



**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. at Holy Trinity Anglican Church @ 7252 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Grand Forks in July & Aug.**

**Things To Do**

**Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> in Castlegar** (for info call USCC @ 442-8252)

**Nagasaki Day Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 3 pm Gyro Park, Grand Forks:** entertainment, speakers, and silent auction--**donate items and/ or make bids.** For info call Laura @ 442 0434 or email [L4peace@telus.net](mailto:L4peace@telus.net)

**An Expert Legal Opinion on International Maritime Law and the Gaza Blockade: June 22, 2011**

*The blockade \*is\* illegal no matter what Israel claims:*

Ambassador Craig Murray is a former Alternate Head of the UK Delegation to the United Nations Preparatory Commission on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. He was deputy head of the teams, which negotiated the UK's maritime boundaries with France, Germany, Denmark (Faeroe Islands) and Ireland.

As Head of the Maritime Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, he was responsible for giving real time political and legal clearance to Royal Navy boarding operations in the Persian Gulf following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, in enforcement of the UN authorized blockade against Iraqi weapons shipments.

Ambassador Craig Murray is therefore an internationally recognized authority on maritime jurisdiction and naval boarding issues.

His analysis of the Israeli blockade of Gaza and the right of the Gaza flotilla to sail.

"The legal position is plain. A vessel outwith the territorial waters (12 mile limit) of a coastal state is on the high seas under the sole jurisdiction of the flag state of the vessel. The ship has a positive right of passage on the high seas. The coastal state can regulate economic activity exploiting the resources of the seas and continental shelf up to 200 miles, the extent of the continental shelf, or the agreed boundary, but there is no indication of fishing, oil drilling or analogous economic activity in this case. The vessel is entitled to free passage."

"This right of free passage is guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, to which the United States is a full party.

(Continued next column)

**Gaza Blockade**

Any incident which takes place upon a US flagged ship on the High Seas is subject to United States legal jurisdiction. A ship is entitled to look to its flag state for protection from attack on the High Seas."

"Israel has declared a blockade on Gaza and justified previous fatal attacks on neutral civilian vessels on the High Seas in terms of enforcing that embargo, under the legal cover given by the *San Remo Manual of International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea.*"

"There are however fundamental flaws in this line of argument. It falls completely on one fact alone. San Remo only applies to blockade in times of armed conflict. Israel is not currently engaged in an armed conflict, and presumably does not wish to be. San Remo does not confer any right to impose a permanent blockade outwith times of armed conflict, and in fact specifically excludes as illegal a general blockade on an entire population."

"It should not be denied that Israel suffers from sporadic terrorist attacks emanating from Gaza. However this does not come close to reaching the bar of armed conflict that would trigger the right to impose a limited naval blockade in terms of San Remo. To make a comparison, in the 1970's and 1980's the United Kingdom suffered continued terrorist attack from the Irish Republican Army, with much more murderous impact causing many more deaths than anything Israel has suffered in recent years from Gaza. However nobody would seek to argue that the UK would have had the right to mount a general naval blockade of the Republic of Ireland in the 1970's and 1980's, even though the Republic was undoubtedly the base for much IRA supply and operations. Justifications of Israeli naval action against neutral civilian ships by San Remo is based on special pleading and an impossibly strained definition of the term "armed conflict". "

For more information Craig Murray can be reached at: [craigmurray1710@btinternet.com](mailto:craigmurray1710@btinternet.com)

## **July 1: Israel's Blockade has reached the shores of Europe. We Will Not Let Israel Control Gaza or International Water**

The Canadian Boat to Gaza, 'The Tahrir', is being prevented by Greek authorities from leaving its port in Greece. The US Boat to Gaza, 'The Audacity of Hope', set sail for Gaza today from a port in Greece but was quickly stopped and boarded by the Greek Navy authorities

It is imperative that we mobilize in order to ensure that The Tahrir, and then the rest of the Flotilla, is allowed to sail. The Flotilla and the people of Gaza need us to get the boats free. The boats have past their inspections. There is no legal reason for Greece to stop the boats.

We are calling on supporters to hold public demonstrations and to contact Greek, Israeli and Canadian government representatives. We urge that Greece not become complicit in the illegal actions of Israel.

We are calling on supporters to hold public demonstrations and to contact Greek, Israeli and Canadian government representatives. We urge that Greece not become complicit in the illegal actions of Israel.

### **Here are some of the things that you can do to help: 1 The content of our messages**

The **Greek government** needs to know that world public opinion does not want them to succumb to Israel's coercion. We don't want to make Greece 'dig in its heels'. **Tell the Greek government** that they can play a profound role in **protecting human rights** and **international law**.

Tell them they must let the Tahrir go on our mission to break the illegal blockade of Gaza. Below is contact information for Greek Officials in Canada and a template letter to send to Greek Officials in Canada and Greece

The **Israeli government** needs to know that we know what they are doing and we won't be silent. They have used economic threats – through their lackey governments, like Canada -- against Greece. They have motivated sabotage that could well have caused the deaths of nonviolent human rights defenders in international waters. And they have threatened violent military interception of the flotilla in international waters.

