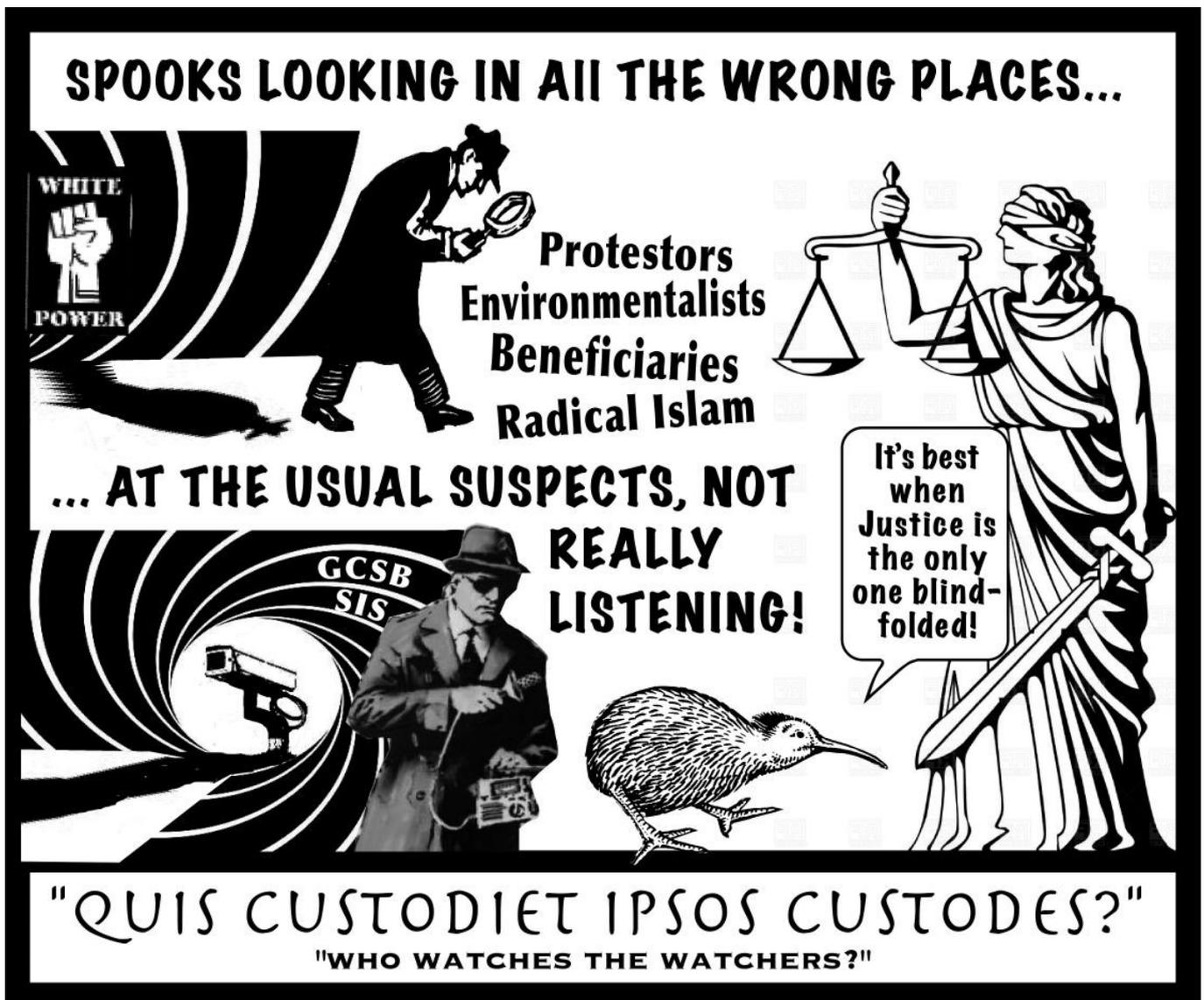


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TURNING A BLIND EYE

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THE SPOOKS AND THE CHRISTCHURCH MASSACRE

By Warren Thomson

On Friday March 15th, 2019, a gunman opened fire during prayers at two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch. Fifty people were killed (another victim has since died) and a similar number taken to hospital. Since the atrocity many questions have been asked about the part security agencies played – or more importantly, not – in the lead up to the massacre.

In the days before the attacks, the alleged gunman, Brenton Tarrant, using his full name, had posted racist content and photos of firearms on Twitter, Facebook, and other social networks. His previous online activity involved various Rightwing nutter groups. "It's just striking the online part of his persona was clearly visible. It wasn't confined to the dark Web. If someone had been watching, perhaps they could have picked it up" (Dr Belinda Barnett, Senior Lecturer in Social Media at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia; *Stuff*, 13/4/19). Another marker could have been Tarrant's extensive travels and overseas contacts.

Andrew Hampton, the Director-General of the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), commenting on the announcement of a Royal Commission into the shootings, offered the following: "GCSB is normally in a position where it can neither confirm nor deny any operational details, but given the nature of the situation I can confirm GCSB had not collected or received from partners any relevant intelligence ahead of the terrorist attacks".

"New Zealand's intelligence and security agencies do not currently have the legal authority, technical means or resources to actively monitor all online activity that occurs in New Zealand. In addition, all intelligence and security agencies are grappling with the challenges of encryption and closed online communities" ("GCSB Statement On The Christchurch Terrorist Attacks", 18/3/19, <https://www.gcsb.govt.nz/news/gcsb-statement-on-the-christchurch-terrorist-attacks/>).

Representative of some of the responses to this was this one from the *Daily Blog*: "What the bloody hell were the SIS (Security Intelligence Service), GCSB (Government Communications Security Bureau), NSG (National Security Group), CNSN (Cabinet National Security Committee), ODESC (Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination), SIB (Security and Intelligence Board), CTCC (Counter-Terrorism Coordinating Committee), NICC (National Intelligence Coordination Committee) IAD (Intelligence and Assessments Directorate), NRU (National Risk Unit) and the NSPD (National Security Policy Directorate) f----- doing? The cry now will be there is no way to catch a lone wolf and that they need more powers" (*Daily Blog*, 13/4/19).

Then the Leader of the Opposition, Simon Bridges, suggested that if our spies were able to carry out mass surveillance (!!!!!), the alleged mosque murderer could have been stopped (*NZ Herald*, 26/3/19). In particular, Bridges claimed Project Speargun* had powers which could have been significant and that "with the significantly heightened risks we face today" Speargun "would make us safer" (*Herald*, *ibid*)

On TVNZ Bridges said: "We beefed up the security intelligence. I think in cyber security we pulled back. We didn't go to a thing called Project Speargun, for example". **For the background on Project Speargun, see Warren's "Mass Surveillance Of New Zealanders: Greenwald Versus Key", Peace Researcher 48, November 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-bac-kissues/pr48.pdf>. Ed.*

“A Failure Of Human Intelligence”
Security consultant Paul Buchanan, on *Morning Report* (RNZ, 26/3/19) attributed the mosques attack to “a failure of human intelligence” (HUM INT – the domain of the SIS. The GCSB does electronic intelligence – ELINT; and/or signals intelligence - SIGINT). He was critical of Bridges’ comments. Project Speargun - a metadata interception of the Southern Cross international undersea cable - would not have helped prevent the attack because it was directed at foreign traffic coming into New Zealand.

Buchanan stated that Speargun “never went away” (contrary to the message nurtured by the spooks), but was “supplanted by newer technology” that was much more sophisticated. “So, there may be another name for it, but it never went away”. He added: “*And so for a fellow like Mr Bridges to be sitting on the Intelligence and Security [Committee] and not know that strikes me as a little bit odd*” (emphasis added). Which adds to the grave concerns that PR has about how little the senior MPs know about our spooks.

Buchanan, with whom PR seldom agrees, went on to say that a joint review by the Law Commission and the Ministry of Justice in 2018 found that New Zealand’s surveillance laws struck a good balance between privacy and security. PR contends that the balance tilts far too much in the favour of the secret squirrels, but at least Buchanan is making the point that the events in Christchurch should not be used to give the agencies more power.

Furthermore, Buchanan did state that: “In fact (the spy agencies) have more powers than anytime previously,” with which PR certainly concurs. Problems that led to the March 15 terror attacks “have nothing to do with the technological capabilities of the agencies involved and all to do with either mistaken priorities, scarce resources or an inability to follow up on leads”, Buchanan told RNZ.

Spooks Already Well-Funded & Resourced

Former long-term Minister, United Future Leader and MP, Peter Dunne, who was on the Government’s Intelligence and Security Committee and pushed for regular five-year reviews into the country’s intelligence agencies, told ABC

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 21/3/19) that the security services had never been better resourced or trained.

He hoped an inquiry would get to the bottom of whether New Zealand’s agencies had been negligent when it came to far-Right extremists, because “I think there is some substance to that criticism”. The *Herald* (26/3/19) reminded readers of the \$179m boost to agency budgets in 2016 and the passing of the Intelligence and Security Act in 2017 and quoted a former officer: “They’ve got everything they need to do their job,” he said.

The Establishment view came from Rhys Ball (academic and former spook): “In my view, I think those agencies could benefit from a lot more resources” (*Stuff*, *ibid*). More resourcing always helps. Ball says there needs to be a “fundamental shift” in how the public views intelligence, he says. “Many New Zealanders recoil when ‘the spooks’ ask for more because there’s this perception the intelligence community is a bunch of spies that carry out mass surveillance” (*Stuff*, *ibid*). He maintained the official line: “Until now, we’ve had a relatively successful hit ratio, in terms of preventing things going bang in this country. Attacks have been thwarted. But we don’t see the successes, we only see the failures”.

It will be crucial in the aftermath of Christchurch that the public is not persuaded to back calls such as the appallingly ill-informed one by Bridges to extend intelligence powers, or the somewhat more informed recommendation by Ball for a lot more resources. The brutal truth is that we have to just accept that there will sometimes emerge lunatic shooters who lurk under the radar and are almost impossible to know about. The other option – turning this country into a police state – is absolutely unacceptable.

Some cybernet experts have been scathing about security failings in regard to the mosques shootings. “This demonstrates extreme ignorance on the part of police,” Australian cyberhate expert Ginger Gorman is reported saying. Globally, law enforcement is “completely out of their depth when it comes to predator trolling and the real-life harm it causes”. There will be more attacks, she warns, unless law en-

forcement is “properly trained and resourced to monitor and investigate cyberhate” (*Stuff*, 13/4/19).

In the same article, Massey University Centre for Defence and Security Studies counter-terrorism expert Dr John Battersby, raises the question: But what if the Internet is just too big and complex to police? Which reinforces the historically valid proposition that some killers are undetectable. Battersby also believes that social media companies must be liable for facilitating the online bullying, criminal transactions, and terrorist activities that occur on their platforms.

On top of this, Rightwing bigots are becoming increasingly tech savvy and aware of how to evade detection by using encryption or private networks to disguise communication with each other. So, New Zealanders will have to be prepared to counter arguments from the spooks about how a paucity of resources meant they were not able to prevent the Christchurch massacre, and spook demands for more resources, and/or more powers, will have to be fiercely opposed.

In an ironic twist to the saga, the *Herald* (26/3/19) reported a former Australian senior intelligence officer saying that in one instance when his agency appealed for assistance (from the US National Security Agency [NSA]) the amount of electronic intelligence provided was totally overwhelming. In other words, Five Eyes is collecting so much data it is operationally useless.

