

Saskatchewan PEACE NEWS

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Obama on Iraq – Demagoguery and Deception

Belying the truth and supporting the neo-conservative policy of permanent war, U.S. president Barack Obama announced on August 31 that “the American combat mission in Iraq has ended. Operation Iraqi Freedom is over.” Operation New Dawn is now the codename for the American presence in Iraq. Obama parroted former U.S. president George W. Bush who proclaimed on May 1, 2003 aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, “In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.” The demagoguery and deceit of Obama’s words caused U.S. Congress representative and long-time opponent of the Iraq invasion Ron Paul to say, “I wonder if our government even understands what it is to end a war anymore. The end to war, to most people, means all troops come home, out of harm’s way. It means we stop killing people and getting killed.”

Fifty thousand U.S. troops (which still receive combat pay), seventy-five thousand private contractors and five huge ‘enduring bases’ remain in Iraq. The number of private contractors is expected to double. On August 28, nine days after the U.S. Army’s Fourth Stryker Brigade left Iraq, an American soldier was killed in a rocket attack in southern Iraq. The same day saw five thousand members of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, a combat unit, sent to Iraq from Ft. Hood, Texas. Police armed with automatic weapons and using police dogs forced peace activists to end their blockade of buses carrying the soldiers being newly-deployed to Iraq. On September 5, the New York Times reported that insurgents mounted a coordinated attack lasting three hours on one of the main military commands in Baghdad. U.S. soldiers provided “suppressive fire” to counterattacking Iraqi troops and American helicopters and unmanned drones provided surveillance. Two days later, two American soldiers were killed and another nine wounded when a firefight erupted inside an Iraqi Army base north of Baghdad.

In his speech, Obama said, “Iraq has the opportunity to embrace a new destiny” and America will “lead among those who are willing to work together to expand freedom and opportunity for all people. At the same time, Iraqi artist and writer, Ghalib Al-Mansoori has said, “Iraqis have lived and are still living through hell... The ‘partial withdrawal’ the U.S. has promised by the end of August, 2010 is of no significance to Iraqis since U.S. intentions have not changed.

The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq has left over one million Iraqis dead, one-and-a-half million internally displaced and two million outside the country as refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere around the globe.



Map of Iraq

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL HEAD CALLS FOR PEACE ACTION

Once a year the peace forces in Japan hold a ceremony in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to mark the criminal nuclear destruction of those two cities in 1945 by the U.S. military and to call for nuclear disarmament. This year, the 65th anniversary of the bombing, a greater than usual number of world leaders were present for the ceremonies including the President of the United Nations and the Prime Minister of Japan. Also speaking there was Ms. Socorro Gomes, a previous member of parliament in Brazil and president of the World Peace Council. The Regina Peace Council is affiliated with the Canadian Peace Congress, which in turn is affiliated with the World Peace Council. We present here an account of Ms. Gomes' remarks, a compilation, abridged, of her remarks in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Ms. Gomes referred to the bombing of the two cities as atomic genocide. "No other episode rivals so much terror," she declared. "It is estimated that the mass execution outnumbers by far evaluations of 140,000 in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki – mostly civilians. These estimates are considerably higher when one adds the ensuing deaths and congenital mal-formations stemming from exposure to radiation." And, Gomes added, throughout the decades that separate us from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies, the U.S. has demonstrated -- from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, among the countless more or less overt and devastating wars it engendered – that there has not been a more aggressive and inhumane nation throughout the historical development process.

The terror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had led to universal consciousness of and opposition to the destructive use of nuclear energy, and its monopoly by the armed powers, under the hegemony of the United States, Gomes declared. The struggle of the peoples of the world against imperialist war and for world peace had continued through the decades of the last half of the last century, and had grown even more rapidly in the first decade of the 21st century, particularly with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

In all these moments, Gomes added, since the massive genocide attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear blackmail has played a role. In response to such arrogance, world clamour for nuclear disarmament has also grown, and the World Peace Council and all of its member associations have actively joined in the struggle.

