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Letter from Your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members:

All of Vancouver was saddened by the death of Harry Rankin, 81, on Tuesday 26 February. Lawyer, champion of the poor, former Vancouver Councilor, veteran and VANA member, Harry is remembered in a tribute below.

VANA's "Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Since" exhibition opens tomorrow at Simon Fraser University. Next week, the exhibition will be at Langara College from 20-22 March. Exhibitions at UBC and Capilano College are in the works. As at our exhibition in July last year at the Vancouver Public Library, we will keep a "Comments & Contact" book at the exhibition. When these exhibitions are completed, we will add the new contact names to our list of 148 potential Canadians Against Nuclear Arms (CANAN) supporters, and organize a new formative event.

VANA's Convention 2002 will take place in the second week of October and will be an "at home" convention this year, our National Exec. members decided at their monthly meeting on Monday 15 March. The convention will operate by a conference phone call involving VANA branches across Canada. This decision by the exec. recognizes that the considerable amount of energy, organization and resources that go into a convention is better used, at this stage of VANA's existence, in dealing with the increasingly dangerous world situation. We will have more details for you on this in the next update.

The Bush Administration's "Nuclear Posture Review" (NPR) leaked to William Arkin, whose article on it appeared 9 March 2002 in the LA Times, gives us a chilling glimpse of this 'increasingly dangerous world situation.' A point form summary of this NPR appears below to present as clearly as possible, the facts of this review. Below this, you will find opinion on this review in the form of "Comments on the leaked Nuclear Posture Review." It is especially important to keep fact and opinion separate on such an important matter.

'Why is Canada following America's reckless march to war?' asks VANA national president David Morgan in an article that appears below. This article has been sent widely to Canada's media, peace groups and all Liberal, Bloc and NDP Members of Parliament. Bloc members and Quebec's Liberal MPs got a French translation. So far, no reply to this question has been received.

At our next members meeting on Monday 25 March 2002, 1:30 p.m., at the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak, we will welcome David Cadman, President of the Vancouver UN Association, to speak on the U.N. Support for the UN and the rule of international law has always been central to VANA's thinking. The way that the Chretien government has turned its back on the UN and "marched to Washington's drum" is our sharpest point at issue with this government. Don't miss this informative and up-to-the-minute presentation.

Keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They will certainly find a warm welcome in this update. (even the beefs)

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VANA SALUTES HARRY RANKIN (1820-2002)

Harry Rankin, 81, lawyer, a longtime champion of the poor in Vancouver, City Councillor from 1967 to 1993, corporal in the Canadian Army First Division, Seaforth Highlanders, wounded twice in the Italian campaign, VANA member, very widely respected and loved, died following heart surgery Tuesday 26 February.

VANA members attended a celebration of Harry's life at the Croatian Centre, Vancouver Sunday 10 March, where an overflow crowd of 1,000 plus heard many tributes to Harry. David Morgan spoke of him, as "certainly no aristocrat, but a truly noble man," in a tribute from VANA.

A good portrait of Harry in action, appeared last year following an article in the National Post March 17, 2001 "Did Canadians Steal The Treasures?" which suggested that maybe the Seaforth 's who captured a Nazi HQ in a palace during the battle for Rimini, in Italy, were responsible. "When a family member (a Count) returned to his ancestral home," the article stated, "many valuable heirlooms -priceless works of art, fine china, ornate furniture-had disappeared."

Harry replied:

Dear Sir:

"I am K52258, Corporal Harry Rankin, a Seaforth Highlander who joined the Canadian Army September 04,1939, spent five and one half years overseas in WW2 with two and one half years active service in Italy. I was wounded twice. I was a combatant at the Battle of Rimini. I WAS THERE! Ian MacLeod is dead wrong! He, for writing, and you, for printing, do a grave disservice to those many Canadians who were wounded, suffered or died defending liberty.

I will be 81 years old in May 2001.

I was in the Pioneer Platoon. Our infantry was spread on hills in front of the Palazzo Des Vergers, the palace you depict. Our infantrymen were a couple hundred yards in front of the palace receiving a helluva shelling, machine gun and mortar fire from the Germans up on the hill. We were in a desperate position.

