



# VANA NEWSLETTER - BC BRANCH



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## Letter from Your Executive

Dear Fellow VANA Members in BC:

Canada, having chosen not to send troops to join the rest of the English-speaking world in its attack on Iraq, is now under great US pressure to take part in Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) or "Star Wars." This pressure now comes mainly from the Canadian business establishment which fears both a general US trade retaliation, crudely hinted by US Ambassador Paul Celluci, and also loss of lucrative Star Wars hardware contracts.

The Globe & Mail editorial "Canada should say yes to missile defence" (12 May'03) warns Canadians that "decisions will be made without us," we won't have a seat at "the table," that the US will spend \$8billion annually on BMD (no need to spell out the implications here) and that "rogue states such as North Korea might conceivably launch attacks."

This BMD "movie" is one that has been playing a long time. No one is better able to remind us of this than Paul Hellyer who had to deal with this same issue when he was Canada's Defence Minister, 1963-67. His article on it appears below, and is followed by VANA BC member Bill Hall's excellent letter to Chretien and his cabinet on the same issue.

**The "Militarization of Space" will be the topic of our meeting on Monday 26 May** when we will be showing a video of the same name. After the video we will have a short discussion followed by a letter writing session, so bring your pen. We will supply paper and envelopes and the addresses of Canada's cabinet ministers. Bill Hall has given us a great example. As usual the meeting will be held at the Fireside Room of the Unitarian Church, 49th Avenue at Oak at 1:30pm.

Neither the UN weapons inspectors nor the US forces in Iraq have been able to find any weapons of mass destruction. However, the US has been able to confirm that Iraq has many oil wells. The statistics in a Time magazine article (below) written with a 'now-it-can-be-told' frankness, show just how gigantic is this resource which the US now controls. As the dust of the war settles, one of the major motivations, for what now looks like a neo-colonial war, gets clearer each day.

Meanwhile, raw materials for weapons of mass destruction, Uranium oxide "yellow cake" (U3O8), at Tuwaitha, seven miles south of Baghdad, left un-guarded by the US, has been looted and dispersed. Symptoms of the deadly health effects of this yellow powder are already beginning to appear at a nearby village. This US negligence can only be described as criminal, and is in shocking contrast to the great care taken to secure Iraq's oil production facilities.. An article from Britain's Telegraph below, describes this.

Please keep sending in your news, views, questions, articles, and letters,

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**Missile defence: It was wrong then and it's wrong now**

By PAUL HELLYER, Minister of National Defence from 1963 to 1967)  
Thursday, May. 15, 2003

It is almost 40 years since U.S. secretary of defence Robert McNamara asked me if Canada would be interested in helping develop an anti-ballistic missile defence for North America. I was able to say, "Thanks, but no thanks," which was the position of the Pearson government and one that I fully endorsed.

There were good reasons for not disturbing the balance of power and escalating the arms race. The reasons for not joining NMD are even more compelling today when there is no military threat to North America, and U.S. unilateralism is creating a new source of instability.

The Minister of National Defence, John McCallum, and some of his colleagues have been giving us the usual spin that one would expect from the military. Unless we are sitting at the table, our voice will not be heard; there will be industrial benefits; Canadian lives might be saved; and if we don't make up our minds soon, the Americans will proceed without us.

Only the most naive of Canadians would suggest that being at the table with the Commander-in-Chief Northern Command would give us one iota of influence. This is one of the most spurious of arguments. CincNorCom listens to his boss at the Pentagon and to no one else.

It is possible that Canada might derive some minor industrial benefits, but the extent would probably be determined by our cash contribution to NMD. We could obtain equal benefit by spending the same amount

of money on equipment that the Canadian Forces desperately need for their assigned tasks.

The notion that NMD will save Canadian lives is unquestionably the most far-fetched of all the arguments. We have no enemies with along-range missile capability. In fact, the stated reasons for NMD -- protection from "rogue states" -- is a cover story for its real function, which is far more sinister.

