

VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH



June 2002 Vol. 13, No.55



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

Web Site: www.vana.ca

Letter from Your Executive

VANA members, together with many peace activists and friends were greatly saddened by the death of Joyce Lydiard on May 24 at her home in North Vancouver. Joyce, a valued member of VANA BC's executive, made great contribution to many peace and social justice organizations. She was a spirited Raging Granny, she played a pivotal role in the creation of the Canadian branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF-Canada), she worked for peace and social justice issues within the United Church and supported and greatly strengthened the work of the Canadian Peace Alliance, serving on its Administrative Committee for the past three-and-a-half years. She will be greatly missed. We are also saddened by the death of Doug Chipperefield, a long-time VANA member, who passed away recently after a lengthy illness. Our sincerest condolences go out to his family.

One of the truly great men in the world today is nuclear physicist and Nobel Peace Laureate Joseph Rotblat. Rotblat, 93 years old, was the keynote speaker at the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) 15th World Congress, The Summit for Survival, Washington, DC on May 4, 2002. Like his life's work, his speech spanned the 57-year atomic age and presented our present situation with great vision and force. A synopsis of this great speech (11 pages long) appears below.

In his speech, Rotblat appeals for "the renewal of a mass campaign" for the abolition of nuclear weapons. This important appeal will form the subject of **our next members meeting on Monday 24 June 2002, 1:30 p.m., at the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak. Our guest speaker at this meeting will be Dr. Alan Connolly of Vancouver, who attended the "Summit for Survival" in Washington and heard Rotblat speak. Members of the Vancouver peace community are welcome at this meeting.** Twenty seven days after Rotblat's speech in Washington and adding weight to his warnings, President George Bush spoke to the graduating class at the West Point military academy on June the first. In this speech the president said that Americans must... "be ready for *preemptive action* when necessary." Read some extracts from this alarming speech below. Also on June 1, as if to confirm the worthlessness of the recent Bush-Putin strategic N-weapon agreement, the U.S. government announced plans to resume production of plutonium "pits," which are used to trigger nuclear warheads. A news item announcing this ominous move appears below.

The last country that should be in favour of acquiring nuclear weapons should be Japan, where there are still people alive who have experienced their dreadful effects. Nevertheless, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary recently suggested a review of the three non-nuclear principles in Japan's constitution. In a country with the strict authority structure of Japan, it is not likely that this suggestion was a careless ad lib. More likely, it was carefully planned kite-flying to measure the acceptance or outrage of the reaction. Details below.

Finally a cheery item of protest from Alaska, where Bruce Gagnon, Coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space found surprisingly widespread opposition to George Bush's Starwars II, due to be launched on Friday 14 June when the US will be officially free of the ABM treaty and concrete will be poured at an ABM site in Alaska. A cheery read.

Your dedicated VANA BC exec will be taking a summer break, and so there will be no meetings or news letters in July and August. But do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates. In the meantime have a good summer.

Your VANA BC exec:

Ed Livingston President, (604-730-6990, Fax: 604-730-6931 e-mail: <phcl@netcom.ca>

Cynthia Llewellyn Secretary, Ted Powis Treasurer,

David Morgan, News Letter, 604-985-7147, Fax: 604-985-1260 e-mail: dmorgan@web.net,

240 Holyrood Road, North Vancouver, BC, V7N 2R5

Bas Robins, Membership Coordinator: At Large: Emil Grieshaber, Ed Shaffer

Rotblat's speech: A synopsis

Introduction: Joseph Rotblat was one of the many physicists who worked on the atomic bomb during WW-II to offset the possibility of Hitler dominating the world if Germany got the bomb first. When it was discovered in 1944 that Germany was not even close to producing an atomic bomb, many of the scientists working on the bomb in America began questioning the purpose of this project, but only one scientist quit work on principle. His name was Joseph Rotblat. Twelve years later Rotblat helped Bertrand Russell launch the Pugwash Movement, an informal international association of scientists dedicated to the cause of peace. This work earned Dr. Rotblat Nobel Peace Laureate in 1995. When Dr. Joseph Rotblat, spoke at UBC on 1 March 1997, VANA members asked him if he would be an honorary member of our organization. He graciously agreed.