In fact, the World Peace Council originated in 1949-50 "waving the banner of nuclear disarmament." At the very moment of its creation, the World Peace Council launched the Stockholm Appeal, still impressively up to date. That document, which famously travelled the world collecting the signatures of 600 million people, stated clearly and simply:

"We demand an absolute ban on nuclear weapons, which are aimed at oppression and the mass extermination of people.

"We demand the establishment of rigorous international control to ensure the application of such a ban.

"We believe that the first government to make use of the nuclear weapon, no matter against which country, would commit a crime against humankind and should be treated as a war criminal.

"We call on all people of goodwill in the world to sign this appeal."

"Today, 60 years later, the Appeal inspires the World Peace Council and resonates in our actions. We deem it of the utmost importance that hundreds of social organizations engaged in the movement for peace and international solidarity around the world mobilize in the struggle against militarization, military bases, imperialism, and aggressive alliances by imperialist powers such as NATO, and nuclear weapons."

Referring to the Review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the U.N. in May, Gomes stated that once more the United States and other nuclear powers took advantage of the occasion to further press the non-nuclear countries in an attempt to make the Additional Protocol to the NPT mandatory, and to obstruct efforts towards disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons. At the same time, these same powers, in violation of aspects of the Treaty they claim to stand for, exert an intolerable veto against other countries' access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The United States and Russia had announced a bilateral strategic arms reduction agreement to reduce the number of strategic warheads to 1,550. However, the agreement appeared to be of merely symbolic value and not truly connected with peace efforts. Evidence of this is the recent announcement of the project Conventional Prompt Global Strike, and a new weapon to be mounted on a long-range missile capable of travelling at a speed several times higher than the speed of sound. Launched from U.S. soil, this missile is capable of striking any place in earth in less than an hour. The justification is maintenance of so-called 'dissuasion power', even with a reduced nuclear arsenal.

"The planet's greatest nuclear power has just announced its new defence strategy and a few weeks ago the U.S. organized an international conference on nuclear security in Washington with the purpose of fighting 'nuclear terrorism,' Gomes continued. Amid the disarmament rhetoric, the United States once again proclaimed its right to use nuclear weapons in circumstances it shall classify as 'extreme,' to 'defend' vital American interests or those of

Gomes - cont'd page 3

Gomes – cont'd from page 2

its allies. And yet again, the superpower refused to declare that it will not be the first to use nuclear armament.”

With respect to development of nuclear power for peaceful purposes, Gomes pointed out that in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, disarmament is declaratory (non-binding), whereas non-proliferation is mandatory. Formidable and mighty economic interests are hiding under the theme of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in order to bar non-nuclear states from advancing in the international economic arena. “In this concert of world resistance to nuclear armament,” Gomes asserted, “we thus consider that the struggle should proceed for the inalienable right of each State Party to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and at the same time for the complete elimination of all nuclear arsenals.”



Turning to the current world situation, Gomes said the world is mired in deep economic and social crises, which generate great conflicts. U.S. imperialism and its NATO allies frantically prepare intervention plans and wars in every region of the world, with potentially tragic effects to national sovereignties and the rights of peoples, threatening the very survival of humanity. Thus the U.S., claiming a priority for nuclear proliferation prevention, authorizes itself, in the name of its ‘vital interests’ or those of its allies, like Israel, to carry out an attack with nuclear weapons, in ‘extreme’ conditions, against any country. Actually, it is the continuation of George Bush’s ‘pre-

emptive war.’ In other words, uphold U.S. power by military force, whatever the cost to humanity.

In 2011, Gomes pointed out, the U.S. will invest US\$780 billion in its army, a record budget since the end of the Second World War, 49% higher than the 2000 budget and larger than the military expenditures of all the other countries of the world together. The U.S. insists on keeping bases all over the globe, lately intensifying installation of military bases in Latin America, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and in Central Asia. U.S. Special Forces, experts in covert war operations and intelligence, subversion and ‘destabilization’ missions, are operating in 75 countries, up from 60 countries only one year ago. “The world is the battlefield,” said a high-ranking officer of the US Special Forces.

The new strategy of the U.S. and NATO, Conventional Prompt Global Strike will see NATO operating in every continent and sea, the speaker warned.

