

The Dominion

dominion, *n.* 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

CANADA'S GRASSROOTS NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • JULY, 2004 • DOMINIONPAPER.CA • Vol. II, #2

Venezuela petitions U.S. to stop funding coup supporters

In a June 22nd letter, Bernardo Alvarez, Venezuelan ambassador to the United States, asked U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell to direct the National Endowment for Democracy to stop funding political opponents of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. The letter claims that the NED, which is supported by money from the U.S. Congress, is violating Venezuela's campaign finance laws and the endowment's own regulations by giving grants to organizations and people that supported the failed 2002 coup against the country's democratically elected leader.

"We would ask that, in supporting democracy in Venezuela, the United States take care not to violate Venezuela's election laws or other Venezuelan laws; and take care not to assist or facilitate the violation of such laws by Venezuelan citizens," read the letter. It also highlighted General Powell's own condemnation of the U.S.'s support of the 1973 Chilean coup and contrasted this with White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer's apparent endorsement of the Venezuelan coup when, at the time, he suggested that President Chavez had resigned.

The U.S. has been openly hostile towards Mr. Chavez since his landslide election victory in 1998. Mr. Chavez, socialist president of Venezuela and admirer of Fidel Castro, maintains popular support in



Venezuelans take to the streets against military and business coup organizers that temporarily deposed democratically-elected President Hugo Chavez in 2002. *VENPRES*

the country by villainizing the wealthy business class, depicting them in speeches as living in "luxury chalets where they perform orgies, drinking whisky." The 2002 coup by military and business leaders that followed his attempt to nationalize the country's oil industry—the world's fifth largest—is widely understood to have been supported by the U.S. government.

European Commission President selected

Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, Prime Minister of Portugal, was selected as the 11th European Union Commission President, ending a two-week stand-off between the United Kingdom and Italy, and France and Germany. The five-year presidency—the holder of which is selected by consensus of the Commission—heads what is effectively the Executive branch of the European Union.

Prime Minister Barroso was chosen as a compromise candidate by the commission, which was split by the UK and Italy's support for Britain's Chris Patten, and Germany and France's nomination of Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt. Mr. Barroso, who has turned Portugal back from the brink of EU expulsion for running high deficits, is seen as a possible solution to the EU's ailing economy.

Even still, there are calls from within the EU to make the position of Commission President answerable to popular election, most recently from outgoing president Romano Prodi. The current system, whereby the president is chosen by the appointed representatives of the member states, reflects the U.S. electoral college system as it existed in the first few years of the union. A move towards direct election of the president, which would undoubtedly involve a loss of power by national govern-

ments, is not expected until member states—most notably the UK—grow more comfortable within the EU.

Israel accused of using nerve gas against protesters

Israeli riot control police stand accused of having used nerve gas in dispersing a crowd demonstrating against the construction of the security wall in Al-Zawiya by Israeli authorities. An Israeli organization opposed to West Bank occupation, Gush Shalom, released a press statement noting that symptoms experienced by demonstrators treated for gas inhalation were consistent with the use of a nerve agent.

The symptoms—which included dilated pupils, sudden and long-lasting loss of consciousness, and muscle rigidity—are typical of no known tear gas, which typically causes stinging in the eyes and nose and slight choking. Nerve agents—the use of which is forbidden under international convention—are among the "weapons of mass destruction" that the U.S. expected (but failed) to find after invading Iraq in 2003.

UN advisor to Africa: stop paying back debt

Jeffery Sachs, special poverty advisor to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, called on the developed world to cancel

Continued on back page »

Haitians Ask Canada: What Security?

Prime Minister Paul Martin and Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham announced that 100 RCMP officers will be sent to Haiti, as part of a plan to “ensure security and stability.” The officers, according to Martin, will help to “reform the Haitian National Police.”

The announcement has left many Haitians puzzled as to what the Canadian government means by “security and stability.” Since the democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide and his Lavalas party were removed from power, all 5,000 members of the Haitian National Police have been dismissed from their positions and replaced by members of the former military. The Haitian military, often supplied and trained by the US, was integral to several coups and attempted coups until it was disbanded by Aristide in 1994.

Since Canadian and American troops landed in Haiti in February, between 2,000 and 3,000 Haitians, mostly Lavalas activists who support the return of Aristide, have been murdered. Demonstrations in favour of Aristide’s return have been met with gunfire, and dozens have been killed. Many members of the former government are in hiding. In at least one case, US forces were involved in a massacre in the Bel Aire district of Port-au-Prince. The role of Canadian troops is less clear, but a report in the *Truro Daily News* confirmed that Canadian snipers are working in the Haitian countryside. Master Cpl. Scott Richardson, a Canadian sniper who worked in Haiti, was quoted as saying “we’re the ones who fly around in the helicopters, drop into the mountains looking for the bad-dies ... it’s a cool job.”

When Aristide was removed, Haiti’s prisons were emptied of convicted



Under Canadian and US supervision, thousands of civil servants have been jailed on vague or nonexistent charges. Former police chief Jean Michel Gaspard, shown here, was released by US Marines after he demanded basic information about why he was being held.

murderers, war criminals, and drug dealers, and have now been filled with Lavalas party activists. Many have not been charged; some, fearing assassination, have turned themselves in. —Anthony Fenton

Martin Calls for Cooperation on Free Trade, Military Interventions

It has been said that the Sun Valley Conference “attracts more moguls than a double-black ski run.” The annual gathering of media owners and executives was also the location of Paul Martin’s first major post-election speech.

At the multi million dollar resort, Martin told billionaires like Disney’s Michael Eisner, Fox’s Rupert Murdoch, and investor Warren Buffet that there needs to be “massive international cooperation” to enforce freetrade rules. “It’s time that we understood our responsibilities as joint stewards of North America and those areas where... our interests intersect.”

Martin also touched on Canada’s role in US military invasions outside of North America, and advocated for a greater US and Canadian role in “failed states.”

“It is true that fragile states often require military interven-

tion to restore stability. You in the United States know this, and so does Canada.”

Martin stressed the case of Haiti, where he said that Canadian, French and US forces hadn’t “stayed long enough” to set up institutions during previous interven.

Some critics have repeatedly blasted Martin and the commercial and government-owned media for ignoring the four-year campaign aimed at destabilizing Haiti, led by the US. Martin, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham, and a number of mainstream journalists have declined to respond to accusations and questions in this vein. —Dru Oja Jay

Parties are Irresponsible, Undemocratic: Democracy Watch

Democracy Watch has recently released its “Report Card on the Democratic Reform and Corporate Responsibility Election Platforms” of the five main political parties that were involved in the June federal election. Its main finding is that voter apathy, low voter turnout, and minority governments will remain until all parties and politicians become serious on the topics of honesty, integrity, openness, efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability within the federal government.

The report assigned a letter

grade to each of the parties, and none received better than a C, for the following reasons. No party promised an “honesty in politics” law, even though this was obviously a top concern among voters. No party promised a “meaningful public consultation” law that would make it easier for Canadians to voice concerns. No party clearly promised to limit the influence of elite lobbying, even though polls showed this as well was an important voter concern. Only one party promised full disclosure of donations to the party, and only one party proposed to implement citizen watchdog groups to guard against corporate wrongdoing.

