



ALBERTA PEACE NEWS

YES TO PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, NO TO IMPERIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM

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Edmonton Peace Council (EPC) Meeting Schedule for 2007-2008:

EPC Meetings will be held every 3rd Thursday of the month at the Stanley Milner Library, 6th Floor Room 7, from 7:00pm-9:00pm.

Next Meeting: January 17, 2008

1. January: Labour and Peace
2. February: Iraq Day of Action Prep.
3. March: Caracas Preparations
4. April: Report Back Caracas
5. May: TBA

Attendees: Please see the library security at the front door to access to the meeting room on the 6th floor.



Edmonton Peace Council Planning for the WPC World Peace Conference, April 8-13, 2008, Caracas, Venezuela

The Edmonton Peace Council is currently planning to participate with the Canadian Peace Congress in the World Peace Council's World Peace Conference in Caracas, Venezuela. The Conference has proclaimed Caracas International City of Peace for the duration of the event. World Peace Council affiliates from every continent are planning to attend. The event will be over 5 days from April 8-13, 2008. The Canadian Peace Congress is issuing a call for labour, farm, peace and social justice groups wishing to attend in conjunction as part of the official Canadian Peace Congress delegation to contact the Canadian Peace Congress. (See page 9 for details)

The Canadian Peace Congress is set to launch its new web site in January 2008. The site will carry local council's information as well as information from our international fraternal organizations. The web site is located at:

www.CanadianPeaceCongress.ca

**Next EPC Meeting January 17, 2008, 7:00 pm
6th Floor, Stanley Milner Public Library**

UFCW LU-401 News Release: Safeway Must Be Won!

It is time for Safeway to live up to their promises to employees and customers!! **UFCW Local 401 members throughout the province have voted overwhelmingly in support of authorizing strike action against Canada Safeway.** Strike votes started on December 3, 2007 and continued to December 14, 2007, all across Alberta.

Local 401 non-meat employees voted 95% in favour of a strike and the Southern Alberta Meat Local 401(former 373A) members voted 92% authorizing strike action. Results of one of the other Unions that are bargaining with Safeway were: BCTW & GM Local 252 (Calgary Bakers) voted 97% in favour.

In every meeting that was held, employees voiced their displeasure at Safeway's bargaining position. Members were disgusted that Safeway would be looking for concessions in these economic times. The monetary offer of 50¢ a year with no retroactivity was an insult to all employees, **members who are not at the top rate are upset that their wage offer is 0%, 0% and 0%.**

Employees remember the promise that Safeway management made in 1993 when they took rollbacks to keep the Company alive. Safeway brought in helicopters "dropping" prices, now and forever, back then. It is apparent that the helicopters have long since crashed, with **the only things going "up" at Safeway are prices, profits** and employees' anger!

With this overwhelming show of support for a strike, your Union is hopeful that Safeway will come back to the bargaining table with a different approach when bargaining continues in January. In Safeway's December 7, 2007 update, the Company wrote;

(Continued See UFCW-LU401 Page 7)



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Canadian Public Opinion Solidly Against the US-NATO War in Afghanistan

December 28, 2007, Don Currie - Member Canadian Peace Congress Interim Executive

Canadian public opinion has swung decisively against the Afghanistan war policy of the Conservative Government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Rising casualties among Canadian troops deployed to the Kandahar region of Afghanistan, revelations of torture of Afghan detainees and the appalling death rate among Afghan civilians due to NATO bombing raids has hardened public opposition to the war. Testimony before the Senate foreign affairs committee in November 2007 revealed ongoing mismanagement of Federal Government aid funds assigned to reconstruction projects. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) manages a \$100 million fund for 2006-2007 part of a total Federal Government package of more than \$650 million for 2001-2009. The British based Senalis Council and Canadem, two agencies involved with NGO's operating in Afghanistan provided testimony to the Senate hearing complaining that federal government funds are not reaching the Afghan people.

The *daily cost* of the war now exceeds \$3 million CDN and is expected to triple by February 2009 when the Canadian Parliamentary mandate to participate in the NATO led war expires and Canadian forces are supposed to be withdrawn. Prime Minister Harper refuses to commit to honoring the Parliamentary decision and has appointed former Liberal Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley, an architect of the Canadian armed forces combat role in the NATO-US War to defer a Parliamentary debate in the hopes of preventing a defeat of the Harper Government that would bring on a federal election where foreign policy and Canada US relations could become the major issue.