In the Middle East the U.S. and its NATO allies have increased their troops in Afghanistan, prolong the war in Iraq and adopt measure to set up military bases in Central Asia. Preparations for aggression against Iran are underway. “For imperialism it is necessary to contain Iran, to reinforce Israel’s power to avoid compromising its control in the Middle East and Central Asia,” Gomes said. The U.S. and Israel are making preparations for a possible military intervention, redeploying navy forces through the Suez Canal toward the Persian Gulf, close to the Iranian sea coast. Meanwhile, the US negotiates with Saudi Arabia the use of air space in potential bombings. The U.S. and Israel threaten Syria and Lebanon, and the U.S. backs the occupation in Palestine and the criminal blockade against the Gaza Strip.

On July 23, a deal was signed in New Delhi between the U.S. and India to ‘contain terrorism.’ In East Asia, Gomes continued, the U.S. recently held large-scale joint military manoeuvres with South Korea in the Korean Peninsula, right on the doorstep of North Korea. They accused the North Korean government of sinking a South Korean warship and imposed sanctions against North Korea. The U.S. continues to maintain its military bases on Japanese territory, bases that have been there since the end of World War Two.

In Latin America pressure intensifies against the Cuban Revolution, the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and the democratic anti-imperialist processes across the region. A new military base was set up in Honduras, which helped a coup d’etat to be staged. Under the pretext of humanitarian aid to Haiti in the wake of the earthquake that shook that country early this year, 15,000 strong U.S. military forces disembarked in that country. Recently more than seven thousand U.S. soldiers, 46 warships, aircraft carriers, submarines and helicopters set up camp in Costa Rica...

Gomes - cont'd page 7

DANGER OF ATTACK ON IRAN ESCALATES

In early August Fidel Castro spoke to the National Assembly of People's Power in Cuba, the country's parliament, warning of the dangers of nuclear conflagration as a result of U.S. and Israeli threats against Iran over its nuclear program. It was the first time the former Cuban president had addressed the parliament since June 2006 when he retired due to illness.

Cuba's revolutionary leader urged US President Barack Obama to desist from an attack on Iran because it would trigger a nuclear conflict, and media around the world have taken up Castro's warning about the consequences of such a disaster. Obama, Castro emphasized, is the one who must give the order for the much-discussed attack, and he would be ordering the death of hundreds of millions of people. If Obama realized the consequences of such an action, Castro added, "he would not take it. We are making a contribution to that effort at persuasion."

In his plea, Castro stressed that if nuclear war were unleashed, "the existing world order would not survive and would immediately collapse." He noted the current nuclear arsenal accumulated by military powers is 450,000 times more deadly than the bombs that destroyed the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The United States and other world powers maintain a constant campaign against Iran which they charge with working to obtain a nuclear arsenal, which Tehran has always denied. There is no evidence of a nuclear weapons program in Iran and Iranian authorities maintain their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

Castro has also published a series of articles since stepping down as president of Cuba. In one article he explains his position on the Middle East and Iran by quoting from a paper by American-Israeli journalist Jeffrey Goldberg. Goldberg previously worked for *The New Yorker*, and now writes for *The Atlantic Journal*. He conducted interviews with some 40 Israeli current and past 'decision makers' as well as many American and Arab officials. In his interviews, Goldberg asked what the percentage chance was that Israel would attack the Iranian nuclear program in the near future. Not everyone would answer, but a consensus emerged that there was a better than 50 percent chance that Israel would launch a strike by next July.

A shortened version of the article by Castro, in which he quotes from Goldberg, follows

Castro writes:

The Opinion of An Expert

If I were asked who best knows about Israeli thinking,

I would answer that without question it is Jeffrey Goldberg. He is an indefatigable journalist, capable of having dozens of meetings to ascertain how some Israeli leader or intellectual may think.

He is not neutral, of course; he is pro-Israeli, no ands, ifs or buts. When one of them does not agree with the policy of that country, that too is not done halfway.

For my aim, it is important to know the thinking that guides the main political and military leaders of that State. I feel that I have the authority to have an opinion because I have never been anti-Semitic and I share with him a profound hatred of Nazi-Fascism and the genocide perpetrated against children, women and men, young or aged Jews against whom Hitler, the Gestapo and the Nazis took out their hatred against that people.