Democracy Watch points out that progress has been very slow in democratizing the Canadian federal political scene. Some examples include it taking about 20 years to finalize ethics rules for all MPs and senators, it taking only two years of parliamentary debate in 2001 for MPs’ pay to increase, and then only another two hours of debate for MPs’ health benefits to increase in 2004. 20 cabinet ministers have broken ethics rules, yet only two have been penalized. Democracy Watch offers a final example of the Liberals deciding to increase party funding from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per vote in the recent election so that their party would have a chance at receiving more money with less votes.

However, Democracy Watch is somewhat hopeful. Four out of the five main parties promised better ethics enforcement, an increase in parliament’s role in reviewing some of the approximately 3,000 appointments that are solely made by the Prime Minister, a strengthening of the access-to-information system in some ways, and an increase in corporate responsibility measures. However, flaws in the current system will make all of these promises somewhat difficult to implement. —Mark Parker

The Canadian Left is Failing to Stand Up for Haiti

Haitians are risking their lives to fight an illegal regime that Canada supports

by Yves Engler

Shame on us.

Four and a half months ago the Liberal government sent troops to a foreign country without the legally elected host government's permission. Since February 29th, Haiti has been occupied by foreign troops and a pro-U.S. government has been installed. The Canadian media, and the rest of us, have been disturbingly silent.

At the end of February, Haiti was front-page news. The Globe and Mail's Paul Knox was there and CanWest's eleven daily papers ran stories from the Montreal Gazette's once progressive Sue Montgomery. Both reported on Aristide's authoritarianism, drug connections and "thuggish" supporters, known as the Chimeres. Neither gave much credence to other side of the story and now that Aristide is in exile in South Africa, the Canadian media has lost all interest.

So, what's going on?

No one from Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party is part of the interim government, even though it is by far the most popular political party in the country. The Gerard Latortue regime, which was appointed by the occupying force's council of "wise men", has defied the constitution by refusing to hold elections within ninety days after the presidency became vacant. None will be held until some undetermined time next year, giving the government and paramilitaries sufficient time to thoroughly repress Lavalas.

And that's what they've done, according to Amnesty International.

"While the authorities have moved swiftly to arrest members of former President Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, they have not acted with the same commitment against,

for example, those accused or convicted of perpetrating grave human rights violations, some of whom played a prominent role in the recent insurgency," an Amnesty report concluded. The unsavory lot of murderous narco-traffickers, including Guy Phillipe, still openly carry weapons in major cities like Cap Haitien, Gonaives, and Hinche. The Miami Herald reports that "rebels control some towns, police some towns and the two

"No one from Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party is part of the interim government, even though it is by far the most popular political party in the country."

sides share control of others."

The Canadian media's silence regarding police and rebel collaboration is striking since prior to Aristide's ouster, it was full of ominous accounts of the politicization of the police force. Yet now with Aristide gone and Canadian troops supporting Haiti's police, our media ignores their crimes, which include the torture and execution of five Aristide supporters in March, according to Amnesty. Haitian police also fired on a pro-Aristide march in May, killing at least one person and allowed former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune's home to be ransacked. He is now in prison with at least seven other pro-Aristide ex-officials.

Coalition forces aren't merely turning a blind eye towards the paramilitary "rebels" and police repression, they are actively participating

in the repression. U.S. troops shot dead at least six Haitians between March 7-12 in Port-au-Prince, and, Amnesty reported, "investigations into these killings have apparently not been undertaken." On May 10, coalition forces raided the home of Annette Auguste, a popular folk singer and Lavalas activist, killing her dog and arresting twelve people.

The economic situation has also deteriorated since the coup. Immediately after Aristide's ouster millions of dollars worth of property was looted and destroyed, much of it by infuriated Aristide supporters who blame the one percent of the population that controls nearly half the country's wealth for Aristide's removal. More significantly, the price of rice has doubled since Aristide's forced departure, worsening life for the poor majority who rely on rice for subsistence. The cost of rice has increased for a couple of reasons including a slight rise in world prices and some disruption of supply routes. But most important Aristide's regime helped stabilize prices and according to Berthony F.A. Mercier, 50, who paints signs in Port-au-Prince, "the people who sell the rice are the people who kicked Aristide out."

The news isn't all bad. After last week's meeting, the Caribbean community (CARICOM) still refuses full relations with the illegitimate Latortue administration, even under intense U.S. pressure. This honorable position needs defending.

But what has the Canadian left done? Not much good.

During the federal election debates, Paul Martin and Gilles Duceppe agreed that Canada's involvement in Haiti was a success. The NDP's Jack Layton didn't object, wasting an opportunity to provide an alternative view of Canada's role

in the troubled nation. Does he really agree with replacing an elected government by force of foreign troops? If so, who speaks for those opposed to Canada's Haiti policy?

It's for those who believe in self-determination to support the thousands of Haitians risking their lives for the restoration of democracy. It's the least we can do after all the harm our troops and media have done.

~ ISSN 1710-0283 ~

www.dominionpaper.ca

2466 Robie St. #1, Halifax NS
B3K 4N1 ☎ (902) 425-9888

The Dominion is a not for profit free newspaper covering topics of interest to Canadians. We aim to provide a counterpoint to the mainstream papers, direct attention to independent journalism, and establish a venue where alternative forms of journalism can be practiced.

The Dominion is published every three weeks and in print and on the web.

Coordinating Editor

Dru Oja Jay

Arts Editors

Max Liboiron

Jane Henderson

Int'l News Editor

Geoff Hamilton

Canadian News Editor

Mark Parker

Environment Editor

Hillary Lindsay

Copy Editors

Amanda Janes

Mark Parker

Antoni Wysocki

Ottawa Coordinator

Jane Scharf

Cruise Control?

The Cruise Ship Industry In Canada

by Yuill Herbert and
Karen Gorecki

What images spring to mind when you imagine a northern cruise vacation? Crystal clear water, teeming with sea life; humpback whales, porpoises and dolphins frolicking for your viewing pleasure; or perhaps just the vastness of a clean, wild ocean untouched by human pollution. These images contradict the current reality of the cruise industry.

A single cruise ship discharges approximately 1.3 million litres of waste water per day, more than the port city of Haines, Alaska. Haines can expect several ships per day, creating a floating mega-city in the harbour. NGOs concerned about cruise ship pollution have found that cruise ships burn fuel that has a 90% higher sulphur content than that used by cars. An American environmental group, the Blue Water Network, estimates that 77% of all ship waste comes from cruise ships. About two billion pounds of trash is dumped into the world's oceans each year and 24% of that waste comes from cruise ships. Approximately 14 million kilograms of waste was produced in 2000 on the Alaska-Canada route. With the exception of plastics, most of this waste can be ground up and legally dumped.

John Hansen of Northwest Cruise Ships Association is puzzled at the concern of many environmental groups and citizens. "I can't quite understand the degree of interest that they have in our industry and where it stems from". Ross Klein, author of a detailed study of cruise ships titled *Cruise Ship Blues*, thinks there are obvious reasons for the interest: "one needs to keep in mind that three of the four major cruise companies are convicted



A single cruise ship discharges approximately 1.3 million litres of waste water per day, more than the port city of Haines, Alaska. VIPIRG

environmental felons, with those convictions occurring since 1998." Cruise ships have accrued over 60 million dollars in environmental fines over the last five years in the United States. Yet, in Canada there have been no fines despite the fact that these same ships visit our waters. The only explanation is a lack of Canadian monitoring and enforcement.