A media poll conducted from December 6-9, 2007 by the Strategic Counsel comprising Canada's most influential newspaper the Globe and Mail and a major private television network CTV, showed that if an election were called today 68% would vote against the Harper Government. In Quebec the anti-Harper opposition soars to 82% of committed voters who would vote against the Government. Sixty five percent of Canadians believe Canadian forces are in Afghanistan at the behest of the US Bush administration and because Canada is part of NATO. When asked what they considered to be the biggest threat facing the world 36% of Canadians polled listed climate change and global warming, another 11% cited the gap between rich and poor

countries, 14% listed lack of respect for human rights, 11% considered American foreign policy to be the greatest threat facing the world and only 12% mentioned terrorism. The poll revealed that 39% of Canadians think that Canada's foreign policy is less independent than 50 years ago pointing to Canada's relationship with U.S. as the principal cause of declining prestige internationally. Thirty three cent believe the Liberal Chretien Government's 'no' to the Bush administrations pressure to join in the war in Iraq to be Canada's greatest foreign policy achievement.

On top of the drop in public support for the Harper war policy are the explosive public hearings before the Parliamentary Ethics Committee investigating the ties between former Conservative Prime Minister Mulroney and Airbus International one of the largest arms suppliers in Europe. Karl Heinz Schreiber, a Canadian lobbyist for Airbus, and who is presently awaiting extradition to Germany where he faces corruption charges, is alleged to have funneled money from Franz Joseph Strauss former Chancellor of Bavaria and head of Airbus, during the 1980's to bring Mulroney to power and back his campaign for a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Airbus would then use Canada as a platform to market Airbus weaponry into the US market to compete with large US arms suppliers. Both Strauss and his employee Schreiber were ardent anti-communist opponents of the German Democratic Republic (the GDR) and had a big stake in inflaming the east-west arms race. The links between arms dealers and Government war policy is well known in Canada. Former Canadian Defense Minister Gordon O'Connor was forced to step down when it was revealed that he had been a defense department lobbyist for twenty years in partnership with high Canadian and US NATO officers attempting to sell arms to the Canadian military. O'Connor has been replaced by the current Defense Minister Peter McKay, also implicated indirectly in the Airbus scandal. The hearings are not over.

With scandal and falling public support dogging the Conservative Government, the only way the Harper Government can remain in power is disunity at the polls among pro-peace voters in the next federal election expected in early 2008. The three opposition parties the Liberals, New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Bloc Quebecois all have foreign policy positions formally opposing the war in Afghanistan and calling for Canadian withdrawal. Party leaders, Stephane Dion of the Liberals, Jack Layton of the NDP and Gilles Duceppe of the Bloc Quebecois instead of launching a frontal attack bicker and seek electoral advantage rather than forging a clear opposition stance towards the Harper Government.

All opposition parties are under pressure from the 4 million strong organized labour movement, the Council



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of Canadians, the largest civil society organization in Canada, rank and file members and supporters of the New Democratic, the Canadian Peace Alliance and the Canadian Peace Congress, the Communist Party and the Greens to defeat the war policies of the Harper Conservative Government.

Peace demonstrations calling for an end to the war were held across Canada last October 27 demanding the withdrawal of Canadian troops and a new mobilization is beginning for mass demonstrations in March 2008. Increasingly the slogans of the peace movement are demanding the defeat of the Harper Government. If the Harper Government is to be defeated and Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan ended unity in action on the streets and at the polls will have to be lifted to a higher level. That is the challenge confronting the entire democratic left progressive and peace forces of Canada in the months leading up to the next federal election expected early in 2008.

AIPSO Press Release on the Assassination of Benazir Bhutto

All India Peace & Solidarity Organisation (AIPSO)

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December 28, 2007

The National Secretariat of the All India Peace & Solidarity Organisation has issued the following statement to the press:

ON BRUTAL ASSASSINATION OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

The All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation (AIPSO) expresses its profound shock and deep outrage at the heinous assassination of Ms. Benazir Bhutto, the leader of the Peoples Party in Pakistan. Taking place less than two weeks before the elections, this is an obvious attempt to derail the transition to democracy that Pakistan is attempting. It is not only an attack on the democratic process in Pakistan but it also poses a serious threat for the entire region.

The AIPSO strongly condemns this attack. Clearly there are forces who are seeking to destabilise Pakistan and not allow the transition to democracy to succeed. All the peace loving people in the world must join hands with the people of Pakistan to ensure that such disruptive efforts are thwarted.

The AIPSO also conveys its heartfelt condolences to Ms. Benazir Bhutto's family and People's Party of Pakistan. The AIPSO assures the people of Pakistan of its solidarity with them in their hour of grief.

