



CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

125 Brandon Avenue, Toronto, ON M6H 2E2

www.canadianpeacecongress.ca

No to US-NATO Military Intervention in Libya! No to Canadian Military Involvement in Libya!

Canadian Peace Congress Statement on Events in Libya

04 March 2011

As the crisis in Libya deepens, the Canadian Peace Congress denounces the rapid moves by imperialist forces – including the U.S., E.U., NATO, Canada and Israel – to intervene and exploit the conflict to their advantage. We call on the minority Harper Conservative government to withdraw the offensive Canadian JTF-2 Special Forces who have been deployed to the region, recall the heavily armed HMCS Charlottetown and refrain from deploying logistical air refuelling and support power, and halt the implementation of offensive CF-18's to the region. Furthermore, the Canadian government must oppose the United Nations Security Council's imposition of sanctions which will only result in the death and injury of Libyan people, and reject any form of foreign military intervention including the use of no-fly zones which will involve massive bombardment to neutralize existing Libyan air defences.

While the composition and demands of the movement against the Qaddafi regime are not clear at this point, there is a strong component that is decidedly reactionary in nature. This element, centred in Eastern Libya, includes the so-called "National Front for the Salvation of Libya" which is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and is closely tied to anti-Qaddafi exiles; pro-monarchist forces which have never forgiven Qaddafi for overthrowing the king in 1969; and the Muslim brotherhood. These forces are pressing for theocratic, feudal and pro-imperialist objectives, and it is they who have attracted the keen interest and support of large oil corporations and the Western governments.

The recent, successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have placed those countries at the delicate, opening stages of profound change. How these societies develop remains an open question, but two things are already clear: first, the events in Tunisia and Egypt have served as a catalyst for similar popular protests throughout the Middle East and North Africa; second, the emergence of powerful, sovereigntist people's movements poses a dramatic threat to the balance of forces in the region, which has until now favoured the policies of transnational energy corporations, the imperialist states of Europe and North America, and the government of Israel. This threat is the primary motivator behind the desperate attempts to generate pretexts for foreign military interference in Libya.

The current efforts by Western governments to demonize Qaddafi as a murderous madman who has committed crimes against humanity are eerily reminiscent of the similar treatment that Saddam Hussein received prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq, and should give pause for sober reflection. Reports of Libyan military strikes against unarmed civilians are distressing and such actions, if substantiated, deserve strong condemnation. However, it is dangerously hypocritical to demand that Qaddafi answer for these allegations without demanding that imperialist leaders answer for their role in bombing civilians in Yugoslavia in 1999, or for bulldozing trenches filled with live Iraqi soldiers in 2003, or for massacring thousands of civilians in US-NATO actions over the past decade, or for knowingly handing Afghan detainees over to torture.

The Canadian Peace Congress is concerned that some voices in the broader peace movement have called for the governments of Canada and other countries to intervene in Libya, citing the doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect" or R2P. While the outrage over reports of civilian deaths is understandable, the R2P doctrine is framed in a manner that ignores the geopolitical realities of the current imperialist world order. From the experiences of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia, two US-led invasions of Iraq, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and the coup in Haiti in 2004, it is very clear that

foreign interventions under the guise of humanitarianism immediately transform into violent, exploitative campaigns whose aim is to control regions, peoples and resources for the benefit of powerful international entities. By citing the “Responsibility to Protect”, the peace movement inadvertently becomes a political fig leaf for imperialist intervention.

The danger of war, including the use of nuclear weapons, is very real and is being fuelled by the military involvement of the US, EU, NATO and Israel. There are reports that hundreds of American, British and French military personnel have already landed in Libya, along with Canadian JTF2 forces, to act as “defence advisors” to sections of the anti-Qaddafi forces. The United Nations Security Council has imposed sanctions on Libya and there are moves to militarily enforce a no-fly zone over the eastern part of the country, a military measure that would necessarily be preceded by massive bombardment. Several countries – including Canada – have already contributed heavily armed warships to a naval armada in international waters off Libya.

If there is to be any hope of peace, democracy and progress in Libya, this interference must be opposed and reversed. Libya must not be allowed to become a US-NATO military base in North Africa, the springboard for imperialist efforts to manipulate and corrupt the popular movements in Tunisia, Egypt and beyond. Ostensibly, imperialist moves to interfere in Libya emerge from their opposition to democratic, sovereigntist and progressive forces in Libya and throughout the entire region. Libya could serve as a dangerous precedent for imperialism to block all popular uprisings in the region and throughout the world.

It is the sole right and task of the people Libya to determine the course of their political and economic development, free from foreign interference. As the World Peace Council stated, “We underline the right of the Libyan people to express their anger and agony and their demands for changes in the social and economic field and their sovereign right to determine the political developments in their own country. The [imperialist governments] which are serving the interests of the multinational corporations and international capital are searching for opportunity to take more and open control of the oil and gas resources of Libya and expand their spheres of influence.”

The key responsibility of the peace movement in Canada is to prevent Canadian involvement in aggressive, unjust and illegal military endeavours. In light of this responsibility, the Canadian Peace Congress:

- declares its solidarity with the Libyan people and demands an end to the bloodshed;
- denounces the UN sanctions against the Libyan people;
- calls on the Canadian government to withdraw from its military interference, including cancelling the deployment of the HMCS Charlottetown;
- opposes any foreign military intervention, including efforts to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.

-30-

*Canadian Peace Congress Executive Council
March 4, 2011*

About the Canadian Peace Congress:

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 as an organization of Canadian people that works for world peace and disarmament. We maintain that peace, not militarism and war, is the guarantor of democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice. The Congress is affiliated to the World Peace Council and is a founding member of the Canadian Peace Alliance.

For more information on the Canadian Peace Congress, or to join, please contact:

Dave McKee
President, Canadian Peace Congress
dmckee@canadianpeacecongress.ca