

Editorial

**Freedom's Just Another Word
for U.S. Imperialist Domination**

Listening to the inaugural address of U.S. President George W. Bush was reminiscent of something out of *Alice in Wonderland* or an exercise in Orwellian double-speak. Literally every sentence was diametrically opposed to the actual reality of today's world and the role played by U.S. imperialism in it.

In his address, Bush talked about the "years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical" following the "shipwreck of communism", totally ignoring the U.S. war against Iraq in 1991, its intervention in Bosnia in 1992, the occupation of Somalia in 1993 and the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1999, not to mention the threat of pre-emptive nuclear strikes against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and numerous other acts of

aggression by U.S. imperialism. Then, out of nowhere, the events of September 11, 2001 supposedly brought this peaceful and idyllic period to an end. He also spoke demagogically about the U.S. mission of advancing the ideals of freedom at home and abroad, again a concept totally at odds with reality. For example, Bush declared: "Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation." In fact, the United States was created on the foundations of African slavery and genocide against the Aboriginal peoples. It built its capitalist economy on the basis of the indentured labour of Irish immigrants and the

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Commentary

Paul Martin's Visit to China

Prime Minister Paul Martin has just completed a visit to China as part of his tour of Asia. During the visit he met with high-ranking Chinese government officials and discussed business opportunities for Canadian corporations. He is also reported to have discussed the Chinese record on human rights and presented a list of individuals whom he considers to be victims of human rights abuses.

It is interesting to note that the individuals on Martin's list are mainly political opponents of the Chinese regime who have been promoting the Americanization of China. Aside from the fact that there are all kinds of other human rights violation, not only in China but in Canada, as well, the fact is that the most serious violations of human rights in China

are a consequence of the insatiable demand for profits by foreign and domestic capitalists. How can Martin be a defender of human rights when he was in China as a representative of the corporations that are the greatest abusers of human rights in China?

It is also interesting that in his meetings with U.S. President George W. Bush late last year Martin did not raise the issue of the U.S. human rights abuses of prisoners, including Canadian citizens, in Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and numerous other locations. Nor did he raise the issue of the American human rights abuses against immigrant workers, African-Americans, Hispanics and Aboriginal peoples in the U.S. Similarly, Martin has never

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Liberal Party's Love Affair With U.S. Imperialism On Again

The Martin government has announced the appointment of former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna as the Canadian ambassador to the United States, effective March 1.

The avidly pro-American McKenna has served on American corporate boards with members of the Bush family and also sits on the boards of General Motors Canada, CanWest Global and the Bank of Montreal. He is an ardent proponent of furthering economic integration with the U.S. and as Premier of New Brunswick hosted a number of forums designed to further the economic integration of Atlantic Canada and the U.S. eastern seaboard states.

McKenna's appointment was announced the same week that Paul Cellucci, the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, told a reporter that he expects Canada to announce shortly it will sign on to the Bush administration's anti-ballistic missile defence plan. Cellucci, whose term is up in the spring, said the matter "will be dealt with over the next couple of months." "We continue to hope that Canada makes a positive decision on the missile defence program, which we believe is consistent with the mission of Norad," he said.

Instead of condemning Cellucci's interference in Canadian domestic affairs and revoking his diplomatic credentials, Prime Minister Martin and his cabinet have accepted the ambassador's comments quietly, with government sources confirming to reporters that Canada will join the missile defence plan, possibly in a matter of weeks.

This is despite the fact that opinion polls have shown consistently that the majority of Canadians oppose any involvement in the plan. It is also despite the fact that the plan is already obsolete, as confirmed by the recent announcement by the Russians that they have developed a new missile that cannot be shot down by the U.S. system.

The system, which is supposed to intercept and destroy anti-ballistic missiles fired at North America, was first proposed by President Ronald Reagan during the Cold War. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the project was shelved for some time,

as there was little support for spending the billions, even trillions of dollars, it is estimated the shield will cost. As well, serious doubts were raised by scientists working for the Pentagon about how effective such a shield would be.

For his part, Paul Martin has stated repeatedly that one of his priorities as prime minister will be "repairing the relationship" with the U.S., supposedly strained by Canada's refusal to participate in the American invasion of Iraq. During his visit to Washington last April, Martin stressed the number of Canadian troops serving in Afghanistan, and he subsequently committed Canadian forces to assisting the U.S. to occupy Haiti, following the American-sponsored coup against elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On the economic front, the Martin government has refused to provide any assistance to sectors fighting trade harassment from the U.S., preferring instead to find diplomatic "solutions" to economic blockades that have resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs and cost the Canadian economy billions of dollars. From softwood lumber to spring wheat to beef, the Liberals have simply turned their backs and allowed the Americans to do whatever they please on the trade front.

This open-armed embrace of the Americans has only faltered briefly - during the campaign leading up to the 2004 June election, when the Liberals campaigned on a platform of defending Canadian sovereignty. The Conservative Party and its leader Stephen Harper were too pro-American and would not defend the Canadian nation, Liberal party advertisements claimed.

One television advertisement in particular reminded Canadians that Stephen Harper would have committed Canadian troops to Iraq had he been prime minister when the U.S. invasion began. Of course, it did not point out that Paul Martin probably would also have committed Canadian troops to the invasion had he been prime minister, given that in the months leading up to the invasion, he made several public comments supporting the U.S. Following his election as leader of the Liberal Party, however,

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For Your Information

Alberto Gonzales and the Rule of Law

By the end of January Alberto Gonzales is expected to be confirmed as the next Attorney General of the United States. The Attorney General is part of the U.S. cabinet and is responsible for ensuring that the rule of law is upheld. Given this responsibility, Gonzales seems as inappropriate a choice as his predecessor, John Ashcroft.

