



## VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH

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### Letter from your Exec

Dear Fellow VANA Members in BC:

Since our last update a historical corner has been turned at the UN. The eight-week-long struggle to see whether the world shall be governed by the rule of law or the rule of war was decided. The rule of war won out. However the naked aggression against Iraq that is in the works, does have a fig leaf. It is called Security Council Resolution 1441. An article below gives a general picture of this "cynical cover for US aggression."

The draft of this resolution was brought to the UN by the United States on the 5th of November. The next day, Dr. Glen Rangwala of Cambridge University e-mailed a scathing critique to the Security Council members warning them of its many falsehoods, distortions and dangers. Nevertheless, those members passed it unanimously as Resolution 1441 with virtually no changes just two days later. Sections of this resolution followed by some of Dr. Rangwala's "Comments" appear below.

This resolution is so provocative and so clearly designed to provide a whole range of pretexts for war that it should be repudiated by Canadians as a clear violation of the UN Charter. A copy of a resolution passed by your executive, to this effect, appears below. It has been sent to the Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister, the media and to the peace movement.

**Few people have struggled harder against the Bush administration's eagerness for war with Iraq than former weapons inspector Scott Ritter. Ritter, brought to Vancouver by the Campaign to End Sanctions Against the People of Iraq, spoke here to an overflow crowd of one-thousand on October 4 this year. We will present a video of Ritter's highly-informed and stirring speech at VANA's next members meeting. This meeting will be on Monday 25th November 2002, 1:30 p.m., at the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak. A lively discussion will certainly follow this outstanding presentation. Don't miss it.**

**One of the widely predicted results of a war against Iraq is a substantial increase in terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies.** Nuclear power plants - "bombs-in-place" - are particularly vulnerable targets. "Our Nuclear Achilles Heel" below, considers this threat.

It was with a consciousness of these ominous events that we marched in Vancouver on Remembrance Day. June Black's beautiful banner "Let Peace be Their Memorial" was our message and the strong applause from the crowd showed that it was well received. Several VANA members spoke in schools and took part in school Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Finally, many thanks to Fred Knelman for sending his poem "A Vicious Circle" which appears below. Its final words, "only love is the answer," echo W.H. Auden's words written in New York at the outbreak of World War II/ "We must love one another or die."

Do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates, the next of which will be in January 2003.

Your executive joins in wishing all members and their families a merry Christmas and a peaceful and happy new year.

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## UN resolution on Iraq: a cynical cover for US aggression

By the Editorial Board of *WSWS* : News & Analysis

9 November 2002

With its unanimous vote Friday on a US-British resolution threatening “serious consequences” if Iraq does not comply with a new weapons inspections regime, the United Nations Security Council has given the Bush administration an international cover for the war it is planning against the Arab nation.

The resolution is a thoroughly cynical document, which deliberately sets forward requirements that Iraq cannot possibly meet. It thereby satisfies the aims of Washington—to fashion the pretext for launching a war that is already well in preparation, without requiring the US to obtain prior authorization from the Security Council.

While portrayed by the Bush administration and the media as a compromise reached through intense negotiations over substantive matters, the resolution, in fact, represents a bowing by permanent Security Council members France, Russia and China to intense pressure from Washington.

Syria’s vote for the resolution is one more demonstration of the utterly treacherous and reactionary role of the Arab national bourgeoisie, which is ever ready, notwithstanding its Pan-Arab pretensions, to curry favor with US imperialism by backing its crimes against the Arab masses.

Speaking in the White House Rose Garden, Bush made clear that the US sees the resolution as a legitimization of its war plans. He left no doubt that his administration will seize on any alleged “noncompliance” as the excuse for full-scale war. “With the passage of this resolution,” he said, “the world must not lapse into unproductive debates over whether specific instances of Iraqi noncompliance are serious. Any Iraqi noncompliance is serious...” Bush continued: “America will be making only one determination: Is Iraq meeting the terms of the Security Council resolution or not? **The United States has agreed to discuss any material breach with the Security Council, but without jeopardizing our freedom of action to defend our country.** If Iraq fails to fully comply, the United States and other nations will disarm Saddam Hussein.”

Initially, both France and Russia had insisted that the Security Council take a second vote on whether to authorize military action against Iraq in the event that the country was found in noncompliance with the weapons inspection regime. That demand, however, was dropped in the face of Washington’s intransigence.

In the end, the resolution promises only that the Security Council will meet to “consider the situation” should Iraq be charged with interfering with weapons inspections. The wrangling over diplomatic language was, in the end, driven by the desire of the other Security Council members to secure political cover for their capitulation to Washington.

