

Canadian Pugwash Group

Chair: Dr. Adele Buckley; Vice Chair: Prof. Walter Dorn; Treasurer: Prof. Erika Simpson;
Secretary: Prof. Sergei Plekhanov; Directors: Prof. Peter Meincke; Dr. Theodora Carroll; Mr. Steven Staples

July 24, 2006

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

RE: Middle East Conflict

Dear Mr. Harper;

We urge the Government of Canada to provide strong diplomatic support to an immediate international effort to quell the disastrous conflict in Lebanon and Israel. I am enclosing the July 21, 2006 Statement of the Pugwash Council on The Middle East Conflict. The Pugwash Council is the governing body of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, and Canadian Pugwash is the national organization in Canada. The Statement points out the risk of this situation spiraling out of control, and calls for a ceasefire. Canada has a special need to become engaged because of the many Canadian citizens who are directly or indirectly involved, and there is a very real possibility of escalation into a much wider conflict. Because of Canada's distinguished history of peacekeeping in the Middle East, our contribution to the international effort to cease the active conflict can be significant.

Canadian Pugwash members strongly desire that Canada should stand by its traditional policies of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and urgently seek the formation of an international peace force that is fully staffed and equipped with resources appropriate to the need.

I draw to your attention the following pertinent information:

- (1) The burden of this conflict has fallen on innocent civilians. In addition to newspaper reports that some 500,000 refugees that have left their homes in Lebanon, and that the Lebanese infrastructure will take many years to restore, we have heard through contacts of a Canadian Pugwash member that burn injuries that are being treated at hospitals in Lebanon are, in fact, untreatable severe internal burns (indicating that new and powerful types of cluster bombs are in use)
- (2) The attack of Hezbollah on Israel is not receiving support from the majority of the Arab states, but the current situation could change rapidly and unpredictably. Securing a ceasefire is the best risk reduction strategy.

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Past Chairs

The Honourable Douglas Roche, O.C.; M.Gen.(ret) Leonard Johnson; Dr. Wm. Epstein; Prof. John Polanyi C.C.

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(3) Note also the article in the New York Sun, July 17/06 “Arab Majority May Not Stay Forever Silent”.

As the Pugwash Council Statement says “Much is at stake, not least the small but nonetheless possible risk of the use of nuclear weapons”. Not only in the Middle East, but elsewhere, the present international situation is one of escalating danger that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Canada, as a non nuclear weapons state, must play a strong mediative role to relieve this danger. I attach a copy of the “Call upon Canadian Parliamentarians for Nuclear Disarmament”, prepared by the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and already received by your office in April 2006.

We would also wish you to know that we endorse the stand taken by Canada at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, and commend the actions taken by Ambassador Paul Meyer.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Adele Buckley, Chair
Canadian Pugwash Group
On behalf of the Canadian Pugwash Board of Directors

Cc:

The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Gordon O'Connor, Minister of National Defence
Prof. Erika Simpson
Prof. Walter Dorn
Mr. Steven Staples
Dr. Theodora Carroll
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Encls.

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