



## CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

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### **Prorogation Has Not Solved the Crisis: Unite to Bring Down the Harper Conservatives!**

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Despite the decision by the Conservative government to prorogue Parliament in order to avoid a non-confidence vote, the political crisis has not disappeared and continues to represent a crucial juncture for the people of Canada. The Canadian Peace Congress added its voice to those of the labour movement, hundreds of progressive social and community organizations, and millions of Canadians who called and mobilized for the defeat of the Conservative federal minority government on Monday and the establishment of a new coalition majority government. Now that Parliament has been suspended, the Canadian Peace Congress calls for continued unity in action to oppose the Conservative agenda and bring down this government at the earliest opportunity.

The catalyst for the current parliamentary crisis was the economic update last Thursday, in which Finance Minister Jim Flaherty indicated that the government's intention was to solve the economic crisis on the backs of working people. The Tories refused to provide stimulative public investment, legislative guarantees for job protection or support for unemployed workers; instead, they launched an all-out assault on pay equity, attacked the wages and right to strike of federal employees, offered up public lands and assets at fire sale prices to their corporate friends, and moved to further weaken Canada's electoral democracy by suspending the public financing of political parties. Through all of this the Conservative Party, the most pro-war faction in Parliament, remains committed to spending billions of dollars on the war in Afghanistan and half a trillion dollars on the Canada First Defence Strategy.

Clearly, this government must go. Despite prorogation, the fact remains that the Conservatives have lost the confidence of a majority of the Canadian public and a majority of the House of Commons. While delayed, the nearest opportunity for achieving this important victory against the right-wing remains a non-confidence vote in Parliament and the establishment of a new majority government by a coalition of opposition parties. Despite the weakness of the various coalition partners on a range of policy matters, their counter-attack to the Harper government must be supported and their unity and resolve encouraged. The defeat of the Conservatives serves the causes of peace, democracy and social progress.

A new coalition government composed of opposition parties that have been compelled, through various reasons and to different degrees, to give voice to the majority opinion in Canada is the opportunity for a fresh start on redefining Canada's foreign policy. The foreign policy that is needed includes the rejection of Canadian participation in military blocs and a turn to participation and engagement with

new trends in the world that oppose the Bush Doctrine, the immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan and a negotiated settlement to that war, opposition to a renewed arms race, deep cuts to Canadian military spending and an active contribution to international disarmament, the promotion of progressive reforms to the UN to reorient that body toward the principles in the UN Charter, and the dedication of Canada's foreign policy resources to easing international tensions and overcoming global poverty.

The Canadian Peace Congress considers that an economic program to protect Canadians from the economic crisis will be successful if it also includes measures to reverse and reduce the Conservative policy of militarization of the economy. Militarism is an impediment, not a stimulus, to the economic expansion and job creation that can only come from public investment in infrastructure, public housing, public transit, environmental projects, justice for Aboriginal peoples, child care, public education, anti-poverty measures, and capital investments in peaceful production.

The key now is to build opposition in the extra-parliamentary arena, to broaden and strengthen the movement to bring down the government, and to stiffen the resolve of the opposition parties to form a coalition government. The Conservatives have indicated that they will spend the next six weeks campaigning against the opposition – this means six weeks of attacks on labour rights, six weeks of chauvinistic vitriol against Quebec, and six more weeks of a deepening economic crisis with no government support for working people.

The labour movement and its allies, including the peace movement, must ensure that there is also six weeks of growing mass mobilization and action against the Harper Conservatives.

- 30 -

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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.

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