

# VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH



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Web Site: [www.vana.ca](http://www.vana.ca)

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## Letter from your Exec

Sailors have a weather saying: "Long foretold long last; short notice, soon past." The storm brewing over Iraq has been brewing a long time and looks to be a big and long-lasting one, with damage no one can foresee. Much of this update deals with this crisis, especially from the viewpoint of the legitimacy of any attack by the United States on Iraq.

**This dovetails with the topic of our next members meeting: "U.S.A, Iraq & the Law." This meeting will be on Monday 23 September 2002, 1:30 p.m., at the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak. Our guest speaker will be Gail Davidson, lawyer, and member of "Lawyers Against War." Do join us for the first meeting of the new season, hear about plans for our "Conference Call Convention," and join in the lively debate that will follow Gail Davidson's interesting presentation.**

Nuclear physicist, Nobel Peace Laureate and Honorary VANA member Joseph 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. A synopsis of his great speech (11 pages long) appeared in our June update. A recent letter of his to VANA appears below.

VANA members will be sorry to hear that Mary Kitley will be resigning at the end of October due to health problems. We have sent our hearty thanks and appreciation for her long and faithful service to VANA. Cec Muldrew will be passing-the-torch on the VANA National Update, also due to health problems. Few of us realize the heavy load of peace activities that Cec carries in his home town Winnipeg. Following heart trouble early this summer, Cec decided that six years producing the update was enough. The Update will certainly continue. Walter Josephy, a long-time VANA member in Ottawa, has volunteered to be the new Editor.

VANA's "Hiroshima-Nagasaki & Since" exhibition opened at Douglas College, New Westminster on Monday 9 September and will be there until Friday 20 September, when David Morgan will run a follow-up two-hour workshop on the exhibition. Our "Comments & Contact" book there will hopefully put us in touch with some keen student activists who may be willing to help organize CANA, (Canadians Against Nuclear Arms) a successor to VANA. We hope to open the exhibition next at Simon Fraser University.

As usual, VANA had a table at the Under the Volcano festival event held in Cates Park near Deep Cove, in August. We collected over fifty signatures on our petition calling on Canada to return to a full respect for and compliance with International Law and the UN Charter. VANA Life Member, Libby Davies, MP has agreed to read this petition in Parliament and send us the Hansard record of this. Many thanks Libby. If any members want a copy of this petition please ask and we will send it Do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates. Your exec joins in welcoming you back from the summer break to our renewed and sorely needed task of working for the abolition of nuclear weapons,

Ed Livingston President, (604-730-6990, Fax: 604-730-6931 e-mail:<[phcl@netcom.ca](mailto: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](mailto:dmorgan@web.net),  
240 Holyrood Road, North Vancouver, BC, V7N 2R5

Bas Robinson, Membership Coordinator

At Large: Emil Grieshaber, Ed Shaffer

## VANA's Conference Call Convention

This year we are holding the VANA biennial convention by conference call. The national exec believes that this is a good way to save the time, energy and dollars that go into a regular convention, for the all too-obvious struggles ahead. So far, VANA branches in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa St John and Halifax are going to be on the call. If there is a group in Victoria, Nanaimo or some other centre who are interested and can get hold of a speaker phone, do let us know and we will include you too.

We will be e-mailing out Conference Call Kits on September 21, just two weeks before the conference call. These kits will contain: Conference Call Convention Agenda, President's report, Treasurer's report, Membership coordinator's report, Convention theme: "Where do we go from here?" (Summary of Rotblat's address 4My02, Conference call procedure & notes, Resolutions, DREC Agenda.

We expect the convention to go something like this:

1. 9:00 Pacific Time Call to order
2. "Registration," as each branch comes on line they announce the branch name, names of all present. When all branches are on the line...
3. President opens proceedings, welcomes all present and reminds members about key points of Teleconferencing Guide (distributed in kits)
4. President's Report: President gives brief verbal review of key points in his report (in kit) and asks for questions and comments.
5. President Calls on Treasurer to give brief highlights of his report and ask for questions and comments
6. President calls on Membership Coordinator to give brief highlights of his report and ask for questions and comments.  
Having brought members up-to-date on past operations,
7. The President now calls on Mary Kitley to announce the results of the mail-in election.
8. The President (affirmed or new) then presents the Convention Theme for discussion ("Where do we go from here?") by reminding members of Rotblat's key points and inviting members to consider ways that they can be adapted to VANA's energies and resources.
9. Resolutions: Refer to consolidated resolutions in kits for moving, seconding, debate and vote.
10. Additional items can be added to the agenda.

