



Letter from your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members in BC:

“Prevention is better than cure,” says folk wisdom. Nowhere is this more true than in regard to war. Since our last Update in November, the world peace movement, with very important veteran support, has been working to prevent a US attack on Iraq. VANA is playing its part in this movement. A leaflet produced by VANA Saskatoon (“10 things you need to know about Iraq”) and widely circulated there, appears below. Other actions by VANA, and an Australian vet are described below.

VANA, together with Lawyers Against War, is presenting a resolution against war to the Vancouver City Council at their next meeting. Many cities in the United States, including Washington DC, San Francisco, Baltimore and Chicago have passed similar resolutions

A brave attempt to prevent the outbreak of war was made by four women members of a Canadian Peace Team from Vancouver, who went to Iraq in December. A brief account by Linda Morgan of this team appears later in the newsletter.

Be sure not to miss our BC Branch VANA meeting on Monday 27 January when Linda Morgan and Irene Vandas of the Peace Team will be telling us about their experiences in Iraq. This event will, as usual, be held at 1:30 in the Fireside Room, Unitarian Church at 49th Avenue and Oak Street, Vancouver.

In opposing Canada's involvement in a US attack

on Iraq, the views of General Peter Gration, who was chief of the Australian Defence Force during the Gulf War give us some useful arguments from a reputable source. Canada's position in this context, has important similarities with that of Australia. His views appear below.

VANA's main concerns regarding Iraq are first to prevent a war, second if that fails, to prevent Canada becoming involved and third to prevent the use of nuclear weapons.

Your president explored the possibility of Prime Minister Chretien being a peacemaker over Iraq. Read a copy of his recent letter to the PM below.

Finally, on Saturday 18 January, VANA members joined a large, anti-war march in Vancouver under our banner.. Similar marches took place across North America and throughout the rest of the world..

Do keep sending in your news, information, articles, writing, questions, beefs and bouquets. They are always welcome and will be included in future updates. Finally, please note our new address in the letterhead.

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 Robinson, Membership Coordinator
At Large: Emil Grieshaber, Ed Shaffer

Announcement: "Honour our future; Respect our past." On 11 February 1:30 p.m. There will be a rally at the Legislature in Victoria to rescind tuition hikes and pharmacare cuts. Information & bus schedules: Lower mainland: 604-576-8000 or 778-772-8012 Vancouver I.: 250-360-1068 or 250-751-1222 U-Victoria: 250-721-8370 Oakridge Bus Reservations: 604-876-2703

Ten things you need to know about Iraq

1. Iraq was created out of the Ottoman Empire, by Great Britain and France after the First World War. Iraq is a secular Arab State which despite its record of human rights abuses, freed women from the veil and developed a society with excellent universal accessible social and educational facilities.
2. Iraq was supported by the United States in its war with Iran in the 1980's in an attempt to defeat the fundamentalist Muslim regime and so make Iran's oil more easily accessible to the West.
3. **Desert Storm** (1991): Iraq invades Kuwait. The UN authorized force to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. There was **no** UN mandate for the heavy bombing of Iraq. This bombing destroyed: 28 hospitals, 38 schools, all of Iraq's 11 electrical power stations; 119 sub-stations; 4 of Iraq's 7 major pumping stations; 31 sewage plants; This caused at least 300,000 casualties. Sewage disposal and water purification plants were deliberately destroyed in order to ensure the likelihood of water borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dysentery spreading in the civilian population. **This has been a principal cause of deaths for over 500,000 children since the end of the war. [Unicef figures].**
4. UN forces used Depleted Uranium in armour piercing shells. Such radioactive material has increased birth deformities in Iraqi children and may be a cause of the "Gulf War Syndrome".
5. UN Resolution 687 in 1991 ordered Iraq to divest itself of Weapons of Mass Destruction [WMD]. Referring to Israel's nuclear weapons it also suggested a WMD-Free zone be established in the Middle East. It reminded the five original nuclear powers of their obligation to rid themselves of these weapons. Iraq alone has made any attempt to fulfill these obligations. [UN inspectors reported that Iraq

had got rid of 95% of its WMD's before the inspectors were withdrawn by the USA. (Dec'98.)

