

Saskatchewan PEACE NEWS

VOLUME 17 NO. 1

JUNE 2010

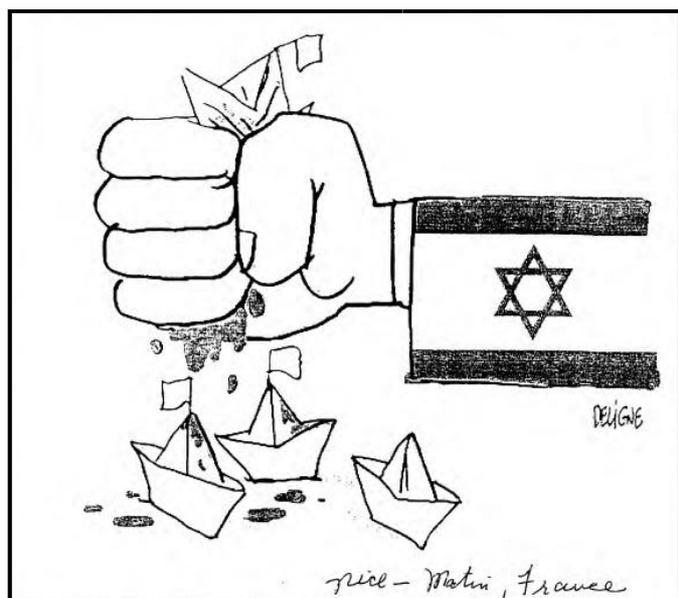
World Peace Council Condemns Israeli Attack on Aid Flotilla

The World Peace Council, to which the Regina Peace Council is affiliated through the Canadian Peace Congress, issued a statement May 31, 2010, condemning the Israeli attack on the international flotilla bringing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza. The statement said, in part:

The World Peace Council condemns the military attack during which more than sixteen civilians of different nationalities lost their lives and more than 60 were injured. This massacre produced by the Israeli government proves once more the reactionary nature of the regime which for decades has denied not only the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state, but also humanitarian aid to the people of Palestine, suffering under Israeli occupation and aggressive attacks such as the one in 2008.

The World Peace Council expresses its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just demand for establishment of an independent state within 1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Likewise we express our solidarity with the peace loving forces inside Israel, who struggle side by side with the Palestinian people against the occupation of Palestinian lands.

The recent action of Israel constitutes a crime of international dimension, since the Israeli aggression has the political support and toleration of the U.S., the European Union and other imperialist structures. The World Peace Council expresses its deep concern for the escalation of imperialist aggressiveness in the region and calls upon the peace loving forces of the countries of the area to stay alerted and vigilant toward further attacks. □



An expression of opinion from a newspaper in Nice, France

Congo — A History of Foreign Domination

As the world recognized Africa Day on May 25th, it had become abundantly clear that "peace-making" forces sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) - for example MINUSATH in Haiti, ISAF in Afghanistan, MONUC in Democratic Republic of Congo and MINIURCAT in Chad and Central African Republic -- are incapable of bringing peace and stability. Increasingly, these interventions are being seen as enforcing the economic and political interests of the Great Powers seated on the Security Council as opposed to resolving deep-rooted socio-economic and political problems in the recipient nations.

The Peace Operations Working Group of the Peacebuild network reports that in 2009 with 97,569 military and police serving in 15 missions, the United Nations deploys and supports more troops more than any other entity in the world except for the defence department of the United States - more than UK, France, China and Russia combined. Growing five-fold in the last ten years, the UN now deploys more troops than at any time in its history. Peacebuild observes that UN missions are most notable in Africa and are "now more robust, more multi-faceted and more complex." The current United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC) is the UN's largest with an estimated annual budget of US\$1 billion. In 2009, twelve Canadians (all military) were part of MONUC.

Idriss Deby, President of Chad, has indicated that MINIURCAT has failed to protect civilians and construct infrastructure projects as promised. The UNSC will start withdrawing troops from Chad and the Central African Republic this July with complete withdrawal by December 31 st. The UNSC has tentatively complied with Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila's request that UN troops be withdrawn from the country by August 2011.

Bountiful Riches and Colonial Plundering

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is pivotal to the future of the African continent. The country of 65 million borders nine other African nations. With a size of Western Europe, the DRC holds practically every mineral known to man. The DRC contains most of the planet's cobalt reserves and produces 21% of the world's gold. The country could literally become the powerhouse of Africa with a single proposed mega-dam on the mighty Congo River (Grand Inga project) increasing Africa's total electricity supply by 50 percent. After Brazil, the DRC has the second largest rain forest in the world. The fertile land of the DRC could reportedly feed a population of 9 billion - the estimated world population by 2050.

The riches of the DRC have not gone unnoticed. In the 1400s Europeans made contact with the Kongo Empire and began utilizing Kongolese trading routes for commerce in natural resources (e.g., ivory) and slaves. With so many people sold into slavery, by the 19th century the Kongo Empire had collapsed due to the lack of human resources and the cost of war with the Portuguese. Called by Portugal and organized by Otto

von Bismarck, Chancellor of Germany, the Congo Conference of 1884-85 held in Berlin proclaimed the Congo Free State as private property of the Congo Society which was controlled by King Leopold of Belgium. The United States was the first country to recognize the Congo Free State under the ownership of King Leopold II. In the 23 years of Leopold's rule, 10 to 15 million Congolese died due to exploitation and disease. In 1908, the Belgium state took control over the Congo until Congolese independence on June 30, 1960.

