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CPC LEADER BLASTS UPCOMING BUSH VISIT TO OTTAWA

People's Voice Interview with Miguel Figueroa

WHILE THE DANGER of imminent U.S.-led war on Iraq continues to loom large, the chances for averting war are actually improving, according to Communist Party of Canada leader Miguel Figueroa. "The next several weeks will be critical," Figueroa said in a PV interview on the eve of the February 15 global anti-war actions. "The role of the international peace movement will be decisive in preventing Washington from imposing its military `solution' on Iraq and its people." The war strategy of the Bush Administration is now in deep crisis, the CPC leader said.

"Washington had expected that by taking a hard, uncompromising line and by carefully cultivating an atmosphere of `war inevitability', the broad peace movement would eventually melt away, and the resistance by other leading states in the U.N. Security Council would collapse. "But so far, neither has happened. On the contrary, public opposition to an Iraq war has grown by leaps and bounds across Canada and internationally, and even within the United States."

Figueroa also noted that the other major capitalist states like France, Germany, and Russia, pressured by the anti-war majorities in their own countries, and motivated by their own imperialist interests in the Middle East, are stiffening resistance to the war option. The Bush-Blair `coalition of the willing' is losing support, and NATO itself is now deeply divided.

"Why is the anti-war movement growing?" asked Figueroa. "Because people everywhere are seeing through the web of lies the Bush Administration has concocted to justify war, and that a U.S.-led invasion and occupation will not liberate the Iraqi people or lead to an independent, democratic state. On the contrary, it will be used to strengthen U.S. strategic hegemony in the region and control of its vital oil reserves, at the expense of both the Iraqi people and U.S. rivals in Europe and Asia."

The CPC leader was particularly critical of the flip-flop in Canadian government policy in recent weeks.

"Canadians have every right to be furious with the Chrétien government over this issue. Last October, the Prime Minister opposed all military action against Iraq, even if approved by the Security Council. Then, after Resolution 1441, Chrétien and Foreign Minister Bill Graham explicated opposed unilateral action and insisted that any war would require a second U.N. resolution.

"Now however, Ottawa is changing its tune once again, suggesting that another resolution might not be required, and even speculating on Canadian participation in a U.S.-led

aggression. "What gives, Mr. Prime Minister? Your government is either a spineless pushover, prepared to cave in to the first signs of pressure from Washington, or else you have intended all along to fall into lockstep with President Bush and have been purposely misleading Parliament and deceiving the people for months. Either way, your behaviour is a public disgrace!"

Figueroa called on the labour, peace and democratic movements to "pull out all the stops" to make Feb. 15 a massive success across the country. He also urged the mobilization of Canadians from coast to coast to protest the visit of President Bush to Ottawa on May 5. "This is an outrage. George W. You are not welcome in Canada!" Figueroa said. "Let's put 100,000 people on Parliament Hill to make sure he gets the message!"

For more information, contact CPC Party leader Miguel Figueroa at 416-469-2446.

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