

PROJECT
PLOUGHSHARES
CALGARY

Peace News

OCTOBER 2008



Calgary West All-Candidates Forum 7 - 8:15pm Friday October 10th

Varsity Community Centre (4303 Varsity Dr. N.W.)

Project Ploughshares is preparing several peace, security and development questions to ask the candidates. Residents of the Calgary West riding will have the opportunity to ask candidates questions from the floor.

The Varsity Community Association has provided the meeting space in Varsity Hall for the forum.

We are located:

Parkdale United
Church
2919 8th Ave NW
T2N 1C8

(403) 270-7366

Office hours:

Mon, Tue, Thurs
10:30am - 3pm

Wed 2 - 6pm

Singing for Peace

Celtic Songs of Life and Caughter

7:30pm Friday October 24

Parkdale United Church (2919 8th Ave NW)

Featuring Calgary Folk musician Rod Walsh
with Graham Tait, Kathy Peppers and
Christie Simmons

Tickets: \$15 at the door, \$13 advance,
\$8 students / low income

Call 403-270-7366 to order your tickets

A Benefit Concert for Project Ploughshares Calgary



24th Annual

Holiday Peace Fair

Saturday November 15th

9:30am - 4pm

St. David's United Church

3303 Capitol Hill Cres. NW
(near the University LRT)

\$2 Admission—Free for children under 12
Light lunch available

Buy unique gifts & seasonal treasures.



Over 25 vendors
working for peace,
social justice and the
environment including:
Ten Thousand
Villages, UNICEF,
Women for Women in
Afghanistan,
JustShirts, Fibres of
Life, CIWA

Ploughshares Calgary News

Peace Day 2008

The rains held off in Calgary, in several provinces in Afghanistan NATO forces and the Taliban honoured the United Nations' request for a ceasefire, and millions around the world participated in celebrating the International Day of Peace, Sunday September 21. Peace prevailed for a day!

Here in Calgary 75 people, from 8 months to 86 years, travelled quietly amidst large flags, peace balloons and Fall colours from Eau Claire plaza to the Peace Park at 8th Street SW. Once at the park Kim Cox, Cherokee spokesperson, recalled our thanks for the land and gratitude to the Blackfoot nation for their generosity. She called on the Earth Spirit to bless our efforts to bring peace. Alderman Joe Ceci commended those who work for peace and used keeping Calgary clean as an example of small actions we can all take. Mugasa Sammy, Mennonite Central Committee, outlined the progress of bringing a peace pole sculpture to Calgary, and the fact

that we are still needing up to \$50,000, but seeking especially the connection with groups across the city. Erica Robinson, Soka Gakkai International Buddhist group (SGI), was the enthusiastic M.C.. Tents with peace items and children's activities festooned the area.

Possibly for the first time in Calgary, sixty people formed a human version of the 'Ban the Bomb' peace sign (the letters 'ND' in semaphore, short for 'Nuclear Disarmament').

The most mesmerizing moment of the afternoon was witnessing a Tai Chi demonstration where the slow-motion movements were backed by haunting music played by DJ group Blulite, and brilliant singer Emma.

Attendees left looking forward to next year's celebration on the same date and uplifted by the music, presentations and company.



War Resister Speaks to Calgarians

As part of a cross-Canada day of actions on September 13th, the War Resisters Support Campaign with the help of Project Ploughshares and CANDIL, brought in Iraq war resister Chuck Wiley to raise awareness about the issues surrounding US soldiers seeking refugee status in Canada on the basis of conscience.

Chief Petty Officer Chuck Wiley, 17 year vet of the US Navy, was deployed to the Persian Gulf spring of 2006 with the responsibility of operating one of four nuclear power plants on the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier. As he spoke with soldiers returning to the ship from operations in Iraq he grew increasingly concerned about what he perceived as irresponsible acts by soldiers that abused the Fourth Geneva Conventions.

