

We don't talk enough about peace. And my fear is that the less we talk about it, the more we risk losing it. The Green Party of Canada was founded in 1983 on the shared ethos of the peace, anti-nuclear and environmental movements. Today, we Greens continue to oppose nuclear power and advocate for the environment. But peace does not get nearly enough attention. Could our own feelings of relative security be blinding us to the rising tide of militarism in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and China?

Veterans of the Great War have faded from the public eye, their voices now heard only in recordings. Those soldiers returned home one hundred years ago with a plea: "Never Again". In answer, the government of the day named the central feature of Canada's central legislative building the Peace Tower. And we Canadians still consider ourselves a peace loving nation.

But recent foreign adventures call that identity into question. Our fourteen year long occupation of Afghanistan persisted long after the Taliban had been dispersed. Canada's participation in the bombing of Libya has empowered Islamist insurgencies in North Africa and changed the European political landscape with a flood of refugees.¹ We invented the modern peace-keeping force and were often the largest contributor to UN peace-keeping operations, yet our current involvement is at an all-time low.²

Ottawa hosts the Army Run today. We have no more poignant reminder of war's cost than the sight of so many disabled veterans. Some veterans have returned to their families with invisible scars, manifesting in violence against women and children. But the greater part of the human and ecological cost of Canada's wars is hidden from view, over the horizon.

The voices which in living memory warned us against wars on foreign soil have fallen silent, even as Canada's defence industry grows. Just as the nuclear power and oil & gas industries have gained control over this country's energy policies, so Canada's defence industry is gaining undue influence over foreign policy.³ We need only look South of the border to see where that path leads.

The GPC platform rightly calls for winning peace by re-establishing CIDA, working towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals and expanding our military's peace-keeping role. Left unsaid is the need to learn from our recent past and support our troops by mending fences rather than blowing them up.

Advocacy for peace is in the Green Party's DNA, it's in our bones and it's in Vision Green. Let's stand on guard. Lest we forget.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_migrant_crisis#/media/File:Map_of_the_European_Migrant_Crisis_2015.png

² <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/09/29/does-canada-still-contribute-to-peacekeeping-in-the-world.html>

³ <https://o.canada.com/news/canadian-arm-of-weapons-maker-wins-10-billion-saudi-deal>