

VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH



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Box 319, 916 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1K7

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Letter from Your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members:

VANA BC executive wishes you a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Connie Fogal, an outspoken lawyer and wife of VANA member Harry Rankin, spoke clearly and forcefully against Canada's new "anti-terrorist" law at our well-attended regular general meeting on 10 December 2001. Her topic, "Bills C-35 and C-36: Protest at your Peril." Since VANA is an organization of protesters, these new laws are of great concern to us and to the peace movement of which we are a part. We therefore summarize (below) the main points of Connie's excellent talk.

No one is more aware than us VANA members that the news we get about civilian casualties in Afghanistan is incomplete, to put it mildly. Members will therefore be interested in the careful research into this sensitive area, by a U.S. professor in New Hampshire. His findings appear below.

Congratulations to VANA member Marvin Brown in Nanaimo for doing such a fine job with the local media! His letter to the Nanaimo Harbour City Star and a follow-up interview in which he presents his views on Afghanistan and other battles in the "war-against-terrorism" appears below.

George Galloway, MP from Scotland, spoke about Iraq and the Middle East at an overflow class in Langara College on Tuesday 15 January. Bin Laden.... "pierced Arab hearts with his message," said Galloway, who was brought to Vancouver by B.C.'s Campaign to End Sanctions Against the People of Iraq (CESAPI). Galloway's speech, which kept 80 students in rapt attention for 40 minutes, appears below in a summary report. Also there are comments below by Ed Shaffer on the attempts to find Osama bin Laden.

There is currently a threat of a war between India and Pakistan which could easily result in a devastating nuclear exchange. Yesterday this rated about 40 words on page 8 of the Vancouver Sun. Luckily, VANA BC members don't have to depend on such low calibre media as this to keep informed. This serious crisis will be the subject of our next meeting at the Unitarian Church Fireside Room on Monday 28 January at 1:30p.m. The speaker(s) at this meeting are currently being arranged.

Our congratulations to Judith Rees-Thomas, a Raging Granny, who took a VANA Petition full of signatures to her MP, John Reynolds (Alliance). He agreed to present it in the House of Commons. Our first for the new petition, as far as we know.

Finally, a point of information: VANA's membership year now begins on 1 November, in line with our financial year and also to tie it to Remembrance Day. Membership dues (\$30.) should be mailed to: Mary Kitley, Site 4, Box 3B8, Tantallon, NS, B0J 3J0. If you are behind a year or two with your dues, just start afresh with this year (not that we will discourage you from paying the missed years if you so wish!) Keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets.

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Bills C-35, C-36 etc: Protest at your Peril

A summary of a presentation by Connie Fogal to a VANA BC meeting 10 December

Bill C-24 (Passed 13 June 2001)-Potentially, an 'anything-goes' law for the police.

A public officer is justified in committing an act or omission-or in directing the commission of an act or omission under section (10)- that would otherwise constitute an offense if the public officer:

(a) is engaged in the investigation of an offense under, or the enforcement of, an Act of Parliament or in the investigation of criminal activity

S.25.1 (9) and (10) require the officer to get authorization to commit the offense , but then give him permission to commit offense if it is not feasible to get the authorizations, and if he or she believes on reasonable and probable grounds that it is for the purpose of law enforcement duties.

INCREDIBLY, this bill gives police powers to commit offenses in the “enforcement of, an Act of Parliament.”

It also reduces protection from police harassment and intimidation

Bill C-35 (Passed on first reading 29 November 2001. Will come before Parliament in February and thence to the Senate for final approval) Grants “immunity from legal process of every kind to representatives of a foreign state that is a member of or participates in an international organization.”

● C-35, together with C-36, creates severe criminal penalties for anyone who in any way interferes with such foreign agents, their property or means of transportation, or merely threatens to do so.

●This bill clearly has more to do with preventing lawful protest at such meetings as the WTO meeting in Seattle and the FTAA in Quebec, than with preventing “terrorism.”

●This would give a mass-murderer, like Suharto and his armed thugs, better protection in Canada than that given to a Canadian citizen.

Bill C-36 (Passed 18 Dec 2001). Big: 175 pages

● Allows preventative arrests, detention up to 72 hours without charge or appearance before a judge, compels those charged to answer questions on penalty of imprisonment and removes the right of the accused to know the evidence against them.

● Consists mainly of amendments to other acts including: The Criminal Code of Canada, the Official Secrets Act, The Canada Evidence Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Immigration Act, the proceeds of Crime Act, Access to Information Act, Canada Post Corporation Act, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, Access to Information Act, Privacy Act, Seized Property Management Act, Canadian Security Intelligence Act, United Nations Act, Identification of Criminals Act and others.