WPC Press Release on World Peace Conference, April 2008, Caracas, VZ

The World Peace Council (WPC) held successfully its Executive Committee meeting on November 19-20 in the capital of Vietnam, Hanoi.

The WPC expresses its gratitude to the Vietnam Peace Committee, for its generosity hosting the WPC E.C.

Major item of its agenda, amongst other topics, was the holding of the next Assembly of the WPC, as the highest decision making body of the Organisation.

The Executive Committee decided unanimously to accept the readiness of our Member Organisation from Venezuela, COSI (Committee for International Solidarity) to host the WPC Assembly and announced the holding of the events around the World Assembly of the WPC for the dates of 8th -13th April, 2008, in Venezuela, declaring for one week Caracas the "World Capital of Peace and the anti-imperialist struggle".

Under the above slogan the WPC is going to hold its (outgoing) Executive Committee Meeting on the 8th April, its Assembly on 9th and 10th April and an open broad World Peace Conference on 11th and 12th April. The 13th April will be dedicated to the peoples who are in struggle for the sovereignty against foreign interference coinciding with the 6 years of the restoration of the peoples' power after the attempted coup d' état in 2002.

The WPC appreciates the disposition of the Venezuelan government and its institutions which welcomed warmly the decision of the WPC. The Secretariat of the WPC will work with COSI and the National Preparatory Committee in Venezuela, for the successful holding of the WPC events.

The WPC is proud to be able to share the aspirations and struggles of the peoples of Latin America considering the political developments in the region as very encouraging and promising. Holding our Assembly in Caracas, for the first time in South America, we write a new chapter in the glorious history of the WPC, opening a new phase for the development of the anti-imperialist peace movement world wide. The WPC is entering with the next Assembly in a new period, where we have all to demand more from ourselves. We shall make our WPC stronger, based in



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even more countries, more visible and useful tool for the coming difficult struggles of the world peace movement.

Very soon respective materials, website and invitations shall be issued and sent out.

The Organisations which participated in the E.C. Meeting in Hanoi were the following: Vietnam Peace Committee, Cuban Movement for Peace and the sovereignty of the Peoples, Greek Committee for international Détente and Peace, Committee for International Solidarity (Venezuela), Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation, Mexican movement for Peace and Development, Movement for Peace and Solidarity (Argentine), Japan Peace Committee, Bangladesh Peace Council, Brazilian Center for the struggle for Peace and Solidarity of the Peoples, US Peace Council, Congo Peace Committee, OSPAAAL Spain, All India Peace and Solidarity Organisations, Syrian Peace Committee, Korean National Peace Committee, German Peace Council, Spanish Committee for the defense of Solidarity and Peace, Sri Lanka Peace Council, Lao Peace and Solidarity Committee, Mongolian Union for Friendship and Peace and AAPSO as guest.

30.11.2007 The Secretariat of WPC

International News

Venezuela Attends 4th Annual Petrocaribe Summit in Cuba

December 23rd 2007

by Kiraz Janicke

www.Venezuelanalysis.com

The 4th Summit of Petrocaribe, a regional energy organization initiated by Venezuela, concluded in the Cuban city of Cienfuegos Friday, with member nations signing new agreements to promote economic and social development and regional energy integration.

During his opening speech Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez presented member nations with the option of paying for low-cost oil with goods and services instead of cash, based on the model of Cuba, which provides thousands of doctors to treat poor patients in Venezuela in exchange for around 93 000 barrels of oil per day.

Slamming U.S. imposed free trade agreements as "the road to hell" Chavez said that Petrocaribe aims to "resolve asymmetrical access to energy resources through a plan of favourable, equitable and just exchange."

Petrocaribe is creating a "new geopolitics of oil" that serves the people's interests, and not those of imperialists or big corporations, Chavez said.

In addition to the 93 000 barrels to Cuba, through Petrocaribe Venezuela provides for the distribution of a further 53 000 barrels of oil and derivatives per day under favourable conditions of payment to member nations allowing them up to 25 years for repayment with 1 percent interest as long as the price of crude remains above \$40 a barrel.

The summit addressed ways of implementing the exchange of goods and services for oil without burdening countries with financial debt as well as more efficient energy use, potentials for technical and professional development and training and the creation of a fund for the financing of energy projects in the region. Chavez also called for the creation of an international fund to promote alternative energy sources such as geothermal, solar and wind power.

Members of the Petrocaribe include Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Venezuela and Honduras. Honduras was formally incorporated as the 17th member of the regional energy organization.

