

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents a growing number of area residents of diverse backgrounds brought together over the Iraqi crisis.

We support multilateral action for non-violent conflict resolution, human rights, ecological integrity for the planet and international law, through education and dialogue locally and globally.

We encourage everyone's participation as we strive for peace and justice to build a better world for future generations.

The Boundary Peace Initiative meets: 2nd & 4th Thursdays @ 7 pm Selkirk College.

Things To Do

- **Mothers Day Peace Walk May 8th: 1 pm**
Haynes Point in Osoyoos



- **B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition Conference: May 14th**
Kelowna: call Laura @ 442-0434 for info

Mother's Day Proclamation

By: Julia Ward Howe

The "**Mother's Day Proclamation**" by Julia Ward Howe was one of the early calls to celebrate Mother's Day in the United States. Written in 1870, Howe's *Mother's Day Proclamation* was a pacifist reaction to the carnage of the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War. The Proclamation was tied to Howe's feminist belief that women had a responsibility to shape their societies at the political level.

Arise, then, women of this day!

Arise, all women who have hearts,
Whether our baptism be of water or of tears!

Say firmly:

"We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies,
Our husbands will not come to us,
reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn

All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.

We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country
To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of the devastated Earth a voice goes up with our own.

(Continued next column)

Mother's Day Proclamation

It says: "Disarm! Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."

Blood does not wipe out dishonor,
nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war,

Let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.

Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means
Whereby the great human family can live in peace,

Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,
But of God.

In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality
May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient

And at the earliest period consistent with its objects,

To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,
The amicable settlement of international questions,
The great and general interests of peace.

Afghan women respond to “Calgary Herald” on NATO occupation of Afghanistan

Afghans for Peace November 17th, 2010

On October 5th, 2010, Lauryn Oates wrote a highly misleading article on the Calgary Herald titled as “ Afghan women doomed if NATO leaves“, favouring the occupation and war in Afghanistan while painting a picture that Afghan women, with the exception of Malalai Joya, generally support it.

Below are four responses from women organizers from Afghans for Peace. -

Dear Lauryn Oates,

As an Afghan Canadian woman and active organizer of Afghans For Peace, an Afghan-led movement against the NATO occupation and war in Afghanistan, I completely disagree with the message of your article. It is equating the voice of one woman, Malalai Joya, with supporting the withdrawal of NATO when in fact she initially was against the withdrawal and was willing to support the mission provided they actually carry out what they set to do (which they haven't). Rather she is here to shed light on the current problems in Afghanistan as our own troops are in the most war torn regions of Afghanistan. It seems you've also forgotten to include the rest of Shukria Barakzai's quote where she points out the hypocrisy of NATO's mission and the fact that “ foreign troops raid houses and terrify the female occupants”. You also chose to not include where Suraya Pakzad had said, “I don't believe war fighting produces a winner”, referring to Obama sending more troops. You may want to consider how you word your articles and not take people's words out of context. This was a badly written article and it worries me to know that you actually manage “education projects” in Afghanistan.

As for some of the other Afghan women you listed, how very convenient of you to assume that their plea for help from the “international community” meant more NATO troops. Even though they made no mention of it. More importantly I want to point out that I do NOT believe that NATO's mission in Afghanistan will “improve human rights”, “end women's oppression”, and “provide opportunities for Afghan women to live their lives with dignity, certainty and purpose”. I'm appalled that you could even make such false claims.

There is a lack of evidence of any major progress for Afghan women. The same warlords that raped, mutilated, oppressed, and killed women have regained power and control throughout Afghanistan under NATO occupation and with the help of the corrupt NATO-backed government, leaving Afghans, especially the women, feeling discouraged and hopeless. NATO forces have been in Afghanistan for 9 years and yet violence and oppression against women have seen a rise, including suicide

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(From last column) Afghan women and self-mutilation because they feel hopeless. The truth is, Afghan women are doomed if NATO stays.

It is necessary and critical for the future of our policy to properly gauge the realities in Afghanistan. Without doing so, we are endangering our own interests, and the interests of Afghanistan. If we are to risk the lives of our troops and Afghan civilians, then it is critical to evaluate these issues instead of blindly supporting a mission on the pretense of liberating women, bringing democracy, human rights, or fighting terror. Bombs, weapons, and tanks are not the solution to Afghanistan's problems. The Afghan people, in particular Afghan women, need (properly monitored) humanitarian aid, education, work opportunities and so on. I suggest you keep that in mind the next time you write an article about my people and homeland.

Suraia Sahar

Afghans For Peace, Canada

Dear Calgary Herald,

I have recently stumbled upon an article in your paper written by Lauryn Oates. I would like for you to review my response to and critique of her article titled, “Afghan Women Doomed if NATO leaves”.

