

VANA President's Message for Update

Saturday, December 21, 2002

Dear Fellow VANA Members:

Today is the winter Solstice and the sun has appeared in Vancouver after many days of cloud and rain. I wish I could use this as a symbol of world events reaching their darkest phase and preparing to make a slow improvement. But we all know it ain't so.

One of the few certainties in the New Year will be that the United States will attack Iraq. Judging by US warmaking history, the attack will depend heavily on air power and since the Iraqis would be insane to put their armies exposed to that air power in the desert, it looks as if the battle will be fought around and in Baghdad, a city of just under five million people. If this is so, the best we can hope for is a rapid collapse of Iraqi resistance, but having watched the US/UK enforced sanctions kill over half-a-million of their children in the last twelve years, the morale of the 2003 Iraqi army may be very different matter from that of 1991. This may be a very bloody business with the major civilian losses, typical of modern wars.

Our first immediate task is to struggle to prevent Canada becoming involved in this criminal enterprise. Our second immediate task is to join with other nuclear abolitionists in warning against any resort to nuclear weapons.

Our long term goals remain, taking nuclear weapons off alert status and supporting all efforts to abolish these monstrous enemies of humanity.

VANA can be proud of its record of working for these goals and their urgency will keep us active in the coming year.

Warmest regards to you all and may we get past this dark solstice in world events soon and see an encouraging springtime.

David Morgan

Editor's Comments:

I have the highest regard for Doug Roche, a man of courage, intelligence and wisdom. I once told him that it was people like him, that made me proud to be a Canadian. The letter below illustrates my point.

December 19, 2002

An Open Letter to the Minister (From Senator Roche)

The Hon. Bill Graham, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Room 418-North, Centre Block
House of Commons
O t t a w a

Dear Bill,

It is sad beyond description that, in this Season of Peace, I should be writing to you to give you whatever strength and courage I can to continue to stand up for Canadian values and resist the drums of war.

It is now abundantly clear that the Bush Administration will override Hans Blix and the U.N. inspection team at the first opportunity and declare war on Iraq. How can the U.S. explain this war fought, at least on the surface, for nuclear disarmament when the U.S. itself is a country with 10,000 nuclear weapons? Iraq is a country with no demonstrated nuclear weapons. Saddam Hussein is a vile man, but the economic sanctions imposed by the West

have resulted in far more deaths of innocent people in Iraq than he is guilty of. Now the Iraqi people will suffer immeasurably as their food, water and health infrastructure is destroyed by war.

The U.S. has also made official the deployment of a missile defence system, which experts, including you, recognize will involve putting weapons in space. The Canadian government has always opposed weapons in space. A renewed nuclear arms race is now certain judging by the protests coming from Russia and China, among others.

What about Canada? I believe that the majority of Canadians want the U.N. Security Council, not the U.S. unilaterally, to decide if Iraq is in compliance with Resolution 1441 concerning whether Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Canadians want to keep space free from weapons to head off future wars. But will the Canadian government finally make a more forceful stand on these two issues, or will it be pressured into support for the U.S.?

That pressure is already apparent from the U.S. It also exists within our own country from those who mistakenly insist that Canada must follow the U.S. lead on all security questions. The stakes in the Canada-U.S. relationship are getting much higher because the world has reached a defining moment: will we let one nation, however powerful, bypass the rule of law or will Canadians stand up for the values of peace through the application of international law? The voice of peace can no longer be heard amid the cry for war.

You are in a leadership position. I am speaking for many Canadians in asking you to clearly stand up against those who want war. We want to encourage your voice in Cabinet and to support you in your efforts.

I send you this letter in the true meaning of peace at Christmas.

With best wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Douglas Roche, O.C.
Senator

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To unsubscribe, send a blank email to abolition-caucus-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

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Correction
Editor's Address

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VANA: Report to National, & to Ontario/Québec Region, on meetings of the
CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS (CNANW)

Ottawa, 29-30 October 2002

Connie Gardner, Toronto

<terrell.gardner@utoronto.ca>

Some of these meetings slog through necessities building foundations, and some soar. This was one of the stellar ones. Trying to report on all of it has taken me a week to get nowhere clear, in more pages than anyone wants, so here are the main points, an annotated agenda, other papers from the meeting, and a promise to provide details of any items if someone wants them. My main impression is that this is an extraordinarily gifted group of people who work together extraordinarily well, and achieve more successes than most other groups I know. They are good at choosing issues to work on, and each season seems to find them a little further along (e.g., Canada's unprecedented "yes" vote on the recent NAC Resolution submitted to the UN General Assembly: see penultimate paragraph on this page).

CNANW activities

"CNANW" in its entirety are the eighteen member organizations whose representatives meet about twice a year to report on activities and set policy (see list attached to agenda for those who attended this meeting), and about a hundred other "sponsoring" organizations, including peace, labour, environmental, educational, religious, human rights, social justice, etc. groups, all of which are affected by nuclear expenditures and dangers. Its day-to-day work and its imaginative drive come mostly from Bev DeLong of Lawyers for Social Responsibility (LSR) in Calgary; Jean Christie, an activist and skilled executive in Ottawa; and Debbie Gridale, co-ordinator for the national Physicians for Global Survival in Ottawa; with insistent ghostly pushing and steering from Senator Douglas Roche. Contributing importantly to policy discussions are Carolyn Bassett (Canadian Peace Alliance [CPA] National Office, Toronto), Judith Berlyn (CPA and Centre de Ressources sur la Non-violence, Montreal), Robin Collins (United Nations Association, Ottawa), and, lately, Sarah Estabrooks (following in Bill Robinson's research job with Project Ploughshares, Waterloo).

