



June 12, 1981

Ms. Kathy Gidora
Kamloops- Shuswap Peace Council
P.O. Box 973
Kamloops, B.C.
V2C 6H1

Dear Ms. Gidora:

I have received your letter with a copy of the petition and the signed affidavit attesting to 1000 signatures, thank you.

I can appreciate your concern for peace in the world and like everyone I share your concerns. I only wish that peace was as easy to achieve in our time as you seem to think it is. You make some interesting points which I will attempt to address in the order that they appear on your petition.

Your first observation is that the nuclear arms race is growing at an alarmingly dangerous rate. This is true, but one must remember that it is being proliferated by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America as well as certain lesser powers, yet the only country that you make reference to signing a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty is the United States. As far as the nuclear arms race ending in a nuclear holocaust if not stopped, there are enough nuclear weapons in the world right now to bring it all to an end, if that was the desire of the super powers.

To come back to the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) you say that we should urgently press the United States to sign the Treaty, but you leave out any mention of the other party in the Treaty who has refused to go along with any sort of monitoring system and who has broken faith with the spirit of the Treaty many times.

Your second point, the simultaneous dissolving of military alliances sounds very nice on paper but how do you work toward a bilateral dissolving of military alliances when a country like Soviet Russia has attacked and is occupying the country of Afghanistan, and is threatening the very meager freedoms earned by the Polish Solidarity Union.

Cont...

In fact, threatening the very freedom of the country as they did in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. To dissolve any of the allied military alliances would, in my opinion, be playing right into the hands of the Communist forces throughout the world. Which leads me to your third and last point which is the disarmament of Europe. You were correct in stating that it is the world's most heavily armed area, but you only have to go back in history a very short time to discover why it is the most heavily armed area in the world. I guess at this point we could get into a prolonged argument over how to achieve peace in the world. Your method, though very admirable, will not work, for as has been known for centuries, if you want peace then you must prepare for war. The only thing that will deter the Communist forces of the world and keep their finger off the nuclear button is a well-armed, well-trained and technologically superior armed force on the other side.

The United States of America under their former administration allowed their armed forces to deteriorate, while they pursued some of the methods that you outline in your petition. They negotiated sincerely on the SALT talks, and they earnestly pursued detente. During the same time period, the Soviet Union continued to build their military strength at a tremendous rate as you can witness if you care to watch their annual May Day Parade. In fact, the Soviet military strength far out numbers the United States at this time. The new administration, under President Reagan, have come to the realization that the only way you can negotiate with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, is to build your military so that you can speak from a position of strength. Accordingly, the United States this year is increasing their defense spending by a considerable amount, for the first time in many years.

I think it goes without saying that every responsible human being in the world wants peace, in fact, I have never, ever found anyone to be in favour of war. The only thing we disagree on, Ms. Gidora, is the way to achieve it. If I thought for one moment that your methods would work I would be the first to endorse them, however, they won't. Thank you for taking the time to write to me, and I look forward to meeting you sometime.

Yours for Peace,
through Strength.



Claude Richmond
M.L.A. Kamloops