Finally, the warning from our military that if we don't sign on soon the U.S. will proceed on its own is quite correct. That is exactly what it will do because the Bush administration is committed to it. Our participation would undoubtedly be welcome, especially if it meant easier access to our territory, if required, and some contribution toward the cost. But it doesn't really matter.

We went through the same ritual with the Bomarc missiles in the Diefenbaker era. Years later, we learned that it was our air force that wanted to play with the big boys' toys and keep their cushy jobs at Colorado Springs.

This time, the stakes are higher and the consequences far more serious. For the first time in my memory, the U.S. administration is dominated by a small group from the Pentagon. Vice-President Dick Cheney, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz and a handful of their close associates were all involved in a 1992 Pentagon document, Defence Planning Guidance, on post-Cold War strategy.

One of its key sections read: "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of  
*(continued on page 3)*

**Hellyer** (*continued from page 2*) the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union."

When a copy was leaked to the press, its belligerent tone caused such a furor that it had to be withdrawn and rewritten. The language of the revised version, signed by Mr. Cheney when he was secretary of defence, was more diplomatic, but the intent remain unchanged. The U.S. would build up its forces to the point where it could attack any country on Earth without fear of significant retaliation. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty had to be abrogated. The U.S. had to develop a multilayered anti-missile system on a global basis to protect not only the continental United States but also military operations anywhere.

The 2000 copy of the document makes very clear that NMD is just one step in the direction of a system that will involve "interceptors" and weapons of mass destruction in space. It will be designed to pulverize any military or civilian installation on Earth and have the capacity to zap any person in their garden. The picture is so abhorrent that it is beyond any sense of shock and awe. And even though the plan is no secret, it is almost certain that none of the Canadian cabinet ministers who intend to make us an accessory have read it. If they had, surely they wouldn't recommend anything so totally incompatible with Canadian values.

Instead, Canada should accept the long-standing invitation of Congressman Dennis Kucinich of Ohio to launch a conference to seek approval of an international treaty to ban weapons in space. That would be a positive Canadian contribution toward a more peaceful world. (*Paul Hellyer was minister of national defence from 1963 to 1967*).

## **Bill Hall's letter to Ottawa re Missile Defence**

From: "William Hall" To: "Prime Minister"  
"Minister of Defence" McCallum.J  
Foreign Affairs "Member of Parliament"  
Owens  
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003

Dear Prime Minister:

### **Canada Must Not Join With the United States in a Continental Missile Defence System!**

The finest thing that Canada has done in the past several years is to take her own policy decision with respect to the war in Iraq. The government listened to the voice of the majority the Canadian people, and acted accordingly. Because of the wise decision to stand apart from the United States, your government is now held in high regard both within Canada and throughout the world.

Don't compromise that position by getting locked into an irrevocable defence agreement with the United States! The concept is flawed from the beginning - the threat is vague, and the technology is unproved. The very thought of Canada putting so much money and resource into a hypothetical and static defence at a time when the rest of the world is in urgent need of our flexible and experienced talents is heartbreaking!

No matter what representation we are given in such a project, there is no doubt who will control the ultimate decisions. Canada will contribute, but the United States will control; - we need look no further than the current "coalition of the willing". Canada has always been able to work with whatever allies she has chosen. If we commit (*continued on page 4*)

**Hall** (*continued from page 3*) ourselves irrevocably to the United States in this matter, we are "tied to her wagon " forever in the eyes of the rest of the world, and committed to a heavy financial burden that will limit our own choices from here on.

I urge you not to take this bait and become committed to Star Wars. Remain independent, and leave Canada clear to assign our own priorities as determined by the Canadian government, based on Canadian foreign policy.  
William H. Hall,  
Lieutenant Commander, RCN (Retired)

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### **"Iraq's crude awakening"**

(excerpts from Time Magazine of 10 May 2003 )

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has been firm and consistent on what the war in Iraq is not about. **"It has nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil,"** he says. If it sounds as though he's protesting too much, it's because the Bush Administration is up against a prevailing world view that the burden of proof is on the U.S. to show that it won't exploit Iraq's underground riches. Hours after the invasion began, U.S. forces had seized two offshore terminals that can transfer 2 million bbl. daily to tankers. They secured the southern Rumaila oil field so swiftly that Saddam Hussein's retreating troops managed to set only nine wells ablaze, compared with 650 Kuwaiti wells during Gulf War I, and U.S. airborne troops took the northern oil fields at Kirkuk largely intact.

