



June 30, 2025

President's Column



Dear Members,

Last week, Israel and the US launched unprovoked attacks on Iran. Although currently a ceasefire is in effect, the situation is very unstable and it's hard to predict how it will evolve. However, a certain long-term consequence of the aggression against Iran is the serious undermining of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Many countries will conclude that the best assurance to avoid being attacked by nuclear-armed powers is to have their own nuclear arsenal.

Although Science for Peace is in favor of the abolition of nuclear weapons, we support the Non-Proliferation Treaty until abolition is achieved. Consistent with this position, we oppose the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran. However, according to a report last March to Congress by the US director of National Intelligence, Iran does not currently plan to develop nuclear weapons. We should also remember that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has spent the last 20 years proclaiming that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran was "imminent". Therefore, it's reasonable to conclude that the main goal of Israel's aggression to Iran, which has included the assassination of many of its leaders, is to promote "regime change". In addition, a confrontation with Iran helps Israel to distract the attention from the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, where Israel continues its genocidal war.

The Canadian government has recently made a joint statement with the governments of the United Kingdom and France. The three governments state that

The Israeli Government's denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable and risks breaching International Humanitarian Law. We condemn the abhorrent language used recently by members of the Israeli Government, threatening that, in their despair at the destruction of Gaza, civilians will start to relocate. Permanent forced displacement is a breach of international humanitarian law.

This is a positive statement, but it will mean nothing if it's not followed by concrete sanctions against Israel and a cessation of the provision of arms to it.

Recently, the Trump administration has revived the idea of a missile defense system that would protect the US from any ballistic missiles. The system has been called "Golden Dome". This discredited idea of an impenetrable missile defence system, which was initially proposed by the Reagan administration and named "Star Wars", has been called by experts "the longest-running scam in the history of the Department of Defense". Since 1962, the US has spent \$ 531 billion on various failed missile-defense schemes. Trump claims that new technologies will allow him to overcome previous failures. However, it will never be possible to ensure that the system is "impenetrable". For instance, the US has been one of the main contributors to the development of the missile defense system called the "Iron Dome", which is currently deployed by Israel. Many of the missiles recently launched by Iran on Israel have reached their targets, even though Iranian missiles are not as sophisticated as the Russian ones, and even though the territory to be defended is minuscule in comparison with that of the US.

The obvious response of an adversary to an opponent's missile defense system is to build more offensive weapons. Consequently, one immediate consequence of the development of the "Golden Dome" will be an increase in the arms race with China and Russia. The reason for this is the belief that the US is aiming for a first-strike capability with new generations of offensive weapons. And even if independent experts conclude that the "Golden Dome" will not work, an adversary can't count on that. The adversary must assume that the system will work, unless it is overwhelmed by a multitude of sophisticated missiles and drones. Hence, further expenditures on new generations of offensive weapons will be expected.

When Trump recently announced the "Golden Dome" project, he indicated that Canada was interested in participating. He declared that this participation will cost Canada \$61 billion (although two weeks later he increased the cost to \$ 71 billion). He added, of course, that Canada could get the missile defense system protection for free if we agree in becoming the 51st state. Notably, when Ronald Reagan proposed the "Star Wars" missile defence system decades ago, the former Canadian prime ministers Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin decided not to participate.

Unfortunately, the current Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney seems to be ready to embrace the "Golden Dome". It is unclear whether he speculates that Canada's participation in this ballistic missile defense system could be used as a bargaining chip in the current tariffs negotiations. Whatever Carney's reason to embrace the "Golden Dome" might be, we at Science for Peace believe that Canada's participation in this costly, unproven and destabilizing project will undermine Canada's strategic interests and global reputation. The large sums of money require to join the "Golden Dome" will be better spend in affordable housing, health care, and to confront the climate crisis.

Science for Peace calls all peace-loving Canadians to urge Prime Minister Carney to reject Trump's "Golden Dome" project.

