



# CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

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WORLD PEACE COUNCIL REGIONAL  
MEETING, CARACAS VENEZUELA  
AUGUST 25-27, 2007

REPORT TO CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE

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## SPECIAL NOTE OF APPRECIATION

The Canadian Peace Congress would like to express a special acknowledgement of appreciation for the work of *Maria Alejandra Arias* who works for the Andean parliament in her tireless work to translate for the Canadian Peace Congress delegate. She translated, took notes, and organized much of the meeting. Without her help this report would not have been possible. The Canadian Peace Congress is very grateful for all of Maria's efforts.

## INTRODUCTION

The World Peace Council (WPC) regional continental meeting of the Americas was held in Caracas Venezuela August 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 at the National Assembly of the Venezuelan parliament. The meeting was called to discuss the current world and regional political situation, to establish a framework for continued work within the WPC in the coming year and to begin preparations for the WPC world summit to be convened in April 2008.

Venezuelan Comité de Solidaridad Internacional (COSI) hosted the meeting which was held in a spirit of revolutionary upsurge advancing within the Central and South American countries. In conjunction with the WPC meetings the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) were also being held in Caracas. This provided a youthful and enthusiastic spirit throughout the meetings. Youth play an important and leading role in the socialist revolution in Venezuela and in the broader and growing international peace and anti-imperialist movement.

### *DAY ONE*

COSI organized two tours for WPC delegates. The first explored some of the revolutionary changes occurring in Caracas. Visiting a barrio in Caracas and touring a state subsidized food distribution centre, a medical clinic, a computer centre for youth and children. The tour was conducted by the local communist party committee for socialist construction. The WPC delegates then visited a local community television station where we were interviewed. The community television and arts is enjoying growing state funding to compete with the private information sources. We then visited a very popular community radio station where we were interviewed again. There was great interest shown in the WPC delegation and the statements and positions of the WPC.

### *DAY TWO*

Another tour was organized by COSI and the regional committee of the Communist Party of Venezuela to a small fishing village in the Venezuelan National Park located close to Porta Cruz which is approximately 370 kilometres east of Caracas to attend and hear Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez address the Venezuelan nation in his popular Sunday afternoon addresses and question and answer sessions.

The Venezuelan President greeted the WPC delegates one by one and read out the organizational affiliation. Chavez then proceeded to offer to host the 2008 WPC conference in Caracas with state support. This announcement was welcomed enthusiastically by WPC



delegates. It was emphasized by the WPC Executive Secretary that this offer will go along way to ensure the success of the April 2008 WPC conference. All delegates were encouraged to begin immediate preparations for their organizations attendance.

## *DAY THREE*

The WPC meeting of the regional continental Americas was convened at 9:00am Monday August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in the National Assembly of the Venezuelan Parliament. Two sessions were held. The morning session heard greetings and messages of solidarity from all the organizations. Canada presented our official greeting (see Appendix A for full text) which was well received. The discussions focused on the international situation and the anti-imperialist fight back and the emergence of the world wide revolutionary socialist movement currently being led by Hugo Chavez and the revolutionary socialist forces in Central and South America.

The afternoon session centred on the practical tasks facing the WPC. Delegates heard a financial report, discussed the need for more communication and organizational efforts by the regional coordination, discussed questions of language in producing the Peace Messenger and stressed the need to minimize costly travel to meetings were electronic communications such as email, web sites, bulletin boards and web conference calls could be more effectively utilized.

In the evening a dinner was hosted by David Velásquez Interior Minister for Popular Participation and Social Protection. The dinner was attended by several deputies of the Venezuelan National Assembly and the Andean Parliament, executive members of the Communist Party of Venezuela and COSI members and peace supporters.