Rightwing Extremist Threat Ignored

There is not one specific mention of the threat posed by white supremacists or Rightwing nationalism in ten years of public documents from the SIS or the GCSB. This is the conclusion from NZ Human Rights Foundation research which examined ten years of *Annual Reports* and Ministerial briefings; the threat of Right nationalists is never specifically mentioned (RNZ, 20/3/19).

According to the research, Rightwing extremism was briefly mentioned for the first time publicly by Rebecca Kitteridge, the Director-General of the SIS, when she spoke to the Government’s Intelligence and Security Committee in February 2019. The Minister for the GCSB and SIS, Andrew Little, tried to justi-

fy the agencies' failings by stating that the spooks started looking seriously at the threat posed by far-Right extremists in the middle of 2018.

However, the Islamic Women's Council told *RNZ* that it appealed to senior Government officials, and warned the SIS, as early as January 2017 about increasing racism and Rightwing activism, calling the situation urgent. Former Race Relations Commissioner, Dame Susan Devoy, called the official response to the fears of Muslims "diabolical" (*RNZ*, *ibid*).

The Human Rights Foundation research shows the SIS set up informal chats and offers of payment to young Muslim men, who were not advised of their rights and who felt pressure to spy on their mosques. HR Foundation Executive Director Peter Hosking said the SIS was not advising people of their rights when it invited young men along to "chat".

The SIS claimed that over the previous nine months it had "increased its efforts to obtain a better picture of the threat posed to New Zealand by far Right extremist groups" (*RNZ* *ibid*). At any one time over the past three years, the SIS said, there were 30 to 40 people on the counter-terrorism risk register, but it did not specify why people were being watched.

And it is now very clear that there has been a major intelligence failure, in part because the spies were looking the wrong way. In the past there was always a strong whiff of Rightwingism amongst the ex-police and soldiers recruited into the SIS. Although there have been big changes in the organisation in more recent years, that orientation seems to be still alarmingly prevalent today.

NZ Muslims Unhappy With The Spooks

A Muslim Aucklander who was an active member of his community at the time says he was contacted by the SIS two months before the 2011 Rugby World Cup (held in NZ), and asked if he knew of any security risks, or had any concerns (*RNZ*, 26/3/19). He was very surprised when he got the call. He was not offered money, nor reportedly felt obliged to do anything he was uncomfortable with. However, research by the Human Rights Foundation (see above) shows the SIS



has had informal chats with young men, and offered money, and the subjects did feel pressure to report on their associates.

The person spoken to by *RNZ* said he knew of at least three other people who had been contacted in the same way. He went to a meeting at McDonald's in the Auckland CBD where he was met by two people, a man and a woman, presumably SIS officers. The experience made him feel "absolutely awful". At the time "It made me feel that I'm monitored, I felt that my privacy had been breached".

Now, following the Christchurch massacre he told *RNZ* that he was "a little bit furious that they've dropped the ball completely, by obviously focusing on a very small segment and not focusing on another segment that in this particular case has led to New Zealand's worst day". Australia's ABC ran comment from Ibrahim Omer, who migrated to New Zealand from Eritrea and works in the trade union movement helping refugees resettle in New Zealand. He said Muslims had been over-monitored by security services, while far-Right groups had been largely ignored.

Another Muslim, Adam Awad, originally from Somalia, and noted for his community work in Wellington, told ABC it was time Rightwing groups were closely monitored in New Zealand. "We've been saying these Rightwing groups need to be on a watchlist," he said. The people causing problems were living in plain sight. "They are on social media. People know them. They harass people in the supermarket, even at sporting grounds," he said. "At the

mosque they often talk about how bad the treatment is from skin-heads" (ABC, 21/3/19).

What Now?

Anti-Bases Campaign has spent many years trying to convey to the public the deficiencies and anti-democratic nature of NZ's spook organisations, and to persuade the public and the politicians that the organisations should be junked and replaced with more transparent and effective policing. The Government has set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry, headed by Supreme Court Justice Sir William Young, to analyse what relevant State agencies knew about the accused before the attack, and what measures they should take to prevent such attacks in the future.

It has a budget of \$8.2 million and began considering evidence on May 13 and will report back by December 10 (2019). Prime Minister Ardern has said she wouldn't rule out "serious consequences" for relevant agencies, depending on the Inquiry's findings. It is unlikely that a Royal Commission will come up with any radical proposals.

And it is certainly unlikely to consider the option of handing over the security issues to the Police and disposing of the covert spooks, which is the Anti-Bases Campaign's preferred option (the recent Cullen-Reddy intelligence review dismissed the suggestion without even considering it as an alternative. See Warren's "Intelligence And Security Bill 2016: Giving The Spooks Yet More Powers", in PR 52, November 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHOW5iQWdHdHhacZQ/view Ed.).



THANKS, WARREN

PR Editor Flying Solo Again

By Murray Horton

Warren Thomson (with Gen de Spa),
inside outer perimeter
at Waihopai, 2019 protest.
Photo: Dot Lovell-Smith

Warren Thomson has been *Peace Researcher* Co-Editor since 2011. In 2019 he has decided to step down from that role. It is not an exaggeration to say that *PR* may well have died if Warren had not come on board as Co-Editor in 2011, that most challenging of years for everyone living in Christchurch. As sole Editor, I had only got out one issue in the year from July 2010 until July 2011.

All of us in the Anti-Bases Campaign Committee (along with everyone else in Christchurch) were dealing with thousands of earthquakes that disrupted every aspect of daily life – both Warren and I had our houses damaged (in my case, that meant my workplace was also damaged); the February 2011 killer quake destroyed Warren's central city workplace and, with it, his job until other premises could be found.

For that July 2011 *PR* (number 41)

Warren stepped up, along with fellow ABC Committee member, Doug Craig and we got it out. I remember doing the mailout in our dining room, the one room in the house that was habitable, the room that I worked in and that Becky and I lived and slept in for several months during winter 2011, while the rest of our house was being repaired. After that Doug moved to Nelson, where he remains – the quakes had wiped out, firstly, his job, and then his flat.

Once Warren was in the saddle with me as Co-Editor, we got back to business as usual, publishing two issues per year. Warren is an ABC founder and veteran Committee member (known to all as Waihopai Warren due to his numerous arrests at spy base protests in the 1980s and 90s). He has been a longstanding *PR* writer, and had a previous stint as Co-Editor, with the late Bob Leonard, in the 90s. In 1997 he went to Bangkok for work, and end-

ed up staying there until 2010, getting married in the process. He and Noi arrived back in Christchurch just in time for the quakes. Now, after a further eight years as Co-Editor, he's decided to retire from that role for good.

But Warren's certainly not lost to *PR*, the ABC Committee or Waihopai protests. His regular *Spooky Bits* is a valued feature of every issue. And he also wrote the lead article for this issue. He remains on the Committee and every year at Waihopai, he makes a point of going onto the spy base land to bang in a placard and face down any cops that might try to stop him. Warren is a great example of growing old disgracefully. Nor has Doug Craig been lost – he has an article in this issue. And *PR* itself will keep rolling along, with me as sole Editor (which I last did, when I took over from Bob Leonard, from 2003 until 2011). ■

Continued from page 4:

Almost certainly large parts of the investigation will be carried out under official secrecy – an increasingly common feature of our inquiry/judicial proceedings, which gives intrinsic advantages to the Establishment. The prospects do not look

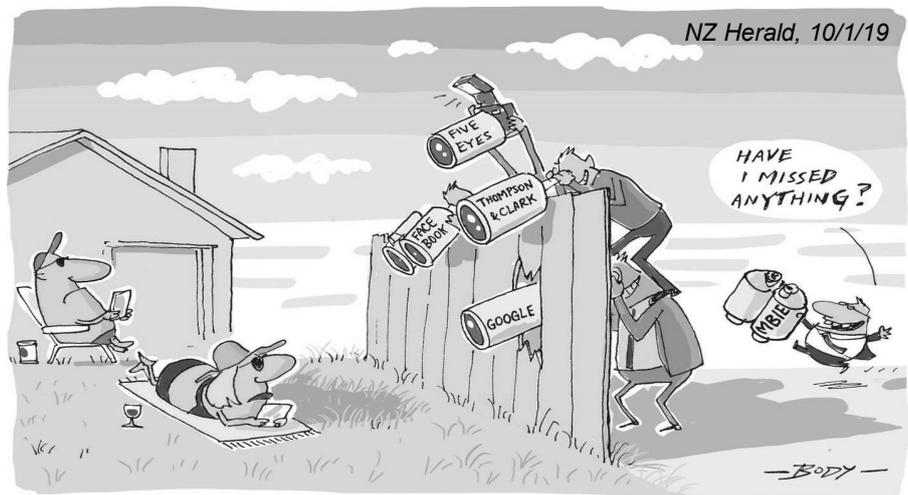
particularly promising. But there will be scope for public participation. This will require those who are troubled by the activities of our secret agencies to get out and forcefully make their opinions felt. Hopefully there will be some robust

discussion of the spook agencies and their arcane operations; this is the least we can hope for in the aftermath of this tragic Christchurch event. ■

THOMPSON & CLARK JUST TIP OF SPYBERG

Let's Add Them To Inquiry Into Whole Covert World Of State Spying

By Murray Horton



In the immediate aftermath of the March 2019 Christchurch mosques massacre, the Government announced that a Royal Commission of Inquiry will be held into the country's spy agencies (the Security Intelligence Service [SIS] and Government Communications Security Bureau [GCSB], plus Police, Customs, Immigration and any other relevant agencies). That is excellent and long overdue (although it will be confined to this particular crime and the mass murderer who committed it).

It needs to have a much wider scope. The December 2018 revelations about a whole raft of Government agencies contracting Thompson & Clark to spy on New Zealanders on their behalf are just the latest in a long, sordid history of the State spying on the people. Go back a decade and you'll find:

- ▶ Thompson & Clark exposed as spying on environmental activists on behalf of the since gone bust Solid Energy.
- ▶ Thompson & Clark exposed as spying on animal rights activists on behalf of the State.
- ▶ Police spy/infiltrator/agent provocateur Rob Gilchrist exposed as having spied, for money, on a whole raft of activist groups for a decade.
- ▶ The release of Security Intelligence Service files on many people (including me) that revealed a long history of obsessive spying on Leftwing activists. In the case of the only organisation to receive its file – the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa – the file revealed that the SIS had spied on CAFCA for a quarter of a century*.

The State, in the form of the Police and the SIS, has always spied on Leftwing activists. I have been a po-

litical activist for 50 years and have documentary evidence that I've been spied upon by both. What is different about these latest revelations is the State contracting out its spying to private enterprise (thus providing itself with the all-important "plausible deniability").

Plus, the fact that spying net has now been spread much wider than the usual suspects – Communists, protesters, activists, unionists, "eco-terrorists", etc – right down into the ranks of the Mum and Dad homeowners who were unfortunate enough to be among the victims of the 2010/11 Christchurch quakes and to have an unresolved insurance claim with the singularly unhelpful Southern Response (the State body which took over AMI's quakes claims when it went bust in 2011).

Thompson & Clark Never Spied On Right

This is what happens when spies – authorised and unauthorised/privatised – operate in a bubble of arrogance, secrecy and impunity. First, they came for the activists; then they came for the insurance policy holders. Funnily enough, there is no evidence that Thompson and Clark was ever contracted to spy on murderous fascists, racists or Islamophobes. Nor on the Rightwing of politics at all.