Behind the scenes there have been negotiations aimed at securing some guarantees that in the event of a US-led war, Washington’s European allies would hold on to some of their (Iraqi oil) interests. France, Russia and China have all opposed a unilateral war against Iraq from the standpoint of their own substantial interests in the country’s oil wealth. Russia’s Lukoil has the largest interest—a 23-year, \$3.5 billion contract to develop the huge West Qormah oilfield. The French state-owned TotalFinaElf is close to completing negotiations on a deal to exploit the Majnoon oilfield, with reserves estimated at up to 30 billion barrels. China National Petroleum Corp., meanwhile, has a contract to develop part of the Rumaila area. Those close to the administration in Washington, however, indicate that nothing has been promised.

The resolution passed by the UN only underscores Washington’s use of the weapons inspections issue as a pretext for war. Leading former inspectors have insisted that Iraq’s military arsenal has already been effectively destroyed during the seven years of inspections that followed the last Persian Gulf war. The new resolution, moreover, includes terms that are directed at eliminating not weapons, but Iraq’s sovereignty and right to self-defense. UN diplomats congratulated themselves on passing a resolution with “no hidden triggers” for military action against Iraq. Indeed, the triggers are out in the open.

## Comments on the US-UK draft resolution of 5 November 2002

Dr. Glen Rangwala, University of Cambridge, UK  
(6 November 2002) Excerpts

“...The UK-US draft (Resolution 1441). ...is unnecessarily provocative, in that it attempts to establish mechanisms and criteria that are unrelated to the effective disarmament of Iraq but which will be a cause of considerable tension between the UN and Iraq. It attempts to legitimise prior UK-US military action, in contravention of the legal opinion of almost all other members of the United Nations, by falsifying history and by misappropriating and even misquoting past Security Council resolutions.”

(Below are some sections of Resolution 1441, in quotes, followed by critical comment)

**“Recalling** that its resolution 678 (1990) authorized Member States to use all necessary means to uphold and implement its resolution 660 (1990) of 2 August 1990 and all relevant resolutions subsequent to resolution 660 (1990) and to restore international peace and security in the area,...

This paragraph is a **clear attempt to provide post hoc legal justification for the bombing of Iraq since 1991**. It suggests that resolution 678 authorised the use of force to implement all resolutions on Iraq from 1990 to the present day. This is clearly untrue: 678 only justifies the use of force to implement resolutions on Iraq passed between 2 August and 29 November 1990.

**“3. Decides** that, in order to begin to comply with its disarmament obligations, in addition to submitting the required biannual declarations, the Government of Iraq shall provide to UNMOVIC, the IAEA, and the Council, not later than 30 days from the date of this resolution, a currently accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other delivery systems such as unmanned aerial vehicles and dispersal systems designed for use on aircraft, including any holdings and precise locations of such weapons, components, sub-components, stocks of agents, and related material and equipment, the locations and work of its research, development and production facilities, as well as all other chemical, biological, and nuclear programmes, including any which it claims are for purposes not related to weapon production or material;”

It **may make compliance impossible** because it, if read literally, is asking for Iraq to provide a full "declaration of all aspects of its programmes" in the chemical field, including those activities not relating to weapons issues. If this draft is accepted, Iraq would be compelled to produce within 30 days a full inventory of all the activities of all the chemical facilities throughout the country, including those engaged in relatively trivial and harmless activities. It is difficult to see how any country could possibly compile and guarantee the validity of such a declaration, given the logistical problems that would be encountered. Any inaccuracies in this declaration would, in accordance with OP4, constitute a "material breach" by Iraq of this resolution. As such, this paragraph ensures that the resolution cannot be complied with.

**“Even if the Iraqis wanted to comply, and I am not clear that they do, I doubt that they could comply with this resolution,”** said Denis Halliday, the former assistant general secretary of the United Nations. Halliday, who resigned from his 34-year UN career over an economic sanctions regime against Iraq that he described as “genocidal,” added that the approved resolution includes provisions that are **“designed solely for a war by Mr. Bush.”** )

**“5. Decides** that Iraq shall provide UNMOVIC and the IAEA immediate, unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any and all, including underground, areas, facilities, buildings, equipment, records, and means of transport which they wish to inspect, as well as immediate, unimpeded, unrestricted, and private access to all officials and other persons whom UNMOVIC or the IAEA wish to interview in the mode or location of UNMOVIC’s or the IAEA’s choice pursuant to any aspect of their mandates; further decides that UNMOVIC and the IAEA may at their discretion conduct interviews inside or outside of Iraq, may facilitate the travel of those interviewed and family members outside of Iraq, and that, at the sole discretion of UNMOVIC and the IAEA, such interviews may occur without the presence of observers from the Iraqi Government; and instructs UNMOVIC and requests the IAEA to resume inspections no later than 45 days following adoption of this resolution and to update the Council 60 days thereafter; “

This is **perhaps the key "deal-breaker"** in the resolution. The Council would be according to UNMOVIC and the IAEA the right to transport anyone -- seemingly without his or her permission -- outside the country. For example, the resolution would allow UNMOVIC the right to order senior governmental officials, including the Iraqi President, to leave the country at their discretion. The Council, if it endorses this draft, would be according to UNMOVIC the legal right to abduct individuals with their families, and to take them abroad. It would be wholly implausible to expect cooperation with such an unchecked range of powers.

