

## **Combatting Terrorism Depends on Global Human Security, Not Military Might**

Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on  
Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
Public hearings on the 2002 G8 Summit and the North American relationship  
Toronto, May 8, 2002  
Carolyn Bassett, Coordinator  
Canadian Peace Alliance / L'Alliance canadienne pour la paix

Good morning. My name is Carolyn Bassett and I am the Coordinator of the Canadian Peace Alliance. We are Canada's largest umbrella peace organization, with member groups from coast to coast to coast. We work for global disarmament, the abolition of war and the redirection of funds from military purposes to human needs.

I will be speaking today about what the Canadian Peace Alliance thinks the Government of Canada should propose when the G8 discusses combating terrorism at the upcoming meeting in Kananaskis.

The Canadian Peace Alliance was distressed that Canada responded to the violence of September 11 with more violence, backing the US bombing initiative and later sending our own troops to Afghanistan. We believe that using war to fight what were essentially criminal acts legitimizes the violence of both acts as a valid way to address conflict. Responding to violence with more violence, we believe, also risks sparking future terrorist actions and therefore perpetuating a cycle of violence. We fear that all the expensive military hardware and surveillance measures in the world cannot keep us safe if the political context is not addressed.

The G8 meetings provide an opportunity for Canada to work multilaterally to help reorient the approach to combating terrorism. We hope that the Government of Canada will take the opportunity afforded by the Kananaskis meetings to re-emphasize the importance of a common or human security approach and move away from relying on military security.

### **Nuclear terrorism**

I want to begin by highlighting the threat that nuclear weapons continue to pose to everyone's safety and security. I hardly need to remind you of the catastrophic casualties that would result from the accidental or deliberate use of just one nuclear device, whether by a state or a non-state organization. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons should remain a priority for the Government of Canada. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government use all available opportunities, including the upcoming G8 meetings, to press for their abolition.

We never want to face the aftermath of a September 11-type attack by a terrorist group using a nuclear device. Prevention must be the main focus. The only way to ensure that nuclear weapons cannot be obtained by a terrorist organization is to eliminate them completely from the face of the earth. Necessary immediate steps towards abolishing nuclear weapons include:

- all states should strengthen, ratify and adequately fund verification processes and agreements like the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- nuclear weapons states should immobilize excess nuclear explosive (fissile) material by vitrifying it (encasing the material in ceramic or glass logs from which it cannot be extracted);
- nuclear weapons states should dismantle all remaining nuclear weapons and immobilize that explosive material as well.

A nuclear explosive device cannot be created without fissile material, which is either highly enriched uranium or plutonium. Therefore, identifying, securing and immobilizing that material is crucial to protect us all from deliberate or accidental nuclear attack.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) effectively inventories fissile material and inspects nuclear sites. Although these aspects of the IAEA mandate are working well, the organization's budget for its work in this area is inadequate, which limits its capacity. Voluntary contributions to the IAEA can be earmarked specifically for its critical inspection and verification work. Canada should make a substantial voluntary contribution for work in this area and urge other G8 states to do the same. An appropriate amount for Canada to contribute might be \$500 million per year for three years.

The IAEA's inventory and inspection mandate extends only to the non-nuclear weapons state-parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Yet the IAEA could undertake inventory and inspection activities in the nuclear weapons states as well. The Government of Canada should seek consensus at the G8 to extend the mandate of the IAEA to the nuclear weapons states.

There are particular concerns about Russian fissile material from dismantled warheads. The Canadian Peace Alliance encourages the Government of Canada to contribute to threat reduction activities in Russia such as irreversibly immobilising these fissile materials. This is the only way to take these explosive materials out of circulation. The G7 countries should immediately commit to providing financial assistance to Russia to identify and secure surplus fissile materials in a form like vitrification. Such support to Russia would reduce considerably the risk of a non-state actor obtaining the fissile material necessary to create a nuclear device.