But this stuff is only the tip of the spyberg. It involves "humint" (human intelligence): infiltration, surveillance, covert recording of meetings, that sort of thing. The vast bulk of modern spying involves "elint" (electronic intelligence) and it is carried out 24/7, silently and covertly monitoring all manner of communications. In this country it is carried out by the GCSB, whose key tool is the Waihopai spy base.

The GCSB, via Waihopai, is used not only to spy on foreigners, directed by the US National Security Agency (NSA) as part of the Five Eyes spy alliance with the US, UK, Canada and Australia. It is also used to spy on New Zealanders. When it was caught doing so illegally (take a bow, Kim Dotcom), the Key National government did not punish the criminals but legalised the crime.

Despite a massive campaign against it, that Government amended the GCSB Act to allow the Bureau to spy on New Zealanders (but not murderous fascists, racists or Islamophobes. Not even Australian ones). The present Labour Coalition government has done nothing to rectify that. That's the bigger picture here. Let's have a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the whole covert world of State spying – the GCSB, SIS, Police, Customs, Immigration, et al and the contractors such as Thompson and Clark – and the cloak of anti-democratic impunity in which it operates.

* We've been writing about this stuff for a long time. *Peace Researchers* 34, July 2007, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abcpr/pr-backissues/pr34.pdf> and 35, December 2007, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prprbackissues/pr35.pdf> ran extensive material on Thompson and Clark's private political spying. Specifically, see Mark Eden's "The Privatisation Of Spying, Part 2", in *PR* 35.

There are three detailed articles about Rob Gilchrist, Police spy/infiltrator/agent provocateur, in *PR* 38, July 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/prbackissues/pr38.pdf>. And also see my article "SIS Spied On CAFCA For Quarter Of A Century", in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 120, May 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/20/06.htm>. ■

WAIHOPAI SPY BASE PROTEST 2019

By Murray Horton

The Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) held our regular protest at the Waihopai spy base in January 2019. Our press release spelled out why we were there: “The protest will make the point that Waihopai works for Donald Trump, which makes this country complicit in his volatile and downright unhinged behaviour. He is all over the place like the old proverbial. Trump would be a joke if he didn’t have control of the world’s biggest spying apparatus, biggest military and biggest nuclear arsenal”.

“This ‘transformative’ Government has continued NZ’s membership of the Five Eyes spy alliance, which is the reason for Waihopai’s existence. Within the past few months, we have witnessed the Government falling in behind the US and Five Eyes, as the US aggressively confronts China and Chinese companies to reassert its military, political and economic dominance of the world. This despite Jacinda having said: ‘New Zealand has, and always has had, an independent foreign policy’. The evidence shows 100% the opposite and nowhere more glaringly than at Waihopai. The fact is that NZ is the most loyal, albeit junior, satellite of the US Empire”.

“Not only does the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which operates Waihopai, systematically spy on New Zealanders – but it also routinely spies on any number of other countries, on behalf of the US National Security

Agency (NSA). And the NSA spies on everyone – ultimately it is spying on behalf of Donald Trump”.

“It is essential that more pressure is put on the Government to end the anti-democratic and destructive activities of this NZ spy agency. For more than 30 years Waihopai has been NZ’s most significant contribution to Washington’s global effort to manipulate world business and diplomacy. And for more than 30 years the Anti-Bases Campaign has protested at Waihopai, calling for its closure”.

“Waihopai does not operate in the national interest of New Zealand. In all but name it is a foreign spy base on NZ soil, paid for with hundreds of millions of our tax dollars; it spies on Kiwis and foreigners; it is NZ’s key contribution to America’s global spying & war machine. Waihopai must be closed” (ABC press release, 18/1/19, “Waihopai Works For Donald Trump”).

As it was in 2018, the 2019 protest was a low-key affair. We confined our activities to the spy base itself, with no march or rally in Blenheim (we haven’t done those since 2016). Numbers were lower than in some recent years but comprised a good mix of both new people and old friends (such as Adi Leason, the highest profile member of the 2008 Domebusters).

First (Unannounced) Visit To Inner Gate Since 2008

But we did do something different. We decided to visit the base unannounced on the Friday evening before the publicly announced Saturday protest. And, lo and behold – the outer gate was wide open, proving that the cops and base security only actually shut it on the days that they know we’re coming. We announced our pre-

sence via the intercom at the outer gate and were told, in no uncertain terms, to go away. We ignored that.

We were tempted to drive our rental van right up to the inner gate (which remained shut) but decided against that, for pragmatic reasons. But several people did walk, completely unchallenged, right up to that inner gate and took photos to prove it. This was the first time that any members of the public (or media, for that matter), have got up to that inner gate, since the Domebusters penetrated the base and deflated one of its two domes, in April 2008. Indeed, security was pretty relaxed this time around – the cops didn’t take any action when Waihopai Warren Thomson, aided by Gen de Spa, climbed the outer fence to bang a placard reading “Close The Base” into the paddock.

Theme Was: Waihopai Works For Trump

One banner read “GCSB Spying To Make America Great”. And the indefatigable Ian Dalziel, who has provided us with many memorable props for past protests (and who regularly does the cover graphic for *Peace Researcher*) made more big posters for us, to add to the ones he did for the 2018 protest. They dramatically illustrated just some of the things that are so objectionable about Trump (there were so many to choose from that it was difficult to decide what to leave out).

The new ones included: the two Waihopai domes, with Trump and Jacinda’s faces on one each of them; a global map of Waihopai-type spy bases with each identified by their code names (Waihopai’s is “Ironsand”); Trump as Big Brother; Trump with his favourite autocrats – Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong-un and Mohammad bin Salman. We nailed these big posters to the fences adjoining the base’s outer gate.



Banner at spy base outer gate.
Photo: Dot Lovell-Smith

Green Co-Leader Key Speaker At Base

There were several speakers (myself included) at the hour-long rally at that gate. Undoubtedly, the star attraction was Greens' Co-Leader, Marama Davidson, who said it was the first time she'd ever been to Waihopai (let alone attended a protest there). She was continuing a long tradition of Green Co-Leaders participating at Waihopai protests, going right back to 1996, when the Party first got into Parliament – the late Rod Donald, Jeanette Fitzsimons, Russel Norman and Metiria Turei had all spoken there in the past (multiple times, in Rod's case).

Not to mention Green MPs such as Golriz Ghahraman, Keith Locke and Steffan Browning. Both Keith and Steffan have been coming for decades, starting from before they entered Parliament and up until years after they retired. Both were at Waihopai 2019 – Keith spoke, focusing on the subject he writes about in his article elsewhere in this issue, namely the fact that the Director of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) apologised to him, in 2018, for him having been used in joint SIS/GCSB staff training material as an example of a "threat" (this occurred while he was still an MP).

But, although Green MPs and Co-Leaders have participated at Waihopai protests for more than 20 years, 2019 marked the first time that a Green Co-Leader has done so when the Party has been in Government (which has only been the case since the 2017 election; Marama is not one of the Greens' three Ministers outside Cabinet).

This was appreciated by ABC, because the Labour-New Zealand First Coalition government is every bit as wedded to the US military alliance as any National government, including the Five Eyes spy alliance that is the reason for Waihopai's existence. For many years the Greens have called for Waihopai to be closed, placing it at odds with Labour. It is good to see that has not changed despite the two parties now being in Government together.

First Union Leader Speaker

Marama wasn't the only first-time visitor to Waihopai to speak – we also had our first ever union leader, namely Robert Reid, of First Union (no pun intended). Having visible support from one of the country's

Green Co-Leader Marama Davidson speaks at protest (former Green MP Steffan Browning holding umbrella). Photo: Dot Lovell-Smith



biggest unions is important (First Union is the single biggest pledger to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income). Both Marama and Robert made the point that, although our numbers at the actual protest were small (as they always are; spy bases tend not to be built in handy locations), we represented many thousands of people who were with us in spirit that weekend.

Another first was that we had a heckler. We've had them before but always from the other side of the argument, namely pro-Waihopai, pro-American alliance. This bloke and his mate were, nominally, on our side but considered us not to be radical enough, he has a major problem with the Greens and he also has some interesting ideas about what it is that Waihopai does.

And he made sure, from the moment I started speaking as the first speaker, that he was going to loudly let everybody know his opinions, as he tried to shout down all speakers, particularly Marama. This led to a bit of tension but nothing major. We didn't let him divert or derail our activity. Actually, I've met him before, decades ago, when the subject of his interest was the US military base at Christchurch Airport.

Media Coverage

"The numbers were smaller but the message remained loud and clear

for a group of protesters at New Zealand's enigmatic Waihopai spy base - shut it down. Around 30 people from around New Zealand and converged on the Marlborough-based satellite interception station on Saturday. Authorised for construction by the Lange government, the GCSB run satellite communications monitoring facility has been operating since 1989 and has been the subject of ongoing protests and disputes in that time".

"Much of the opposition has centred on its suggested involvement with the US-led Echelon network, operated by the 'Five Eyes' countries of New Zealand, the USA, Australia, Canada and the UK. The Anti-Bases Campaign have had regular yearly protests at the base since the late 1980s, with up to several protests occurring each year at the organisation's peak".

"The group gathered for another peaceful protest in 2019 at the base entrance for speeches and to once again call for its closure. Organiser Murray Horton said it was important that the group kept coming to the site each year to raise public awareness of the site and what they believed it was being used for. 'The purpose of going there is to literally keep flying the flag – if we did not go there, you would not be asking me about this and it would completely fly under the radar'".

“The powers that be will say it's a NZ base and they know everything that goes on in there – our point of view, backed up by the likes of Nicky Hager, is that it's essentially an outpost of American intelligence operating in NZ, staffed by NZers and paid for by you and me”. Horton said the protest was making a point this year that ‘Waihopai works for Donald Trump’, which made New Zealand ‘complicit in his volatile and downright unhinged behaviour. Trump would be a joke if he didn't have control of the world's biggest spying apparatus, biggest military and biggest nuclear arsenal”.

“Horton said a handful of protesters had already paid a visit to the base on Friday night, reaching the inner gate of the complex before being told to leave by staff. ‘The voice on the other end of the intercom was rather abrupt’, he said. It was understood to be the furthest any protest group had gone since one of the domes collapsed after the 2008 Ploughshares attack. One of those who punctured the domes back then – Adrian Leason – was there on Saturday and spoke to those assembled”.

“He was joined by Green Party Co-Leader Marama Davidson and several current or former Green MPs, continuing a tradition of the Party's involvement in the protest that stretched back to the mid-1990s. While addressing the crowd, Davidson said more pressure was needed on the Government to ensure NZ's spy activity remained in the best interests of the country. ‘Are we

using this resource, this money and this espionage to spy on the activities of the people causing and making the biggest contribution to the biggest crisis of climate change and wealth inequality? No – that is not what we are spending vital taxpayer resources on doing”.

Heckler

“Also in attendance was political activist Ben Vidgen who expressed his own views on national security, interrupting the speeches of Davidson and Horton on several occasions. While he supported the protesters' rationale, Vidgen said a wider focus was needed to expose the extent of US military expansion in NZ”.

“I definitely support anything that raises awareness of the fact that our sovereignty and national security has been undermined by these facilities – they're not acting in our interests – we pay for them but we have no control over them. Basically, we wanted to highlight that Waihopai isn't the be all and end all of what's happening in our country... there's actually a lot of facilities that have popped up in NZ over the last decade that are equally tied up with the US-military expansion”.