Finally: It will be important to be familiar with the Convention Kit's contents before the call takes place. As with any Convention, the purposes of the CCC will be to review past operations, vote for a new executive, consider future operations, give members involvement and empowerment and re-invigorate the organization in an atmosphere of warmth and goodwill.

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### **"No evidence of Iraq's WMD" says UN's Chief Weapons Inspector**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) The U.N. chief weapons inspector said Tuesday there is no evidence from aerial photos or other sources that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction or is trying to build them. But Hans Blix said there are still "many open questions" about Iraq's weapons programs that need to be answered. He urged Iraq to allow U.N. inspectors to return and reiterated that if Baghdad cooperates fully with inspections he could recommend that the Security Council suspend sanctions within a year.

U.N. inspectors left Iraq ahead of U.S. and British airstrikes in December 1998 to punish Saddam Hussein for not cooperating with inspections. Under council resolutions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, sanctions cannot be lifted until inspectors certify that Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have been destroyed, along with the long-range missiles to deliver them.

(*Boston Globe*, By Edith M. Lederer, Associated Press, 9/10/2002 )

**Letter from Nobel Prize Laureate and Honorary VANA member Sir Joseph Rotblat**

From: "London Pugwash Office"  
To: David Morgan  
Subject: "Where do we go from here?"  
Date: Mon, 2 Sep 2002

Dear Mr. Morgan,

Thank you for the letter of 20 August. It was good to hear from you again. I am very glad to hear that your organization is planning to take up the call "Where do we go from here?" at the convention on 5 October.

The situation with regard to the nuclear issue has worsened since my Washington D.C. talk. It looks now more likely that the Bush Administration will resume testing of nuclear weapons; in which case China will also resume testing and possibly also India and Pakistan. A new nuclear arms race will ensue. We must take action to prevent this.

Do not allow age and flagging energies (which also apply to me) to prevent you from the pursuit of this important task. I wish you all success in your endeavour.

With warm personal greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Rotblat

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**VANA letter to PM Chretien**

Date 13 September 2002

To The Right Honourable Jean Chretien, Prime Minister  
The House of Commons, Ottawa, ON  
Re The Iraq situation

Dear Mr. Chretien

Our organization congratulates you on your government's insistence that any attack on Iraq must be made with the authorization of the United Nations Security Council. However, U.S. President George Bush has insisted many times on the need for a "regime change" in Iraq and made no mention of the United Nations having any role in making this change. In his speech to the UN General Assembly yesterday, he stated

"The Security Council Resolutions will be enforced - the just demands of peace and security will be met - or actions will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will lose its power."

This statement indicates that President Bush feels free to enforce all previous Security Council resolutions, regardless of any that are currently under study. No previous resolution authorizes the use of force, except to drive Iraq's military out of Kuwait. Canada should insist that, both the actions by the United States and any forthcoming Security Council resolutions dealing with Iraq, should scrupulously follow the words and the intent of the UN Charter.

Yours truly,  
David Morgan, VANA National President

## **President Bush Plans a War of Aggression**

by David Morgan

Sunday, July 21, 2002

(This article was sent out very widely to the media and to other peace organizations. .)

There are some alarming similarities between the summer of 1939 and this summer of 2002.

In the summer of 1939 it was obvious that Hitler was planning to attack Poland. At the end of March, having concluded the seizure of Czechoslovakia, Hitler demanded that Poland yield Danzig and the Polish "corridor" to Germany. From then until five months later on September 1st, when Hitler attacked Poland launching World War II, you did not have to be a diplomat in the corridors of power to know that German aggression against Poland was going to happen.

