

Editorial

## Oppose the War Preparations of the Canadian State

The Canadian Armed Forces has announced plans to hold a week of urban warfare exercises in Winnipeg beginning on April 30. The exercises, nicknamed Operation Charging Bison, will involve about 500 soldiers, including a number of American trainers, and will be the largest urban warfare simulation ever held in Canada. The initial announcement earlier in the year indicated that the exercises would take place throughout downtown Winnipeg. However, at a recent press conference the military announced that the operation will be confined to two small areas outside of the downtown area. The rationale presented for the exercises is the need to prepare Canadian soldiers for the new role they will be playing abroad.

Beginning in the early 1990s the Mulroney government began to describe the role of the Canadian military as one of “peacemaking” rather than peacekeeping. From the time of the U.S.-led invasion of Kosovo in 1999 the Canadian government has been systematically transforming the role of the Canadian military abroad away from either peacekeeping or “peacemaking” and towards a more aggressive combat role. With the recent transfer of command of the Kandahar region of southern Afghanistan to Canadian troops, that role is now becoming clearer. The U.S. armed forces are suffering from a severe shortage of money and

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Commentary

## Canada Should Get Out of Afghanistan!

On March 1, Canadian Brigadier-General David Fraser assumed command of NATO troops in southern Afghanistan. The command in Kandahar includes 2,200 Canadian troops. This marks a deeper involvement by Canada in the continuing U.S.-led aggression and occupation of Afghanistan. The change in command has also been accompanied by a campaign by the government, mass media, major political parties and defence staff to convince the Canadian working class and people that this is a just cause. For example, Fraser, on assuming his new command, stated that Canadian troops are there “at the behest of the Afghan population”, that the mission is about “helping Afghans” and that the “goal is to enable and facilitate the rebuilding of their country”. However, none of these assertions are

true.

Internationally, a big effort has been made to give legitimacy to the “regime change” brought about by the U.S. and Britain and to sanitize their violation of the national sovereignty of Afghanistan. For example, from January 31 to February 1, 2006 the United Nations co-chaired, along with the British government and the newly-elected Afghan government, “The London Conference on Afghanistan”. The result was the adoption of an international agreement called “The Afghanistan Compact”. This “Compact”, to which Canada is a signatory, places Afghanistan under foreign military and political control. It stipulates that “Through end-2010... the NATO-led International Security

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Assistance Force (ISAF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and their respective Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) will promote security and stability in all regions of Afghanistan...” It also stipulates the establishment of a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board involving the Afghan government, the United Nations and other countries to ensure “the implementation of the political commitments that comprise this Compact”.

Canadian troops were sent to Afghanistan at the behest of the United States and Britain, not at the behest of the people of Afghanistan. They were sent in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and under the pretext that the Taliban government was refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden to U.S. authorities. In other words, Canada’s participation in this aggression had nothing to do with helping the people of Afghanistan. Right from the beginning, under the Liberal government of Jean Chretien, Canada was assigned a combat, not a peacekeeping role. In February 2002, only a few months after the U.S.-British attack in October 2001, the Canadian armed forces dispatched the 3 PPCLI Battle Group under then Lieutenant-Colonel Pat Stogran to Kandahar, Afghanistan for a tour of six months. An official Canadian Forces “backgrounder” said: “During this period, the soldiers of the 3 PPCLI Battle Group performed tasks ranging from airfield security to combat.”

Steven Harper has stated that his government “strongly supported the previous government and its commitments” and will continue to do so. He gave various arguments to defend his stand. First, he said that Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan is “important for global security”. This is simply untrue. It is undeniable that the U.S. “war against terrorism” which was initiated by the attack on Afghanistan has significantly destabilized the world. Second, he said that Canada must fulfill its “obligations to the international community”. This is merely a euphemism for fulfilling obligations to the United States, which has prevailed upon its allies to provide money and troops to defend and extend its world empire. Third, Harper said that his government has a “responsibility to support” Canadian troops - “our men and women” - in Afghanistan rather than undermine their spirits by

raising doubts about their mission. This is a way of avoiding the issue. The Canadian government certainly does have a responsibility for the Canadian armed forces. One of these responsibilities is to ensure that Canadian men and women are not sent to commit aggression against other peoples and are not sent to die as cannon fodder in U.S.-led wars of conquest.