I remember Colonel Syd Thompson asking for volunteers of stretcher bearers during the shelling to bring in the wounded. I and three others carried in a fellow Seaforth suffering with a leg almost off. The wounded soldier looked at me and said, "For Chrissakes Hank, get me out of here. If you get me off this field safely, I am home."He was about 23 years old, badly wounded for life, but happy as hell to be able now to get out of there to go home to Canada.

95% of us were on foot, carrying Bren guns, mortars, rifles, and submachine guns and one anti-tank rifle (the biggest guy got to carry that). We were carrying at least 60 lbs each. Can you imagine us looting a palace to carry away treasures? Where in the hell would we have put them? How could we have carried them away? If this pinhead writer would have taken the time to try to visualize this situation, he would have known this was impossible as we had only a very few ammunition trucks. The Seaforths were an infantry battalion. That means we were on foot. I was there during the whole attack.

I saw no looting! Our battalion left after the battle was over and we carried no loot. There was no Lt. De Paul.

The Count who came back was an Air Force major in the Fascist military of Italy, our enemies, operating under the fascist leader Il Duce. The Count was obviously a fascist himself, being in the position he held. The writer is saying that Germans had some class for not looting this palace which was German headquarters for years. The Count whines about his family treasures.

Chances are the family stole those treasures plus food and all other commodities from the Italian people over the centuries.

The Prince says "Reading this makes me sad. It's terribly sad." Let me put it in an infantryman's words. Your article makes me sad. Terribly sad. I say spare a tear for the graves of the 20 year olds who died in these battles, not for fascist treasures, even if they were stolen by someone.

(Continued on page 3)

Harry Rankin (continued from page 2)

This article attempts to rewrite history and reinterpret war in a most offensive way. It seeks to legitimate fascism consistent with the current restructuring of the world in that image- property before people. It personalizes the vandalizing of this fascist's property instead of visualizing the real casualties- smashed peasant huts and civilians lying on the roads wounded and alive, but with no care. I saw a civilian woman lying with her leg badly wounded turning green with gangrene. People are the casualties of war, not some fascist's stolen treasure. War itself is an atrocity. It is the slaughter of the innocent.

This article defames the Seaforth Highlanders. It demeans us with its stinking sentimentality. As far as I am concerned if the palace had been battered to the ground it would have made very little difference to my comrades or to me. We were at war!!!!!!!

The infantrymen of that day will be remembered and honoured long after your paper is folded into the cage for the birds to crap on!

Yours truly,
Harry Rankin

Secret U.S. "Nuclear Posture Review"(NPR) leaked

NPR issued by: Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense.

Sent to Congress: 8 January 2002

Security Status of NPR: Classified

Leaked to: A copy of the report was obtained by defense analyst and Los Angeles Times contributor William Arkin, whose article on it appeared 9 March 2002 in the LA Times.

Previous NPR: September 1994 by the Clinton administration.

Request for this NPR: Congress requested the reassessment of the U.S. nuclear posture in September 2000. The nuclear posture review is "required by law." (Col.C.Abbott)

Apparent scope of review: "a statement of strategy" (Senior U.S. official, 9 March'02) " . . . it does not provide operational guidance on nuclear targeting or planning." (Army Lt. Col. Catherine Abbott said 9 March'02 in the Defense Department's specific response to details in the article.) "orders the Pentagon to draft contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons against at least seven countries."(William M. Arkin, senior fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington and an adjunct professor at the U.S. Air Force School of Advanced Airpower.)

Comparison with previous NPR: Since the Clinton administration's review is also classified, no specific contrast can be drawn. However, analysts portrayed this report as representing a break with earlier policy.

Bush administration official statements on the 2002 NPR: Have publicly provided only sketchy details of this nuclear review. They have publicly emphasized the parts of the policy suggesting that the administration wants to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons.

Use: This NPR is now being used by the U.S. Strategic Command to prepare a nuclear war plan.