The daylong summit concluded with the inauguration of the reopened Camilo Ceinefeugos Oil refinery, closed for more than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over \$136 million in renovations have been made to the refinery, a joint Venezuelan-Cuban initiative, which will employ 1,200 people. It is expected that the refinery will initially process 65 000 barrels of oil per day, with the capacity to expand to 100 000 per day and will be part of the "logistics mechanism" for distributing oil to the region, Venezuelan Energy Minister Rafael Ramirez said.

The Petrocaribe Summit had been an "extraordinary success" Ramirez affirmed, adding that Guatamala has also registered their intention to join Petrocaribe, and two other countries have expressed interest in joining the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a Venezuelan initiative, with the participation of Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua aimed at promoting fair trade throughout the region in opposition to the free trade agenda of Washington.

Acting Cuban President Raul Castro also stressed the importance of ALBA and Petrocaribe as evidence that "a better world is possible."

Without ALBA, Cuba would not have been able to reopen the Cienfuegos refinery, Castro said during the closing of the Summit.

"We truly believe in solidarity, cooperation and the joint capacity to develop our countries for our people," he added.



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"At a time when the oil prices have broken every record, creating an extremely complex situation to most of the oil importing third world nations, the member countries of Petrocaribe are in a privileged position," Castro declared.

Chavez, who arrived in Cuba on Thursday, also held a 2 and half hour "emotional" meeting with convalescing Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The Venezuelan president also inaugurated 100 "petro-houses" donated by Venezuela, produced from petroleum products based on Brazilian technology. Supermodel Naomi Campbell, who recently visited Venezuela and conducted a long interview with Chavez, also attended the housing inauguration, before meeting with workers in Cuba.

North American Integration and the Militarization of the Arctic

By Michel Chossudovsky
Copyright Global Research, August 20, 2007

The Battle for the Arctic is part of a global military agenda of conquest and territorial control. It has been described as a New Cold War between Russia and America.

Washington's objective is to secure territorial control, on behalf of the Anglo-American oil giants, over extensive Arctic oil and natural gas reserves. The Arctic region could hold up to 25% of the World's oil and gas reserves, according to some estimates. (Moscow Times, 3 August 2007). These estimates are corroborated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS): "The real possibility exists that you could have another world class petroleum province like the North Sea." (quoted by CNNMoney.com, 25 October 2006)

From Washington's perspective, the battle for the Arctic is part of broader global military agenda.

It is intimately related to the process of North American integration under the Security and Prosperity Partnership Agreement (SPP) and the proposed North American Union (NAU). The SPP envisages, under the auspices of a proposed "multiservice [North American] Defense Command", the militarization of a vast territory extending from the Caribbean basin to the Canadian Arctic.

It also bears a relationship to America's hegemonic objectives in different parts of the World including the Middle East. The underlying economic objective of US military operations is the conquest, privatization and appropriation of the World's reserves of fossil fuel. The Arctic is no exception. The Arctic is an integral part of

the "Battle for Oil". It is one of the remaining frontiers of untapped energy reserves.

The Arctic nations (with territories North of the Arctic circle) are Russia, Canada, Denmark, the US, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. The first three countries (Russia, Canada and Denmark) possess significant territories extending northwards of the Arctic circle.

Directed against Russia, which is in the process of claiming part of the Arctic shelf, Washington's Arctic strategy is tied into a broader process of militarization and territorial integration.

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

The United States has adopted a unilateral approach to Arctic development. It has refused to approve the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which was ratified by both Russia and Canada. A United Nations Committee currently administers the Law of the Sea Convention.

The US transpolar territory is much smaller than that of Russia, Canada and Denmark. US territories bordering the Arctic are limited to the North Alaskan coastline, extending from the Bering straits to the Northeastern Alaskan US-Canadian border. The US has a number of US military bases and installations in Alaska. There are several human settlements on the Northern Slope (Northern Alaska coastline bordering the Arctic Ocean), including Prudhoe Bay, Barrow and Cape Lisborne. This Northern Slope is rich in oil. It was among the first areas of development of Arctic oil. The Alaskan pipeline links Prudoe Bay on the North Slope to the port of Valdez in Prince William Sound on the Gulf of Alaska.

Russia

Russia, in contrast, has by far the largest border with the Arctic, from the Northwestern city of Murmansk on the Russian-Finnish border, extending over the entire Northern Siberian region, to the Bering Straits, which separate Alaska from the Russian Federation. Murmansk is the largest city north of the Arctic Circle, with a population of more than 400,000 inhabitants. In other words, a large part of the Russian Siberian continental shelf borders the Arctic.