All of the opposition parties in the House of Commons are supporting Canada’s military mission in Afghanistan - the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois give unquestioning support, while the NDP give “critical” support. They all share two things in common. Not a single one of these parties is demanding the withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan and all of them are concerned that the vast majority of the Canadian people are opposed to Canada’s participation in the war in Afghanistan. The Liberals, NDP and Bloc are raising questions over the length of the mission and criticizing the lack of debate in the House of Commons. In addition, the NDP is pretending that Canada’s current role in Afghanistan has changed from its original purpose.

During the last federal election NDP leader Jack Layton tried to suggest that the nature of the “mission” in Afghanistan had undergone a change since 2002. He stated that “We appear to be drifting from our original mission there – which was to provide security in the capital region – and into a combat role side-by-side with American troops.” While the number of Canadian troops in Afghanistan has increased since 2001, Canada’s role in Afghanistan has never been one of peacekeeping. It is even ridiculous to suggest that there could be a peacekeeping role in that situation given the fact that the U.S. broke the peace by invading a sovereign country. Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, General Hillier, in an interview on March 3, 2006, totally dismissed the notion that Canada has ever been involved in peacekeeping in Afghanistan. He said that “What is occurring now is a crystallization of the kind of operations that have taken place for the last 15 years, since the Cold War. If anyone thinks that what we were doing in the Balkans in the early to mid 1990s was peacekeeping, they simply do not understand whatsoever what you had to do on the

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ground.”

The NDP has been joined by the Liberal Party and Bloc Quebecois in demanding that Canada’s military role in Afghanistan be debated in the House of Commons. The NDP wants a debate about the terms and goals of the mission. Jack Layton has said that the NDP does not want a “protracted” mission, but he is not demanding that Canada immediately gets out of Afghanistan. In other words, a short mission is alright for the NDP. On March 6 he stated that: “It’s vitally important that we have, in the House of Commons, a full debate on our mission, its terms, our goals, because that really has yet to happen. We certainly don’t want to become involved in a protracted war.” Liberal defence critic, Ujjal Dosanjh, in an interview with the *Globe and Mail* on March 3, 2006, stated that the Liberals only want a debate in order to convince the Canadian people to support the war. The article said:

“Mr. Dosanjh, who was health minister in the previous government, then re-asserted the Liberals strong support for the mission and the troops. ‘We support the mission absolutely and in unqualified fashion,’ he said. The purpose of a parliamentary debate, he stressed, should not be to argue about whether Canadian soldiers should be in Afghanistan, but rather to persuade Canadians that they should be there. ‘In an environment where one is not certain as to what percentage of Canadians support the mission...it would be useful to have their representatives from across the country actually engage in a sober debate about a very serious issue.’ He added: ‘If you had a vote in parliament, I have no doubt in my mind that there would be absolutely overwhelming support.’ Indeed, it is extremely unlikely that the government would lose such a vote, since the Liberals and the Bloc strongly support the Afghan mission, and the NDP, though more critical than the other parties, are not strongly opposed.”

Furthermore, the NDP’s election platform did not take a stand against Canada’s role in Afghanistan. It merely said that an NDP government would “Commit Canadian troops to overseas operations only under the auspices of international peace and

security organizations.” The problem with this stand is that Canadian troops **are** committed to Afghanistan under the auspices of international peace and security organizations, such as the United Nations and NATO, which only shows that these organizations are part of the problem too. The issue is not multilateralism versus unilateralism in determining right from wrong. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the United States and Britain, and their threats against various other countries, are wrong even if these actions have the backing of other countries, and even if these actions have the backing of the United Nations Security Council, NATO and other international organizations.

The Canadian working class and people should condemn the Canadian government for participating in the aggression against and occupation of Afghanistan and demand that Canadian troops be immediately withdrawn. We should also demand that Canada get out of NATO and NORAD. The Canadian working class and people should condemn “The Afghanistan Compact” too. Even though the “compact” is a multilateral agreement put in place under the auspices of the United Nations it does not make the past or present activities of the United States and Britain, or those of the Canadian government, any less a violation of international law and the sovereignty of Afghanistan.

