

PROJECT
PLOUGHSHARES
CALGARY

Peace News

FEBRUARY 2008



We are located:
Parkdale United Church
2919 8th Ave NW
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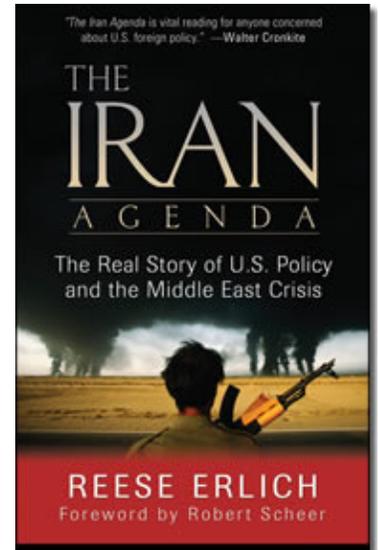
Office hours:
Mon, Tue, Thurs
10:30am - 3pm
Wed 2 - 6pm

Reese Erlich: Window on Iran February 13th 7:30pm Parkdale United Church

Reese will share from his first-hand experience as a journalist covering events in Iran. Both his time in Iran and time spent at home in California covering U.S. foreign policies shaped his new book "*The Iran Agenda*", which speaks to the Bush Administration's mistakes in Iraq and what that means for U.S. relations with Iran. Copies of Reese's book will be available for purchasing.

Reese Erlich began his career in journalism in the 1960s as an investigative reporter for the magazine Ramparts. He reports regularly for NPR, CBC, ABC (Australia), and Radio Deutsche Welle; and his articles have appeared in many magazines and newspapers. Reese co-authored the book *Target Iraq: What the News Media Didn't Tell You* with Norman Solomon (2003).

Project Ploughshares Calgary is partnering with the University of Calgary's Consortium for Peace Studies and the Faculty of Communication and Culture to sponsor Reese Erlich's visit to Calgary.



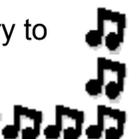
March 12th 7:30pm
Ploughshares Monthly Meeting
Parkdale United Church

Ten years after the world came together to ban landmines, ordinary people are once again needed to make an extraordinary impact! The short documentary film *Yellow Killers - the Impact of cluster munitions in Serbia and Montenegro* will be screened as an introduction to a meaningful presentation and discussion led by **Jamilah Joseph** from the **Red Cross** on what WE can do to stop cluster bombs.

Cluster bombs have killed and injured thousand of civilians during the last 40 years and continue to do so today. But now there is a real opportunity to make them a thing of the past. An international treaty is being drawn up within the Oslo Process which will see cluster bombs banned by the end of 2008.



On **April 20th** **Jim & Jean Strathdee** from California will be in Calgary to perform at an evening fundraising concert for Project Ploughshares. Mark the date and watch for further information.



Ploughshares Calgary News

C.A.U.S.E. Event: "Nuclear Power: Hope or Hoax?"

Dr. Gordon Edwards (Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility) gave a thorough presentation at Knox United Church on January 15th. The event hosted by Citizens Advocating Use of Sustainable Energy (C.A.U.S.E.) was to help educate the public about nuclear power given the concerns there are about the plans for a nuclear power plant in northern Alberta. Dr. Edwards addressed and disputed the claims that nuclear energy is "clean energy", is cost effective, and is an answer to global warming. Throughout the evening he led the audience through the "nuclear fuel cycle" explaining the scientific reactions and their affects on the surrounding materials and environment.



He focused his talk on three main areas:

1. The Problem of Nuclear Safety - The splitting of the atom releases different particles, called fission products, that are much more radioactive than the original atom. When there is a nuclear disaster the land is not re-usable. In the long-term, damage done to individual cells in the human body does lead to cancer.
2. The Problem of Nuclear Waste - High level wastes like irradiated fuel require careful containment for a long period of time, 90% of the radioactivity is in the first 10 years, after which the wastes can be buried in geological repositories (however scientists predict it to take 50,000 years before the wastes cool down). Low and medium level wastes are materials that have been activated by coming in contact with radioactive materials, they including the reactor itself, and they must also be contained.
3. Nuclear Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons - "If you are spreading peaceful nuclear power you are also going to spread nuclear weapons." There are two strategic nuclear materials, highly enriched uranium and plutonium, and one of these materials is required to build nuclear weapons. "It's crazy to base long-term nuclear policies on regimes currently in power around the world."

