

May 2, 2004

**Open letter to Mr. Andrew Holota, Editor of The Leader (Surrey/N.Delta)**

Dear Mr. Holota:

In an editorial on April 23, 2003 in the Surrey/North Delta Leader, under the title 'What didn't happen', you wrote:

"Well, there it is then. Nothing left to do in Iraq but rebuild the country, unify diametrically opposed sects of Muslims, create a democracy instead of a fundamentalist theocracy, convince the Kurds they don't want their own country, convince Syria to show Hezbollah the door, and make peace between Israel and Palestine." ... "If one still believes the anti-American peaceniks and bad-news-is-best television pundits, it'll never happen."

When I originally read your article, I could not believe how many distortions, fabrications and false statements could be included in one short editorial. I was tempted to refute all your statements then, but I held back so as not to be accused of being emotional and one sided. Furthermore, people in the peace movement realized even then that less than one year would be enough to expose the truth.

I held onto your editorial hoping after the passing of a year, you would be honest with yourself, your readers and with those whom you attacked unfairly. But NO, not a single word about the new Vietnam, the loss of human life (American and Iraqi), not a single word about the ramifications of this war and the new realities on the ground.

Mr. Holota, your article was totally wrong, misleading and racist.

Wrong, because the U.S. is not rebuilding Iraq nor creating a democracy, Iraq is now closer than ever to a fundamentalist theocracy, thanks to the U.S. Though it is true that "diametrically opposed sects of Muslims" are unified, it is currently only in opposition to the U.S./U.K. occupation.

Misleading, because Syria cannot show Hezbollah the door. Hezbollah is a Lebanese grass roots resistance movement that showed Israel the door; it also has representatives in the Lebanese Parliament.

Racist, because you cannot determine the destiny of any people -- the Kurds will determine their own destiny and NO outside force will stop their quest for self-determination.

You continued on with your "political analysis" to inform the ordinary people in Surrey, Delta and beyond (many other community papers published your April 2003 diatribe) by saying that "the Iraq war... should go down in history as the one most notable for what never happened".

You did correctly list a few things that did not happen. "The Iraqis didn't use weapons of mass destruction against the coalition forces. Saddam Hussein didn't fire missiles into Israel." However, these were never the predictions of the peace movement but rather the predictions of the US/UK "intelligence" which has been proven woefully wrong about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction WMD. You continued your gloating about what "never happened" by stating - "Baghdad did not become a quagmire of urban warfare." I don't need to even comment on that prediction.

Then you went on a rampage against what you called the CBC-worshipping crowd and informed us "what else won't occur":

"Iraq won't descend into anarchy, despite the best efforts of some of its people to put it there."..."American forces will not occupy the country for ever."

And then you concluded by saying, "To the chagrin of the Chicken Littles, here are some of the key things that did happen....The U.S. is now helping the Iraqis regroup and rebuild, just as promised."

Have you seen Fallujah lately?

Here are some of the things that have actually happened, none of which you correctly predicted or you are now talking about.

An increase in violence against and resistance to the American imperial project and its allies all over the world - from the Philippines/Malaysia in the East to Spain and Morocco in the West.

The violation of Iraqi human rights occurring on all levels with the torture of Iraqi prisoners by US/UK forces being just one example.

The U. S. administration's deception and cover up about WMD and the "war on terror".

The institutionalized racism against refugees and Arab and Moslem citizens in Canada and the U.S.

The disastrous effects of this war on the U.S. and Canadian economies and its manifestations on the American and Canadian people.

The escalation of hatred against the U.S. due to the war in Iraq and the U.S. support for Israeli war crimes against the Palestinians. Do you think Mr. Bush and his government are still wondering, "Why do other people hate us?"

The Palestinian Intifada (uprising) forcing the Israeli war criminal and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to seek a hasty retreat from the Gaza Strip.

And finally, oil resources are less secure than ever and oil prices are at a record high.

And just to set the record straight:

Hezbollah is still in Lebanon; no-one showed them the door.

There is no peace in Palestine/Israel.

Nobody convinced the Kurds they should not have their own country.

Mr. Holota:

While I was waiting for an editorial from you to admit your ignorance and distortions, I saw your new editorial "HEU Strike Biting the hands that feed" (April 28, 2004). I realized from what you wrote that you would never admit nor recognize that you were wrong on the U.S. aggression on Iraq. You are serving the hand that feeds you, that is big business and their representatives in Victoria and the U.S. Both domestically and globally, your editorials are not meant to reflect accuracy but rather to serve a very specific political agenda.

It is a cheap shot when you say that the union is "holding sick people hostage" and that the union struggle for better wages and working conditions is "most reprehensible". It is the government in Victoria who are holding most British Columbians (including sick and poor people) hostages. It is your dishonest positions and motivations that are the most reprehensible. I leave you to your conscience (if you have any left) and to the intelligence of the public that will decide on your future.

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