Even more disturbing is the nature of some of the environmental violations, companies purposely and systematically polluting throughout their fleet. The Royal Caribbean Cruises Incorporated and Norwegian Cruise Lines were caught having installed lines to bypass the oil/water separator, a mechanism used to clean water of oil before being discharged. These lines were removed during US coast guard inspections to avoid detection. Both of these companies were also found guilty for purposefully dumping hazardous waste into their waste water. Ironically RCCI was promoting its "Save the Waves" campaign while purposely and illegally polluting our oceans. Carnival Corporation Limited also had to pay for dumping oily waste

from 5 ships, and making false entries into their log books.

There is a serious need to strengthen environmental regulations that govern cruise ships. Linda Nowlan, of West Coast Environmental Law, points to one area of weakness: "a ship that sails from Seattle to Alaska can't dump sewage in Washington's waters and it can't dump in Alaskan waters. But it can dump raw sewage for most of the thousand kilometres it travels in BC."

Most of the ships that ply through Canadian waters are also flying "flags of convenience". Companies register vessels in countries that charge little or no tax and turn a blind eye to international conventions on marine safety, the environment and labour standards. Some nations that offer flags of convenience include Panama, Burma, Cambodia, Lebanon, the Bahamas and Liberia. Liberia gains \$15-20 million per year for its registered cruise ships and allegedly uses this to support brutal rebel groups in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

Canada has recently ratified the Kyoto Protocol, yet a loophole benefiting cruise ships has emerged. Greenhouse gas

emissions of international ships are excluded from the national emissions inventories. Bunker fuel emissions of commercial vessels (whether registered as domestic or foreign-flagged), like airplanes, whose "point of departure or point of destination" is outside territorial waters, will find their emissions are not counted.

Over the last three years there has been a 300 percent increase in cruise ship traffic in Victoria, British Columbia. The cumulative impact of this year's 320 000 passengers and crew members from almost 160 visits has not been studied or planned for in Victoria despite the fact that the cruise port resides in a residential neighbourhood, with massive ships less than 300 metres away from the front-steps of people's homes.

Local citizens' groups have begun to take action on the issue of cruise ships. In a report titled *Ripple Effect*, the Vancouver Island Public Research Group (VIPIRG) is calling for a public assessment of the cruise ship industry, in particular relating to impacts on the environment, and the community.

American Patriot From Guelph?

by Jane Henderson

Every movement needs a theme song.

So I was told by that 1998 satire 'Wag the Dog', a movie I watched last week with increasingly mirthless laughter. Its "fake war" was too eerily true, and my position as a spectator too uncomfortably familiar. Then I got to speak with a Canadian who actually has written a theme song, and who is overturning his role as spectator to the American administration.

Sam Turton is a longtime singer-songwriter now settled in Guelph, Ontario. His anthem, currently flying around the inter-world on downloadable mp3, is a single called "Patriot." The impossibly direct message of this track slices to the heart of Bush's militaristic PR.

"Patriot" refuses that last bastion of nationalistic propaganda—the "you're with us or against us" mentality that characterizes crusaders of any persuasion. Its lyrics reclaim dissent itself as patriotic, demanding that the listener think beyond any blind nationalism to a more essential ideal. "I have a lot of American friends," says Turton, "and I send them information all the time because they're living in a media blackout. This song grew out of that sense of...world community, of being in Canada, just feeling very affected by what Bush's administration has been doing."

"If mainstream America heard this song without the words, they'd love it," Turton declared. It's easy to agree. "Patriot" mixes a down-home country flavour with a fife-and-drum-type motif which sure does waken a sense of the old Stars and Stripes. Now perhaps I'll be forgiven for craving a little variety in "Patriot's" refrain...but when one has the propaganda of the current climate to counter (Did anybody



Sam Turton: "There are no real borders... but in this case policies in the US are affecting all of us and we have a right to speak to that"

else hear about the new truckers-against-terror vigilante program?), there's value in what's catchy and direct.

In "Patriot", all-American musical style and thematic content are comfortably entwined, a deliberate choice. Instead of using biting humour, the beloved weapon of Bush-bashers, Turton chose infectious rhythm and melody to snare his audience and convey his earnest message. Although this intersection of art and politics is a new project for Turton, a musician for some 30 years, the passion driving the project is tempered by pragmatism. Lots of "activist music" is about personal expression, he says, but he disciplined "Patriot" to resist murky artistry and speak to a large and mainstream audience.

And what, I wondered (always willing to jump in and ask the obvious), do audiences think of some Canadian guy singing at them about American politics? "Mmmmm," said Turton, "People don't usually appreciate people from other countries coming in and commenting on their political processes."

Well, no. Yet Turton has had only positive responses, having now performed at a variety of venues in Ontario, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, and currently preparing for some gigs in Greenwich Village.

Is this success because he's been preaching to the converted? Actually, no: his first and most nervous "Patriot" performance was to a staid bunch in rural Pennsylvania. Oddly enough the only belligerent audience member he's yet encountered was at home in Guelph.

Ideally, a reasonably well-known US artist will pick up the song and re-release it in the US, spreading the message and inspiring people to oust Bush come November. Barring that, as time ticks along and the election approaches, Turton hopes for media attention (I coughed politely) and increased radio play of his own recording.

Having only just recovered from my annual phobic response to Canada Day, though, I did have to raise some concerns about this whole "I am a patriot [repeat]" idea. Patriotism is chauvinism, no doubt about it, and Turton is ready to say so. "There are no real borders, of course; economically, socially, environmentally...but in this case policies in the US are affecting all of us and we have a right to speak to that." The rhetoric of the song is a tactic, then, an effort to use patriotism to curtail its own excesses.

The Canadian federal election, on the other hand, came and went without any Sam Turton sound bites. "I was pretty uncomfortable about that, actually," Turton admitted,

"though it was a joke amongst my friends. Here we were, realizing that Stephen Harper's a little Bush, and I don't have a song!" Letters to the editor were his route on that one.

With "Patriot", both sound and message are a departure from Turton's usual approach. Although the song implicitly denounces the authoritarian Bush administration, Turton ordinarily shies away from such generalized criticism. Ideals of compassion are central to his career, as a primal integration therapist, and also to his musical compositions. The variety of tracks on his 2003 album 'feel' are more representative and were selected to evoke a "vibrant, primal, fully feeling way of life." To this end Turton uses uncomplicated lyrics and a range of musical styles, many rooted in bluesy, R&B traditions which have your foot tapping and your neck loosened by the onset of the second bar. The sound puts me in mind of summer evenings, sundried fields, beer, friends and the well-mixed satisfaction there entailed.

The lyrics in "Patriot" use an American voice, but the song surely speaks for many Canadian spectators: get out and vote in November, dear neighbours, please. And with "Patriot" jingling in the back of your head, you're likely to feel proud about it.

Essay

Canada, Empire

Humanitarianism, peacekeeping, and other myths

by Justin Podur

The United States is engaging in a bloody occupation in Iraq; it overthrew the democratically elected government in Haiti, enforced by the Marines; it sowed already devastated Afghanistan with cluster bombs and replaced the Taliban with warlords; it is engaging in ongoing efforts to oust Cuban and Venezuelan governments; it is supporting repression in Colombia; it is constantly threatening Iran, Syria, and North Korea; it offers unconditional support to Israel's bloody occupation of Palestine.

