



JUNE 2020

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Contact info



If you need to reach us, please email us at office@ploughsharescalgary.ca or call the church at 403 283 3301 and leave a message for us. Ploughshares office hours: Tuesdays 12-7pm; Thursdays 12-7pm; Saturdays 2-4pm

We will only be able to return calls with an Alberta area code.

Dear supporters: **Our email service was down from May 7 to May 20**, and thus we did not receive any emails. If you emailed us during this time, please email us again so that we may respond to you.



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Virtual 8th Annual Floating Lantern Peace Ceremony

As the COVID-19 response evolves, your Ploughshares Calgary Society board continues to closely follow updates. Given the current guidelines surrounding restrictions on public gatherings, planning is tentatively underway to hold a **virtual 8th Annual Floating Lantern Peace Ceremony in August**. The exact date will be announced later on various social media platforms. In the past, this free and popular family event took place at Calgary's Olympic Plaza where hundreds of floating lanterns were released onto the Olympic Plaza pool.



2019 Floating Lantern Peace Ceremony

This annual event commemorates the approximately 213,884 victims who lost their lives in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively. Symbolically, releasing floating lanterns is a traditional Japanese ceremony called "Tōrō nagashi," with the lanterns representing the departed spirits of lives lost. This event also looks with hope towards a peaceful world that is free from violence and nuclear weapons. Please watch for more information coming soon on various social media platforms such as Facebook about this year's unique **virtual event** and how and when you can participate.



Chair's message

I hope that all of you are safe and secure during the current Coronavirus situation, and that you have managed to keep in touch with family and friends so as to lessen the challenges we faced due to stress and changes in routine. The Ploughshare Calgary board wishes all of you the best. We look forward to further contacts with you when the health situation gets closer to normal.

In these altered times, the Ploughshares board continues to be active in several areas. Since March we have had two tele-conference meetings that have been quite productive and successful and board members continue consultations by email. Danica Derksen, our lively and hard-working staff person, has another job for the summer but may be able to return to us in the fall. In the meantime, Danica continues to give us occasional assistance on a volunteer basis and we are grateful for that.



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The good news is that our group has received a grant under a federal government program for summer employment. This means that we will receive $\frac{3}{4}$ of a salary for an employee to work for 8 weeks, 30 hours per week, in July and August. This person will assist us with efforts to explore promising contacts with youth; sort office and archival materials; and research conveniently usable materials on current topics. These may include connections between climate change and militarism; the need for global

cooperation revealed by the recent pandemic; and challenges to nuclear disarmament. Several people have expressed interest in this position and members of our hiring committee are in the process of conducting interviews.

The Floating Lantern committee is working to organize a virtual event in commemoration of Hiroshima Day and we anticipate that our summer employee will be able to assist in that project.

We will of course wish to renew arrangements with Peggy Mason (President, Rideau Institute) to give her address on the topic "What would a feminist foreign policy look like?" during or after the fall of 2020. That address was planned for April. Of course we cannot make definite re-arrangements yet due to the underlying public health situation. Uncertainties in that area also mean that our AGM (normally in June) has been delayed. Sadly, no fall meetings have yet been planned. We do assure you, though, the board has not been inactive during this time.

The Coronavirus situation has exposed many inequities and vulnerabilities in our society, affecting as it does migrant workers, homeless persons, residents of long-term care facilities, and oft-underpaid workers in areas of healthcare, retail, delivery, and food processing. Some analysts predict greater attention to such areas in the aftermath of the pandemic. Shifts and trends are very difficult to predict, but we can only hope that these analysts will be correct. Let us do what we can to assist them. Shifts away from defence production in the direction of public health development and research would be most welcome. A tank or missile is of little avail against a virus. Negotiation, trust, and conflict resolution are absolutely necessary, as experience shows.

Our newsletter editor, Kathleen McWilliams, has worked long and hard for the past two years to bring the newsletter to our members. The related tasks are time-consuming and Kathleen now needs to step down from this work. I'm sure I can speak for our readers when I express my gratitude to Kathleen for her generous gifts of time and energy. We will really miss these efforts! Thanks so much, Kathleen, and we wish you all the best with the new work and projects that you will undertake.

We wish you a safe and comfortable summer with fresh air and sunshine, and plan to send out a newsletter for September.