Gonzales, who was commissioned as Counsel to President Bush in January of 2001, also served under Bush in Texas. He was appointed as Justice of the Texas Supreme Court in 1999 after serving for two years as Bush's Secretary of State.

In this position in June 1997, Gonzales sent a letter to the U.S. State Department justifying Texas' decision to execute a Mexican national – Irineo Tristan Montoya – following his conviction on murder charges. In violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the state of Texas failed to inform the Mexican consulate when Montoya was arrested. In his letter, Gonzales argued: "Since the State of Texas is not a signatory to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, we believe it is inappropriate to ask Texas to determine whether a breach occurred in connection with [Montoya's] arrest and conviction." The Vienna Convention was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1969 and became national law at that time.

As Counsel to the President, Gonzales has shown a similar disregard for international law. He penned a

memo in January 2002 which justified the use of torture against suspects as part of the Bush administration's so-called war on terror. Gonzales argued that the U.S. President "wasn't bound by laws prohibiting torture and that government agents who might torture prisoners at his direction couldn't be prosecuted by the Justice Department." The memo also stated that the president has the authority "to approve almost any physical or psychological action during interrogation, up to and including torture."

"As you have said, the war against terrorism is a new kind of war," Gonzales wrote. "The nature of the new war places a high premium on other factors, such as the ability to quickly obtain information from captured terrorists and their sponsors in order to avoid further atrocities against American civilians. ...In my judgment, this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of prisoners."

This memo surfaced in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal, and many American commentators have argued that it confirms the widely-held belief that far from being the actions of a few bad apples, the torture of prisoners in Iraq and in Guantanamo Bay is the result of directives from the highest level of the Bush administration.

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Martin was politically astute enough to not push the issue, and kept his mouth shut through the months following the invasion. Only when it became clear that the U.S. was sinking into a quagmire in Iraq did Martin announce his opposition to the invasion.

Martin's post-election about-face on defending Canadian sovereignty is not unique - it is simply a reflection of well-developed Liberal Party tactics. The Liberals have emerged as the main governing party in Canada largely by embracing an on-again off-again love affair with the Americans. Of course, this love-hate relationship is purely for public consumption, as the Liberal Party has always been enamoured of American imperialism.

For example, under the leadership of Sir Wilfred Laurier the Liberal Party was the first Canadian

political party to push for free trade with the U.S. and urge north-south economic integration. When the Americans were lukewarm to the idea, Laurier instead became an ardent Canadian nationalist, who declared that the twentieth century would belong to Canada and tried to portray himself as anti-American because it won him votes.

Ever since the Liberals have repeatedly played the anti-American card, appealing to the genuine anti-imperialist sentiment of Canadians, while at the same time, in practice, reducing this sentiment to empty rhetoric. The Liberals are masters of waving the flag and pounding their chests while selling out Canada to U.S. economic interests.

Now it appears that the Martin government has decided that the time is right for it to openly court the Americans again.

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super-exploitation of wave upon wave of other immigrants. To claim that the U.S. was created to promote the cause of freedom of all peoples is an insult to all those Americans who have suffered slavery, oppression and exploitation over the centuries.

Bush's words were also an insult to the Mexicans, Cubans, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans and others who have suffered under the yoke of American colonialism over the past two centuries, as well as to the countless victims of U.S. imperialist aggression and enslavement during the past half century. Every country in Central America has witnessed their democratically-elected governments being overthrown by the CIA and U.S. Marines and replaced by brutal military dictatorships and U.S.-trained death squads. The first democratically-elected government in the Middle East, that of Mohammad Mosadegh in Iran, was destroyed by the U.S. and replaced with the dictatorship of the Shah. The democratically-elected Sukarno government of Indonesia was brought down by the CIA which installed Suharto and implemented a reign of terror that resulted in the deaths of over two million people. In fact, it would be difficult to name one instance in which the United States has actually defended democracy anywhere in the world and there are few countries which have not suffered "regime change" at the hands of the CIA, the U.S. marines or both. Even Canada and Australia have had governments brought down by the U.S. because they were seen as detrimental to American interests. So when Bush stated that "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world", he was obviously defining democracy and tyranny in a different manner than the rest of humanity understands them.

Bush's definition of "freedom" is hinted at in his reference to the "force of human freedom". Freedom is a condition of human existence; it is not and cannot be a force, although the use of force is more often than not necessary to achieve it. Referring to freedom as a force and bragging about the long history of the U.S. policy of bringing "freedom" to the peoples of the world exposes Bush's definition of the word as a euphemism for U.S. imperialism and the U.S. military. This is the force by which he intends to bring

"freedom" and "democracy" to the peoples of the world, by which he intends to "liberate" the oppressed people from their enslavement by domestic masters and bring them under the enslavement of U.S. imperialism, which, by Bush's definition, equals "liberty".

While it was couched in flowery words and high-sounding ideals, Bush's inaugural address can only be interpreted as a threat to the peoples of the world that his administration intends to continue on the path it has followed for the past 60 years, the path of political intrigues and military aggression designed to bring the entire world under the hegemony of U.S. imperialism. However, there is an interesting fact of history that bears noting: those emperors who have the power to act with impunity do so and generally do not talk about it; those who have lost the power to act with impunity wax eloquent about their grand intentions.

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condemned the Canadian state's countless violations of the human rights of Aboriginal peoples.

The instances where Martin chooses to cite human rights abuses and the instances where he chooses to remain silent demonstrate that he is not motivated by a desire to defend the human rights of all. Rather, he is motivated first and foremost by the interests of the foreign and domestic corporations that dominate the Canadian economy and, secondly, by the desire to curry favour with U.S. President Bush and the U.S. imperialists.

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