

ON THE ROAD

WITH MAUDE BARLOW

I hope this edition of *Canadian Perspectives* finds you well, rested and ready for another year of fighting for social and environmental justice. We surely have our work cut out for us, with a federal election likely upon us soon.

The last few months went by for me in a blur. My cross-Canada tour for my new book, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*, took me to many of your communities. The tour coincided with an explosion of interest in the issue of water and real breakthroughs at the political level in commitments for action.

In March, the NDP sponsored a private member's bill to adopt a comprehensive water policy to protect Canada's water ecologically and jurisdictionally. In June, the Bloc Québécois tabled a resolution calling for exemption of water from NAFTA. The Green Party is campaigning to scrap NAFTA, in large part because of the danger it poses to water, and the Liberals have now appointed a water critic, who is calling for a water policy and a secretary of state for water stewardship.

As well, there are two Senate bills in process. One, by Liberal Senator Jerry Grafstein, calls for a federal agency to protect Canada's drinking water and watersheds. The other, by Conservative Senator Pat Carney, seeks to ban the commercial export of Canada's water through an amendment to the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act. Carney, the Mulroney trade minister who negotiated the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and who denied that it and its successor NAFTA put Canada's water in jeopardy, now acknowledges that these trade deals do in fact give huge rights to U.S. water



Maude Barlow, speaking at a Troops Out of Afghanistan rally in Kelowna, B.C. on October 27.

Paul Manly

corporations if the trade in water ever commences.

Collectively, this political support for water protection legislation is very gratifying and a testament to the hard work of the Council of Canadians and the many groups we work with across the country. We, of course, will continue to advocate for a national water policy that protects Canada's water, both politically and ecologically. See page 21 to find out how you can get involved in cross-Canada actions on March 22, World Water Day.

On the international front, our work for water justice continues. We are pressuring the United Nations to move forward with its assessment of how best to guarantee the right to water for all. We recently launched our online Right to Water action centre (www.righttowater.ca), which I urge you all to join. And preparations are already getting under way for the March 2009 World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey.

Meanwhile, our chapters and staff team have also been hard at work fighting to stop the proliferation of for-profit health services across the country. We recently kicked off our Best Kept Secret campaign, which will see Council activ-

ists making the case to community organizations and small businesses that public health care provides Canada with a competitive advantage. To read more about the campaign, see page 19.

Throughout the last several months, we have continued our exposure of the Security and Prosperity Partnership and its threat to our environmental, health and safety standards, our once independent foreign policy, and our civil liberties and human rights. We have also helped expose how the SPP threatens Canada's energy security (something to ponder on a cold winter night) as we ramp up our energy campaign. See page 6 to read more about how the SPP threatens energy, and what you can do take a stand for a Canadian Energy Strategy.

The Council has continued our opposition to the war in Afghanistan, denouncing our government's lack of support for U.S. war resisters in Canada, as well as the practice of military recruiting in schools. And we're keeping the pressure on provincial governments to stop the spread of inter-provincial trade agreements that give corporations tremendous rights, at the expense of the public interest. You can visit our website at www.canadians.org, to read more about our TILMA and anti-war campaigns.

This year will take me to the United States and beyond with the publication of *Blue Covenant* internationally. As always, I proudly represent the wonderful members of the Council of Canadians, who have become known, nationally and internationally, for tireless work in support of social and economic justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maude Barlow'.

Maude Barlow is the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians.