

Peace Tower Clock Stops in Ottawa

Written by

Wednesday, 24 May 2006 14:30 - Last Updated Wednesday, 24 May 2006 14:30

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PEJ News - C. L. Cook - At precisely 7:28 am (eastern daylight time) the four faces of Ottawa's [Peace Tower ground to a halt](#)

. The occurrence was remarked on tonight's edition of Canada's State media, television news flagship program, 'The National.' The National's host, Peter Mansbridge lightly noted the event, with an eye to perplexed tourist reaction. But, the real knell marking the death of 'Peace' in Canada came not today at 7:28am (eastern daylight time), but when the previous government of Paul Martin redefined the country's foreign policy, and the role of the military.

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Just more than a year from the initial announcements from then-defense minister, Liberal Bill Graham, Canada would redesign the nation's military, in both form and planned function, the interim has seen Canada become a prominent player in controversial military/aid operations in Afghanistan, Haiti, and Darfur, Sudan. Though the Canadian government's involvement in all of these areas [predates minister Graham's enactment](#) of Canada's invigorated "diplo-militancy," the radical redefinition of the country's stated self-understanding on the global stage is something not all Canadians are pleased, or comfortable with, as polls in Canada have consistently, with the exception of one conducted today for the credibility-challenged CanWest Global media behemoth, confirmed majority Canadian resistance to military "Mission(s)" abroad.

Playing Proxy

Though the recently appointed Prime Minister, Harper insists the Canadian "Mission" is independent of U.S. aims in the region, the facts belie him: Not a "NATO," nor an adjunct of the "UN" mission, neither an effort sanctioned in any recognized international law, 'Operation Enduring Freedom' is an entirely American operation. While flag ceremonies may hark nominal Canadian "control," the truth of the matter is: Uncle Sam calls the shots; and Canadians get shot.

Just hours from the hour of the Ottawa heritage Peace Tower clock stopping, Stephen Harper held forth before Parliament, pledging a two year extension to Canada's "commitment to the Afghanistan Mission," and a reported 40 million dollar cdn. infusion to the already dubious 150 million dollar cdn. investment in "aid" to Darfur, Sudan.

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But today, Canadian "aid" requires more scrutiny than in more innocent times past.

The [death of a Canadian captain](#) last week in Afghanistan is an inaugural event; not in she being the first Canadian woman to die under America's command, but the first Canadian woman-soldier killed in Afghanistan under American command. It has proven more disastrous than the great grief and loss her family, friends, and colleagues now experience; the destruction of the young career militarist, Cpt. Nichola Goddard seems to have motivated a [retaliatory "strike" by U.S. warplanes](#), serving as a punishment meted to the village approximate the *theatre fatale*

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An aerial attack Canadian diplomats are trying to distance themselves from, conducted apparently by U.S. warplanes, and helicopters, subjecting a tiny, mud and clay enclave rural village identified by American military sources as a "Taliban" hotbed, [has enraged residents](#), many who spent the day after burying neighbours, killed in their beds by bombs from above.

The retributive assault, clearly illegal by all but Israeli 'Rules of Engagement' has demolished any "good will" Canada's so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT's) may have engendered during their redeployment to the more fractious south and western regions of the country they have occupied since 2001.

Almost five years, and more than 4 billion dollars cdn. after Canada's entanglement in Afghanistan began, at the behest of America, and defying the censure of the United Nations, the situation in the country is worse than ever, with death rates among civilians, and occupiers reaching levels not seen since the initial onslaught. And no hope so far seen on any horizon.

Yet, Stephen Harper "commits" the nation to at least three more years of this madness.

And on to Darfur

When it comes to Africa, most North Americans reflexively conjure images of sub-Saharan misery; they instinctively imagine the uber-munchen of the 'Dark Continent,' humans incapable of human thought, fraught by the calamities of their inherent inabilities. It's a convenient mind-set, tailored these many years to further certain interests, and now so oft repeated as to become functionary to western appreciation of the "reality" in Africa.

So it is with the popular portrait of the situation in Darfur. While newsmakers rend tears over the horrors allegedly being committed in Darfur, and doubtless there are too numerous veritable instances of these, they simultaneously obscure the true mechanism behind these atrocities. Darfur is not what it appears on 'The National,' or any other corporate media screen you've seen.

Today, prime minister, Stephen Harper announced [a further forty million dollars cdn](#) . be heaped upon Sudan; this in addition to the approximately 160 million dollars in tax exacted tribute spent, Liberal money already directed towards various operations in that nation. This on

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the head of the gifting to Britain, in the form of a submarine purchase, of a billion dollars cdn., four billion plus spent in Afghanistan, and the near 200 million dedicated to the subversion of Haiti's democracy.

Unabashed by these costs, the "conservative" Mr. Harper is now frantically reaching out a cash-laden hand to Canada's youth, imploring they consider careers killing dusky foreigners in Canada's new military. A killing campaign promising to last generations.

While You Were Out

As Canadians let conscience sleep, self-satisfied with their lot, the country was stolen. Now, the price of that lack of vigilance will be visited not only upon the heads of the anonymous "others" unlucky enough to find themselves beneath the random bombs of empire, but bearing the costs too to the treasury; those future inhabitants of "transit tubes," the things young Nichola and her like are laded into for transport home, and the international diminishment of the once proud face of the "True North, Strong and Free," the price due for our newfound "muscularity."

Saving the day for Ottawa's Peace Tower clock has, typically, been outsourced to an American firm. And, maybe the Americans in Washington can make the mechanisms of peace appear to tick again, but like Afghanistan, and Iran, and Haiti, and elsewhere, foreign involvement can only prolong Darfur's fundamentally dysfunctional system.

And, don't let's get into China's take on this; or Russia's

One wonders: "Just where is Harper's largesse with the treasury to end?"

As reflected today in the face of the Peace Tower, there is, with this Conservative/Reform government, no time for peace for "Canada's" current masters.

Peace in Canada is stopped.

Chris Cook is a contributing editor to [PEJ News](#) , and hosts [Gorilla Radio](#) , broad/webcast from CFUV Radio, broad/webcast from the University of Victoria, Canada. You can check out the [GR Blog here](#) .