“– Security of UNMOVIC and IAEA facilities shall be ensured by sufficient United Nations security guards;”

There is no description of **the number or composition of these "guards"**. Iraq is being asked to accept a resolution that permits a foreign military presence on its soil, without knowing the nature of that military presence.

“– UNMOVIC and the IAEA shall have the right to declare, for the purposes of freezing a site to be inspected, exclusion zones, including surrounding areas and transit corridors, in which Iraq will suspend ground and aerial movement so that nothing is changed in or taken out of a site being inspected;”

This provision again grants to the weapons inspectorate an extensive range of unchecked powers. For example, **UNMOVIC could declare large areas of Iraq to be "exclusion zones" for an indefinite period of time.**

## Repudiate Resolution 1441

Veterans Against Nuclear Arms calls on the Canadian Government to repudiate UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq (#1441) of last Friday, 8 November 2002.

The intent of this resolution is clearly to provide a wide range of causes for war. Taken in combination with the very large United States military buildup in the Gulf region, it constitutes a "threat of war" and is a clear violation of the UN Charter. This resolution amounts to a gross perversion of the peace-making and war-preventing purposes of the United Nations.

For us veterans, and for many others, the United Nations is a very precious organization which has literally been paid for with blood. The UN Charter embodies the most valuable lessons learned about war-prevention during the bloody twentieth century. This abuse of the UN organization and its Charter fills us with disgust and foreboding.

We therefore call on the Canadian Government to show its respect for the UN Charter by openly repudiating UN Security Council resolution 1441 of 8 November 2002. A motion to this effect was passed unanimously at a meeting of the national executive of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms on Tuesday 12 November 2002 in Vancouver, BC

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### Weapons Inspectors Timetable

- \*\* Hans Blix will arrive in Baghdad on Monday 18 November 2002.
- \*\* Inspections expected to begin 27 November (Report due in 60 days ie 26 January 2003)
- \*\* Iraq must declare by 8 December 2002 all WMD and related programs in great detail
- \*\* "Iraq's declaration is a very important document that we hope they take very seriously," Hans Blix
- \*\* More than 300 inspectors will be rotated into Iraq
- \*\* 30 of these inspectors are American (the largest national group)
- \*\* Inspectors will carry out their work during the Muslim holy period of Ramadan.
- \*\* Final report by inspectors due on 26 January 2002.
- \*\* "We are not ... contending that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," Blix said, "[but] we have a great many questions." He added that, if Iraq continues to hold firm to its position that it has no banned weapons, the onus will be on the accusers to back up their accusation. "We are not saying that all the intelligence is wrong, it may be right," he said during a press briefing in Washington, "but we are also not confirming it."
- \*\* "...one (inspection) team member said that with the United States ready to invade at the slightest misstep by Saddam, the program may be short-lived. "The Americans have a checklist," he said. "They're going to look that over, and if he screws up, that's the fast track to war."

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### A Vicious Circle

*F.H. Knelman, Ph.D.*

There was no error  
In their acts of terror  
Hate breeds violence and violence hate  
The chance for peace is now too late.  
The course terror found  
Is a misery-go-round  
Until the circle is broken  
And justice no mere token  
Terror will persist  
The last opportunity missed  
Hate is the cancer  
Only love is the answer

## "Our Nuclear Achilles Heel"

Excerpt from Rachel's Environmental & Health News #749, 8 August 2002)

In 1982, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) ruled that owners of nuclear plants do not have to design against such threats as kamikaze airliner crashes because to do so would make nuclear electricity too expensive to be competitive. "Reactors could not be effectively protected against such attacks without turning them into virtually impregnable fortresses at much higher cost," the NRC said.[4]

The U.S. has 103 operating nuclear power plants (plus 7 that are closed), most of which are storing intensely-radioactive spent fuel in 40-foot-deep pools of boron-treated water to shield against radiation and to keep the fuel from heating up, catching fire, and releasing radioactivity. Unlike reactor cores, the spent fuel pools are not covered by a concrete containment dome; they are covered only by a metal building.

If the water were to drain out of a spent fuel pool, the fuel would be exposed to a combination of air and steam, causing the zirconium outer "cladding" of the fuel assemblies to catch fire and burn fiercely.[4] The Nuclear Regulatory Commission acknowledges that such a fire could not be extinguished and could burn for days, releasing large amounts of radioactivity.