To meet deepening concerns about US threats to international law (breaching anti-nuclear treaties, "re-rationalizing" nuclear weapons), CNANW is increasing educational and anti-nuclear efforts in the Canadian Parliament, the UN, and NATO. It has been able to support similar efforts by the Middle Powers Initiative (see page three), by its member groups, and by other "sponsoring" groups. It has commissioned research and writing of briefs for Parliamentarians (see Bill Robinson's "Canada and Nuclear Weapons..." enclosed), and developed public education documents for its website. It has discussed nuclear issues with over 80 Parliamentarians, including a briefing of the Canadian delegates to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It has developed cordial and candid relations with a variety of officials from Foreign Affairs and National Defence. It has organized roundtables of government and non-government experts on nuclear issues.

Its latest call for a flood of letters supporting the NAC (New Agenda Coalition, now the New Agenda Group) Resolutions in the UN General Assembly is partially responsible for Foreign Minister Bill Graham's decision that, for the first time, Canada vote "Yes" on the first

one, against all other NATO nations, most of whom, as usual, abstained. Canada has not had the courage to do this before.

Its immediate goals: (1) To get admitted as an NGO representative to the UN negotiations on the Non-proliferation Treaty. (Bev DeLong represented CNANW among non-governmental participants in the Land Mines negotiations, about which she says “The US tried to get an exception for ‘smart mines,’ and nobody knew anything about them, but luckily I had some data we could give the delegates, and we defeated it. I sent 90 faxes that night.”) (2) To press in every arena for Canada to resolve its “NATO-NPT contradiction” (the contradiction between Canada’s anti-nuclear-weapons policy, and its membership in NATO, which explicitly relies on nuclear weapons; NPT = Non-proliferation Treaty). CNANW respects any member organizations’ insistence on withdrawal from NATO and thinks that this issue of Canada’s contradictory position is a good place to begin, and one in which we have a good chance of success. In a recent meeting with CNANW, MP Irving Cotler, member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, noted that the Chair of this committee is sympathetic, and CNANW should try to get the NATO-NPT contradiction on their agenda. One could begin by urging members of the Liberal caucus (3) To hold a round-table for Parliamentarians and activists to educate people about “tactical” nuclear weapons; and another round-table about the dangers of debris in space, to human life, the environment, and businesses who rely on satellites. (4) “Consultation” on nuclear weapons (big event convened by Department of Foreign Affairs for experts from many Canadian NGO’s). (5) Summer intern program for high school/university students, to work on web page interesting to their age group, assemble a nuclear abolition kit for school curricula, to translate materials into French, etc.

Reports of member groups

The vitality and imagination of CNANW member groups are impressive. Here are a few:

- Lawyers for Social Responsibility (LSR): constant badgering of local, national, and international governments on legalities of nuclear policies, drafting of “Model Nuclear Weapons Convention” which can be the basis of a disarmament treaty.
- Physicians for Global Survival (PGS): constant newspaper ads and flyers (see enclosed), activism about the national War Museum (see last section of this report, about items relevant to VANA), lobbying for a Peace Museum, summer internships sending physicians and students to Hiroshima.
- The Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA): despite its own varied membership involving all peace groups in Canada, whose interests are not solely nuclear disarmament, it has started a computer file of anti-nuclear-weapons and peace curricula in schools.
- Peacefund Canada: newspaper ads, sponsorship of League of Canadian Poets’ presenting an original-art-wrapped poem to each member of Senate and Parliament over a year, out of which has grown public readings across Canada, a compact disk, and the book “Waging Peace”; a musician in Halifax talks of commissioning musical works based on some of the poems).
- Science for Peace: a range of working groups and publications, a petition for intellectuals and academics about US and Iraq.
- Les Artistes pour la Paix: pronounced by government representatives “the best-informed” NGO representatives at parliamentary discussions of the G8 summit and the Non-proliferation Treaty, establishing the right of NGO’s to participate in these meetings, involving Mayor of Hiroshima and high-level Canadian officials in Montreal’s observance of Hiroshima Day.

- and (out of all proportion to its size) the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa (constant public meetings and work with youth).
- VANA's report drew heavily on e-mails from David and the recent resolutions. It seemed impressive.

The Middle Powers Initiative (MPI)

This is a group of non-governmental activists from "non-aligned" countries, neither nuclear powers nor "have-not" nations, who, with help from experts in any country, press their governments and the international community on anti-nuclear issues. It has also set up the "Parliamentary Network on Nuclear Disarmament", parliamentary members from governments worldwide, co-ordinated by Alan Weir (see list enclosed of Canadian parliamentarians who are members). The MPI's guiding strength comes from Senator Douglas Roche, who founded it; it is now chaired by The Right Honourable Kim Campbell (!).

We attended a meeting on 29 October it had arranged, for experts from the US to address the Joint Senate-Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs, urging Canada to strengthen its pressure on the US government for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We also had our own meeting with them on 30 October in the Senate Office Building. This second meeting also had very interesting representation from some of CNANW's "sponsoring" organizations (see enclosed list of those attending). The MPI delegates and main arguments, including their answers to questions in both meetings, were:

- Kim Campbell: "Nuclear abolition is not a 'pacifist' issue but a hard-nosed security issue: nuclear weapons are useless against terrorist acts, and the certainty of further proliferation makes us MORE vulnerable with them than without them." (Note: this is the exact point made to the same committee by General Lee Butler and Robert McNamara three years ago.) "NATO now sees the uselessness of big bombs, but wants to develop 'tactical' ones: just as bad or worse because more 'usable'. Do not let Canada be elbowed aside. Canada has paid with blood and years of diplomacy, it has troops now in 15 countries (the US very few), and it has a right to speak." We were startled at her apparent conviction, and her effectiveness.