## WPC MAIN PLENUM ATTENDEES

The World Peace Council (WPC) regional continental meeting of the Americas was attended by eight member organizations and three observer organizations. The organizations present were:

- **Greece** – Iraklis Tsavdaridis – Executive Secretary World Peace Council
- **Venezuela** – Comité de Solidaridad Internacional (COSI), represented by;
  - Jul Jabour (General Secretary COSI, Deputy of Andean Parliament)
  - Victor Hugo Morales (Member Executive Committee COSI)
  - Fermin Toro (President COSI)
  - Jeronimo Carrera (Member Executive Committee COSI);
- **Cuba** - Miembro del Movimiento Cubano por la Paz y la Soberania de los Pueblo (MOVPAZ) represented by;
  - Orlando Fundora (President World Peace Council, Executive Member MOVPAZ)
  - José Ramón Rodríguez (President MOVPAZ);
- **Mexico** – Movimiento Mexicano por la Paz represented by;
  - Manuel Terraza Guerrero (Acting Chair for the meeting, President Movimiento Mexicano por la Paz);



- **Argentina** – Consejo Mundial del al Paz del Movimento por la Paz, la Soberania y la Solidaridad entre los Pueblos (MoPaSSol) represented by;
  - Rina Bertaccini (Vice President Consejo Mundial del al Paz, President MoPaSSol);
- **Dominican Republic** – Juan Pablo Acosta García (World Peace Council Regional Coordinator Caribbean and Americas, President UDP);
- **Brazil** – Centro Brasilenõ de Solidaridad a los Pueblos y Lucha por la Paz (CEBRAPAZ) represented by;
  - Rubens Diniz (Executive Member CEBRAPAZ);
- **Canada** – Canadian Peace Congress represented by;
  - Sean Currie (Secretary Treasurer Edmonton Peace Council);
- **Paraguay** (Observer) – Najeeb Amando;
- **Uruguay** (Observer) Juan Canessa (Commission for Justice and Memory);
- **Chile** (Observer) - Sergio Sepiélveda.

## MAIN PLENUM DISCUSSIONS

The morning session of the WPC meetings was characterized by assessments of the world and regional peace forces and the role of these forces in the revolutionary socialist movements sweeping Central and South America. Special emphasis was placed on Venezuela's role as the leading anti-imperialist force and the need to strengthen the anti-imperialist fight back.

### *VENEZUELA*

Fermin Toro President of COSI opened the main session with special greetings of solidarity with all the regional struggles for peace and social justice. He had special thanks for Hugo Morales for his help in the arrangements. He stressed the pride and importance of the fraternal relationship with the WPC and COSI. Toro noted that conditions are similar in all countries and forms the basis and conditions which unite all oppressed peoples and is the critical factor in the anti-imperialist fight back.

### *CUBA*

Orlando Fundora President of WPC summarized the meetings of the WPC in Brazil and commented on the international military situation. Fundora noted the politics surrounding energy and the growing connection between oil consumption and the increasing belligerence of US imperialism. Fundora said, "Imperialism is soaking up the scientists of the world and putting them to task of developing new weapons and bio-fuel technologies". The question of bio-fuels Fundora said "puts the question of food production versus energy for cars centre stage". (The Canadian Peace Congress notes that for Canadian farmers this question is emerging in the form of the fight for the Canadian Wheat Board and corporate control of Canadian agricultural production which will be diverted from food production to more profitable energy production.)



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The WPC President also warned of the issue of water and the control by the large trans-national water corporations. Imperialism he said “is trying to monopolize the fresh water of the world”. The CPC points to the Montebello SPP meetings in August which were in part to discuss Canada’s capitulation for the bulk export of fresh water to the US.

NATO poses a threat to world peace. Fundora made special emphasis that the sharpening European situation is due to the aggressive stance of US-NATO interference in the domestic affairs of European countries.

Fundora commented on the re-establishment of the Canadian Peace Congress as an important milestone and emphasized the importance of cooperation between continental organizations such as the US Peace Council, Canadian Peace Congress, MOVPAZ, Caribbean Peace organizations as essential in strengthening peace forces in combating US imperialism in hemispherical revolutionary struggles now under way in Central and South America.

