

Editorial

Canada Should Get Out of Afghanistan

During the parliamentary debate on the extension of the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that a lengthy debate on the issue would make Canadian troops “vulnerable to violent enemy attacks”. This claim is quite simply a myth designed to deflect accountability away from those who are actually putting young Canadian men and women at risk and onto those who are opposing the presence of Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

There is also no truth to Harper’s claims that the Canadian military presence in Afghanistan is for the purpose of strengthening democracy, ensuring equality rights for women, reducing poverty and making the world safer from the threat of terrorism. In reality, the abysmal situation in Afghanistan is entirely the creation of the United States, which funded, armed and organized the Taliban and various

warlords during the 1980s and 1990s in order to ensure U.S. imperialist control over the country. It did so in the full knowledge that these forces were anti-democratic and anti-woman. Furthermore, it was the American CIA which set up and operated the terrorist training camps where the Taliban and other fighters received their training. This was done with the full knowledge that these allies were, and continue to be, the biggest opium dealers in the world.

When the Taliban refused to continue following the dictate of the Americans, the U.S. and its allies invaded the country and fomented a civil war, using the phony excuse that Afghanistan was harbouring the architects of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. To date, no evidence has been released proving these allegations. The world is expected to simply believe the word of the same American

See page 3: Out of Afghanistan

Israeli Supreme Court Upholds Apartheid Law

In a six to five decision released on May 14, the Supreme Court of Israel upheld the 2003 law enacted by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) which bans Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, West Bank or East Jerusalem who are married to Israeli citizens from living in Israel or receiving Israeli citizenship.

The Nationality and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) was enacted in July 2003 as a temporary measure but has since been extended every six months or so. The law was introduced by the Sharon government to prevent family reunification for Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship and living within Israel, and their spouses and children living in the occupied territories. At the time the law was introduced there was no pretence that it would serve any other purpose. Ariel Sharon stated openly that this was a necessary security policy to keep tens of thousands of Palestinians from claiming Israeli residency and then having the right to move freely within Israel where they might engage in

terrorist activity that would put Israeli citizens at risk.

Immediately after the law was enacted, Adalah, the largest Palestinian human rights organization, joined with six other Palestinian and Israel human rights organizations to petition the court for its annulment on two grounds. Firstly, they argued that the law violated the rights guaranteed to citizens under the Israeli constitution, including the right to human dignity. Secondly, they argued that the law violated the right to equality of all Israeli citizens as it was enacted to apply specifically to Arab citizens of Israel, who comprise the vast majority (over 99 percent) of Israelis with spouses and children living in the occupied territories.

During the petition process, Israel’s Attorney General testified before the Supreme Court that Palestinians from the occupied territories who become Israeli residents are “increasingly involved in terror activity”. Adalah successfully challenged this assertion – under cross examination the Israeli

See page 4: Israeli Apartheid Law

The Division Over the Iranian Nuclear Issue

After two weeks of meetings the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China – were unable to reach agreement over a draft resolution on the Iranian nuclear issue. The United States, Britain and France were on one side; on the other side were Russia and China. The draft resolution was circulated among the 15 members of the Security Council, but it was never put to a vote because either Russia or China would have vetoed it. The contentious issue was Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. Russia and China were both opposed to invoking this against Iran.

According to Articles 41 and 42 of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the Security Council is authorized to choose punishments for any country which may “pose a threat to international peace and security”, “disturb international peace and security” or “take an aggressive measure”. Article 41 says that the Security Council is authorized to take measures to enforce its decisions such as the partial or complete breaking of economic relations. This includes severing railway, marine and aerial links, as well as post, telegraph, radio and any other type of communication, as well as political ties. Meanwhile, Article 42 says that if the UNSC determines that the measures taken under Article 41 are not sufficient, then it can use aerial, marine or ground forces to protect or restore international peace and security.

The stand taken by Russia and China favours Iran’s struggle to defend its sovereign right to build its national economy based on modern technology and its legal right to engage in nuclear research and development for peaceful purposes. It temporarily blocks the United States, Britain and France from using the authority of the UN Security Council to justify their war preparations against Iran in the name of the “international community”. However, it would be wrong to believe that Russia and China have become opponents of hegemony or defenders of the sovereignty of nations. Rather, they are taking this stand to advance their own interests and to weaken those of the United States, Britain and France. This is part and parcel of the contention among the major powers for spheres of influence, while they collude among themselves against the struggles of the peoples for national and social liberation.