For the same reason, I abhor the crimes committed by the fascist government of Netanyahu which kills children, women and men, young and old in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

*In his illustrated article "The Point of No Return" which will be printed in *The Atlantic Journal* in September 2010, now available on the Internet, Jeffrey Goldberg starts his more than 40-page paper; I am taking the essential ideas from it in order to enlighten readers.*

Castro quotes Jeffrey Goldberg:

"It is possible that at some point in the next 12 months, the imposition of devastating economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran will persuade its leaders to cease their pursuit of nuclear weapons....It is possible, as well, that 'foiling operations' conducted by the intelligence agencies of Israel, the United States, Great Britain, and other Western powerswill have hindered Iran's progress in some significant way. It is also possible that President Obama, who has said on more than a few occasions that he finds the prospect of a nuclear Iran 'unacceptable,' will order a military strike against the country's main weapons and uranium-enrichment facilities.

I am not engaging in a thought exercise, or a one-man war game, when I discuss the plausibility and potential consequences of an Israeli strike on Iran. Israel has twice before successfully attacked and destroyed an enemy's nuclear program. In 1981, Israeli warplanes bombed the Iraqi reactor at Osirak, halting....Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions and in 2007 Israeli planes destroyed a North Korean-built reactor in Syria.

Castro - cont'd page 5

Castro – cont'd from page 4

An attack on Iran, then, would be unprecedented only in scope and complexity....

But, based on my conversations with Israeli decision-makers, this period of forbearance, in which Netanyahu waits to see if the West's nonmilitary methods can stop Iran, will come to an end this December....

Several Arab leaders have suggested that America's standing in the Middle East depends on its willingness to confront Iran. They argue self-interestedly that an aerial attack on a handful of Iranian facilities would not be as complicated or as messy as, say, invading Iraq. "This is not a discussion about the invasion of Iran," one Arab foreign minister told me. "We are hoping for the pinpoint striking of several dangerous facilities. America could do this very easily."....

If the Israelis reach the firm conclusion that Obama will not, under any circumstances, launch a strike on Iran, then the countdown will begin for a unilateral Israeli attack. A strike on Iran, Israeli intelligence officials believe, could provoke all-out retaliation by Iran's Lebanese subsidiary, Hezbollah, which now possesses, by most intelligence estimates, as many as 45,000 rockets— at least three times as many as it had in the summer of 2006, during the last round of fighting between the group and Israel....

Obama administration officials, particularly in the Pentagon, have several times signaled unhappiness at the possibility of military pre-emption. In April, the undersecretary of defense for policy, Michele Flournoy, told reporters that military force against Iran was 'off the table in the near term.' She later backtracked, but Admiral Michael Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has also criticized the idea of attacking Iran.... "In an area that's so unstable right now, we just don't need more of that."....

Dennis Ross, the former Middle East peace negotiator who is currently a senior National Security Council official, said during the meeting that he believes the Israelis now understand that American-instigated measures have slowed Iran's progress, and that the administration is working to convince the Israeli – and other parties in the region – that the sanctions strategy "has a chance of working."

"The president has said he hasn't taken any options off the table, but let's take a look at why we think this strategy could work....Last June, when they hadn't responded to our bilateral outreach, the president said that we would take stock by September."

The sanctions are going to cut across the board. They are taking place in the context of Iranian mismanagement – the Iranians are going to have to cut [food and fuel]

subsidies; they already have public alienation; they have division in the elites, and between the elites and the rest of the country....

Not long ago, the chief of Israeli military intelligence, Major General Amos Yadlin, paid a secret visit to Chicago to meet with Lester Crown, the billionaire whose family owns a significant portion of General Dynamics, the military contractor. Crown said "I share with the Israelis the feeling that we certainly have the military capability and that we have to have the will to use it. The rise of Iran is not in the best interest of the U.S."

"I support the president," Crown said. "But I wish [administration officials] were a little more outgoing in the way they have talked. I would feel more comfortable if I knew that they had the will to use military force, as a last resort. You cannot threaten someone as a bluff. There has to be a will to do it."....