A Promising Independence

The Republic of Congo's first democratically elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba declared Congo for the Congolese. He immediately faced opposition from the colonial powers and mining interests which backed an armed secessionist movement in the southeastern province of Katanga headed by businessman Moise Tshombe. In a military coup, Congolese Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko) overthrew Lumumba in September 1960. The illegitimate regime placed Lumumba under arrest and then with CIA assistance abducted him to Katanga where he was interrogated, tortured and murdered on January 17, 1961 with his body being dismembered and dissolved in hydrochloric acid.

In November, 1965 Gen. Mobutu again seized power and began a 32-year reign of brutality. In 1968, under the guise of granting amnesty to Pierre Mulele, leader of the 1964 Simba rebellion and former minister of education under Lumumba, President Mobutu Sese Seko had Mulele publicly tortured and executed, his eyes were pulled from their sockets, his genitals ripped off, his limbs amputated one-by-one, all while he was alive. From 1965 to 1991, Mobutu received more than US\$1.5 billion in military and economic assistance from the US. In return, US corporations increased their share of the Congo's fabulous mineral wealth. US presidents Ronald Regan and George H.W. Bush respectively praised Mobutu as "a voice of good sense and goodwill" and "our best friend in Africa."

Mobutu's dictatorship came to an abrupt end on May 17, 1997 when forces led by Laurent-Desire Kabila captured Kinshasa with the backing of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. By 1998, Kabila's former allies of Rwanda and Uganda turned against him and backed a new rebellion to remove him from power. Seven other African countries became involved. The conflict which is often referred to as Africa's First World War officially ended in July 1999 as a result of peace talks led by South Africa. Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement has been difficult and marked with continued warfare and interference in Congolese affairs.

In a failed coup attempt, DRC President Laurent Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001. He was replaced by his son Joseph Kabila. In 2003, the DRC established a transition government and parliament which wrote a new Congolese constitution that was overwhelmingly approved by referendum in 2006. National elections were also held which saw Joseph Kabila elected as president. Antonie Gizenga who served as deputy prime minister in

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Patrice Lumumba's 1960 government was named prime minister. In October 2008, he was superseded by Adolphe Muzito.

Appropriation of Congolese Wealth - Still On the Table

The Rwandan and Ugandan invasions of 1996 and 1998 are primarily about gaining access to the DRC's immense mineral wealth. The systematic looting and appropriation of Congolese resources by Rwanda and Uganda was clearly identified in a December 2008 United Nations report. According to Nicholas Bariyo reporting in the *Dow Jones Newswire* on May 15th, Rwanda's mining sector output grew by 20% in 2008 mainly due to increased export volumes of tungsten, cassiterite (tin) and coltan. His article also reports that Rwanda has no large-scale mining industry and that a large part of the minerals are smuggled into the country from the DRC's North Kivu province.

The actions of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi have resulted in the deaths of 6 million Congolese and laid the foundation for the balkanization of the DRC or the outright annexation of eastern DRC by Rwanda. One may ask why Rwanda has been able to commit such notable atrocities in the DRC without receiving a meaningful reprimand from the United Nations and others despite the fact that two European courts have charged its top leadership with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Sweden and The Netherlands are withholding aid from Rwanda as a result of its aggressions against the Congolese people. The answer lies primarily in Washington, Paris and Brussels.



In November 2008, Herman Cohen, former Mobutu lobbyist and U.S. assistant secretary of state for Africa under George H.W. Bush, argues in a *New York Times* article titled "Can

Africa Trade Its Way to Peace," that "having controlled the Kivu provinces for 12 years, Rwanda will not relinquish access to resources." Cohen also believes that "the free movement of people would empty the refugee camps and would allow the densely populated countries of Rwanda and Burundi to supply needed labor to Congo and Tanzania." This all would be facilitated by creating a Central or East African free trade zone as advocated by the United States and France.

More often than not, U.S. foreign policy involves the presence or use of its military. Since 2001, according to African sources, the U.S. military has operated a base built by Dick Cheney's Halliburton at Cyanguu in western Rwanda near its border with the DRC. In a move to counter increased Chinese presence in Africa, President George W. Bush created AFRICOM, an independent U.S. military command dedicated to the entire African continent (except Egypt), in October 2007. AFRICOM currently has cooperative security location or 'lily-pad' agreements with a dozen African nations stretching from Nigeria to Zambia and Botswana. AFRICOM's official mission is to "promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy." In January 2009, AFRICOM reported that its Brig. Gen. Mike Callan had met with Rwandan military chief Gen. James Kabarebe in Kigali to discuss turning Rwanda into central and eastern Africa's "air hub" for both military and civilian air traffic. Rwandan President Paul Kagame is a former student of the U.S. military training base at Fort Leavenworth and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's son, Lt. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni graduated from the same college in the summer of 2008.

