

Editorial

Condemn the I.A.E.A. Resolution Against Iran

On September 24, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.) passed a resolution stating that Iran's nuclear activities constitute non-compliance with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to which it is a signatory. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 22 in favour, one against and 12 abstentions. Voting for the resolution were Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States. Only Venezuela voted against the resolution. Twelve countries abstained: Algeria, Brazil, China, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Vietnam.

For the past few years, the United States and its allies, particularly Britain, France and Germany, have been threatening Iran with dire consequences over the nuclear issue. They are demanding that Iran give up the enriching of nuclear fuel. Their argument is that the process of enriching nuclear fuel, while necessary to create nuclear energy, can also be used to produce weapons-grade material to create nuclear weapons. Iran states that control over the nuclear fuel cycle is important for its development of nuclear energy. In fact, according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a signatory state does reserve the right to control the nuclear fuel cycle, including the process of enrichment. Otherwise, the I.A.E.A. would need to pass resolutions against the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China and other countries that

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Canada Announces Nuclear Cooperation Agreement with India

After voting in favour of a resolution accusing Iran of non-compliance with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Canada has entered into an agreement to sell nuclear material to India, a country that will not even sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The agreement was announced on September 26, two days after the International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.) resolution against Iran. Some commentators have described the agreement as Canada's "reward" to India for voting in favour of the I.A.E.A. resolution. The agreement covers nuclear safety collaboration, scientific and technical contacts on civilian nuclear issues, supply of nuclear-related dual-use items to civilian nuclear facilities, and development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The provision of full civil nuclear energy cooperation between a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty like Canada and a non-signatory like India contravenes the very essence of that treaty. The Canadian government, however, describes the agreement as a "first step" rather than full cooperation. But the agreement clearly violates the Canadian government's own nuclear non-proliferation policy. This policy originates from a review that was undertaken after India detonated a nuclear device in 1974. India created the plutonium for the device from spent fuel from the Canadian-supplied CIRUS nuclear reactor. Since then, Canada has had no bilateral nuclear cooperation with India.

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Multiculturalism and the Governor General

Shortly before Michaëlle Jean was sworn in as Canada's new Governor General, various news outlets reported that in a speech last April she criticized the federal government's policy of multiculturalism. Immediately a chorus of calls arose for her to be replaced with someone else who supports this policy, which supposedly is a core value of Canadians.

Jean was quoted as saying that the official policy of multiculturalism is used to divide people and contributes to the ghettoization of various ethnic communities. She also criticized those leaders of ethnic organizations who make their living off multiculturalism, saying: "It's terrible, when you think about it. My dream is that we reflect much more deeply on citizenship, on belonging, which is not a negation of where we come from or our heritage, whether we are from Abitibi or Haiti or somewhere else. It's not that. But what are we doing together?"

It is clear from Jean's remarks that she was not rejecting the government's multicultural policy from the perspective of Eurocentrism, but rather from the perspective that this policy is used to block the development of Canada as a nation. She is absolutely correct in this regard. That Canada is a multicultural society is an undeniable fact. However, the federal policy of multiculturalism is not a policy of recognizing the equality of all cultures and heritages. Rather, it is a policy of elite accommodation designed to keep various ethnic communities ghettoized and reduced to the level of vote banks, primarily for the Liberal Party. Over the years the multiculturalism policy has been used to fund those community and religious leaders who accept the "values" of the Canadian government, including the most backward and corrupt political culture which is promoted by all of the big parliamentary parties. Meanwhile, organizations which oppose the values of the Canadian state and defend the integrity of their communities, far from receiving financial support from the government, have been the target of vicious state attacks.

Multiculturalism, as practiced by the Canadian government, does not begin from the premise that all

Canadians and their cultures are equal. It does not even begin from the premise that there is a Canadian culture which is distinct from English, French or any other ethnic culture, a culture which reflects the struggles of peoples from many lands to build a new society. Rather, it begins from the perspective that there are two "founding nations" – English and French - and all other cultures are reduced to a matter of some quaint and exotic cuisine, attire and religion. It is a policy which denies the existence of the Quebecois nation and the various Aboriginal nations, reducing them, as well, to a matter of "distinct" cultures. In this sense, it is a racist policy which attempts to disguise itself as being anti-racist and "tolerant". It is a policy richly deserving of criticism. Branding those who oppose it as being somehow "un-Canadian" is not acceptable.

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control their own nuclear fuel cycle.

In this sense, the issue of the nuclear fuel cycle raised by the Americans is a diversion. The United States, from the time it dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has tried to keep a monopoly over nuclear weapons in order to threaten other countries and impose its dictate on them. At the same time, the United States and other nuclear powers have ignored the wishes of the peoples of the world for the destruction of nuclear weapons, and to the contrary, have continued to perfect these weapons of mass destruction. In recent years, the United States has threatened many countries including Iran with so-called "pre-emptive strikes" even with nuclear weapons. In all their wars over the past 15 years, the U.S and British armed forces, as well as NATO forces, have used ammunition and bombs made from depleted uranium, starting with the Gulf War in 1991-92, Bosnia in 1994-95, Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Depleted uranium has been proven to cause cancer and various other serious illnesses. It is estimated that thousands of Iraqi civilians have died as a result of its

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Sharia, Religious Tribunals and the Separation of Church and State

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced last month that his government would ban all religious arbitration courts and tribunals operating in the province. His announcement came following growing pressure to prevent the establishment of Islamic religious tribunals which would rule on certain questions based on the principles of sharia, a system of Islamic law.