Contains only one new law (Bill C16), the Registration of Charities (Security Information) Act

● It is important to grasp the inter-connections between this and other acts

●Its language is convoluted and therefore open to wide interpretation

●Judges may reflect the new political/social climate and interpret these laws harshly.

●Defines “terrorist” so broadly that anyone involved in (formerly) legitimate civil protest, or even planning such protest, could be charged.

●Permits Government to apply this definition in creating a list of “terrorist” organizations

Bill C-42 (First reading:22 November 2001. Comes before Parliament again in February’02)

●This, like Bill C-36, is a compendium of amendments to many other acts

●Empowers the Minister of Defence to declare any place or thing (eg: a car or bus) in Canada a “Military Zone” for up to one year.

●In these zones, special laws and military powers apply, including the use of lethal force.

●Empowers the Minister of Health to declare an emergency and force vaccinations on people without these vaccinations being proven safe.

General:

These detailed and complicated new laws abolish ancient and fundamental rights, like the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and the right to remain silent.

●Bill C-36, which has very far-reaching effects, was rammed through Parliament, with no real public debate or even full parliamentary debate, which was curtailed by closure.

●These changes are consistent and in harmony with the WTO agenda.

●The WTO’s stated aim had been to make these changes “incrementally”(unobtrusively)

●The terrorism of 911 is now being used as justification to fast-track these changes.

“Nineteen terrorists in 6 weeks have been able to command 300 million North Americans to do away with the entirety of their civil liberties that took 700 years to advance from the Magna Carta onward. The terrorists have already won the political and ideological war with one terrorist act. It is mind boggling that we are that weak as a society.” (Rocco Galati, lawyer for the Canadian Islamic Congress)

3,500 Civilians Killed in Afghanistan by U.S. Bombs

DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE - December 10 - More than 3,500 civilians have been killed in Afghanistan by U.S. bombs, according to a study to be released December 10 by Marc W. Herold, Professor of Economics, International Relations, and Women's Studies at the University of New Hampshire.

Professor Herold has been gathering data on civilian casualties since October 7 by culling information from news agencies, major newspapers, and first-hand accounts. "I decided to do the study because I suspected that the modern weaponry was not what it was advertised to be. I was concerned that there would be significant civilian casualties caused by the bombing, and I was able to find some mention of casualties in the foreign press but almost nothing in the U.S. press," said Herold.

Herold's data is available at <http://www.democracynow.org/thndtrmb.doc> (MS Word Format)

For each day since October 7, when the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan began, he lists the number of casualties, location, type of weapon used, and source(s) of information. Following are several examples from his daily calculations

● On October 11, two U.S. jets bombed the mountain village of Karam, comprised of 60 mud houses, during dinner and evening prayer time, killing 100-160 people. Sources DAWN, (English language Pakistani daily newspaper), the Guardian of London, the Independent, International Herald Tribune, the Scotsman, the Observer, and the BBC News.

● On October 13, in the early morning, an F-18 dropped 2,000 lb. JDAM bombs on the Qila Meer Abas neighborhood, 2 kms. South of the Kabul airport, killing four people. Sources Afghan Islamic Press, Los Angeles Times, Frontier Post, Pakistan Observer, the Guardian of London, and the BBC News.

● On October 31, in a pre-dawn raid, an F-18 dropped a 2,000 lb. JDAM bomb on a Red Crescent clinic, killing 15 - 25 people. Sources DAWN, the Times of London, the Independent, the Guardian, Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France Presse.

● October 18th - the central market place, Sarai Shamali in the Madad district of Kandahar is bombed, killing 47 civilians; October 21st - a cluster bomb falls on the military hospital and mosque in Herat, killing 100;

● October 23rd - in the early a.m. hours, low-flying AC-130 gunships repeatedly strafe the farming villages of Bori

● Chokar and Chowkar-Karez [Chakoor Kariz], 25 miles north of Kandahar, killing 93 civilians;

● November 10th - the villages of Shah Aqa and a neighboring sidling, in the poppy-growing Khakrez district, 70 kilometers northwest of Kandahar are bombed, resulting in over 300 civilian casualties.

● November 18th - carpet-bombing by B-52's of frontline village near Khanabad, province of Kunduz, kills at least 150 civilians.

Professor Herold has sought whenever possible to cross-corroborate accounts of civilian casualties. He relied upon British, Canadian, and Australian newspapers; Indian newspapers, especially The Times of India; three Pakistani daily newspapers; the Singapore News; Afghan Islamic Press; Agence France Press; Pakistan News Service; Reuters; BBC News Online; Al Jazeera; and a variety of other reputable sources, including the United Nations and other relief agencies.

The Pentagon has repeatedly denied reports of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, and most U.S. media outlets have qualified their reports of casualties with the statement "could not be independently confirmed." But Professor Herold has been able to confirm the number of casualties and has found that the number is climbing toward 4,000. "People have to know that there is a human cost to war, and that this is a war with thousands of casualties," said Herold. "These were poor people to begin with, and, on top of that, they had absolutely nothing to do with the events of September 11."