- Bruce Blair, former missileer, President of Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C.: "Russia's nuclear and strategic forces are living below poverty line, have to moonlight to survive, alcoholism is common, come to work exhausted, are ripe for bribery: proliferation is inevitable. Meanwhile the US is inventing new 'enemies' and ready to resume testing. Nuclear weapons are useless against terrorist acts, and their deteriorating condition and loose security increases rather than averts danger. Canada's leadership is filling a vacuum in US leadership and is very welcome. Insist weapons be taken off alert, since any hacker could trigger a launch warning which would allow only two minutes for order against launching; if launched, in 30 minutes the equivalent of 80,000 Hiroshima bombs would explode (2000 weapons, each 40 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb)."

- Alice Slater, President, Global Resource Action Center, New York: "400,000 marched in Washington to oppose war in Iraq, and got no media coverage. 22 Senators voted against war, no media coverage. Dissent is bubbling, and needs help from Canada. As for weaponization of space, people in the US are calling for a freeze (no media coverage), corporations are spending millions lobbying for weaponization. Our opposition needs help from you and your press. Tell the US: 'Stop trashing the UN. Abide by law and treaties.'"

- Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute, San Francisco: “New treaty between Russia and the US permits 2000 nuclear weapons each. Each weapon is 200 megatons, bigger than all weapons in all human history combined. Canada should maintain its acknowledged leadership on anti-nuclear issues, and on opposing weaponization of space. In the US, ‘sovereignty’ issue makes treaties low priority. Bush government is about resources, greed, power. Its actual POLICIES say ‘If corporate corruption, cut funds to the SEC; if forest fires, cut and sell the trees.’ Nuclear weapons are the hammer for keeping inequity in the world. Human security needs gender equity, sustainable development, social justice, human rights. These are moral issues, and people are ready for them. Make common cause with religious and human rights and environmental groups. Take your message to the churches; get the schools to develop curricula on diplomacy, on abolition of destructive weapons, on multi-lateral versus unilateral policies.”

- Senator Doug Roche: “Canada’s ‘yes’ vote on the first of the two NAC Resolutions (which is essentially the same resolution that has been passed for the last several years) was an extraordinary act of courage -- it alone among the NATO nations opposed the US pressures. But those pressures increased so much that on the second NAC Resolution (a new one dealing with ‘tactical’ nuclear weapons) it abstained, as it and other NATO dissenters always have. We asked the Government, ‘Can Canada be a bridge between NAC and NATO?’ and were told that the government needs popular pressure on this. The MPI is sending a special delegate to dissenting NATO countries, continuing its pressure that they live by the strictures in NATO’s own 2001 review.”

The questions from the Committee were mostly honest and fair, including Art Eggleton’s inquiry about Canada’s supporting missile defence, a thorny issue during his Ministry of Defence: what should Canada’s position be? The only childish put-downs were from Stockwell Day. (CMG note: Mystery: we do not permit this behaviour among schoolchildren; why do we put up with it in Parliament?)

Jonathan Granoff paid glowing tribute to Senator Doug Roche’s chairing of a special session of the Third Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates (see their statement enclosed) “dealing with these great minds with deftness, skill, and grace”. And Senator Roche paid a nice tribute to CNANW, “the parent of the Middle Powers Initiative”.

In sum

Looking back on these two days, I am impressed by four things:

- 1) The expanding influence and effectiveness of the Middle Powers Initiative, now involving parliamentarians worldwide (the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament), as well as the Non-governmental Organizations (NGO’s) with which they began.
- 2) The harmony among MPI and CNANW activists, permitting an unusually high level of world-wide effectiveness. They are, for instance, in close touch with the New Agenda Group of nations which has consistently passed anti-nuclear weapons resolutions in the UN General Assembly.
- 3) The intelligence, integrity, and effectiveness of CNANW policies and tactics, focused in the large on nuclear disarmament, the rule of law, and the primacy of the UN, and working day to day on (a) smaller winnable steps towards it (representation at NPT negotiations, and getting Parliament to face the NATO/NPT contradiction); and (b) long range public education (website,

round tables for activists and parliamentarians on tactical nuclear weapons and on weapons in space, summer internships for students).

4) The value of convening these meetings for representatives of such varied activities and viewpoints. I found it very inspiring.

Cullings relevant to VANA

The new War Museum in Ottawa has in its prospectus no coverage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nor of nuclear weapons. It is divided into hardware and message, all glorification of war. Write Sheila Copps, Heritage Minister, and Joe Geurts, CEO of War Museum: How will it cover the nuclear age? How will it cover veterans' views, including VANA's? (To Sheila Copps: Canada has a long history of peacemaking. What are plans for a peace museum?)

The "Diefenbunker Cold War Museum" is open and has an exhibition on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Its remote location has not stopped busloads of school groups from visiting. Letter-writing campaigns: Urge parliamentarians to resolve NATO/NPT contradiction. Tell them Canada should make it illegal to work on anything related to nuclear weapons, as it is now to work on chemical or biological weapons. And Canada should stop its contributions to other countries' nuclear programs (space, expertise, uranium). Write strong congratulations to Foreign Minister Bill Graham about Canada's "yes" vote on the NAC Resolution; he is under attack from the right and from the US because of it.

VANA is asked to look at the CNANW website <abolishnuclearweapons.org> and advise any changes or additions. Its editorial committee is Bev DeLong (<bevdelong@shaw.ca>), Angela Beale (First Unitarian Congregation, Ottawa), and Sarah Estabrooks (Project Ploughshares).