Russia and China are playing a questionable role in the Iranian nuclear dispute. Their interests converge

with Iran on some fronts, but with those of the United States on others. For example, on the economic front, Russia does not want to alienate Iran and lose a lucrative market for its nuclear reactors, but neither does it want to alienate the United States which holds the key to its entry into the World Trade Organization. Similarly, China does not want to alienate Iran and lose a much-needed source of oil and gas, but it does not want to alienate the United States and lose access to a major market for Chinese goods.

As a result, Russia and China have been content to keep the Iranian nuclear dispute within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this forum they could play the role of honest brokers with little or no consequences to themselves. They allowed the United States, Britain, France and Germany, as well as the Director-General of the IAEA, to make countless false accusations against Iran, and they abstained from the harshest resolutions against Iran. At the same time, they presented themselves as friends of Iran by advocating the peaceful and diplomatic resolution to the dispute within the framework of the IAEA.

This tactic worked as long as the dispute remained in the hands of the IAEA. However, for some reason, Russia and China threw their support behind the British-French-German resolution at the Board of Governors meeting of the IAEA on February 4, 2006. This resolution cleared the way for the IAEA to report Iran to the UN Security Council which is what the United States had been demanding all along. It is possible that Russia and China thought that Iran would capitulate in face of this united front of the five major powers. But events did not proceed that way.

The February 4 resolution of the IAEA constituted a flagrant violation of the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Safeguards Agreement signed between Iran and the IAEA. It violated the inalienable right of Iran to engage in nuclear research and development for peaceful purposes. It stated that Iran must: suspend all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development; reconsider its decision to construct a research reactor moderated by heavy water; ratify and implement in full the voluntary Additional Protocol; implement transparency measures extending beyond the formal requirements of the Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol.

See page 3: Iranian Nuclear Issue

Iranian Nuclear Issue...from page 2

No such demands had ever been placed on another country in the entire history of the IAEA. The resolution was unprecedented, but Russia and China voted in favour of it. The Iranian government unequivocally rejected it. One month later, the President of the UN Security Council issued a statement demanding that Iran submit to the IAEA terms. Once again Iran refused to comply with such conditions. This has now led to the current crisis and division among the major powers.

The United States is using the nuclear issue to push a political agenda against Iran – an agenda it has been pursuing since the Iranian revolution in 1979 which overthrew the pro-U.S. regime. Even though the United States accuses Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons, the General-Director of the IAEA, after years of inspections by the agency, has grudgingly admitted in his otherwise ambiguous reports, that there is no evidence of the diversion of nuclear research and development for military purposes in Iran.

The United States is not really interested in resolving the dispute. Its idea of “diplomacy” is to get other countries to join in the attack on Iran. Only a few days ago, the President of Iran proposed direct talks with the U.S. but the offer was rejected. At the same time, Britain, France and Germany (the EU-3), who terminated their discussions with Iran in January 2006, have asked for the resumption of talks. They want Iran to consider what they call a “new” proposal.

However, there is nothing new in the EU-3 proposal. It demands that Iran give up its right to develop and control its own nuclear fuel cycle. The capacity to create nuclear fuel is the key for the self-reliance of any country in nuclear power generation. Without self-reliance on this front a country must rely on a few nuclear technology supplier countries like the United States and Russia for nuclear fuel. Iran has made it clear that it does not want its economic development dependent upon or vulnerable to the whims of these suppliers. This conclusion is based on their past experience.

Many years ago the Iranians openly requested the assistance of the IAEA in order to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in their country. This was consistent with Iran’s rights as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But Iran was blocked by the nuclear suppliers who withheld this technology in violation of the NPT. As a result, Iran was forced to acquire this technology through unofficial sources. After 27 years Iran has acquired this technology. Today, after the fact, Britain and

France, two of the nuclear suppliers, are offering what they refused Iran since 1979.

The failure of the United States, Britain and France to invoke Chapter 7 of the UN Charter does not eliminate the danger of aggression by the United States and its allies against Iran. Even though the situation is not the same as when the United States attacked Iraq, it would be wrong to believe that the United States could not launch a war, including a nuclear war, against Iran. There is also no guarantee that Russia and China will not reverse their position on Chapter 7.

U.S. President George Bush and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared only last month that “all options are on the table” including a nuclear strike against Iran. Iran’s ambassador to the UN responded to these threats by sending a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to the UN Security Council in which he urged them to take action to condemn and stop these threats. Kofi Annan responded by accusing Iran of taking an “aggressive posture” and of refusing to engage in discussions to resolve the dispute. The UN Secretary-General said nothing against the U.S. threats of nuclear war against Iran.

