Canada in Afghanistan

“There will be some who want to cut and run, but cutting and running is not my way and it’s not the Canadian way,... We don’t and we will not, as long as I’m leading this country.”

Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper

“Looking at some of the major foreign policy issues facing us today, I am troubled by the direction and tone being taken by the Harper government... They show an alarming disregard for our strengths and traditional priorities in foreign affairs.”

Liberal Leadership Candidate, Bob Rae

“This is an agonizing mission for Canadians but it’s a mission that amounts to a moral promise..... It’s a promise in which Canada said ‘We’re going to help Afghans get their country back on its feet.’ And the Canada I love and the Canada I respect always keeps its promises.”

Liberal Leadership Candidate & MP, Michael Ignatieff

“It’s not balanced. It doesn’t represent the equilibrium between humanitarian aid, reconstruction and comprehensive peace process that Canadians would want to see.”

Jack Layton, Leader of the NDP

“This war has nothing to do with rendering ‘humanitarian relief’ or defending ‘freedom and democracy’ in Afghanistan. In fact, Canada is propping up a corrupt and illegitimate regime of warlords and heroin traffickers. What’s more, this ‘mission’ is helping to carry out Washington’s dirty work in the entire region, freeing up U.S. forces for its continued bloody occupation in Iraq. “

Communist Party of Canada

“The Green Party of Canada is opposed to extension of the Canadian military deployment to southern Afghanistan beyond the scheduled February 2007 end date... we now need to shift training and security assistance to predominantly Muslim UN member nations. Also, we need to increase and better equip Afghan Army troops directly involved in counter-insurgency operations.”

Green Party’s Foreign Affairs critic, Eric Walton.

“Il importe de se questionner sur le changement de mission, son coût financier et humain, son efficacité et sa durée. Et c’est pour cette raison que le Bloc Québécois a exigé un débat au Parlement afin de faire la lumière sur ces questions. Ce débat permettrait de prendre une décision éclairée pour la suite des choses.”

Bloc Québécois
The Department of Peace Initiative is currently now being pursued by peace NGOs in 20 countries. The Canada Working Group for a Federal Department of Peace in its present form was established in November 2005. The Working Group has now chapters in Victoria, Vancouver and Ottawa, and the new ones in active consideration in Winnipeg and Montreal. Our national campaign has been already endorsed by 13 national organizations that range from Council of Canadians, Canadian Pugwash Group, Conscience Canada to Dalai Lama Foundation of Canada and World Conference on Peace and Religion. Its prominent supporters include distinguished Canadian peacemakers such as Hon. Lloyd Axworthy and Senator Doug Roche.

In our background research to outline the rationale and need for such a Department, we found out that the Federal Government spends annually $16.3 billion (2004) on its “international security” envelope. This is a considerable amount in terms of taxpayer’s contribution for which there is little public debate or accountability in the country. Our research showed that there was a lack of transparency on how and where the funds for international peace and security were allocated and spent.

Difficulty in transparency resulted from the way “peace and security” was defined by the government, and the way it was organized. We found that international security envelope work was spread among seven federal departments - in the Departments of Defense, Foreign Affairs, CIDA, Justice, Immigration and so on. So we looked at each of those Departments, their mandates to find out if “Peace” was their top priority. Department of Defense identifies its main priority as national security. Foreign Affairs is more involved in crisis management, than peacebuilding in a defined way. CIDA’s top priority is poverty alleviation. We found a complete lack of a systemic approach for peace within the federal government.

The Federal Department of Peace we propose is a place that would provide a single coherent framework for policy focus for Peace. It will bring together for the first time the three major components of international peace and security: peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Our paper (available at <http://www.departementofpeace.ca>) provides a full concept in the form of a model Bill for creation of such a Department headed by a senior Minister who, as a member of Cabinet, would actively pursue a mandate of conflict transformation by peaceful, non-violent means and serve as a counterpoint to the viewpoint of DND and other departments, ensuring a full debate prior to any commitment of Canadian troops for combat, for example.