## **Modern Communism**

**Bulletin of the Manitoba Regional Committee  
of the Communist Party of Canada  
(Marxist-Leninist)  
Editor: Ken Kaltornyk**

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Produced by volunteer labour**

# Over 30 Million People Protest in India Against the Visit of U.S. President Bush

*(Reprinted from People's Voice, Organ of the Communist Ghadar Party of India)*



*Above and next page - scenes from anti-Bush demonstrations across India*

Even before George Bush arrived in India, several political parties and organizations among the people had raised their voices in protest. Thousands of posters had appeared on the walls of various cities declaring that Bush must not set foot on Indian soil and that he was not welcome in our country.

Starting on March 1, from the minute he arrived until the minute he departed on March 3 more than 3 crore (30 million) people participated in rallies and mass demonstrations all over the country. Neither the police nor anybody else could prevent them from taking to the streets. They loudly expressed their anger against the Bush administration and its crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its dangerous plots against Iran and other countries.

The air was filled with the cries: “Butcher Bush, you are not our guest”, and “Butcher Bush – Go Back!” People from all walks of life took part, including workers, peasants, women, youth and students, small business families and shopkeepers, professionals and intellectuals.

The people’s actions were in stark contrast to the

red carpet welcome that the government of India laid out for this U.S. imperialist chieftain. The Indian rulers even handed over the security function to the American forces, letting in more than 700 U.S. soldiers and American sniffer dogs into the country.

During March 1 and 2, massive protest actions shook Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Calicut, Bangalore, Lucknow, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar and Srinagar.

Delhi, the capital city, was brought to a standstill on March 1. Mass participation on the streets was to an unprecedented degree, with more than five lakh [500,000] people congregating in Ramlila Maidan. This protest action had been organized jointly by diverse organizations active in the city, including: Jamiat Ulama E Hind, Communist Ghadar Party of India, Jamiat Islami E Hind, and Lok Raj Sangathan. The March 1 rally at Ramlila Maidan was noteworthy not only for the massive numbers it drew, but also for the high level of discipline of its participants, many of whom had come from towns far away.

Lakhs of people participated in a mammoth rally



at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on March 2. The entire south Bombay came to a standstill. The rally was organized jointly by the Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind, All India Ulema Council, Communist Ghadar Party of India, Samajwadi Party, Communist Party of India, National Railway Workers' Union, Mumbai Aman Committee and others.

A second protest march was organized in Delhi from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament on March 2, by the Committee Against the Bush Visit. Organizations that collaborated in this committee included CPI, CPI (M), CPIML, CGPI, AIFB, RSP, SP, JD(S), IJP, Lok Raj Sangathan, AITUC, CITU, AICCTU, TUCC, UTUC, AIBEA, BEFI, NZIEA, GIEAIA, DUCKU, Democratic Karamchari Front, Janvadi Shikshak Manch, Democratic Teachers Front, JANAM, IPTA, PWA, Janwadi Lekhak Sangh, NFIW, JMS, Purogami Mahila Sangathan, AIPSU,

AIYF, DYFI, RYF, AIYL, Hind Naujawan Ekta Sabha, Yuva Janata Dal (S), Lord Buddha Club, AISF, SFI, AISB, JNUSU, JMISU, AMS, FDI, Jan Sanskriti, SAHMAT, DSF, SKS, AIKS, AKS, BKMU, JSM, AIALA, COC, Navdanya, RFSTE, IDPD, CNDP, INSAF, PEACE, SC/ST All India Organization.

Pune witnessed a powerful joint protest action on March 2. The action was organized by the LNP(Leninist), Lok Raj Sangathan, CPM, Rashtra Seva Dal, NCAS, Dalit mahila Sangathan, and several other organizations. Reports are still pouring in of protest actions from the smaller towns and rural areas of our vast country, including moffusil market towns like Jind and Sirsa in Haryana, Nohar in Rajasthan, and pilgrimage centers like Varanasi and Hardwar.

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Srinagar witnessed powerful demonstrations every day for a whole week preceding and during the visit of Bush. During fierce clashes with the armed forces, many people suffered grievous injuries.