Russia, going back to the Soviet era, had established scientific-military stations on the island of Northern Zemlya as well as in the Francois Joseph archipelago (Franz Josef Land), which is also under Russian jurisdiction. (See map.) Northern Zemlya was used during the Soviet era for underground nuclear testing.

Russia is now claiming sovereignty (under the International Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS) over a vast 1,191,000 sq km territory which is part of the Arctic shelf.



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This territory claimed by Russia submitted to the UN Committee that administers UNCLOS is said to contain substantial hydrocarbon reserves, on the Arctic seabed:

The 1982 International Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) establishes a 12 mile zone for territorial waters and a larger 200 mile economic zone in which a country has exclusive drilling rights for hydrocarbon and other resources.

Russia claims that the entire swath of Arctic seabed in the triangle that ends at the North Pole belongs to Russia, but the United Nations Committee that administers the Law of the Sea Convention has so far refused to recognize Russia's claim to the entire Arctic seabed.

In order to legally claim that Russia's economic zone in the Arctic extends far beyond the 200 mile zone, it is necessary to present viable scientific evidence showing that the Arctic Ocean's sea shelf to the north of Russian shores is a continuation of the Siberian continental platform. In 2001, Russia submitted documents to the UN commission on the limits of the continental shelf seeking to push Russia's maritime borders beyond the 200 mile zone. It was rejected.

Now Russian scientists assert there is new evidence that Russia's northern Arctic region is directly linked to the North Pole via an underwater shelf. Last week a group of Russian geologists returned from a six-week voyage to the Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater shelf in Russia's remote eastern Arctic Ocean. They claimed the ridge was linked to Russian Federation territory, boosting Russia's claim over the oil- and gas-rich triangle.

The latest findings are likely to prompt Russia to lodge another bid at the UN to secure its rights over the Arctic sea shelf. If no other power challenges Russia's claim, it will likely go through unchallenged. (See Vladimir Frolov, Global Research, July 2007)

Russia is basing its claim on the grounds that this portion of the Arctic sea shelf is connected to Russia's continental shelf, through the 2000 km long underwater Lomonosov ridge. "According to Russian media, the physical connection to the Russian intercontinental shelf means that the ridge is technically a part of Russia, and therefore open to exploitation."

<http://www.oilmarketer.co.uk/2007/07/04/russia-seeks-un-approval-on-artic-oil-grab/>

The Strategic Role of Canada and Denmark's Arctic Territories

After Russia, Canada and Denmark have the largest transpolar territories.

To effectively challenge and encroach upon Russian territorial claims in the Arctic, Washington requires not

only the collaboration of Canada and Denmark, but also jurisdiction over their respective Northern territories, which are considered by Washington as strategic from both a military and economic standpoint.

The US has a military presence in both Canada and Denmark (Greenland). Both countries play an important role in Washington's Arctic strategy.

Canada's territory, extends northwards to the Queen Elizabeth archipelago which includes Ellesmere Island bordering onto the Sea of Lincoln, which is part of the Arctic Ocean. Ellesmere Island is part of the Canadian territory of Nunavut.

Alert on Ellesmere Island (located at 82°28'N, 62°30'W) is considered the northernmost human settlement in the world. In practice it operates as a military intelligence station (Canadian Forces Station Alert) is under the jurisdiction of the Canadian military. CFS Alert is 840 km from the North Pole.

The militarization of the Arctic is part of the process of North American integration under the Security and Prosperity Partnership Agreement (SPP). The proposed North American Union (NAU) constitutes a means for the US to extend its sovereignty over Canada's Arctic territories.

When the creation of US Northern Command was announced in April 2002, Canada accepted the right of the US to deploy US troops on Canadian soil, extending into its Arctic territories:

"U.S. troops could be deployed to Canada and Canadian troops could cross the border into the United States if the continent was attacked by terrorists who do not respect borders, according to an agreement announced by U.S. and Canadian officials." (Edmonton Sun, 11 September 2002)

In April 2006, Canada formally ratified a renewed North American Aerospace Defense Agreement (NORAD), ("renewed NORAD"), which allows the US Navy and Coast Guard to deploy American war ships in Canadian territorial waters including its Arctic seabed territories. (For further details, see Michel Chossudovsky, Canada's Sovereignty in Jeopardy: The Militarization of North America, Global Research, August 2007)

Greenland

Greenland, which is under Danish jurisdiction, constitutes a sizeable landmass bordering the Arctic Ocean.

