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## CANADA AND THE NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

edited by George Melnyk

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## AFTERWORD

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### FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICY INDEPENDENCE: WILL THIS BE OUR VERY LAST CHANCE?

*Mel Hurtig*

The Chrétien government's decision not to join the American invasion of Iraq surprised and pleased most Canadians. Since the invasion, public opinion polls have consistently shown the majority of Canadians supported the government's decision and in recent months that support has grown even stronger. Here and elsewhere the invasion is increasingly seen as an illegal and tragic imperialistic blunder, which is well on the way to producing a Vietnam-like quagmire while generating widespread hatred and increasing terrorism around the world, with more and worse certain to come in the future.

The pressure on the Chrétien government to join George W. Bush's ill-advised "pre-emptive" aggression was unrelenting. The threats from the likes of U.S. ambassadors Paul Cellucci and Gordon Giffin and Condoleezza Rice were blunt and arrogant. Canada was expected to join in and it would be "unthinkable" if we did not. *Time* magazine said, "Canada could play a hefty price for the government's anti-war stance." Meanwhile, our own plutocratic Americanizers were vociferous in their support for Bush, Rumsfeld and the Pentagon. Most of our press weren't far behind. A *Globe and Mail* columnist wrote, "Simply put, if we get too far from the Americans, we get punished." Continentalist historian Jack Granatstein said

that Canada has “no choice” but to co-operate fully with the United States. Stephen Harper and the Official Opposition were strongly in favour of going to war. So was virtually all of the powerful and influential big-business community in Canada – much of it foreign-owned and controlled.

Over and over, Canadians were warned about our vulnerability if we chose not to go to war. Our exports would be threatened; the border would be closed; further planned and anticipated integration in the form of “The Big Idea” and “The Grand Bargain” would be in danger. Our standard of living would be sure to plummet. What was so remarkable about the Chrétien decision was that, since its election in 1993, the government had been the most continentalist, conservative Liberal government in modern Canadian history. With so many staunch American sycophants in the cabinet and on the backbenches, and with a foreign affairs department that long ago forgot the meaning of words like “sovereignty,” “independence” and “self-respect,” it seemed that most likely “ready, aye ready!” would be the Canadian response. Is there much doubt that that would indeed have been the Canadian response if Jean Chrétien were not entering the last months of his reign as prime minister? I think not. Is there any doubt about what Paul Martin would have done? Once again I think not.

The public opinion polls continue to be revealing (despite some silly headlines in the *National Post*). Most Canadians want us to be independent of American domination, want us to support multilateralism, want us to preserve our own standards, values and quality of life. Yet, whatever pride we can take in relation to our principled decision regarding Iraq, will be quickly trampled by a Paul Martin government’s uncompromising rush to join Bush’s National Missile Defence (NMD) plan, to integrate our military with the U.S. military, to place us behind the North American Security Perimeter,

while selling off even more of the ownership and control of our country. Anyone who is familiar with Bush's new Star Wars plan knows that it will result in the weaponizing of space, the de-stabilization of arms agreements, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the rapid development of more powerful nuclear weapons, and improved multiple-warhead missile delivery systems. For Canada to adopt a fawning, obsequious behaviour in the face of such potential disaster will certainly end our ability to ever again demonstrate foreign and defence policy independence.

What agreements that Canada supports and in some cases helped initiate will have to be abandoned because the United States doesn't like them? Will it be the Land Mines Treaty? The International Criminal Court? The Small Arms Treaty? The UN Protocol on Developing, Producing or Stockpiling Biological or Toxic Weapons, or a long list of other international agreements the rogue Bush administration detests? If Canada abandons its long-standing opposition to the weaponizing of space by supporting the NMD, and if we further integrate our military with the U.S. military, any proud remnant of our foreign policy legacy will be swept down the drain forever. Paul Martin is a strong supporter of the WTO Doha Round, the FTAA, the GATT, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, all with their mantras of privatization, deregulation, and the "free flow of capital" (the euphemism for selling off the ownership and control of our country that is not already foreign-controlled).