China Enters the Fray

In April 2007, as the DRC emerged from widespread warfare, a Chinese consortium concluded a US\$9 billion joint venture agreement with the Joseph Kabila government which would see new infrastructure: roads, two hydroelectric dams, hospitals, schools and railway links constructed in exchange for the right to mine 10 million tonnes of copper and 600,000 tonnes of cobalt. China agreed to put US\$6 billion into the DRC in the first four years before a new mine would enter into production in 2014. Other Chinese companies came as well. For example, China's ZTE Corp. has signed a US\$1 billion deal to construct a gigantic three million hectare (more than 5 times the size of Prince Edward Island) palm oil plantation. In his late 2008 occupation of northern Kivu province, rebel leader Gen. Laurent Nkunda (known to be backed by Rwanda) demanded that the DRC government in Kinsasha cancel its agreement with China. He said nothing about the developing Tenke Fungurume copper/cobalt project owned by Freeport McMoRan Gold and Copper Company (Freeport) of the U.S.

The DRC-China deal bartering infrastructure construction for mineral rights caused so much concern in the U.S. and France that in May 2009 Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and former French finance and industry minister, said the IMF wouldn't write-off the US\$10 billion of DRC's foreign debt incurred

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by Mobutu Sese Seko and owed to the Paris Club of investors unless the agreement with the Chinese consortium was changed. If the DRC had ready recourse to Chinese support, the Kabila government might be emboldened in its current review of existing mining contracts. The DRC and China rejected the criticism saying that no new debt for the DRC would be created because the Export-Import Bank of China would be funding the deal and taking all the risk. Peter Lee in a March 11th article for *Asia Times* reports that the DRC-China joint venture may be in trouble: under IMF pressure the Kabila government has deferred the second US\$3 billion infrastructure tranche; a Hong Kong court has awarded US\$100 million to the FG Hemisphere hedge fund and blocked the payment of signing fees by China Railways to the DRC until the award has been paid; Gecamines, China's local partner, is in trouble (US\$23 million of the first installment of the Chinese signing bonus has gone missing); two important supporters of the DRC-China deal, Canadian Paul Fortin, former manager of Gecamines and Victor Kasongo, former vice-minister of mines and the man behind the recent review of all of Congo's mining contracts, have left the scene; and opposition parties and NGOs in the DRC are now questioning the terms of the DRC China agreement. As presidential elections approach, the struggle for influence and advantage in the DRC intensifies.

In the China-IMF-DRC equation there is another factor: the Tenke Fungurume copper project. The Tenke Fungurume concessions are twice the size of the Chinese Sicomines project and encompass an area of over 1,500 square kilometres in Katanga province. The DRC government wishes to reinstate provisions of the initial concession granted by Mobutu Sese Seko which gave the government a 45% stake in the project instead of the current Freeport agreement of a 17.5% share. Over the life of the mine, the difference amounts to the revenue from 5 million tonnes copper worth at least US\$30 billion. In addition, certain undeveloped portions of the Tenke Fungurume reserves may be reallocated to the Chinese project. Canadian-based Lundin Mining owns a 24.75% share of the Tenke Fungurume project.

Canadian Mining Companies - In on the Action in a Big Way

With US\$5 billion invested, Canada is reportedly the largest non-African investor in the DRC mining sector. *Conflictminerals.org* states that 22 Canadian mining companies are active in the DRC. The TMX (Toronto Stock and TSX Venture stock exchanges) boasts that it is the top stock exchange for mining on the African continent. In 2009, a record CDN\$22.3 billion (34% of total global mining equity capital) was raised by TMX-traded mining companies. The TMX lists 1,428 mining companies which represent 55% of the world's public mining companies. Alone the DRC has 20 TMX-traded mining companies operating on its territory. In November 2007, Canadian company First Quantum Minerals Ltd. began operations at its Frontier mine in the DRC. *Reuters* reported on May 22nd that the DRC's Supreme Court had revoked First Quantum's right to minerals at its Frontier and Lonshi mines in southern DRC. First Quantum was already in a dispute

with the Kabila government in Kinshasa after it closed the company's Kingamyambo Musonoi Tailings mining project in September 2009. In a May 18th article by Michael J. Kavanagh, Bloomberg reports that, under protest, mining companies in the DRC are paying a new tax on exports of unrefined copper and cobalt ore. To encourage companies to refine minerals, the Kabila government has also prohibited the export of unrefined minerals beginning April 8th. The DRC's Ministry of Mines also wants to boost its revenue from the greater value of refined copper and cobalt.

