

## Editorial

## McKay Attempts to Whip Up Support for Endless War in Afghanistan

Conservative Defence Minister Peter McKay spent most of last week appealing to NATO members to step up their military commitment in Afghanistan. After meeting with his counterparts in the Netherlands, Britain and Norway in the first half of the week, he paid a visit to U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Thursday to report on his discussions with the Europeans. “If the job is not done in Afghanistan, if countries like Canada leave, the Taliban can follow them,” McKay told Canadian reporters in Washington. “By that I mean these threats are not going to stay isolated. We know that Afghanistan was an incubator and an exporter of terror.” He further stated: “There is a pressing need for other partners to step forward and share that burden.”

Of course, these claims by McKay are just a

scare tactic and few Canadians, let alone Europeans, believe him. The Taliban was established and the warlords of the Northern Alliance were organized by the U.S., with the assistance of Pakistan’s intelligence agencies, to wrest control of Afghanistan away from the Soviet Union. While the U.S. and its allies recruited, trained and armed tens of thousands of foreign jihadists to enter Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet army, there is little evidence that the Taliban, or any other Afghan group for that matter, has ever sent fighters abroad.

On the other hand, Mr. McKay’s friends in Washington have a long history of training terrorists both at home and abroad and using those terrorists against their enemies. Furthermore, since the Second World War the U.S. has unleashed more terror on the

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## Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila Massacres

From September 16-18, 1982, members of the Israeli-backed, Israeli-trained and Israeli-armed Lebanese Phalangist mercenaries murdered between 2,000 and 3,000 unarmed civilian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in West Beirut. This was a well-organized operation, conducted almost entirely in secret, in an area completely under the control of Israeli soldiers. All evidence confirms that the massacres were carried out with the full knowledge of senior members of Israel’s political and military establishment.

Israel invaded Lebanon on June 6, 1982, allegedly in response to the Palestine Liberation Organization’s (PLO) attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to London a couple of days earlier. In

reality, the invasion had been in the planning stages for some time, with Israel looking for an excuse to act and wipe out PLO forces in Lebanon. Then-Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon said Israeli troops intended to advance only 40 kilometres into southern Lebanon to “neutralize” bases from which the PLO was attacking northern Israel. However, within 12 days of the invasion, Israeli troops had reached Beirut and launched an intensive shelling operation which resulted in the death of an estimated 18,000 civilians.

After two months, a U.S.-brokered ceasefire was negotiated. This specified that the PLO would evacuate Beirut under the supervision of a multinational force and that the tens of thousands of

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Palestinian refugees living in camps in Beirut would be protected. The evacuation of the PLO ended on September 1 and the multinational forces left Beirut on September 10.

The next day, on September 11, Sharon declared that thousands of “terrorists” still remained inside the refugee camps around Beirut. As a result, on September 15 the Israeli army occupied West Beirut, surrounding and sealing off the Sabra and Shatila camps. This fact was confirmed by an Israeli military press release issued on September 16.

Prior to invading Lebanon, Israel had supported the Lebanese Phalangist mercenaries during Lebanon’s civil war, and their close working relationship continued after the invasion. Well-known for committing atrocities against the Muslim Lebanese population, the Phalangists were, according to Israeli military sources, “ruthless”, “bloodthirsty” and dedicated to ethnically cleansing all Palestinian refugees from Lebanon.

Israeli military commanders decided that, while they would maintain their positions around Sabra and Shatila, they would leave entering the camps to combat the “terrorists” within to the Phalangists. According to several senior Israeli military leaders, and confirmed by Sharon himself, Israeli command received the following instructions on September 15: “[Israeli] forces are forbidden to enter the refugee camps. The mopping-up of the camps will be carried out by the Phalanges.”

Phalangist forces entered both Sabra and Shatila shortly after 5 p.m. on September 16. According to testimony he later gave under oath, Israeli General Amir Drori phoned Sharon at this time and told him: “Our friends are advancing into the camps. We have co-ordinated their entry.” Sharon replied: “Congratulations. Our friends’ operation is approved.” Over the next 40 hours the militia raped, killed and injured the thousands of unarmed civilians, mostly children, women and the elderly. Israeli army leaders were in continuous contact with the militia leaders directing the massacre throughout the entire “operation”. Not only did they not intervene to stop it, they stopped those trying to escape the camps and assisted the Phalangists by providing night flares.