“A Police spokeswoman said officers had a presence at the location but reported no significant issues or incidents” (*Stuff*, 27/1/19, “Annual Waihopai Spy Base Protest Takes Aim At Donald Trump”, Tim O'Connell, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/110184004/annual-waihopai-spy-base-protest-takes-aim-at-donald-trump>). That online report in-

cludes a couple of photos and a short video.

Campaign A Marathon, Not A Sprint

Marlborough is always hot in January and the 2019 Waihopai weekend was one of the hottest periods of a prolonged stretch of hot weather over a lot of the country last summer. Blenheim was 35°C on the Sunday, and it was probably hotter at our inland camp. The weather wasn't the only drama: a couple of hardy Christchurch activists set off to bike to and from the protest.

But that plan came to an abrupt end on the Friday when the woman was knocked off her bike by a passing vehicle in Marlborough and was left sprawled unconscious on State Highway 1, from where she had to be helicoptered to Wellington Hospital. Fortunately, she was not badly injured and was able to return to her Christchurch home on the Monday.

ABC has been protesting at Waihopai for more than 30 years. So, this campaign is definitely a marathon, not a sprint. But we'll keep going and urge others to join us (as they have always done over the decades). This affects all New Zealanders, because it's being done in our name and with our money. With every passing year, the scandals involving Five Eyes, the GCSB and Waihopai, and the threats caused by them, become bigger and worse. Time to say: “Enough is enough! Close Waihopai now!”. ■

IMPRESSIVE “WEEK OF PEACE” LINEUP IN PALMERSTON NORTH

In Response To Weapons Expo 2018

By Liz Remmerswaal

The shift of the annual “Weapons Expo” from Wellington to Palmerston North, for the first time in 20 years, brought a fresh crop of peace activists to protest the October 2018 event. Peace Action Manawatu (PAM) was formed largely out of a group of TPPA (Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement) activists in response to the Defence Industry Association's (DIA) annual forum. Under the leadership of retired physician Dr Fred Hirst, the group already had a good relationship with both the local City Council and the Police, having run a number of rallies previously.

Palmy: Peace City Or Defence Hub?

Initially PAM asked the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) to cancel

the event, as it didn't fit in with its “Peace City” status, but was told by Mayor Grant Smith that these days the area is recognised as a defence hub, with both the RNZAF Base at Ōhakea and the NZ Army Base at Linton employing over 3,000 people in the region. PAM also challenged the legality of putting in road blocks during the forum and local Women's Health Centre spokeswoman Jean Hera said women visiting the Centre at that time were likely to be stopped at a checkpoint and asked about the nature of their business, which would be very intrusive.

Dr Hirst told the Council he was concerned that Lockheed Martin, the world's largest arms dealer and nuclear weapons manufacturer, had been the primary sponsor of this

trade fair for many years and it was typical of the companies that profit from militarisation and war, causing human suffering, death and destruction of the planet. However, the forum's chairman, Andrew Ford, said the conference was held as a networking event for New Zealand industry and supported Government agencies involved in defence and national security.

Protest: From Church Services To Blockades

PAM coordinated a series of wide ranging events which included a poster exhibition challenging ideas about WW1, a book launch of Lena and Forest Chambers' book "Remembering the Brave", a multi-faith peace gathering of prayers and songs in the Square, a film on the effects of war on the environment "Scarred Lands And Wounded Lives", a "Hope And Healing" service at All Saints Anglican church and a forum on the role of the NZ Defence Force with Nicky Hager and Valerie Morse. There was also a rally, picnic and march through the city to the venue as well as several blockades of the venue in an attempt to stop forum participants getting through, accompanied by a strong Police presence (*ten people were arrested. Ed*).

Supporters came from all around the North Island including Peace Action Wellington, Auckland Peace Action, World Beyond War, Pacific Panthers, Organise Aotearoa, People Against Prisons Aotearoa, Metropolitan Church in Progress, students from St John's Theological College, Quakers, Catholic Workers, Tāmaki Makarau anarchists and West Papua Auckland Action, and many were accommodated at the St Michael's Marae as well as in private homes. At the same time the DIA garnered support from the community through providing their keynote speakers to two local schools, putting on a pre-Armistice Day function for 11 RSA branches, and donated trees for planting at Linton.

The ongoing actions of Peace Action Manawatu in challenging the Palmerston North City Council to create an "ethical venues" policy means it may not be able to again host 2019's weapons expo. PAM has asked the Council to ban weapons events from Council venues, and Mayor Grant Smith told the *Manawatu Standard* that after the March 2019 terror attacks in Christchurch the Council is likely to further distance itself from events related to gun and armaments. Al-

ready, in 2019, the Council has cancelled the NZ Tattoo which was to have been held in the city in April because of concerns that the military displays featuring explosives, firearms and aircraft could be distressing to some.

The Council is planning to consult with the public on a policy which was expected to be announced in August 2019. Meanwhile the NZ Defence Industry Association has a booking pencilled in for the Palmerston North Central Energy Trust Arena for 29-31 October, but plans are up in the air. NZDIA Chairman Andrew Ford told *Peace Researcher* that there were plenty of options for the location of the forum, but that no decisions had been made yet as they were looking into how to create a relevant forum that held the most value for the industry, and that the nature of the event may be different in 2019.

Liz Remmerswaal is the National Coordinator of World Beyond War Aotearoa NZ.

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*Palmerston North
Weapons Expo march, 2018*



WHY HUAWEI?

By Doug Craig

Huawei Inc is a multi-billion-dollar telecommunications and infrastructure firm based in Shenzhen, Guangdong, China. Its global expansion since 2010 has run into a determined push back from a number of Western-aligned governments. Huawei, whose name can be translated as “Chinese Achievement”, is a major player in global telecommunications tech being only second to South Korea’s Samsung. Recently its market value surpassed that of Apple.

In New Zealand it has partnered up with mobile phone and services providers Spark and 2 Degrees for both enhanced 4G and the projected 5G network establishment (see Spark-Lab at www.sparklab.co.nz for its high tech video of driverless vehicles). Despite being involved in NZ rollouts of earlier 2G and 3G infrastructure through provision of equipment and some technicians, and having a publicised meeting with the then Prime Minister, John Key, in 2013, the imminent roll out of the next quantum leap to 5G was seen as critical to NZ security overall.

Obviously the widespread and cheap prevalence of Huawei cellphones in retail telecommunications shops is not seen as particularly problematic. It is well known that most cellphones and associated software have backdoors or gateways so that software technicians can install upgrades and patches remotely. This also applies to Nokia, Apple and many other cellphones.

As one journalist says, our lives via our communication devices are now wide open - they know almost more about you than your mother; and Apple has “dibs on your first born”. The notion of telco privacy is a misnomer and a joke. The unease or risk to security from Huawei is at a higher level than personal cellphone level behaviours - although information about our leaders would be of interest to many foreign governments

It is at the level of the 5G infrastructure which is qualitatively and quantitatively different. The GCSB commissioned a report from the high level National Cyber Security Centre



in the UK, and although it did not report an actual imminent threat from installed Huawei equipment, it said “there were serious problems with their engineering and security systems” (Ciaran Martin, Chief Executive Officer, 20/2/19, Brussels speech).

In November 2018, GCSB Director-General Andrew Hampton, using the little-known TICS (Telecommunications Interception Capability and Security) Act said that Huawei involvement in Spark’s planned rollout of the new 5G networks would be prohibited unless the risk was properly addressed. He said the final decision would be up to the Minister responsible for GCSB, Andrew Little.

GCSB Director-General, Andrew Hampton (press statement, 28/11/18): “The Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) regulates network security under the Telecommunications Interception Capability and Security Act (TICSA). The Act requires network operators to notify GCSB of certain proposed decisions, courses of action, or changes to their network”.

“As per Spark New Zealand’s statement today, I can confirm the GCSB under its TICSA responsibilities, has recently undertaken an assessment of a notification from Spark. I have informed Spark that a significant network security risk was identified. As there is an ongoing regulatory process I will not be commenting further at this stage”.

What Is 5G?

First of all, 5G stands for the fifth generation of telecommunications, which will require many changes from existing 3G and 4G systems.

There will be many more cellphone towers and antennas, more allocated bandwidth and more equipment open to remote interrogation. 5G will also enable more cloud-based applications. Because of the wider bandwidth and lower latency of messages there will be faster speeds (rapid broadband enabling real time streaming, and more gigabytes of information carried).

5G also enables more remote control of telecommunication enabled equipment (The IOT) or Internet of Things, that is, things with Internet devices embedded in them talking remotely to each other. Also, power metering of remote equipment and switching, right down to things like fridge contents’ monitoring and ordering. It will enable more seamless operations of driverless cars and urban transport systems. 5G leaves open information technology (IT) architecture (core vs diffused) for many new applications. 5G is, in effect, an open sesame for the many technologies now only seen via CGI (computer-generated imagery) in Hollywood science fiction films. It will enable a much different information suffused and possibly a virtual reality world in future.

Overseas Opposition To Huawei’s Expansion

The USA, since 2012, has opposed Huawei penetration of the US domestic IT market. - Huawei employees have been implicated in copyright violation and stealing technology and there are Huawei copyright issues over parts of the technology. Motorola, a telecommunications competitor, is in opposition to Huawei and ZTE from bidding for US networks. *Better Buys*, a consumer magazine, made a recommendation against Huawei equipment.

Six US security chiefs testifying to US Senate hearings in February 2018 about security threats, including former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director, Mike Pompeo, said: "The six - including the heads of the CIA, FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), NSA (National Security Agency) and the Director of National Intelligence - first expressed their distrust of Apple-rival Huawei and fellow Chinese telecom company ZTE in reference to public servants and State agencies. When prompted during the hearing, all six indicated they would not recommend private citizens use products from the Chinese companies".

The Trump Administration also made a strong statement on maintaining US cyber security, particularly from threats from Chinese telecommunications firms such as ZTE and Huawei (see US National Security Statement, December 2017 at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>). Trump trade wars against Chinese firms are discounted by *Washington Post* reporters. They say it is more a technology war over the next generation of telecommunications and who will seize the technological high ground.

The issue of the Chinese People's Liberation Army antecedents of Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei is possibly the red herring that is often dragged out in hearings and US public statements. But many US and UK defence industry firms employ ex-military in central executive positions. For example, ex-four star General David Petraeus, in charge of US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq under Bush Junior, and ex head of the CIA was hired by KKR to head a defence and intelligence consultancy TASC, (<http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2013/06/05/DOD-Retirees-From-4-star-General-to-7-Figure-Income>).

Also, Vice-Admiral David Dorsett, the former Navy Director of Intelligence, was snapped up by Northrup Grumman to work as Vice-President of Cyber-Security. Many former Department of Defense (DOD) personnel are recruited for their expertise and contacts at the Pentagon and in the armed forces. Steve Blank's history of Silicon Valley and CIA funding at www.steveblank.com also describes the close relationship between DOD and the intelligence community with the emerging Sili-

con Valley firms.

His current course at Stanford University on "Hacking For Defense" (<https://steveblank.com/2016/06/03/hacking-for-defense-stanford-lessons-learned-presentations/>), which explicitly advocates the use of cyber-security countermeasures to stop and deter hacking attempts by extra-national actors. This has the support of and input from the US Department of Defense.

Others advocating for strengthened US responses to the Huawei supposed threat are part of a group called Protect America's Wireless (see <https://www.protectamericaswireless.org/about>). Formed in October 2018, it is made up of foreign policy and security experts from think tanks and former senior US State Department officials.