In my conversations with former Israeli air-force generals and strategists, the prevalent tone was cautious. Many people I interviewed were ready, on condition of anonymity, to say why an attack on Iran's nuclear sites would be difficult for Israel. And some Israeli generals, like their American colleagues, questioned the very idea of an attack. "Our time would be better spent lobbying Barack Obama to do this, rather than trying this ourselves," one general told me. "We are very good at this kind of operation, but it is a big stretch for us. The Americans can do this with a minimum of difficulty, by comparison. This is too big for us."

Based on months of interviews, I have come to believe that the administration knows it is a near-certainty that Israel will act against Iran soon if nothing or no one else stops the nuclear program... Earlier this year, I agreed with those, including many Israelis, Arab – and Iranians – who believe there is no chance that Obama would ever resort to force to stop Iran; I still don't believe there is a great chance he will take military action in the near future – for one thing, the Pentagon is notably unenthusiastic about the idea. But Obama is clearly seized by the issue....

Denis McDonough, the chief of staff of the National Security Council, told me, "What you see in Iran is the intersection of a number of leading priorities of the president, who sees a serious threat to the global non-proliferation regime, a threat of cascading nuclear activities in a volatile region, and a threat to a close friend of the United States, Israel. I think you see the several streams coming together, which accounts for why it is so important to us."

WHAT ABOUT CANADA?

Although Goldberg's paper may indicate the U.S. and Israel have differences on the question of Iran, the two

Castro - cont'd page 6

Castro – cont'd from page 5

nations agree that Iran is an enemy and they are jointly preparing for action against Iran. Both the U.S. and Israel have naval attack forces in the Strait of Hormuz and in the Persian Gulf, and joint manoeuvres have taken place. Where does Canada stand on this issue?

On June 9, the U.N. Security Council adopted resolution No.1929 imposing further drastic sanctions on Iran for carrying on with its program to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes, a resolution both the U.S. and Israel knew Iran would ignore, and giving them an excuse to up the campaign against Iran. Back in March, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon at the G8 Foreign Ministers meeting in Canada, and at the G8 and G20 meetings in June, boasted of the sanctions the Canadian government had already imposed on Iran, and on July 26, Prime Minister Harper quickly announced additional sanctions, 'building upon Resolution 1929.'

To say the least the Harper government's position with respect to Iran is hypocritical. The Canadian government sells Canadian uranium to states that want it for peaceful purposes, but which also even possess nuclear weapons. Yet U.N. Resolution 1929 is designed to make it impossible for Iran to develop nuclear energy even for peaceful purposes. Canada supports the position of Israel, which is known to have about 200 nuclear weapons, but which refuses to even join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.N.'s watchdog on nuclear development, has made many inspections of nuclear facilities in Iran, but Israel has refused to allow any inspection at all by the IAEA.

When Resolution 1929 was passed by the Security Council, Brazil and Turkey voted against the Resolution because it ran counter to their efforts to bring about a negotiated solution based on an agreement they had reached with Iran in May, known as the Tehran Declaration. Lebanon voted against Resolution 1929, saying Iran had the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy and that the Tehran Declaration provided a way to resolution of problems. "The sanctions regime represented a painful failure of diplomatic efforts." Although China and Russia voted for the resolution, they also stated that they considered it afforded opportunities for further negotiation. Japan's foreign minister has subsequently called for further efforts based on the Tehran Declaration.

Instead of going along with the U.S. and Israel in their war plans against Iran, Canada should also be seizing on the opening for negotiations provided by the Tehran Declaration. The alternative could be a Third World War - a nuclear war. The Canadian people don't want war. This is the time for Canadians to gear up for action for peace, with the first priority to stop Harper from leading us into a nuclear disaster. □ C.Fischer

Obama – cont'd from page 1

Life expectancy of Iraqis has fallen from 71 years in 1996 to 67 years in 2007. Disease is rampant with an epidemic of mental illness. Due to the use of depleted uranium weapons, the cancer rate in Fallujah, for example, is now worse than in Hiroshima, Japan (A-bombed by U.S. in 1945). Foreign Policy in Focus reports that Iraq has 25 - 50 percent unemployment with over half of Iraqis living in sprawling slums (up from 20 percent before the U.S. invasion). The killing of innocent people (about 300 persons a month) has become part of daily life. After the March 7 elections earlier this year, Iraq still does not have a functioning government.