Israeli forces permitted the International Committee of the Red Cross to enter Sabra and Shatila on September 20 where it found over 1,000 dead bodies and thousands more injured. Estimates are that another 1,000 to 2,000 bodies were either bulldozed by the Phalangists or removed from the camps between September 16 and 20 in large convoy

trucks which were seen leaving and returning to the camps repeatedly by hundreds of eyewitnesses

On September 19 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 521 condemning the massacre, although, at the insistence of the U.S., the resolution excluded direct reference to Israel’s role. This condemnation was followed by a December 16 General Assembly resolution that declared the massacre to be an “act of genocide”. (see sidebar) This was one of a series of UN resolutions condemning Israeli actions in Lebanon as well as the occupied Palestinian territories.

To date, not a single individual has been held criminally responsible for this crime. The only Israeli investigation into the genocide was a parliamentary commission headed by a former Supreme Court justice, Yitzhak Kahan, which had no legal authority to back up its findings. The Kahan Commission held the majority of its hearings in camera, for what it described as reasons of national security. Not a single survivor of the genocide testified before the commission, although several high-ranking Israeli and Phalangist military officials did.

The Commission’s report concluded that Ariel Sharon was “personally responsible” for the massacres. Sharon, who was forced to resign shortly after the commission’s report was delivered, remained active in political life in Israel and was elected Prime Minister in 2002. While the Kahan Commission’s findings and recommendations have been made public, along with a first appendix of evidence, the second appendix has never been and never will be published as Kahan and his fellow commissioners felt that “non-publication of this material is essential in the interests of protecting the nation’s security or foreign relations.”

An attempt to bring those responsible for the genocide to justice was launched in Belgium in 2001 by 23 survivors of the massacres, but was thwarted by pressure from the Bush administration. Donald Rumsfeld personally raised the issue with Belgian lawmakers, threatening that if the Belgian law which allowed for the prosecution of war crimes conducted in foreign countries was not weakened, the U.S. would withhold massive funding for NATO operations and building projects. Rumsfeld is also reported to have threatened that the U.S. would move NATO out of Belgium altogether unless the law was watered down. The Belgian law was changed in June 2003.

The International Campaign for Justice for the Victims of Sabra and Shatila was trying to have Ariel Sharon tried before the International Court in The Hague. However, their efforts stalled following Sharon’s massive stroke in 2006.

# UN Security Council Resolution 521

The Security Council,  
Appalled at the massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut,  
Having heard the report of the Secretary-General (S/15400),

Noting that the Government of Lebanon has agreed to the dispatch of United Nations observers to the sites of greatest human suffering and losses in and around that city,

1. Condemns the criminal massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beirut;

2. Reaffirms once again its resolutions 512 (1982) and 513 (1982) which call for respect for the rights of the civilian population without any discrimination and repudiates all acts of violence against that population;

3. Authorizes the Secretary-General as an immediate step to increase the number of United Nations observers in and around Beirut from 10 to 50 and insists that there shall be no interference with the deployment of the observers and that they shall have full freedom of movement;

4. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon, to ensure the rapid deployment of those observers in order that they may contribute in every way possible, within their mandate, to the effort to ensure full protection for the civilian population;

5. Requests the Secretary-General as a matter of urgency to initiate appropriate consultations and, in particular, consultations with the Government of Lebanon on additional steps which the Council might take, including the possible deployment of United Nations forces, to assist that Government in ensuring full protection for the civilian population in and around Beirut and requests him to report to the Council within 48 hours;

6. Insists that all concerned must permit United Nations observers and forces established by the Security Council in Lebanon to be deployed and to discharge their mandates and in this connexion solemnly calls attention to the obligation on all

# UN General Assembly Resolution on Sabra and Shatila Massacre

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution 95 (I) of 11 December, 1946,

*Recalling also* its resolution 96 (I) of 11 December, 1946, in which it, *inter alia*, affirmed that genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principals and accomplices - whether private individuals, public officials or statesmen, and whether the crime is committed on religious, racial, political or any other grounds - are punishable,

*Referring* to the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December, 1948,<sup>6/</sup>

*Recalling* the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August, 1949,<sup>2/</sup>

*Appalled* at the large-scale massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps situated at Beirut,

*Recognizing* the universal outrage and condemnation of that massacre,

*Recalling* its resolution ES-7/9 of 24 September, 1982,

1. *Condemns in the strongest terms* the large-scale massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps;

2. *Resolves* that the massacre was an act of genocide.