We propose five key interrelated offices in this new Department: Office of Peace Education, Office of Human and Economic Rights, Office of Disarmament, Office of Civilian Peace Service, and Domestic Violence issues related to Women, Youth, Aboriginal and First Nation People as well as Interreligious Harmony.
Such a Peace Department should not require a large budget, just 2 percent of the current international security envelope to start with. This could be expanded to 10 percent as there is a proportionate decline in the funding of military defense over a 5 to 10 year period. Instead of militarization, the electorate will get the government to focus upon longer-term institution building for peace. It is similar to the kind of effort we made a generation ago in committing ourselves to becoming a steward for our environment through the creation of Federal Department of the Environment. Some people have found the Peace Department title to be too soft. One might alternately give it a more functional title e.g. Department of Peacebuilding, Human Security or Disarmament etc.

At the Second International Peoples Summit of Department of Peace in Victoria this June, two of the delegates were from the governments of the Philippines and Solomon Islands where an equivalent of Peace Departments are already functioning to mitigate local conflicts and participation in international peace processes. Last July, an international group of NGOs under the GPPAC (Global Program on Prevention of Armed Conflict) in their submission to the UN, mentioned the necessity of Department of Peace and Civilian Peace Service in their agenda.

Opposition to the concept stems often from an unwillingness to challenge the status quo, on the part of political parties, bureaucracies, or even peace NGOs - all those who benefit from p-i-e-c-e-s, that is fragmentation of peace. As citizens, we would like our money to be spent on peacebuilding rather than seeking solutions through weaponry and killing other human beings. Reality is that it’s unrealistic to expect an armed soldier to be a social worker or conflict resolver. It requires another way of thinking and skill sets without which peace in 21st Century is unlikely to come. A Federal Peace Department is our alternative to the status quo.

So we have to ask our politicians to focus on this. If parties fail us, then we have to find MPs with conscience to introduce a Private Members bill. In democracies, ultimately politicians do things which their electorate want. Therefore awareness among the public has to be raised on “out of the box” approaches for peace through discussion and media.

We have plans for creating additional chapters across Canada. Please join us in this to ensure that we have a leadership to transform pieces of peace into something actionable.

For more on Department of Peace, please visit our web site: http://www.departmentofpeace.ca. For chapter formation Manitoba westwards, please contact Dr. Saul Arbess at email: sarbess@shaw.ca; and for Ontario eastwards, Dr. Bill Bhaneja at billbhaneja@rogers.com

Bill Bhaneja is presently a Senior Fellow at the Program for Research in Innovation Management and Economy, University of Ottawa. A former Canadian diplomat, he is the co-spokesperson for the Canada Working Group on Department of Peace. He is also a member of Canadian Pugwash Group, Science for Peace, Civilian Peace Service Canada and an Associate, Center for Global Nonviolence, Hawaii.

**Upcoming Events**

*Science for Peace-Canadian Pugwash Group*

*Eric Fawcett Memorial Forum*

**Canadian Defence Policy & Global Security**

Saturday October 28, 2006 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
University of Toronto Campus

check the SFP Web Site for Details
http://scienceforpeace.sa.utoronto.ca
Vancouver World Peace Forum’s Vision
By Phyllis Creighton

With 5,000 others from around the world, I attended the World Peace Forum (WPF) in Vancouver from June 23 to 28. Its vision was caught at the first plenary by Vancouver philanthropist Jennifer Simons’s claim that “we must and can end war,” and by former International Court of Justice Judge Christopher Weeramantry’s call for recognition of the immorality and illegality of nuclear weapons and the urgent need to get rid of them.

The WPF’s 350 plenaries and workshops included five Science for Peace (SfP) events:

Our panel, “Creating a paradigm shift towards social justice and a green Earth,” which drew some 70 people, involved Helmut Burkhardt, Rose Dyson, Julia Morton-Marr, and me from Science for Peace, Helga Breuninger (of the Breuninger Foundation, Stuttgart and Wasan Island), and Audrey Kitagawa and Ashok Gangadean (our moderator) (both of the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality). Helmut set out global issues demonstrating the need for policy and action based on the holistic paradigm of interconnectedness – the shift to “web of life” thinking sketched in my introductory comments. Rose spoke about transformations required to deal with violence in the media, Helga on collaborative approaches in business and community, Julia on sustainability and peace education, I myself on the urgency of moving beyond nuclear weapons and war, Audrey and Ashok on enhanced consciousness, values, and spirituality.