His announcement means the Jewish religious tribunals already operating in the province will no longer have any authority and also means that no other religious groups in the province will be able to establish such bodies with state sanction.

Any attempt to disallow Sharia tribunals while Jewish tribunals continued to operate would have been blatantly discriminatory, especially on the basis that Islamic law is more oppressive of women, which some people tried to argue. Orthodox Jewish tribunals throughout the world are well known for their disdain for women; the recent documentary *Sentenced to Marriage*, by an Israeli-Canadian filmmaker, highlights how religious tribunals routinely exploit women by forcing them to pay huge ransoms to receive religious divorces from abusive husbands, for example.

McGuinty's decision on religious tribunals is especially timely given that the principle of the separation of church and state is currently under

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use in the First Gulf War. Where are the resolutions of the I.A.E.A. condemning the United States, Britain, their "coalition" partners, and NATO for these crimes?

Iran has a sovereign right to develop nuclear power and control its own fuel cycle. The I.A.E.A. resolution is a violation of the sovereign rights of Iran. It constitutes an interference in Iran's internal affairs. The entire 60 years since the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan have shown that the United States, which is spearheading this attack against Iran, is not interested in peace among nations or the

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attack throughout North America.

Several U.S. states are currently attempting to reintroduce or already have started the teaching of creationism in public schools, under its new, modern label, "intelligent design", with President George Bush lending support to the cause. Recently, a Florida court ruled that a pharmacist was within his right to refuse to fill birthcontrol prescriptions for women because, as an evangelical Christian, he was opposed to birth control, a ruling that was supported by Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

These two examples are both despite the Establishment Clause to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, penned by founding father Thomas Jefferson, which prohibits Congress from passing any laws in regards to the establishment of religion. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently interpreted this clause to mean, as Jefferson himself wrote at the time, that there must be a "wall of separation" between religion and the state.

In Canada, under the guise of promoting multiculturalism and tolerance, there has been similar blurring of the separation between church and state. Several provinces, instead of abolishing existing funding for religious school boards have instead expanded funding to different religious groups. In fact, funding for private religious schools in many provinces, including Manitoba, has increased over the past two decades, while funding of the public school system has either stagnated or been cut back. Furthermore, while funding for culture has been reduced steadily since the mid-1980s, money to support different religious festivals and pageants has grown steadily.

McGuinty's decision on religious tribunals in Ontario may well be fuelled by anti-Islamic feelings, as supporters of Sharia have argued. However, even if McGuinty's motives may be suspect, this does not mean that the demand for Sharia law is a just demand. The separation of church and state is a basic principle of democracy. To the limited extent that the Ontario government's decision upholds this principle, it is a positive decision.

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Canada's nuclear non-proliferation policy is set out in a document titled "Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation and Canadian Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy". This states in part:

"Before Canada will consider entering into nuclear cooperation with any non-nuclear-weapons state, i.e. any country other than the U.S.A., the U.K., France, Russia and China that state must:

a. make a legally binding commitment to nuclear non-proliferation by becoming a Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the NPT), or an equivalent, internationally legally binding agreement; and

b. thereby accept full scope safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency on all of its current and future nuclear activities."

India is not a signatory to the NPT, nor does it accept the supervision of the I.A.E.A. over all of its nuclear activities.

Canada is not alone in renewing nuclear cooperation with India. On July 18, 2005, the United States and India concluded a far-reaching strategic agreement. Under the terms of this agreement, the United States pledged to work to achieve "full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade" with India. In return India pledged to separate its civilian and military nuclear operations and to put its civilian operations under international safeguards. Under cover of this agreement, India will receive nuclear material and technology from the United States, allegedly for non-military applications only.

In announcing the recent agreement between Canada and India, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre Pettigrew stated: "India is a global power and an important partner with whom we are building an intense, broad and enduring relationship." One aspect of the agreement is that it will help Canadian businesses gain access to Indian markets. Canada is a big player in the world nuclear industry. It produces 30 percent of the world's uranium of which 80 percent is for export. It is also one of the major manufacturers and exporters of nuclear reactors and other nuclear technology. Canadian nuclear companies will now have an opportunity to regain the lucrative Indian market that they lost to competitors like Russia after 1974.

Another aspect of the Canada-India agreement is that it reflects the growing involvement of the Canadian government in Asia. This involvement is aimed at keeping the peoples of Asia under the domination of imperialism. The agreements that Canada and the United States have entered into with India will be used to play off India against one or another of its neighbours, and through such methods control the region. This is a tried and true method of every imperialist. The Indian government, which has its own anti-people aims, proved that it is willing to play this role by voting in favour of the I.A.E.A. resolution against Iran.

The Canadian people must demand that the Canadian government stop its participation in imperialist politics. These kinds of politics have nothing to do with working for peace and prosperity, nor with developing harmonious relations among countries and peoples.

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development of nuclear technology for peaceful applications. In this case the United States is using the nuclear issue to create a pretext for economic and political sanctions against Iran, or even military aggression, just as they used the pretext of weapons of mass destruction to invade Iraq.

All peace-loving and justice-loving people should condemn the I.A.E.A. resolution against Iran, oppose all threats of economic, political and military sanctions against Iran, and denounce the Canadian government for voting in favour of this resolution.

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