Lauryn Oates discusses the NATO mission in Afghanistan and her support for it. Oates quotes numerous Afghan women who share the same opinions yet fails to address the issues brought forward by Malalai Joya and other Afghans who are against the war.

Oates diverts attention away from the reasons why Malalai Joya and other war resisters do not support the war and therefore I will briefly explain a few reasons why the withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan will not “doom Afghan women”.

1. Rape is a systematic weapon of War. Feminist scholar, Kimberley Carter's article “Should International Relations Consider Rape a Weapon of War” argues that rape is a systematic weapon of war. She draws examples from Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina etc. Carter argues that the military use rape as a weapon of dominance, humiliation, and to instill fear in the area of invasion.

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(From page 2) **Afghan women respond**

Perhaps this issue has not been brought up by Oates because, “rape as a weapon of war may be dismissed from much IR analysis due to its categorization, and subsequent marginalization, as a “women’s issue.” This point, I believe, is worth exploring in depth; for, if rape were to be a “women’s issue” (a categorization that presumably means an issue affecting only females), then even still it would present a weapon of war that directly impacts at least 50% of the population in question.” (Carter, 2010).

The women in Afghanistan are therefore not safe in the hands of the military.

2. War displaces women and children.

3. Afghan people will not forget the 1960s-1970s, when Afghan women were going to school, working side-by-side men in high positions and traveling the world for internships. Afghan has prospered without the US and can continue to prosper without the US. The Afghanistan the media fails to inform the public about.

Afghan women do not have to choose between the Taliban or NATO, this is a patriarchal war with no room for the voice of Afghan women. Afghan women will create their own alternatives as soon as we send the troops home.

Regards.

Yasmin

Afghans For Peace, Canada

Dear Lauryn Oates,

As an Afghan-American female, I would like to start by saying that I found your article tasteless, biased and misleading. Before I go any further, I would like to present some history on my family.

Both of my parents were born and raised in Southern Afghanistan, in the city of Kandahar. Compared to other cities, Kandahar is by the far the most conservative. Yet, in this ethnically Pashtun and traditional city, all the females in my family were given unlimited freedom to education. As an Afghan female growing up in the U.S., my parents always emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge; the duty of all faithful Muslims. Yet, in the present, here in the west, we are constantly flooded with images of Afghan women being tortured by the Taliban; photos of young girls in Kandahar with acid-damaged faces, bruises and broken limbs are common. These images are then used to rally support for the war. As someone who still has family living in Kandahar, I must speak out against all this deceptive propaganda.

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(From last column) **Afghan women respond**

The current situation of Afghan women in no shape or form justifies the illegal, cruel and unjust occupation of Afghanistan by foreigners. This illegitimate war has done nothing but brought more suffering, pain and grief for the women of Afghanistan. There are a number of ludicrous claims present in your article, but I find nothing more fictitious and comical than the title, “Afghan women doomed if NATO leaves”. If the withdrawal of NATO means an end to drone attacks, tanks, rockets and bullets; then there will be nothing more celebrated by Afghan women than the pulling out of NATO. In the 9 years of this atrocious occupation, the quality of life for women in Afghanistan has deteriorated indefinitely. Infant mortality has skyrocketed, psychological problems have dramatically increased in the female population, and countless Afghan women have been murdered by NATO bombs. As a voice for my Afghan sisters back home, I would like to end by saying that it is repulsive for you to use the suffering of Afghan women as a shameless tool to rally support for a shameless war.

Sumaira Akbarzada

Afghans For Peace, USA

Ms. Lauryn Oates,

As an Afghan woman I find your article highly manipulative and misleading. Upon further research of your quoting of MP Shukria Barakzai from Chris Sands’ article, I found that you conveniently chose to ignore her criticism of US-led NATO troops with regards to Afghan women in that same article:

“Even a promise to safeguard women’s rights was, she said, hypocritical when foreign troops raid houses and terrify the female occupants.”

You also failed to mention Suraya Pakzad’s follow up quote in reference to an increase of US troops by Obama where she said:

“I don’t believe war fighting produces a winner”.

It is clear that Suraya Pakzad does not believe in war as a solution to Afghanistan’s problems.

While Dr. Sima Simar, MP Shukria Barakzai or MP Fawzia Koofi are asking for help from the “international community”, none of them are insisting on “including military” as you have claimed at the end of your article. The truth is we do not need more foreign troops invading and occupying our land and inflicting terror upon our people. What did US troops bring to Iraqi women? Rape, honor killings, complete lack of security and an end to women’s rights.