“Deep dialogues,” a workshop led by Ashok (emeritus philosophy professor from Haverford College, Penn.) involved Helga, Audrey, and me and engaged the participants in a process of talking and listening to foster the openness and collaborative spirit needed for moving beyond problems to solutions.

Three other workshops: Helmut, with Julia, presented the Handbook on global issues and solutions developed through the Evolution of World Order Conferences; Rose and Metta Spencer discussed media concerns; and Tamara Weiss, a California teacher mentored by Julia, presented methods of peace education that can empower children to become peacemakers.

SfP board member Lee Lorch and I were also at the WPF in its premiere of Veterans against nuclear war, a film produced by Toronto filmmaker Anton Wagner. The film has an interview of me in Hiroshima’s Peace Museum in August 2005, original footage of the atomic bombings, and interviews of members of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (VANA) – including pithy comments from Lee. A Japanese soundtrack and inclusion of the film in the global education curriculum for Ontario’s public schools might result!

Two major organizations for cities held meetings at the WPF. The International Association of Peace Messenger Cities (of which the UN made Toronto a member in 1986) issued a call for a UN special session on disarmament, as an introduction to an international decade for disarmament, and also for national commissions on disarmament to help civil society participate. Cities should support this initiative. Mayors for Peace (MfP) – an organization with 1,403 mayors of which Toronto became a member in 1983 when city council voted to make it a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) – brought forward a Cities Are Not Targets project based on a resolution of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. MfP’s 2020 Vision, of a world free of nuclear weapons by 2020, is energizing cities around the world. Right now, with more than 1,000 nuclear missiles in the U.S. and an equal number in Russia on launch-on-warning, Canadian cities are targeted. Our mayors should take action on this resolution and spread it by bringing it to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

I attended numerous workshops on nuclear weapons, including a meeting of Abolition 2000, the global coalition of more than 2000
NGOs. These events made clear how grim our prospects are, with the modernization of arsenals proceeding and military doctrines of nuclear war-fighting, in the U.S. case even in preventive war. The threat to survival of life on Earth hangs over all of us with the growing danger of proliferation and of their use inadvertently or deliberately, instant retaliation, and nuclear winter. One hope to build on is the NWFZ movement. NWFZ treaties cover over half the world – Latin America, the Pacific, Africa, Antarctica, Mongolia. We should work to make Canada a NWFZ.

The WPF’s Nuclear Weapons Working Group put out an action agenda calling on:

- All states to comply with their legal obligation and revive negotiations in good faith on an agreement for verifiable, irreversible nuclear disarmament and to end reliance on nuclear weapons within all defence policies;
- The nuclear weapons states to take all nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert and to reject all policies for nuclear weapons use;
- Citizens to educate the public about nuclear weapons and international law, encourage professional associations to develop codes of conduct to prohibit their members from participation in development of nuclear weapons, and work to establish effective national whistleblower protection legislation.

Affirming an inextricable link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons (as does Abolition 2000), the agenda also calls for phasing out of nuclear power and for establishing an International Sustainable Energy Agency. It also asks for global volunteers to come and help UK activists convince the British government to not replace its Trident nuclear submarine fleet, in hopes of a domino effect for disarmament. Much work to be done!

At the end, the WPF issued an appeal – Make Peace! – now on its web site (www.worldpeace-forum.ca). Here are some highlights:

The Forum concluded that at this critical juncture in history a world without war is achievable.

We will build a just peace based on social justice, human and democratic rights, and economic equality.

We will educate our children . . . to cultivate a culture of peace.

We will recognize the needs and aspirations of all indigenous peoples.

We will ensure the leading role of women and youth as peacemakers.

We will declare war as a crime against humanity and demand an end to war.

We will insist on protection of the environment.

We will work to eliminate nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and terror.