6. UN resolution 1441 of November 8th 2002 demands that Iraq declares all its WMD's "*including aerial unmanned vehicles for dispersal and all such weapons locations, components, sub-components agents and related material and equipment.*" This demand in effect means disclosing the site of every chemical, biological or nuclear facility in the country. The Resolution also gives the inspectors the power to abduct Iraqi citizens and their families for interrogation outside Iraq. Very tough requirements make compliance difficult. Non compliance means war.
7. Iraq has not threatened the USA
8. Saddam Hussein and President Bush both consider Osama Bin Laden terrorist.
9. None of the 9/11 terrorists came from Iraq
10. Iraq has the second largest untapped supply of oil in the world. President Bush, Vice-president Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Condoleeza Rice are connected to the American Oil Industry. The USA and Great Britain both threaten to attack Iraq regardless of what the Inspectors report. Like the Gulf War this would begin with intense high level bombing killing hundreds or thousands of civilians and causing a horrific humanitarian refugee situation. This would be followed by massive land-based attacks with tanks and artillery. To prevent this, urge the Canadian Government to seek an end to the conflict by diplomatic means. **SO PLEASE** contact the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon Bill Graham and tell them that Canada should play no part in any US or UN proposed war on Iraq.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6
or Tel: 1-613-992-4211 Fax: 1-613-941-6900 E-mail <pm@pm.gc.ca>

Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6
or Tel: 1-613-992-5234 Fax: 1-613-996-9607- E-Mail <grahab@parl.gc.ca>

“Iraq: The Human Cost”

by Linda Morgan

In December I visited Iraq with three members of a Canadian Peace team, all of us from Vancouver. We visited Baghdad, Mosul and Basra.

Peace groups in the west are trying to prevent a new Gulf War, but for Iraqis, the Gulf War of 1991 never ended. The 23 million people of Iraq see this new war as a continuation of the war that has been waged against them for the last twelve years that has killed more than one-and-a-half million people. Sanctions are killing on average 250 people a day and about 200 of them are children.

Bombing, which has been ongoing for years in the illegal "no fly zones," has been stepped-up in the last few months. Britain and the United States claim to be protecting the people in the no fly zones, but as an Iraqi said, "They are killing them, maiming them, depriving them of the normal livelihood and also destroying the infrastructure which is there to serve them."

Our Canadian Peace Team was made up of four of us traveling from Vancouver, Irene MacInness, Irene Vandas, Jen Ziemann and myself. We joined two other Canadians, Drs. David Swann and Amir Khadir, in Baghdad together with the international Iraq Peace Team that is organized by Voices in the Wilderness, a Chicago based peace group. The goals of the Peace Team are to show solidarity with the people of Iraq, to prevent the war in whatever way they can and to be witness to events if war comes.

This was my second trip to Iraq. The first was in 1999, but now things are much more vivid and personal for me. When we entered Baghdad the signs of war and sanctions were evident. There was garbage everywhere due to the lack of garbage trucks, and old poorly maintained cars polluted the air. The power plants and water treatment facilities continue to function inadequately due to the lack of spare parts. The power goes out in some sections of the city, up to four times a day. In Vancouver the

power went off for about 6 hours this Christmas, and the big news item was: How did people cook their turkey? Antibiotics and cancer treatment drugs remain in short supply due to the Sanctions.

Last time we were in Iraq visiting a hospital, a two year old girl, called Nemya, died. The doctor said then all he needed to save her was a 50 cent piece of tubing but it was unobtainable because of the sanctions. This time while we were at the Hospital in Basra, Jihad Hani, a six year old girl died of leukemia. Her mother was inconsolable with grief, crying and weeping and hitting herself. Jihad Hani's Doctor said that the necessary drugs for her were unavailable. We felt pity for the family, and shame because of our government's role in this. In despair, we stood in the hall and cried.

I asked the Doctor how he will cope if a new war comes and he just shook his head and said that every day it gets more difficult to cope without the war. "We lose 3 to 4 babies a day."

We drove to Mosul in the north. Conditions there appear better, but the doctors of Mosul's Public Hospital said they find it difficult to treat patients because of shortages in medical supplies, similar to those in Baghdad and Basra. While in Mosul we visited a school that was damaged during a 1997 missile attack. Bombs were dropped next door to the school and 7 children injured. The teachers have to cope with frightened children every time the air raid siren goes off or enemy planes go over head.

