



**Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC) Conference:
"Women Building Peace"
February 15 to 17, 2009, Saint Paul's University, 223 Main Street,
Ottawa**



This conference followed from the very successful dinner hosted by the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative (CDPI) held in September, honoring the contribution of women to peace. The conference is developed in cooperation with the CDPI, Saint Paul University, the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR), the Rideau Institute, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, and One World Inc. Organizers acknowledge, with appreciation, the PSAC Social Justice Fund contribution to the conference. Xxxinsert others

**Keynote Presentation:
Peggy Mason, February 15, 2009**

Biography:

Peggy Mason's career highlights diplomatic and specialist expertise in the field of international peace and security, with a particular emphasis on the United Nations, where she served as Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament from 1989 through 1994. Mason has been a faculty member of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre since 1996. As a regular trainer and role player, she brings the UN political/diplomatic perspective to a range of NATO and EU training exercises to prepare military forces for peace and stabilization operations. Since 2002 Mason has been a Senior Fellow at The Norman Paterson School of International Relations (NPSIA). She chairs the Board of Peacebuild, a network of Canadian NGOs engaged in all aspects of peacebuilding. A graduate and gold medalist of the University of Ottawa Faculty Of Common Law, Peggy Mason was inducted into its Honour Society in September 2003.

Consistent with her belief that a peaceful world must be a just and equal one, improving the status of women both within Canada and globally has been an important aspect of her varied career. While Legal Advisor to the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women when Doris Anderson was President, she played a pivotal role in ensuring the Charter of Rights and Freedoms contained strong provisions on sexual equality.

(1) Welcoming Remarks by Theresa Dunn

It is my pleasure to introduce to you our keynote speaker. Peggy's work has included being the former Ambassador for Disarmament with the Department of Foreign Affairs, focusing her interest in the non proliferation of nuclear weapons. She is a Senior Fellow at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and the Chair of Peacebuild to name a few of her activities. Over the last many years she has been engaged in efforts to help countries in conflict negotiate and implement comprehensive peace settlements.

I met Peggy Mason around 1999 at a dialogue on Arms to Art being put on by a group from Sierra Leone. It occurred at the Unitarian Church. I was impressed with Peggy who I believe still worked with the Department of Foreign Affairs at that time. She was gracious, accessible and her presence gave validity to the conversation that occurred.

I am very pleased that she has agreed to take time out of her demanding schedule to not only provide us with her insights tonight on peacebuilding but to participate in the dialogue over the next two days.

Please help me welcome Ms Peggy Mason.

(2) Presentation by Peggy Mason

Putting Peace back into Peacebuilding

(Xxx presentation text)

Questions and Answers:

Question:

Questioner referred to a host of constraints against implementing serious measures to protect women from gender violence (including the internally displaced children in Africa, gender violence against women in Liberia, the aftermath of war, the absence of a human rights commission, the perpetuation of sexual violations by those in positions of power and supposed protection). Given all these constraints, she asked what hope there was for implementation, how to get women in vulnerable states involved in providing solutions, etc.

Answer:

Peggy Mason acknowledged how incredibly difficult it all is; how context- specific everything is. Then suggested that one has to look very specifically at each situation and start a dialogue on how the process be made more transparent. Usually it is easier to start at a very local level; start groups. That is just one building block, but there is no substitute for it. Then start training and simultaneously work the principles at higher levels. The Peace Building Commission is the one new mechanism that was agreed to at the higher level, as a UN focal point designed to enable all the various component parts to work for a longer term strategy... This kind of question (Veronika's) should go into the peace building strategy that is constantly being reviewed by the Peace Keeping Commission. Liberia is one of few countries currently being focused on. The operative paragraph is important: paragraph four: There is no amnesty provision.

Question:

What do you think is the future of Afghanistan?

Answer:

The hope is that if the new Administration seriously engages in regional negotiations that could lead to the way forward. Of course, it also depends on how long the troops stay, and whether the surge exacerbates the situation, in which case negotiation results would be more difficult attain. There are a lot of ifs. One of the dimensions, if we ever get to a real negotiation, is a stabilization requirement, still needed in a peace keeping sense. Then the question will be if there will be other forces than NATO. This also presupposes that we will try and follow something other than the policy we have now. Clearly, the current situation is unsustainable.

Question:

I want to thank you because I have known that I have not liked that our troops are in Afghanistan. You have articulated why. You have mentioned Obama is supporting activity you are unhappy with. what would you like to get him to do?

Answer:

The short answer: The weight of all efforts should be on negotiations, less on military. A key problem is the drones. They obscure facts where Pashtun's live on both sides of the border. Bombing in such areas has proven to be spectacularly unsuccessful in winning over the areas because it alienates people even more. It does not address Al Qaeda. It is causing more damage, and it is also directly harming security. There is now much, much less security. The surge will not work. ... Results in Iraq were not because of the surge....

Comment:

What you're saying is that all the effort should be on negotiating. NATOo and the US are parties to the conflict.

Question:

Canadian women have a key role to play to help Afghanistan. How do you see Canadian women contributing?

Answer:

There are a number of Canadian women working directly in partnership with women in Afghanistan, including women's peace groups, NGOs, etc. The main point, in terms of domestic policies, Canadian women need to lobby; to rebut the Government of Canada's simplistic view that the Taliban are totally responsible for violating women's rights... There is a big role for women to set the Government of Canada straight. Plus those women in civil society situations working more directly with groups in Afghanistan should, amongst others, make sure that there should be women at the table and support for women's rights in all negotiations.

Closing Remarks:

Theresa Dunn, Co-chair: Canadian Department of Peace Initiative, Ottawa Chapter

Theresa Dunn thanked Peggy Mason, and noted that the conference participants will dialogue, with Peggy's coaching, to imagine what could be different, in Liberia or in other countries, as well as to create an opportunity to consolidate their voices more strongly. She asked people to dare, to celebrate others, and to put forward how they would like others to change.