



# CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

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## A “Strategic Concept” for Peace – Disband NATO!

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The eve of the Lisbon Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is pause for reflection and action on the future of the world's biggest instrument of war, and the necessity of anti-imperialism and peace. In the face of the military alliance's invitation to “rethink, reprioritize and reform” itself, the Canadian Peace Congress calls for all peace movements and peace-supporting people in Canada to increase their demand for Canada's immediate withdrawal from NATO.

For over 60 years, NATO has served as a key mechanism for imperialist aggression and expansion, with its roots as an anti-Soviet institution that was dominated by the military-industrial complex of the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has repeatedly sought to redefine itself and legitimize its continued existence; each time with increasingly tragic and violent conclusions. Since 1991, NATO has been the key participant in the bombardment and forced division of Yugoslavia, numerous reactionary coups and countless bloody regimes and dictatorships.

NATO has also used the war in Afghanistan to deeply integrate itself with the United Nations, further weakening both that organization and the institutions of international law. As the Canadian Peace Congress stated in 2009:

*NATO's ongoing war against Afghanistan is the current “theatre of operations” for the new strategic concept, and it clearly exposes the intent of U.S. imperialism and its NATO and EU allies to perpetuate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the cycle of wars of aggression, militarization and economic crisis that characterized the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Afghanistan represents two significant and troublesome “firsts” for the alliance: it is the first time NATO has undertaken a mission outside of the North Atlantic arena, and it was the first time that the alliance's “mutual defence” clause had been invoked. Both of these developments were nothing less than desperate attempts to secure a role for NATO in the world. Specifically, NATO and its core membership of Western imperialist states have used the war in Afghanistan to secure a foothold in the resource-rich areas of Asia, controlling strategic pipeline routes and encircling China and Russia.*

Canada's contribution to NATO's search for a new role in the world has been shameful. In addition to supporting and participating in the aggressions against Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, Canada was a central player in facilitating the transfer of command of the Afghanistan mission from the United Nations to NATO. Presently, the government of Stephen Harper is committed to extending Canadian involvement in the Afghanistan war to 2014 or beyond, in a bid to prolong the conflict and NATO's active presence there.

There must be no illusion that NATO's search for a "New Strategic Concept" will diminish the imperialist drive for war, or that it will advance the cause of world peace, or that it will secure a democratic and progressive international order for the peoples of the world. NATO's expansion – its very continued existence – is a threat to world peace. The strategic concept that is necessary for peace and progress is the disbandment of NATO, and all other imperialist military alliances.

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 – the same year as NATO – and since that time has well understood that Canada's participation in the military alliance not only threatens world peace, but also undermines Canadian sovereignty in both international and domestic affairs. Through NATO's nuclear sharing program and its longstanding nuclear first-strike policy, Canada is brought into the group of nuclear weapons states. NATO's position on the Middle East, which ascribes to Israel the role of "deputy enforcement officer" for the region, has contributed heavily to recent and dramatic changes in the Canadian government's policy toward the Middle East and toward Arab and Muslim Canadians. Since 1949, the policy of the Canadian Peace Congress has been that the necessary first step for securing an independent foreign of peace, disarmament and international cooperation is Canada's withdrawal from NATO.

On the occasion of the Lisbon Summit, the Canadian Peace Congress:

- denounces NATO and the Lisbon Summit, and reiterates the demand for NATO's dissolution;
- calls for Canada's immediate unilateral withdrawal from NATO;
- condemns the continued war and occupation of Afghanistan, and calls for immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops and all occupying forces;
- declares solidarity with the "Peace Yes! NATO No!" Campaign of the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation and the World Peace Council;
- remains committed to building and expanding the continued struggle against NATO, against imperialism and for peace and solidarity.

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*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:

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