

TWO AWARDS FOR STEPHEN HARPER
And One of Them is Deserved!

By Yves Engler

At a ceremony in New York today the Appeal of Conscience Foundation will present Stephen Harper with its World Statesman of the Year award. Former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger will deliver the prize.

Canada's Prime Minister is really racking up the hardware. This morning a coalition of international and community groups announced that Harper has won the first ever Richard Nixon Prize. The award is given to a leader for pursuing "principled, forthright and steadfast international policies in the interests of the rich and powerful, regardless of the consequences" to everyone else.

The decision to grant Harper the Richard Nixon Prize was made after a thorough review of his foreign policy.

The grantees cited Harper's "consistent backing of the interests of North America's top 1% of income earners, with a special emphasis on supporting those who make their billions from resource extraction, weaponry and banking."

The committee applauded Harper for bombing Libya into democracy. It took special note that this was probably also good for certain oil and gas interests.

"In the best tradition of Richard Nixon who could always keep a straight face," the committee praised Harper for at the same time "standing by Egypt's Hosni Mubarak until the final hours of his 30-year presidency."

In Afghanistan the Prime Minister has stayed committed to war even though most Canadians want to bring the troops home, the prize committee said in a statement. Harper's decision to continue to deploy 1,000 troops as well as special forces is exactly what America's 37th president would have done. "Canadian special forces play an important role in US-led nighttime assassination raids. When a parliamentary committee began asking inappropriate questions about Afghan detainees Harper refused to buckle and simply closed shop," said the committee's statement. "Richard Nixon would have been proud."

The committee also analyzed several more obscure aspects of Harper's international policy.

"We applaud Canada's decision to send 2,000 troops to Haiti days after the 2010 earthquake. It took real courage to send troops to 'secure order' for Haiti's elite when many other countries misguidedly focused on search and rescue teams to pull injured people from under rubble."

Despite Harper's Conservative government being the biggest backer of the world's mining industry, ordinary Canadians just don't understand how valuable this is to the wealthy, the committee said. "We appreciate the Prime Minister's commitment to advancing Canadian mining companies' interests abroad. All investors benefit."

As for calls that Ottawa should regulate Canadian mining corporations' behavior abroad, "Conservative officials have repeatedly pointed out that most companies have corporate social responsibility programs to take care of any problems they may face with noisy indigenous communities in Latin America or elsewhere. That's exactly the position Richard Nixon would have taken." The prize committee also noted that many of the individuals running big Canadian mining companies are good people who fund university programs, think tanks and other initiatives designed to defend the way of life of the 1%.

As for one of the most controversial foreign affairs issues he's dealt with Harper's made a simple - and correct - calculation, the committee said. While almost the entire world backs the Palestinians in their bid for a small state, why should we? As Richard Nixon certainly believed, Canada's job is to support the United States and the West, in that order.

Finally, the Richard Nixon Prize grantees said they thoroughly support Harper's international environmental policy. "The Prime Minister has firmly challenged those in Washington and Europe who call the tar sands "dirty oil". At international climate negotiations Harper has made the tough decision to support more carbon in our atmosphere rather than simply accede to an overwhelming international consensus. His government repeatedly blocked climate negotiations and withdrew Canada from the Kyoto protocol, what he once correctly called a 'socialist scheme' to suck money out of rich countries."

The Richard Nixon Prize will be given to Prime Minister Harper the next time he visits Honduras, where he helped overthrow the elected president, who was such a pain in the ass.

Yves Engler is a Canadian author of six books. His most recent is The Ugly Canadian: Stephen Harper's Foreign Policy.

Words to the Raging Grannies Song

Tune: I Want a Girl Just like the Girl that Married Dear Old Dad.

**Guess who has got World Statesman of the Year Award this year?
You'll never guess and we will confess it sure did sound real queer
It's Stephen Harper who brings home the prize
No one understands the big surprise
You can't fool the folks, this must be a hoax
Just tell us no more lies.**

**Guess who's the first Prime Minister to be found in contempt
Of the Parliament he was heading, well he thought he was exempt
Cutting funding meant for Human Rights
Hiding documents from all our sights
Don't kid me brother, tell me another!
This one hits the heights.**