UN Security Council - Complicit Behaviour and Failed Humanitarian Intervention

As a result of the Belgian-inspired Katangan secessionist revolt in July 1960, the UNSC adopted Resolution 143 on July 14 which called for Belgium to remove its troops from Katanga province and for the UN to provide military assistance (UNOC) to the new Republic of Congo. On August 9 the Security Council passed Resolution 146 which forbade UNOC to "intervene in or influence the outcome" of the so-called internal conflict. In September 1960 faced with UN reluctance to provide military assistance, the Lumumba government requested and received support from the Soviet Union which airlifted Congolese troops fighting secessionists. Subsequently, the UN closed all Congolese airports under their control along with the radio station in Leopoldville. This halted the Soviet-supported airlift. With CIA help Gen. Joseph Mobutu seized power in a military coup, suspended parliament and the constitution, and arrested Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba was placed under house arrest with a guard of UN troops. After Lumumba's murder in Katanga, in which many feel the UNOC was complicit, the UNOC remained in the Republic of Congo until June 30, 1964 when Moïse Tshombé, leader of the Katanga secession, became Congolese Prime Minister. The Congo intervention created a financial crisis in the United Nations with France and the Soviet Union refusing to pay any of the UNOC's cost. Canada contributed about 400 troops to the UNOC.

The United Nation's second military presence in the Congo (MONUC) was initiated by the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of July 1999 and followed UNSC Resolution 1258 of August 6, 1999. The initial MONUC mandate was to monitor the ceasefire agreement which included the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops from eastern DRC. Since that time, the Security Council has adopted progressively interventionist policies toward the DRC. The UNSC increased the number of MONUC troops, military observers, police and civilian personnel in the DRC to about 25,500 and authorized EU-led (non-UN) troops to support MONUC on several occasions in 2003, 2006 and 2008. MONUC's October 2004 mandate which remains valid to this day authorizes the use of "all necessary means" to promote reestablishment of confidence and discourage violence in the DRC as well as to ensure protection of civilians (including humanitarian personnel) under imminent threat of physical violence. MONUC's protection of civilians has come under severe criticism as Congolese and others have accused it of not adequately protecting the civilian population and even participating in the rape of Congolese women which has become a hallmark of warfare in the DRC. Some 41,000

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Congolese women have been violently raped in eastern DRC. A review of reports indicates that nearly 7 million Congolese (47% of which are children) have been killed while MONUC has been present in the DRC. Fabienne Hara, vice-president for multilateral affairs of the International Crisis Group, in an article posted in *The Christian Science Monitor* on May 14th says that while the UNSC and MONUC may have believed their tactics would stabilize eastern DRC, so far MONUC has failed to effectively deter armed groups and in fact, the "humanitarian situation is worsening."

On May 14th a UNSC delegation headed by French Ambassador to the United Nations Gerard Araud landed in Kinshasa to discuss the future of MONUC with Congolese officials. The UNSC delegation also visited Rwanda. In a May 27th article by Bill Varner, Bloomberg reported that a panel of UNSC experts accused the Kabila government and Congolese army of being involved in mining and timber operations that violate UN sanctions. The UNSC report came as the Security Council was determining the future of MONUC. On May 28 the UNSC unanimously renamed its force in the DRC the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and authorized it to stay in the DRC until June 30, 2011. *AngolaPress* reports that the Security Council resolution authorizes MONUSCO to have over 22,000 troops, military observers, police and civilian police personnel (an increase of about 1,500 from the current UN force) concentrated in eastern DRC with a special force capable of rapidly deploying to other parts of the country. The "humanitarian" mission has been replaced by a "stabilizing" one. The UNSC resolution states, "future reconfigurations of MONUSCO should be determined on the basis, is the evolution of the situation on the ground." Commenting on UN withdrawal, French ambassador to the UN Gerard Araud has said, "We won't leave if we are not sure the Congolese authorities are able to do the job."

What's Next - Failed State Status and Permanent UN Presence?

The call by President Joseph Kabila for UN troop withdrawal from the DRC by summer 2011 has resulted in a profusion of calls for the UN presence in the DRC to continue. Liberal Senator, Romeo Dallaire, and New Democrat MP, Paul Dewar, are arguing for a serious Canadian military presence in the DRC. Not surprisingly, mining companies in eastern DRC have expressed concern that withdrawal of the UN will make their operations vulnerable to armed groups and deter investment. The International Crisis Group (formed in 1995 by World Bank Vice-president Mark Brown, former U.S. diplomat Morton Abramowitz, and foreign aid expert Fred Cuny) says that while the UN cannot stay in the DRC forever, President Joseph Kabila's decisions on MONUC, delayed elections and stalled governance reforms prove his government is "heading in the wrong direction." In an interview with *Voice of America* on May 5, Didier Bitaki, a leading member of a coalition of rebel groups in the DRC, says that Congo will

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The Cheonan - Another Gulf of Tonkin?

The sinking of the Cheonan, the South Korean ship which is supposed to have been sunk by a North Korean submarine on March 26, looks more and more like a 'Gulf of Tonkin' incident being used as an excuse to attack North Korea.

The Cheonan was part of a joint military exercise, Operation Foal Eagle, by South Korea and the United States, taking place off Baengnyeong Island, and sank on March 26. Baengnyeong Island is only 20 kilometers from North Korea in an area that the North claims as its maritime territory. A committee appointed by the South Korean government immediately charged that the Cheonan had been sunk by a North Korean sub, and the mainstream media have pursued a policy of repeating the charge endlessly while ignoring the information that has come out refuting the charge.

