

Proposed New Years Resolution for the Promotion of Peace

Written by

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Pej news -Joan Russow (PhD) Global Compliance Research Project- To promote peace, what is needed is an expansion of the concept of watch dog - a Commission for Peace Promotion, under the office of the Auditor General, reporting, nationally and internationally, on Canada's failures and successes in promoting peace. This position would be an officer of the crown and independent of the government. The commissioner should be appointed by parliament in conjunction with peace groups. [before the dissolution of the current parliament and before any government majority].

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To complement this role of the commissioner, and to fulfill commitments made internationally through various international agreements, the military budget should be reallocated to support common security initiatives and education and to provide extensive training in disaster prevention and mitigation.

This proposal is quite distinct from that proposed by the proponents of the "Department of Peace" (DOP). The DOP would be a token measure still within the constraints of government. What is needed is an outside watch dog that would have the mandate to examine and criticize all government departments. A "Department of Peace" that is under a Minister of Cabinet and beholden to the government, and that encompasses current government rhetoric such as "human security" 3 D - Diplomacy, Development and Defence, "failed states" and "responsibility to protect" - all strategies to justified increased militarism and intervention, is unacceptable, ineffective and untenable, and at best or worst would be used to justify skewed policies in other departments.

A Peace Promotion Commissioner under the Office of the Auditor General could begin by examining the existing mandates within the different departments. To promote peace, the Commission would have to recommend that the mandates of other departments be drastically changed, and that funds be substantially re-allocated. For example, the Department of Defence Budget would have to be reallocated to promote common security- peace, social justice, human rights and environmental protection. The current government mandate, cutely named the 3D "Diplomacy, Defence and Development"- would have to be abandoned and the flawed operations

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in Afghanistan immediately terminated.

Rather than joining in with the US-led or NATO-led ill-conceived operations of revenge and bravura, Canada would have to begin to advance the rule of international law, the force of compliance with the international law and the concept of true security -common security. The Commissioner could point out as the Commission for Sustainable Development did, that Canada has failed to live up to its international promises made through longstanding international obligations incurred by Canada through treaties, conventions and covenants, or through longstanding commitments through conference action plans and UN General Assembly resolutions and declarations related to the furthering of common security.

The Department of Natural Resources would have to oppose all claims that civil nuclear energy is a solution to climate change and to immediately begin to phase out the production and exporting of civil nuclear energy and finally acknowledge the inextricable link between civil nuclear energy and the development of nuclear arms, and to subsidize socially equitable, safe and environmentally sound energy.

The mandate of the Department of Foreign Affairs and international trade would have to entail all actions and funding being dedicated to the promotion of peace. The Department of Foreign Affairs would have to be mandated to be at the forefront of opposition to the existence all organizations such as NATO which have escalated conflict and intimidated other states; and CIDA would no longer be at the forefront of furthering Canadian corporate interests, through having conditional corporate companionship and complicity (CCCC) funding, and through subsidizing NGOs to further Canada's corporate and military interests. The current mandate to promote 'international trade' would have to involve the call for the dissolution of the WTO, the abrogation of NAFTA and the end of negotiations on the FTAA..

The Department of Justice would have to condemn the current US practice of misconstruing article 51 'self defence' of the Charter of the United Nations to justify invading another state, and the US policy of pre-emption/prevention attack to legitimize invading other states.

The Department of Justice would have to be mandated to revoke licences of all Canadian corporations if the actions of the corporations have destabilized other states, contributed to war and conflict, destroyed the environment, violated human rights, or denied social justice. For example, all corporations engaged in the mining, processing or exporting of uranium would have their licences revoked.

The Department of Industry would have to have a different mandate which would be to supervise the phasing out of all production of weapons, and weapons parts, and to be responsible for the institution, in consultation with the ILO, of a fair and just transition program for workers and communities affected by the transition, phasing out, sunseting or conversion of these industries.

The Commission for Peace Promotion would be responsible for carefully examining and analyzing the Treasury Board estimates to discern hidden costs contributing to the violence and militarism.

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The proposal for an expansion of the concept of watch dog - a Commission for Peace Promotion, under the Office of the Auditor General, would go way beyond the current role of Auditor General. The Auditor Generals office has a limited watch dog role. The role is to essentially assess the correspondence between government approved priorities and the accuracy of the actual expenditures to implement these priorities; the role is not to question the legitimacy of government priorities related to external standards and obligations and commitments. The later role in relation to peace promotion could be carried out by the Commission on Peace Promotion