Special emphasis was placed on the leading role that Venezuela is playing in the world. Fundora said “The role of Venezuela is important because it signifies a break with chains of imperialism”. All the actions of Venezuela are of peace, health and education for the peoples of Central and South America.

“The requirement to struggle against imperialism is of first rate importance” the WPC President noted. He indicated that because of the Venezuelan revolution imperialism is losing its position of world wide domination and that peace forces are gaining ground and are now becoming the “leading force” in the world. Venezuela has the same agenda as the world wide struggle for peace and is central in drawing new forces and alliances in this struggle.

Fundora emphasized the relevance of having the WPC meetings in Caracas. This is of particular importance in the face of Venezuelan President Chavez’s announcement that the Venezuelan people will host the event. Fundora said “we are obligated to ensure success because of Chavez’s support”.

## *MEXICO*

Manuel Terraza Guerrero acting chair for the WPC meeting summarized the role of newly emerging forms of peace struggle on South America. He said “in Brazil and Argentina the peace movement is advancing because of these newly formed peace groups”. After 50 years of the Cuban revolution in facing different processes of change, the strengthening of the Cuban peace movement is of critical importance as it forms the basis of the North American continental struggle for peace. It is the bulwark in the anti-imperialist fight back and directly challenges the false notion of the permanence of US imperialism.

Guerrero noted the difficulties in advancing the Mexican peace movement but said “Mexico is finding new forms of struggle to overcome this situation”. He indicated that Mexican peace forces are building alliances between political parties and citizen movements and is working with children’s and doctor’s groups.

“On the whole”, the Movimiento Mexicano por la Paz President said “there are more positives than negatives”.



## ***ARGENTINA***

Rina Bertaccini summarized the previous 2 years of peace work in Argentina as characterised by a dominant anti-imperialist content. She commented that Argentina is pursuing building alliances with other continental peace forces and seeing great progress in the anti-imperialist content of this work.

Bertaccini said “the founding in 1947 of the Argentinean peace movement with the WPC was large and broad in scope”, she continued that given the current global realities “the original peace forces were correct in their anti-imperialist linkages to peace”.

The importance of a conscious struggle against the enemies of peace is a requirement of the anti-imperialist fight back Bertaccini argues. She emphasized the need to overcome financial impediments to WPC work and to find new allies of peace.

In Argentina and South America it is very clear the direction that the peace movement is taking. It is one with a strong anti-imperialist content. The struggle to halt foreign military bases, primarily US military bases, is a reflection of the anti-imperialist content. Central to this movement is the fight against US military academies.

Bertaccini rejected the “fight against terrorism” as a false struggle. A struggle she said “that deflects imperialist, first and foremost US, complicity in the militarisation of the world economies”. She called for a special WPC meeting to discuss the politics of “US terrorism”. This she said “will form the basis for a WPC policy against US terrorism”.

Bertaccini closed by saying that “the only way forward is to work with all peace movements. The Central American political situation is complex but what they all have in common is the fight for social justice”.

## ***DOMINICAN REPUBLIC***

Juan Pablo Acosta García opened his remarks by acknowledging the special guest from Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile. García summarized the situation in the Caribbean and said much of the difficulty with the struggle for peace in this region is due to geography and languages.

He noted that of particular difficulty is “freedom of the press”. He noted the critical situation in Haiti and noted that currently there is no WPC member from Haiti. Puerto Rico has had a peace council that has existed for many years and which is being re-activated.

Noting the “completely different” cultural realities between Haiti and the Dominican Republic the need to find new ways to work is critical for the development and strengthening of the peace movement in this region.

García called for a regional continental meeting of the Caribbean, USA, Mexico, Cuba and Canada to strengthen the revolutionary struggles of Central and South America.