A terrorist organization would not require a sophisticated delivery mechanism in order to use a nuclear weapon. Indeed, it would be virtually impossible for any non-state (or state) actor to develop such a mechanism in secret. The proposed US missile defence program, therefore, offers no protection against a terrorist organization using such a weapon and would draw critical financial resources away from more important uses to combat terrorism. Therefore, at the G8 meetings, the Government of Canada should emphasize that the priority must be to take fissile material out of circulation and to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Even if all nuclear materials were as fully secured as possible against the possibility of terrorists obtaining them, we would still be forced to live in fear of the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons by states. Yet, if anything, the utility of possessing nuclear devices has been reaffirmed in the post-September 11 context, ironically enough by the very state that suffered the terrorist attacks.

The policies outlined in the US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirm the centrality of nuclear weapons to US security policy and actually seek to expand the roles for nuclear weapons. Most notably, the NPR seeks to "normalize" the possibility of using of nuclear weapons as one among many war-fighting tools.

The main thrust of the NPR runs directly contrary to the fundamental principles of Canada's current disarmament policy, most notably the commitment to binding multilateral treaties that irreversibly reduce and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons. The Kananaskis meeting provides a multilateral forum for Canada and other G8 states to voice their concerns about the NPR with the United States. The Government of Canada should use the G8 meeting to remind its counterparts of the over-riding importance of taking steps towards eliminating nuclear weapons. Let us recall that according to a 1998 Angus Reid poll, 93 percent of Canadians want the Government of Canada to take a leading role in ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada press for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the upcoming G8 meetings.
2. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that Canada announce at the G8 that it will make a voluntary contribution of \$500 million per year for three years to the International Atomic Energy Agency earmarked specifically for its critical inspection and verification work and urge other G8 states to do the same.
3. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada seek consensus at the G8 on extending the mandate of the IAEA to undertake inspection and verification activities the nuclear weapons states.
4. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada raise its concerns about the policies outlined in the US Nuclear Policy Review at the G8 meetings and encourage other G8 states to do the same.

### **Using the International Criminal Court to prosecute terrorist acts**

The Canadian Peace Alliance believes that all states, especially Canada, have an obligation to help develop and use mechanisms to resolve conflict without resorting to force. There is an opportunity now to strengthen the framework to address acts of international terrorism in the future.

The Canadian Peace Alliance concurs with the Government of Canada's strong support for the International Criminal Court (ICC). Once the ICC is up and running, its mandate could be extended to include terrorist acts as crimes against humanity. It would offer a mechanism to deal with cases that cannot be prosecuted under domestic law and reinforce the principle that acts of terrorism should be addressed through prosecution, not retaliation.

In light of this, the Canadian Peace Alliance believes that the position of the Government of the United States with regard to the ICC is most unfortunate and urges the Government of Canada to raise this issue at the G8 discussions.

### **Recommendations:**

5. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada urge all G8 countries that have not yet ratified the ICC Convention to do so.
6. The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada seek consensus among G8 countries to add crimes of terrorism to the list of crimes that the ICC can prosecute.

### **Convention on terrorism**

Since September 11, 2001, the Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly has recommitted itself to drafting a comprehensive convention on terrorism that would incorporate a general definition of terrorism. Indeed, the lack of a generally accepted international definition of terrorism was one of the main reasons why the ICC was unable to include acts of international terrorism in its list of crimes against humanity.

The Canadian Peace Alliance concurs that an internationally-agreed definition of terrorism is a priority. We feel that the G8 meeting may provide an opportunity to do further work towards such a definition. We are concerned, however, that any consensus reached may not adequately reflect the views of states that are not part of the G8 process. We note that the definition of terrorism introduced in Canada denies the possibility that states can engage in terrorist acts, and conversely, defines almost any use of force by non-state actors for political purposes as terrorism. Such a definition does not seem to be likely to achieve

consensus internationally. Although the G8 meetings may provide useful “testing grounds,” the United Nations is the forum that is most appropriate for discussing new international mechanisms and approaches to addressing problems of terrorism.

One option that we would like to see explored both at the UN and the G8 is to focus a definition of terrorism on the acts rather than the perpetrators of the acts. This likewise could serve the purpose of further delegitimizing the use of violence for political purposes by any actor.

### **Recommendations:**

- 7 The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada emphasize to other G8 countries the centrality of United Nations structures in arriving at an internationally accepted definition of terrorism and developing and strengthening international mechanisms and processes to fight terrorism.

