

Ploughshares Calgary Society
2919 8 Ave NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1C8
July 5, 2023

Dear Hon.

As an organisation with a long-standing dedication to peace, we are deeply troubled by the escalating deaths, debilitating human trauma, destruction of infrastructure, and serious environmental damage that has taken place since the February 24, 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Of gravest concern is the heightened risk of nuclear warfare that the invasion has unleashed. This compels us to seek steps that might be taken towards the resolution of this conflict. We reach out to you with this concern and offer some context and suggestions.

On June 14, 2023, we held an event, both online and in-person, called the “Calgary Peace Table on Ukraine and Russia.” At this meeting, we viewed excerpts from a two hour video recording of an April 27, 2023 Zoom meeting sponsored by the Canadian Pugwash Group (CPG), entitled “The Peace Table for Ukraine and Russia.” (The video of this meeting can be viewed at: <https://pugwashgroup.ca/peace-table-for-ukraine-and-russia/> .) In this recording, four speakers with relevant diplomatic and work experience in Russia and Ukraine participated in a facilitated discussion that focused on obstacles to a ceasefire, and possible steps that could be taken towards circumventing those obstacles. CPG followed up their discussion with a [Report of the Peace Table on Ukraine and Russia](#) and a paper entitled “[Silence the Guns in Ukraine](#).” We commend this work, the orchestration of such an informative and engaging debate, and the publication of these two ensuing helpful documents. We support the effort towards peace that these encourage, in particular the offering of suggestions for specific actions that could be taken to build trust. We encourage you to read and view these, for they provide much valuable food for thought.

After our own viewing, we spent time discussing the video excerpts and supporting documents. We believe that Canada can make a positive contribution towards creating a forum for the dialogue that could open up new ground for pathways towards peace. In particular, we want to suggest that our country become involved in supporting the development of an international Peace Table on Ukraine and Russia. Such a Peace Table could be structured to include input from all concerned parties, and be informed by experts in the region’s history, in international diplomacy, conflict resolution as well as in ecology and environmental restoration. Such a forum for dialogue could generate specific recommendations to create the conditions most likely to lead towards a durable peace.

In our own Calgary Peace Table, we developed the following recommendations that could help guide peace negotiations and rebuilding. We offer them here:

- Change the language of the dialogue from that of winning/losing to living as neighbours.
- Engage women in the process to reach a more durable peace agreement.

- Respect security concerns of both sides, with the goal of both sides feeling secure (Common Security.)
- Attend to humanitarian needs (physical, social, and psychological.)
- Require accountability, transparency, sustainability and efficiency (e.g. in the provision of humanitarian and military aid, other practical support, etc.).
- Support democratic decision-making, holding elections under international supervision.
- Listen to the views of all citizens and support dialogue in both countries.
- Encourage strategies and approaches that lessen environmental degradation and that mitigate the climate crisis.
- Seek understanding and advice from relevant historical and political experts.

Canada has offered significant assistance to Ukraine, both military and humanitarian, as well as generous support for refugees. But this war needs to come to an end. Human and ecological fragilities demand it. Our country can play a role in bringing it to an end. As a democratic, multicultural country with a history of contribution towards peace-making, we must find ways to step up and make an important contribution towards the dialogue necessary to move towards peace. A Peace Table on Ukraine and Russia is a promising suggestion. Would you be willing to support such an initiative? If so, what support could you offer, and how can we assist?

With sincere concern and hope,

Marya A. Jarvey

President

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