

## Editorial

### Canada's New Role in the Service of U.S. Imperialism

Until the end of the First World War, Canada was an economic dependency of Britain and its foreign policy was set in London. Thus, when Britain declared war on Germany in 1914 Canada was automatically at war with Germany as well. The economic decline of Britain following the war and the corresponding rise of U.S. economic power led to a shift in Canada's economic dependency from Britain to the U.S.

Following the Second World War Canada's foreign policy also shifted from serving British imperialism to serving U.S. imperialism. This became particularly apparent during the 1956 Suez Crisis when Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson sided with the U.S. against Britain, France

and Israel. Pearson proposed the creation of a UN peacekeeping force to separate the Egyptian and Israeli armies. However, the main purpose of the proposal was to assist U.S. imperialism in displacing the British and French imperialists as the dominant powers in the Middle East. Pearson was rewarded for his service to U.S. imperialism by being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

From 1956 until 1990 the Canadian military played a special role as "peacekeepers" in the service of U.S imperialism. Canadian peacekeepers were deployed to Cyprus to prevent the conflict there from splitting the NATO alliance and to keep Turkey in the U.S. orbit. Canada sent peacekeepers to the Golan

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## Commentary

### Harper's Double Standard and the U.S. Propaganda War Against Iran

On May 25, 2006 the *National Post* issued an apology for publishing a story that falsely accused the Iranian government of enacting legislation that would require the Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian minorities in Iran to wear distinctive coloured badges.

The *National Post* story was written by a prominent U.S. neo-conservative, Iranian-American Amir Taheri, a frequent contributor to the *Wall Street Journal*, and was initially published in the May 19th edition of the *National Post*. Alongside the story ran a 1935 photograph of a Jewish businessman in Berlin with a yellow star sewn on his overcoat, as required by Nazi legislation at the time. Immediately

after the publication of the article, an official in charge of the media department of Iran's embassy in Canada, Hormoz Qahremani, sent a letter to the *National Post* dismissing the veracity of the report.

Nevertheless, during a news conference on May 19 with Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that the report "might be true". A *Canadian Press* article reported on his remarks as follows:

"He [Stephen Harper] says Iran's hard-line Islamist government has proven itself capable of such extremism. 'Unfortunately, we've seen enough already from the Iranian regime to suggest that it is very capable of this kind of action,' Harper said.

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# Canada Renews Expanded NORAD Agreement Indefinitely

Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay and National Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor announced last week that a renewed North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) Agreement between Canada and the U.S. has come into effect following the May 8 vote in the House of Commons in favour of ratifying the agreement. The vote passed 257 to 30, with all members of the Conservatives, Liberals and Bloc Quebecois voting in favour of renewal.

Putting the renewal to a vote in parliament was in keeping with the Conservatives' pledge to bring all international treaties and agreements to parliament for approval, McKay said. In reality, the parliamentary debate and vote was simply a formality, as the new NORAD agreement had already been signed by O'Connor and the U.S. ambassador to Canada, David Wilkins, on April 28. The Conservatives did not announce the new agreement at the time it was signed. However, a U.S. State Department spokesperson confirmed the signature to a reporter from the Toronto Star.

"Our defence relationship with the United States is one of the pillars of our wider relationship. NORAD has been a key element of Canada-U.S. defence cooperation since its establishment in 1958," McKay said in the news release announcing the ratification. "Strengthening NORAD enhances Canada's ability to exercise its sovereignty and protect Canadian interests. It is a further step in our mutually beneficial defence and security relationship with the United States."

While previously the NORAD agreement needed to be reviewed every five years, the renewed agreement is now permanent, which, according to the same news release, "underscores the long-term commitment of both Canada and the U.S. to the joint defence of North America." Other changes to the agreement include expanding it to include maritime warning capabilities in the event of an attack on North America, which means NORAD will now monitor all North American oceans and lakes, in addition to airspace.