Three weeks later, when U.S. forces rolled into downtown Baghdad, they headed straight for the Oil Ministry building and threw up a protective shield around it. While other government buildings, ranging from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the National Museum of Antiquities, were looted and pillaged, while hospitals were stripped of medicine and basic equipment, Iraq's oil records were safe and secure, guarded by the U.S. military.

General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had an explanation: **"I think it's, as much as anything else, a matter of priorities."**

Rumsfeld's disclaimer aside, the fact is that oil—who has it, who produces it, who fixes its price—governs everything of significance in the Persian Gulf and affects economies everywhere. While the Bush Administration has repeatedly asserted that Iraq's oil belongs to its citizens—**"We'll make sure that Iraq's natural resources are used for the benefit of their owners, the Iraqi people,"** the President said—the stakes go far beyond Iraq. The amount of oil that Iraq brings to market will not just determine the living standards of Iraqis but affect everything from the Russian economy to the price Americans pay for gasoline, from the stability of Saudi Arabia to Iran's future.

Why is Iraq such a prize? Not only does it have the potential to become the world's largest producer, but no other country can do it as cheaply. That's because, for geological reasons, Iraq boasts the world's most prolific wells. **In 1979, the year before Iraq's oil fields were devastated by the first of three wars, its wells produced an average of 13,700 bbl. each per day. By contrast, each Saudi well averaged 10,200 bbl. U.S. wells, which are gradually drying up, averaged just 17 bbl.** It would take more than 800 U.S. wells to pump as much oil as a typical Iraqi well.

Consequently, production costs in Iraq are much lower. **The average cost of bringing a barrel of oil out of the ground in the U.S. is about \$10. In Saudi Arabia, it's about \$2.50. And in Iraq, it's less than \$1,** according to Fadhil Chalabi, executive director of the Center for Global Energy Studies in London and former Under Secretary of Oil in Iraq. What's more, most of Iraq's known oil deposits are waiting to be developed. That's why everyone has cast a covetous eye on the country. And why each one of the world's major powers and international groups has an agenda for Iraqi oil.

*Telegraph* (UK) (Filed: 11/05/2003)

**“Villagers suffer radiation sickness after looting nuclear power plants** By Inigo Gilmore in Baghdad”

Doctors fear that hundreds of Iraqis may be suffering from radiation poisoning, following the widespread looting of the country's nuclear facilities. Seven nuclear facilities have been damaged or effectively destroyed by ransackers since the end of the war. Technical documents, sensitive equipment and barrels containing radioactive material are believed to have been stolen.

Many residents in villages close to the huge Tuwaitha Nuclear Facility, about seven miles south of Baghdad, were showing signs of radiation illness last week, including rashes, acute vomiting and severe nosebleeds.

As Saddam Hussein's regime collapsed last month villagers began looting barrels of the uranium oxide, known as "yellowcake", from the site, which they then emptied to use to store water, milk and yoghurt.

In Al Riyadh village, about a mile from the site, 13-year-old El Tifat Nasser fell ill after her brothers visited the facility on a dozen occasions and returned with barrels. "She is bleeding twice a day through her nose and she is very sick," said her mother, Sabieha Nasser, 48. "We are very worried."

Local hospitals have seen an influx of patients complaining of similar symptoms. "A lot of people seem to be affected," said one doctor. "It is deeply worrying."

Villagers said Iraqi officials arrived recently with Geiger counters. One said the men had measured areas where locals had emptied the contents of stolen barrels. "The Geiger counters were screaming," he said, adding that the officials had then instructed them to cover the areas in concrete.

The failure to secure the nuclear sites has fuelled criticism of American forces in Iraq. It is known that at the Tuwaitha facility there were significant quantities of

partially enriched uranium, cesium, strontium and cobalt.

