

**EXECUTIVE BOARD STATEMENT TO THE
TORONTO & YORK REGION LABOUR COUNCIL
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2006**

“ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF STEPHEN HARPER”

The federal Conservatives celebrated the first hundred days of minority rule by raising their true “red, white and blue” colours for all to see. Two key events are the signposts of things to come. The first was the lightning-quick vote to lengthen the stay of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. Then within days, Stephen Harper announced that his government would end Canada’s support for Kyoto.

In both these moves, the Tories have signaled their complete alignment with the discredited policies of George W. Bush. Canada is being whipped into line – not by a foreign power, but by its own Prime Minister and his corporate cheerleaders. Our country is now at war, a real departure from the traditional role of peacekeeper upheld since the days of Lester Pearson. The casualties in this U.S. controlled operation will surely mount, while billions of dollars are being shifted from social services to arms spending. At the same time, Canada’s border policy is being “harmonized” with the U.S. Patriot Act.

This is not exactly a new direction. The Liberals had signed on to Afghanistan to placate President Bush after we refused to invade Iraq. And the narrow vote in Parliament only carried due to the support of Ignatieff, Godfrey and other leading Liberals.

Sabotaging Kyoto, however, is a more pronounced departure from Canada’s International role. As weak as it was, our support for this treaty has been vital in the struggle to deal with climate change. Labour and environmental activists have worked tirelessly to deepen the understanding of the looming ecological crisis and the need to take action. Now, with a few words from the Prime Minister, Canada has joined the rogue states who are willing to risk our planet’s future for a fistful of dollars.

The corporate elite is lining up to back Harper all the way in their mutual Deep Integration agenda. They are hoping to sugar-coat the true Stephen Harper and allow him to win a majority in the next Parliament. We have witnessed this same alignment of thoughtless greed and narrow-minded arrogance in the Mike Harris years, and know what it will take to stand up against it.

The Executive Board recommends that the:

1. Labour Council and its affiliates condemn the Harper government’s betrayal of the Kyoto Accord and ending programs designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve energy savings and prevent pollution.
2. Labour Council join with the Canadian Labour Congress in opposing offensive military operations in Afghanistan and urging our government to take the necessary measures to ensure the safe withdrawal of Canadian troops; and work with peace activists from all communities to build a strong anti-war movement in the Toronto region.
3. Labour Council continue to expose and mobilize against the Deep Integration agenda of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the right-wing drive of the Harper government.