VANA National and VANA Ontario/Québec both owe their dues for 2002. Apparently the dues we sent earlier this year were arrears for 2001!

Here is an irresistible gem from Murray Thomson of Peacefund Canada:

Don't you worry, honey child,
 Don't you cry no more,
 It's only a little old nuclear thing
 In a little old limited war.
 It's just a fancy warhead, child,
 In a little old tactical shell,
 And all it'll do is blow us all
 To a little old limited hell.

With profound thanks for sending me to these inspiring meetings,
 Constance Moore Gardner

I have a couple of things from Manitoba VANA:

Steve Brodack, one of our members from Thunder Bay, Ontario, passed away in August at age 86. On day two of the Second World War, Steve enlisted in the RCAF and served as a senior flying instructor

with the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. He was discharged in 1946. He became a carpenter and worked his way up to manager for sixteen years. He was a VANA member for many years.

Margaret Maier and Cec Muldrew, secretary and president of Manitoba VANA were married on September 28th, 2002.

Dear Fellow VANA Members:

Four Vancouver women, including my wife Linda, will be in Iraq by 10 December. They are Irene MacInnes, Linda Morgan, , Irene Vandas & Jennifer Ziemann.

They are going there as part of the Voices In The Wilderness (VITW) Peace Team whose members go in relays so that there will be members in Iraq if/when the US launches a war.

The purposes of the VITW Peace Team are to "live among the Iraqi people, to be with them during any aggression"..."use our presence to protect (life supporting) facilities"..."to speak truthfully from Iraq about the effect of sanctions and war on the people of Iraq."

My wife Linda, who leaves Iraq on 22 December, does not intend to be in Iraq when the war begins, although that risk certainly exists. Her purposes in going are:

1. To raise awareness in Canada of the risks faced by the people of Iraq. If this is a risky trip for her, how much greater are the risks faced by the women and children of Baghdad and Iraq.
2. To attract media attention to the real effects of any war on the Iraqi people.
3. To make a video record of the Peace Team and pre-war conditions in Baghdad & Iraq.
4. To prevent the war.

She has been successful in attracting media attention. CBC have had a camera person covering her preparation (meetings etc) for the past 3 weeks. They will interview her on her return and use her video taken in Iraq. The CBC budget for this must be +/- \$20 thousand. City TV have also done a pre-trip interview & will follow up. CKNW radio are also following this. CBC plan a radio interview with her in Baghdad.

I tried to prevent Linda from making this trip. The risks, early on, seemed to enormously outweigh the potential benefits. This is still a very risky trip, but her judgement of the potential benefits has proven to be right. She is crazy to be doing this, but when I look around at what supposedly sane people are doing - preparing to bomb people who have been starved for twelve years - then I am very proud of my crazy, brave wife.

David Morgan

Highlights from the VANA Executive Meeting of December 9

Present: David Morgan (chair), Ed Livingston, Cynthia Llewellyn, Ted Powis. Regrets: Bas Robinson, Ed Shaffer.

Finances.

Treasurer's Report. - Ted reported he has met with auditor Ted MacCormac and bookkeeper Shayle Duffield arrangements should work out well. Bank account has been opened in West Vancouver

No new figures available on bank balances until accounts transferred.

Audit as at 31 October 2002 not yet completed; Mary Kitley will continue with us until it is.

Originally reported cost of the conference call convention did not include charge by the telephone company of 25¢ per minute for each line connected. Final total cost of \$626.07 was still very reasonable.

VANA owes dues to CNANW. David will check amount and advise Ted.

Organization

- a) David E-mailed usual request for news and views. Replies incorporated below.
- b) Noted need for better system for getting branch reports, as indicated by lack of reports.
- c) Rent for mail box (\$123) is due. Agreed to cancel in view of small amount of use; David will ask Ed Shaffer to arrange. Decided to use David's address in lieu of mail box address.

Branch Reports

- a) Saskatoon. John Bury forwarded pamphlet "Ten Things You Need to Know About Iraq" distributed in leafleting campaign by VANA and other peace groups in Saskatoon.

Congratulations will be conveyed to John Bury for this initiative, and moved that copies of the pamphlet be circulated to other branches with encouragement for them to use it.

- b) British Columbia. Good VANA attendance at 17 November anti-Iraq war march and rally.

At 25 November branch meeting viewed video of speech by Scott Ritter, former U.S. marine officer and weapons inspector; his theme "Waging Peace"~ very stirring.

DREC No report.

Membership - Ted will work with Bas to get up-to-date figures. Will request Mary Kitley to FAX him and E-mail David latest numbers. Noted that our membership year is the same as our financial year.

Agreed to tell members they are not required to pay for past years if they are in arrears, though they might wish to make an equivalent donation.

Newsletter. Walter Josephy is anxious to receive branch news. He is presently working on next issue of Update

Website. Branches should post current actions under the Calendar of Events. CNANW report should be posted.

CNANW

M/S David/Cynthia that VANA executive express great appreciation to Connie Gardner for her work in reporting on CNANW and urge her to continue as our representative at these meetings.

Agreed we should think about ways we could link better with this organization, and ensure that they have our material. They now have a website: abolishnuclearweapons.org. They request comments, speakers lists, etc.

Correspondence

Peace 2000 group in Iceland reported on discovery of Air Atlanta plane carrying NATO weapons.

An example of "civilianization of war". A very sensitive matter. Similar use of our airlines, exposing passengers to risk, could also result in economic loss through people's reluctance to fly.

Past Activities

- (a) VANA statement calling on Ottawa to repudiate UN Security Council Resolution 1441 sent to the Prime Minister, MP's, media and peace groups. No response from media.