On the Heavy Side: Three N-Facts;

(Source: Brookings Inst. website: <http://www.brookings.org>)

I Number of islands vaporized in Enewetak atoll by the November 1, 1952 "Mike" H-Bomb test: 1 (The island of Elugelab)

Chuck Hansen, U.S. Nuclear Weapons: The Secret History, Orion Books, 1988, pp. 58-59, 95

II Number of nuclear tests in the Pacific: 106

Natural Resources Defense Council, Nuclear Weapons Databook Project

III. Number of U.S. nuclear tests in Nevada: 911

Natural Resources Defense Council, Nuclear Weapons Databook Project

"Canada has no business in Afghanistan" -Marvin Brown

Marvin Brown, a VANA member in Nanaimo, stirred up the local press with this clear and direct letter to the editor of the *Nanaimo City Star* in December:

In answer to James Latour's letter (Some wars are necessary Dec. 8 Star) I call war terrorism because I fought Hitler's army and I can still feel the horror of it. Hitler wanted to rule this world and he used any means to attain that end.

George Bush wants to rule the world and he is using the same tools to achieve that end. I oppose those methods, so I raise my voice against George Bush and his powerful army. It is not eliminating terrorism, it is creating it. Hitler did not have that right and George Bush does not have that right. Marvin Brown, Nanaimo.

(The Star did a three-quarter-page follow-up interview with Marvin, part of which follows.)

Marvin Brown, 77, says Canada should have no part in the war against terrorism.

"It's very destructive for our own country. it destroys our decency," says Brown. "We're trying to prevent violence by killing people - it just doesn't work."

Seeing the soldiers in Afghanistan takes him back to his days as a young paratrooper in Europe. "I see these soldiers on TV and they're still wet behind the ears," says Brown as his eyes brim with tears. "They're just kids." And it's not just the conflict in Afghanistan he opposes. "I'm opposed to military intervention in any country," he says, "Canada has a lot we could share with the world. But we shouldn't be sharing bombs and guns, we should be sharing food and medicine."

Brown says the solution to the problem in Afghanistan is simple - get out. It's neither Canada's nor the United States' place to be policing the world. "We should strengthen the United Nations. If there's need for any kind of action, it should be done under the name of the U.N. and not under the name of the U.S. or Canada."

Brown joined the U.S. army in 1943 signing up with the 101st Airborne Division. They were surrounded by the Germans for ten days at Bastogne in Belgium. "I lost many good friends there," says Brown with tears in his eyes, "I think about it every night."

Honourably discharged from the army in 1946, Brown moved to Canada in 1965 with his draft-age sons, and never regretted coming here. "Every day I thank Canada for keeping my sons alive."

George Galloway, MP from Scotland spoke on Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East at Langara College

"Bin Laden pierced their hearts with his message"- Galloway

George Galloway, MP from Scotland, and Senior Vice Chairman Parliamentary Labour Party Foreign Affairs Committee, who returned to Britain from Iraq on Friday 11 January, spoke to an overflow class of students at Langara College in Vancouver at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday 15 January 2002.

The English-speaking countries, especially the United States and Britain, "have a deeply cynical policy of double standards regarding the Islamic world of 1.3 billion people," said Galloway who has visited Iraq yearly since 1991.

"In spite of Osama Bin Laden's violence, his primitive politics and his misogyny he is the most popular figure in this Islamic world, where he has little competition from the corpulent kings, generals, dictators and juntas, who obey orders from the west," said Galloway.

(continued on page 5)

Galloway (continued from page 4)

“I was with Arabs in Iraq, Jordan and Palestine while they listened to Osama Bin Laden’s first video and saw the reaction: Their faces were wet with tears. He pierced their hearts with his message, which had three arrows:

First: That America will never have peace until Palestine has peace and justice.

Second: That America will never have peace as long as 6,000 Iraqi children die each month due to U.S. enforced UN sanctions.

Third: America will never have peace as long as the west maintains tyrants and puppet rulers in the Islamic world.”

“The Islamic world sees 6,000 Iraqi children die every month for ten years and sees that the west doesn’t care,” said Galloway, “but when 3,000 people die in the World Trade Centers the whole world shakes and is now on the brink of many wars.” Galloway sees this as part of a pervasive double-standard by which the blood of Americans is worth so much more than the blood of Iraqis or Afghans.

On the Light Side:

Quiz

Which terrorist organization best fits the description below?

** Leader is the spoiled son of a powerful politician, from extremely wealthy oil family.

** Leader has declared a war against his 'enemies'; believes any nation not with him is against him; believes god is on his side, and that any means are justified.