The Thule Air Force base in Northern Greenland is under the jurisdiction of the US Air Force 821st Air Base Group. It constitutes the US's northernmost military facility (76°32'N, 68°50'W). The military base lies approximately 1118 km north of the Arctic Circle and



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1524 km south of the Terrestrial North Pole. The Thule base is 885 km east of the North Magnetic Pole.

The Thule US Air Force base also "hosts the 12th Space Warning Squadron, a Ballistic Missile Early Warning Site designed to detect and track Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) launched against North America."

The Thule base links up to NORAD and US Northern Command headquarters at the Peterson Air Force base in Colorado. The Thule base is also "host to Detachment 3 of the 22d Space Operations Squadron, which is part of the 50th Space Wing's global satellite control network."

Denmark is member of NATO, firmly allied with the US. Both Danish and Canadian territory will be used by the US to militarize the Arctic. Denmark has also been a firm supporter of the Bush administration's military agenda in the Middle East.

Canada's Arctic Military Facilities

Ottawa's July 2007 decision to establish a military facility in Resolute Bay in the Northwest Passage was not intended to reassert "Canadian sovereignty. In fact quite the opposite. It was established in consultation with Washington. A deep-water port at Nanisivik, on the northern tip of Baffin Island is also envisaged.

The US administration is firmly behind the Canadian government's decision. The latter does not "reassert Canadian sovereignty". Quite the opposite. It is a means to eventually establish US territorial control over Canada's entire Arctic region including its waterways.

Under the renegotiated North American Aerospace Defense Agreement (NORAD), the US military has access to Canada's domestic territorial waters including Canada's sea shelf with the Arctic, which coincidentally also provides Washington under the guise of "North American sovereignty" with a justification to challenge Russia in the Arctic.

Continued From Page One: UFCW-LU401

"The Company advised the Union that some or all of these proposals (concessionary) may be further amended or withdrawn throughout the course of negotiations..."

It is time Safeway finally lived up to their words; get rid of your concessions and reward your employees!

Bargaining dates for Province – wide UFCW Local 401 members bargaining is scheduled for January 7th to 11th, 2008. Southern Alberta meat employees' bargaining is scheduled for January 16th to 18th, 2008.
www.goUnion.ca

Viewpoint – Labour and Peace, The Way Forward for Organized Labour

By Sean Currie – Edmonton Peace Council

2007 witnessed a melt down in the US housing market brought on by stock market speculators and banking piranhas. The US war in Iraq is entering its 6th year with no let up in sight. In fact the US military budget for fiscal year 2008 is increasing to over \$650 billion! Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans have been killed or maimed. Workers' children are sent into a brutal war in Afghanistan. A new global arms race is being fomented by the US through the deployment of missile shields in Czechoslovakia and Poland. The minority government of Stephen Harper is quietly re-opening BMD talks with the US and preparing to increase national military spending by billions more annually. Workers will have to pick up the cost.

The crisis in eastern Canadian manufacturing with the loss of 350,000 jobs since 2002 and the hyper exploitation of labour in Alberta with 50-60 hour work weeks are two sides of the same coin. While billions of dollars are wasted by the Harper neo-cons on a US-NATO war of aggression in Afghanistan working Canadians are facing economic crisis, reduced wages, job loss, deterioration in working conditions and poverty, chronic housing shortages and losses, a worsening health care and education system and workers' pensions are being risked by the new river boat gamblers of the 21st century.

Organized Labour Under Attack

Organized labour is under attack like never before. Organized labour's ability to fight back is increasingly being eroded. Its ability to protect and advance working conditions, wages and jobs is threatened by an organized campaign of claw backs and anti-labour legislation and indifference to the needs of working Canadians by the Harper neo-cons.

In Alberta that attack is through regressive labour legislation, frenzied exploitation of the Tar Sands and the neutering of the industrial section of organized labour – the building trades. In Ontario workers are facing plant closures and a federal government more interested in buying new tanks, helicopters and frigates than developing public transportation, housing and industrial development in the interests of the Canadian people.

While billions of dollars are spent on war and military expansion, Canadian industry is distorted and crippled by an alliance of finance-energy-military capital seeking



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ever greater profits. This alliance is expressed in the foreign policy of the minority Harper Government. Canadian foreign policy is wrapped in the chest thumping of “emerging energy superpower” status. The de-industrialization of Eastern Canada is linked to global imperialist rivalries and the continentalist fortress policies of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) doctrine which ties Canada to a single market strategy of resource transfers and value added buy-backs.