Besides Tuwaitha and the adjacent Baghdad Nuclear Research Centre, the Ash Shaykhili Nuclear Facility, the Baghdad New Nuclear Design Centre and the Tahadi Nuclear Establishment have all been looted.

It is not yet clear what has been lost in the ransackings. There was unrestrained looting among chemical stores and scientific files that some experts believe could, in the wrong hands, allow the manufacture of a "dirty bomb". Many of the files, and some of the containers that held radioactive material, are missing.

All of the facilities have attracted close scrutiny from the International Atomic Energy Agency and from United States experts who claimed that Iraq, despite IAEA inspections, was working to develop nuclear weapons. The warehouses at Ash Shaykhili have been destroyed by ransacking and fire and the enrichment processing equipment is either missing or burnt..

Alarmed by the reports, the IAEA's director-general, Mohamed El Baradei, last week sent a letter to reiterate earlier demands that the US grant the agency access to Iraq's nuclear sites, but so far there has been no response.

Mohammed Zaidan, the former chief agricultural engineer at Tuwaitha, said he had visited the nuclear site with Dr Hamid Al Bahli, a nuclear scientist, on April 7 when American troops were approaching from the south.

The soldiers, he said, assured the men they would secure Tuwaitha, but two weeks later they returned to find there were no American soldiers, only hundreds of people looting the facility and dogs rolling around in the contaminated uranium oxide.

"The soldiers had promised us they would secure the site but they did not and we wonder why," he said. "Perhaps it was because they always knew there were no real weapons there, despite all their claims. But, nevertheless, these materials represent a major health hazard and before long we may start to see people developing cancer and deformed babies because they did not stop the looting."

## Where, oh Where are Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction? by Ed Shaffer

There is an old saying that "truth is the first casualty of war." And in the present so-called "war against terrorism" truth is a major casualty. Early in 2002, shortly after President's Bush's "axis of evil" speech, the Pentagon tried to create an Office of Strategic Influence designed to sway public opinion throughout the world. It proposed many tactics, including the use of "disinformation," to achieve its objectives.

Upon reading this, I immediately dispatched a letter to *The New York Times* suggesting the U.S. take the next logical step by forming an "axis of liars" to confront the "axis of evil." Unfortunately its editors decided that my letter was not fit to print. Perhaps they were right because I was an unsophisticated "disinformationist." I suspect that the Bush administration later adopted my proposal but had the sense to call it a "coalition of the willing." This is disinformation *par excellence*.

This coalition was set up, in defiance of the United Nations Charter, to destroy Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction." According to U.S. mouthpieces, Iraq had violated U.N. resolutions by refusing to destroy these weapons and thereby posed an imminent threat to world peace. The U.S. warned the U.N. that, if it did not force Iraq to disarm, it would become "irrelevant" and the U.S. would have to take on the responsibility of forcing Iraq to comply with U.N. resolutions.

Ignoring the findings of both the U.N.-appointed Blix commission and former arms inspectors that these weapons had already been destroyed, the U.S. and its coalition lackeys invaded Iraq, murdered thousands of innocent civilians, destroyed that country's

infrastructure and found no weapons of mass destruction.

Nevertheless Bush, Rumsfeld and Tony Blair are still saying that they are confident that they will find these weapons. **But if these weapons really do exist, they will have to explain, why Saddam Hussein has never used them. We will have to wait and see what explanations their disinformation specialists will conjure up on this one.**

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### On the Light Side

More 'Order in court:'

(These are questions actually asked of witnesses by attorneys during trials, and appeared in the Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyers Journal)

Question: "Were you present when your picture was taken?"

Question: "Did he kill you?"

Question: "How far apart were the vehicles at the time of the collision?"

Question: "You were there until the time you left, is that true?"

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### Security

We will not find security  
in an endless weapons race  
not in the depths of oceans  
nor the voids of outer space.  
That hi-tech hi-cost systems  
will save us is a fable.

Security grows from meeting foes  
around a low-tech wooden table

*David Morgan 19 March 1999*

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## VANA MEMBERSHIP

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