Contradicting Obama's words that all U.S. troops will leave Iraq by the end of next year in accordance with an agreement with the Iraqi government current head of ISAF troops in Afghanistan, former CENTCOM chief and commander of the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq U.S. Gen. David Petraeus, on CBS News said, "We're not leaving" Iraq and that troops remaining in Iraq will have "an enormous capability." Echoing Petraeus, U.S. Gen. Ray Odierno has said that U.S. combat troops would return to Iraq if the security situation worsened and would consider staying in Iraq after 2011 if invited.

One can be certain that the Pentagon will have a big say in what actually occurs in Iraq under Obama's watch. After saying earlier that "as long as I am President, we will maintain the finest fighting force that the world has ever known," Obama ended his August 31 speech by saying, "Our troops are the steel in our ship of state... they give us confidence that our course is true."

Kevin Zeese, executive director of Voters for Peace, reports the Army Times as saying that U.S. combat brigades will remain in Iraq, but with their name changed to 'Advise and Assist' brigades. American pilots will still fly combat missions in support of Iraqi troops. American Special Forces will still confront Iraqi insurgents in high-intensity operations. With Canada's "combat" mission in Afghanistan set to end next year, the question is whether or not Prime Minister Stephen Harper will take his cue from Obama, declare the "combat" mission officially over in July 2011, and have Canadian troops 'Advise and Assist' the Karzai government in an 'Operation New Dawn' for Afghanistan. No matter the words, it will still be the same dirty, brutal and illegal occupation of a foreign country. Canadian troops and police must leave Afghanistan. The earlier. The better. □

- Dave McKee, President Canadian Peace Congress

Support Our Troops Bring Them Home!

Gomes – cont'd from page 3

The Colombian government signed a military agreement with the U.S. whereby seven U.S. military bases will remain in Colombian territory.

“With the economy in shambles and in a historical process of decadence, the United States resorts to military power – a terrain in which its superiority is indisputable – as a last resort to maintain world domination. War is, today, imperialism’s main tool. This explains a military budget that corresponds to half of the military expenditure of the rest of the world and which, in spite of the crisis, was stepped up, as well as rising aggressiveness against the peoples,” Gomes charged.

“Peace is indeed seriously threatened. At the same time there is reason for historical optimism,” Gomes continued. “Everywhere the peoples are moving and struggling and opposing the tendencies to shoulder the workers with the effects of the crisis, resisting coups and threats of war, rejecting imperialism’s interventionist policies and in many cases advancing toward securing democratic and patriotic accomplishments. The conviction is spreading that it is necessary to fight for a new political and economic world order. Increasingly the zeitgeist is one of anti-imperialist struggle and union of broad pro-democracy, progress, national independence, and peace forces.

“The fraternal presence of the World Peace Council in Japan on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the nuclear bombings, is a manifestation of solidarity with the Japanese people and of the unity of the peace movement in the world,” Gomes declared. “It is a fitting occasion to reflect and to organize the anti-imperialist and peace struggle. We renew our hope that we shall accomplish in the present a future of peace, harmony and social prosperity in Japan and worldwide. □ C. Fischer



1st Annual PEACE Fountain Festival

Saturday
Sept 18th
2:00 - 5:00 pm

Regina City Hall
Plaza



Free Live Music

Free Games Face Painting
Bannock & refreshments Chalk Drawing
Prizes

Join us for this fun family event to mark the kick-off of our petition campaign to have the City Hall fountain formally designated the “Regina Peace Fountain”!

Everyone is Welcome!

Hosted by the Planning Committee of the Regina Peace Fountain, Regina Peace Council
Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, Regina Peace Action Coalition and the Making Peace Vigil

7

Remember! Making Peace Vigils every Thursday at noon - SCARTH STREET MALL

Enclosed please find my donation Name: _____

in the amount of \$ _____ Address: _____

in support of SASKATCHEWAN PEACE NEWS _____

Email: _____

(Saskatchewan Peace News is now published electronically)

World Peace Day

World Day (United Nations International Day of Peace) is dedicated to peace, or specifically, the absence of war. The official day occurs annually on September 21 and was first celebrated in 1981 upon being declared by the UN General Assembly (opening day of regular sessions of the General Assembly).