These actions are part of a very deliberate agenda to deny self-determination to the peoples of the world, keeping the world 'safe' for investors, corporations and militarists. This agenda undermines democracy on behalf of elites in the rich countries and their clients in the poor countries.

In most of these ventures, Canada has been openly supportive; in others, its support has been behind the scenes. What is the historical pattern of Canadian foreign policy? What is Canada doing today and why? Opposing imperial depredations is something everyone of conscience must do, but in order to change Canada's policies it is important to know what that entails. The record is mainly one of complicity and hypocrisy, with the occasional open crime.

Canada's real role in the

world is covered by a lot of mythology. There are a variety of narratives about Canada—what it is, how it works. Canada is seen as an 'honest broker', a moderating influence on the United States. It is said that Canada doesn't have the power or will to have imperial aspirations, and if there is a division between the US and the rest of the world, Canada stands with the world. These are myths a lot of people subscribe to.

Yet, there are a lot of people who know better. The Council of Canadians held a series of events across the country called: "Canada: Country or Colony?" They point to free trade pacts, defence sharing agreements, US investment in Canada, US encroachments into Canada's public sector, the majority of Canadian trade going to the US...and conclude that Canada is in a colonial relationship with the US. What the US says goes. Canada imports manufactured goods and exports natural resources. It's colonialism.

I have a lot of respect for the Council of Canadians, and for that Canadian 'nationalist' sentiment. I recently read a book by David Orchard, who twice ran for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party. David Orchard is not an ordinary conservative. In his view, the Conservative Party is the force that built the national railway system, that built up the public sector, that defended Canadian sovereignty against

US encroachment, and only recently betrayed its noble traditions with Mulroney and the North American free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

For Orchard, the entire history of Canada is one of resistance to US attempts to take it over: alliances of indigenous-French and indigenous-French-British repelled repeated military invasions. Visionary politicians realized that unity alone could create a state and economy that could be independent. Those visionaries passed and were replaced by venal men who don't care for independence or sovereignty and who want to sell the country to the US. Those colonial collaborators, Orchard points out, have always existed in Canadian history: for every invasion there were those in Canada eager to be absorbed.

John Ralston Saul, the husband of Canada's Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, not a conservative, someone who would probably call himself a 'humanist', makes similar assertions about Canada. To Saul, the defining characteristic is the intertwining of British, French, and indigenous that created something unique and worth preserving here in this northern country. He always goes back to the alliance between Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine in Lower Canada (Quebec) and Robert Baldwin in Upper Canada (Ontario), an alliance that enabled these

politicians to outflank those who wanted union with the US and bring about 'responsible government' in Canada.

This, too, is an interesting story, but I'm not sure that it is true. Struggles between elites are rarely between those with vision and those who lack it. They are, instead, based on different interpretations of how elite interests are best served. The men who built the railway (and it is interesting that when people talk about "the men who built the railway" they are referring to the capitalists and government officials here, and not the people who actually laboured on it, sweating and dying in terrible conditions for terrible wages), the men who sought tariff protections for Canadian manufactures, they had their own reasons for doing so. And in recent years, even the most 'nationalist' parts of the Canadian elite dared not assert too much independence.

Years ago in Mexico a friend lamented her country's problem: "We are too far from heaven and too close to the US." Canadian nationalists would say the same—but for Canada there is another aspect. On the one hand, there is a question about how independent Canada could be even if it wanted to be. On the other, there is a question about whether Canada wants to be independent. In other words, the Council of Canadians question: "Canada, Country or Colony?", should be expanded

to: "Canada: country, colony, or colonizer?" And the answer isn't pretty.

Gwynne Dyer, in his foreword to Victor Levant's excellent history of Canadian involvement in the Vietnam war, puts this issue very clearly:

The fact is that Canada did have choices about its behaviour in Vietnam in the 1950s, and chose to behave badly. The same is true of the 1960s. We have choices in the 1980s too, although every choice involves a potential price.

We cannot know how high the price would have been if we had...refused to serve US interests in Vietnam. Nobody in Ottawa even considered the question seriously until the very end...Nobody knows what the cost to Canada of serious dissent from US policy would be today, either, though the United States could clearly hurt us a lot if it chose to do so. But always behind the lines...looms the vast misery and suffering that Canada's complicity helped to perpetuate in Vietnam, and that is a kind of cost too. In many cases Canada does have the ability to choose, and it has a duty to itself and to others to make the right choices.

I want to look here at just a few of Canada's choices. Why does Canada make these choices? What are the effects of these choices? How could we change things?

Vietnam

Some might think of Paul Martin as a liar and a gangster. Unsurprisingly, it is a family tradition. Paul Martin Sr.'s own words are some of the most eloquent on why Canada got involved in the US war on Vietnam. What follows comes mostly from Victor Levant's fine book, 'Quiet Complicity'.

We know Canada is an economic power of some consequence. There was just a G8 summit in Georgia, where protesters couldn't get anywhere close. Canada was there, making decisions about the rest of the world as part of this

elite club. Canada is a major exporter both of raw materials and of manufactured goods.

Subject to US Power?

A lot of Canada's manufacturing is automotive. Before Canada had NAFTA, it had the Auto Pact of 1965, which created a continental auto industry and thus made the main part of Canada's civilian manufacturing base subordinate to US capital. The alternative was to develop an indigenous auto industry: "insistence on high domestic content for vehicle assembly operations, high tariffs, quotas, and licences. Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Britain, and Europe had gone this route." But Canada under Pearson opted for integration with the US.

Some of Canada's manufacturing is military. The Defence Production Sharing Agreement of 1959 turned Canada into a major exporter of military goods—really, a subcontractor—to the United States. US procurement in Canada between 1959-1973 totalled \$3.2 billion. Today, "Canadian Defence Industries Association figures show that Canadian 'defence' industry revenues grew 35% between 1998 and 2000, far outpacing growth of the rest of the economy, which grew at approximately 3%. Canada's 'defence' market grew from \$3.7 billion in 1998 to \$4.08 billion in 2000, up 22.6%. Exports to the USA grew by 17% from just under a billion to \$1.25 billion. And our arms exports to the rest of the world grew a staggering 75% in the same period from \$798 million to \$1.5 billion" (quoting Stephen Kerr). Canada's arms industry does \$5 billion in business annually, with 650 firms and 57,000 direct jobs. The business is handled through the Crown Commercial Corporation.

Most of the Canadian manufacturing economy is owned by the US, and the final destination of the goods - and

most of the resources - is the US. This was true during the US war on Vietnam and it is true today. During that period US interests controlled 47% of the manufacturing, 61% in petroleum and natural gas, 59% in mining and smelting (figures cited by Levant). After NAFTA, US control has grown further.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, who the mythology treats as a peacekeeping hero (and who we will be hearing more from), said at the time: "[N]o country in the world has less chance of isolating itself from the effect of American policies and decisions than Canada. If Washington 'went alone' where would Ottawa go?"