(b) David has acted on Convention resolutions as appropriate.

Work in Progress

Committee reviewing and up-dating "Beyond Deterrence" and NATO reports. David will check with committee members to ensure they have copies of "*Beyond Deterrence*"; also check with Mary Kitley whether she has some stored. If government issues a new white paper on defence, this should be included in the study.

New Business

(a) Ed Shaffer urges that VANA prepare a statement against Canada joining Iraq war to go to Prime Minister, MP's, media, NGO's. Relate to fact that Canada did not get involved in Vietnam War. Since parliament breaking soon for holidays, David promised to submit a draft statement to the executive later today and get *final* statement out tomorrow.

Future Activities

(a) VANA's immediate focus: Call against Iraq war and for a return to the rule of international law.

(b) Long term focus: De-Alerting nuclear weapons and opposition to NMD.

Next Meeting: 13 January 2003.

Comments from David:

Please send along your News, Views, Questions & Motions for our monthly exec meetings on the second Monday of every month.

For instance:

NEWS: We are hungry for news of VANA from individuals & branches so that we can publish it in exec minutes and the Update. Also, good articles and info.

VIEWS: Your views on the National & World situation & how VANA can do a better job dealing with it.

QUESTIONS: Why is/isnt VANA(fill in the blanks)

MOTIONS: Don't wait for conventions. If you want VANA to move on some issue, put it in writing, get a seconder and send it in. Your exec will act on it.

Best wishes,

Your Exec

Letter from VANA:

The Right Honourable Jean Chretien, Prime Minister,
The House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario

Subject: *Canada and the United States war against Iraq*

Dear Prime Minister Chretien:

The people of Iraq, have been starved for twelve years by the very harsh US/UK enforced United Nations sanctions. They have witnessed the deaths of a half million of their children, the ruin of their country's life-support systems and the almost total collapse of their economy, due to these sanctions. Now the United States threatens them with war, regardless of the results of the current weapons inspections.

The US/UK sanctions regime and the threats of war combined with an enormous military build-up on Iraq's borders are all gross violations of the letter and the intent of the UN Charter.

Prime Minister Chretien, you should therefore avoid all Canadian involvement in this cruel and lawless war, just as Prime Minister Trudeau avoided involvement in the equally cruel and lawless US war against Vietnam.

Yours truly,

David Morgan
National President, Veterans Against Nuclear Arms

Excerpts from

A New Bridging Role for Canada

By Senator Douglas Roche, O.C.
Ploughshares Briefing 02/7

“...the New Agenda states ...the most important political force working today for nuclear disarmament”
“...in the game of nuclear disarmament, NATO trumps the NAC”

On October 25, 2002 in the United Nations First Committee, Canada pushed the green yes button on the New Agenda Coalition omnibus resolution, L.3, Revision 1. This was no ordinary vote. For Canada was the only NATO country to support the resolution. What does this action say about the New Agenda, NATO, and Canada itself? What are the implications for the nuclear disarmament agenda? Where should Canada's NGO community now concentrate its attention?

First, the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). In 1998, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and Sweden formed a coalition expressing their concern for the need for a new agenda leading towards a nuclear-weapons-free world. The resolutions NAC introduced in the UN in 1998 and 1999 were vigorously opposed by the US, the UK, and France, the three nuclear weapons states in NATO. But NAC showed it had political support around the world, and during the 2000 Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty demonstrated its political muscle as it engaged the nuclear weapons states in negotiations. The result was a Final Document in which all the States Parties to the NPT made an "unequivocal undertaking" to negotiate the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. This commitment was embodied in a program of 13 Practical Steps. NAC hailed this as a "landmark" achievement.

NAC then presented a resolution to the 2000 Meeting of the UN First Committee that virtually repeated the 13 Steps. It passed overwhelmingly: 146 in favour, 3 opposed, and 8 abstaining. The US voted yes; so did every other NATO country except France, which abstained. Russia and a few of its former republics also abstained. The No's were cast by India, Pakistan, and Israel, which did not like the resolution telling them to join the NPT. Actually, the vote was a triumph of masterly diplomacy and confirmed the New Agenda states as the most important political force working today for nuclear disarmament.

In 2001, with the world in turmoil following the September 11 terrorist attacks and the new Bush Administration pulling out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and opposing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (thereby renouncing two of the 13 Steps), NAC decided not to submit a resolution.

But by April 2002, NAC had recovered its footing and submitted a detailed working paper: "We remain determined to pursue, with continued vigour, the full and effective implementation of the substantial agreements reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference."

As Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland told a Strategy Consultation convened by the Middle Powers Initiative, "The New Agenda Coalition is very much in business."

NAC brought in two substantive resolutions to the 2002 Meeting of the First Committee.

The resolution went slightly beyond the language of the 13 Steps in a few places.

But on the whole, it is impossible to point to any significant difference between the resolution of 2000 and the one in 2002. Yet the vote shifted significantly. It was 118 in favour, 7 opposed, and 38 abstaining. Of the NWS, only China voted yes; the NATO 3 – the US, the UK, and France – voted no, and so did Monaco (which always votes with the US).

Non-nuclear NATO states, with the exception of Canada, fell back from 2000 to an abstention in 2002. It is interesting to note that the seven East European states (Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria) on the verge of being taken in by NATO, also abstained.

There is no doubt that the US pressed its NATO partners not to support the resolution. I will return to Canada's delicate role in a moment, but first we must examine the incoherence between NATO and the NPT.

In 1999, the Canadian government, following a recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, pressed NATO to examine its nuclear weapons policies. Without actually reviewing its policies, NATO began a process of considering options and issued a 130-paragraph document on December 14, 2000. The document said that nuclear weapons are "essential" and must be kept up-to-date as "credible deterrence."