The Chinese National Intelligence Law mentioned in several news reports on Huawei is seen as hostile to US and its Five Eyes partners (the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). That Law, passed in 2017, says that organisations must "support, cooperate with and collaborate in national intelligence work" (CNET.org, accessed 28/4/19). Is this any different to the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency work with US corporations or the British defence industry and UK trade promotion and representation? In other words, are the Chinese supposed to play a cleaner game than the US and UK opposition in selling their technology?

Canada

As the Trudeau government decides whether to join its security and trading partners in banning Huawei Canada from supplying technology to build Canada's 5G wireless network, it risks an expensive lawsuit under the terms of a foreign investor protection agreement signed by its predecessor, the Conservative Harper government, which had concluded negotiations on the Canada-China Agreement for the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments (<https://international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/china-chine/fipa-apie/index.aspx?lang=eng>) in 2012.

At the time, it was seen as a necessary precursor to the comprehensive free trade talks the two countries hoped eventually to explore as

an alternative to the US-sponsored Comprehensive and Free Trade Agreement. Now, those trade talks are on ice due to tense diplomatic relations with Beijing. And the investor protection treaty now threatens to complicate any plans the Canadian government has to keep Huawei out of Canada's high-speed 5G network.

Also, the Chinese Ambassador has made hostile statements about Canada's trade relationships with China over the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, and two Canadian citizens are detained under spying allegations. Meng Wanzhou - Huawei's CFO (Chief Financial Officer) and Ren's daughter, was arrested over violation of alleged Iran trade sanctions and now faces extradition to the US. Interim agreement to extradite was given in March 2019 and Ms Meng remains under house arrest in Vancouver.

Australia

The Australian government, back in 2012, banned Huawei from bidding on the National Broadband Network citing security concerns. It was also frozen out of a deal to supply a telecoms cable to the Solomon Islands in 2018. Huawei hit back as quoted by BBCTV *Business News* (18/6/18): "Chinese telecoms company Huawei has sharply criticised Australian government comments about its policies and products. An open letter, written by its Australian-based executives, said the comments by the Australian government about Chinese government control and potential cyber spying were "ill-informed and not based on facts". Huawei also offered to set up a National Testing Centre for 5G equipment, similar to ones for Canada and Britain, to deflect criticism.

India

India seems to have no current problems with 5G equipment supplied by Huawei to its telecoms services but has said it might confine Huawei-supplied infrastructure to the interior of the country and not in the sensitive border areas. It has cited the origins of Ren Zhou-feng and the Chinese Telecommunications Act as causes for concern. Its attitude towards Huawei cyber security concerns is "wait and see". However, Huawei technology is seen as more affordable for Indian applications than any competitors being about four times cheaper than Qualcomm's (US firm) equipment.

United Kingdom

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has found no overt risk from Huawei equipment and the Government Communications Head Quarters (GCHQ) believes that counter-measures could protect the UK's telecommunications networks. It also sees Huawei as a very different country, but one who has a strangely familiar IT campus (strangely based on some familiar UK landscapes. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cz4pr2gd85qt/cyber-security>).

PM Theresa May's National Security Council has OKed Huawei participation, over Ministerial objections. A leaked report from No 10 Downing Street says Huawei could be confined to the outer layer of 5G but not participate in the central core. It is assumed that the GCHQ would continue to function as overt surveillance over the whole network. Director Jeremy Fleming confirmed that the risk is more of an engineering and security risk rather than a geopolitical risk that who supplies the equipment is not the problem.

Huawei's Response To These Pressures

- Public statements about trade wars between itself and US.
- An anti-trade protection case filed against the US government. As reported by Reuters in Hong Kong, "Huawei Rotating Chairman Guo Ping said in a statement: 'The U.S. Congress has repeatedly failed to produce any evidence to support its restrictions on Huawei

products. We are compelled to take this legal action as a proper and last resort. This ban not only is unlawful, but also restricts Huawei from engaging in fair competition, ultimately harming U.S. consumers', he said. 'We look forward to the court's verdict'".

- Huawei-branded companies in place with local faces fronting the local operation.
- Sponsoring of local events and organisations, for example the Wellington Phoenix football team sponsorship.
- Emphasis that Huawei is not owned by the Chinese government but is an employee-managed company and has no outside ownership. But it not as transparent as a listed stock company.
- Offers to set up technology testing centres in Australia, Canada and NZ.
- Public comments on Huawei's cyber security, and saying that 5G without Huawei would be like English Football without Manchester United.

New Zealand: The Five Eyes Response

On July 17 2018, the intelligence chiefs of the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand reportedly met in person, in part to make plans to publicise their concerns about allowing Huawei equipment to operate in their countries and governments (see <https://theconversation.com/whats-wrong-with-huawei-and-why-are-countries-banning-the-chinese-telecommunications-firm-10>

9036). Andrew Little, the Minister responsible for the GCSB, remarked in February 2019 on US security concerns over Huawei bidding for 5G involvement.

"He was asked what he made of Mr Pompeo's comments about the United States' relationship with countries that allowed Huawei into their networks. 'New Zealand's security and intelligence relationship with the US, and indeed with other Five Eyes partners, is based on what we contribute to that relationship, not on compliance and acquiescence', he said" (<https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/383170/andrew-little-disregards-us-remark-on-partnership-versus-huawei-use>). PM Jacinda Arden brought up the Huawei cybersecurity issue when meeting the Chinese Premier in March 2019. However, no details were given of the Chinese response.

Is NZ facing difficult choice in joining the 5G revolution? Do we want a sophisticated 5G network? And is Huawei the best choice? Jaha Sariinen, of the *New Zealand Herald*, a communications IT editor, has said it (the technology) is full of holes with "shonky" software. This would make it vulnerable to hackers and bad actors, as well as breakdowns, he claimed. There are strong security concerns from all the Five Eyes partners. Huawei is said to be too risky, both from Chinese government interference and from hacking. Such infrastructure could be at the heart of command and control technology in both industry and transport, and possibly in some military applications

What Can Be Done?

Given that NZ wants to be part of the coming worldwide 5G revolution it is limited to one of two choices. One: Go with existing developed 5G technology with which it has some experience. Using some Huawei components and, as a corollary, confine it to the periphery of the IT infrastructure rollout, similar to the proposed UK solution.

Two: Wait for a more developed and internationally sanctioned telecommunications technology (either US or European) that would be interoperable with existing systems. This may not happen until mid to late 2020s. Is it possible for a security template for 5G infrastructure to be compliant for all providers? All tech suppliers (including Huawei) should



be liable for consumer liability in international courts. Given the resistance of Chinese manufacturers to acknowledge liability or product guarantees, this seems to be unlikely.

The ITU (International Telecommunications Union; one of the UN's oldest agencies) is investigating cyber-security issues and possible security mechanisms. An issue discussed in recent IT cyber forums is how to manage multi-platforms, wide spectrum and cloud computing, and high-speed low latency responses. One solution being recently discussed is not platform security but user-generated security. That is, the user defines their wants and level of security needed. Perhaps various forms of encryption or multi-slicing technology are possible to spread the information being transmitted and make it more difficult to intercept.

The Level Playing Field?

Can Huawei be weighed up against the other 5G options? Is a separate NZ tech response even possible given IT interoperability worldwide? So, is the 5G threat from Huawei credible or just another one of US President Donald Trump's anti-foreign rants. Is it a part of the Trump trade wars and the Western government phobias and developing disquiet over Chinese Belt and Road trading and foreign policies? Is it a

Chinese bid for the high road of distributed Internet technology that could shape our future world for the next 50 or more years? Might it be the start of the Chinese Century where consumer goods come with Chinese characters instead of the traditional British and American logos.

And does it have any military implications where drones and remote tanks and rocketry are controlled from afar? And can such remote control also be disrupted from afar if the controlling code or signal is intercepted or misread? Again, Steve Blank's insights about the control of defence and IT industry cooperation may be useful. His report on the Chinese government TORCH investment programme and the operation of new business incubators is instructive (see www.steveblank.com, accessed 28/4/19).

"There are close to 100 specialised incubators for companies founded by returned overseas Chinese scientists and engineers. There are a dozen sector-specific incubators (a Biomedicine Incubator in Shanghai, Advanced Material Incubator in Beijing, a Marine Technology Incubator in Tianjin, etc.) These incubators are mostly clustered in the eastern coastal regions, and disproportionately target TMT (Technology Media and Telecom) and Biotech.

Some of the startups coming out of these incubators have become large international companies including Lenovo, Huawei, Suntech Power, etc".

When large military-industrial elephants roar, where do the other creatures hide?

Disclosure: My Internet provider is using Huawei modems for their enhanced 4G broadband service. Any Internet traffic via this equipment might be discoverable by other parties, unless encrypted.

A concise summary of the whole Huawei saga (up until the end of 2018) is "How Five Eyes Cooked Up A Campaign To Kill Off Huawei" (Sydney Morning Herald, 14/12/18, Chris Uhlmann and Angus Grigg, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/opinion-analysis/109348046/how-five-eyes-cooked-up-campaign-to-kill-off-huawei>). And, since Doug Craig's above article was written, President Trump has signed a May 2019 Executive Order which effectively banned Huawei telecommunications equipment in the US. Google immediately suspended business with Huawei, cutting the latter off from access to the world's biggest smartphone software operator. This has existential implications for Huawei. Ed. ■

SIS APOLOGISED TO FORMER MP FOR LABELLING HIM A "THREAT"

By Keith Locke (Green MP, 1999-2011)

First published in The Spinoff, 17/1/19. Republished with permission. Ed.

In April 2018 I received a letter from Rebecca Kitteridge, the Director of the Security Intelligence Service, apologising for the way I was referred to in internal SIS documents. She wrote that I had been described as a "threat" in speaking notes for a Joint Induction Programme run by the SIS and the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) since 2013. In the SIS documents I was identified as an "internal" threat because I

"wish[ed] to see the NZSIS & GCSB abolished or greatly modified". The documents labelled this a "syndrome".

In her apology, Ms Kitteridge said "the talking point suggests wrongly that being a vocal critic of the agencies means you are a 'threat*' or a 'syndrome'. In fact, people who criticise the agencies publicly are exercising their right to freedom of expression and protest, which are rights we uphold, and are enshrined in the Intelligence and Security Act 2017". *Hilariously, Director Kitteridge's letter of apology to Keith admitted that the relevant document misspelled "threat" as "treat". So, the SIS and GCSB branded Keith as a treat to national security. Ed.

I haven't gone public on this until now, but given the recent news about several other State agencies spying on people, I decided that what happened to me should be in the public domain. In his December 2018 report (into the use of private

spy company, Thompson and Clark, by various State agencies), State Services Commissioner Peter Hughes described the State spying on critics of deep-sea oil drilling, like Greenpeace, "an affront to democracy".

Like Ms Kitteridge, in her letter of apology to me, Hughes said that it was "never acceptable for an agency to undertake targeted surveillance of a person just because they are lawfully exercising their democratic rights, including their right to freedom of expression, association and right to protest". Most disturbing, in the cases Hughes identified, is that many civil servants must have known about this illegal, anti-democratic surveillance without blowing a whistle on it. In my case, many SIS and GCSB officers must have heard me being identified as a "threat" without challenging it.