According to Dr. Edwards; "Safety, weapons proliferation and waste remain constraints on an increase in nuclear power production."



About twenty-five people attended the January monthly event of Project Ploughshares Calgary; the screening of the film *Joyeux Noël* about the World War I Christmas Eve truce. During the discussion time afterwards several audience members shared their dismay that the story of the truce is not well known, and their surprise when they learnt that all of the events depicted in the film actually occurred.

Ploughshares National News

Project Ploughshares and The Canadian Council of Churches released a joint letter on January 24, 2008 in response to the Manley Report. Here is an excerpt;

The Manley Report, sadly, has missed the opportunity to guide Canada towards a truly constructive role in securing a long term sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

The Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan, known as the Manley Panel, accepts the premise that Canada's role in counter-insurgency combat is key to global and Canadian security. They recommend that this approach be sustained in Kandahar by, initially, supplementing Canadian Forces with another battle group (1,000 troops) from a NATO/ISAF ally, and ultimately transferring that counter-insurgency fighting to the Afghan National Army once adequately trained.

While mentioning the need for diplomacy and reconciliation in the body of the Report, the Panel members fail to recommend that Canadian diplomatic support be focused on assisting Afghans and the international community in building a comprehensive peace negotiation that includes those elements of Afghan society that were excluded from the Bonn Compact. Canada, with its NATO/ISAF partners, is a party to a civil war in supporting one side in an internal conflict that precedes 9/11. A way must be found for the largely excluded Pashtun from the south and east of the country to join the political process. We believe that a comprehensive peace building, reconciliation and diplomatic approach offers the best hope for peace in Afghanistan, including the Kandahar region.

Global News

The **Human Security Report** provides news headlines by e-mail or on-line. To sign up, go to: www.humansecurityinstitute.ca.

IAEA Visits Iran While the UN Debates Imposing Sanctions

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei and safeguards head Olli Heinonen earlier this month visited a facility where Iran is developing its advanced line of P-2 uranium-enriching centrifuges.

The officials received first-time access to the site as they seek to resolve remaining questions on Iran's past and present nuclear activities, said diplomats close to the U.N. nuclear watchdog inquiry. Western powers have suspected that Iran's nuclear program is aimed at weapons development, though a recent U.S. intelligence assessment said Iran's military nuclear program ended in 2003.

Iran vowed to address the agency's outstanding concerns about its nuclear work within four weeks of ElBaradei's visit to Tehran on Jan. 11-12. Tehran has disclosed some details to the agency on its development of the advanced centrifuges, originally announced by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2006, which could enrich uranium at a much faster rate than technology now in use.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council is considering new nuclear sanctions against Iran that would include inspections of deliveries thought to be carrying nuclear equipment as well as a travel ban on officials involved in Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

At a minimum, the Security Council should wait until the U.N. nuclear watchdog finishes its investigation of Iran's nuclear past before imposing new sanctions, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told the Associated Press.

Source: Global Security Newswire January 24, 28, 30, 2008

Kenya: Tensions High as Annan-Brokered Talks Begin

The "official dialogue process" began on 29 January between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), even as violence that has ravaged the country since late December continued to spread, with the latest casualty a Member of Parliament who was shot dead outside his home in Nairobi, the capital.

Pledging his commitment to the process of national healing and reconciliation, Kibaki announced that 32 fully-equipped police stations would be built in parts of the country affected by the violence. He said Ksh700 million (US\$10 million) had already been committed to this project.

ODM leader Raila Odinga also committed himself to the dialogue process but maintained that the most urgent issue facing the country was the resolution of the "deeply flawed" presidential elections that have resulted in violence in many parts of the country.