This continentalist approach is driven by fueling a continued aggressive US arms build up, wars of aggression and military occupations with cheap Canadian energy. The integration of Canadian energy with US military industrial capacity is leading to intensified hardship for Canadian workers. It is leading to an embattled organized labour movement having to make some stark choices between maintaining hard fought labour gains, won over 6 decades of struggle since WWII, and trade-offs for maintaining minimum economic positions. Such is the dilemma facing the CAW in auto and in Alberta the UFCW fighting to maintain organized labour’s gains - two fighting unions under attack by the most reactionary sections of Canadian capital.

Organized Labour: The Largest Working Class Expression of Peace

Organized labour is the largest working class force for peace. There is nothing in war or a war economy that is in the interests of workers. It has no stake in war and everything to gain from fighting for the peaceful development of the country and its vast resources. It represents the majority sentiment for peace among all Canadian people.

This sentiment was expressed by Jim Sinclair, President, British Columbia Federation of Labour and Rick Bender, President, Washington State Labour Council in a joint statement on September 24, 2007 which was published in Volume 1 Issue 2 of the Alberta Peace News, where they said:

“As the death toll climbs, so does the economic cost. Public money and resources (working people’s taxes) support this war. The amounts are staggering. We watch as living standards continue to decline on both sides of the border. Poverty grows, and along with it so does the homeless crisis in all of our cities. Every week the United States spends \$8 billion more on war. To date, the war has consumed more than \$450 billion; in Canada the number has climbed to more than \$5 billion. Swedish experts report that in 2006 the world expenditures on arms reached over \$1.2 trillion dollars, enough to feed, clothe, house and provide basic education and medical care for the planet’s poor.”

However, organized labour’s ability to make advances is undermined by the enormous quantities of wasteful expenditures on wars of aggression. Organized labour is faced with deteriorating conditions of labour density, defined as the percentage of organized workers within the employed work force as a whole. As goods and services benefiting peaceful development are abandoned for the high profits of US military spending the Canadian economy becomes ever more distorted. This distortion manifests itself in a weakened position for organized labour and a shedding of union jobs.

Organized Labour Challenge

As plans for an integrated energy system get underway for the extraction and transportation of Beaufort and Mackenzie Delta gas to the mining and upgrading operations of Fort McMurray and the \$250 billion in proposed spending on bitumen recovery and transportation to the central US military industrial refineries of Chicago, Oklahoma and Texas, Eastern Canadian workers are forced to import and pay for expensive energy at world prices.

These projects are competing for labour – cheap labour. It explains why the minority government of Stephen Harper has abandoned workers in the manufacturing and auto sector of Ontario and Quebec – they are needed in Alberta to meet the demands of a US imperialist policy of belligerence and war.

Alberta organized labour was set back September 2007 and the industrial building trades weakened following a fight to position the building trades for a strike mandate against Alberta’s anti-labour legislation requiring 75% of building trade unions to have a strike mandate before *any* union can serve strike notice. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB), Construction Owners Association of Alberta (COAA) and the union internationals all had a hand in this set back. The minority Government of Stephen Harper and his Alberta minion Ed Stelmach, now have greater freedom in the continued intensified exploitation of workers in Canada.

The exposure of the “Western flank” of the Canadian labour movement to the foreign policies of Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), CAPP and the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) are the result of a frontal attack on organized labour in Eastern Canada - an effort to nullify any fight back by Canadian workers. A compliant industrial labour movement only leads to greater profits for the war profiteers of the Harper neo-con power base of military death merchants in Ottawa and big-oil thugs of Calgary.

Breaking with Harper’s proxy Washington foreign policy, which allows and encourages Canadian energy to flow south, freely into the military industrial economy of the



ALBERTA PEACE NEWS

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US, is of first rate importance for Canadian organized labour. An organized struggle to shift the wide open exploitation of Canadian energy to a planned and publicly owned development and a made in Canada oil and gas price for Canadian industry is essential to reclaim the power and influence of organized labour in Canadian politics, that is presently being lost to massive military budgets and speculative energy plays.

<http://tdrc.net/index.php?page=declaration-organizations>

In Solidarity for Justice and Peace,
Ali Mallah

Canadian Peace Congress Prepares for WPC Caracas World Assembly

The Interim Executive of the Canadian Peace Congress, following the report of Sean Currie Congress delegate to the August WPC Regional Meeting in Caracas has begun the work of organizing a Congress delegation to the April 2008 World Assembly of the World Peace Council. The Canadian Peace Congress upon receiving the official documents of invitation from WPC and COSI, the host organization, will circulate them and begin the work of organizing a Congress delegation to attend the WPC Executive Meeting, and send a broad representative delegation of peace, labour and democratic activists to attend the World Assembly and Day of Solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution and the people of Venezuela. Special attention will be given to organizing youth to attend the event.