Similarly, during this summer of 2002, it is obvious that President George Bush is planning to attack Iraq. He has been far more open and frank about his plans than was Hitler. Leaked plans for this attack were published in the New York Times on 5 July 2002 where the debate, as in the U.S. media generally, is how Iraq should be attacked, and not whether such an attack has any legitimacy. The President has never spoken of getting the UN Security Council's approval for this attack any more than Hitler tried to get support from the League of Nations for his attack on Poland.

Neither Hitler's attack on Poland, nor President Bush's planned attack on Iraq can be justified as "self-defence." They are each, clear-cut examples of the launching of a war of aggression. In Hitler's case the prize was the re-connection of Germany with East Prussia and the seizure of Poland itself as a big, resource rich agricultural prize for colonization and eventual use as a forward base for launching the attack on Russia.

In Bush's case, the prize is Iraq's gigantic petroleum reserves which amount to at least 18 cubic km of easily extracted oil. Compare this to US reserves of 4 cubic km of oil with very high extraction costs. Also, with U.S. forces in control of Iraq and already deployed in the Caspian area and in Afghanistan, the last remaining oil prize, Iran, will be hemmed in on three sides. The issue that motivates this planned aggression, is not "weapons-of-mass-destruction" it is "resources-of-mass-attraction."

But what about the legalities of a war of aggression? In 1945, at the end of World War II, Nazi German leaders were put on trial by the U.S.A, Soviet Union, Britain and France at the War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg. It is interesting to recall what this tribunal said about the waging of a war of aggression "To initiate a war of aggression," declared this Tribunal in its judgment, "is the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

The Chief American Prosecutor at this Tribunal in 1945, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, was very clear on this point

"Launching a war of aggression is a crime that no political or economic situation can justify. If certain acts in violation of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United States does them or Germany does them. .... we are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us."

Fifty-seven years after Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson spoke these words, the United States is preparing to launch just such a war. When great powers defy international law in this way, a very great international instability results. Germany's defiance led to World War II. The results of U.S. defiance, in this nuclear armed world, may be just as serious.

## On the Heavy Side

“War is hell,” William Tecumseh Sherman, a U.S. army general who fought in the American Civil War of 1861-1865, told West Point cadets in 1879. “I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have never fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded, who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. (See “Chickenhawks” article below)

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### **Invading Iraq would violate U.S. and international law**

by Professor Marjorie Cohn

Despite opposition by many prominent Republicans, Dick Cheney and George W. Bush are mounting an intensive public relations campaign to justify their pre-ordained invasion of Iraq. A preemptive strike against Iraq would violate the Constitution and the United Nations Charter. Article I, section 8 of the Constitution empowers Congress, not the president, to debate and decide to declare war on another country. The War Powers Resolution provides that the “constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to (1) a declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories, or possessions or its armed forces.” Congress has not declared war on Iraq, no statute authorizes an invasion and Iraq has not attacked the United States, its territories, possessions or armed forces. President Bush’s lawyers have concluded that he needs no new approval from Congress. They cite a 1991 Congressional resolution authorizing the use of force in the Persian Gulf, and the September 14, 2001 Congressional resolution authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks.

These two resolutions do not provide a basis to circumvent Congressional approval for attacking Iraq. The January 12, 1991 Persian Gulf Resolution authorized the use of force pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 678, which was directed at ensuring the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. That license ended on April 6, 1991, when Iraq formalized a cease-fire and notified the Security Council. The September 14, 2001 resolution authorized the use of armed force “against those responsible for the recent [Sept. 11] attacks against the United States.” There is no evidence that Iraq was responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks. A preemptive invasion of Iraq would also violate the United Nations Charter, which is a treaty and part of the supreme law of the United States under Article 6, clause 2 of the Constitution. It requires the United States to settle all disputes by peaceful means and not use military force in the absence of an armed attack. The U.N. Charter empowers only the Security Council to authorize the use of force, unless a member state is acting in individual or collective self-defense. Iraq has not attacked this country, or any other country in the past 11 years. None of Iraq’s neighbors have appealed to the Security Council to protect them from an imminent attack by Iraq, because they do not feel threatened.

