



Science for Peace

September 14, 2023

President's Column



As a biomedical scientist, I am very aware of the reluctance by many of my colleagues, and the organizations that congregate them, to make statements that could be considered “political”. This is why I find remarkable that last month Editors of 100 respected medical journals and other medical experts published a statement about the role that health professionals could play in reducing the risks of nuclear war (Lancet, vol 402, page 431). The list of publications behind this statement includes the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association, the British Medical Journal and The Lancet.

In this document the medical experts state that “Current nuclear arms control and non-proliferation efforts are inadequate to protect the world’s population against the threat of nuclear war by design, error, or miscalculation”. They further point out that: “There are many examples of near disasters that have exposed the risks of depending on nuclear deterrence for the indefinite future. Modernisation of nuclear arsenals could increase risks: for example, hypersonic missiles decrease the time available to distinguish between an attack and a false alarm, increasing the likelihood of rapid escalation”. The document also cites studies showing that “A large-scale nuclear war between the USA and Russia could kill 200 million people or more in the near term, and potentially cause a global “nuclear winter” that could kill 5-6 billion people, threatening the survival of humanity”.

After describing the important role that the health professionals led by the

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) played to end the end the Cold War arms race, the authors call “health professional associations to inform their members worldwide about the threat to human survival and to join with the IPPNW to support efforts to reduce the near-term risks of nuclear war, including three immediate steps on the part of nuclear armed states and their allies: first, adopt a no first use policy; second, take their nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and third, urge all states involved in current conflicts to pledge publicly and unequivocally that they will not use nuclear weapons in these conflicts”.

Finally, the document asks health professionals “to work for a definitive end to the nuclear threat by supporting the urgent commencement of negotiations among the nuclear armed states for a verifiable, timebound agreement to eliminate their nuclear weapons in accordance with commitments in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, opening the way for all nations to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”.

Science for Peace asks our members to circulate this remarkable document among our friends and colleagues.

Jorge Filmus
President, Science for Peace

Upcoming Events

UPCOMING EVENTS

Science for Peace Peace and Conflict Lectures, Fall 2023



Location/Time: Hybrid session: in-person at the Paul Cadario Conference Centre, University College at U of T, and on Zoom, See Registration links on next page

5–6:30pm

Oct 24th

Cesar Jaramillo: “Ticking Time Bombs: Escalating Global Tensions and the Nuclear Threat”

Nov 21st

Dr Vladimir Zhagora: “The Challenges of Forging Peace in Sudan”

Dec 5th

Dr Jill Carr-Harris: “Nonviolent Social Action: Sharing Experiences in War, Conflict and with Climate Change”

[Scienceforpeace.org](https://scienceforpeace.org)

Register for: 'Ticking Time Bombs: Escalating Global Tensions and the Nuclear Threat'

[Eventbrite in person attendance](#)
[Zoom](#)

Eryl Court Bequest

Eryl passed away in Toronto on November 28, 2018. Eryl was a tireless worker for world peace, and a long-time member of Science for Peace. Our organization has recently received a significant bequest from Eryl's state.

Focus on Members: Margot Mandy



Science for Peace and Me

I did my doctoral studies at the University of Toronto surrounded by Science for Peace. Not only was John Dove, my thesis supervisor, involved, but also a number of other professors in Chemical Physics Theory. Professor Dove was a Dean at the Scarborough Campus and I could always tell when he left that campus for downtown because the phone would start ringing. Many of the messages that I took had to do with Science for Peace, so I decided to join.

I had made an intentional decision when I left industry to pursue another degree that for every ten hours on campus, I would volunteer at least one hour in the community. Through that I was able to put together a parallel nonacademic curriculum vitae. It was not long before I found myself on several boards, sometimes as a signing officer. One day I had to leave the lab abruptly to bicycle across town to sign a cheque. Upon my return to the lab, my supervisor expressed concern that my community involvement was interfering with my studies. As I was explaining the urgent situation that necessitated the prompt signing of a cheque, the phone rang to summon John Dove to sign immediately a cheque on behalf of Science for Peace. My community involvement was not questioned after that.

After Professor Dove and his wife were killed in a car accident in 1989, I was invited to join the executive committee. Since I had taken so many phone messages for Science for Peace, I was deemed to know what was going on. The executive committee met over lunch in the cafeteria at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. Once we were approached to partner with a peace group in eastern Europe. The question arose of how to discern whether they were a bona fide organization. Did they, like us, hold their executive meetings in the cafeteria of a psychiatric institution?

Upon completing my doctoral studies, I left Toronto for a postdoctoral fellowship, returning to Toronto the following year for a research associate position in the Physics Department. I was invited back onto the executive of Science for Peace.

In 1994, I accepted a position at the University of Northern British Columbia which had just opened in Prince George, British Columbia. I continued to serve on the Board of Science for Peace until a change in bylaws introduced term limits and I was no longer eligible. Most summers, I would travel to Toronto to do research and participate in whatever Science for Peace events I could while I was in Toronto.

Prince George does not have many ongoing organizations of activists. Instead, coalitions form to focus on particular issues. We have little difficulty finding each other and organizing. Resource extraction and its impact on the livelihood of indigenous peoples are major issues in this part of Canada. My spouse and I have been heavily involved in the Northern Gateway Pipeline hearings and are presently involved in the local Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

When remote participation in Science for Peace became feasible, I was able to become more involved. Presently I serve on the Board and on the Working Group on Militarism and Climate Change. The pandemic has given remote participation a boost, not only for Science for Peace, but for many other organizations.

Margot Mandy is a Professor of Chemistry at the University of Northern British Columbia. She has been a member of Science for Peace for over 40 years.

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