

The War on Libya: Canada's Parliament Endorses Military Escalation

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
Global Research, June 16, 2011
16 June 2011

Region: [Canada](#)
Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

While the US Congress questions the legitimacy of the war on Libya, the Canadian parliament with one dissenting voice, votes in favor of extending Canada's participation in an illegal and criminal military undertaking:

On Tuesday, after Canada recognized the NTC as Libya's legitimate government, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird said the rebels are the true representatives of the Libyan population and will therefore be a critical player in Canada's efforts to provide assistance.

"Our government will engage with the institutions and representatives of the NTC," Baird told Parliament on Tuesday before the evening vote. "I will be seeking a meeting with my counterparts on the NTC.

"We will identify members of the NTC responsible for domestic issues and propose meetings with their Canadian counterparts. We will also happily arrange meetings between NTC members and honourable members of this place."

The announcement also came hot on the heels of Ottawa's new commitment of \$2 million in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Libya.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May was the only dissenting MP to vote against the extension of the mission for three-and-a-half months. (CTV, June 15, 2011)

The broader implications of this "humanitarian war" and Ottawa's role in the US-NATO military alliance, not to mention the cost of this military operation to Canadian taxpayers has been barely mentioned in Canada's media.

The New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Bloc Quebecois, which claim to be "progressive" and "anti-war", have given a blank cheque to the US-NATO sponsored war in North Africa.

We call upon the rank and file of all major political parties (except the Green Party) to question this diabolical political "consensus" in favor of war. Contact your MP. Raise this issue at the local level.

How could a party committed to the tenets of democracy such as the NDP endorse the continuation of a bombing campaign which is now in its third month, on the grounds that "civilian lives must be protected"?

Since when are civilian lives protected by B-2 Stealth Bombers and F-16 Fighter Jets?

There is ample evidence that this war has resulted in countless deaths and atrocities. The country's civilian infrastructure is being destroyed.

And now NATO is preparing to launch a ground war in derogation of Libya's sovereignty.

In substance, Canada has granted its support to the landing of NATO troops in Libya, virtually without debate.

When war is heralded as a mission of peace within the Canadian parliament, the very foundations of Canadian democracy are threatened.

Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party is the only committed anti-war voice in our House of Commons.

When the lie becomes the truth and war presented is presented as peace, there is no turning backwards.

The war on Libya is an integral part of the broader military agenda in the Middle East and Central Asia which until recently consisted of three distinct areas of conflict : Afghanistan and Pakistan (the AfPak War), Iraq, Palestine.

A fourth war theater has opened up in North Africa, which raises the issue of escalation over a vast geographical area.

These four war theaters are interrelated. They are part of a broader region of conflict, which extends from North Africa and the Middle East, engulfing a large part of the Mediterranean basin, to China's Western frontier with Afghanistan, and Northern Pakistan.

We call upon people across Canada, from coast to coast, to challenge the decision of the House of Commons as well as question the legitimacy of this diabolical military agenda, carried out in our name.

Similarly, we must challenge Canada's corporate media which has deliberately obfuscated the causes and consequences of the war on Libya.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, June 16, 2011

Defence Minister MacKay defends Libya extension

CTV.ca , June 15, 2011

One day after Parliament voted overwhelmingly to extend Canada's mission to Libya by several months, Defence Minister Peter MacKay acknowledged many questions remain around what a future democratic government might look like in Libya.

Canada is part of a NATO mission that began in February to enforce a no-fly zone and protect civilians, but that has ultimately become a mission to remove leader Moammar Gadhafi from power.

Canada announced on Tuesday it was formally recognizing the rebel National Transitional Council as the legitimate government of Libya.

There have been questions, however, about who comprises the NTC and what its longterm goals for Libya might be.

MacKay told CTV's Canada AM on Tuesday "there are still some unknowns" when it comes to the disparate rebel group, but the decision to back the NTC was the right one.

"Democracy isn't always, shall we say, clearly defined," MacKay told CTV's Canada AM on Wednesday.

"But it is a reaction to the people of Libya who were in the streets, and as we've seen in other countries throughout the region they wanted a change. They were no longer going to accept the repression, the violence that their own government was perpetrating against them."

Canada got involved in Libya under the premise of protecting civilians. The goal has now shifted dramatically, with Canada taking part in air strikes against compounds belonging to Gadhafi and his loyalists.

MacKay said that achieving the United Nations' long-term goals for Libya, such as ensuring the safety of the population and allowing humanitarian aid to enter the country, can only occur after Gadhafi is removed.

"We are trying to attempt to stop an atrocity, that is what we are there to do," MacKay said.

"We are there to protect human life and to allow this transitional council to do what they have to do to bring about a kind of functioning and stable society so that they can go forward without living under the heel of Gadhafi."

Canada currently has 650 military personnel in the region, many of them aboard the HMCS Charlottetown.

Canada has so far spent about \$23 million on the mission, but the cost could climb to an estimated \$60 million if Canada remains in Libya until the end of September.

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The policy echoes similar announcements from Germany and Australia in recent days, as more countries join the growing list of governments that officially recognize the rebels.

France, Spain, Italy, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have also formally recognized the council.

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