## *BRAZIL*

Rubens Diniz began his comments bringing attention to the importance of the struggles of revolutionary socialism underway in Venezuela. He emphasized the importance of the international defence of the socialist gains in Venezuela as part of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Diniz commented on the “different forms of propaganda” that the imperialists are assembling as the centre of its fight against socialist gains in Venezuela. He said that “fighting for peace is also a social justice fight. The fight for peace is a continuation of struggle and not one that can emerge only as new conflict arises”, commented Diniz. He was drawing consideration to the world wide attention that the war in Iraq first aroused and then faded. This he said is of “particular interest to peace forces”.

He raised the need to find new ways to maintain and continue the continuity for the struggle for peace. He said “precisely because there is an emergence of an anti-imperialist block of non-belligerent states that within this emerging block can this continuity can be found.”

He urged the WPC to find new ways to build solidarity with other peace forces and agreed that Chavez in the framework of the Venezuelan revolution “tasks that were previously prohibitive to the international peace movement can now occur”. He stressed the need to emphasize neo-colonialism and elevate to greater visibility on the WPC agenda.

## *CANADA*

Canada reported briefly on the current political situation in Canada with the minority Conservative government led by PM Steven Harper as the leading force in the militarization of Canada. It was noted that the energy policies of the Harper neo-con government is the new central issue facing the peace forces. Canada’s role in the US-NATO led war in Afghanistan are a reflection of an alliance of finance-military-oil capital willing to sacrifice the youth of the country in exchange for profit. A statement was read which was well received (please see Appendix A for the full text).

## *PARAGUAY*

Najeeb Amando briefly summarized the peace situation in Paraguay and noted that “discussions of imperialism in South America form the basis of the current revolutionary socialist transformations occurring on the continent”.

He said that the government of Paraguay is utilizing fear as the basis for the introduction of “terrorism issues”. He stressed the new role of military forces in the cities and that the military is characterizing bourgeois politics of the nation through fear and intimidation.

Amando said that the peace forces are combating the forces of reaction through historical education, developing networks and cultural and political challenges to bourgeois power. He indicated that building an affiliated peace organization within Paraguay to the WPC is great importance which will be tackled in the coming year.

## *URUGUAY*

Juan Canessa thanked the WPC assembly for the opportunity to participate in the meetings. Canessa briefly summarized the current political situation in Uruguay characterizing the



content as “popular” and generally anti-imperialist nature. The Uruguay peace forces are gaining a great deal of experience through the ant-imperialist fight back but are confronted by a reactionary media.

Juan Canessa said that “Uruguay has been present in the WPC in the past and now needs to re-affiliate with it as a task of first rate importance”. He went on to say that “international solidarity will be understood not only as the fight against war but will have the reach of social equality for our people”.

## *CHILE*

Sergio Sepiélveda thanked the WPC for inviting Chile to participate in the Assembly meetings. Sepiélveda told the WPC delegates that he was attending the World Federation of Democratic Youth and that WFDY has a long a rich relationship with the WPC.

Sepiélveda noted that Chile currently does not have a “committee for Peace” but that the need for a “break with coalition work” is important as it submerges the anti-imperialist forces in coalition work not allowing for more independent anti-imperialist positions. He requested materials to take back to Chile to help in the formation of a new peace council.

Sepiélveda said “the need to coordinate the working class and peace movement in Chile is a necessity; it needs to occur to help prevent resource wars for water, etc”.



## ***REPORT FROM SECRETARY GENERAL WPC***

Iraklis Tsavdaridis Secretary General of the WPC summarized the previous year's work and noted that the results was the product of a process of ongoing planning. Iraklis stated that it is both important and significant to have the observers from Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile.

The Secretary General called on the participants of the meeting to work toward sending a delegate to the November 20<sup>th</sup> 2007 meetings in Hanoi in celebration of Vietnam's National Day of Peace on November 19<sup>th</sup>. He stressed the importance of building solidarity with socialist Vietnam and the need for strengthening peace forces in the region.

Turning his attention to Europe and the developments of the US-NATO militarization of the Balkans and the introduction of space based weaponry and "defensive" shields, Tsavdaridis said "the WPC meetings in Lisbon on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> will be a direct challenge to those meetings being held by the defence ministers of the EU".

