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Editorial

Withdraw Canadian Troops from Afghanistan

The Canadian government is expanding its role from being a mediator in international disputes, most notably its “peacekeeping” missions for the United Nations, to being a combatant alongside the United States. From October 2001, when the United States launched its “war on terrorism”, to the present, the Canadian government has deployed 20 warships and more than 13,500 soldiers, sailors, and air personnel, primarily in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf.

In a recent speech to public servants in Gatineau, Quebec, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin highlighted this shift in policy. He said: “Canada has an important part to play that goes well beyond the traditional role of mediator, and we are going to play it – in terms of foreign affairs, our military capacity and development aid.” In May, for example, the Canadian government announced that it was

deploying troops in Kandahar and would further increase its presence in the south of Afghanistan in February 2006 by deploying a brigade headquarters and an army task force to Kandahar under the command of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The Canadian government is presenting its participation in the U.S. war on terror as something that will contribute to international security. However, since the U.S. launched this “war on terrorism”, starting with its invasion of Afghanistan, tensions have increased around the world while the rights and freedoms of the people have come under attack on a wide scale. The United States has used its “war on terrorism” to mask its increased presence in parts of the world that were previously beyond its sphere of influence. This has given it greater influence in eastern

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October 1 - China’s National Day

On October 1, 1949 Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communist Party of China, speaking from Tianamen Square, proclaimed the liberation of China with the words, “China has stood up!” After many years of struggle against foreign domination by European powers and others, including an heroic war against Japanese occupation, the Chinese people achieved national independence.

The establishment of an independent People’s Republic of China was a momentous event for the Chinese people and the peoples of the world. It was a product of the two great movements of our time and in turn strengthened these movements – the movement of the working class for socialism and the movement of the oppressed peoples and nations for national liberation.

For the Chinese people the victory of revolution opened the way for broad reforms of an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist character and created the conditions for building socialism in China. It marked the beginning of the reunification of China, even though the return of Taiwan is still not settled. For the peoples fighting against colonialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America the victory of the Chinese revolution was an inspiration and an example that they too could achieve national independence. For world capitalism and imperialism, at the head of which stood the United States, the victory of revolution in the world’s most populous country, was a blow only surpassed in history by the Russian Revolution of 1917. In a sense, to this very day, world capitalism and imperialism are trying to recover from this blow.

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Martin Liberals Eager for Closer Economic Ties with China

Canada hosted a large Chinese delegation, led by President Hu Jintao, from September 8-11 and then again from September 16-17 following the UN World Summit. During its visit, the Chinese delegation met with several senior cabinet ministers, all of the Canadian premiers and hundreds of corporate presidents and other officials.

It was clear from the events during this week-long visit to Canada that the Martin government is eager to expand trade with China, which has the fastest growing economy in the world. Officially, the visit was held to celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and China, but at every single function held during the visit, increasing trade was the dominant subject. Speaking at his official welcoming reception at Rideau Hall, Hu said Canada and China's "two economies are highly complementary for one another and their vast potentials are mutually beneficial".

During the visit, the countries signed seven new agreements, including a promise to collaborate more closely on nuclear energy research (Canada last year lost out on a bid to supply more nuclear reactors to

China), including advanced reactor systems, safety and design codes and sustainable fuel cycles. Another agreement provides for a three-fold increase in passenger and cargo flights between the two countries. Other agreements dealt with closer integration of food safety systems and transportation systems.

The biggest winner was Bombardier, which signed a commercial agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Railways for the sale of 200 km/h electric multiple units (EMUs) produced by Bombardier and its Chinese joint venture partner, Sifang Power Qingdao. The agreement also provides for the joint establishment of a Chinese maintenance centre dedicated to EMUs.

Martin and Hu also issued a joint declaration on science and technology. The declaration commits them to conducting a joint "Complementarity Study" to identify areas of science and technology research of the greatest benefit to both Canada and China and then to recommend the best ways for bilateral research partnerships in these areas.

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Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. In these regions it has established new military bases and funded authoritarian central governments to oppress and exploit the people. This has led to heightening of tensions with other countries, as well as disillusionment, resentment and resistance from the working class and people.

A "re-ordering" of the world is taking place. The United States had hoped that the collapse of the USSR and pseudo-socialism in the eastern European countries would make it the sole arbiter of world affairs. Its dream of replacing the bipolar world, divided between the U.S. and Soviet Union, with a unipolar world under its sole dictate has not come to pass. Other big powers and regional powers are asserting themselves. The old powers like Britain, France, Russia, Japan and Germany want to expand their spheres of influence, while some other countries like China, India, Brazil, Iran and others are asserting their independence from these old powers; they have their own plans for developing their economic,

political and military strength.

Even though Canada is dominated by the United States, the Canadian government is also positioning itself to take advantage of this "re-ordering" in order to maximize the profits of the monopoly capitalists in Canada. The Canadian government's emphasis on "global competitiveness", its Team Canada missions to China and other countries, Paul Martin's whirlwind tour of Asia, and the federal government's recent announcement of plans to fund various developments in British Columbia to facilitate trade with Asia are all indicative of its participation in this "re-ordering" of the world. The deployment of troops to Haiti, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf are also part of this strategy.