Jorge Filmus
President
Science for Peace

Recently Published

CANADA NEEDS A BROADER CONCEPTION OF SECURITY IN A WORLD OF MULTIPLE CRISES

Canada needs to adopt a pro-active approach, in concert with like-minded middle powers, that combines a re-imagined military role with programs designed to enlist civilian volunteers to combat both human-and "natural" emergencies. Canada is in a position to play a unique role in the world, one that serves both to enhance our security as a nation and at the same time, works to improve the lives of the world's peoples. Such a repositioned mandate prioritizes peacekeeping, diplomacy and peaceful conflict resolution, and emergency support.

Context: the new security environment:

1. Fracturing of the postwar liberal international order, which despite its shortcomings in practice, asserted the supremacy of international law and prohibited territorial aggression.
2. The challenge of changing established partnerships and alliances, particularly in response to the tariff war and threat to Canadian sovereignty emanating from the current US administration.
3. Geopolitical threats in the Canadian Arctic
4. Canadian emergencies (fires, floods, storms) linked to extreme weather and ecological decline
5. Climate change in tropical countries, leading to migration, conflict, and state breakdown
6. Foreign wars and expanding numbers of refugees
7. Disinformation campaigns, especially via social media, undertaken by anti-democratic groups and countries

Specific Initiatives:

1. Threats to Canada's sovereignty require a greater independence of Canadian armed forces from the US armed forces and arms suppliers. For example, it is absurd for Canada to purchase more than the 16 F-35s we have contracted for. Not only is the F-35 expensive and prone to breakdowns, but it is not well equipped to operate in the Arctic. In addition, the ability of the US to halt software updates, and thus erode the F-35's operability, argues for us to adopt an alternative fighter jet. In any case, as experts contend, the age of the fighter jet is closing, owing to the development of highly effective and relatively inexpensive drones. We should invest in drones.

2. Geopolitical threats in the Arctic as climate change advances requires that Canada's armed forces develop an enhanced capability for operating effectively in that environment. Increases in military spending should respond to this priority. We need improved monitoring and enhanced search-and-rescue capabilities in the Arctic.

3. Canada should reinstitute a Civil Defence Corps. This would involve the creation of training centres across Canada, and the recruitment of volunteers, of all ages, to learn (a) how to act in the case of nuclear war or invasion, (b) how to counteract emergencies brought on by extreme weather. The civilian volunteers might also receive training in [unarmed civilian defence](#), which is an effective way to deter or, if necessary, defend against an incursion into Canada.

4. The Canadian military has persistent shortfalls in recruits. Young people might find a military career more attractive and challenging if it took on, in addition to traditional defence tasks, some non-traditional tasks of high social value. Personnel could be trained not only in conventional military skills, but also in peacekeeping, assistance in combatting natural emergencies such as floods and forest fires, and cooperating with civilian volunteers in a Civil Defence Corps.

5. Canada should show the courage to acquire observer status at the meetings of the parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Other NATO members have already done so. It is the right thing to do, as humanity's survival is threatened while nuclear weapons exist. This move also expresses Canada's independence in decision making.

6. Canada should continue to support multilateral institutions, especially those dedicated to resolving international disputes via the United Nations and enforcing international law, such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. At the 80th anniversary of the UN Charter, the United Nations is subject to enormous pressures to render the institution irrelevant. Canada must show resolve and vision in defending the reputation of the UN and participate actively in efforts to enhance the UN's effectiveness. The September UN Summit, dedicated to the organization's anniversary, would be a good opportunity for Canada to demonstrate its resolve. Diplomacy should continue to define Canada.

7. Societal breakdown owing to environmental degradation, extreme weather, or violent conflict can serve as breeding grounds for terrorist movements in the affected countries. These conditions also propel population movements, including to Canada, that, in turn, fuel right-wing, anti-democratic forces. For these reasons, **it is in Canada's security interests to maintain or increase its aid budget while paying special attention to the needs of countries adversely affected by extreme weather and incipient conflicts.**

8. **For humanitarian reasons as well as to stem the flow of refugees that provide fodder to far-right groups, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and the continued flow of humanitarian assistance are all crucial.** They can help quell conflicts and rebuild human security in fragile states. Canada must therefore regain its capacity to engage in extensive peacekeeping expeditions and to assist when climatic disasters devastate foreign countries.

RECENT WEBINARS

www.scienceforpeace.org

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }} You received this email because you are registered with Science for Peace

[Unsubscribe here](#)