As the Iranian ambassador pointed out in his letter, the UN Secretary-General and the UN Security Council are emboldening the United States by their silence. In contrast, the working class and people around the world, and the governments of a growing number of countries, are raising their voices to condemn the U.S. war preparations and threats against Iran.

Out of Afghanistan...from page 1

intelligence agencies that claimed that Iraq possessed huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. The Canadian troops are present in Afghanistan neither to keep the peace nor to strengthen democracy and protect the rights of women. On the contrary, they are there to assist the U.S. in its efforts to dominate Afghanistan and various other countries in the Middle East. This is an unjust war and Canadian soldiers should not be participating in it.

Contrary to Harper’s claims, it is those who are opposing the continued presence of Canadian forces in Afghanistan who are supporting the young men and women in the Canadian armed forces, while it is Harper’s government and the previous Liberal governments of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin which have put those soldiers in harm’s way. To make a contribution towards peace, democracy and human rights Canada must oppose the hegemonic policies of U.S. imperialism and various other imperialist powers. The first step is to immediately withdraw Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan.

For Your Information

Parliament Votes to Extend Afghan Mission to 2009

On May 17, following six hours of debate, the Canadian parliament decided by a vote of 149 to 145 to extend the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan by an additional two years. One hundred and twenty-five Conservatives and 24 Liberals voted for the motion, while 65 Liberals, 49 Bloc Quebecois and 29 NDP voted against. Ten Liberal and two Bloc MPs were absent for the vote.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper claims that the parliamentary vote on the decision to extend the mission was the fulfillment of his pre-election promise that all Canadian military commitments would be decided on by parliament, rather than by Cabinet alone. However, prior to the debate on the issue Harper announced that even if he lost the vote in parliament he intended to extend the mission by a year. Furthermore, the debate was held on six hours notice

in order to ensure that there was insufficient time for Canadians to mobilize against the decision. In his speech to parliament Harper claimed that a long debate on the issue would leave Canadian troops “vulnerable to violent enemy attacks”, although he failed to explain what connection, if any, exists between the two. He also implied that the Liberals, Bloc and NDP were being hypocritical in their opposition to an extension of the Afghan mission, given their support for the initial deployment of Canadian troops to that country in 2002.

Despite a massive propaganda campaign by the federal government and the monopoly media to convince Canadians of the correctness of the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan, more than half the respondents in recent polls indicated that they were opposed to any extension of the mission.

Israeli Apartheid Law...from page 1

Attorney General could point to only 25 individuals, from a group of thousands, who were interrogated for alleged involvement in terrorist activities. In response, Adalah argued that 25 individuals represented a minority of residents of the occupied territories who were the children of or married to Israeli citizens, which made the law completely disproportionate to its stated goals. Even without the law, Adalah noted, the state has a “graduated procedure” for awarding legal status to non-Palestinians seeking residency in Israel, including criminal and security background.

However, the majority of Supreme Court justices disagreed. Justice Mishael Heshin, representing the majority, argued that the right to human dignity “does not include any constitutional obligation on the state to allow foreigners married to Israeli citizens to enter the state.” He added that, in his opinion, the aim of the law – preventing the entry into Israel of “hostile elements to the security of the state” – was justified given the “state of war against the Palestinian Authority”. While two of the Supreme Court justices who upheld the law agreed it was unconstitutional, they also argued that while it violates constitutional rights, it is proportionate.

The justices arguing the minority position said not only did the law violate the premises of the basic guarantee to human dignity and liberty, but that the violation of rights was directed “against Arab citizens of Israel ... and therefore, is a violation of the right of Arab citizens of Israel to equality”. Supreme Court

Chief Justice Aharon Barak, who articulated the minority position, also rejected the majority view that the violation of rights was proportionate, because it does not allow for a case-by-case decision on whether non-Israeli citizens can enter Israel for reunification with their Israeli spouses and instead strips the rights of all in a “collective and sweeping manner”.

Responding to the Supreme Court Decision, the lead lawyer for Adalah, Hassan Jabreen, noted that the court “has instituted three tracks of citizenship on the basis of ethnic background: a direct track for Jews under the Law of Return; a middle track for foreigners according to the graduated procedure; and the harshest track, for Arab citizens.”

Modern Communism

**Bulletin of the Manitoba Regional Committee
of the Communist Party of Canada
(Marxist-Leninist)**

Editor: Ken Kaltornyk

To contact the Manitoba Branch of CPC(M-L):

Fax: 477-6741

Email: mrc-cpcml@mts.net

Internet: www.modern-communism.ca

Produced by volunteer labour