Japanese journalist Tanaka Sakai writes in *Asia-Pacific Journal*: "The Cheonan was a patrol boat whose mission was to survey with radar and sonar the enemy's submarines, torpedoes and aircraft....If North Korean submarines and torpedoes were approaching, the Cheonan should have been able to sense it quickly and take measures to counterattack or evade. Moreover, on the day the Cheonan sank, U.S. and ROK military exercises were under way, so it could be anticipated that North Korean submarines would move south to conduct surveillance. It is hard to imagine that the Cheonan sonar forces were not on alert."

The Seoul newspaper *Hankyoreh* agrees. "A joint South Korean-U.S. naval exercise involving several Aegis warships was underway at the time, and the Cheonan was a patrol combat corvette that specialized in anti-submarine warfare. The question remains whether it would be possible for a North Korean submarine to infiltrate the maritime cordon at a time when security reached its tightest level and without detection by the Cheonan." And Scott Snyder, director of the Center for U.S.-Korea Policy at the Asia Foundation issued a statement that American spy satellites were also monitoring the exercise "so the U.S. would have known that North Korean submarines had left their ports on a mission."

Stephen Gowans reports that Won See-hoon, director of South Korea's National Intelligence, told a South Korean parliamentary committee in early April, less than two weeks after the South Korean warship sank, that there was no evidence linking North Korea to the sinking. South Korea's Defense Minister Kim Tae-young backed him up, pointing out that the Cheonan's crew had not detected a torpedo, while Lee-Ki-sik, head of the marine operations office at the South Korean Joint chiefs of staff agreed that "No North Korean warships have been detected...in the waters where the accident took place." Gowans adds: "Notice he said accident."

Soon after the sinking of the Cheonan, Defence Minister Kim Tae-young ruled out a North Korean torpedo attack, and Intelligence chief Won See-hoon, said there

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was no evidence linking North Korea to the sinking. When speculation persisted that the Cheonan had been sunk by a North Korean torpedo, the Defence minister called another press conference to reiterate "there were no unusual North Korean activities detected at the time of the disaster."

As Gowans points out, "The case gets weaker still." Back Seung-joo, an analyst with the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis said that "If a single torpedo or floating mine causes a naval patrol vessel to split in half and sink, we will have to rewrite our military doctrine."

Other evidence points to the Cheonan splitting in two and sinking because it ran aground upon a reef, a real possibility given the shallow waters in which the warship was operating. For example, the South Korean Coast Guard captain who rescued 56 of the stricken warship's crew reported he had "received an order...that a naval patrol vessel had run aground in the waters 1.2 miles to the southwest of Baengnyeong Island, and that we were to move there quickly to rescue them."

"So how is it," Gowans asks, "that what looked like no North Korean involvement in the Cheonan's sinking, according to the South Korean military in the days immediately following the incident, has now become, one and a half months later, an open and shut case of North Korean aggression...."

As Gowans points out, "It is worth mentioning that North Korea supports a policy of peace and co-operation. South Korea, under its hawkish president, does not." President Lee Myung-bak's predecessors favoured a policy of peaceful coexistence and growing co-operation with their neighbour to the north. This became known as South Korea's Sunshine Policy. President Lee and his Grand National Party prefer a confrontational stance toward North Korea; his foreign policy rests on the goal of forcing the collapse of North Korea.

"Lurking in the wings," says Gowans, "are U.S. arms manufacturers who stand to profit if South Korean president Lee Myung-bak wins public backing for beefed up spending on sonar equipment and warships to deter a North Korean threat." The RAND Corporation, for instance has called for South Korea to buy sensors to detect North Korean submarines, and more warships to intercept North Korean naval vessels. *The Business Times* reports that Boeing, which has delivered 61 F15-K Eagle Fighters, is looking to clinch a deal for 60 more of the planes.

When Lee took office in February 2008, he set about reversing the 10-year-old policy of unconditional aid to the North. Lee has also refused to move ahead on cross-border economic projects. Lee's goal, as Selig Harrison, the U.S. establishment's foremost liberal expert on Korea describes it, is to "once again seek the collapse of the North and its absorption by the South." Lee, who claimed that his intuition had told him North Korea was to blame, has used the Cheonan incident to cut off trade with the North; to block the North's use of the South's shipping lanes; to argue for stepped up international sanctions against Pyongyang; to call for the beefing up of the South's military; and to issue a virtual declaration of war, branding

North Korea the South's principal foe and announcing that "It is now time for the North Korean regime to change."

Seoul already spends \$20 billion per year on its armed forces, almost three times more than the \$7 billion Pyongyang allocates to military spending. At the same time there are 30,000 U.S. troops stationed on the Korean peninsula and twice as many more in nearby Japan. As Gowans says, "By expanding the South's military budget, and using the Cheonan affair to put the country on a virtual war footing, Lee forces the North to either divert even more of its limited resources to its military - a reaction which will ratchet up the misery factor inside the North as guns take even more of a precedence over butter - or leave itself inadequately equipped to defend itself."