A Canadian Council on National Unity poll has shown that two-thirds of Canadians say that maintaining the sovereignty of Canada is *the* most important challenge facing our country, while only 8 per cent want us to become more like the United States, and three in five say that we are losing our independence from the United States. A full 89 per cent say that the quality of life is better in Canada than it is in the United States. Yet,

with the Paul Martin government, we're going to be rapidly heading to even more integration, more harmonization, and more Americanized policies, standards, and values.

Timid Canadian continentalists (and there are many of them in the federal government and in our business community) claim that we are so vulnerable to the United States that we really *must* toe the American line, or else. This is nonsense. Fifty-four per cent of our entire trade surplus with the United States comes from our exports of oil, natural gas, and electricity. We supply 99 per cent of U.S. electricity imports, 94 per cent of their natural gas imports, 17 per cent of oil, and 35 per cent of their uranium used for power generation. To suggest that these exports are in any way vulnerable is absurd. Then, if you subtract the huge annual U.S. surplus in services, which are mostly imports into Canada by American branch plants from their parent companies at inflated and very profitable non-arm's-length prices, and then subtract the huge \$30 billion-plus annual U.S. investment income surplus with Canada, our overall net surplus with the United States shrinks to well under 1 per cent of GDP. Consider, too, that Canada is the number one customer of U.S. corporations and has been for the past forty-eight consecutive years. We buy more goods and services from the United States than all fifteen European Union countries combined. U.S. exports to Canada, plus their investment income from Canada, exceed their income from any other country by an enormous \$177 billion!

A proud, independent, self-confident Canada should be playing a much greater role in the United Nations, should be joining the post-Cancun group of nations (China, India, Brazil, etc.) to counter the WTO establishment vision of corporate globalization, should quickly step up its foreign aid, should strongly support multilateral agreements to promote peace and disarmament, and should reject imperialism in all its forms – and say so without reservation. We can't do

any of these things unless we stop the growth of the foreign ownership and control of our country. A colony doesn't have an independent foreign or defence policy. A colony's young men and women go off to fight imperial wars, be it in the Middle East or in North Korea, or where have you.

Those of us who love our country, value our freedom to chart our own future, and have children and grandchildren that we want to grow up to be Canadian must do much more in the future if our wonderful country, so full of promise and opportunity, is to survive for our future generations. And what a shining example we could be for other democracies. And what a tragedy it would be if we fail.

## Notes on Contributors

**Colleen Beaumier** is the Liberal M.P. for Brampton-West Mississauga. Prior to the U.S. invasion, she visited Iraq on a fact-finding trip to study the effects of UN sanctions on the population.

**Dr. Arthur Clark** is a citizen of the United States and of Canada and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, 1971–73. Currently a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary, he helped establish the Dr. Irma Parhad programmes at the University of Calgary, which are concerned with conditions influencing human health and well-being worldwide.

**Trudy Govier**, PhD, is a philosopher, who lives and works in Calgary. A longtime member of Project Ploughshares, Dr. Govier is the author of a number of philosophical works, including *A Practical Study of Argument*, *Social Trust and Human Communities*, and *A Delicate Balance: What Philosophy Can Tell Us about Terrorism*.

**Robert Hackett**, PhD, is a professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. He co-directed NewsWatch Canada from 1993 to 2003. His books include *Sustaining Democracy? Journalism and the Politics of Objectivity*, *The Missing News: Filters and Blind Spots in Canada's Press*, and *Political Communication and the News Media in Democracies: Competing Perspectives*.

**Jim Harding**, PhD, is adjunct professor of human justice at the University of Regina. He has been active in the peace movement since the Ban-the-Bomb campaign in the 1950s. Among his books are *Social Policy and Social Justice* and *Nuclear Politics*

in *Saskatchewan* (forthcoming). Now semi-retired, he gardens organically in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley and works on the Crows Nest Ecology Preserve. His book, *After Iraq: War, Imperialism and Democracy* is forthcoming in 2004.