Use of Nuclear Weapons: "weapons could be used in three types of situations:

1. Against targets able to withstand nonnuclear attack
2. In retaliation for attack with nuclear, biological or chemical weapons; or
3. "in the event of surprising military developments."

Other directives: Numerous, include:

1. Developing bunker-busting mini-nukes
2. Developing nuclear weapons that reduce collateral damage.

Potential targets: China, Russia, Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya and Syria.

Types of Situations where nuclear weapons might be used:

1. Arab-Israeli conflict
2. In a war between China and Taiwan
3. In an attack from North Korea on the south.
4. In an attack by Iraq on Israel or another neighbor.

The report says Russia is no longer officially an "enemy." Yet it acknowledges that the huge Russian arsenal, which includes about 6,000 deployed warheads and perhaps 10,000 smaller "theater" nuclear weapons, remains of concern. (This summary prepared by David Morgan 11 March 2002)

Comments on the leaked "Nuclear Posture Review."

"This is dynamite; I can imagine what these countries are going to be saying at the U.N. This clearly makes nuclear weapons a tool for fighting a war, rather than deterring them," (Joseph Cirincione, a nuclear arms expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.)

"They're trying desperately to find new uses for nuclear weapons, when their uses should be limited to deterrence. "This is very, very dangerous talk . . . Dr. Strangelove is clearly still alive in the Pentagon." (John Isaacs, president of the Council for a Livable World.)

"For 56 years, the world has avoided nuclear weapons use despite many grave crises. The Bush administration is now dangerously lowering the threshold for wreaking nuclear devastation." (John Isaacs)

"The Bush administration plan reverses an almost two-decade-long trend of relegating nuclear weapons to the category of weapons of last resort. It also redefines nuclear requirements in hurried post-Sept. 11 terms. In these and other ways, the still-secret document offers insights into the evolving views of nuclear strategists in Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld's Defense Department."

(William M. Arkin, a senior fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington and an adjunct professor at the U.S. Air Force School of Advanced Airpower Studies in Washington)

"The NPR's call for development of new nuclear weapons that reduce "collateral damage" myopically ignores the political, moral and military implications--short-term and long--of crossing the nuclear threshold." (Arkin)

"In truth, what has evolved since last year's terror attacks is an integrated, significantly expanded planning doctrine for nuclear wars. "(Arkin)

"Despite their pronouncements of wanting to slash nuclear arms, the Bush administration is reinvigorating the nuclear weapons forces and the vast research and industrial complex that support it. In addition the Bush administration seems to see a new role for nuclear weapons against the `Axis of Evil' and other problem states." (Robert S. Norris, a senior research associate at the Natural Resources Defense Council and an expert on nuclear weapons programs.)

"By targeting these seven countries, some of which are new targets, the U.S. is increasing, not decreasing, the possibility of using nuclear weapons in its policy," (Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association.)

The "Axis of Evil" states: "All of them have signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Washington has promised that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that have signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty unless those countries attack the United States or its allies "in alliance with a nuclear weapon state."(Michael R. Gordon, New York Times, 10 March 2002)

Russians "should understand that a significant part of the United States' nuclear forces are of course aimed at objects in the Russian Federation, and we should draw our own strategic conclusions from this." (Dmitry Rogozin, who heads Russia's parliament's foreign affairs committee and has close ties to the Kremlin, on NTV television)

On the Light Side:

President Bush and Colin Powell are sitting in a bar.

A customer recognizes them and asks: "What are you guys doing in here?"

Bush says, "We're planning WWII."

"Really? What's going to happen?"

Bush answers, "Well, we're going to kill 140 million Iraqis, Iranians and Afghans this time and one bicycle repairman."

The guy exclaims, "A bicycle repairman? Why kill a bicycle repairman?"

Bush turns to Powell, punches him on the shoulder, and says, "See, smart ass, I told you no one would worry about the 140 million Iraqis, Iranians, and Afghans."

Why is Canada following America's reckless march to war?

It is no big secret that President George W. Bush is eager to attack Iraq.