**Leadership was not elected by a majority in a free and fair democratic election.

** Kills thousands of innocent civilians, some of them children, in cold blooded bombings.

** Operates through clandestine organization with agents in many countries; uses bombing, assassination, other terrorist tactics.

(Prize for best answer: Weekend trip for two to Port Moody)

Where, Oh Where Is Osama bin Laden?

by Ed Shaffer

Since 1998. Osama bin Laden has been a wanted man. Accused of masterminding the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa and of the attack on the battleship, Cole, in Yemen, the United States, we are told, had been looking for him long before September 11 but has not, up to now (January 19, 2002), been able to find him. The C.I.A., despite its vast resources, has been unable to do what Israel did in apprehending Eichman in Argentina and France did in arresting Carlos the Jackal in the Sudan. Both these countries got their man without dropping a single bomb and without killing any innocent civilians.

What makes this failure even more puzzling is that the C.I.A. had contact with bin Laden as late as July 2001. In an article in *The Guardian* (London, November 1, 2001) Anthony Sampson, an author of several books on the oil and arms trade, reports that “[t]wo months before September 11 Osama bin Laden flew to Dubai for 10 days for treatment at the American hospital, where he was visited by the local CIA agent.” Sampson’s source of information was the conservative French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, which has close contact with French intelligence. According to Sampson:

Bin Laden is reported to have arrived in Dubai on July 4 from Quetta in Pakistan with his own personal doctor, nurse and four bodyguards, to be treated in the urology department. While there, he was visited by several members of his family and Saudi personalities, and the CIA. The CIA chief was seen in the lift, on his way to see Bin Laden, and later, it is alleged, boasted to friends about his contact.

(continued on page 5)

Bin Laden (continued from page 5)

Sampson’s story, if true, raises questions about the willingness of the United States to capture bin Laden. So does a recent book, *Ben Laden: La Vérité Interdite (Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth: November 2001)*, co-authored by Jean- Charles Brisard, a French security expert and Guillaume Dasquié, a journalist. The book claims that John P. O’Neill, former director of antiterrorism for the F.B.I.’s New York office, “complained bitterly last summer that the United States was unwilling to confront Saudi Arabia over Osama bin Laden and that oil ruled American foreign policy” It states that he had been leading the F.B.I.’s investigation into the bombing of the destroyer Cole in Yemen in October 2000, but he had been barred in July from returning to Yemen by the United States ambassador there, who accused him of harming relations between the United States and Yemen. Frustrated by this lack of cooperation, he left the F. B. I. in August last year to become the chief of security of the World Trade Center. He was killed in the Sept. 11 attack.

Another indication of the lack of willingness to go after bin Laden was the decision by the United States to agree to the request of Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington, to evacuate 24 members of Osama bin Laden's family, who were living in the United States They were driven or flown under F.B.I. supervision to a secret assembly point in Texas and then to Washington from where they left the country on a private charter plane when airports reopened three days after the attacks. Why were not these people, some of whom may have had direct connections with Osama, not detained and questioned, while at the same time the government was rounding up and detaining without any charge several thousand people from the Middle East, whose connections to bin Laden are unproven. This question remains unanswered(continued on page 6)

Finally, James Woosley, former director of the C.I.A., told the BBC late last year that the United States is not interested in finding bin Laden. It would leave that task to the new Afghan government. He added that all the U.S. is interested in “changing governments” in Afghanistan and other countries.

There are a number of reasons why the U.S. may not want to find bin Laden. First, if they capture him alive, they will have to put him on trial. Such a trial could arouse passions in the Muslim world. In addition, bin Laden may bring to light some interesting details about the relationship between his family and that of former president Bush. The elder Bush is one of the chief representatives of the Carlyle Group, a \$12 billion (US) equity fund, which invests heavily in military industries. Among other share holders are former Secretary of State James Baker, former British PM John Major and, until very recently, the bin Laden family. It certainly would not be in the interests of the present President Bush to air this dirty linen in public.

The alternative to putting bin Laden on trial is, using the mobster language of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, to “kill him.”But that would make him a martyr, something the U. S. would not want to happen. Finally, bin Laden’s capture would put strong international pressure on the U.S. to end the war. But the U.S. wants to expand it in order to change governments in its drive to impose a *Pax Americana* on an unwilling world., a far more important goal than the apprehension of Osama bin Laden.

VANA MEMBERSHIP

Name: To renew your membership in or to join VANA, please fill out the form below and send, along with a cheque payable to VANA, to Ted Powis, Treasurer, #603-1745 Esquimalt, W. Vancouver, V7V 1R7 The dues are \$30, \$20 of which go to the national office and \$10 to the branch. (You can use the enclosed addressed envelope)

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____ **Code** _____

City _____ **Prov** _____

Email Address _____