As the Iraq war continued the US Forces also implemented several decisions such as the stop-loss mandatory re-enlistment program (end of enlistment requirement is null and void) and the individual augmenting program (non-combat personnel are transferred into combat leadership roles without adequate training) that continued to raise Chuck's concerns. Chuck received aggressive responses from his superiors when he spoke with them about his concerns. In returning to the US, Chuck was told by a JAG officer when he asked about applying for conscientious objector status, that after 16 years in the military it was not possible. So Chuck came to Canada like an estimated 700 other Iraq war resisters.

In spite of a June 2008 motion by the Canadian parliament to implement a program that allows resisters to apply for permanent resident status, and that any deportation proceedings against them should cease immediately, Robin Long was deported in the summer, and others like Chuck have been denied their refugee claim and are expecting to hear from Canadian Border Services about removal procedures.

Chuck feels Canadian courts do not want to take a stance on this issue because the decision is not just about a single soldier, but about the relationship between Canada and the US, and the rights of any soldier in a war.



Photo by Dave Bell

Ploughshares National News

Below are excerpts about two recently released reports from Ploughshares. The full text of these reports is available at: www.ploughshares.ca

Armed Conflicts Report 2008—released September 18

This year, according to Project Ploughshares' *Armed Conflicts Report 2008*, the world will face one more war than it did a year ago, and a total of 30 in all. This year's increase in total armed conflicts interrupts a multi-year trend of slow but steady decline in conflicts worldwide. At the turn of the millennium there were 41 conflicts in 35 countries; by 2006 it was 29 conflicts in 25 countries. The new report tabulates the armed conflicts of 2007, when two new wars emerged and one ended.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Day of Peace message links ongoing war to continuing violations of human rights throughout much of the world and to chronic underdevelopment. "Reaching the Millennium Development Goals is also essential to peace. Yet many countries in Africa are not on track to reach a single one of the goals by the deadline of 2015....On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, I call on world leaders and peoples around the world to join forces against conflict, poverty and hunger, and for all human rights for all."

Full descriptions of all armed conflicts of 2007, as well as those recently ended, are available on the Project Ploughshares website (www.ploughshares.ca). Project Ploughshares has reported annually on armed conflicts since 1987.

Space Security 2008—report released September 21

Anti-satellite weapons and space debris are increasing threats to the security of outer space. This a key finding from the just released **Space Security 2008**, a study issued September 21 by Project Ploughshares, which coordinated and published the report.

Weapons programs also threaten stability in outer space, demonstrated by the Chinese anti-satellite experiment on 11 January 2007 and the US intercept of a failed satellite using its missile defense system on 20 February 2008. "There is growing tension between the U.S. and China over the security of outer space, largely driven by mistrust and suspicions over weapons programs," says Dr. Ray Williamson, Executive Director of Secure World Foundation.

Threats are heightened by a limited ability to monitor the space environment and space activities. "In an increasingly crowded environment, improving 'space situational awareness' – the ability to track space objects and understand the space environment – is critical to ensure space security. This will require both more investment by space-faring nations, as well as better cooperation and more formal processes for sharing space data," says Theresa Hitchens, director of the Center for Defense Information.

How Canada spends its peace dividend

*By Ernie Regehr, 5 Sept 2008, on his *Disarming Conflict* blog: www.igloo.org/disarmingconflict/howcanadas*

Canada's contributions to international peace and security are grounded in the our collective sense that we are part of a common humanity and in the recognition that our own security depends ultimately on a stable, rules-based, and equitable international order.

If, for example, we believe that the most immediate way in which people experience insecurity is through unmet basic needs, political exclusion, denied rights, social and political disintegration, and the criminal and political violence that invariably attend such conditions of insecurity, we might logically conclude that the most urgent requirement is to address these insecurities by the pursuit of more favorable social, political, and economic conditions. That in turn means that security preparedness requires a broad range of development initiatives as well as military engagement.

One simple measure of the way in which states respond to insecurity – of the relative emphasis that we place on military or non-military measures – is to look at defence-to-development spending ratios. In 2006 (the most recent year for which comparative figures are available) the Canadian ratio of defence-to-development spending had climbed to 4:1. It is worth noting that if Canadian development spending had reached the declared target of .7 per cent of GDP by 2006-2007, the Canadian defence-to-development ratio would of course have been closer to 2:1 and thus closer to the ratios in the Nordic and some other likeminded European countries.