The **Canadian Government** needs to know that they are complicit in the coercion. And that they have a responsibility by international convention, to protect the Canadians on the Flotilla. Included in the letter is a note of disgust that Canadian government is falling to pressure by the Israeli government. Below, there is a template letter to Canadian MPs and a link for their contact information.

(Continued next column)

## (From last column) **Israel's Blockade** 2 ACTIONS

**Letter to our Canadian MPs** : We have a letter template for you to use to send to MPs reminding them that the Canadian government has obligations under the Geneva Convention.

**Contacting Greek officials** : Greek government officials are to be asked to clarify whether a political decision has been made by the Greek government in response to Israeli and other governments' pressure. We will ask that they not be complicit in the massive human rights violations by Israel against the people of Gaza. We will ask them to defend human rights and not fall to the pressure of Israel and other governments – who are playing with the lives and livelihoods of Greeks and Palestinians.

We have a template letter to use and contact information for Greek officials in Canada and in Greece. Contact details below for Greek Consulates and Embassy in Canada

All quotes are referenced to Amira Hass <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/gaza-bound-a-mystery-worthy-of-henning-mankell-1.369938>

The Canadian Boat to Gaza, The Tahrir - meaning liberation, is one of the lead boats of the Flotilla. The Greek Government has stopped the Tahrir from sailing. It is imperative we get the boat free so it can sail to help to free Gaza.

We understand the immense pressure that the Greek Government is getting.

“The fact that officials in Israel were able to report the prevention of the departure of six ships anchored in Greece, even before the organizers of the flotilla knew about it, shows Israel's involvement.” Prof Vangelis Pissias, a member of the flotilla's steering committee said the Greek government is under pressure not only from the Israeli government but by other governments as well.” Given the “FLOTILLA WARNING 2011” that was on the government of Canada's website's page for Canada's Embassy to Greece, and its unwavering - support at any cost – mentality to Israel, we can assume Canadian government complicity in this.

(Continued page 3)

(From page 2)) **Israel's Blockade**

We must call on the Canadian Government to remind Greece of maritime conventions.

Prof Pissias affirms that the popular pressure that is being applied is making it hard for Greece to give in to Israel. **WE MUST BUILD THE PRESSURE.**

Despite this week's General Strike by the people of Greece against the austerity measures "the port workers' union announced that in solidarity with the flotilla to Gaza, the stevedores who would be loading the flotilla vessels had been exempted from the strike ... and in Athens, where daily protests are being held against Greek government policies, the protesters have voted to support the flotilla".

**It is illegal for the Greek Government to prohibit the sailing of the ships. They have passed inspection and Greece has no right to hold foreign ships from sailing.**

{Ed. Note: For a template of letters and contact info on whom to send to give me a call or an email. Phone: 250 442 0434 or Email: [L4peace@telus.net](mailto:L4peace@telus.net)}

**Judicial Inquiry NOW!**

**Release All the Afghan Detainee files.**

By: The Canadian Peace Alliance: June 24, 2011

Despite what John Baird and Peter MacKay said, the release of 4,000 heavily censored files is not the end of the Afghan detainee scandal. The files are but a fraction of the total number of documents (estimated at between 25,000 and 40,000 pages) on the issue and these are so heavily redacted that they fail to shed any light on the central issues in the affair. This is just another smokescreen by the Harper Government.

It follows a pattern that we have seen from this government before. In December 2009, the government prorogued parliament in an attempt to delay the calls for the release of all the files. They have spent the last few years using all legal mechanisms at their disposal to keep the documents hidden and they have attacked the testimony of Canadian officials such as Richard Colvin about the torture of detainees. This suggests a less than stellar commitment to transparency on the issue.

There is very little new information in this latest release of documents. What is new, however, suggests that further investigation is warranted. According to the Toronto Star, one of the documents shows that in 2007,

(Continued next column)

(From last column) **Judicial Inquiry NOW!**

then Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor was told of the deteriorating situation for Afghan detainees and that the prisons were not up to international standards.

The report from an advisor to the Afghanistan Task Force stated that the Tory government spin on the issue was "out of sync with reporting from the field."

The question becomes: if Cabinet ministers were being informed of the harsh conditions of detention, why did they do nothing about it?

Indeed, there are many central questions that still remain. Who in the Canadian Government knew of these concerns? Why did it take years for even this scant documentation to be released? How many officials in the field knew about the issues?

The torture of Afghan detainees has been revealed by dozens of human rights monitoring groups that have found pervasive use of torture. Malalai Joya, former Afghan Member of Parliament said it is an open secret that torture is occurring. How can cabinet members who should, theoretically, be authorities on all details of the war, not be aware of this?