### **Transparency and G8**

The G8 lacks transparency, adequate representation and democratic control and has no legal or permanent status. We hope, therefore, that the G8 will not take over major new areas of global political governance. The Canadian Peace Alliance was surprised to learn that the G8 has a 25-point action plan on terrorism that Canada is apparently implementing but has not yet publicly released. We learned this by reading Assistant Deputy Minister, Global and Security Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade James R. Wright,) testimony to SCFAIT on January 17, 2002.

As you will recall, he told the committee that “Canada is playing a lead role in the implementation of the comprehensive G-8 action plan on counter-terrorism. This 25-point plan covers a range of issues including support for the UN role on anti-terrorism, financing, aviation security, immigration, drugs, cyber-crime and judicial cooperation.” The plan does not appear on the Government of Canada’s web site on the G8. It does not appear elsewhere on the Government of Canada’s web site. And as you know, the G8 has no secretariat, so it is not available there.

We believe that people living in Canada have a right to know and play a role in shaping the policies of our government. We believe that Parliamentarians, a group of Canadians elected to oversee the development of policy in Canada, should be able to see the plan and discuss its merits. We hope our government will press for more transparency in reporting G8 plans and programs, as a first step towards greater accountability.

### **Recommendations:**

- 8 The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada work with other member countries towards making the G8 more transparent.

### **Making acts of terrorism less likely**

The Canadian Peace Alliance believes that the Government of Canada can do more to foster a climate that makes acts of terrorism less likely. Humanitarian assistance, a more just international distribution of income and wealth and the fair application of international law are critical to wipe out the breeding grounds on which terrorism thrives.

Economic security is an essential component of human security and key to avoid the creation of future generations of terrorists. Reducing the global the gap between rich and poor is critical. Human security

and well being require access to safe, clean drinking water, adequate nutrition, shelter and health care, basic education and useful work. Meeting all these human needs, as well as addressing the most urgent environmental crises, would cost approximately one third of what the world currently spends on preparing for and engaging in war.

Insofar as the growing gap between rich and poor is actually maintained by force, global militarism drains resources from critical human needs as well as implying the legitimacy of violence as a source of power. The G8 countries have a special obligation to change their approach since they spend approximately 75 percent of the world's \$800 billion annual expenditures on weapons and 87 percent of the world's \$40 billion annual trade in weapons.

If the Government of Canada and the other G8 countries seriously want a world in which conflicts are resolved by negotiation, compromise and non-violent means, then they must move away from relying on militarism to preserve their economic and political power. The guiding principle of all G8 deliberations, including those on combating terrorism, should be to put the long-term well-being of people and the planet ahead of short term financial and trade interests.

The current "truism" that civil liberties and the rule of law stand in the way of protection against acts of terrorism is equally likely to backfire. The Canadian Peace Alliance believes that the moment we talk about civil liberties and the rule of law as luxuries, we are headed in a very dangerous direction. The world has seen all too often what it means for the security of people when civil liberties are not protected and the state can act in an arbitrary or heavy-handed way. Similarly, nation-states are called upon to protect and promote core international human rights within their borders because such measures are necessary to protect us from acts of terror by states. Surely the Government of Canada would not accept the notion of putting in place one form of terror in order to address another. It is essential to work domestically and internationally to find ways to reduce terror and channel conflict, not to create new forms of it.

### **Recommendations:**

- 9 The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada work with the G8 and other countries to make a determined effort to reduce global economic disparities.
- 10 The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada reduce its reliance on militarism as a source of economic and political power and urge other G8 countries to do likewise.
- 11 The Canadian Peace Alliance recommends that the Government of Canada reassert at the G8 the centrality of protecting civil liberties and promoting human rights to the security of us all.

### **Conclusion**

As the developments of September 11, 2001, clearly show, security does not depend on military might. The greatest military power the world has ever known did not prevent the terrorist attacks in the US – and could not have done so. No amount of military capability can prevent a determined suicide terrorist from acting. But a determined effort led by the G8 countries to promote human security and a fair, transparent international system that offers effective mechanisms to address conflict would go a long way to keeping people from becoming suicide terrorists.