On March 3, Bush flew from Delhi to Hyderabad, to find the entire city shaken by a total bandh (general strike). Almost the entire people of Hyderabad were either out on the streets shouting angrily against Bush or confined to their homes. The only exception was the handful of political leaders and state officials who were shaking hands with, and towing behind the unpopular 'guest'. The police organized lathi [long sticks] charge and bursting of tear gas, leading to severe injuries among the protestors. In Lucknow, several persons died as a result of a state-organized provocation to divert and split the unity of the mass demonstration.

Spokespersons of many political parties and people's organizations denounced the Manmohan Singh government for welcoming Bush to India. Matthew of Lok Raj Sangathan condemned Bush as a mass murderer and the biggest terrorist of all. Arundati Roy and numerous well known personalities participated in protest actions and spoke out against the crimes of the Bush administration.

Comrade Prakash Rao, spokesperson of the Communist Ghadar Party of India, emphasized that the nuclear deal was not really the central purpose of the Bush visit to India, as is being portrayed in the bourgeois media. "Bush wants to fool the Indian people that the U.S. government is our friend and natural ally. This is in order to strengthen the U.S. war preparations. What he wants is for Indian soldiers to become cannon fodder in aggressive wars against Iran, Syria, North Korea, Cuba, and other countries and peoples. This was the real purpose of the visit. But the massive demonstrations show that the Indian people are not fooled", he said.

Members of the Communist Ghadar Party of India participated actively in the mass demonstrations and rallies. They spoke to the people on the streets, pointing out that we must not ever support an Indo-U.S. 'strategic alliance', because it is an imperialist alliance aimed against the sovereign rights of the

peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The working class and people of India must be vigilant about the deal being struck by the Indian ruling class with U.S. imperialism. The Bush visit has shown that in pursuing a strategic alliance with the U.S., the Indian bourgeoisie is acting in its narrow interest, completely disregarding the wishes and demands of the vast majority of the people. It is ready to compromise on national sovereignty and barter away the dignity of our people, to achieve its own imperialist aims.

The people of India cannot be secure from destructive imperialist wars as long as the bourgeoisie is ruling the country. We must prepare conditions for establishing the rule of workers and peasants, so as to make a break with the imperialist system, get rid of capitalism and usher in socialism and communism. This is the path to prevent war and secure our future in our hands.

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manpower and the Bush administration is demanding that its allies shoulder more of the burden of defending and expanding the U.S. empire. While many U.S. allies have resisted the American pressure, it is clear that the Canadian government has acquiesced. It is rapidly converting the Canadian Armed Forces into an auxiliary to the U.S. military machine and is training Canadian soldiers to take on the role of an occupation force in Afghanistan. This will free up American troops for new military adventures elsewhere.

Operation Charging Bison not only represents an escalation in the transformation of the Canadian Armed Forces into an aggressive combat and occupation force, but is also an exercise in shaping public opinion about this new role for the Canadian military. It is an attempt to get Canadian citizens used to the presence of soldiers in their streets and to convince them that the Canadian military is a force for peace and security. This, coupled with the massive propaganda barrage unleashed on Canadians with every fatality in Afghanistan, is part of a concerted effort to change the minds of Canadians, a majority of whom are opposed to the presence of Canadian

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For Your Information

## Post-Withdrawal, Israel Continues to Wreak Havoc in Gaza Strip

While Israeli occupation forces unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza Strip in August 2005, Israel did not give up control of all access points for bringing goods in and out of the Gaza Strip. The forced closure by Israeli soldiers of the main commercial crossing in the Gaza Strip has devastated the local economy, with the area on the verge of an “agricultural disaster” according to a report released March 7 by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Israel first closed the Karni crossing from January 15 to February 5, claiming the move was necessary to prevent Palestinian attacks on Israel or illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The crossing was again closed on February 21 after reports of explosions in the area, and has remained closed ever since.

The USAID report estimates the Karni closing has caused agricultural losses of more than US\$450,000 per day. PEC, a Palestinian cooperative established after the Israeli withdrawal to manage the greenhouses left behind by Jewish settlers, has been losing more than \$120,000 per day. Greenhouses built by settlers during the occupation occupy 56 kilometres of the Gaza Strip and are serviced by 12 wells. The greenhouses, constructed

by the settlers with public funds, were then purchased from the settlers by private foreign donors for several million dollars before being turned over to the PEC. Production at the greenhouses employs close to 1,000 Palestinians. In addition, the United Nations warned last week that stocks of staples such as wheat, sugar and cooking oil were likely to run out in the Gaza Strip within days.

