

Stop Ottawa's Arms Shows!

Origins of COAT: 20 Years and Counting!

In late 1988, the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT) was initiated in order to expose a massive arms exhibition on Ottawa City property called ARMX. As a result of this first COAT campaign, Ottawa's City Council passed an historic motion



denouncing the international arms trade and banning all military trade shows from being held on municipal property.

For almost 20 years, the City of Ottawa has respected its ban on hosting arms bazaars, until now.

Secure Canada 2008

This year, City Staff signed a contract allowing Ottawa's Lansdowne Park to be used for a military trade show in the autumn of 2008 called "Secure Canada." In July, COAT began organizing against this event which was sponsored, in part, by the U.S. embassy, major American weapons producers and the biggest lobby group for U.S. military industries. "Secure Canada" was eventually cancelled, organizers say, due to protests and federal government restrictions on official participation in controversial events during the federal election.

CANSEC 2009

Unfortunately, an even bigger and more blatant arms bazaar is now looming on Ottawa's horizon. City Staff are negotiating with the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries to lease Lansdowne Park for Canada's largest manifestation of the international arms trade, namely CANSEC. Please join our efforts to stop this military trade show, which is scheduled for late May 2009.

***We stopped them before. We can do it again!
... Please sign COAT's Online Petition ...***

Whether or not you live in Ottawa, please sign our online petition telling Ottawa politicians to respect City Council's 1989 commitment to ban all international arms shows from municipal property!

Remembering Marion

Many will remember Marion Dewar as the Mayor of Ottawa, the president of the NDP, an NDP parliamentarian and the president of Oxfam Canada.

Marion was also a tremendous supporter and mentor of the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT) and she played high-profile roles in many of our largest events and campaigns.

For instance in 1989, Marion was the master of ceremonies at COAT's huge peace march and rally in which thousands protested against ARMX, Canada's largest military trade show. That year, Marion also chaired our "Public Inquiry into the Arms Trade and Human Rights."

In 1991, Marion moderated a COAT conference called "From War to Peace: An Agenda for Economic Conversion." When ARMX returned in 1993—under the clever PR guise of a "Peacekeeping" exhibition—Marion was active on COAT's steering committee and hosted PEACEX, our three-hour program of speeches, music and poetry, which included information tables from 60 organizations.

On November 11, 1995, COAT organized a large dinner to honour Marion. In the following year, she moderated a day-long COAT symposium called "Aiding and Abetting Repression: Canada's Weapons Trade and the Need for Conversion."

When COAT produced a 30-minute documentary in 1998 on how "air shows" target children and market war by romanticising and glorifying weapons delivery systems, Marion was the narrator.

In October 2001, COAT held a "Vigil for Nonviolence." Six hundred walked from Parliament Hill to a downtown church where Marion cohosted a program of music, workshops and speeches.

Recently, Marion was incensed that the City of Ottawa would allow the return of military trade shows to Lansdowne Park and she was absolutely determined to help COAT to stop these events.

Marion's tremendous passion to make the world a better place continues to inspire us. We will remember her in our ongoing efforts to oppose war and to build a culture of peace.



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Coalition to
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541 McLeod St. overcoat@rogers.com
Ottawa Ontario http://coat.ncf.ca
K1R 5R2 Canada 613-231-3076