We decided to challenge the "no fly zones" by flying to Basra in the southern zone. Now I know what it is like to sit in plane and wonder if it's going to be shot down. In Basra I met with families that were victims of these criminal bombings and saw the scars on the bodies of children. While visiting a hospital, we heard and felt bombings. There were about 25 to 30 thuds that seem to resonate (continued on page 4)

“Human Cost”(continued from page 3)

through my stomach. The Doctor was visibly shaken by the constant pounding as he knows only too well the results and has to deal with the injuries, disfiguration, and maiming. We all felt sickened by it.

In Iraq on the surface, people seem to be just getting on with their lives. They seem to have put the threat of war in the back of their minds, but when asked a question, like, "How do they cope with the threat of being bombed?" the fear comes tumbling out.

One man told me, "We are living under a tremendous psychological warfare - not knowing if today we will come home from work and everyday we think, 'we have got through one more day alive.'" Another said, "The air raid siren was practiced two days ago, and I came home to find my wife hiding in a cupboard. she was shaking all over. She had thought that the bombing had began." he went on to say, -"During the 1991 bombing my sister had a miscarriage - many pregnant women got so afraid that they miscarried their children."

The words of a woman student at Baghdad University seemed to sum up the reactions of Iraqis to the Bush Administration's eagerness for war: "We all want to live," she said, "I want to bring up my children. I want to live my life."

(Since returning, Linda has had several TV, radio and press interviews)

The case against war with Iraq

by General Peter Gration

Melbourne Age (Australia, January 2 2003

[General Peter Gration was chief of the Australian Defence Force during the Gulf War.]

As 2003 dawns, the threat of a US-led war against Iraq looms over the world. The question for Australia is, should we take part? If we do, it will be the first time in our history that we have taken part in unprovoked offensive military action against another country. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein is a brutal dictator heading an unsavory regime that probably does possess weapons of mass

destruction (WMD), and the world would be a better place if they were removed.

Nevertheless, there are insufficient grounds for war, which is unnecessary and may lead to unpredictable and potentially disastrous consequences. It is not in Australia's interests to take part in such a war. I stress that this is not a call for inaction, since better alternatives are available. Let me elaborate. The war would be the first practical implementation of recently announced changes in US national security policy. This has moved from containment and deterrence to an open-ended doctrine of the right to pre-emptive strike if the US perceives a threat developing to its global supremacy. In my view, this is bad policy that strikes at the very heart of efforts to create a rules-based international order, and can only lead to a less stable security environment and a marginalised UN.

The public case for war centres on Iraq's WMD and the threat they pose. There is an element of urgency built in, with what I believe are exaggerated statements on the imminence of Iraq developing a nuclear weapon. The forcible removal of the WMD will require regime change, which seems to have been a US objective all along, and means invasion, installation of a puppet regime (or direct American rule) propped up by a large occupation force. There are also suggestions that the US may intend to pursue wider strategic objectives in the Middle East, including the control of Iraqi oil, removal of a military threat to Israel, and containment of Iran.

Iraq is not the only country with WMD, and there seems to be no reason why Iraq's use of its weapons against other countries cannot be contained and deterred by the immensely more powerful US, which did it successfully with the Soviet Union, China and North Korea. We should note also that biological weapons have a a short shelf life, and, like chemical weapons, are notoriously difficult to use tactically. Iraq also lacks credible strategic delivery means. Again, Iraq has no history of providing WMD to terrorists. I believe the prospect of it doing so is low. No links have been established (Continued on page 5)

Case Against War (continued from page 4)

between Iraq and al Qaeda or the attacks against the US on September 11, despite strenuous attempts to do so. Indeed, Iraq is one of the more secular Islamic states, and the prospect of Iraqis cooperating with the fundamentalists of al Qaeda seems remote.

In short, the real and immediate threat from Iraq's WMD, while not zero, is much exaggerated, and is well short of providing grounds to go to war. This unnecessary war could produce some disastrous outcomes that may worsen, rather than improve, global security. Once war starts, the outcomes may be quite unpredictable and not what is planned. Nevertheless we can speculate.

There is little doubt that a US invasion of Iraq will be militarily successful - the only questions are time, casualties and cost. Much will depend on the Iraqi army's will to fight and the attitude of the civil population. My guess is that the initial invasion should take no more than a few weeks, with low American casualties but high Iraqi casualties, particularly among the civilian population - perhaps eventually in the hundreds of thousands.