However, tension remained high across the country as an African Union-mandated team, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, held its first national reconciliation meeting with Kibaki and Odinga, who have nominated three members each to lead their parties in the negotiations.

Annan arrived in the country last week and has already held meetings with the two groups as well as other stakeholders. He has also visited camps for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Source: The Human Security Report - Integrated Regional Information Networks January 29, 2008

U.S. to Seek Broad Powers in Iraq as UN Mandate Expires

With its international mandate in Iraq set to expire, the Bush administration will insist that the government in Baghdad give the U.S. broad authority to conduct combat operations and hold battlefield detainees, as well as guarantee American troops and civilian contractors immunity from Iraqi law, according to administration and military officials.

This negotiating position faces a potential buzz saw of opposition from Iraq, with its fragmented Parliament, weak central government and deep sensitivities about being seen as a dependent state, these officials said. At the same time, the administration faces opposition from Democrats at home, who warn that the agreements the White House seeks would bind the next president by locking in President George W. Bush's policies and a long-term military presence.

The U.S. negotiating position for a formal military-to-military relationship, one that would replace the current United Nations mandate, is laid out in a draft proposal that was described by a range of White House, Pentagon, State Department and military officials on ground rules of anonymity.

The American quest for immunity for civilian contractors is expected to be particularly vexing, because in no other country are contractors working with the U.S. military granted protection from local laws. The American officials said the negotiations with the Iraqis would determine whether the U.S. authority to conduct combat operations in the future would be unilateral, as it is now, or whether it would require consultation with the Iraqis or even Iraqi approval.

Source: The Human Security Report - International Herald Tribune January 25, 2008



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Special thanks to Diane Janzen, Ali Rezaei, Sally Hodges and Larry Kennard for their work writing and editing this issue of the newsletter.

Alberta Social Forum



**Leap Forward Into Action
 Civil Society:
 The New Superpower**

February 29 to March 2, 2008
 Red Deer College
 www.albertasocialforum.ca
 Saturday Keynote Speaker
 11am — Linda McQuaig

Yes! I want to become a Project Ploughshares Calgary donor and partner in building peace.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I'd like to become a Friend of Ploughshares and give a monthly donation of:

\$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$_____

(please attach a void cheque for monthly donations)

Here is my donation for this year of:

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$_____

(donations of \$10 or more will receive a tax receipt)

I'd like to receive the monthly newsletter by:

Email (recommended)

Mail (requires \$35 donation)

The Consortium for Peace Studies is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2nd annual Calgary Peace Prize

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be honoured at a banquet dinner on March 31, 2008 at the Calgary Zoo, where he will also speak to guests about his work to promote interfaith dialogue, international human rights and poverty reduction .

Tickets are now available for purchase from the Consortium at the cost of \$150 per person, of which \$100 is considered a tax-deductible donation to the Consortium for Peace Studies.

The annual conference of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) was held on November 17-20, 2007 at Palais des congrès de Montréal. MESA is the largest and the most authoritative organization devoted to the scientific study of the Middle East and is run as a non-profit, non-partisan organization of scholars from across the globe. Currently it has more than 2600 individual and sixty institutional members. These academic and professional members are mainly working in the academia and research institutions in North America, Europe and the Middle East. Interestingly, this year's President-Elect is a Canadian scholar, Virginia Aksan of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.



Last November's conference hosted more than a thousand participants and its sessions covered a wide range of topics related to society, culture, history and politics of the Middle East. The panel themes ranged from linguistic studies to great power strategies in the Middle East. At least four sessions dealt directly with the question of peace and conflict resolution in the Middle East in the 2007 conference. One full session, chaired by Simona Livescu of UCLA, was explicitly devoted to human rights issues in the Middle East.

MESA's annual conferences are a great source of up to date information on the Middle East politics, and scholarships are available for anyone interested in Middle East issues. MESA's website can be found at: www.mesa.arizona.edu

Project Ploughshares Calgary Executive board member, Ali Rezaei, attended the 2007 conference and was a panel participant for the session; "Building Linkages between Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Iran".