To inaugurate the day, the Peace Bell is rung at UN headquarters in New York City. The bell is cast from coins donated by children from all continents and was donated to the UN by the Diet of Japan as a “reminder of the human cost of war.” The inscription on its side reads: “LONG LIVE ABSOLUTE WORLD PEACE.”

There are thousands of peace events on World Peace Day each year. In 2009, four Rotary World Peace Fellows created www.millionactsofpeace.com to challenge one million people around the world to commit to doing one act of peace. Making Peace Cranes in schools (similar to past Hiroshima Days at the Regina Peace Fountain) is a common activity. This year's World Peace Day theme is “Peace, Youth and Development” under the slogan “Peace = Future.”

World Peace Day “provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date,” says the day's official website at www.internationaldayofpeace.org. The Regina Peace Council salutes World Peace Day and in its spirit mentioned above, commits itself to the official designation of the fountain at the City Hall Plaza (Queen Elizabeth II Court) as the Regina Peace Fountain. □ P. Gehl



65th Anniversary of Atomic Bombings

Each year the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (UN International Peace Cities) hold peace ceremonies on August 6 and 9 respectively, to memorialize the victims of the atomic bombings, preserve the memory of nuclear horrors and advocate nuclear disarmament and world peace.

The 2010 event in Hiroshima was noteworthy in that Ban Ki-Moon became the first UN Secretary-General to attend. First-time attendees also included the U.S. ambassador and officials from the UK and France attended. Government officials representing over 70 countries and many NGOs, and international organizations were present as well.

In their peace declarations, the mayors of both cities urged the Japanese government to legislate into law the Three Non-Nuclear Principles: abandoning the U.S. nuclear umbrella, legally recognizing the expanded ‘black rain areas’, and implementing compassionate assistance for all aging victims of the atomic bombings (*hibakusha* or explosion-affected people) anywhere in the world. Following the earlier Hiroshima Conference for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons by 2020, the mayors asked the Japanese Prime Minister for his commitment to a new world of ‘zero nuclear weapons’ by 2020.

Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan in his Nagasaki Peace Ceremony address said Japan has a moral responsibility to lead actions towards “a world without nuclear weapons”. He pledged that “Japan will observe its Constitution and firmly maintain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles for the sake of the elimination of nuclear weapons and the realization of eternal world peace.

More than 4,000 cities have joined Mayors for Peace an international NGO headed by the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Regina Mayor Pat Fiocco sent greetings to the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony in 2001 on the initiative of former-Councillor Joe McKeown. □ P. Gehl

Saskatchewan Peace News is published quarterly by the Regina Peace Council and edited by Peter Gehl. The Council endeavours to provide residents of Saskatchewan and others with timely and informative articles which we feel have significant importance to peace in our community, country and beyond.

The Regina Peace Council was originally formed in 1949 and has a long history of action for peace. The Council is a member of the Canadian Peace Congress which is affiliated to the World Peace Council.

Publication of the *Saskatchewan Peace News* depends on the volunteer labour and financial support of our members and supporters. Contributions are always welcome as well as comments and suggestions from you – our readers. The Regina Peace Council accepts articles concerning the struggle for peace for publication, subject to approval by our editorial board.

Please consider making a donation and becoming a member of the Regina Peace Council. We meet monthly except for July and August. For further information, please write to: **The Regina Peace Council, 46 Williston Drive, REGINA, SK, S4X 1C4**; or phone **949-1222** or **347-7693**; or email to peace.council@accesscomm.ca.

REGINA PEACE FOUNTAIN

WHEREAS the people of Regina are entitled to live in a peaceful and safe community and world;

WHEREAS a Peace Fountain is a symbol and commitment to peace, equality and justice;

WHEREAS the above beliefs and goals were those of former and long-serving Councillor Joe McKeown; and

WHEREAS there has been no formal recognition of Joe McKeown and his service to our city and his constituents;

WE THE UNDERSIGNED hereby petition the Council of the City of Regina to enact the following:

1. Officially identify the fountain in the Queen Elizabeth II Court, as the REGINA PEACE FOUNTAIN; and
2. Place a commemorative plaque to former Councillor Joe McKeown on the Peace Fountain.

SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	STREET ADDRESS	DATE

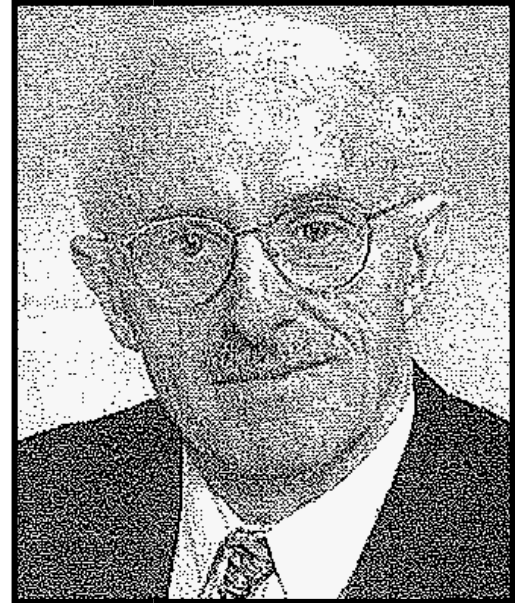
Sponsored by the **Planning Committee of the Regina Peace Fountain**
Return completed petitions to:
Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, 2340 Victoria Avenue, Regina, SK, S4P 0S6
Telephone: 352-6386

Joe McKeown's Peace Legacy

September 18, 2010

The late W. J. (Joe) McKeown served on Regina City Council from 1979 to 1994 and again from 2000 to his untimely death on July 26, 2003 at the age of 66 years. From 1999 until his passing, Joe was President of the Regina Peace Council, a cause that was very dear to his heart. Former Councillor Bill Gray paid tribute to Joe upon his death by saying, "I'll always remember him as a pillar for peace because that what he was."

In his last term, Councillor McKeown twice proposed to Council that the existing water fountain in the City Hall Plaza (Queen Elizabeth II Court) be officially designated as the "Regina Peace Fountain" – a place where Regina citizens could gather to celebrate peace and peacefully settle differences. Joe spoke several times at the launching of Peace Lanterns in the plaza fountain commemorating Hiroshima Day on August 6. City Hall architect Joseph Pettick enthusiastically supported Joe's proposal, stating that the courtyard was designed to encourage community gatherings. In 2006, Mayor Pat Fiocco committed himself to supporting the Regina Peace Fountain after completion of the Immigrant Sculpture Project.



Having the City of Regina officially designate the plaza fountain as the "Regina Peace Fountain" was just one of Joe's efforts to have Regina City Council actively participate in and promote peace. Following is a list of various initiatives Joe took while on City Council:

- City referendum on disarmament and use City Hall Forum for a public meeting [1982].
- June 6 officially declared "Peace Sunday" in Regina [1982]
- Resolution from Council and signage officially designating Regina as a "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone" [circa 1982]
- Greetings from the mayor on the 40th anniversary and supper of the Regina Peace Council [1989]
- Motion to Council supporting negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear weapons test ban [1989]
- Resolution from Council requesting a 'Peace Dividend' for Canada's infrastructures and alleviation of hunger and poverty [1991]
- Met with mayor about the City of Regina joining the UN International Association of peace messenger cities [2000]
- Spoke at Millenium Symposium on Science, Society and Human Rights at the University of Regina [2000]
- Resolution from Council supporting City of Vancouver's support of municipality in Mexico affected by NAFTA [2001]
- Resolution from Council supporting 'Peace Pole' at Massey Road school [2001]
- Mayor's greetings sent to city of Hiroshima's Peace Ceremony on August 6 [2001]
- Attended United Youth Peace Summit [2001]
- Supported renaming the city's Crime Prevention Committee to Peace Committee [circa 2002]
- Resolution from Council opposing U.S. invasion of Iraq [2003]

Joe spent a lifetime working for peace, locally and throughout the world. His campaign literature always mentioned peace – a fact he pointed out when questioned on City Council about "peace not being a city issue." His name as city councillor cannot now be on a resolution officially designating the "Regina Peace Fountain." To not support having his name on a commemorative plaque situated on the Regina Peace Fountain is to re-write history.