The Appeal sets out goals to mobilize, network, support, and collaborate across generations and the globe and so realize the capacity of civil society to build peace. It ends with the ringing cry: “We want a world without war – the world our children deserve.” At a Voice of Women gathering in Vancouver, Dr Mary-Wynne Ashford, co-author with Guy Dauncey of Enough Blood Shed claimed that we are at the beginning of a social revolution; ending war is no longer an idealistic dream, but a realistic goal based on sound evidence. A belief shared by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Sir Joseph Rotblat, it could inspire our work!
Medical Publishing is a noble calling. Brought to mind is the image of dedicated scholar-monks, labouring against ignorance and suffering. Not always agreeing - no, sometimes violently disagreeing, but always with silent acknowledgment of the common goal of a community dedicated to alleviating human suffering by sharing information.

The contrast is stark when you discover that the medical publisher Reed Elsevier has, via its subsidiaries Reed Exhibitions and Spearhead Exhibitions, a sideline in organising international arms fairs. At these fairs manufacturers, governments and arms dealers meet, greet and discuss future contracts and collaborations. Reed Elsevier’s arms fairs allow weapon manufacturers to promote their products to buyer’s delegations from regimes in conflict, from regimes with appalling human rights records, and from some of the most impoverished regions in the world.

Medical publishing is more than a business, it is a vital activity that requires the goodwill of the medical and academic communities who conduct research, write articles, conduct peer review, edit journals and (to complete the cycle) buy back that research when it is published.

Reed Elsevier makes the argument that armed defence is a human right, and that governments have an obligation to seek it under article 51 of the UN Charter. Yet, no part of the UN Charter mandates countries to export arms. The imposition of UN arms embargoes on aggressor nations recognises that the pursuit of disarmament does not contradict the right to self-defence in Article 51. Reed Elsevier fails to mention Article 26 of the Charter which by contrast, positively enshrines the principle of spending the minimum possible on armaments, recognising that money spent on weapons diverts from vital human and economic resources - such as health and education. For the medical community, there is a painful contradiction between our ideals and those of the arms trade as it is currently conducted.

Elsevier hosts one of the largest arms fairs in the world, Defence Systems International (DSEI), held biennially in London and always the subject of controversy. DSEi is shrouded in secrecy, yet what does come to light allows us a glimpse of the kind of thing that is probably going on at similar arms fairs Reed Elsevier hosts around the world.

The list of those officially invited to the last DSEi, held in 2005, included buyer’s delegations from China (currently under an EU arms embargo), Indonesia (with a track-record of using UK-made military equipment on civilians), Colombia, Saudi Arabia and other countries on the UK Foreign Office list of the 20 most serious human rights-abusing regimes. Reed Elsevier has a second list of invitees which it keeps secret, and which no doubt includes countries with even less scruples than those on the official list.

The equipment being promoted at DSEi tells its own story. Anti-personal mines (land mines) are illegal under international convention, but cluster-bombs, which can be dropped from the air and create de-facto mine-fields are not. In 2005, 2003 and 2001 Reed Elsevier have insisted that cluster-bombs would not be displayed at DSEi. Each time journalists have uncovered exhibitors at DSEi offering for sale anti-personnel mines or cluster bombs. You can read about the effects of cluster bombs in ‘Disability and Rehabilitation’, an Elsevier journal. Remember, these weapons are designed to maim, usually by destroying the feet and legs, and not to kill, so that the enemy has to expend resources looking after an injured victim.

How should the readers and editors of ‘The Journal of Hazardous Materials’, another Elsevier Journal, feel about the depleted uranium shells that are on sale at DSEi? How would the reader and editors of ‘International Journal of Acute Pain Management’ feel about the torture equipment, the leg irons, stun guns and batons,
that were illegally promoted at DSEi?

And most importantly, what about the small arms available from manufacturers and via dealers present at DSEi? Small arms - things like pistols and machine guns - which are responsible for up to half a million civilian deaths each year (according to a UN estimate). When you see a child soldier toting an AK-47, or militias in a war zones herding civilians, ask yourself where the weapons came from. The answer will involve the global arms trade, and, because of their involvement in it, Elsevier.