The Canadian government must withdraw Canadian armed forces from Afghanistan. It is one thing to mediate international disputes where the parties to the dispute want outside assistance. It is another thing to militarily intervene in other countries, to violate their sovereignty, and dictate what kind of government and system should exist there.

Provisional IRA Completes Disarmament

On September 26, 2005, General John de Chastelain, head of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD), confirmed that the Provisional IRA had fully disarmed. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) formally ordered an end to its armed campaign on July 28, 2005 as a step towards implementation of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

At that time, the IRA stated: “The overwhelming majority of people in Ireland fully support this [peace] process. They and friends of Irish unity throughout the world want to see the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Notwithstanding these difficulties our decisions have been taken to advance our republican and democratic objectives, including our goal of a united Ireland. We believe there is now an alternative way to achieve this and to end British rule in our country. It is the responsibility of all Volunteers to show leadership, determination and courage. We are very mindful of the sacrifices of our patriot dead, those who went to jail, Volunteers, their families and the wider republican base. We reiterate our view that the armed struggle was entirely legitimate. We are conscious that many people suffered in the conflict. There is a compelling imperative on all sides to build a just and lasting peace. The issue of the defence of nationalist and republican communities has been raised with us. There is a responsibility on society to ensure that there is no re-occurrence of the pogroms of 1969 and the early 1970s. There is also a universal responsibility to tackle sectarianism in all its forms. The IRA is fully committed to the goals of Irish unity and independence and to building the Republic outlined in the 1916 Proclamation. We call for maximum unity and effort by Irish republicans everywhere. We are confident that by working together Irish republicans can achieve our objectives”.

The statement concluded: “There is now an unprecedented opportunity to utilize the considerable energy and goodwill which there is for the peace process. This comprehensive series of unparalleled initiatives is our contribution to this and to the continued endeavours to bring about independence and unity for the people of Ireland.”

The 1950s and 1960s was a time when peoples around the world rose up to overthrow the system of colonialism and to achieve independence for their countries. The Irish people, who had waged a centuries long struggle against British rule, were part of this momentous development but were unable to free themselves from foreign rule. All progressive and democratic forces in the world share in the desire of the Irish people for their independence and unity. Only time will tell whether or not this peace process will result in these goals being achieved.

For Your Information

The Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement, was the political agreement brokered between the Irish Republicans, Ulster unionists and the British government to end the armed struggle for an independent Ireland. The Agreement was reached in Belfast on Friday, April 10, 1998 and a copy of it was sent to every household in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, with a referendum on the Agreement held in May, 1998. The Agreement was accepted by 74 percent of those who voted in Northern Ireland and 94 percent in the Irish Republic.

The Agreement opens with a Declaration of Support that states:

We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning. The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. ... We are committed to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South, and between these islands. We reaffirm our total and absolute commitment to exclusively democratic and peaceful means of resolving differences on political issues, and our opposition to any use or threat of force by

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For Your Information

Venezuela Moves its Exchange Reserves Out of U.S. Banks

Last week, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced that Venezuela had moved all of its central bank reserves out of American banks and had liquidated its investments in U.S. Treasury securities. He said that the funds had been moved to European banks on a temporary basis, but proposed the creation of a South American central bank which could hold the foreign exchange reserves of all of the countries in the region. Venezuela currently has foreign exchange reserves of US\$30.434 billion.

Chavez explained that the move was made necessary by the repeated threats being made against Venezuela by the American government. The U.S. has a long history of freezing the assets of other governments with which it disagrees. In addition, the big U.S. banks have been implicated in providing support to the attempts by the American administration and its Venezuelan allies to overthrow the democratically-elected Chavez government.

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others for any political purpose, whether in regard to this agreement or otherwise. We acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations. However, we will endeavour to strive in every practical way towards reconciliation and rapprochement within the framework of democratic and agreed arrangements.

Most of the proposals outlined in the agreement fall into three "strands", with all proposals in Strand One dealing with the establishment and operation of a democratically elected power-sharing assembly in Northern Ireland. Under Strand Two, the creation of a North/South Ministerial Council to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish government "on matters of mutual interest" was proposed, while the creation of a British-Irish council was set up under Strand Three "to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands." Also in Strand Three, the participants affirmed their "commitment to the mutual respect, the civil rights and the religious liberties of everyone in the community". Measures included the establishment of a new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law.

A separate section of the Agreement deals with the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, requiring all participants "to use any influence they may have" to achieve decommissioning of all arms "within two years following endorsement in referendums North and South of the agreement and in the context of the implementation of the overall settlement."

China's National Day...from page 1

China's National Day was widely celebrated in the 1970's by people in many countries including Canada who aspired to socialism and national liberation. After the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the change in the character of the Soviet Union from a socialist to a social-imperialist country was exposed to the world, and it appeared that China had emerged as the principal defender of socialism and national liberation in the world. China's revolution, however, stopped half way. Socialism was not constructed in China. Its internal economic, policy and social reforms since 1979, and especially since 1992, are capitalist in character, not socialist. Its external policies are more and more like those of other big capitalist countries.

China's direction is of great significance to the world. Starting with this issue *Modern Communism* will be carrying regular articles about China.

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