For now, Canadian contributions to international peace and security remain heavily weighted toward military engagement. Military preparedness will always be expensive given its extraordinary capital and personnel costs, but the obvious question remains: is it rational to devote only a quarter of our international peace and security dollar to mitigating the threats to security as they are actually experienced—namely, unmet basic needs, political exclusion, denied rights, social and political disintegration, and the criminal and political violence that invariably attend such conditions of insecurity?



Project Ploughshares Calgary

2919 8th Ave. NW
Calgary AB T2N 1C8
(403) 270-7366

office@ploughsharescalgary.ca
www.ploughsharescalgary.ca

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

October is Membership Renewal Month

To continue Project Ploughshares' work for peace we need your support every year!

We suggest a donation of \$35 each year for a membership, however we do accept monthly pre-authorized debit donations and donations of publicly traded stocks and securities. Contact the Ploughshares office if you are interested in either of these options.

Global News

UN: Guns fall silent in Afghanistan on Peace Day

KABUL - The guns fell silent across much of Afghanistan for International Peace Day on Sunday. The UN said tens of thousands of U.S., NATO and Afghan soldiers were observing peace day by refraining from offensive operations. For the most part, the Taliban insurgents were also standing down to mark the day. Government officials in most places reported no violence, and several credited Peace Day efforts.

Sunday was the 26th anniversary of the International Day of Peace, a UN-backed push for a day of non-violence and global ceasefire. The UN mission in Afghanistan in particular heavily promotes the day. The UN's special representative in the country, Kai Eidi, described the response as "remarkable" and urged all sides in the Afghan conflict to make peace a common goal.

NATO's top general in Afghanistan ordered all international troops to halt offensive operations from midnight Saturday to midnight Sunday in honour of the day. That order followed an announcement from Afghan President Hamid Karzai that Afghan troops would observe Peace Day. A Taliban spokesman said its fighters would also lay down their guns Sunday.

Afghans around the country celebrated the day with sporting events, gatherings and marches. The Ministry of Public Health launched a polio vaccination campaign in which some 12,000 volunteers would vaccinate up to 1.8 million children from Sunday through Tuesday, the UN said. The volunteers also planned to vaccinate in the violence-plagued south, where medical workers are routinely attacked.

In the northern city of Kunduz, a street that has seen three suicide bombs was rededicated as "Peace Avenue" during a Peace Day ceremony. In the central highland town of Bamiyan, Afghanistan's first Olympic medal winner led a march of Afghan orphans. Rohullah Nikpai won a bronze at the Beijing Olympics in taekwondo in August.

By: Jason Straziuso, AP, September 21, 2008

UN Admits Darfur Troop Shortfall

Only half the troops intended for a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force for the Sudanese region of Darfur will be deployed by 2009, the UN says. Alain Le Roy, the new head of UN peacekeeping, said only 13,000 of the 26,000 troops authorised for the Unamid force would arrive by the end of 2008. Unamid took over peacekeeping duties in the war-ravaged Darfur province last January from a 7,000-strong AU force. It had planned to have more than 20,000 staff deployed by the start of 2009. But by last month it had only 8,100 troops and fewer than 2,000 police on the ground. In July, Unamid's commander, Nigerian Gen Martin Agwai, expressed optimism that 80% of the force could be deployed by year's end. That optimism was echoed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. But Mr Le Roy said: 'I think 80% sadly has been, as far as I know so far, a bit optimistic'. He said the arrival of Thai and Nepalese units in Darfur had been delayed, adding that he expected an additional 3,000 troops and police to be on the ground by the end of November, primarily from Ethiopia and Egypt. In July, seven Unamid peacekeepers were killed and 22 injured when they were attacked by heavily armed militia in northern Darfur, prompting the UN to move its non-essential staff to locations outside the country.

BBC, September 18, 2008

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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 become a Friend of Ploughshares and give a monthly pre-authorized debit donation, please send me an application form:

I'd like to receive the monthly newsletter by:

Email (recommended)

Mail (requires \$35 donation)