The prime minister who preceded Pearson, Diefenbaker, himself no anti-imperialist (he established his anti-communist credentials by saying he had "no ear for the lullabies of the neutralist"), showed a slight inclination for an independent foreign policy for Canada. He criticized US tactics in Laos. He kept Canada out of the Organization of American States, which the US used to isolate Cuba's revolution and which Che Guevara called the 'Department of Colonies'. Diefenbaker was unenthusiastic about posting US nuclear missiles in Canada. He tried to establish greater trade ties with Britain.

How did the US react? With regime change, of course! According to Levant, "In the 1962 Canadian election, US action played a role in the Conservatives' decline from a 208 seat majority to a 116 seat minority. President Kennedy received Opposition Leader Pearson for a forty-minute conversation three days after the election was called, and the Kennedys lent their polling expert, Louis Harris, to the Liberals. One billion dollars in US funds left Canada in the first quarter of the year." The next election saw even more blatant US intervention. Levant cites a US columnist who commented on the event: "Adroit

statecraft by the American State Department brought down the bumbling crypto-anti-Yankee government of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and replaced it with a regime which promised to be faithful to the concept of Canadian-American interdependence."

"The lesson," Levant notes, "was not lost on succeeding governments in Ottawa."

Canada's own imperialist ideas

But be careful. David McNally points out that "Canadian capitalists are also major players in the world of foreign investment and global takeovers...Between 1994 and 2001, for example, 384 more US businesses were bought up by Canadian corporations than the number of Canadian businesses that US companies managed to purchase. Judged in dollar amounts, Canadian capitalists spent \$46 billion more purchasing US businesses than did the latter buying firms in this country."

Levant notes that during the war on Vietnam, Canada exported \$21.3 billion to Asia and imported \$14.6 billion—a big surplus. Canadian business didn't want to 'lose' Southeast Asia to what they called 'communist aggression' and what we might call 'self-determination' any more than the US did. Canadian elites wanted to make sure Asia was 'safe' for their investments just as US elites did.

Lester B. Pearson himself stood up in the House of Commons in the 1950s and told the parliament that "aggression" by the Vietnamese against France, in Vietnam, was only one element of worldwide communist aggression and that "Soviet colonial authority in Indochina" was stronger than French control!

Now we are ready to meet Paul Martin Sr., who was capable of wielding US President Dwight Eisenhower's "domino" theory with the best

of them. Remember that the domino theory is a justification for intervention anywhere, any time, because any place is a domino that, if it is allowed to “fall”, may well lead to the collapse of the entire world. As External Affairs Secretary, Martin told the House of Commons in 1965:

Vietnam is a test case. I suggest that if the North Vietnamese aggression with Chinese connivance succeeds, it will only be a matter of time before the next victim is selected...If the US were to leave Vietnam at the present time, what would happen to that country? What would happen to Burma? What would happen to India, a commonwealth country?

Martin helped the US aggression by calling the Vietnamese national liberation movement “Viet Cong aggression”. Martin even compared the Vietnamese to Hitler: “If North Vietnam succeeds in taking over the whole of Vietnam by force, if the rest of the world is prepared to sit back and see this happen...we would, in my judgement, be guilty of an error of the same nature as the mistakes at Munich... Aggression is aggression, whether it takes place in Europe, Ethiopia, or Vietnam.”

But aggression is not aggression, according to Martin Sr. and Lester B. Pearson, if the United States is the aggressor.

The US is capable of bullying Canada and has certainly done so. But it is also the case that Canada’s elite has its own corporate interests in plundering the poor countries. Canada’s elite has the same contempt for self-determination—once called “communism”—as the United States does. Canada jumps to help imperialism. If it didn’t, the US has demonstrated that it can push.

Consequences

What did Canada jump to do, in Vietnam? A number of things. In Levant’s words:

Canadian food and bever-

ages fed US troops, Canadian war material was used on the battlefields of South Vietnam and flown in sorties over Hanoi and Haiphong, auto parts fabricated in Canada were installed in US army vehicles, and many Canadian raw resources stoked the fires of the US military-industrial complex.

Everything from napalm components to green berets, from gunsights to whiskey, from radio relays to rocket warheads, were provisioned. The *Toronto Star’s* weekly magazine tracked TNT from a plant in Quebec to Crane Indiana where it was poured into bombs. The May 27, 1967 supplement commented that “With luck, the explosive that left [Quebec] could be hailing down on a Vietnamese village six weeks later.” These were boom years for the whole Canadian economy, a boom the Vietnamese paid for with their lives, by the million.

To be sure, the Canadian government compensated Vietnam by providing ‘humanitarian’ aid—but only to the South Vietnamese regime, the US client, whose principal victims were the South Vietnamese people. Canadian aid escalated with American bombing; the more the Americans bombed, the more the Canadians ‘aided’. However, the main purpose of these few millions of dollars, according to External Aid Office Advisor Michael Hall, was to “demonstrate publicly that they were on the same side of the war as the US”.

Claire Culhane went to Vietnam as a nurse with one of these “aid projects” and became one of the most outspoken activists against the war. She presented the real face of these Canadian aid projects in her book, *Why is Canada in Vietnam?*, in 1972. She describes a tour of a hospital ward she conducted with a supervisor.

Dr. Mosely was keeping a careful check of the time as she had to meet a friend to play tennis at 12:30, and was getting ready to leave. When I straightened the patient’s

bedsheets, I found a ghastly condition of disembowelment and shattered limbs, lying in a mixture of crushed bone and blood—together an unbearable sight, in need of much more work. When I called this to [Dr. Mosely]’s attention, she stopped long enough to laugh and say: “Don’t be silly, why bother, she’ll be dead by morning anyway, she will just smell a little sweeter when she dies.”

Back in Canada, Culhane wondered about a Canadian project to fund artificial limbs.

I sought out Dr. Claude Gingras of the Montreal Rehabilitation Institute, who had initiated the Qui Nhon Rehabilitation Hospital (he was later decorated by President Thieu) to enquire why he was making no attempt to provide trained surgeons who could save limbs, instead of fitting artificial ones. His reply consisted of a ten minute dissertation on the other-worldliness of the oriental mind and how its attitudes towards death differed from our own!

The medical teams that went over as part of the aid program also helped out the US war effort by denying that US chemical warfare was harmful and that napalm was bad for you.

On the subject of chemical warfare, Canada allowed testing of defoliants in New Brunswick in 1966. From a US Army technical memorandum:

In March 1965, the Canadian Ministry of Defence offered Crops Division large areas of densely forested land for experimental tests of defoliant chemicals...the test site selected contained a mixture of conifers and deciduous broadleaf species in a dense undisturbed forest cover that would provide similar vegetation densities to those of...Southeast Asia.

B-52s practiced bombing runs over Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1968 and 1970.

Canada participated in what was called the International Control Commission

(ICC), along with Poland and India. ICC teams travelled in Vietnam and determined whether ceasefires were being violated. Canada used its presence on the ICC not only to help whitewash what the US was doing and deny the facts, but also to spy on the Vietnamese, providing intelligence to the US on what the effects of its weapons were on the population and more.