Report back meetings of the decisions of the August Caracas Regional Meeting of WPC have been organized by the Edmonton Peace Council, the Regina Peace Council and the newly formed Fraser Valley Peace Council in Vancouver BC where the WPC World Assembly was discussed and work begun on organizing a representative delegation. Report was also made to the Nelson BC Peace Coalition, evoking keen interest in the WPC event in Caracas.

In other work, the Congress Interim Executive has opened up discussions on a draft call to an Extraordinary Renewal Convention to be convened following the WPC World Assembly in Caracas next April. The call will be accompanied with a new draft constitution and program of action.

Canadian Peace Congress Council's participated in the Canadian Peace Alliance sponsored October 27th mobilizations for peace under the slogans of Canada Out of Afghanistan, US Out of Iraq, Hands of Iran, and Bring the Troops Home Now.

The Congress is working on a new website and is reviewing plans for an all-Canada Congress publication.



Unifying the organized and unorganized workers of Canada around an independent program of peaceful development of the economy challenges the hyper exploitative and anti-labour policies of Harper and his corporate bosses. Unifying wider sections of Canadian workers around a labour led program of peace will put labour in a more favourable position to influence the direction and content of Canadian foreign policy and strengthen the organized labour movement in general.

Canadian organized labour *is* fighting back. Advancing a new economic vision of Canada as a nation of peace will capture the imagination of all Canadians, challenge the anti-labour policies of Harper and lead to a more unified and strengthened union movement in Canada. Labour can lead the nation! Harper must be defeated!

Housing Not War!

From Doug Meggison - HSSA

Dear all,

The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) and the anti-war Canadian Peace Alliance are joining forces to launch a national HOUSING NOT WAR campaign.

We need your support. Join us in calling on the government to implement a Housing Not War strategy. PLEASE, sign the declaration, Forward it to your lists & contacts and get involved at www.housingnotwar.ca.



World Peace Council



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Peace and Labour Events

Alberta Federation of Labour

Visit: <http://www.afl.org> for upcoming events.

Edmonton and District Labour Council

Meetings Every 3rd Monday 7:00pm at the Carpenters Hall, #201 - 10425 Princess Elizabeth Ave NW Edmonton, AB T5G 0Y5 Phone: (780)-474-4747 Email us: edlc@telusplanet.net

Parkland Institute

Visit: <http://www.ualberta.ca/parkland>

Council of Canadians - Edmonton Chapter

SPP WATCH makes the links between daily news items, new government initiatives and the ongoing Security and Prosperity Partnership talks between Canada, Mexico and the United States. As well as regular SPP updates, we will continue to post new reports, interviews and multimedia presentations critical of what is sometimes called the "deep integration" of North America. The site is updated regularly so visit often.

For more information on the SPP, please visit www.IntegrateThis.ca

ECAWAR 2007-2008

Next Meeting: Thursday January 10 for the next ECAWAR meeting at the International Hostel

The 2007-2008 schedules will be announced contact the ECAWAR information line at 780-998-2713 or go to www.ecawar.org

ALBERTA SOCIAL FORUM 2008

Feb 29 to Mar 2, 2008, RED DEER, ALBERTA Red Deer COLLEGE: LEAP FORWARD TO ACTION, CIVIL SOCIETY - THE NEXT SUPERPOWER

The World Social Forum is an open meeting place where social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organizations opposed to a world dominated by any form of imperialism come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action. Since the first world encounter in 2001, it has taken the form of a permanent world process seeking and building alternatives to neo-liberal policies. In the spirit of the World Social Forum, two Alberta Social Forums have been held already (in Edmonton in 2003 and in Calgary in 2005). The Third Alberta Social Forum will be held in Red Deer from February 29 to March 2, 2008. You are invited to participate.

http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_1anguage=2&id_menu=

Canadian Peace Alliance

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World Peace Council

World Peace Conference, Caracas, Venezuela, April 8-13, 2008

The Edmonton Peace Council (EPC) is a member of the Canadian Peace Congress which is affiliated to the World Peace Council.

The Alberta Peace News (APN) is published by the Edmonton Peace Council. The APN is published monthly and relies on volunteer labour and the financial support of our members and supporters. We hope you will help us in our fight for peace by becoming a member of the EPC and/or providing financial assistance.

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