Immediately after the sinking, an inquiry group was appointed by Lee, but even before the inquiry rendered its findings, Lee announced that a task force would be launched to overhaul the national security system and bulk up the military to prepare itself for threats from North Korea. He even prepared a package of sanctions against the North in the event the inquiry confirmed what his intuition had told him. The inquiry did find the North responsible, but its findings were denounced by civil society groups, and inconsistencies were questioned by the South Korean media. It was hoped that fabricating a case against the North would serve Lee's Grand National Party in the mayoral and gubernatorial elections which were coming up early in June, but opposition parties accused Lee of using 'red scare' tactics to garner support. Leaders of South Korea's four main opposition parties issued a joint statement denouncing the government's findings as untrustworthy.

An Historical Note:

Back in 1964, on August 2, in the midst of the Vietnam war, the United States announced that three North Vietnamese torpedo boats had launched an unprovoked attack on the USS Maddox, a U.S. Navy destroyer, in the Gulf of Tonkin. The incident handed then-U.S. president Lyndon Johnson the Congressional support he needed to step up American military intervention in Vietnam. In 1971, the *New York Times* reported that a secret Pentagon report, which came to be known as The Pentagon Papers, revealed that the incident had been faked to provide a pretext for the escalated military intervention. There had been no attack.

Now US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has seized on the Cheonan incident to strengthen the U.S. claim that North Korea is a threat. For her it is a justification for the continued presence, 65 years after the end of World War Two, of 60,000 U.S. troops on Japanese soil, as well as those in South Korea, and the current attempts of the U.S. to expand its military base in the region. She would do well to remember the outcome of 'the Tonkin incident' and the Vietnam war.

A Final Note:

The election for which President Lee used the Cheonan incident to whip up antagonism towards North Korea took place June 2. These were local elections in which the turnout was the highest in 15 years. Candidates representing President Lee's Grand National Party were soundly defeated.

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Canadian Peace Congress Celebrates VE Day

Canadian Peace Congress statement marking the 65th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

The Canadian Peace Congress, along with millions of people throughout Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas including Canada, celebrates the 65th anniversary of the victory over Nazi fascism. Nearly 45,000 Canadian soldiers died and another 54,000 were wounded during World War II. While many years have passed, the significance of the defeat of Nazism remains. The systematic extermination and terrorizing of civilian populations by the Nazi regime and its allies killed 50 million and promised to drive humanity into unparalleled barbarism and ultimate calamity. The victory of the anti-Hitler coalition embodies the universal values of human rights, freedom, democracy, social emancipation, peace, sovereignty and national independence.

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns any efforts either to minimize or distort the lessons and achievements of the Allied nations in World War II. The sacrifice and decisive contribution of the Soviet Union toward Allied victory should be remembered and recognized. Nearly 18 million Soviet civilians died under Nazi bombing and shelling, from starvation, in concentration camps and due to forced labour. The Soviet Red Army defeated 507 German divisions and more than 100 divisions of its fascist allies during which it lost 8.7 million officers and soldiers including more than one million in the liberation of Europe.

It is necessary to stress that World War II was inseparable from and a consequence of an ongoing crisis among the leading capitalist states. Then, financial and industrial capital of the Axis powers (Germany, Japan and Italy) with the support of various corporate backers, sought to rearrange and dominate the world by militarism, war and brutal terror (fascism). Today, the world is also undergoing an ongoing, wide-spread and systemic socioeconomic crisis. Humanity is again faced with the choice: either advance through a higher stage of political relationships (i.e., multilateralism based upon the principles of the United Nations Charter) or slip backward into economic chaos, civil wars in different countries, new wars between nations and ultimately a third and truly calamitous world war.

The antifascist unity between a great socialist state (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) allied with the greatest capitalist states (United States and Great Britain) not only defeated Nazism, but also saw the birth of the United Nations founded on the principles of sovereignty of nations, equality of member states, negotiated (i.e., peaceful) resolution of differences among states and Great Power unanimity on the Security Council. The Nuremberg Trials of Nazi party members resulted in the International Law Commission of the United Nations codifying under international law: Crimes Against Peace, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity. The joint work of the Allied nations produced the documents and international framework which to this day remain the best hope for humanity for peace. □

Worldwide Condemnation of Israeli Attack

The attack by Israel on the flotilla carrying humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza has stirred up a storm of protest against, and condemnation of this crime against humanity. And the storm is world-wide. By June 1, the U.N. Security Council had condemned the act and Ban Ki Moon, president of the United Nations called for a full investigation conforming to international standards. Statements had been issued by the government in the U.K., Mexico, Brazil, Austria, Japan, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Uganda, China, France, Gabon, Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were protest rallies around the world, from Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, to the U.S. and Canada. Even the queen of Jordan, which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, declared "Assigning themselves authority and immunity, Israel's leaders feel licensed to do whatever they like and not expect an international outcry."

The Harper government in Canada, however, does its best to justify the Israeli piratical action. Refusing to have anything to do with an international tribunal looking into the attack on the flotilla, Israel has declared it will conduct its own investigation, and Canada and the U.S. are supporting this ridiculous stand. Time and again the mainstream media here repeat that Israel is the 'only democratic country in the region' and that they have the right to resist the attacks of the Gazans. Nothing is said about the events which have led up to the Gazans fighting back against Israeli oppression, about the Israelis, with the fifth strongest military in the world, stealing the Palestinian land and forcing Gazans into a concentration camp, blockaded against any aid from outside.