How else could the disparaging reference to me have stayed in the officer training material for ten years. Ms Kitteridge told me the "threat"

label was carried over into the Joint Induction Programme speaking note from a "Protective Security Advice presentation (believed to have been developed in about 2008)" and "a historical security aide-memoire (believed to have been developed in 2012)".

To make matters worse, the ten-year period when I was deemed to be a "threat" includes the last three years (2008-11) of my 12 years as a Member of Parliament. It appears the SIS learnt nothing from the public controversy, in early 2009, when it was revealed that the SIS had a file on me, which they were updating during my time as an MP, with material going up to 2006.

This resulted in an inquiry by the then Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, Paul Neazor, which found that "a sitting MP because of his or her function and standing [is] not generally a subject for intelligence collection or surveillance". This, in turn, led to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Speaker, the SIS and the Minister in Charge of the SIS, signed off in 2012, endorsing the Inspector-General's recommendations.

This MOU also had a section on "political neutrality" whereby the SIS "does not take any action for the purpose of furthering or harming the interests of a political party". Clearly the SIS and GCSB were acting in a politically biased manner by treating my Parliamentary critique of the intelligence agencies, delivered officially on behalf of the Green Party, as representing a "threat".

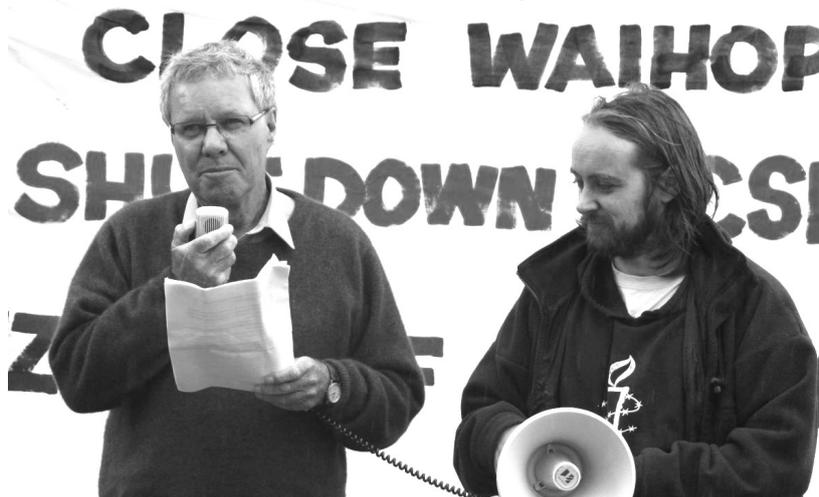
It seemed pretty clear that the SIS had breached the MOU requirements for political neutrality, by treating a sitting MP and his views as a "threat",

so I wrote to the current Speaker, Trevor Mallard, about it. He didn't think the MOU had "been breached in any way". Mallard side-stepped my contention that the SIS had acted in a politically biased manner, but did admit that "certain materials being used by the security agencies contained inappropriate expressions of opinion regarding your conduct, including during a time that you were a member of Parliament".

He said he met regularly with the SIS Director "and will continue to ensure that she is aware of the need for security agencies to respect the role and independence of Parliament". I have to disagree with the Speaker that it was just a matter of the SIS using "inappropriate" language. For a spy agency to describe someone as a "threat" is serious. It identifies them as a target for some form of monitoring or surveillance, and this is what has happened to me over many years. When I got my SIS file, I found it ran for hundreds of pages, beginning in 1955 and ending in 2006.

It is a case study in what is wrong with our intelligence agencies. No criminality is identified. I have no criminal record. The file is all about my legitimate political activities, mainly in international peace and justice campaigns (e.g. against apartheid and the Vietnam War), but also in the labour movement. My file illustrates the main function of the SIS over the years, which hasn't been to track down criminals (which the Police do quite well) but to spy on political dissenters. ■

Keith Locke (when Green MP) speaks at 2011 Waihopai spy base protest (Joe Hendren holding megaphone). Photo: Hannah Coleman



SIS SPIED ON KEITH LOCKE FOR 50 YEARS

By Murray Horton

Some background is necessary to better understand Keith's above article. Here is an extract from my article "SIS Spied On CAFCA For Quarter Of A Century" (*Foreign Control Watchdog* 120, May 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/20/06.htm>). The relevant subsection is titled "Spying On MPs A Step Too Far":

"The most high-profile and controversial Personal File to have been released is that of Keith Locke (as the children of Jack and Elsie Locke, veteran Communists and activists, Keith and his sister Maire Leadbeater had been the subject of SIS Personal Files since their childhood and onwards for 50 years). The most controversial aspect of Keith's file was that the last entry was as recently as 2006, seven years after he was elected to Parliament as a Green MP".

"The SIS took a close interest in his meetings, as an MP, with members of NZ's Tamil community and a fact-finding trip that he made to wartorn Sri Lanka earlier this decade. Keith made the point that the SIS was spying on meetings that he was holding with his constituents. Unlike me, and others, Keith hasn't received an assurance from (then SIS Director Warren) Tucker that the SIS has stopped spying on him; nor (unlike me) has he received an assurance from Tucker that '...you have never encouraged unlawful activity such as sabotage, subversion or terrorism...'".

"Spying on 'old Lefties' (Tucker's phrase) is one thing, but spying on a sitting MP is quite another. The revelation led to uproar in Parliament, the media and among the public. (Then Prime Minister) John Key, as Minister in Charge of the SIS, ordered Paul Neazor, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, to investigate. He produced an unusually speedy report recommending that the SIS should not spy on MPs, but gave the spies a great big escape clause by saying that if they have to it should be cleared with the

Speaker (a member of the governing Party)".

"Neazor also dipped his toe into the broader issue of the SIS files and said: 'Historically, because of the extensive cross-referencing system, when a Personal File existed, information from any source about that person could find its way to the file. It could produce a vacuum cleaner approach to collecting' (*Press*, 18/3/09; "Watchdog Slates Scale Of SIS Files", Mike Houlihan). So, that's where all us 'old Lefties' et al are – we've been sucked up into the dust-bag of (the SIS version of) history".

The SIS Personal Files released a decade ago came complete with handwritten opinionated notes on them. Here's another quote from my same 2009 *Watchdog* article: "One of the last entries in the Personal File of Keith Locke MP is the handwritten word 'Eeeexcellent!' accompanying a selection of letters critical of Keith published in various papers in very recent years".

"Paul Neazor, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, wrote, in his March 2009 report on Keith's complaint about the SIS spying on him as an MP: 'Mr Locke suggested that some at least of this material might have been gathered because of his critical stance in Parliament on intelligence issues. All I can say is that one notation which could have given that impression was certainly unprofessional and ought not to have appeared on a file of a neutral intelligence service'. I would like to hear the SIS' definition of neutrality".

"You Are Only Of Interest To Us As Long As You Are Interested In Us"

Director Kitteridge's letter of apology to Keith was accompanied by internal SIS documents in which he was identified as "an 'internal' threat because I 'wish[ed] to see the NZSIS & GCSB abolished or greatly modified". This targeting of critics of the spy agencies as threats (or, indeed, treats) to the nation's security is nothing new. In fact, it continues a long and ignoble tradition. Another subsection of my 2009 *Watchdog* article was headed "Enemies List". Here's an extract:

"There was one particular campaign that the SIS monitored with particular attention to detail, namely that of any group or coalition of groups to

abolish the SIS. CAFGINZ (the Campaign Against Foreign Control In New Zealand; CAFCA's original name in the 1970s and 80s) was in the thick of that throughout the years and it is still our view that the SIS serves no useful purpose, that it should be scrapped and that any of its functions deemed necessary could easily be done by the Police who are, theoretically at least, accountable to the rules of evidence and accountable for their behaviour in a court of law".

"(Then SIS Director Warren) Tucker's letter to CAFCA (30/10/08) says '...it is probably fair to say that there might have been less subsequent NZSIS interest in CAFGINZ if it had not continued with protests against US bases and visiting naval vessels and taken up an active 'abolish the SIS' stance". So, it makes no bones about the fact that it maintains a literal enemies list".

"This was made extremely explicit in Tucker's letter to me (4/2/09; in relation to my own SIS Personal File): 'You ask if you are still 'a person of interest' to the NZSIS. The answer is that you are only of interest to us as long as you are interested in us. You have campaigned publicly for the abolition of this Service but you have never encouraged unlawful activity such as sabotage, subversion or terrorism...'. So that's a relief that campaigning publicly for the abolition of the SIS is not equated with sabotage, subversion or terrorism".

"This enemies list was maintained right down to the level of finding out who were the writers of critical letters to the editor. For example, Anti-Bases Campaign founder, Warren Thomson, had one such letter published in the *Press* in 1990. This was duly clipped and filed, along with Warren's address, phone number and occupation (as gleaned from the electoral roll and phone book). The accompanying report described him as 'probably being the author of a derogatory letter about the NZSIS'. For the record, Warren's letter cited an Australian Prime Minister who had called his spies a 'bunch of stumblebums' and said that the description applied to the SIS". ■



OWEN WILKES' SIS FILE A Bit More Released, A Decade After First Smidgen

By Murray Horton

There hasn't been much to report on this subject for years. It's been a decade since CAFCA (Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa) received its Security Intelligence Service file (and it remains the only organisation to have done so). At the same time, numerous individuals, including me, did likewise. CAFCA tried to get the SIS Personal file on the late Owen Wilkes (*Peace Researcher* 31, October 2005, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr31.pdf>, is a special issue devoted to Owen).

The SIS released a tiny smidgen of it (they say that they hold six volumes on Owen). And that was the end of it as far as CAFCA was concerned. To get that, it had to work with Owen's brother, his only surviving blood relative, as he was (and is) the only person with legal standing to request access to Owen's file. But the indefatigable Maire Leadbeater has, much more recently, taken up the quest (you can read Maire's "Omega Campaign Of 1968/69: An Important And Well-Earned Victory, Flaws Aside", in *PR* 56, November 2018, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr56.pdf>. Owen features very prominently in that article – that successful campaign 50

years ago was where he made his name).

In January 2019 Maire rang me to say that she had secured some more of Owen's SIS file, also with the vital cooperation of Owen's brother, and immediately sent me the scans. Reading those documents led me to, straight away, ring Owen's ex-wife (the exact 1976 date of their legal separation is recorded in the file) to inform her that she is listed in it as "Relative Of Interest" (i.e. wife) and is therefore likely to be the subject of her own SIS file. Despite the fact that Owen has been dead since 2005, the SIS is still prepared to only release a tiny fraction of his six-volume file.

I checked this latest batch of papers against what CAFCA has had since 2009. A lot, but not all of it, is the same. It is interesting that the SIS Director, Rebecca Kitteridge, says, in her cover letter to Maire, that the reason for spying on Owen is no longer the mission of the SIS. The released material pre-dates both the birth of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) and the Waihopai spy base (both took place in 1987) but there's an awful in it about CAFMANZ and CAFGINZ (CAFCA's predecessors i.e. the Campaign Against Foreign Military Activities in New Zealand and the Campaign Against Foreign Control In New Zealand. Owen was a founder of CAFMANZ, CAFGINZ and CAFCA. Not to mention, ABC).

Despite the redactions, it is possible to work out what and who some documents are about. For example, I intelligently guess that a 1986 one is from the SIS to the US Central Intelligence Agency (or, less likely, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) about an Australasian speaking tour that I, on behalf of CAFGINZ and then CAFCA, spent three years (1984-87) - unsuccessfully - trying to organise. The proposed speaker was Philip Agee, former CIA agent turned whistleblower, author and anti-imperialist campaigner par excellence (my obituary of Agee is in *PR* 36, August 2008, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr36.pdf>).