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(From page 3) **Afghan women respond**

leading NATO to liberate Afghan women. And 9 years later, we have witnessed how US-led NATO policies lack any meaningful effort towards liberating Afghan women.

There is a huge difference between asking for help from the “international community” and a US/NATO military occupation of Afghanistan. In a country with the world’s second highest maternal mortality rate and third highest infant mortality rate, “international community” help requires the dedicated work of NGOs, humanitarian aid group, civilian initiatives for peace, reconstruction and stability, etc. Not more US/NATO troops. According to Fahima Vorgetts of Women for Afghan Women in an interview with the Huffington Post, “the little aid directed towards Afghanistan in the following years was allocated to the military, leaving almost nothing for vital improvements in education and infrastructure”. And in an in-depth Democracy Now interview with well-respected Afghan activist, Rangina Hamidi, she states, “more troops translate to more killing here... sending more troops will not solve the problem”.

Another point I’d like to state is that over the last 9 years, the presence of US/NATO troops has made the job of NGOs and humanitarian aid groups much more difficult especially with the creation of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) where the line between NGOs and US/NATO military has been blurred in the eyes of the Afghan people.

Afghan women’s rights have been exploited one too many times by foreign military powers. As an Afghan woman, I have not forgotten that the Soviets also invaded Afghanistan while promising equal rights for Afghan women.

Fatima Mojaddidy
Afghans for Peace, USA

CCPA report: Canadian military spending highest since WW2

March 9, 2011

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has published a new report on Canada’s military spending. Canadian Military Spending 2010-11, written by *Ceasefire.ca* editor Bill Robinson, shows that Canadian military spending is higher now than it has been at any other time since the end of the Second World War. According to the study, Canada will spend at least \$22.3 billion on its military forces in fiscal year 2010-11—an increase of 54% since 9/11.

“Canada is the 13th largest military spender in the world and 6th largest within the 26-member NATO alliance,” says Robinson.

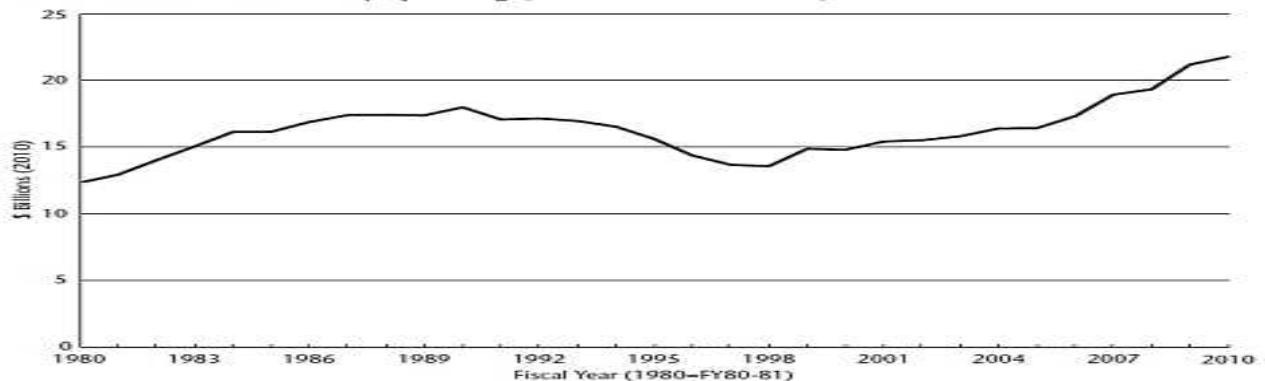
Canada’s mission in Afghanistan has absorbed a significant part of the recent increases in Canadian military spending, but this has come at the cost of Canada’s ability to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations and its ability to fund non-military contributions to global security and humanitarian action. Canada currently contributes just 56 military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, making Canada 60th on the list of 102 contributing countries.

“Canada could make a much greater contribution to global security and humanitarian action by shifting resources to non-military security efforts and to peacekeeping operations,” Robinson says. “An increase in Official Development Assistance funding equivalent to our post-Cold War increase in military funding would make Canada a great power in the development assistance/humanitarian aid world.”

Editors note: See graph below

Afghanistan, Defence policy

Chart 1- Canadian Military Spending (1980-81 to 2009-10)



The Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) welcomes articles, which are the sole responsibility of the authors and may not be common consensus. To contribute please contact **Laura** at **250-442-0434** or **l4peace@telus.net**. The BPI is a member of: Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Canadian Peace Alliance, Abolition 2000, Lawyers Against the War, Uranium Free Kootenay Boundary, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation as well as other local and global groups.

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