



CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

125 Brandon Avenue, Toronto, ON M6H 2E2

Canada and NATO Out of Libya! Hands Off Syria! Peace Congress Calls for Increased Mobilizations Against War

24 May 2011

As the conflict in Libya grinds on, the real character of the “humanitarian” military intervention there is becoming more and more clear. Using the political cover of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, NATO military forces led by the United States have wasted no time in transforming Libya's dangerous political unrest into an imperialist interventionist war aimed at regime change, dividing the country and plundering oil resources.

NATO and its member states – including Canada – have actively sided with reactionary forces within Libya and are now leading the effort to overthrow the government, including blatant attempts to assassinate Moammar Qaddafi and other government members through airstrikes. In the eyes of NATO, the largest military organization in the world, “Responsibility to Protect” means “Opportunity to Interfere,” regardless of death and destruction.

When considered as part of a regional campaign by imperialism, the aims of NATO clearly go far beyond plundering the oil of the Middle East and North Africa. Faced with a massive surge of the popular and revolutionary movements in many Arab countries, imperialism is manoeuvring to reassert its control in the region. It is no coincidence that NATO attacks against Libya are accompanied by increased aggressive postures by the United States and Israel against Syria, Iran and Palestine.

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns the ongoing imperialist aggression against Libya and calls for the immediate withdrawal of Canadian and NATO forces from the region. All peace-supporting groups in Canada – including trade unions, faith communities and student groups – need to speak out and mobilize against NATO's action against Libya and the threat of a far broader war in the region.

In Syria, the internal political crisis is extremely dangerous and is also attracting interest from imperialist forces who seek to interfere for their own ends. For decades, the United States has sought to overthrow the Syrian government because of its strong stands for Arab unity and sovereignty, for national rights for Palestine, for nationalization of oil resources, and against Israel's policies of expansion and occupation. As it did in the case of Libya, imperialism will seek to use the current political situation as a pretext to intervene in Syria, citing humanitarian concerns, and quickly turn the conflict toward its own ends. This will only result in misery for the Syrian people and pose the threat of a wider regional conflict.

The Canadian Peace Congress expresses its full solidarity with the Syrian people and their legitimate democratic demands. At the same time, we oppose imperialist interference under any pretext, and we condemn efforts by the United States and its NATO allies to distort humanitarian values to justify their own aggressive and exploitative aims.

We demand that the Canadian government:

- Immediately withdraw Canadian military forces from Libya and the region;
- Oppose military intervention in Syria and Iran, under any pretext;
- Support the peace initiatives of those states and organizations advocating a cease fire and negotiated end to the war;
- Withdraw from NATO and all other military alliances;
- Promote progressive reforms at the United Nations, to transform it into a transparent and democratic body.

The Canadian Peace Congress calls for increased mobilizations by peace and progressive forces in Canada, to oppose Canada's military involvement in Libya and to prevent intervention in Syria and Iran.

A large organized movement for a non-interference, and peaceful negotiated settlement can prevent the Harper Conservative government from implementing its wider aggressive war agenda. Such a movement can give voice to the growing opposition among the Canadian people who oppose U.S. and NATO instigated wars, and who demand a new independent Canadian foreign policy of peace, non-intervention and diplomacy in international relations.

-30-

*Canadian Peace Congress Executive Council
May 24, 2011*

About the Canadian Peace Congress:

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

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

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