Cheney and Bush cite the possibility that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction as the rationale for a preemptive strike. Iraq is in violation of Security Council Resolution 687, which requires full cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors. But this issue involves the Iraqi government and the United Nations. The Security Council did not specify any enforcement mechanisms in that or subsequent resolutions. Only the Security Council is empowered to take “...further steps as may be required for the implementation of the resolution.” Although the Security Council warned Iraq, in Resolution 1154, of the “severest consequences” if it continued its refusal to comply, the Council declared that only it had the authority to “ensure implementation of this resolution and peace and security in the area.” Moreover, the claim by Cheney and Bush that Iraq has developed weapons of mass destruction is spurious. Scott Ritter, who spent seven years in Iraq with the UNSCOM weapons inspection teams, has said, “There is absolutely no reason to believe that Iraq could have meaningfully reconstituted any element of its [weapons of mass destruction] capabilities.” There is no legal justification for a preemptive attack on Iraq. Only Congress can authorize the use of United States armed forces, and only the Security Council can sanction the use of force by a U.N. member state. Both are necessary; neither has been forthcoming.

*(Marjorie Cohn, an associate professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, is on the national executive committee of the National Lawyers Guild, and is a JURIST Contributing Editor)*

## Chickenhawks Crow for War

By Matt Bivens

"A chickenhawk [describes] public persons -- generally male -- who (1) tend to advocate, or are fervent supporters of those who advocate, military solutions to political problems, and who have personally (2) declined to take advantage of a significant opportunity to serve in uniform during wartime."--*The New Hampshire Gazette*

WASHINGTON -- We are being dragged toward war with Iraq by such chickenhawks. The loudest voices demanding war are those of men who once upon a time quietly skipped out on the fun in Vietnam. Men like Dick Cheney, who famously explained, "I had other priorities in the '60s than military service." Cheney received draft deferments as a college student until he got married in 1964; marriage removed him from the draft. But the next year, the government announced married men would be drafted, unless they were also fathers. Nine months and two days after that announcement, the Cheneys had their first child. A list of chickenhawks -- including many who are eager for war with Iraq, yet who had "other priorities" when Vietnam came a-calling -- has been compiled by Steven Fowle, a Vietnam veteran who edits *The New Hampshire Gazette*. (It's at [www.nhgazette.com/chickenhawks.html](http://www.nhgazette.com/chickenhawks.html)). It starts with the president himself. George W. Bush waited out the war from a post with light duties in the Texas Air National Guard. And, apparently, even that cushy deal was too onerous. There's an unexplained one-year gap, from May 1972 to May 1973, in Bush's service record. That year he was supposed to have reported for duty at the Alabama Air National Guard, but apparently never showed. Bush's reply is that he was honorably discharged and is proud of his service -- but also that he can't recall the specifics.

Specifics are also in short supply for Defense Department Iraq hawks like Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle; for White House adviser Karl Rove; for professional blabbers George Will, William Kristol, Rush Limbaugh and Pat Buchanan; for Republican congressional leaders Trent Lott, Dennis Hastert, Dick Armey and Tom DeLay; and for many others -- right down to Rambo himself, Sylvester Stallone. Some of the explanations offered by those who avoided Vietnam sound hilarious today. Pundit and politician Buchanan got out for "bad knees," but went on to become an avid jogger. DeLay, who was working as a pest exterminator during Vietnam, is reported to have complained that he would have served but all the places were taken up by black people. (Blacks in the 1960s had no "other priorities?")

And then there's rabid radio personality Limbaugh's excuse "Anal cysts." As Matthew Engel noted in the Guardian, "It is not my custom to mock others' ailments, but anyone who has listened to Limbaugh's program can imagine the dripping scorn he would bring to the revelation that a prominent Democrat had skipped a war over something like that." The poster boy for draft-dodging, to hear the media tell it, has long been Bill Clinton. But Clinton also organized anti-war protests in the late 1960s, and years later, while running for office, was thoroughly grilled by the media and the public for his Vietnam-era conduct. By contrast, the chickenhawks weaseled out of Vietnam while loudly proclaiming their support for it; they've never once been called to account for doing so; and now, they want to send a new generation of Americans into a Middle Eastern ground war.

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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 \_\_\_\_\_