"Incorporating a maritime warning function into NORAD will assist in providing increased protection

against emerging threats such as terrorism," O'Connor stated. "It will increase the ability of Canada and the U.S. to work together in response to these threats. This is yet another example of the commitment by both nations to ensure that this binational command continues to adapt to new security challenges."

NORAD was first established in 1958, during the first phase of the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union for global domination. The agreement provided for binational air defence of the U.S. and Canada. Given the American's vast air force and air weapons industry, the agreement essentially committed the U.S. to defending Canadian airspace in the event of a Soviet attack. In exchange, Canada ceded sovereignty over its airspace in the event of an air attack, while Canadian military officials involved in implementing NORAD came under the control of the U.S. armed forces. Within a year of signing the NORAD Agreement, Canadian Prime Minister John Diefenbaker announced the cancellation of the Avro Arrow Airplane (CF-105) program. From then, the Canadian aerospace industry has been and remains, at least on the military production side, a series of branch plants producing parts for American warplanes.

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'We've seen a number of things from the Iranian regime that are along these lines.' 'And the fact that such a measure could even be contemplated is absolutely abhorrent.' Harper said he could not vouch for the accuracy of the report. But if true, he said it would be a throwback to one of the most odious chapters in human history. 'It boggles the mind that any regime on the face of the earth would want to do anything that could remind people of Nazi Germany,' he said. The report is a reminder that Iran must never be allowed to gain nuclear weapons, Harper said."

Harper apparently has no such qualms about Israel, despite the fact that Israel, unlike Iran, actually possesses nuclear weapons and has threatened to

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## For Your Information

# Canada Withdraws from UN Peacekeeping on the Golan Heights

On March 24, after 32 years of UN “peacekeeping” in the demilitarized zone on the Golan Heights between Israel and Syria, the Canadian government withdrew the 189 military personnel assigned to the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). After July, two Canadian officers will remain - one to serve as a military aide to the UNDOF commander, a second as senior staff officer to the continuing UNDOF mission.

Although part of Syria, the Golan Heights has been under Israeli military occupation since it was captured in 1967. Israel unilaterally annexed the part of the Golan under its control in 1981. More than 12,000 Canadian troops have served in the UN Disengagement Observer Force buffer zone since the 1970’s. The UNDOG was the last remaining significant involvement of Canada in UN “peacekeeping”, reducing Canada’s contribution to UN missions around the world to 59 military personnel - 18 troops and 41 military observers.

A report issued by the Polaris Institute on May 17 found that there are currently 64,322 military personnel participating in UN missions around the world. Canada currently contributes one-tenth of one

percent of these military personnel. It ranks 50th out of the 95 countries currently contributing military personnel to UN missions, just behind Romania with 63 personnel and just ahead of Mali with 54 personnel. In 2005, Canada ranked 35th out of 96 countries then contributing. Before the mid-1990s, Canada was consistently among the top 10 contributors to UN peacekeeping missions.

The report stated that “Canada is not alone in having virtually abandoned UN peacekeeping. In fact, most of the Western-aligned middle-power states now contribute very little to UN missions. The 26 members of NATO contribute in total only 2,173 military personnel (or 3.4 percent of the UN total), despite the fact that NATO militaries together account for 70 percent of the world’s military spending.”

The report also points out that since September 11, 2001 Canada has spent \$4.146 billion on military operations in or related to Afghanistan, or 68 percent of the \$6.132 billion spent on international missions between the fall of 2001 and the end of March 2006. During the same period, Canada devoted only \$214.2 million, or 3 percent of spending on United Nations military operations.

## For Your Information

# The Canadian Mission in Afghanistan

On October 7, 2001 the U.S launched military attacks on Afghanistan. The same day Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced that Canada would provide transport and patrol aircraft, frigates, supply ships and 900 troops to operations in Afghanistan. This was a unilateral and illegal action by the U.S. and several other countries. While the UN became involved in Afghanistan in December 2001, purportedly to help rebuild the country, Canadian forces have never been there under the auspices of the UN.