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Member States, under Article 25 of the Charter, to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council in accordance with the Charter;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Council informed on an urgent and continuing basis.

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2396th meeting on 19 September, 1982

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world's people, in the form of bombs and missiles and at the hands of its troops, than any other country in the history of the world. It is rather ironic, therefore, that Mr. McKay would warn the people of North America and Europe about the incubators and exporters of terror from the very capital of the world's foremost terrorist nation.

Polls conducted in Canada indicate decreasing support for Canada's mission in Afghanistan, while in Europe there is virtually no support for the war, which is seen as an American adventure with no hope of success. This view is shared by many European leaders, which means that McKay's appeal will almost certainly fall on deaf ears. The Netherlands is currently debating its continuing participation in the mission and there is widespread speculation that a withdrawal by the Dutch would lead to the unravelling of the 40-country "alliance of the willing" cobbled together by the Bush administration in the wake of the September 11 attacks..

Just like his U.S. masters, McKay likes to pretend that victory is just around the corner and that a short, concerted "surge" of military force by the major NATO partners will bring peace and security to Afghanistan. However, he is ignoring over two millennia of history – from Alexander the Great to the vaunted Red Army – that proves that there is no military solution in Afghanistan. Most of the European NATO members have actually studied history and recognize that a political solution involving the Taliban is the only way to end the conflict. However, there is increasing evidence that the U.S. and its closest allies, including Canada, do not really want to bring the conflict to an end, despite its toll in human life and the billions of dollars it is costing. As long as the U.S. and allied forces are in Afghanistan, they pose a threat to its neighbours – Iran on the west and Pakistan to the east – and can be used to influence the policies of those countries.

Other powerful economic interests are also involved in prolonging the conflict. Of course, the arms manufacturers are one such interest. However, it has recently been revealed that the major international pharmaceutical companies vetoed a proposal to put an end to the illicit opium trade in Afghanistan by buying all the opium produced by Afghan farmers and using it to produce legal pain-killers. At present, the cost of opium-based narcotic pain-killers is extremely high and they are available only to the world's wealthiest nations and people. The sheer volume of Afghan

opium production would have flooded the pharmaceutical markets with cheap narcotics and driven down the profits of the legalized drug cartels, so they demanded that the Bush administration block any efforts to legalize Afghan opium.

The eradication campaign favoured by the U.S. military not only maintains premium prices for legal narcotics, but also drives up prices for illicit drugs, thereby increasing the profits of the illicit drug cartels, which likewise have innumerable links to the U.S. state, as well as many other states. In fact, many of the key members of the Karzai government in Afghanistan make their money from the opium trade, with the full knowledge of the U.S. and Canadian governments. With such powerful economic and political interests benefitting from a state of war in Afghanistan, it is clearly fraudulent to suggest that the governments backing those interests – such as the U.S. and Canada – have any desire to end the war or the occupation.

Therefore, no matter how often Peter McKay declares that victory is just around the corner or that failure will bring terrorism to our own doorsteps, in reality the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan has little to do with either peace or ending terrorism and there is no end in sight. The military occupation of Afghanistan provides the U.S. with a geo-political advantage over its imperialist rivals and a state of endless war brings super profits to both the arms and drug cartels – legal and illegal. It is no accident that the U.S. has been adamantly opposed to "nation-building" in Afghanistan from the beginning or that the Harper Conservatives have also abandoned such a role for Canadian forces. In the words of former Bush advisor Richard Perle, the war on terror is a "war without end" and that is the real mission that McKay is trying to sell to Canadians.

## **Modern Communism**

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