This issue will not go away. There are calls for a much more rigorous process of review which should be undertaken immediately. If torture is allowed to go unheeded and excused then what is to prevent further abuses of prisoners/detainees in any other conflict or even at home.

The Canadian Peace Alliance is calling on all political parties to demand that a full judicial inquiry be held and that all relevant documents be released. If the officers and the politicians in Ottawa knew that they were giving illegal orders, they need to resign and be held to account for their actions. Further we are calling for all Canadian forces, trainers or combat troops to be brought home. Any support for the torturers of the Afghan government is a crime which must end.

**I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends.**

**Abraham Lincoln**

**It is the job of thinking people not to be on the side of the executioners.**

**Albert Camus**



## Response from Jack Layton to Laura Savinkoff on Libya Extension: June 20, 2011

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your concerns about the extension of the UN sanctioned mission in Libya. I appreciate having the benefits of your comments on this important matter.

New Democrats initially supported the mission's mandate to protect civilians from attacks by the Libyan government. The fact of the matter is that the African Union and the Arab League appealed directly to the UN and the international community to get involved and help stop Muammar Gaddafi's savage treatment of civilian Libyans and rebel forces. That is why we supported Parliament's motion to join other countries like the United Kingdom, France, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, Qatar, UAE, Jordan and Morocco in this UN mission.

However, we continue to be concerned about the potential of the mission to creep beyond its mandate. We clearly said that Canada should take a strong role in ensuring that diplomacy and humanitarian assistance are Canada's top priorities. We pushed these views by tabling a number of substantive amendments to the government's June 14th motion. To achieve transparency on Canada's goals in Libya, we believe that it is crucial to:

- Make clear that the goal of the UN-mandated mission is to protect civilians.
- Secure an increase to Canada's support for humanitarian assistance.
- Strengthen our diplomatic role with the acknowledgment that only a Libyan-led political transition will end this conflict.
- Ensure improved oversight of Canada's involvement, including parliamentary committee meetings and better information sharing.

In reinforcing our position, NDP Foreign Affairs critic Paul Dewar said: ". I think amendments are required to support the humanitarian concerns that exist, especially the internally displaced people and refugees resulting from this conflict; to ensure that we investigate and prosecute rape as a weapon of war, which is something my party has asked for in places like the Congo; and to ensure that there is a strengthened diplomatic pledge by the government to ensure that we fall in line with UN resolution 1973. I say this because it is not a crisis that will be solved by Canada, by NATO or by more bombing, but by diplomatic and humanitarian pursuit and making sure that the UN is in the lead and is coordinating matters." (Hansard, June 14, 2011)

For your interest, please see attached a copy of the entire motion, (with NDP amendments in bold), and a link to Mr. Dewar's full speech found here:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1&DocId=5089492#Int-3887798>

New Democrats did not support this extension lightly nor will we support any - further extension of the current mission.

Again, thank you for taking the time to register your views with me.

Sincerely,

Hon. Jack Layton, P.C. , M.P. (Toronto-Danforth)  
Leader of the Official Opposition

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.

## (From last column) Libya Extension Motion on Extending Mission in Libya (June 14, 2011)

That, in standing in solidarity with those seeking freedom in Libya, the House unanimously adopted a motion in the Third Session of the 40th Parliament on March 21, 2011 authorizing all necessary measures, including the use of the Canadian Forces and military assets in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973; and given that the House unanimously agreed that should the government require an extension to the involvement of the Canadian Forces for more than three months from the passage of the said motion, the government was to return to the House at its earliest opportunity to debate and seek the support of the House for such an extension; therefore, with the objective of protecting civilians, the House supports another extension of three and a half months of the involvement of the Canadian Forces in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1973; the House supports an increase in Canada's humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis and efforts to strengthen Canada's support for the diplomatic efforts outlined in UNSCR 1973 to reach a ceasefire leading to a Libyan-led political transition, that the government of Canada engage with the National Transitional Council (NTC) based in Benghazi as a legitimate political entity and representative of the free Libyan people; that it provide the NTC with advice and assistance in governance, including women's rights; and supports the government's commitment to not deploy Canadian ground troops; that the House deplores the ongoing use of violence by the Libyan regime against the Libyan people, including the alleged use of rape as a weapon of war by the Libyan regime and supports Canada's participation in the international efforts in investigating, preventing and prosecuting these alleged crimes that it ensure that Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, or visitors to Canada are not subject to any threats or intimidation by representatives of the Gaddafi regime; that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development and the Standing Committee on National Defence remain seized of Canada's activities under UNSC Resolution 1973, and appreciates the government's full and continued cooperation on committee meetings and the sharing of information in accordance with the highest levels of transparency practiced by our partners in the operation; and that the House continues to offer its wholehearted support to the brave men and women of the Canadian Forces who stand on guard for all of us.



Exercise your democratic rights:  
Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister  
Free postage: Prime Minister, Steven Harper, Parliament Buildings,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6  
Phone: 613-992-4211 Fax: 613-941-6900  
Email: pm@pm.gc.ca