It also does not take a crystal ball to predict that Canada will be "on side" if this attack goes ahead. In fact Canada, with four warships in the Gulf - Arabian Sea area, and its record of supporting the sanctions on Iraq (described as "genocidal" by a high UN official who quit his UN career because of them) and also of supporting the past three years relentless U.S./U.K. air strikes on Iraq, is already securely on side. Canada's media have been far too polite to enquire why our four warships were needed to deal with Afghanistan's non-existent navy, or to hint that they may be part of the preps for Desert Storm II. Canada's media are securely "on side" too.

But why is Canada following America's reckless march to war? This is a question we should have been asking about four years ago, because this march did not begin with the presidency of George Bush. It began during Bill Clinton's term, first with the cruise missile attacks on Khartoum and Afghanistan and then with the bombing of Iraq that began, heavily, on 16 December 1998 (Operation Desert Fox), and has continued, less heavily but relentlessly, to the present day. All of these attacks were made without a shred of coverage by international law or the U.N. Charter; all were promptly supported by Canada.

But it was the U.S. contrived and led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia that began on 24 March 1999 (a pivotal date in history) that fully exposed the reckless march to war by the United States. Canada's eager and shameful participation in this bombing, which continued for 78 days, also marked this as a pivotal date in Canadian history.

For it was on this date that Canada, together with the U.S. and NATO, broke the UN Charter of 1945, the Nuremberg principles of 1946, NATO's founding document of 1949, which subordinates itself to the UN Charter, NATO's Founding Act of, 27 May 1997, on Mutual Relations Cooperation & Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, and even Canada's own National Defence Act, by waging an aggressive war against Yugoslavia.

This pivotal change was confirmed by Defence Minister Art Eggleton "If the cause is 'just' and allies are willing, Canada is ready to go to war again for humanitarian reasons, even if the action defies international law and the United Nations Charter." (G&M 2 Oct '99, A14). Canada's long and proud tradition of peace-keeping and support for the UN came to an end. Jean Chretien's government turned Canada's back on the U.N. and started to march to Washington's drum.

The Presidency of George Bush and the terrorist disasters of 11 September did not "change everything;" they just speeded everything up. Suddenly Canada is expected to be "on side" in an endless war. Fifty potential enemies have been lined up, the first of which are Iraq, Iran and North Korea. No wonder PM Jean Chretien is flustered when pressed about Canada's willingness to join the U.S. in an attack on Iraq. He is in the position of a foolish man who turns his back on law and order, joins a gang and suddenly finds out with dismay that he is expected to follow the violent whims of the gang leader. It is high time for Canadians to think very hard about where this prime minister and his government are leading us.

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VANA MEMBERSHIP

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 _____

America's Restless March (continued from page 5)

In 1945, at the end of the bloodiest war in history, the United Nations Organization was set up, in the words of its charter, to " . . . save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . "

With its Security Council to maintain peace and security, its Economic and Social Council to promote worldwide progress in economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields and its promotion of a growing body of international agreements and law, the UN was a brilliantly designed peace-promoting and war-preventing machine. For all its faults, it is still our best hope.

Neither George Bush nor Jean Chretien has come up with anything better.

Canadians must now demand that our government stops following America's reckless march to war, and returns to a respect for international law and the UN Charter.

On the Heavy Side

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Top Five List of Nuclear Secrets Revealed in 2001

1. Reports surface about the use of humans as guinea pigs in nuclear experiments from the 1950s to the 1970s.
 2. In a documentary, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres goes further than any other Israeli official in confirming that Israel has nuclear capability and discloses for the first time details about Israel's acquisition of nuclear weapons.
 3. The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) admits for the first time partial details of seven politically sensitive accidents involving British nuclear weapon, drawing attention to an institution shrouded in secrecy and cover-up.
 4. The French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) admits that Moruroa Atoll is threatened with collapse because of sustained nuclear testing.
 5. The Norwegian Radiation Protection Agency (NRPA) reveals that radioactive waste from a nuclear research plant in Norway has been wrongly fed into a town's sewage system for nine years.
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