There is no way of teasing out the damage inflicted by Canada’s role specifically, in Vietnam or anywhere else. But one can summarize what the effect of the war was as a whole on the Vietnamese. I like David Orchard’s summary:

[O]n April 30, 1975, the last of the US military fled in helicopters from the roof of the US embassy in Saigon, abandoning millions of dollars of weapons, helicopters, tanks and other equipment, hundreds of thousands of CIA operatives, more than five hundred thousand prostitutes and drug addicts in Saigon alone, over eight million refugees and orphans, hundreds of thousands of wounded, deformed and chemically damaged Vietnamese, the world’s greatest demand for artificial limbs, and 150,000 tons of unexploded bombs in the fields and forests. More than 10,000 Vietnamese, mostly farmers and their families, died in the years following 1975, when their ploughs inadvertently hit these hidden bombs containing delayed-action fuses.

Approximately six million died in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and countless others were maimed and wounded as the result of American military aggression. For its war crimes in Southeast Asia, the United States has never paid.

And neither has Canada.

The use of sanctions

Vietnam is a good demonstration of the myths and their relation to the real patterns of Canada’s behaviour in the world. Canada came out of that war smelling like a rose, in spite

of everything, and there are still legends that Pearson challenged Johnson over bombing North Vietnam. According to the Pentagon Papers, Pearson actually made a tactical suggestion to Johnson not to use nuclear weapons on Vietnam, but "iron bombs" were just fine. In 1965, Martin and Pearson were engaging in all manner of apologetics for the US assault.

Kim Richard Nossal, a mainstream Canadian foreign policy academic, compiled a brief list of the use of economic sanctions by Canada. Sanctions were used against—guess who?—Vietnam in 1979 for its invasion of Cambodia (one of the only interventions that actually had a humanitarian effect, stopping Pol Pot's murderous regime). Against the USSR for invading Afghanistan in 1979 (though not against the US for doing the same in 2002). Against Iran after seizing the US embassy in 1979. In 1981 against the USSR and Poland after the latter declared martial law. In 1982 against Argentina for the Falklands war with the UK. In 1983 against the USSR after shooting down a Korean airlines plane. In 1984 against South Africa. In 1989 against China after the Tiananmen Square massacre. In 1990 against Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. In 1991-2 against Yugoslavia. In 1991 against Haiti after the coup against Aristide. Aid was also suspended against Afghanistan, Cuba, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, Indonesia, Libya, Suriname, Sri Lanka, and Uganda, at various times.

But Canada, Nossal himself notes, never considered sanctions against the US for its invasion of Grenada in 1983, or its bombing of Libya in 1986, or its shooting down of an Iranian airliner in 1988, or its invasion of Panama in 1989, or its ignoring of the World Court ruling and Security Council condemnations while it escalated the terrorist war against Nicaragua through the 1980s.

And rather than imposing sanctions on the US for its

1990-91 Iraq slaughter, Canada joined in.

The War on Iraq, 1990-91

Canada sent warplanes and ships to participate in the US attack on Iraq in 1990-91. In an unusual role for Canada, the Canadian military was used directly against Iraq, and thus Canada shares responsibility for the horrors that the Iraqis suffered then and since

Again, quoting David Orchard:

This was a war to give the United States control of Arab oil, from where much of the wealth of the seven major British and American oil companies has come, and which is also the energy source of its major industrial competitors, Europe and Japan.

The price tag...was between 150,000 and 300,000 dead in Iraq—90% civilian. Since the end of the war, more than 100,000 infants have died from malnutrition, dysentery, and other effects of the bombing and ongoing blockade of Iraq...

Canada's minister of external affairs, Joe Clark, said early in the war that the reason Canadian forces were in the Gulf was that Canada would not stand for the invasion of small countries by powerful ones. In the last 200 years, the United States has invaded smaller countries more than 300 times.

From local 'threats' to global 'threats'

Desmond Morton, another mainstream, conventional historian, makes a good point about the implications of Canada's military relationship with the US. The only plausible military threat Canada has ever faced has been the United States, and in Morton's words: "Canadians found that one good way to keep the peace is not to prepare for a hopeless war. Imagine if Canadians had dutifully assumed the old British defence burden...hundreds of thousands of Canadians would

have spent their youth drilling and manoeuvring for a war they could never win. Ottawa would have spent millions of dollars on defence, but it could never be enough. Alarmed at military threats on their border, Americans would have mobilized armies and matched cannon for cannon."

What does a military do when it is not focusing on plausible external threats? Too often, it becomes an instrument for suppressing the local population.

Many of the major Canadian military mobilizations in recent history have been against the population, especially the indigenous. In 1990 in Mohawk communities at Oka, Quebec, and Akwesasne Ontario, 5,000 soldiers were mobilized. In 1993, the RCMP, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and the military coordinated another mission against these same communities. 800 RCMP were mobilized, backed by "several thousand soldiers", to "take control of the reserves." The Second Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment "requested seven M113 armoured personnel carriers, 13 heavy machineguns, and large stocks of riot gear...the 5e Groupe Mecanise du Canada...asked for an extra \$4.2 million worth of ammunition." Luckily for everyone involved, that operation was called off before massive violence ensued. But the Canadian authorities are confronting these same communities again today.

Not too long afterwards, 400 RCMP officers mobilized in British Columbia against a small group of Secwempec indigenous at Gustafson Lake who were claiming a part of a ranch as an ancestral burial site. The RCMP fired thousands of rounds into the forest. This operation, too, was called off, thankfully, before bloodshed.

These kinds of mobilizations against indigenous people were practice runs for Canadian units to work in other countries. Joint Task Force Two, a secret

commando unit (which may or may not have been present at these indigenous assaults), helped train the Haitian police in the mid-1990s: "JTF2's job was to train Haitian police officers in the art of 'door kicking' and building takedowns...SWAT team would be used to hunt down and seize arms caches held by extremists and former army officers intent on overthrowing the Preval government." JTF2 went off to Zaire in the period between the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the genocidal war in the Congo of 1998-2001. JTF2 helped train the Royal Nepalese Army in counterinsurgency techniques, advising that institution on "tactics and the best use of its forces against the guerrillas."

A long tradition of profiteering

War profiteering in Canada went on before the war on Vietnam (WWI and WWII have their own shining examples). The Vietnam War took it to new heights, and Canada has stayed at those heights since, providing arms and other services for human rights violations all over the world. Following are just three instances in a very long list.

Chile

Chile is an interesting historical example. On the University of Toronto campus there is a building called the Munk Centre. Its namesake, Peter Munk, had a remarkable view of the events in Chile.

At a shareholders meeting in Toronto on May 9, 1996, Peter Munk, Chairman of Barrick Gold corporation, praised General Augusto Pinochet for "transforming Chile from a wealth-destroying socialist state to a capital-friendly model that is being copied around the world." Regarding Pinochet's human rights record, Munk said, "they can put people in jail, I have no comment on that, I think that may be true...I think

[the end justifies the means] because it brought wealth to an enormous number of people. If you ask somebody who is in jail, he'll say no. But that's the wonderful thing about our world; we can have the freedom to disagree."

Pinochet's protection of the "freedom to disagree" went as follows, in Asad Ismi's words:

In the year after the coup, the armed forces and police murdered 5,000-30,000 Chileans for their beliefs and associations. A quarter of the organized work force were dismissed for political reasons. Every labor right was suspended and most labor federations were dissolved. The regime's opponents were tortured, kidnapped, exiled, jailed and sent to concentration camps. During 1975-79, between 1,600 and 2,500 Chileans disappeared after detention by Pinochet's secret police.

