Free Meng Wanzhou – March 1, 2021, 7 – 9 PM

by

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Thank you Radihka,

As an immigrant settler, I acknowledge I am on unceded Indigenous lands of the traditional territory of both the Kanien’kehá:ka, and the Anishinabeg peoples.

I’d like to thank Ken Stone and the organizers for inviting me to speak this evening.

*History of Sinophobia in Canada*

Let me give a brief history of **Sinophobia** in Canada. The British drug lords waged two wars against China to push opium in 1839 & 1856. Britain **seized** Hong Kong and forced China to sign **unequal treaties** which led to a “century of humiliation.”

A dozen European **colonial** and imperial powers occupied China. The European powers incited psychological and cultural phobia among their population with the concept of the “**Yellow Peril**” to justify their racist exploitation of Asia, and to **instill** fear and hatred against the Chinese.

Chinese workers left their **impoverished** villages and came to Canada to build the transcontinental railroad. Once it was completed in 1885, efforts were **immediately** made to discourage Chinese immigration. The Canadian government passed the first Sinophobic legislation and imposed the Head Tax of up to $500 **on each** Chinese immigrant. The government was essentially saying, “You gave us your labour, now give us your money.”

The second Sinophobic law was the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1923. For 62 years of Canada’s history – 1885 to 1947, there was standing legislation against Chinese immigrants. I’m saying this to show that Anti-Chinese, anti-Asian racism is imbedded in Canadian history, long before Huawei or the racist assaults we are facing **today** during the pandemic. The present demonization of China **to justify** the Cold War by Western powers will lead to more **anti-Chinese** racism as the “**Yellow Peril**” meets the “**Red Menace**.”

*Huawei and the Cold War*

The hysteria against Huawei began when the Americans realized that US technology was falling behind China in the development of 5G. They trumped up the **charges** that Huawei **poses** a national security threat and **engages** in theft of intellectual property.

At the July 2018 **Five Eyes** meeting in Nova Scotia, the 5 countries in the spy network **coordinated** their plan to attack Huawei. The Five Eyes is composed of the US, the UK and three white colonial powers from the Commonwealth, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Following that **July** meeting, Australia banned Huawei in August, then New Zealand in November after the US produced a barrage of reports about the dangers of Chinese **cyber-attacks**.

The UK then banned Huawei at the end of November. Canada has not stated whether it will ban Huawei but due to the uncertainty of the government delay, Canadian telecoms have contracted with Ericsson and Nokia. So effectively, Huawei is out of 5G development in Canada.

On December 1, 2018, the Canadian government captured Huawei’s CFO, Meng Wanzhou at the request of the US for allegedly violating sanctions against Iran.

Biden will continue Trump’s belligerence towards China. It was the **Obama-Biden-Clinton** team that moved away from peaceful coexistence with China to treating China as the number one adversary with their “pivot to Asia”- China containment **strategy** in 2011.

China came out of the 2008 financial crisis in relatively good shape while the Western **capitalist** world was in a state of decline and deep recession. The West realized their two decades of engagement and investment in China did not produced the results that they wanted, i.e., a more compliant China with the possibility of regime change since they thought the internal contradictions of Chinese society would **collapse** the Communist system. The Chinese had their own game plan and their own system to deal with its internal contradictions which brought 800 million people out of poverty in 40 years.

The American strategy **is** military **encirclement** around China. 60% of the US naval fleet is now stationed in the Asia-Pacific. The [US is increasing its military support to Taiwan](https://news.antiwar.com/2021/01/26/us-military-activity-in-south-china-sea-continues-under-biden/); strengthening strategic cooperation with India; maintaining its military bases in South Korea, Japan, Philippines and Afghanistan. [Canadian naval frigates have also sailed through the Taiwan strait, violating Chinese sovereignty.](https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/top-officials-weighed-canadian-warship-s-passage-through-sensitive-strait-near-china-1.5206882) Canada is using the Cold War to **justify** its increased military spending.

China’s primary response to the US strategy is to develop its **high technology** and **economic infrastructure** through projects such as clean energy to fight climate change; as well as in other high technology areas, like **6G**, 100 times faster and more powerful than 5G. This is where Huawei, ZTE and other hi-tech developers come in for attack by the US and Canadian intelligence.