The Nuclear Issue: **Where Do We Go From Here?** **Sir Joseph Rotblat**

(A summary of the 11-page transcript)

- ** The drive for the elimination of nuclear weapons is not going well; indeed, it is going very badly.
 - ** The situation is grim; the way things are moving is bound to lead to catastrophe. If there is a way out, even if seemingly unrealistic, it is our duty to pursue it.
 - ** The use of these weapons may become a routine part of military strategy, according to the recently disclosed Nuclear Posture Review(NPR).
 - ** After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the great majority of people came to the belief that either the nuclear threat has disappeared altogether, or that the deterrent effect of existing nuclear arsenals will take care of the threat. Neither of these beliefs is justified
 - ** I urge the renewal of a mass campaign to put the nuclear issue back on the public agenda, and I propose that it be based mainly on legal and moral principles.
- The US government should immediately take the following steps:
- ** ratify the CTBT;
 - ** retract its notice to withdraw from the ABM;
 - ** reject any notion of weaponization of space;
 - ** take its nuclear weapons off alert;
 - ** adopt a no-first-use policy;
- all this in preparation for the implementation of its commitment to nuclear disarmament, under the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- In the campaign that I am urging, to put the nuclear issue back on the public agenda, we should make use of the very arguments and tactics employed by President Bush in the actions against terrorism:
- ** He had to build up a coalition of many countries.
- We must show the contradiction between Bush's willingness to break international agreements and his need for international support.
- ** He also had to build up a moral case for the campaign, by presenting the terrorists as evil men.
- We must show the morally bankrupt policy of N-weapon use and threatened use. This is the ultimate evil. Our appeal must be to the public, rather than to cynical politicians.

N-weapons for Japan? Kites are flying.(June 3, 2002)

TOKYO (Reuters) - China reacted angrily Monday after Japan's top government spokesman hinted that the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack could abandon its hallowed ban on nuclear weapons. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference that he was responsible for remarks attributed to a senior official that Tokyo could review its ban on nuclear arms. Fukuda downplayed his comments, saying: ``I only said there is a chance the government could take another look at the three non-nuclear principles in the future.`` There is absolutely no chance that this cabinet will discuss revising these principles.' Opposition parties, however, called for Fukuda's head and boycotted parliamentary debate on key legislation. Conservative politicians have become more outspoken in challenging Japan's postwar pacifism, but fears over domestic and diplomatic fallout have meant they are usually forced to retract suggestions Japan should drop its ban on nuclear weapons. Opposition Liberal Party leader Ichiro Ozawa drew a sharp response from Beijing in April when he said Japan could easily make nuclear weapons and surpass China's military might.

Bush's speech at West point: Some key statements

“America has no empire to extend or utopia to establish. We wish for others only what we wish for ourselves: safety from violence, the rewards of liberty and the hope for a better life.”...

“For much of the last century America's defense relied on the cold war doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence, the promise of massive retaliation against nations, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long. Homeland defense and missile defense are part of a stronger security. They're essential priorities for America. Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act. ...

“Our security will require transforming the military you will lead. A military that must be ready to strike at a moment's notice in any dark corner of the world. And our security will require all Americans to be forward looking and resolute, to ***be ready for preemptive action*** when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives. Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time and in every place. **Targeting innocent civilians for murder is always and everywhere wrong. Brutality against women is always and everywhere wrong.**”

US resumes N-warhead trigger production

June 2, 2002

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, June 1 - The federal government has announced plans to resume production of plutonium "pits," which are used to trigger nuclear warheads, the Energy Department has announced. The department halted production of the softball-size plutonium triggers in 1989. "We need to have the capacity to manufacture certified pits to maintain the safety, security and reliability of the U.S. nuclear deterrent into the future," Secretary Spencer Abraham of the Energy Department said on Friday.

Design work is beginning for the manufacturing plant, which is expected to cost \$2.2 billion to \$4.4 billion, depending on its production capacity, said a statement from the National Nuclear Security Administration, which is part of the Energy Department. The plant, to be built at a weapons facility, would start production by 2020. The announcement from the Energy Department said the site-selection process would begin in September. The department relies on refurbishing triggers, as they are needed, from disassembled warheads. That limited production, done at the Pantex facility near Amarillo, Tex., cannot meet long-term needs, officials said. A recent study by the Bush administration urged construction of a pit-production plant, and some members of both the House and Senate have expressed concern that the lack of a such plant could jeopardize future readiness of the country's nuclear weapons stockpile. Plutonium triggers were last produced at the Rocky Flats facility in Colorado. That plant is being cleaned of radioactive waste.

India-Pakistan N-crisis and Canada

(VANA letter by David Morgan sent widely to the Canadian Press)

22 May 2002

India and Pakistan are on the brink of war. Since they are both nuclear armed this is a very serious crisis. It has already lasted four months. Nearly a million men have been massed on the border since a raid on the Indian Parliament in December that New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based extremists fighting its rule in Kashmir. This crisis was recently made worse by a terrorist attack in Kashmir on 14 May resulting in the killing of 34 people, mostly wives and children of Indian soldiers. Like any such crisis, it is very easy to pass hidden points of no-return, as happened in August 1914. Nuclear attacks on the great cities of India and Pakistan could produce dead and injured in a few days equal to the 17 million killed in the four years of World War I. Canada should now be involved in the diplomatic efforts to de-fuse this crisis, for humanitarian reasons, for our own security and lastly, because we must accept some responsibility for the nuclear technology which we supplied to both India and Pakistan.