As a reminder of those events, we reprint here abridged excerpts from an article from the February 2006 issue of *Saskatchewan Peace News* which gives the background for the current outrage by Israel. At that time, the Gazans had just elected HAMAS to run their government, in an overwhelming victory.

The 'problem' in Palestine goes back to 1947 when the state of Israel was established by the United Nations. In its first major attempt at solving a threatening conflict, the General Assembly of the newly-founded world organization recommended that Palestine, ruled by Britain for just over a quarter of a century, be divided up between the Palestinians and the Israelis in a patchwork pattern that took 56 per cent of Palestine, including some of the most fertile areas, and gave it to the Israelis.

Palestine was thus divided between mutually hostile communities; the native Arabic-speaking Muslims and Christians, who were a majority of about two to one, and the settler community of Jews, most of whom had migrated, under the inspiration of political Zionism, from Europe during the previous period of British rule. The U.N. decision stipulated that there were to be two states, Israel and Palestine. Jerusalem was to be an international city.

The Palestinians did not agree with the United Nations to take

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Reginans Rally Against Mining Exploitation

On page 2 we have an item regarding the exploitation of the mineral resources in the Congo, in far away Africa, and the resulting political scene and warfare. Back in this hemisphere, in front of City Hall in Regina, on Saturday June 5, a rally took place protesting the exploitation of mineral resources in Peru and the resulting upheaval and violence perpetrated on the people of that country.

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their land from them, and war broke out immediately. In the following two years Israel annexed another 11 per cent of Palestinian land. With the Six Day war in 1967 the Israeli army took over all the remaining lands that were supposed to have formed the new Palestine. Consisting of the West Bank and Gaza, this area has become known as The Occupied Territories and comprises about 20 per cent of the area which was originally allotted to the Palestinians in 1947 by the U.N. Although Israel was officially declared a state, this has never been done for Palestine.

As a result of the fighting in 1948, many Palestinians fled their homes, and almost four-fifths of Palestinians are still refugees.

The history of the Occupied Territories has been one of increasing attempts by Israel to cement its control of the lands that were to form the state of Palestine, through control of the water resources; through building the illegal Jewish settlements in that territory; by building the infamous wall, and by outright military suppression. In 2000 the Israeli army began incursions into the refugee camps. These conditions led to the First Intifada, 1987 to 1993, and to the Second Intifada in 2000, uprisings of the Palestinian people against Israeli oppression.

This is the history of the 'most democratic' country in the region. For years Israel has flouted U.N. resolutions in this regard: U.N. resolution #242 (1967) and #338 (1973), calling for withdrawal of Israeli troops from The Occupied Territories (that is the West Bank and Gaza), and resolution #194 (1948) regarding the right of refugees to return home to Palestine. The Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the building of the wall are illegal under international law. Gaza has been turned into a concentration camp for the Palestinians. And now we have the brazen attack on the flotilla, in international waters, which was bringing humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

The people of Canada must make sure our country is not part of this outrage. The Harper government must be informed in no uncertain terms that Canadians do not go along with that kind of 'democracy,' that there must be an independent international investigation of the attack on the flotilla, that the Israeli government must be held accountable for the deaths of the aid workers, and that the blockade of Gaza must be lifted. □

The rally also marked the anniversary of the Bagua Massacre, June 5, 2009. The same day a free trade agreement was signed between Peru, the U.S. and Canada, security forces opened fire on unarmed Indigenous Peoples, the Awajun and Wampis Peoples, and their supporters, in Peru's northern Amazon province of Bagua, who were engaged in a peaceful blockade. More than 30 people were killed and 160 injured. As Alex Nomi of Earth Rights International reports, "Early that morning, Peruvian security forces opened fire from helicopters into a crowd of several thousand protestors in an attempt to break through a road block, one of many throughout Peru's vast Amazon region that indigenous communities had set up in protest to legislative decrees 1090 and 1064 that would have opened up the indigenous territories to increased mining, oil, and natural gas and hydropower development." In Lima, the capital city, the huge crowds that gathered to show their support for the Amazonian communities were doused with tear gas and rubber bullets.

The Peruvian Constitution does not allow foreign exploration or mining. Peru is a signatory to ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights, which seek to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world through protection of their land and resources. Yet the Peruvian government, headed by Dr. Alan Garcia, defended the murderous actions of his security forces at Bagua, and blamed the Indigenous Peoples for standing in the way of 'development.'

Decrees 1090 and 1064 have since been officially repealed, but the Peruvian government continues to auction off new oil and gas concessions throughout its Amazon region. Nearly 40% of all mining activities in Peru are undertaken by Canadian based mining entities, and more than 50 Peruvian communities have singled out Vancouver-based Dorato Resources, because, they say, the company is actively contaminating the Cenepa and Marañon rivers with mercury and cyanide waste. Thousands of Indigenous People in Peru and Ecuador depend on these two rivers. Dorato claims to have acquired an agreement with local officials to exploit an area of 800 square kilometres for the purpose of mining gold reserves. Despite assurances of corporate social responsibility and being sensitive to the needs of the community, the company has been repeatedly found engaging in illicit activities at the expense of the Awajun and Wampis Peoples.