The conflict may well spread beyond Iraq. The gravest concern could be if Israel stepped in, perhaps in response to provocation by Iraq. Any involvement in the war by Israel would lead to the prospect of the conflict spreading across the whole region.

TV images of the US beating up and then occupying a fellow Muslim country could be destabilizing for the leadership of Muslim countries presently friendly to the West, such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Indonesia, as their leaders tried to balance the expectations of support by the US and its allies against the fired-up anti-Western anger of their people. In the worst case, this could unite the Muslim world against the West, fulfilling Samuel Huntington's prediction of a clash of civilizations. The impact on global oil supply and

price, and hence on the global economy, could be disastrous.

The effect on global terrorism is hard to judge. Some believe that removing Iraq as a potential supporter could deliver a serious blow. Others observe that Iraq has no history of supporting global terrorism, and a more likely outcome would be to spawn a whole new generation of suicidal terrorists, targeting the US and its allies - including Australia.

If we go to war without UN endorsement, our actions as signatories of the UN Charter would, in effect, be illegal. And, not least, we should be aware of the humanitarian disaster that would probably be precipitated in Iraq, as its much weakened public health system collapsed in the face of invasion. Given the prospect of these outcomes, it would be strategically unsound to risk them in an unnecessary war when an alternative is available.

That alternative is to continue to pursue the present course of action through the UN inspectors already in Iraq, even in the face of some Iraqi intransigence. This is likely to be a prolonged, frustrating and probably messy and untidy business, but in the end should be effective in removing the WMD and preventing their further development. It will not in itself achieve regime change, nor will it deliver other possible US strategic objectives in the region, such as control of Iraqi oil, but it will avoid the dire consequences of a war.

It can only be successful if backed by the credible threat of the use of force if Iraq becomes seriously non-cooperative, and fortunately that threat is already in place. In the final outcome, we can always go to war as a last resort.

It may be politically difficult for national leaders to step back from war at this late stage, but it may be even more difficult later to justify participation in an illegal conflict with such potential to go badly wrong

.Iraq war: could Chretien prevent it?

COPY

Date 27 December 2002

To The Right Honourable Jean Chretien, Prime Minister of Canada

Re *Prevention of the threatened war against Iraq & request for a meeting*

Dear Prime Minister Chretien

We are on the brink of a lawless war, a cruel war, a disastrous war against the people of Iraq. I believe that you are in a position to prevent this war.

This war is lawless, because whatever legal fig leaves have been applied by the threats and bribes of the Bush administration, this war would be a naked aggression, defying the UN Charter.

This would be a cruel war because during twelve years of sanctions the Iraqi people have witnessed the deaths of over half-a-million of their children, the destruction of their life-support systems, and the ruin of their economy. Now they are faced with a massive bombing attack.

This would be a disastrous war because it may easily spread well beyond Iraq and result in greatly increased terrorism. If the US uses nuclear weapons against Iraq, the probability of nuclear terrorism will increase greatly, which would truly be a hellish

disaster.

I believe that you can prevent this war. Polls have shown that millions of Americans are uneasy and even fearful of this war.

If you announce that Canada will play no part in this lawless and cruel war, and boldly advise Americans to turn aside from their war path, it would have an enormous, good effect. There is no country and no people that Americans trust more than us Canadians. A bold, statesmanlike move by you at this time is urgently needed. No other world leader is in a better position than you are to avert this disaster.

I believe that there is an opportunity here to save tens of thousands of human lives and quite possibly, to de-fuse the catastrophic use of nuclear weapons. Even making a serious attempt to seize this opportunity will earn you an honourable place in history. If you are successful in helping prevent this disastrous war, your name will be long remembered, far beyond Canada.

I would very much like to meet with you in early January to discuss these matters. I will not waste your time

Yours truly,

David Morgan, VANA National President

On the heavy side: While the US military budget alone is now \$380bn, the nations of the world cannot even find one thousandth of that to sustain the \$330m budget that the International Atomic Energy Agency needs to check up on nuclear materials

10. On the Light Side

Changing Light Bulbs

Q: How many Zen Buddhists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Two: One to change the bulb, and one not-to-change the bulb.

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 _____