VANA's Letter to the Prime Minister on Full VANA Letterhead

To The Right Honourable Jean Chretien, Prime Minister
House of Commons, Ottawa
Re *India-Pakistan crisis & Canada*

Dear Mr. Chretien

India and Pakistan are on the brink of war. Since they are both nuclear armed this is a very serious crisis. It has already lasted four months. As senior Commonwealth Prime Minister, you could play a historic role in helping to de-fuse this crisis. I suggest a role for Canada in my letter to Canadian newspapers, a copy of which appears below.

Yours truly,
David Morgan, VANA National President, Veterans Against Nuclear Arms

Alaska peace caravan.

Friends:

I am writing from the woods outside of Fairbanks, inside the one room cabin (with no running water) of Stacey Fritz who leads the Alaskan GN affiliate called No Nukes North.

We've just arrived from several days of our No Star Wars peace caravan that has taken us hundreds of miles across this beautiful state.

I joined the tour last Saturday night after landing in Anchorage. Stacy Studebaker, from Kodiak Island, met me at the airport and we drove 5 hours south to the coastal town of Homer. We arrived at the campground in Homer about 2am and the night sky was still light enough to find the peace caravan RV camper that was surrounded with tents. Folks had already stopped in Seward and Kenai the previous two days with the caravan, unloading tables, literature, T-shirts, banners and signs at each stop to inform the public about U.S. plans to walk away from the ABM Treaty and deploy so-called "missile defense" interceptors at Fort Greely.

Sunday evening in Homer we spoke to local folks who assembled at a local activist center and Stacey Studebaker urged them to pay more attention to what was going on at Kodiak Island, just across Cook Inlet, where the Pentagon is now flight testing missiles for Star Wars. Folks on Kodiak were originally told that the launch facility was going to be for civilian use but all six launches so far have had military applications.

On Monday we set up on the main drag in Anchorage (largest city in Alaska), just across the street from the place where bus after bus unloaded tourists coming in off the cruise ships to see the city. A covered walkway that serves as an overhead crosswalk across the main street was soon sporting our huge banner that read "Star Wars = New Arms Race". It was seen by tons of people as they unloaded from their bus or drove down the street in the midday traffic. Our 3-4 hour vigil there was a great success.

Later Monday we headed north to Talkeetna, a small town nearby the Denali National Park (Mt McKinley). We parked our rented RV in the local campground, fully decorated with our banners, including one that read "No Missiles in Alaska."

Tuesday morning, after a wonderful Alaskan breakfast at the Talkeetna Roadhouse, Stacey Fritz and I then went on NPR's "Talk of Alaska" live call-in show where we debated Chris Nelson (the state liaison for all missile defense activities.) About nine folks called in during the one-hour show, that was aired statewide, and each one of them agreed with us that Star Wars would cost us the national treasury, would not work, and would be destabilizing. It was a wonderful experience to hear one caller after the other, in this Republican dominated state, say they had no faith in the orthodoxy.

From Talkeetna we headed to Fairbanks but could not pass up the chance to get ahead of the Amtrak train that carried car after car of tourists through the state. We surged ahead and pulled up to a railroad crossing and jumped out of the RV with our banners just in time for the train to pass. Plenty of friendly waves came our way.

On Wednesday morning we will go to downtown Fairbanks for several hours of bannering and then on to Fort Greely. There we will set up our peace camp over the following four days where we will stage protests at the base to coincide with the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and ground breaking for missile silos.

We urge folks to write letters to the editor and letters to Congress in the coming days in solidarity with events here in Alaska. Please let folks know that we don't want Star Wars and that we'd rather spend our tax dollars on education, health care, child care and social security. One thing we can say from this Alaskan caravan is that folks are concerned and looking for leadership. Let's don't let them down.

Peace to all,

Bruce K. Gagnon, Coordinator Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
PO Box 90083
Gainesville, FL 32607

**On the Heavy Side:
The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Top Five Nuclear Dangers for 2002**

(listed in order of probability of occurrence.)

1. One or more countries break the existing moratorium on nuclear testing and resume testing, following the lead of the US in its hostility toward the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.
2. The onset of new regional nuclear arms races, particularly in the Asia and the Middle East, as a consequence of US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and development of ballistic missile defenses.
3. Terrorists construct and use radiological weapons on cities, or attack nuclear power plants and/or their spent fuel storage pools, turning these into radiological weapons. Terrorists obtain and threaten to use nuclear weapons on one or more cities.
4. India and Pakistan engage in nuclear war over Kashmir.
5. An accidental nuclear launch occurs because US and Russian nuclear weapons are maintained in launch-on-warning posture, despite deficiencies in Russian early warning systems.