More than this, Chinese President Xi Jinping is promoting what he calls a new “**community with a shared future for humanity**.” A new **Internationalism**, if you will, is being nurtured to counter the military **containment** through **economic development** with projects like the new silk road, the “Road and Belt Initiative”- BRI. To date, [more than 140 countries](https://green-bri.org/countries-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-bri/) have signed onto the BRI. Through these projects, the Global South can decolonize itself and move away from the centuries-old paradigm of Western economic domination.

All these developments scare the West. It is not just the fear of a rising China but also the fear of their own decline.

*Implication for Chinese Canadians*

The demonization of China has serious repercussions for the Asian diaspora living in the belly of the beast. As **Japanese** Canadians experienced with their **internment** during World War II, visible minorities can easily be targeted and scapegoated.

That is why, today, I stand in solidarity with religious minorities in **Quebec** to fight the racist Bill 21, passed in 2019. This law forbids people wearing religious symbols, like the hijab, the turban or the yarmulke from working in the civil service and as teachers. We **learned** through our experience of the Head Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act that legislation targeting and excluding a particular minority will make society **less tolerant** and **less accepting** of people that are different from the majority.

The case against Meng and Huawei plays into the overall Sinophobic sentiments in Canada. These Sinophobic ideas are fermented by the media through their **vilification** of China on issues such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and the Chinese response to Covid 19. Huawei and Meng Wanzhou are caught in this web of anti-China narrative. This is also reflected in how Chinese Canadians are being treated during the pandemic.

*Pandemic and Anti-Chinese Racism*

[Anti-Asian hate crimes reported to the Vancouver police increased](https://vancouversun.com/news/premier-condemns-spike-in-anti-asian-hate-crimes-in-vancouver?fbclid=IwAR36MKLAY5dyIeNPzQKF0B7cPa-81b7mK7tTPhXWNZnUJN8pav_w12ep5G4) by **717%** in 2020. Research by the Chinese Canadian National Council last year shows at least 600 cases of anti-Asian incidents across Canada. The report reveals that 83% of the racist attacks were directed against East Asians, 7% at Southeast Asians, 2% at South Asians, and not surprisingly, 1% at Indigenous peoples. In Montreal, **Inuit people** have been verbally assaulted and told to go back to China! MP Derek Sloan even questioned the loyalty of Canada’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, and asked “whether she works for Canada or for China?”

The Canadian mainstream media has become the main propaganda tool against China. CSIS, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, was a participant in the 2018 Five Eyes meeting to target Huawei. It feeds the media stories about the Chinese threat focusing on Chinese Canadian community leaders and politicians as agents of the Communist Party of China.

[Loaded words like “covert infiltration](https://biv.com/article/2020/05/chinese-canadians-mount-case-against-chinese-communist-party-tactics-abuses)” are used to allege Chinese secret agents operating in [Canadian politics, social media and academia](https://nationalpost.com/news/mpps-ties-to-china-raise-questions-about-how-close-canadian-politicians-should-get-to-foreign-powers). In November 2020, all opposition parties, including the NDP, the Green and the Bloc Québécois supported a Conservative motion calling on the government to ban Huawei and “[**to combat China’s growing foreign operations**](https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/votes/43/2/23) **here in Canada** and its increasing intimidation of Canadians.”

2020 was a banner year for misinformation to a general public already numbed by anti-China rhetoric. What the media say is **now** accepted as the natural narrative in order to condition the population for anti-China actions such as boycotting the 2022 Beijing Olympics and the push for sanctions on China.

*Conclusion – Call to Organize for Peace*

The so-called infiltration of Canadian society by **China sympathizers**, a term which could apply to some of us here tonight, is leading to possible government intervention as the logical outcome of anti-China propaganda. The demonization of China could have troubling implications for Chinese Canadians such as government surveillance and racist attacks.

Thanks to the organizers of tonight’s panel discussion, the Canadian people are starting to question their own government’s participation in this Cold War which could easily **lead** to a Hot War. We must work together **in solidarity** to counter the **hate and fear** that is being propagated daily in the mainstream media, not just against China, but also against all those who **speak** up for **peace and international cooperation**.

As someone from the Chinese Canadian community, I feel we need the support of the **wider** society to overcome any Sinophobic **efforts** by the government. Hopefully, as a result of tonight’s meeting we can **unite and go forward** to build a **long-term** peace movement against the Cold War and against Sinophobia.

Thank you.