**Mel Hurtig** is an Officer of the Order of Canada and the recipient of six honorary degrees. He has been the National Chairman of the Committee for an Independent Canada and is the founder and former Chairman of the Council of Canadians. He is the author of *The Betrayal of Canada, Pay the Rent or Feed the Kids*, and his autobiography *At Twilight in the Country*. His most recent book is *The Vanishing Country: Is It Too Late to Save Canada?*

**Imtiaz Hussain**, PhD, is professor in the Department of International Studies, Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico City). Dr. Hussain's interests include NAFTA dispute-settlement processes, comparative regionalization, and trade security issues. He is a native of Bangladesh, who holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Jacqueline S. Ismael**, PhD, is professor of social work at the University of Calgary. She is author, co-author and/or editor of over ten books on social policy and social development. Her latest works include *The Oppressive State in the Arab World* (2001) and the forthcoming (with Tareq Ismael) *The Iraqi Predicament: People in the Quagmire of Power Politics*.

**Tareq Y. Ismael**, PhD, is professor of political science, University of Calgary. He is the author, co-author or editor of twenty-one books on the Middle East. His most recent works are *The International Relations of the Middle East in the 21st Century: Patterns of Continuity and Change* (2000), *Middle*

*East Politics Today: Government and Civil Society* (2001), and *Iraq: The Cost of History* (2003).

**Donn Lovett** is a Calgary peace activist who has been to Iraq on several occasions.

**George Melnyk** is assistant professor of Canadian Studies in the Faculty of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary. He is the author of numerous books on Canadian society. Most recently he co-edited *Canada and September 11: Impact and Response* (2002).

**Joyce Patel, M.A.**, is a research assistant in Colleen Beaumier's Parliament Hill office.

**Satya R. Pattnayk**, PhD, is associate professor of sociology and director of Latin American studies at Villanova University. His most recent book is *Economic Performance under Democratic Regimes in Latin American in the Twenty-First Century*.

**The Very Reverend Bill Phipps** is a former Moderator of the United Church of Canada. He serves as an International President of the World Conference of Religions for Peace. He is currently Minister of Scarboro United Church in Calgary.

**Scott Ritter** is the former UN Chief Weapons Inspector in Iraq and a former U.S. Marine. He served with UNSCOM from 1991 to 1998. He is the author of *Endgame: Solving the Iraq Crisis* and collaborated on *War with Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want you to Know*.

**Douglas Roche** is an author, parliamentarian and diplomat. He served as Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament from 1984 to 1989. He was elected to four terms as Member of

Parliament and was appointed to the Senate in 1998. He is the author of seventeen books and a contributor to numerous others. His most recent book is *The Human Right to Peace* (Novalis, 2003).

**Dr. David Swann** is a Calgary public health doctor who co-founded an organization to end the sanctions in Iraq. In November 2002, he visited Iraq on behalf of Physicians for Global Survival. He is currently associate clinical professor of community medicine at the University of Calgary.



## CANADA and the NEW AMERICAN EMPIRE

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 sent shock waves around the world. The unilateral decision to invade Iraq and overthrow its government was opposed by many nations and its citizens. Prior to the invasion tens of millions of people around the globe marched with one voice demanding peace and calling for restraint against the looming threat of war. This outpouring of global protest was an unprecedented expression of popular sentiment that challenged self-serving political and corporate interests.

Recognizing this open opposition from governments and the public, Canada refused to join the invasion, even though it was a longtime ally of the United States and enjoyed a beneficial relationship with the superpower. The influential contributors to this book discuss the ramifications of this decision for Canada-U.S. relations from the standpoint of multilateralism and national sovereignty. Among the high-profile contributors are the well-known Canadian nationalist and

author, **Mel Hurtig**; the former Moderator of the United Church, **Bill Phipps**; former U.N. Chief Weapons Inspector **Scott Ritter**; Canadian parliamentarian **Douglas Roche**; author of numerous books on peace and disarmament; philosopher **Trudy Govier**; media professor **Robert Hackett**; Middle East expert **Tareq Ismael**; and **Dr. David Swann**, a medical specialist who visited Iraq prior to the invasion and writes passionately about the suffering of its people under UN sanctions.

This is the first major collection of essays on Canada's role in opposing the war. It documents and analyzes how Canada and Canadians furthered peace and democracy at a crucial time in the nation's history.

**George Melnyk** teaches Canadian Studies in the Faculty of Communication and Culture, University of Calgary. He is the author and editor of numerous books on Canadian culture and society, including the recent *Canada and September 11: Impact and Response*.

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