Best to all,

Trudy Govier



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- ❖ **U.S. blocks vote on UN’s bid for global ceasefire over reference to WHO.** This May 8, 2020, article in *The Guardian* reports that the U.S. has blocked a vote on a UN security council resolution calling for a global ceasefire during the Coronavirus pandemic because the Trump administration rejected an indirect reference to the World Health Organization (WHO). The Security Council had grappled with the resolution for six weeks, with the aim of showing support for a global ceasefire called by UN secretary general, António Guterres. The delay was mainly due to the refusal of the U.S. to endorse a resolution that urged support for the WHO’s operations during the Coronavirus pandemic. Although other solutions to the issue were suggested, such as changing the wording for the WHO to “specialized health agencies,” the U.S. did not agree and again raised its objections. A spokesperson for the U.S. mission at the UN suggested that if the resolution were to mention the work of the WHO, it would have to include critical language about how China and the WHO have handled the pandemic. The U.S. spokesperson said that the council should either continue on with a resolution solely limited to supporting a ceasefire, or a broader resolution that “fully addresses the need for renewed member state commitment to transparency and accountability in the context of Covid-19.” Since Guterres called for a global ceasefire, armed factions in more than 12 countries have held a temporary truce. However, the lack of a resolution from the globe’s most powerful nations undermines Guterres call for a global truce. See [article](#).
- ❖ **On April 12, 2020, Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization wrote an article in *Kyodo News* (a non-profit news agency based in Japan) urging action on the prevention on nuclear weapons.** As the nuclear menace continues to grow, scientists are seeking to understand how a nuclear war could alter the world climate. They build on ongoing work about a ‘nuclear winter,’ which is severe global cooling that researchers predict would follow a major nuclear war. However, much smaller conflicts, which are more likely to happen, could also have devastating impacts around the globe. For instance, scientists have predicted that a nuclear war between India and Pakistan could result in crop failure in many countries, which could ruin food supplies for more than one billion people (Witze, 2020). Zerbo argues that the best defense against the existential threat of nuclear weapons is to prevent their development. Without testing them, a country is unable to determine if they work and move to deployment. **The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty** (CTBT) fills this purpose as it bans all nuclear test explosions across the globe. With 114 member states, it is one of the most widely supported arms-control treaties in the world. This ban is supported by a strong verification network that includes a global high-monitoring network that is also under the oceans and checks for any signs of a nuclear explosion. It has already detected all six of North Korea’s nuclear tests, and it reached a milestone in December, 2019, with a total of 300 operational monitoring facilities. Yet the CTBT remains in legal limbo as it has not yet been ratified by China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, North Korea, and the United States. Thus, it cannot enter into force as binding international law. Zerbo

presents his case for a collective global approach to resolve this stalemate: he argues for the multilateralism of diplomacy and scientific cooperation to ratify the treaty and as the means of saving the world from the threat of nuclear weapons. See [article](#).

- ❖ **Canada must resist U.S. efforts to further undermine the Iran nuclear deal.** In this May 5, 2020, article on the national *Project Ploughshares* website, Cesar Jaramillo, Executive Director of Project Ploughshares, discusses the Iran nuclear deal and U.S. president Donald Trump's continuing actions to jeopardize some of its resulting security benefits. Two years ago, Trump announced the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the 2015 treaty between Iran and permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany. Before the U.S. withdrew from the treaty, Iran was meeting its obligations under the treaty. However, in April, 2020, Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State, claimed that the U.S. was still a signatory to the deal. As such, Pompeo announced that , Trump will soon invoke a clause in the deal, known as the "snapback clause," which will require the UN Security Council to again impose economic sanctions if Iran is found to be cheating on the treaty. Although today Iran is not in full compliance with the agreement, Trump could not point to any concrete violation by Iran in 2018, when he announced the U.S. withdrawal. Since Iran has recently admitted to violating some aspects of the deal, the sanctions will automatically be reimposed once Trump raises these transgressions.

Today, Jaramillo writes, Iran has already been hard hit by the Coronavirus pandemic, and it is already limited in receiving relief supplies. Yet, although a growing number of humanitarian organizations and officials from many Western nations are calling on the U.S. to relieve the sanctions, Trump is preparing to impose further ones. His administration is also trying to urge states (including Canada) who have eased sanctions to reimpose them. In 2016, Canada acted to comply with the UN Security Council Resolution that supports the deal. However, Jaramillo writes, Canada is now in an awkward position with its southern neighbour: due to its own strategic relationship with the U.S., it must try to avoid controversy with it. At the same time, Canada has often expressed support for a rules-bound international order.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the authoritative UN "nuclear watchdog" whose job it was to monitor the deal had continually reported Iran's full compliance. In March, 2020, the IAEA called on Iran to immediately provide access to locations it has refused to let the agency inspectors visit. Jaramillo also notes that it was the U.S. who first removed itself from the agreement and the double standard underpinning the agreement as all the 5 countries (plus Germany) who signed the agreement have nuclear weapons on their respective territories. Jaramillo argues that Canada must carefully consider all the implications of any decision it makes concerning tightening sanctions against Iran, such as well-founded nuclear proliferation concerns, its support for a rules-based international order, and the effects of COVID-19 on Iran. See [article](#).

