



Science for Peace

November 21, 2024

President's Column



Dear Members,

The election of Donald Trump as president of the US represents an immense challenge for progressives everywhere. This challenge is particularly formidable for the members of Science for Peace, since Trump's policies will have a serious impact in all the issues that are of utmost importance for our organization.

Given Trump's unpredictability, it is impossible to know for sure which of the policies that he has campaigned on will be implemented. However, we will discuss here some of the policies that, based on his previous presidency, and on the people who he has nominated for his cabinet, are highly likely to be part of his agenda.

Nuclear Weapons.

As president, the unpredictable and unstable Trump will have the sole authority to order the use of nuclear weapons. In the context of the current wars in Ukraine, and the Middle East, this represents an extremely dangerous situation.

The US and other nuclear-weapons states are already spending tens of billions of dollars every year in modernizing their nuclear arsenals. But Trump and several of his security advisors want to spend even more than what has already been approved by the US government in order to increase the size and the diversity of the US nuclear arsenal. Moreover, some of Trump's advisors are strong proponents of the resumption of nuclear testing and the repudiation of the 1996 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This move could set off nuclear testing by the other major nuclear powers, and it will significantly increase the chances of accidents that could trigger a nuclear confrontation.

Climate Crisis.

Trump considers that global warming is a hoax. Consistent with this position, he withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement. President Biden rejoined this Agreement, but it is highly likely that Trump will again withdraw the US. In his campaign, Trump consistently included in his speeches the "drill, baby, drill" slogan. He has appointed

Chris Wright to head the Department of Energy. Wright, the CEO of Liberty Energy, is known for his strong defense of fossil fuel extraction, and his appointment signals a strong push to maximise oil and gas production. He will work to dismantle the green agenda laid out by Joe Biden, whose massive investments in renewables had set a potential standard for Canada to follow. It will be not surprising to hear Canadian oil lobbyists and the Conservatives soon calling on the government to follow Trumps policies regarding fossil fuels to remain “competitive”.

Militarism.

Trump has been saying for a long time that NATO countries are not spending enough in defense, that they are not meeting NATO’s military spending goal of 2 per cent of their GDP. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, for Canada to reach that goal it will require an extra \$41 billion per year, which will almost double the current defence budget.

Even before Trump was elected, the Canadian government was under serious pressure to increase the military budget. In the wake of this pressure, Trudeau has already pledged to meet the 2% target by 2032. It is highly possible that Trump may use the threat of commercial tariffs to push the Canadian government to speed up the increase in military spending. If this happens, expenditures in Defense will take an even larger proportion of the federal budget, reducing the funds available for social programs, health care and the fight against global warming.

Middle East.

It is expected that Trump will provide full support to the ethnic cleansing and annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. It would be therefore not surprising that if Pierre Poillievre becomes Prime Minister, he will terminate Canada’s long-held policy of supporting the Two-State solution.

Tax Cuts.

During his previous presidency, Trump cut \$1.5 trillion in taxes, which benefitted mostly the billionaires. Business groups in Canada immediately tried to get similar tax cuts to remain “competitive” with the US. Trudeau relented in the face of this pressure and granted tax cuts worth \$14 billion in 2018. Trump has promised that the new administration will introduce additional tax cuts. Expect therefore new pressure by Canadian business lobbyists to obtain more tax cuts in our country. These cuts will represent additional reduction of funds available for social programs, health care and to fight global warming.

Science.

The previous Trump administration was notorious for its contempt for science and for evidence-based policies. One tragic consequence of this contempt for science has been the 1.200.000 people that died so far in the US as a result of the Covid pandemic. The nominations for the cabinet in the second administration indicate that the contempt for science will, if anything, become more entrenched in the government. As a biomedical scientist, I am particularly alarmed by the nomination of Robert Kennedy Jr. to head the Department of Health. Kennedy is well known as an anti-vaxxer, and as a supporter of all kinds of conspiracy theories regarding health-related issues. If he is appointed, expect that anti-vaxxers and conspiracy theorists in Canada, who already have received Pierre Poillievre’s sympathy, will be further encouraged to continue their anti-science campaign, with potentially lethal consequences for the Canadian population.

Certainly, the impact expected from the policies of the new Trump administration will be discouraging for many Canadians, especially members of Science for Peace. However, we must remind ourselves that we are not merely spectators of what’s happening around us, and that history shows that popular resistance has had an impact even in the most oppressive circumstances. The mission of Science for Peace is more important than ever.

On November 26 at 5PM Science for Peace will host Dr. James Turk, the Director of the Centre for Free Expression at the Toronto Metropolitan University. The title of his important talk is “The minefield for campus free expression when it’s about Israel and Gaza”. Please register for attendance in person or by Zoom at scienceforpeace.org.

Jorge Filmus
President
Science for Peace

Upcoming Events

SCIENCE FOR PEACE, PEACE AND CONFLICT LECTURES PRESENTS

“The Minefield For Campus Free Expression When It’s About



Israel and Gaza.”

by Dr. James L. Turk



Dr. James L. Turk is the Director of the Centre for Free Expression (CFE) at TMU prioritizing public education, law reform, policy analysis, and court assistance on matters of intellectual and expressive freedom. He is a recipient of the Intellectual Freedom Award for outstanding contributions in Canada.

Tuesday, November 26, 2024
5pm - 6:30pm

Friends House
60 Lowther Ave
Toronto, ON, M5R 1C7

[Zoom registration](#)

[In person registration](#)


CANADA — AND THE — BOMB

A PUBLIC SEMINAR ON
CANADA'S NUCLEAR SECURITY

DATE: NOVEMBER 29TH
TIME: 6:00PM - 8:00 PM

Friends House,
60 Lowther Ave, Toronto

Join us for lively debate and refreshments
[REGISTER HERE](#)

 ICAN 2017
NORWEL
PEACE
PRIZES

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Recent Events



**Conflict Catalyst or Effective War Deterrent? We Ask
“SHOULD NATO EXIST?”**

A Discussion With:



Dr. Walter Dorn

Dr. Walter Dorn is a professor of defense studies at RMC and Canadian Forces College. Interested in peacekeeping he participates in field missions and assists international organizations, representing SfP at the UN since 1983.



Dr. Arnd Jurgensen

Dr. Arnd Jurgensen teaches international relations at the University of Toronto and is an SfP board member. He writes on topics such as US foreign policy and sustainable development, to regime change and democratization in Latin America.

Where?
Friends House: 60 Lowther Avenue,
Toronto ON M5R 1C7

In Person Registration
<https://tinyurl.com/4hw4963a>

When?
Monday Oct 21 2024
5pm - 6:30 pm

Online Registration
<https://tinyurl.com/bd36zf64>

www.scienceforpeace.org

[View Recording](#)

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