Water could drain from a spent fuel pool in several ways -- leakage, evaporation, siphoning, pumping, earthquake, reactor failure, accidental or intentional drop of a fuel transport cask, explosion inside or outside the pool building, or airplane impact.

The main concern in spent fuel is cesium-137, a highly-radioactive element that enters food chains masquerading as potassium. The spent fuel currently held in the U.S. contains 20 to 50 million Curies of cesium-137. A single spent fuel pool contains more cesium-137 than was released by all the atmospheric nuclear weapons tests in the Northern Hemisphere combined. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission acknowledges that as much as 100% of the cesium-137 in spent fuel might be released by a zirconium fire.

A spent fuel pool typically holds 5 to 10 times as much radioactivity as the reactor core, and a zirconium fire would likely release more radioactivity than a core meltdown and would probably be easier for a disciplined group of suicidal terrorists to initiate. Draining the pool is all it takes.

The Indian Point nuclear power plant, 35 miles north of New York City, currently holds 1589 fuel assemblies in its spent fuel pool (compared to 386 fuel assemblies in the cores of its two operating reactors).[5] The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 1982 estimated that a core meltdown at Indian Point could cause 46,000 fatalities and 141,000 injuries. [NY TIMES April 4, 2002, pg.A23.]

Many spent fuel pools were not designed to hold all the fuel assemblies they presently hold. Spent fuel was supposed to be "reprocessed" at plants like the one that contaminated West Valley, N.Y. (see REHN #748) but the technology failed to materialize. In the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act Congress promised to take all private-sector spent fuel and bury it in the ground somewhere by 1998, but it didn't happen. Current plans call for a spent fuel mausoleum beneath Yucca Mountain, Nevada, but it won't be ready before 2010 at the earliest and it, too, may never materialize.[6; and NY TIMES Feb. 15, 2002, pg. A19.] Meanwhile more spent fuel is being squeezed into existing pools each year. Astonishingly, the nuclear industry is now planning to build 25 to 50 new nuclear power plants in the U.S. and the Bush administration has announced that it will provide millions of tax dollars, plus relaxed regulations, to help them do it.

References:[1]

[1] [http://www.nei.org/documents/Speech\\_Abraham\\_2-14-02.pdf](http://www.nei.org/documents/Speech_Abraham_2-14-02.pdf) and [http://www.nei.org/documents/Vision2020\\_Folder.pdf](http://www.nei.org/documents/Vision2020_Folder.pdf) and <http://www.nuclear-gen.com/>.

[4] Reported by Robert Alvarez, "What About the Spent Fuel?" BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS Vol. 58, No. 1 (Jan./Feb 2002), pgs. 45-47. Available at: <http://www.thebulletin.org/-issues/-2002/jf02/jf02alvarez.html>.

[5] Congressman Edward J. Markey, "Security Gap: A Hard Look at the Soft Spots in Our Civilian Nuclear Reactor Security." Report published March 25, 2002. Available at: [http://www.house.gov/markey/iss\\_nuclear\\_rep020325.pdf](http://www.house.gov/markey/iss_nuclear_rep020325.pdf).

[6] U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO), NUCLEAR WASTE: YUCCA MOUNTAIN REPOSITORY PROJECT (Washington, D.C.: GAO, Dec., 2001.) GAO-02-191; <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02191.pdf>.

### **On the Heavy Side:**

“There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.(From The Russell-Einstein Manifesto Issued in London, 9 July 1955)

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### **On the Light Side**

Counting cows

A math genius was a passenger in a car that drove past a field full of cows.

“There’s three-hundred-and-twenty-seven cows in that field,” said the genius.

“How can you count them so fast?” asked the driver.

“It’s easy,” laughed the genius, “I just count their legs and divide by four.”

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### **What Is Patriotism?**

Ed Shaffer

In times of crisis, many people feel that we must give unquestioning support to the government in power. To do otherwise is considered unpatriotic or even traitorous. What these people don’t realize is that they are echoing the ideology of those we fought against in World War II. During his reign, Mussolini plastered Italy with the slogan, “Believe, Obey and Fight.” In other words, he wanted to transform the Italian people into a bunch of robots who would obey his commands. The trouble with this concept of patriotism is its assumption that a country’s leaders are infallible gods who make no mistakes. As the Italian people found out, the acceptance of this assumption, more often than not, paves the way to disaster.

Alfred Tennyson eloquently pointed out this truth in his “Charge of the Light Brigade.”

Some one had blundered:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd . . . .  
Into the jaws of death,  
Into the mouth of hell  
Rode the six hundred.

Rather than follow blindly those who urge war, we must “make reply” and ask the “reason why.” We should act as thinking human beings rather than as blindly obedient robots traveling along the road to disaster. Disaster in this nuclear age could mean the end of civilization. This is why raising questions is the essence of true patriotism.

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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)

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