This is my favourite passage in this latest batch of Owen's file: "In his extensive writings both here and abroad in support of his campaigns, WILKES has been variously described as an entomologist, New Zealand physicist, military strategist,

and scientist. In fact, he 'dropped out' from Canterbury University after passing five units of a science degree. He does, however, have a well-developed flair for ferreting out, from obscure but unclassified sources, what would appear to constitute classified information, and it seems he has continued to exploit this special skill in Norway". He was the "ferret" to whom the New Zealand, and global, peace movement owes a huge vote of thanks.

Mention of Norway brought back memories. In 1978, I and my then partner (Christine Bird, a fellow CAFGINZ founder and first Chairperson of CAFCA and also an ABC founder) accompanied Owen on a "spy trip" through Norway's northernmost province, the one bordering the former Soviet Union, which gave me my first glimpse of the sort of domes with which I've become so familiar at the Waihopai spy base during the last 30 years. Here is the relevant subsection from my 2005 *PR* obituary of Owen, cited above.

"Spying" Cases In Norway And Sweden

Owen thrived in Scandinavia, and particularly loved his 18 months in Norway, paying Norwegians the highest accolade of being "good jokers". He loved the reaction he got from them when he told them that, in New Zealand, we call our turnips swedes (on the other hand, the only advertising needed to draw a crowd of Swedes to "Monty Python's Life Of Brian" was the phrase: "The film they banned in Norway").

He became famous in Norway by learning cross-country (Nordic) skiing and traversing one of the country's most famous glaciers that way, in winter. He loved to swim in freezing cold fiords. (His late daughter) Koa, who was only a little kid then, flew unaccompanied from Christchurch to holiday with him and was disappointed that she didn't get a stamp in her passport to show the kids back at school – Owen took her to the local police station to make sure she got one.

All up, he lived six years in Scandinavia, most of it in Sweden, where he worked for the world-famous Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). He applied his unique talents to researching in both countries e.g. he identified the entire security police staff by the simple expedient of ringing every block of

particular extension numbers.

In 1978, I and my then partner, did our Big OE, part of which included crossing the former Soviet Union on the Trans-Siberian Express and staying with Owen in his Stockholm apartment. In this most sophisticated of northern European cities, he still dressed and acted like The Wild Man of Borneo (when I inquired about toilet paper, he told me that he used the phonebook). It was quite a sight to visit the SIPRI office full of oh so proper Swedes and there was Owen working away at his desk, naked except for shorts.

We met up with him for a reason, which was to accompany him on a "spy" trip through Norway's northernmost Finnmark province, which was chokka with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) military bases and lots of Waihopai-like spy bases, the first time I ever saw those distinctive domes. Norway was then one of only two NATO members with a land border with the Soviet Union.

Mad Adventure

Off we went, the three of us, on this mad adventure, travelling by boat, train, bus and hitchhiking. We slept in a tent wherever we could pitch it. Bird and I went by bus right up to the Soviet border; Owen got the deeply suspicious driver to drop off him beforehand so that he could walk up and check out a spy base in the border zone (photography was strictly forbidden near any of these bases, even at Oslo Airport, because it was also an Air Force base). He told us that if he hadn't rejoined us within a couple of days, it would mean that he had been arrested and to ring the office in Oslo to let them know. Right on time he turned up.

Now, at such close quarters, with everything on his own terms, Owen could be a very difficult person indeed (the main speaker at his funeral looked meaningfully at his coffin, saying: "And yes, at times you could be a grumpy old shit"). So, it proved in the Arctic Circle. I'll give one example. When we were camped out next to a river, he mistakenly cooked the food in the local equivalent of meths, rather than water (they were in identical containers). Despite being hungry, Bird and I gagged and threw the food away. Owen not only ate it but insisted on giving us a lecture on

how eating meths was good for you.

The whole trip ended, literally, in tears. We ended up arguing about money, and let me assure you that three people squeezed into a pup tent in the wilds of Norway is not a great place to start arguing about money. He seemed oblivious to what was going on, we went our separate ways, and I took several years before deciding to be a personal friend with him again (we continued to work together politically, and as I said, he seemed oblivious to the effects of his actions on others).

We duly delivered the rolls of film back to the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and they were used in a book co-authored by Owen and Nils Petter Gleditsch, the PRIO Director. The book, "Uncle Sam's Rabbits" (a pun on the rabbit ear aerials used at some of the listening post spy bases) caused such a sensation in Norway that both authors were charged, tried, convicted and fined for offences under the Official Secrets Act.

Much more excitement was to come not long after, in Sweden. Security police swooped on Owen as he was returning from a bike trip around islands between Sweden and Finland, he was held incommunicado for several days amid sensational headlines about a Soviet spy being arrested (this was the sort of stuff that gave his poor old Mum palpitations back in Christchurch). He was eventually released and charged with offences under Sweden's Official Secrets Act (after his death, NZ media coverage mistakenly said that he was convicted of espionage offences. That means spying for a foreign country. He wasn't charged, let alone convicted, of any such offence).

Kicked Out Of Sweden For Ten Years

This was at the height of the Cold War, when neutral Sweden was being particularly paranoid about Soviet spies (not helped when a Soviet Whiskey class submarine got embarrassingly stuck in Stockholm Harbour, the famous "Whiskey On The Rocks" episode). Owen's trial was very high profile, attracting international media attention. At first, he was convicted and sentenced to six months prison. He never served a day of that, because he appealed, and the sentence was suspended

but he was fined heavily and ordered expelled from Sweden for ten years (he used to joke that he should have appealed for it to be increased to 20 years).

Two decades later he and his partner, May Bass, visited Scandinavia, where the media was still interested in this most famous New Zealand "spy". His definition of a holiday was to contact the Swedish security police and be allowed to read his case file from the early 1980s (more than 1,000 pages long, in Swedish).

He told that me that the file showed that they were absolutely convinced that he was a Soviet spy and there was circumstantial evidence of which he had been unaware – for instance, he had been monitoring a whole lot of radio frequencies broadcasting from the Soviet Union, and in the case of one, he had apparently stumbled onto the means of communication between the KGB (former Soviet spy agency) and their agent in Sweden. He had no idea but this reinforced the Swedish spooks' idea that he was a Russian spy, rather than an insatiably curious peace researcher.

Never Lived Overseas Again

If he hadn't been involuntarily compelled to leave Sweden, I think that he would have happily stayed there for many years. He was at peace with himself, happily settled with a German woman, Andrea, and her young daughter. His expulsion forced the end of that relationship, as she didn't want to, or couldn't, follow him back to New Zealand. But, in 1982, after six years of high drama in Scandinavia, he returned home in a blaze of publicity and CAFGINZ (as CAFCA was then) sent him around the country on an extremely successful speaking tour.

Christchurch academic, Professor Bill Willmott, nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize (funnily enough, he didn't win it. It was never likely that the Scandinavians would ever award their homegrown prize to a peace activist who had been convicted for "spying" on them). For better or worse Owen was home and he never lived overseas again. He was now an international legend, not merely world famous in New Zealand. ■

SPOOKY BITS

By Warren Thomson

Inspector-General's Report Critical Of GCSB

The latest report of the Inspector-General (IG) of Intelligence and Security (Cheryl Gwyn), issued in December 2018, has done nothing to suggest that Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) should retire because the spooks are all under control. A year after new laws were passed, extending the powers of the agencies, the IG report made several strong criticisms of the ways that the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) are operating.

Gwyn's latest report covered nine months and 40 warrants and shows the spies have interpreted the demands of the law quite differently to the way their oversight body has done. The report even questions whether, on some points, the agencies and her office are talking about the same thing. She said there was a level of uncertainty over what the GCSB was doing under the new law which was "unsatisfactory" after a year.

In an instance which rather proved her point, GCSB Director Andrew Hampton announced that the report gave his agency the thumbs-up when several disturbing criticisms were made. Among the IG's concerns was GCSB spying which picked up New Zealanders' information as collateral collection. Her report on the GCSB's surveillance of the South Pacific showed New Zealanders' data was scooped up along with those who were targets. She said the GCSB believed it did not need a warrant to do so while she believed it did. Gwyn said she believed that GCSB's interception of communications which included incidental collection of New Zealanders' data was not covered by the law.

Other concerns included the GCSB making broad warrant applications to spy on groups - "classes" - of targets. Gwyn also had "serious reservations" about the GCSB's practice of cross-referencing one warrant



NZ's spy bosses:
Rebecca Kitteridge (SIS)
& Andrew Hampton (GCSB)

with another, which made it difficult at times to be clear about what was being spied on and why.

In terms of the SIS, Gwyn said she was also concerned about the degree of detail provided by the agency because of warrant applications that were too broad, thus allowing for greater intrusion. She said the SIS position was "untenable given the clear legal language on those matters and the express statements of policy intent" behind the new law.

What the report does do is sadly reflect key comments made by ABC to the 2015/16 Cullen-Reddy inquiry: proposed laws were too broad, especially the class warrant aspects. And incidental collection of untargeted data was not properly controlled. It has to be said that the Inspector-General is doing more than most people ever expected of her. The bad news is that these reports just tell us that nothing in the spook world really changes for the better.

(See *NZ Herald*, "New Oversight Report Critical Of Spies And Highlights Legal 'Gap' In GCSB Practices" 13/12/18, David Fisher, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12176192. Fisher is a member of the unofficial Reference Group set up by Gwyn to hear a wider variety of views on the agencies).

More Powers For The Spooks?

In my article about the Christchurch massacre (elsewhere in this issue) the question was raised about whether the GCSB and the SIS will get given even more powers in the wake of the atrocity. The immediate

signs are not good. The country was put on high alert for weeks and the Minister responsible for the two security agencies, Andrew Little, told *Morning Report* he had given authority to spy agencies to do "intrusive" activities under warrant.

"I've signed warrants (since the attacks) ... I'm not sure I'm at liberty to disclose the number. We typically have between 30 to 40 people under surveillance. *That number will be bigger now*" (*RNZ*, 27/3/19, emphasis added). Asked if the attack was an intelligence failure, he said it was "too premature to draw that conclusion" and that the Royal Commission being set up would ascertain whether or not there were failures on the part of our security and intelligence agencies" (*ibid.*).

We should all be concerned that a finding of failure on the part of the spooks (and what other conclusion could there be?) will result not in a fundamental review of the agencies' purpose and existence, but the reactive, simple, and disastrous, institution of yet more statutes and yet more cash for them. The latest report of the Inspector-General suggested the warrant system is not working properly. The spies are scooping up information of New Zealanders without the proper legal authorisation and have been pushing the boundaries of the 2017 laws meant to provide greater detail and oversight (see article below). Enough is enough.

Have NZ Spooks Been Implicated In Cases Of Torture?

Earlier in 2019 I sent an Official Information Act request to the Office of the Inspector-General of the intelligence agencies. The main question concerned the status of the Office's investigation into any possible connection of NZ officers with torture of terrorism suspects. The investigation was first set up about four years ago.

A reply from the Office stated that the completion of the report should be around the middle of 2019. *Peace Researcher (PR)* notes that intelligence officers were stationed at Bagram in Afghanistan (see articles below). Whether they had any idea of the activities being carried out by their Five eyes comrades remains to be seen (or not, depending on what information ever becomes public).

