western audiences.

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Jim Miles is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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