Canada still has not ratified either the ILO Convention or the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights and it is time they did. In addition, at the present time Bill C-300, an Act respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil and Gas Corporations in Developing Countries is before parliament. Liberal MP John McKay, who introduced Bill C-300 into the House of Commons in February 2009, has said it is only "a step on the way." However, lawyer Graham Allen says "passage of Bill C-300 would provide an unprecedented accountability mechanism for Canadian mining, oil and gas companies in their overseas operations, establishing Canada as a world leader in this important area."

So our readers should get out their pens and paper, or e-mail, and let your M.P. know he should take action to have Canada ratify the ILO Convention and the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights, and support Bill C-300. □

Congo - cont'd from page 5

become a failed state if the UN leaves. Dr. Eugenia Zorbas, former official of the UN Mission in the DRC, in the May 2010 bulletin *Canadian Policy Towards the Democratic Republic of Congo* published by the University of Ottawa's Centre for International Policy Studies, concludes, "Already Canadian companies are suffering from adverse consequences from DRC's weak governance and rule of law. As a world leader in mining, it is time Canada rally other countries and effect real change with a coherent, cohesive and innovative DRC policy."

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean's visit to the DRC this April raised much speculation about Canadian Gen. Andrew Leslie heading the 22,000 MONUC force and Canadian troops that are withdrawn from Afghanistan being redeployed to the DRC. On April 19th, Alexander Panetta in the *Globe and Mail* reported Canadian Lt.-Col. Robert Cormier, who acts as liaison between MONUC and the Congolese-army, as saying that despite the situation in the DRC being complex and challenging, Canadian troops would be greeted warmly in the DRC with their many French-speakers and absence of colonial baggage - unlike the French and Belgians. The Canadian government has rejected a UN request for Gen. Andrew Leslie to lead the MONUC force. Perhaps the DRC is 'the wrong place at the wrong time' as the conflict continues and allegations of rape and wrongdoing swirl around the UN force. Or maybe, Prime Minister Harper wants to judge opposition to Canadian involvement in the DRC and provide impetus to those supporting intervention before authorizing troops and police to the new and improved "stabilizing" MONUSCO force.

Gerald Caplan in a May 27th article for the *Pambazuka News* has a message which all those calling for a large Canadian troop presence in the DRC should read carefully: "This largely unregulated struggle for minerals is at the heart of the country's brutal wars. It's a perfect storm of betrayal for the Congolese people: governments like Canada's protect mining companies that collaborate with venal Congolese elites in looting and hollowing out the country, if necessary colluding with raping, murderous militias to do so."

People of the Congo — You Are Not Alone

Friends of the Congo rightly says that only a "social justice agenda" will end the world's deadliest conflict since World War II. The DRC does not need more militarization. It needs peace and justice. The *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad refers not to the Congolese, but to the white colonialists who so brutally exploited the Congo. The last 11 years have demonstrated the ongoing role of the Great Powers on the UN Security Council in plundering the Congo. MONUC should be converted into genuine diplomatic and developmental support for the Congolese government and people rather than being militarized into a so-called "stabilizing" force. The Congolese are due compensation for colonial wars and slavery.

The Canadian government should pass Bill C-300, An Act Respecting Corporate Accountability for the Activities of Mining, Oil or Gas Corporations in Developing Countries,

introduced by Liberal MP John McKay on February 9, 2009. The Canadian Investment Fund for Africa should be used to provide capital to African companies as originally intended, not Canadian companies that have ready access to capital markets.

Rwanda and Uganda are members of the Commonwealth. Canada should leverage its position in the Commonwealth to pressure these two countries to cease destabilisation of the DRC and halt the illegal appropriation of its minerals □.

No Canadian troops or police in the DRC! Congo for the Congolese!

P. Gehl

Cheonan - cont'd from page 6

As the *New York Times* reported, a spokesman for the governing party commented "The election results were far less than we had expected and hoped for." The party's chair, an important ally of President Lee, said he was stepping down over the poor results, and Lee's chief of staff offered to resign.

C. Fischer

REGINA'S VIGIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

celebrated its 3rd anniversary last month. Begun in May 2007 the hardy band of vigillers has met every Thursday at noon in downtown Regina, rain or shine or freezing, to demonstrate for peace and justice, and to hand out flyers giving information on a variety of related topics. These have included aboriginal rights, affordable housing, the environment, the cost of the war in Afghanistan, and prorogation of parliament earlier this year. The July 1 vigil this year falls on a Thursday and on that date the flyer will honour the trekkers who took part in the historic trek of unemployed from Vancouver to Ottawa in 1935, the trek that was stopped in Regina.

Reginans are invited to come and join the vigillers in their demonstration of support for peace and justice, every Thursday at noon on the Scarth Street Mall.