The contradiction between what NATO countries say in the NPT context and do in the NATO context is astounding. The very same countries that pledge an "unequivocal undertaking" to the total elimination of nuclear weapons then, in the next breath, reaffirm that nuclear "weapons are essential."

The 2000 vote for the New Agenda resolution allowed the international community to think that NATO might address this incoherence and, over time, devise a non-nuclear strategy. But any such hopes have been dashed by the emergence of the Nuclear Posture Review and the US President's National Security Strategy, which assert the possibility of unilateral pre-emptive military action with nuclear weapons.

Though claiming reduced reliance on nuclear weapons, the US Administration wants to maintain them for offensive purposes. The Nuclear Posture Review states US intentions clearly:

Nuclear weapons play a critical role in the defense capabilities of the United States, its allies and friends. They provide credible military options to deter a wide range of threats, including WMD and large-scale conventional military force. These nuclear capabilities possess unique properties that give the United States options to hold at risk classes of targets [that are] important to achieve strategic and political objectives.

The US Nuclear Weapons Council is considering resumed nuclear weapons testing.

A breakout of the testing moratorium would blow apart the already weakened non-proliferation regime. This is a matter of concern within NATO, to be sure. But the NATO states have not yet found the strength – or courage – to challenge the US's undermining of the NPT 2000 Review.

That the US drives NATO is beyond dispute. The US is driving its aggressive policies forward under the cover of the September 11 terrorist attacks, and, since states everywhere are fearful of more terrorism, the disagreements within NATO are muted. Meanwhile, the development of a missile defence system forges ahead with NATO states lured into support with the prospect of lucrative contracts.

The NPT is the largest multilateral treaty on nuclear disarmament; the treaty is in crisis. The "good faith" provisions of Article VI are being flouted by the US and NATO is mute.

Where does this leave Canada?

As Bill Robinson (2002) has recently pointed out, "Nearly sixty years after the advent of the nuclear age, Canada still maintains a fundamentally ambiguous policy toward nuclear weapons." Though the Canadian government supports the elimination of nuclear weapons, it participates in a nuclear-armed alliance and endorses NATO's Strategic Concept.

Canada has done two things to break out of the Gordian knot:

It has tried to get NATO to bring its policies into line with the NPT.

It has voted for the New Agenda Coalition resolution upholding the 13 Practical Steps for the elimination of nuclear weapons despite a massive NATO abstention.

Canadian diplomacy has long operated on the principle that, if it is to challenge the US on anything deemed important, it needs "good company." One would think that the NAC countries, being themselves reasonably friendly to the US, would constitute "good company." But in the game of nuclear disarmament, NATO trumps the NAC. Since Canada's defence is inextricably intertwined with NATO, not to mention the US, there is no question that Canada – at least at this time in history – will stick with NATO.

Bill Graham, the current Foreign Minister and himself former Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee that recommended Canada push NATO, is a staunch advocate of nuclear disarmament. In a hard-hitting speech to the Conference on Disarmament, March 19, 2002, Graham pledged that Canada "will work to achieve the full implementation of the 13 Practical Steps.... We seek the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction."

Nonetheless, there is no evidence that Graham has directed his thoughts towards NATO. And the questions surrounding war in Iraq and measures to counter terrorism dominated his recent meeting in Ottawa with US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The reality is that the Government of Canada, conflicted as it is on the issue, would likely not have voted yes for the NAC resolution had the NGO community not put pressure on it. There was certainly no public pressure, and the media once again demonstrated their lack of interest in the nuclear disarmament struggle. Parliament was virtually silent.

There is, however, an interesting development that emerges from the yes vote. Canada is now instrumentally positioned to be a "bridge" between NATO and the NAC. It has good credentials with both organizations. It could, in a meaningful way, transmit NAC views to NATO and vice versa. Closing the gap between the two would be a high act of leadership in nuclear disarmament and go a long way to ensuring the survival of the NPT after the 2005 Review.

It is vital that a government take the lead in breaking the incoherence between NATO and the NPT. Only a government belonging to NATO can play this role effectively. Canada, with its principled vote on October 25, 2002, is so placed. It is up to the NGO community to press Canada now to play that role.

Reference

Robinson, Bill 2002, Canada and nuclear weapons: Canadian policies related to, and connections to, nuclear weapons, Project Ploughshares Working Paper 02-5.
(html version) (pdf version)

By Senator Douglas Roche, O.C.
Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative

Call to Conscience from Veterans to Active Duty Troops and Reservists

by some members of Veterans For Peace

December 6, 2002

We are veterans of the United States armed forces. We stand with the majority of humanity, including millions in our own country, in opposition to the United States' all out war on Iraq. We span many wars and eras, have many political views and we all agree that this war is wrong. Many of us believed serving in the military was our duty, and our job was to defend this country. Our experiences in the military caused us to question much of what we were taught. Now we see our REAL duty is to encourage you as members of the U.S. armed forces to find out what you are being sent to fight and die for and what the consequences of your actions will be for humanity. We call upon you, the active duty and reservists, to follow your conscience and do the right thing.

In the last Gulf War, as troops, we were ordered to murder from a safe distance. We destroyed much of Iraq from the

air, killing hundreds of thousands, including civilians. We remember the road to Basra - the Highway of Death - where we were ordered to kill fleeing Iraqis. We bulldozed trenches, burying people alive. The use of depleted uranium weapons left the battlefields radioactive. Massive use of pesticides, experimental drugs, burning chemical weapons depots and oil fires combined to create a toxic cocktail affecting both the Iraqi people and Gulf War veterans today. One in four Gulf War veterans is disabled.