With his opponents killed, jailed, or in exile and the union movement crushed, the general reversed 35 years of economic development. Pinochet's monetarist model was supervised by Chilean economists trained at the University of Chicago. Starting in 1975, the "Chicago Boys" reduced import duties, deregulated industry, eliminated limits on foreign investment, sold public enterprises at low prices, freed the prices of basic necessities and privatized such government services as parks, prisons, utilities, schools, health care, and pensions.

Despite Munk's admiration, Pinochet did not help Chile's economy by doing all this killing and deregulation, instead bringing about the worst economic crisis in Chile's history. By 1982, after all the 'privatization', the state controlled more of the economy than it had under Allende, after bailing out investors and Chile's own elite. Even today, Chile's economy relies on the nationalized copper company, CODELCO.

Pinochet did, however, help set the stage for Canadian

mining to make handsome profits. Canadian investment in Chile was \$4 billion in 1997, making Canada the biggest foreign investor there. At Barrick Gold's mines, workers are paid \$500-1000 a month, while Canadians at the same mines make \$5000. Gold mining company Placer Dome and gas company Nova Corporation also cleaned up in Chile.

Indonesia and East Timor

Indonesia was taken over by brutal dictator Suharto in 1967. Suharto's first act was to kill several hundred thousand people: communists, independent nationalists, and any others who might have been rivals to his dictatorship. The United States helped Suharto out because of his anti-communist credentials. So did Canada. Prime Minister Trudeau visited Suharto in 1971 and announced a \$4 million interest free loan.

Suharto visited Canada in July of 1975, while Indonesia was planning the invasion of East Timor. Canada offered him a \$200 million line of credit. Sharon Scharfe's book *Complicity: East Timor and Canadian Foreign Policy* quotes a Prime Minister's Office memorandum as saying: "[A] successful Canadian aid program in Indonesia...will contribute to a range of Canadian...interests including economic growth and quality of life...the commercial spinoff is proving to be a not insignificant benefit."

East Timor was set to become an independent country when it was invaded by Indonesia in 1975. The Indonesian military killed some 200,000 people in the conquest, one of the worst slaughters ever relative to population (the inhabitants numbered about 600,000) and occupied the country for 24 years until it was forced out in 1999.

In August of 1976, Allan McEachen, Secretary of State for External Affairs, visited Indonesia. By that time, Indonesia had already admitted to killing 60,000 Timorese in the

course of the invasion. Two UN Security Council and one General Assembly resolutions had condemned Indonesia (Canada abstained from the General Assembly resolution). McEachen signed for the \$200 million line of credit promised the year before.

Glen Shortliffe, Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, visited occupied East Timor in September of 1978, and provided useful propaganda service to the Indonesian occupation in the process. His insights included: "East Timor is not self-sufficient in food" (he was unable to figure out that the invasion's mass destruction of crops and animals might have something to do with it); "[I]t is impossible to consider that the bulk of the population is even capable of being politicized in any sophisticated sense"; and "[M]any, if not a majority of Timorese, live in rugged mountain areas connected only by footpaths" (he was unable to figure out that these people might be living in the mountains because they were escaping the Indonesian military). He also provided figures on displacement and hinted that perhaps no one had been killed in the invasion. Jack Whittleton, ambassador in 1987, went even further, helping the government party candidate, Golkar, during his campaign tour for the sham elections of that year, during which some districts had voter turnouts of 327.6% and more than 100% of registered voters elected Golkar with 93.7% of the vote.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien visited Indonesia in 1994, announcing \$1 billion in new trade deals and pledging \$30 million in new aid projects. Between 1988-1994, Canada's total exports to Indonesia amounted to \$2.66 billion. Military exports were at least \$22.26 million. When the Canadian government was asked why at least these military exports couldn't be cut off, an anonymous foreign affairs official said: "If Canada decided unilaterally not to sell

to Indonesia, it could be removing market opportunities for Canadian companies and creating a gap which other countries would run to fill." Again, quoting Asad Ismi:

As the Indonesian army and its militias set fire to Dili and killed thousands of East Timorese in September 1999, the Canadian government refused to stop the export of military goods to Indonesia. This at a time when even the United States, Jakarta's main backer, had suspended military sales to Indonesia, as had the European Union and Australia.

According to documents obtained from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) through the Access to Information Act, six military export permits for the Indonesian Air Force and Ministry of Defence, worth a total of \$119.3 million, were granted by the Canadian government during 1998-1999 to unidentified companies. The permits were for aircraft engines, navigation systems and training simulators or parts.

Israel/Palestine

The Canadian Highways Infrastructure Corporation calls itself a "world renowned, full service, toll highway development company specializing in public-private partnerships with capabilities in finance, design and engineering, operation and maintenance of large-scale toll highway projects". CHIC helped build the infamous 407 toll highway in Ontario, courtesy of the neoconservative government there.

Now they are building settler-only highways in Israel/Palestine: "The Derech Eretz Consortium (DEC), led by CHIC, is the State of Israel's private sector partner in the development of the all-electronic Cross Israel Highway...DEC won a two-year international competition to finance, design, build and operate the 86km toll road, which will run north-south

through the heart of Israel near Tel Aviv." You would think that this \$1.2 billion road was just an innocuous path. The only hint that something might be amiss is this little line: "Instead of adding roads and interchanges in already densely populated areas, the Cross Israel Highway is diverting traffic to the central region of the country, thus reducing vehicle density and pollution in the greater Tel Aviv region."

Israel's network of bypass roads is designed very deliberately to reach from the core areas of Israel itself into settlements in the West Bank without allowing traffic or communication between West Bank towns. These bypass roads are an integral component of what Israeli activist Jeff Halper calls the "matrix of control", by which Palestinians are isolated, surrounded, and disconnected from each other, made wholly dependent on the whims of the Israeli regime. It is an appalling program of imprisoning an entire population. It is also good business for the Canadian Highways Infrastructure Corporation.

Canada's place today

Afghanistan/Iraq

A good researcher on Canada today is Stephen Kerr who, in addition to his written investigative reports, does a weekly radio show called "New-speak" on CIUT-FM in Toronto. Last year, Kerr wrote a piece on Canada's role in the current Iraq war that was very valuable. He noted that three Canadian warships escorted the US fleet in 'Operation Apollo'. The US fleet was firing Tomahawk missiles at Iraqi targets at the time. Canadian aviators manned AWACS aircraft to direct missiles at their targets. Canadian officers worked at Central Command in Qatar, helping with logistics. US troop transport planes used over-flight and refueling privileges in Canadian aerospace. Quoting Kerr: "US

military doctrine describes refueling as the 'key' to US global airpower. This reporter's request for a full accounting of these over-flights was refused by the Canadian Department of National Defence." US troops were relieved by Canadian troops in Afghanistan and Canada took command of the Afghan occupation. 35 Canadian soldiers served on 'exchange' with the Iraq invasion forces.

Haiti

Despite Canada's rather extensive assistance to the US's aggression in Iraq, there was a widespread line in Canadian media that Canada had to "mend a fence" for its defiance of the US on Iraq. Canada's politicians duly complied, "mending the fence" on the bones of Haitians, acquiescing in the coup against democratically elected President Aristide, and sending troops to occupy that country.