A call was made to support as much as possible the Lisbon meetings. He noted that Portugal will be hosting special meetings to discuss the forms of fight back in the context of the re-militarization of Europe via the US missile shield. Tsavdaridis said "that this effort of US imperialism is having a very destabilizing effect in Europe."

The Secretary General summarized the efforts in Africa and noted that the forces in this region are not well organized and weak and may not be able to meet in the new year.

In discussions around the Middle East Tsavdaridis indicated that meetings are being proposed for January to discuss the political situation in that region. He said that "the war in Iraq is still the greatest focus of peace forces in the world."

The next WPC assembly meetings in Venezuela in April "requires more work and greater efforts, especially in light of President Chavez's support for the WPC" Tsavdaridis said. He called on all peace councils to redouble their work in an effort to have 25 countries participate.

A short financial report was given where he commended Canada and Cuba for consistent, regular and timely dues payment. He went on to say that "it is not possible to speak on behalf of an international organization without paying dues". Canada and Cuba were the only 2 participants who attended with dues paid in full.\*

Interjecting in the Secretary Generals report, Jul Jabour, said "the WPC has the support of the revolutionary government of Venezuela." This statement was followed by vigorous applause.

*\*It should be noted that for the years following the dissolution of the Canadian Peace Congress by the forces of capitulation and revisionism the Regina Peace Council led by Cathy Fischer, Nora Jarboh, Elsie Beeching and Peter Gehl maintained dues payment to the WPC. It was through these efforts alone that Canada has the prestige it now enjoys with the WCP executive.*



## SPECIAL GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VENEZUELA

Jeronimo Carrera gave a special salute to all the delegates present and said “it is important for us to have youth involved as it gives hope to all the peace fighters of the sixties”.

The Venezuelan Movement for Peace was born in 1949. UMP was established in Prague by the work of President General Gabardon. Gabardon opposed the US troops being sent into Korea which established the anti-imperialist content of the current COSI. Carrera commented on the fact that the Venezuelan Movement for Peace attend all the WPC meetings in the 1980's and that he “still has his delegate card signed by WPC Secretary General at that time Romas Chandra.

The CPV President made special mention that Jul Jabour's father was, in 1971, very influential in the development of the Venezuelan Movement for Peace. The COSI was formed because they wanted to express solidarity to all people's of Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua, etc.

He said that the 1996 re-affiliation with the WPC was of special importance because it discussed many of the of the important questions of the time. This was in contrast with much of the broader peace movement that said since the fall of the Soviet Union peace was no longer a critical issue. He noted that history has proven the WPC as correct.

Carrera stressed the importance of the April 2008 WPC Assembly in Caracas as an opportunity to see the revolutionary socialist process in practice. He urged all delegates to work for a successful 2008 meeting.



## **APPENDIX A – CANADA’S STATEMENT TO THE WPC ASSEMBLY**

Dear Friends

The Canadian Peace Congress greets the World Peace Council family assembled in this regional conference in Caracas Venezuela. We bring greetings from Honorary Congress Chair John Hanly Morgan and our Interim Executive to WPC President Orlando Fundora Lopez and the entire WPC Executive. We thank our hosts, the Venezuelan Council for International Solidarity (COSI) and through them, express our solidarity with the people of Venezuela who have embarked on the path of the revolutionary socialist transformation of their country.

A regional conference of the WPC organizations of the Americas and the Caribbean is timely. Everywhere in our respective continents and regions and countries the working people, the poor and dispossessed are resisting the aggressiveness of US imperialism and their accomplices to militarize our economies, to appropriate and exploit the energy and other natural resources belonging to our people and to do so without regard to the rights of the indigenous and working people affected nor the environment damage that is inflicted on our countries. In the name of a bogus “war on terrorism” minority neo-conservative regimes deriving their mandate from corporate power, impose economic programs that transfer the wealth of the people to an elite that squander it on extravagance and excess and preparations for war.

The Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive war, unilateralism in international affairs is universally rejected and condemned by all rational people. Non-belligerent states are beginning to move without the approval of US imperialism toward new forms of international relations and economic cooperation. These new relations are based on respect for the sovereignty of nations, for rejection of another arms race, for the renewal of nuclear disarmament programs, for the dismantling of all foreign military bases, for a repudiation of all US-NATO-NORAD-EU type doctrines of the “right to intervene”. The path forward to new forms of international relations can only be based on policies and programs that elevate the needs of the people and the future of the planet above the crass goals of the profit system.

Movements for peace and progress in our region are becoming more insistent, defined and organized. They are beginning to reach into all countries including advanced capitalist countries such as Canada and the USA. There is little doubt that this is due in large part to the steadfastness of the people of Cuba and their socialist government, to the revolutionary events unfolding in Venezuela and Bolivia and the progressive trends in so many other countries of South and Latin America that insist on the right to take the path of development that serves the needs of their people without regard to whether or not it has the approval of foreign military and investment interests.

The struggle of the peace forces in the USA expressing the rejection by a majority of US citizens of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is a vital component in the struggle for peace and progress in our region. The people of Canada in their majority likewise reject the Conservative Government’s deeper involvement of Canadian forces in the US-NATO war in Afghanistan. There is a growing awareness among Canadians of the unjust and undemocratic essence of the



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UN occupation of Haiti. Our people are beginning to understand the profoundly anti-democratic and reactionary content of the corporate agenda for North America expressed in the Security, Prosperity Partnership Meeting from August 18-21 in Montebello Quebec of President George Bush, Mexican President Filipe Calderon and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The Canadian general election is on hold as the right wing neo-con forces contemplate their 30% approval rating and possible defeat if they go to the polls.

The World Peace Council and its regional affiliates in North and South America, in Latin America and the Caribbean are part of a great unfolding fight back of the peace loving people of our respective countries against the bankrupt ideas of a dying imperialism. We do not underestimate the capacity of imperialism for treachery and its powerful resources enabling it to manoeuvre and survive. Neither do we consider it invincible.

We in the Canadian Peace Congress will leave here, strengthened in our resolve to build the organizational strength of our Congress so as to more effectively act together with our brothers and sisters, our friends and neighbours, in solidarity with the working people of all of our countries to unite the broadest possible movement for peace and economic progress that no forces of reaction will be able to resist.



## **APPENDIX B – PREPARATION TASKS BY CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS IN ADVANCE OF THE APRIL 2008 WPC ASSEMBLY IN CARACAS VENEZUELA**

In advance of the Caracas 2008 WPC Assembly Canada needs to work towards a strong delegation. The numbers of tasks are considerable and require the efforts of all the Canadian Peace Congress affiliates. The tentative date for the event is April 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2008. This leaves approximately 34 weeks of preparation time to plan for such things as:

### **1. Event Preparations**

- a. Establishing a Canadian Peace Congress preparations committee
- b. Coordination with the WPC in Athens Greece;
- c. Coordination with the Venezuelan embassy;
- d. Types of events Canada would wish to participate in;
- e. Travel coordination for the delegates;

### **2. Event Promotion**

- a. Inform and invite participation of local labour councils, peace coalitions and organizations friendly to the Canadian Peace Congress;
- b. Pamphlet, poster and communication production and distribution;
- c. Speakers to address local peace councils and friendly organizations;

### **3. Fund Raising**

- a. The Venezuelan Government will be supporting much of the Caracas costs but the WPC affiliates will be responsible for travel costs to and from Caracas;
- b. Funds for preparation of pre-assembly material and newsletters;

### **4. Delegate Selection**

- a. The selection of delegates should occur no later than the end of February to allow for arrangements to get off work, flight and accommodations preparations;
- b. A national convention of the Canadian Peace Congress needs to be called to establish and elected executive to drive the preparations process.