During the Vietnam War we were ordered to destroy Vietnam from the air and on the ground. At My Lai we massacred over 500 women, children and old men. This was not an aberration, it's how we fought the war. We used Agent Orange on the *enemy* and then experienced first hand its effects. We know what Post Traumatic Stress Disorder looks, feels and tastes like because the ghosts of over two million men, women and children still haunt our dreams. More of us took our own lives after returning home than died in battle.

If you choose to participate in the invasion of Iraq you will be part of an occupying army. Do you know what it is like to look into the eyes of a people that hate you to your core? You should think about what your "mission" really is. You are being sent to invade and occupy a people who, like you and me, are only trying to live their lives and raise their kids. They pose no threat to the United States even though they have a brutal dictator as their leader. Who is the U.S. to tell the Iraqi people how to run their country when many in the U.S. don't even believe their own President was legally elected?

Saddam is being vilified for gassing his own people and trying to develop weapons of mass destruction. However, when Saddam committed his worst crimes the U.S. was supporting him. This support included providing the means to produce chemical and biological weapons. Contrast this with the horrendous results of the U.S. led economic sanctions. More than a million Iraqis, mainly children and infants, have died because of these sanctions. After having destroyed the entire infrastructure of their country including hospitals, electricity generators, and water treatment plants, the U.S. then, with the sanctions, stopped the import of goods, medicines, parts, and chemicals necessary to restore even the most basic necessities of life.

There is no honor in murder. This war is murder by another name. When, in an unjust war, an errant bomb dropped kills a mother and her child it is not "collateral damage," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a child dies of dysentery because a bomb damaged a sewage treatment plant, it is not "destroying enemy infrastructure," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a father dies of a heart attack because a bomb disrupted the phone lines so he could not call an ambulance, it is not "neutralizing command and control facilities," it is murder. When, in an unjust war, a thousand poor farmer conscripts die in a trench defending a town they have lived in their whole lives, it is not victory, it is murder.

There will be veterans leading protests against this war on Iraq and your participation in it. During the Vietnam War thousands in Vietnam and in the U.S. refused to follow orders. Many resisted and rebelled. Many became conscientious objectors and others went to prison rather than bear arms against the so-called enemy. During the last Gulf War many GIs resisted in various ways and for many different reasons. Many of us came out of these wars and joined with the anti-war movement.

If the people of the world are ever to be free, there must come a time when being a citizen of the world takes precedence over being the soldier of a nation. Now is that time. When orders come to ship out, your response will profoundly impact the lives of millions of people in the Middle East and here at home. Your response will help set the course of our future. You will have choices all along the way. Your commanders want you to obey. We urge you to think. We urge you to make your choices based on your conscience. If you choose to resist, we will support you and stand with you because we have come to understand that our REAL duty is to the people of the world and to our common future.

Veterans Call to Conscience (VCC)

Boston Globe

Iran's top leader speaks out against any U.S. attack on Iraq

By Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press, 12/6/2002 09:48

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) Iran's supreme leader on Friday made his strongest stand yet against a U.S. attack on Iraq,

saying he would not support it under any circumstances.

In a speech broadcast on national radio, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused the United States of seeking to dominate the oil and other resources of the Islamic world.

"A U.S. attack against any country, including Iraq, under any pretext, is harmful to the interests of the Islamic world," Khamenei said. "The main objectives of the world arrogance (the United States) is to dominate the resources and riches of the Islamic world."

"The Islamic world needs unity and harmony more than ever before because the enemy of the Islamic nation is baring its teeth and claws against us," Khamenei added.

NATO mulls U.S. options for possible military role in Iraq

By Paul Ames, Associated Press, 12/6/2002 01:46

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) NATO nations are studying four scenarios presented by the United States for possible military roles for the alliance should war break out in Iraq, senior alliance officials said.

As in the 1991 Gulf War and last year's overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the United States will spearhead any attack, backed by both NATO and non-NATO allies.

However, unlike in those conflicts, Washington is also seeking a role for NATO itself. Options include:

***protecting Turkey from the threat of a counterstrike from the Iraqis;

***using NATO's planning facilities to coordinate efforts such as air or sea transport for troops and equipment, air-to-air refueling, or even air cover to ground troops;

***using collective forces such as AWACS surveillance planes, minesweepers or naval patrol ships;

***providing troops to enforce peace and help rebuild Iraq after Saddam Hussein's regime has been toppled.

"In the event of a conflict, the United States would welcome NATO political support and an effective contribution militarily," said Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to NATO.

Date: Fri, 6 Dec 2002 10:56:37 +0100

Subject: [abolition-caucus] Re:Inspection team to Inçirlik - Turkey?

Reply-To: "Pol D'Huyvetter" <pol@motherearth.org>

Dear friends,

I would like to propose to inspect the NATO base of Inçirlik in Turkey, which is close to the border of Iraq. Today Inçirlik is the most important Turkish airforce base for the US to launch an attack against Iraq "for its presumed fabrication or possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction".

Inçirlik is the sole storage location for US B-61 nuclear weapons in Turkey. According to Natural Resources Defence Council twenty-five WS3 vaults are operational at Incirlik and six each are maintained as well at the bases of Akinci and Balikesir in stand-by status.

It is assumed that US B-61 tactical nukes are only deployed at the base of Incirlik, number ranging between 25 to maximum 50 nukes. . Who would be interested to organise such a citizens inspection at Inçirlik? Who would be interested to join? Who could help to mobilise Members of European Parliament or other political representatives to join such a mission? Who could provide funding?