Relying on Stephen Kerr again:

Prime Minister Paul Martin first committed approximately 180 troops from the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment, as well as the Joint Operations Group from Kingston, to provide "security" for the criminal Haitian thugs. When on Thursday it became apparent that the political facade created for the coup was crumbling, Martin scaled back Canada's commitment to 60 soldiers. Martin claims he is keen to get Haiti "on the right track."

Aristide, Kerr notes, "had Haiti on the wrong track...feebly trying to deliver what Haitians have been demanding for years"—an agenda made almost impossible by the embargo against Haiti by the US, an embargo Canada participated in. Kerr quotes from Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), which provides various services to corporations doing business in countries

like Haiti: "[S]ome Canadian companies are looking to shift garment production to Haiti." Kerr notes that "Montreal based Gildan Activewear is already subcontracting work to Haitian owned sweatshops, and they have opened a new factory in Port au Prince which employs 400 to 500 people." Gildan is one of the largest T shirt makers in the world. It pays its Montreal workers 10 times the wages it pays Haitians, who get less than they need to live on and not enough to keep up with inflation.

The above, from Kerr, does not come close to describing Canada's full role in the coup. Aristide's attempts at changing Haiti's pattern of poverty were so "feeble" because Haiti was denied development loans by the InterAmerican Development Bank. Those loans were vetoed by the US (no one in Haiti even knew the US could veto IADB loans) after the US decided to oust Aristide some time around 2000. There was an election that year, in which some senate results were contested—all international observers concluded that all irregularities aside, Aristide would have won the election handily. But this was "contested", and so the US cut off aid to the starving country. So did Canada.

After the coup, Canada led the way in repressing Aristide's supporters. The RCMP picked up Oriel Jean, Aristide's security chief, at the Toronto airport, and handed him over to the US, who gave him some bogus drug charges, and sent him off to a Miami jail, where he now sits. This while real drug traffickers and paramilitaries were released from prisons all over Haiti and are now terrorizing the population—while US and Canadian soldiers look on. (Similarly, Canadian security services probably handed bogus information on Syrian-Canadian Maher Arar over to the US immigration authorities who sent him off to Syria for 10 months of torture. No one

twisted Canada's arm to do this either.)

The details of a meeting in Ottawa a year before the coup, called the "Ottawa Initiative", at which the future of Haiti was discussed by countries all over the Americas except for Haiti, have yet to be revealed. But a special representative of the OAS secretary-general, Luigi Einaudi, told a crowd at Hotel Oloffson on New Year's Eve 2003, "The real problem with Haiti is that the international community is so screwed up that they're actually letting Haitians run the place." That contempt for self-determination, going back through Pearson and Martin Sr.'s "anti-communism" to the 19th century and Canada's Indian Act—which was a model for the South African apartheid regime—and continuously throughout Canada's history, is something Canada's elites share with the British and French imperialists who founded colonies here, and with the US imperialists who are colonizing the world today.

Even Diefenbaker, who got "regime-changed", shared this contempt for the people of the Third World. This contempt, this racism, coupled with the many corporate and capitalist interests, would be enough to make Canada somewhat imperialist even if it wasn't so vulnerable to US power. The integration of the economies, the integration of the elites, and the innumerable opportunities the US has to retaliate against a show of independence only make Canada's elites even more eager to do the wrong thing.

Conclusions

I've tried to present some of the realities behind the various myths about Canada and its role in the world. First, there is the myth about Canada's benevolence: that one is handily shattered by the evidence. The other one is the myth about Canada's helplessness before US power: that's almost like a Nuremberg

Canadian Imperialism,
continued from previous page »

defence: Canada was only following orders—there was no scope for a moral decision. Well, it's worth remembering that that defence didn't work at Nuremberg. There are always choices; some are costly. But how could Canadians morally argue against choosing not to profit from murderous policies because such choices were too costly?

If we don't opt for such a sleazy way out, what's left? A country like Venezuela, much weaker, more subject to US power if less interdependent, is paying the costs of an independent course. That isn't the Chavez regime alone that is doing that—it is a result of powerful social movements, and of class struggle in that country. Because of those pressures from below, Venezuela was able to condemn the war in Afghanistan while Canada participated. Venezuela condemned the war in Iraq while Canada applauded. Venezuela refused to recognize the paramilitary criminals who replaced Aristide in Haiti, while Canada joined the forces guaranteeing their power. Venezuela puts Canada to shame, and is facing regime change, violence, and coups because of it.

Borrowing a page from Paul Martin Sr., Venezuela's elite, along with various US political authorities, accuse Chavez of wanting to implement "communism" in Venezuela. But all Venezuelans want is self-determination, a chance to develop their own way, according to their own choices. Instead they are getting a well-funded, orchestrated destabilization campaign. It is only self-determination that Iraqis want, and they are getting an occupation. It's all Haitians want, and they got a coup. If Canadians decided they wanted that, instead of a thin slice of imperial profits and power and all the nightmares and hatred that come with it, there would be a price to pay as well. But, as Dyer noted, empire has a price, too. ...



International News, continued from page 1 »

debts owing from developing African nations. Failing such action, Mr. Sachs recommended that the nations take it upon themselves to simply stop repaying them.

Calling the debts "unaffordable," Mr. Sachs said, "The time has come to end this charade," and referred to economic reports that claim to prove that reducing African poverty would be impossible under the current debt burden. The original debt, which has been repaid many times over in interest payments that top \$2 billion a year, is owed to multinational organizations such as the World Bank and, to a lesser extent, rich lending nations such as Switzerland.

Mr. Sachs' call for debt relief follows similar comments made by British finance minister Gordon Brown at the recent G8 meeting. Opponents to debt relief have insisted that such financial forgiveness be tied to political reform within the debtor nations,

which they assert are rife with governmental corruption and thievery at all levels. They argue that debt forgiveness would only deliver more money into the hands of Africa's few power-brokers, and would not benefit the impoverished public that needs the money.

Egyptian cabinet resignation

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has replaced his prime minister and forced the resignation of his entire governing cabinet. The long-awaited cabinet reshuffle by President Mubarak, who has governed since 1981 and can only be said to be democratically elected in the loosest sense of the word, are expected to be the first step towards major economic, social, and political reforms in the economically stagnating North African nation.

Ahmed Nazief, the virtually unknown former state information minister, was appointed the new Prime Minister and was given 24 hours to form

the new Cabinet. The outgoing Prime Minister, Atef Obied, had served in the position for four years, during which only a few of the reforms supported by President Mubarak and his son (and likely heir) were implemented.

The appointment of Mr. Nazief, a proficient but politically unconnected administrator, is said to be typical of President Mubarak, who has always been careful to keep real political power for himself alone.

US Forces Stretched Thin in Iraq

US forces are increasingly stretched thin in Iraq, as evidenced by several recent decisions from the Pentagon. In April, officials announced that many soldiers would be forced to serve well beyond the promised 12 month tour. Many soldiers stationed in Iraq have not yet had an extended break.

To fill additional gaps, the Pentagon has declared that thousands of troops will be forced to stay on duty after their commissions end. Over 5,600 former soldiers have been called back to duty in Iraq, a move that some have called a "forced conscription", and which many observers say presages a post-election draft. Equipment and troops from other US military bases have also been diverted to Iraq.

