

The Troubling Rise of Militarism in Canada
MILITARISM IS NOT SUSTAINABLE

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 4, 1967. New York, N.Y.

CANADA FIRST DEFENCE STRATEGY – *Canadians were NOT consulted.*

In February 2008, the Canadian government announced Budget 2008 and gave the Department of National Defence (DND) a guaranteed annual increase of 2% on its budget that establishes predictable long-term funding for the military. In June 2008, the Canadian Government launched the *Canada First Defence Strategy*, which signals a greater combat role for our military and commits the government to spend \$490 billion over the next 20 years on DND, **but Canadians were NOT consulted on this new strategy.** The automatic annual increase in defence spending to 2%, beginning in 2011-12, will lead to a military budget of \$30 billion by 2027. As the chart below shows, we are currently spending almost \$18 billion. Yet our greatest security threat is climate change but we only spend \$1.6 billion on that.

***NOVA SCOTIA:** Nova Scotia Business Inc. announced a growth strategy for Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest weapons manufacturer in Nova Scotia. LM got \$2 billion from the federal government to upgrade the combat systems on the frigates and then \$1.8 million from the province for payroll rebates – we could have hired nurses, energy auditors and teachers with that money.

INFO: As shown in our latest federal budget from the *Public Accounts of Canada, 2007-2008*, the defence budget is more than the federal government spends on the Environment, Education, Fisheries & Oceans, Health Canada, Justice, Human Resources and International Aid combined:

EXPENSES

Defence TOTAL	17,330,809,000	Education *(Estimate from transfer to provinces)	4,700,000,000
		Environment	1,456,324,000
		Fisheries and Oceans	1,648,907,000
		Health Canada	2,454,346,000
		Human Resources	3,079,731,000
		Justice	976,832,000
		International Aid *(From several departments)	2,540,000,000
		Social & Environmental Depts. TOTAL	16,856,140,000

However, according to the Centre for Research and Information in Canada’s 2005 *Portraits of Canada* survey, the top three program priorities for Canadians are protecting the environment 78%, spending more on health care 74%, and education and training 73%. Then, why does our federal budget **not** reflect our priorities? Why has the federal government drastically cut the budget on the environment but has alarmingly increased the defence budget? Why are our taxes being spent for the military to get amphibious assault vessels, UAVs, frigate combat systems, and mobile gun systems costing billions of dollars, but they are **NOT** being used to provide affordable housing, adult literacy, eliminating poverty and student debt, tackling climate change and meeting our 0.7% Overseas Development Assistance target to end global poverty and meet our Millennium Development Goals? Demand that the federal government freeze the defence spending and spend our money on our priorities! Our federal budget here: <http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/text/pub-acc-e.html>

FROM THE EARTH CHARTER

The Earth Charter is a widely recognized, global consensus statement on ethics and values for a sustainable future. Developed over a period of ten years, in what has been called the most extensive global consultation process ever associated with an international declaration, the Earth Charter has been formally endorsed by over 2,500 organizations, including global institutions such as UNESCO and the World Conservation Union. There are 16 principles. Learn more and sign on: earthcharterinaction.org. Please notice below the sub-clauses to principle #16.

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.

- a. Encourage & support mutual understanding, solidarity, & cooperation among all peoples & within & among nations.
- b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.
- c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.
- d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
- e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.
- f. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

We are not de-militarizing. Instead, militarism is on the rise in Canada – more recruitment, more military funding of our universities, and more tax dollars going to the military. What is it doing? Not doing peacekeeping. It is fighting in an illegal war in Afghanistan where many civilians have been injured, tortured, forced into refugee camps and killed. We must question: “Fight with the Canadian Forces”- Why? A sustainable future is a peaceful one. The UN declared 2001-2010 to be the **Decade to Create a Culture of Peace for the Children of World. We are NOT doing that.*