The prescribed reading for this is obviously ‘Crash Course: Ethics and Human Sciences’ (published by Elsevier, 2006). It can feel like a sick joke to connect each kind of weapon of death and injury displayed at an Reed Elsevier arms fair to a journal, book or article published by Reed Elsevier which describes how to treat it. But it is important to realise that it is not us making the joke. The sick joke - and it is sick - is being played on us by Reed Elsevier and the punchline is the unknowing complicity of medical professionals in the system of death and injury which they have dedicated their lives to opposing.

Now there is a danger to believing that everything is connected when you can’t see the connections, but it is wilful ignorance to ignore those connections when they are visible. Arms fairs are a tiny proportion of Elsevier’s business - around only 0.5% of total revenue. Most of their profit comes from medical publishing, for which they rely on our goodwill to continue. We cannot stand complacently by while profits from those who love life, health, freedom and community are used to assist those who work against all these things.

So, what to do?

Reed Elsevier are facing increasing pressure from its consumers and other stakeholders to justify their involvement in the arms trade. In the last year the company has been publicly embarrassed by an editorial in the Lancet which asked ‘Reed Elsevier to divest itself of all business interests that threaten human, and especially civilian, health and well-being’. Other academics are boycotting submitting papers to Elsevier journals, and reviewing for them.

An important first step for each of us is to make sure that Reed Elsevier know that the medical, academic and educational communities they serve are aware of their involvement in the arms trade, and keenly feel the contradiction that this small part of their business represents. You can write to the chairman of Reed Elsevier at:

Jan Hommen,
Reed Elsevier PLC,
1-3 Strand,
London
WC2N 5JR,
UK

I have set up an on-line petition for academics and health care professionals at:
http://www.idiolect.org.uk/elsevier.

If you are a member of a professional association, union or learned society you can check if you are involved with Elsevier through them, and see if other members might feel similarly uncomfortable with the position Elsevier puts them in. Reed Elsevier is a publishing company with an arms trade problem, and like all addicts, they need our support to help them recover.

Editor’s Note: An alternative to publishing in these commercial journals is to submit your papers to “Open Access” journals. One great initiative is the Public Library of Science (PLoS) which states it “...is a nonprofit organization of scientists and physicians committed to making the world’s scientific and medical literature a freely available public resource. All our activities are guided by our core principles.” These principles can be found at www.plos.org/about/principles.html  Importantly, authors publishing in the PLoS journal retain the copyrights to their own articles. Author copyright is typically transfered to the parent corporation in commercial journals as a condition of their publishing an article.
The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza: Silence From Israel’s Free-Trade Partner - Canada
By Judy Deutsch

A humanitarian statement about Gaza, signed by one hundred Canadian health professionals and posted on the Science for Peace website, details information about the dire situation in Gaza that preceded the war: UN agencies and Israeli/Palestinian NGOs document a state of emergency precipitated by the withdrawal of funds after Hamas was democratically elected in January 2006 (Canada was the first country to withdraw aid to the Palestinian Authority). A second statement, also posted, describes the humanitarian situation in Gaza and Lebanon as the war continued into August, 2006. Both statements were sent to all Canadian Members of Parliament, and both statements pointed out the paucity of reporting by our media on the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territories (OT) although much information is readily available on the internet.

What is clear and indisputable at present is that Israel’s victims in Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Lebanon, are primarily civilians. It is also clear that the current war is a continuation of previous Israeli actions in Lebanon and in the OT. The 2006 Lebanese invasion led to over one million refugees and 1600 civilian deaths, whereas Israeli civilian deaths number 44. In Gaza, 262 people have been killed, 1200 wounded, of whom 60 had arms or legs amputated. Of the deceased, 64 were children and 26 were women (Dr. Juma al-Saqa, al-Shifa Hospital). What Israeli journalists Amira Hass and Gideon Levy, and Israeli academics Ilan Pappe and Tanya Reinhart, and physicians Mona El-Farra and Nurit Peled-Elhanan and Eyad El-Sarraj write about, over and over, is the under-reported war of attrition against the Palestinian people. This war of attrition includes the impoverishment and terrorizing of the Palestinian people through destruction of their economic and social infrastructure, the daily humiliations and threats in their homes and at checkpoints, the targeted maiming and imprisonment of youth, extra-judicial executions, land confiscation and destruction of homes. Since 1967 over 600,000 Palestinians have spent time in prison and every year, hundreds of Palestinian children are arrested and detained and many are tortured; “almost every family has a male member who has been arrested at some point” (/Stolen Youth/, Defence for Children International/Palestine Section). The release of child and women prisoners in exchange for Cpl. Shalit was the initial negotiating position of the Hamas militia.