- ❖ **Open Skies withdrawal throws nuclear treaty into question.** In this [May 25, 2020, article in The Hill](#), Patricia Kheel writes that Donald Trump's recent move to remove the U.S. from an international pact that aims to prevent accidental war has increased concerns about the future of a separate arms control treaty with Russia. Talks between Russia and the U.S. on the new START agreement, which seeks to limit deployed nuclear warheads, are set to begin soon. However, with Trump's announcement that the U.S. will withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty, arms control experts are worried about the future of the new START agreement, as the existing agreement is set to expire in February, 2021.

The new START limits the number of deployed nuclear warheads the U.S. and Russia can have at 1,550 a piece, places limits on deploying weapons that can deliver the warheads, and creates a verification regime that includes 18 on-site inspections per year. The Trump administration wants any new agreement to include China and many new Russian weapons systems. Although it has far fewer known warheads than Russia or the U.S., to date China has refused to join any arms control talks.

The Open Skies Treaty took effect in 2002 and allows its 34 treaty members to fly short, unarmed observation flights over each other's territories. The treaty's intention is transparency between countries about their military activities and avoiding miscalculations that could result in war. The treaty includes the U.S. and Russia, but the U.S. formally announced in May its intention to withdraw. This announcement begins a six-month period before the U.S. withdrawal is final. Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State, claimed Russia is violating the pact and that the U.S. could reverse its decision if Russia returned to full compliance with the treaty.

❖ **“The IAEA’s Safeguards System as the Non-Proliferation Treaty’s Verification Mechanism”** by John Carlson, Vladimir Kuchinov, and Thomas Shea. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation for international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system fulfills a vital role underpinning the NPT, reinforcing commitments to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and providing confidence that nuclear energy is used for exclusively peaceful purposes. Effective safeguards are also essential in gaining a nuclear-weapon-free world. This [paper](#) explores how the IAEA safeguards system was created, its accomplishments and challenges, issues remaining in flux, and possible future directions.



❖ **“Blundering Toward Nuclear Chaos. The Trump Administration After Three Years.”** [This 87 page report](#), written in 2019, provides an assessment of the nuclear policies of the Trump administration. The American Nuclear Policy Initiative (ANPI) produced the report – a collection of experienced government practitioners and non-governmental policy analysts with deep and multifaceted expertise on nuclear issues. Although the Coronavirus pandemic has currently captured the world’s attention, the report authors note their concern about the underlying global nuclear dynamics and their commitment to clearly assessing them. The authors recently noted that the nuclear dangers facing the U.S. are growing, both through neglect and specific policy choices of the Trump administration. The report authors have closely reviewed the Trump administration’s efforts on nuclear proliferation, strategic stability, and nuclear modernization. Their report clearly notes the growing concerns about most, if not all, of the various nuclear dangers facing the U.S. and its allies. The report and the top line assessment provide an objective summary of nuclear policy under the current administration, detailing and analyzing its record on protecting the U.S. and its allies against perhaps the greatest national security danger facing humanity. The ANPI notes that its goal for this report is to be a valuable resource for those focused on the current and future direction of nuclear weapons issues.

We are very grateful for your loyal moral and financial support over the years that has allowed us to continue working for and educating about peace. Please consider donating for 2020 soon if you haven't already done so. If you have already sent in your donation for 2020, we thank you.

Please make your cheque payable to Ploughshares Calgary Society.

If you write the cheque to the name of Project Ploughshares, the bank WILL NOT honour it for us, so please write it to "Ploughshares Calgary Society."

Yes, I am interested in supporting the peace work of the Ploughshares Calgary Society.
I'd like to make a donation in the following amount:

\$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ or an amount of _____

or a monthly donation of _____ or I am interested in volunteering _____

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov _____ Postal Code _____ Email: _____

Payment Options

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Make cheques payable to **Ploughshares Calgary Society** or go to www.ploughsharescalgary.ca to make your payment via PayPal. Please mail completed form with donation to the Ploughshares Calgary Society, 2919 - 8 Ave. N.W., Calgary, AB, T2N 1C8.

Please note that we are unable to provide tax receipts at this time.



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