

from the Canadian Peace Congress

An Urgent Appeal for Unity against the Growing Danger of War

To all those who share our sense of urgency about the worsening international situation, and the grave danger that war poses for the world today, we issue this Appeal for a united and powerful response.

At this critical moment, ending militarism, aggression and war, averting climate catastrophe, and tackling poverty, social disparity and related global problems should be humanity's top priorities. Instead, political elites, especially in the countries of the NATO alliance including Canada, are pushing the world in the opposite direction.

We are witnessing the emergence of a 'new cold war' and the deliberate cultivation of Russophobia and Sino-phobia, along with other forms of fear-mongering and demonization. In North America, rearmament, bullying tactics and glorification of militarism seem the order of the day. While US President Donald Trump has been particularly shrill in his attacks against peace, his Democratic Party rivals frequently attempt to out-flank him with their hawkish rhetoric. The principles of international law – respect for the full equality and sovereignty of all countries, non-interference, and the resolution of disputes through peaceful negotiation, not threats and aggression – are being increasingly violated. Important agreements such as the Iran Nuclear deal (JCPOA) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces/INF treaty are being unilaterally cancelled.

The arms race is accelerating, and weapons systems relentlessly "modernized". Globally, military spending is now over a trillion dollars a year, with the expanding US military budget leading the way. Foreign military bases are spreading like a metastasizing cancer, and the world's armed forces are now the largest single global source of carbon emissions from fossil fuel consumption.

As regional and international flashpoints sharpen, the danger of global war – involving the main nuclear powers – looms ever larger. The NATO encirclement of the Russian Federation is tightening, and economic and military pressures, as well as propaganda attacks against the People's Republic of China are growing. Backed by Washington,

Israel's rulers are escalating their repressive, apartheid policies against the Palestinian people in besieged Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. Imperialist "regime change" campaigns are targeting Venezuela, Nicaragua and other countries around the world. The US occupation

of Afghanistan is now entering its 18th year, with no end in sight. Canada's arms sales are helping the Saudi regime conduct a vicious war against the people of Yemen. Even the hopeful signs of progress on the Korean peninsula towards a peaceful resolution of that longstanding conflict are being undermined by hawkish forces inside the US Administration and the military-industrial complex.



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The widespread advance of racist, national chauvinist, and neo-fascist movements is adding to global instability. The deepening economic crisis of capitalism is fuelling increased rivalries, trade and tariff wars, even predictions of another global economic meltdown. The crisis of climate change is already bringing destructive weather systems, droughts, rising ocean levels, and other dire consequences.

Canada's Role

In the face of this rapidly deteriorating situation, Canada should and must be a voice of reason and restraint, and a principled advocate for peace and disarmament. Instead, however, Ottawa has become one of the most bellicose voices marching to the 'drums of war'. The current Liberal government of Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland has tilted Canadian foreign and defence policies in a far-right, militarist and interventionist direction, and its bloated war budget squanders valuable resources which would be better spent on socially useful purposes. Any hope that this government would slash carbon emissions, or prioritize the needs of workers, Indigenous peoples, the poor and marginalized, seniors and youth, has vanished. Instead, Canadian military spending is skyrocketing, from the current levels of \$20 billion, to a projected \$36 billion by the middle of the next decade.

Across Canada, a number of useful and important peace & solidarity initiatives are taking place. But we must face the reality that overall, the peace movement in Canada and internationally today is not sufficient to address these many dangerous and

interrelated threats. Unlike earlier periods – the 1980s with its huge mobilizations against the danger of nuclear war, or the early 2000s when millions protested the invasion of Iraq – the anti-war movement today is far smaller. The doctrine of “responsibility to protect”, which the imperialist powers use as a pretext for their geopolitical agenda, has disoriented and neutralized popular resistance.

Today it is more urgent than ever to foster greater cooperation, and unity of action among all of the forces for peace, solidarity and social justice. In the view of the Canadian Peace Congress, the absolutely imperative task of our times is to build powerful mass mobilizations for a decisive shift in Canadian and global politics, away from confrontation and militarism, and towards peace and disarmament. Only such a change can give the human race a realistic chance to save the planet from war and environmental disaster, and to improve the lives of billions of people.

But success requires far more than well-meaning phrases. Common action to transform Canadian foreign and defence policies toward peace and disarmament is needed now! We call upon all the diverse forces in our movement to set aside differences, unite around our shared concerns, and build campaigns to push back the threat of war and militarism, before it is too late!

The Canadian Peace Congress stands committed to this urgent and decisive goal, and welcomes dialogue and joint action with any and all peace and solidarity groups and other concerned organizations and movements to help work for its realization.



We invite you to share this Unity Appeal with other activists and concerned organizations, and we would welcome your thoughts and suggestions. You can reach us at info@canadianpeacecongress.ca, or through the post at Box 73593, Wychwood PO, Toronto, ON M6C 4A7