Looking forward to your answers,

Peace,

Pol D'Huyvetter

For Mother Earth

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From: VFP National Office <veteransfp@sbcglobal.net>
 Subject: Using "Talk Back Radio".
 Subject: Talk Back Radio

Hello,

The interesting aspect of AM talk radio is that progressives can call in and use their format to talk about the "Myths of Iraq Coverage," and many other pressing issues. It only takes a moment to challenge the hosts, make a point, suggest a resource and, most critically, give the audience a different perspective. Over the years, I've noticed that this tactic is not only underutilized, but is rarely even suggested. We're so accustomed to complaining about the corporate media and how we can't reach the "unconverted," that we're overlooking a free avenue through which to reach hundreds, thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of people - regular folk who are politically curious, but are often being manipulated.

Kind Regards,
 Preston
 303.830.7183

Manipulation By Polls/Polls/issues

From an essay by George McGovern in Harper's December 2002 issue:

"One reason I am cautious about sending young men off to war is that I have seen what war does. Half of the bomber crews that I flew with in WWII never made it home again. The images remain with me after fifty-five years -- young airmen laughing and talking over breakfast before daylight, and then a few minutes later being blown to bits when their huge, overloaded bomber filled with men, bombs, and high-octane gasoline crashed during takeoff. I see the image of a bomber taking a direct hit over the target, catching fire, exploding, and falling in pieces over hostile enemy territory. I tell you these things because no man who has had these experiences will ever again speak carelessly about war. It is the worst thing that men do to each other. When I listen to the bombastic rhetoric of Messrs. Bush and Cheney and the war cries of Ms. Rice, I know that I'm hearing from people who've never been near a battle field."

>From Saskatoon.

1. VANA helped organise a Peace Conference On October 18-20 October. Over 250 attended with many young people. The theme was Peace in the Home, Peace in the Community and Peace in the World. There were over 20 workshops presented as well as keynote speech from Peter Coombs. Representatives of the NDP and the Green Party gave greetings and support.

The organisers intend to make this an annual event.

2. VANA did not attend the Legion organised City November 11th celebration due to deteriorating relations with the Legion. Instead we laid wreaths at the Memorial Gates of the University Of Saskatchewan.

However several stalwart people from the Peace Coalition picketed the celebration with pamphlets suggesting the best way to Remember was not to let Canada play any part in the impending war against Iraq.

3. The Saskatoon Peace Coalition of which VANA is a member, organised the conference and is planning a demonstration and march on January 18th to coincide with the other continental demonstrations.

Along the way to that event they have planned for mobilization to demonstrate at 5.30 pm the day the war starts outside the Federal Building.

4. As part of the same momentum tomorrow the Coalition will kick off its mail-drop campaign at the Mahatma Ghandi statue in the downtown. We plan

for an initial 2000 but hope that if we get any encouragement we will shoot for 5000.
from VANA HQ.

If you can't mail drop you can include it in your Seasonal cards and letters.

TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IRAQ

1. Iraq was created by Great Britain and France after the First World War. Iraq is a secular Arab State which despite its record of human rights abuses, freed women from the veil and developed a society with excellent universal social and educational facilities.

2. Iraq was supported by the United States in its war with Iran in the 1980's to defeat a fundamentalist Muslim regime and make Iran's oil more easily accessible to the West.

3. *Desert Storm*, the UN sanctioned war against Iraq in 1991, was carried out by high level bombing causing at least 300,000 casualties.

In addition essential infrastructure such as sewage disposal and water purification plants were deliberately destroyed in order to ensure the likelihood of water borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery spreading in the civilian population. **This has been a principal cause for the deaths of over 500,000 children since the end of the war. [Unicef figures].**

4. UN forces used Depleted Uranium in armour piercing shells. Such radioactive material has increased birth deformities in Iraqi children and may be a cause of the "Gulf War Syndrome".

5. UN Resolution 687 in 1991 ordered Iraq to divest itself of Weapons of Mass Destruction [WMD]. Referring to Israel's nuclear weapons it also suggested that a WMD-Free zone be established in the Middle East. It reminded the five original nuclear powers of their obligation to rid themselves of these weapons.

Only Iraq has made any attempt to fulfil these obligations. [UN inspectors reported that Iraq had got rid of 95% of its WMD's before the inspectors withdrew.]

6. The UN resolution 1441 of November 8th 2002 demands that Iraq declares all its WMD's "*and all such weapons locations, components, sub-components, agents and related material and equipment.*" This demand in effect means disclosing the site of every chemical, biological or nuclear facility in the country even if they are clearly for domestic purposes. A tall order, if not an impossible request to be accomplished in 30 days.

The Resolution also gives the inspectors the power to remove Iraqi citizens and their families for interrogation outside Iraq.

Impossible or unacceptable requirements make non-compliance certain.

Non compliance means war.

7. Iraq has not threatened the USA

8. Saddam Hussein and President Bush both consider Osama Bin Laden a terrorist.

9. None of the 9/11 terrorists came from Iraq

10. Iraq has the second largest untapped supply of oil in the world. President Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and many others of the Bush team come from the American Oil Industry.

The USA and Great Britain both threaten to attack Iraq regardless of what the Inspectors report.

Like the Gulf War this will begin with intense high level bombing killing hundreds or thousands of civilians and causing a horrific humanitarian refugee situation. This will be followed by massive land-based attacks with tanks and artillery.

If you don't want this to happen, then Canada must seek to end the conflict between the UN and Iraq by diplomatic means.

SO PLEASE write to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon Bill Graham and your MP and ask them to ensure that Canada plays no part in any US or UN proposed war on Iraq.