Physical assaults: According to the most recent UN Situation Report (August 24th), only a limited amount of humanitarian aid has reached the Gaza Strip following the complete closure of the main Karni crossing point. At the Erez crossing, no Palestinian workers have been allowed through since 12 March. UNRWA reports that the shortages of food, fuel and construction supplies are jeopardizing every element of their operations in the Gaza Strip. The fishing industry has been paralysed by the complete ban imposed by the IDF on fishing grounds off the Gaza Strip for over 50 days. No developments have been reported for the urgent repairs needed to the Gaza Power Plant. Currently, the remaining electricity available from Israel (approximately 57% of daily supply) is being shared among the 1.4 million people. Data from UNRWA indicate an upward trend in the number of children consultations for diarrhea, a reflection of a possible decline in water quality and food safety. According to the Mayor of As Shoka, the IDF incursion into the area destroyed most of the agricultural land, demolished all the greenhouses and destroyed water and electricity networks. Fifteen percent of all agricultural land in the Gaza Strip was in the As Shoka area. Dr. Abu-Ramadan says the Israelis “have destroyed 70% of our orange groves in order to create security zones.” Per capita income is $700 in Gaza, compared with $20,000 in Israel. Conditions are much worse than in Lebanon where Hezbollah liberally compensates war victims for loss of their houses.

Dr. Al-Saqa of Al-Shifa Hospital talks about the repercussions of the destruction of the pow-
er plant on Palestinian children being cared for at the hospital. Particularly compromised is the ability to deliver quality care to emergency room and chronically ill patients. Medicine is not available and referrals to other hospitals outside of the Gaza Strip are impossible. The hospital relies on back-up generators; patients in the intensive care unit, including premature babies, are particularly susceptible to any interruption in electricity. Doctors at Al-Shifa Hospital have also requested investigation of unconventional weapons (now being investigated by Physicians for Human Rights). The Gaza forensic laboratory was bombed the first day of the war.

The Israeli military and economic siege of Gaza has led to a collapse in Palestinian living conditions and many people only survive by looking for scraps of food in rubbish dumps, say international aid agencies. “The pressure and tactics have not resulted in a desire for compromise,” Karen Abuzayd, the head of the UN Relief and Works Agency is said to have warned. “But rather they have created mass despair, anger and a sense of hopelessness and abandonment.” “Women in Gaza tell me they are eating only one meal a day, bread with tomatoes or cheap vegetables,” said Kirstie Campbell of the UN’s World Food Programme, which is feeding 235,000 people. She added that in June, since when the crisis has worsened, some 70 per cent of people in Gaza could not meet their family’s food needs. “People are raiding garbage dumps,” she said.

Psychological assaults: Elocuently and prophetically, DCI/PS states that “At a time when international political actors are calling for a return to the logic of ‘durable solutions’ to stop the current escalation in violence, nations at war remember no injuries as acutely as they remember the death of their children.”

Ha’aretz reporter, Gideon Levy, visited Al-Shifa Hospital and saw “heartrending scenes. Children who lost limbs, on respirators, paralyzed, crippled for the rest of their lives. Families have been killed in their sleep, while riding on donkeys or working in fields. Frightened children, traumatized by what they have seen, huddle in their homes with a horror in their eyes that is difficult to describe in words. A journalist from Spain who spent time in Gaza recently, a veteran of war and disaster zones around the world, said he had never been exposed to scenes as horrific as the ones he saw and documented over the last two months.”

Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan lost her only daughter to a suicide bomber in Jerusalem. With Israeli and Palestinian mothers, she has been a voice for peace. “I have never experienced the suffering Palestinian women undergo every day, every hour, I don’t know the kind of violence that turns a woman’s life into constant hell. This daily physical and mental torture of women who are deprived of their basic human rights and needs of privacy and dignity, women whose homes are broken into at any moment of day and night, who are ordered at a gun-point to strip naked in front of strangers and their own children, whose houses are demolished, who are deprived of their livelihood and of any normal family life. This is not part of my personal ordeal. But I am a victim of violence against women insofar as violence against children is actually violence against mothers.”

Another example of insidious psychological abuse is the nightly sonic booms over the Gaza Strip. Physicians for Human Rights/Israel filed a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court for a temporary injunction to stop the sonic booms, deeming it a collective punishment of the ci-
vilian population that particularly traumatized children. The petition was rejected. Depending on the child’s age, the sonic booms can be psychologically traumatic: when an assault occurs without warning or preparation, it produces panic and terror, not the signal of anxiety which allows a child to protect himself and have some sense of control; also, for a young child, it is terrifying to feel that his parents cannot protect him; and in itself, the physical impact of sonic boom is confusing and overpowering as it is difficult to locate the source of the sensory assault – this is particularly overwhelming for young children who do not yet have a clear sense of body boundaries and of localized sensations.

It is open to interpretation what to call the latest Israeli war: self-defense? Ethnic cleansing coupled with population transfer? Genocide? It is also open to interpretation when to date the beginning of this war: June 25th, 2006 – the capture/kidnap of Cpl. Gilad Shalit? The unending war against Lebanon -- the Sabra and Shatila massacres of September 1982, the former Qana massacre in 1996 in which 106 people in a UN compound were massacred, the persistent Israeli violation of Lebanon air space? the 1967 annexation of Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights? 1948 and the Nakba? The 1917 colonialist Balfour Declaration or the late 19th century Zionist objective of exclusive Jewish control over Palestine?

On July 15th, 2005, Uri Davis, Ilan Pappe, and Tamar Yaron issued a prophetic statement: “We feel that it is urgent and necessary to raise the alarm regarding what may come during and after evacuation of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip occupied by Israel in 1967...We believe that one primary, unstated motive for the determination of the government of the State of Israel to get the Jewish settlers...out of the Gaza Strip may be to keep them out of harm’s way should the Israeli government and military launch a massive attack on the approximately 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, of whom about half are 1948 Palestine refugees. The scenario could be similar to what has already happened in the past – a tactic that Ariel Sharon has used many times in his military career – i.e. utilizing provocation in order to launch massive attacks [they predict air strikes under General Dan Halutz].” It is generally understood that Israel did not withdraw from Gaza in 2005 but, rather, maintains total control over Gaza’s sea, air, and land borders. During this current war Israel continues to extend the Annexation (Separation, Segregation) Wall and occupy East Jerusalem.

Canada drifted from its position of neutrality under former prime minister Paul Martin and it is likely that Canada will continue to vote against or abstain on a number of UN resolutions critical of Israeli policy. Canada continues to have cordial relations with Israel and its free trade agreement with Israel will boost economic ties. Letters about Canada’s collusion with Israel’s extreme human rights abuses can be sent to Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter MacKay (MacKay.P@gparl.gc.ca <mailto:MacKay.P@gparl.gc.ca>), and to Israeli Ambassador to Canada Alan Baker (50 O’Connor Street, Ottawa K1P 6L2). Other actions include donations to the Occupied Territories and Lebanon and support of the boycott/divestment/sanctions campaign (endapartheid@riseup.net). For information on the academic boycott, google Virginia Tilley and Ilan Pappe (both wrote excellent books on Israel/Palestine).

**Upcoming Events**

Richard Saunders
Coalition to End the Arms Trade

**Afghanistan! Iraq! Missile Defence! Canada’s Complicity in the Business of War**

Tuesday, October 24 7:30 p.m.
Saint Andrew’s United Church, 117 Bloor St. East