If the crossing is not reopened, USAID estimates that within a few weeks, nearly 100 tonnes of produce per day will have to be destroyed. Already during the first week of March, while many of the Gaza’s 1.4 million inhabitants are living without enough food to eat, 58 trucks carrying 450 tonnes of tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers and other produce were turned away from Karni. Their contents were later destroyed.

For Your Information

## Israeli Defence Minister Defends Targeted Assassinations

On March 6, Israeli fighter jets opened fire over a crowded neighbourhood in the Gaza Strip. Israeli Defence Forces said the intended targets were two members of Islamic Jihad, who were both killed, along with three bystanders – two children and an adult standing at an ice-cream stand.

Speaking on Army Radio the following day, Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz defended the practice of “targeted assassination”. Mofaz also even hinted that Israel was considering an extra-judicial killing of the democratically-elected Prime Minister-delegate of the Palestinian Authority, Ismail Haniya.

“We will continue the targeted killings at this pace,” Mofaz stated. “No one will be immune.” When asked to elaborate on his comments, Mofaz said that if Hamas is implicated in future suicide bombings in Israel, targeted assassinations would be used against the “leading members” of the government.

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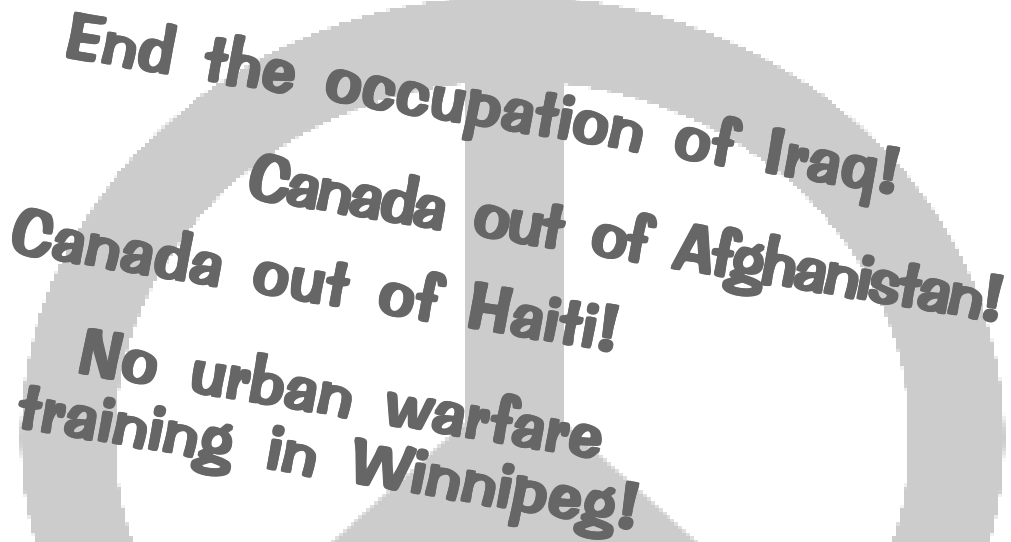
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troops in Afghanistan and an even larger majority of whom are opposed to Canada’s participation in the imperialist military adventures of the United States.

Until recently, Canada has enjoyed an international reputation as a country committed to peacekeeping and the diplomatic resolution of international disputes. Despite the fact that this reputation is largely undeserved, it is clear that the vast majority of Canadians supports a foreign policy based on these principles. Operation Charging Bison and other attempts of the Canadian state to transform the Canadian military into a force for war, aggression and occupation are an unacceptable affront to the aspirations of millions of Canadians and must be opposed.

March 13, 2006

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**End the occupation of Iraq!**  
**Canada out of Afghanistan!**  
**Canada out of Haiti!**  
**No urban warfare  
training in Winnipeg!**

# **WINNIPEG SAYS NO TO WAR!**

**International Day of Action!**  
**Saturday, March 18 1:00 P.M.**

**Meet at City Hall for a march  
to the Legislature**

**Third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq**

For information contact the No War Coalition (Manitoba) phone 792-3371.  
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