In February 2002 a contingent of 850 Canadian soldiers was sent to Afghanistan where it fought under U.S. command. In 2005 the Martin Liberal

government increased its commitment of troops to Afghanistan to a total of 2,300. In early 2006 the Canadian forces were put in charge of operations in the region around Kandahar, where the Taliban forces have been making a comeback. However, in the aftermath of the recent U.S. bombing of a village near Kandahar in which a large number of civilians were killed, it was revealed that the Canadian forces are not really in charge and that there are two levels of U.S. command above them.

While the U.S. is pressuring Canada and other NATO allies to increase their military commitment in Afghanistan, the Bush administration is in the process of withdrawing 4000 of its own troops from that country.

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Heights following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war in order to keep that conflict from undermining support for U.S. imperialism in the rest of the Arab world. At the same time, its role as a "peacekeeper" gave Canada a level of influence and prestige in international affairs far beyond its economic and military power. This, in turn, allowed Canada to play a diplomatic role in which it represented the interests of U.S. imperialism in situations where the latter could not intervene directly, especially in cases involving the conflicting interests of the Soviet Union.

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91, the role of Canada as an "honest broker" on behalf of the U.S. was no longer needed. Furthermore, the U.S. was determined to establish a unipolar "new world order" with itself at the centre. While the United Nations has never lived up to the aspirations of the world's people for it to be a force for peace and security, the U.S. feared that it could potentially emerge as a rival to U.S. authority, either in the hands of the smaller countries or, more likely, in the hands of its imperialist rivals. Therefore, beginning with the first Bush administration and continuing through the Clinton and second Bush administrations, the U.S. has taken systematic measures to undermine the

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use them against its neighbours. In addition, Israeli members of the Knesset, including cabinet ministers, routinely make racist remarks against Arabs and call for the "ethnic cleansing" of the West Bank and Gaza. There have also been reports of the Israeli Defence Forces tattooing identification numbers on the arms of Palestinian men and studying the tactics used by the Nazis against the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising as a model for the suppression of the resistance in Ramallah and elsewhere. Yet Harper has never said a single critical word about Israel and has been silent on the recent call by the Arab League that the Middle East should be made a nuclear-free zone.

In addition, Harper apparently has no qualms about the United States possessing nuclear weapons, despite the fact that the Bush administration has adopted a nuclear first strike policy and is openly discussing the use of tactical nuclear warheads against Iranian nuclear research facilities. And, to paraphrase Harper, we've seen enough already from the Bush regime to suggest that it is very capable of this kind of action.

authority of the UN. The First Gulf War and the various wars in the Balkans were waged by NATO forces without the authorization of the UN Security Council. Peacekeeping operations in Africa were sabotaged, leading to the disaster in Rwanda and elsewhere.

In response to the changing needs of U.S. imperialism, the role of the Canadian armed forces also began to change. Canadian forces participated in the First Gulf War in a supporting role and then took on a combat role in the Kosovo War. The Canadian government stopped talking about "peacekeeping" and began to talk about "peacemaking". Now with the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan the role of the Canadian military has been transformed completely from "peacekeeping" or even "peacemaking", into an aggressive role alongside the invading armies.

The Harper Conservatives, with the full support of a section of the Liberal Party, is now consolidating this new role for the Canadian military. Even the pretence of an independent foreign or military policy is being abandoned and the Canadian Armed Forces are being more and more integrated into the U.S. command structure. The Canadian mission in Afghanistan is not an anomaly but the new model for Canada's military subservience to U.S. imperialism.

Harper's double standard on this issue indicates that his comments about Iran have nothing to do with truth, justice or protecting the lives of the people of the Middle East. Rather, they are part and parcel of the U.S. imperialist propaganda war against Iran, the purpose of which is prepare public opinion for a U.S.-led military assault against that country.

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