**On the Light Side
Happy Landings**

The pilot, wearing a parachute, said to his four passengers: "I'm sorry, but this plane is going to crash in ten minutes and there's only three parachutes left for the four of you. Sorry folks. Good luck!" With that, he jumped out of the plane.

Passenger Hillary Clinton spoke first: "I have a brilliant political career ahead of me and may be the first woman president. I am much too valuable to lose." She then picked up a parachute and was soon gone.

George W. Bush spoke next: "Hey! I'm President of the United States, ain't I? I'm taking one of those parachutes." In a few moments he was gone too.

Left behind were a ten year old schoolboy and the Pope.

"My son," said the Pope, "I am an old man; you have your whole life ahead of you. You take the last parachute."

"Don't worry," said the schoolboy, "there's still two parachutes left. That was my school satchel that President Bush just grabbed."

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)

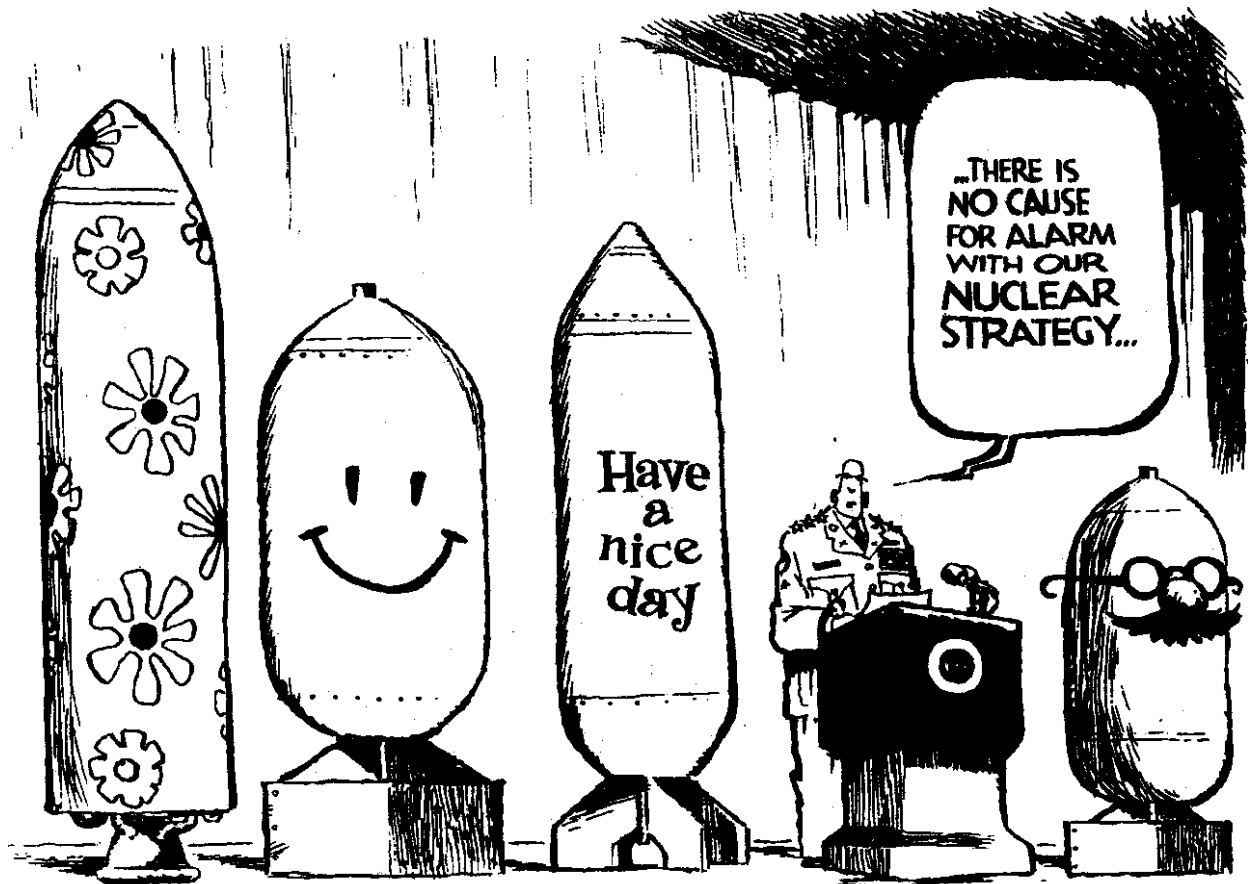
Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____ **Code** _____

City _____ **Prov** _____

Email Address _____ (Please see other side)

Have A Happy Nuke!



Cartoon by Jack Ohman
The Portland Oregonian