

The Canadian government is called upon to act for peace, not promote war

By [Global Research News](http://www.globalresearch.ca/end-the-aggression-against-syria-stop-the-drive-to-war-against-iran/) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/end-the-aggression-against-syria-stop-the-drive-to-war-against-iran/> Global Research, October 01, 2012

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns the ongoing foreign intervention in Syria and the escalating drive to war against Iran, and calls for the immediate withdrawal of all Canadian, NATO and foreign mercenary forces from the region. We further call upon the Conservative government of Stephen Harper to restore and normalize its diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran, and to re-orient Canadian foreign policy toward peace, international cooperation and solidarity.

The Harper government's decision to adopt an international policy of belligerence, and to do so without consulting Parliament, is further evidence of its abandonment of a foreign policy of peace and diplomacy in favour of aggressive and hostile interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. Syria and Iran are member states of the United Nations and have expressed no hostile intent towards Canada or its people. Prime Minister Harper is actively contributing to the danger of war, through hostile policies that are out of step with the Canadian peoples' longstanding support for peace.

The Canadian government has allied itself with a minority of Western governments who, along with pro-war forces within Israel and a few reactionary Arab regimes, are seeking new pretexts for intervention and war. These include the protection of human rights or the prevention of the alleged proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These objectives cannot be achieved by breaking diplomatic relations, imposing economic sanctions, arming foreign mercenaries, or forging international campaigns for regime change and by installing puppet governments favourable to the strategic goals of the major western power.

Foreign intervention, sanctions and military aggression only weaken the human and democratic rights of the Syrian and Iranian people, and diminish their ability to develop and improve their societies. The aftermath of NATO intervention in Libya last year, in which Canadian armed forces bombed Libyan territory, has been disastrous for the people of Libya who are now plunged into factional warfare. This, plus the catastrophic consequences of the military occupation of Iraq, including the deaths of over one million Iraqis, clearly indicate that the main victim of any war is the civilian population.

Written by Joan Russow

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As in the case of Libya last year, the drive to interfere in Syria and Iran is driven by the strategic and economic interests of imperialist powers. These countries – including the United States, Britain, the European Union and Canada – choose militarism and war as their preferred option for expanding their spheres of influence and control over resources and markets. The result is destruction, displacement and despair to the peoples of the developing countries who have been targeted. **Far from resolving conflicts, these policies of interference only deepen current crises and escalate the danger to world peace.**

Pro-war forces have seized upon the many complexities in the situations in Iran and Syria, to promote misinformation and confusion. The threat to peace in the Middle East does not arise from countries who exercise their sovereign right to develop the nuclear energy industries to build their economies. Nor does it originate with countries who oppose Western efforts to re-colonize the Middle East and control its vast energy resources, through the New Middle East Plan. Rather, the concrete threat to peace is the existing conventional and nuclear weapons that the US, its NATO allies and Israel constantly brandish in their effort to destabilize the region, to demonize governments that oppose imperialist plans, and to justify interference and war.

The Canadian Peace Congress asserts that the direction of economic, political and social development in any country is the sole right of the people of that country to determine, without foreign interference. We hold this principle to be true for the people of Canada, as we hold it to be true for the people of Syria and Iran. We are completely opposed to any foreign political or military intervention, under any pretext. This includes efforts to interfere with and divert genuine democratic domestic movements.

The role of the Canadian government in both of these crises has been shameful. Under Stephen Harper's Conservatives, Canada has abandoned its reputation as a country with an independent stance in international relations, and assumed the posture of a vocal NATO aggressor state. In all dimensions – political-diplomatic, economic and military – Canada's recent policies toward Syria and Iran have been geared toward three goals:

1. Isolate and neutralize sources of information that conflict with imperialist aims, by cutting off communication with the governments and peoples in Syria and Iran;
2. Increase the suffering of the people and generate anti-government sentiment, by imposing economic sanctions that particularly target energy industries who produce for local consumption;
3. Increase the active military threat in the region, by deploying warships and other military resources to the region.

These goals all directly serve the overall objective of pro-Western regime change in Syria and Iran, and the Harper government has campaigned hard internationally, to convince other countries to assume similar policies against both countries.

In the case of Syria, the Conservatives have also campaigned aggressively to create and promote a political opposition movement to the government. In November 2011, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly received a report that “virtually no one [in Syria] is calling for international military intervention” and that Syria was “without a clearly identifiable opposition with precise political ambitions.” Yet, just prior to that report, Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird had met with the Syrian National Council and proclaimed them to be the legitimate opposition who has “continuously outlined their appetite for change.” It is unclear how Baird identified an organized and “legitimate” opposition when NATO could not, and it suggests that the Syrian National Council is little more than a pro-Western puppet government-in-waiting that has been fashioned by imperialist forces.

Furthermore, Canada has supported the arming of an estimated 40-60,000 foreign mercenaries to fight inside Syria. These mercenaries form the backbone of the Free Syrian Army, and indicate the degree of armed foreign intervention already underway in Syria. **The recent elections in Syria had a higher voter turnout than in Canada, and a number of independents and government opponents were elected and have been included in the cabinet. The Syrian people have spoken, yet Canada and other interventionist forces continue to pick sides in an internal matter.**

In the case of Iran, the frenzied drive to war has obscured certain significant facts from the public eye:

1.

Iran is a non-nuclear state and a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and is under the supervision of the United Nations’ International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and not for military ends. The fact of the matter is that neither the IAEA nor the U.S. administration has been able to show any substantiated evidence about the weaponization of Iran’s nuclear energy program. The U.S. Secretary of Defence, Leon Panetta, has publicly conceded, “there is no evidence that Iran has a nuclear weapon.”

2.

Israel is a nuclear weapons state with an estimated 200-400 nuclear weapons, who has refused to join the NPT. There is no UN supervision over Israel's nuclear activities. It has pre-emptively attacked other neighbouring states, and has threatened Iran with military attack many times.

3.

United States is a nuclear weapons state with more than 10,000 nuclear weapons, and it has not allowed any inspection of its nuclear facilities by the IAEA. The U.S. has used nuclear weapons against other countries, when it exploded two nuclear bombs on Japan and when it used uranium-enriched weapons in Iraq. The U.S. also has repeatedly threatened Iran with military attack, and has nuclear-equipped forces currently stationed in the region.

The Canadian Peace Congress supports the October 6 Day of Protest Against War, initiated by the Canadian Peace Alliance. After more than a year of conflict and violent foreign intervention, thousands of Syrian people have died. If governments like Canada are allowed to continue their current policies of aggression, interference and colonization, thousands more will die. **All peace-supporting groups in Canada – including trade unions, faith communities and student groups – need to speak out and mobilize against intervention in Syria and Iran and the threat of a far broader war in the region.**

The Canadian Peace Congress demands that the Canadian government:

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Immediately withdraw Canadian military forces from the region, and oppose military intervention in Syria and Iran, under any pretext;

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Restore diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran, remove sanctions, and support the peace initiatives of those states and organizations advocating a cease fire and negotiated end to the war;

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Canadian Peace Congress: End the Aggression Against Syria! Stop the Drive to War Against Iran!

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Withdraw from NATO, which has a nuclear first-strike policy and complimentary sea- and land-based ballistic missile systems, and all other military alliances;

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Promote full nuclear disarmament, beginning with the nuclear stockpiles of the United States, Israel and NATO;

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Adopt a new independent Canadian foreign policy of peace, non-intervention and diplomacy in international relations.

Canadian Peace Congress Executive Council

30 September, 2012

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 Peace Congress is affiliated to the World Peace Council and is a founding member of the Canadian Peace Alliance.