Interview With NZ's Head Of Five Eyes

Spooky Bits often cites articles in *The Guardian*, referring, of course, to the prominent UK liberal newspaper; however, a recent article in the local Ashburton version caught our eye (*Ashburton Guardian*, 8/2/19, "On The Cybersecurity Frontline", <https://www.guardianonline.co.nz/news/cyber-security-frontline/>).

The article featured local lad, Andrew Hampton, better known to *PR* readers as the head of the GCSB. It stated that he lives on a small lifestyle block just outside Wellington and he "travels overseas a lot". He told the writer that the GCSB has "around 500 staff" and that the agency "works only in the national interest and attracts some of the brightest and best people in their fields. These include foreign language experts, communications and cryptography specialists, engineers, technicians, legal, policy and support staff".

The interview did not elaborate on why the GCSB recruits experts in Farsi if it works only in NZ interests, or raise any other of the more troubling aspects of GCSB operations. But the newspaper did print a fairly savage attack on the GCSB in its letters' column as a response from myself, so the good folk of Mid-Canterbury maybe had a little to ponder on.

SIS Undermined By Legal Blunder

In 2018 the SIS reported that there was an increasingly complex and escalating threat environment in New Zealand (although, as we have seen, it did not seem to include Right-wing nutters). But while this threat was present, a law-making bungle made it harder for the spooks to react because, for six months in 2018, it left our spies unable to use video surveillance tools to watch terrorism suspects in their cars, homes or workplaces.

That was revealed in Security Intelligence Service documents, declassified and released through the Official Information Act (*Stuff*, 8/5/18, "Botched Legislations Left Spies Without Some Powers For Six Month", <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/103716999/botched-legislation-left-spies-without-some-powers-for-six-months>).

More Spying By A Government Department

Gordon Campbell (*Scoop*, "Gordon Campbell on MBIE's Social Media Scam", 10/1/19, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1901/S00020/gordon-campbell-on-mbies-social-media-scam.htm>) reports that a Wellington private security firm, ZX Security Ltd, was hired by a Government department to train large numbers of its staff on how to create and maintain false identities on social media.

In December 2017, MBIE (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment) signed a three-year contract worth \$112,000, the object being to collect information from the general public. Given the controversy over the activities of Auckland private dicks Thompson and Clark, and the potential for secret spying on members of the public, this activity by a Government department is extremely disturbing. *Scoop* reports that 70 staff have probably already been trained in these techniques, and the contract is set to run until 2021.

Thompson And Clark Spying Affront To Democracy

In December 2018 the State Services Commission delivered a damning report into the use of companies like Thompson and Clark to carry out surveillance on protestors, acti-



vists and other members of the public, as well as inappropriately close relationships between investigators and some public servants (*RNZ*, 19/12/18).

The report found Thompson and Clark was portraying so-called "issue-motivated groups" including Greenpeace, the Green Party and iwi groups, as security threats and the Commissioner of State Services described the way some agencies allowed some New Zealanders to be targeted by investigators as an affront to democracy. The Commissioner laid a complaint with the Police regarding the potentially illegal recording of meetings by Thompson and Clark (but in May 2019 the Police announced they found no criminal activity involved).

Two agencies for which National Party Leader Simon Bridges had Ministerial responsibility in the last Government, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Transport Agency, featured in the report. Bridges told *RNZ* "I never had anything to do with this". But neither was the muted response of Ardern, saying that there have been "changes" since the events, that it "should be prevented from happening in the future", reassuring. There are no signals from the PM that she is particularly well-informed or interested in the murkier aspects of Government operations.

And We Need Media Watch As Well

In March 2019 *RNZ* reported that: "Seven senior New Zealand journalists spent a week in Hawai'i late last year and produced just one sto-

ry between them. It didn't cost their organisations a cent – the tab was picked up by the US State Department". *Stuff* political reporter Stacey Kirk was one of the seven (*RNZ*, 12/3/19).

Speaking of plans for Spark to allow Chinese telco Huawei to build a 5G mobile network in New Zealand one US Defense official told the group there is "no way" a network built by a company that has that many ties to the Chinese government, is not a security threat. Newsroom's political editor, Sam Sachdeva, was another one of the seven Kiwi journalists on the Hawai'i trip; Jon Stephenson and Nicky Hager were probably not invited.

In the same report, Tracey Watkins describes how she joined a group of journalists in Korea and Washington for meetings with US and South Korean officials where "the Americans pulled out all the stops". Flights were booked and paid for by the US and the journos got a generous daily per diem to cover all their other costs, like food and accommodation. Apparently, journalists were told that background briefings were to be strictly confidential; reporters were allowed to use some material but only if it was cleared by a military censor first. According to al Jazeera, the infamous US government propaganda department Voice of America and its affiliates spend \$US685 million per year.

The US Embassy told *RNZ Media-watch* it had funded trips by 13 New Zealand journalists in 2018. Two *RNZ* journalists were among them: former Deputy Political Editor Chris Bramwell, and Series and Podcast Executive Producer Tim Watkin.

RNZ spokesperson John Barr told *Mediawatch*: “Events are not to be covered solely or mainly because of the availability of subsidised travel. Under no circumstances will there be any external influence on programmes/editorial coverage resulting from any subsidised trip”.

As far as *PR* is concerned, we find it impossible to believe that trips fully funded by the US government, or any other government, do not colour the thinking of the journalists involved (original article the Pacific Media Centre in partnership with Radio New Zealand, 12/3/19, “Hearts And Minds: How New Media ‘Cold War’ Soft Power Impacts”, <http://www.pmc.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/nz-hearts-and-minds-how-new-media-cold-war-soft-power-impacts-10305>).

Secret Authorisation For Spooks To Break The Law

In October 2018, the *Times* (reprinted in the *Press*, 6/10/18) reported that MI5 agents and informants had been secretly authorised to break the law for almost three decades. The policy was publicly acknowledged in March 2018 when Prime Minister Theresa May published a previously secret order governing criminal activity in the UK by the agency. Critics of this previously unknown policy claim it could allow MI5 to indulge in murder, torture, or other unacceptable criminality if the spooks believe it is in the public interest.

In a case before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (read: secret court), a lawyer for Reprieve and Privacy International stated: “This is a case where the agencies are able to self-grant themselves a practical immunity from the criminal law” (*Times*, *ibid.*). The order was renewed in May 2017. While a section of the Intelligence Services Act of 1994 was known to allow the Foreign Secretary to authorise criminal acts outside of the UK, approval of such acts domestically, without oversight, is a new revelation. Does NZ have any similar secret orders yet to be uncovered?

UN Tells UK: Stop Using Terror Charges Against Peaceful Protesters

At the end of 2018, 15 UK protesters were prosecuted and convicted

under a statute which is primarily aimed at “anti-terrorism”. UN human rights experts have demanded that the UK cease the use of security and terrorism-related charges against peaceful protesters, after the 15 anti-deportation activists were prosecuted for an offence carrying a potential life sentence (*Guardian*, 7/2/19). The case has important implications for NZ activists as laws passed by the last National government, particularly relating to marine anti-mining protests, present a similar threat

The “Stansted 15” were prosecuted for endangering the safety of an aerodrome after blocking the departure of an immigration removal flight, offences which are also listed under the 2006 Terrorism Act. “It appears that such charges were brought to deter others from taking similar peaceful direct action to defend human rights and in particular the protection of asylum seekers,” the UN experts said, describing the charges as disproportionate for non-violent protesters (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

Grave Concerns As GCHQ Greatly Expands Hacking

Britain’s Five Eyes spying organisation is to significantly increase its capability for data hacking. And the move comes with significant concerns about what this means for oversight. The expansion of its “bulk equipment interference (EI) regime” means it will be easier for the Government Communications Head Quarters (GCHQ) to target entire communication networks overseas.

This extension of already massive surveillance capacity is justified as necessary to identify individuals who pose “a threat to national security” (same old story). The spook bosses, including those from MI5 and similar organisations, claim that the increase is required because more targeted operations are being rendered obsolete by technology.

Privacy International legal officer Scarlett Kim commented: “The bulk equipment interference power permits the UK intelligence services to hack at scale by allowing a single warrant to cover entire classes of property, persons or conduct”. Kim said: “It’s not just directed at computers and phones, but can target communications networks and their underlying infrastructure, permitting surveillance against whole groups or

countries, or across numerous jurisdictions” (*Guardian*, 8/12/18).

In New Zealand such an expansion should be noted because our GCSB often follows the lead of its British big sister, albeit on a much smaller scale. Kiwis also face expansion of powers and the problems of “class” warrants. When the current UK government passed the 2016 Investigatory Powers Act, the Government’s “independent” reviewer of terrorism legislation promised that bulk EI is likely to be only sparingly used”.

A recent statement from the UK Minister responsible said: “GCHQ have ... determined that it will be necessary to conduct a higher proportion of ongoing overseas-focused operational activity using the bulk EI regime than was originally envisaged” (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). A classic case of mission creep, and a critical example of the constant expansion of surveillance powers.

Even worse, the Government has acknowledged that, due to the vast coverage of data, oversight of collection can only take place post facto. Another brutal trampling on long-established principles; the warrant system is being seriously eroded. A lesson for Kiwis, and another reason for us all to closely monitor the operations of the spooks – both international and local.

Corbyn A Target Of State-Funded Body

An organisation named the Institute for Statecraft, which has received hundreds of thousands of pounds in Foreign Office money, shared tweets calling Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn “a useful idiot” (this is a term that Rightwingers used to apply to peaceniks they claimed were doing the work of the former Soviet Union).

The organisation also attacked Corbyn’s staff, according to the *Sunday Mail*. The “think tank” is supposed to counter Russian online propaganda by forming “clusters” of friendly journalists and “key influencers” throughout Europe who use social media to hit back against disinformation. But a *Daily Mail* investigation found worrying evidence that the shadowy programme’s official Twitter account has been used to attack Corbyn, the Labour Party and their officials. When a conservative newspaper

like the *Mail* is concerned about covert action by charities, so should we all.

Leaked documents passed to the *Sunday Mail* (9/12/18) revealed the organisation's "Integrity Initiative" is funded with £2 million of Foreign Office cash and run by military intelligence specialists. David Miller, a Professor of Political Sociology in the School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol, is quoted: "It's extraordinary that the Foreign Office would be funding a Scottish charity to counter Russian propaganda which ends up attacking Her Majesty's Opposition and soft-peddling far-Right politicians in the Ukraine" (*Mail on Sunday*, 9/12/18). Documents passed to the *Sunday Mail* suggest Chris Donnelly, head of the Institute for Statecraft, was appointed an "Honorary Colonel in Military Intelligence" in 2015.

Further leaked documents appear to show a Twitter campaign that resulted in a Spanish politician believed to be friendly to the Kremlin being denied a job. This is a classic example of how intelligence agencies' vettings can impact on citizens, usually without them having any idea of what happened. Previously it has been revealed that MI5 opened a file on Jeremy Corbyn amid concerns over his links to the Irish Republican Army (*Telegraph*, 19/5/17). The Labour Leader was investigated over fears that he could have been a threat to national security at a time when he was alleged to be supporting convicted terrorists and campaigning for a unified Ireland.

According to the *Telegraph* (ibid.) the Metropolitan Police Special Branch was also monitoring the future Labour Leader at around the same time. Peter Francis, an undercover officer turned whistleblower, revealed that the Police secretly compiled files on Mr Corbyn and nine other MPs which detailed their political beliefs, personal background and any demonstrations that they attended. It is unclear when surveillance of the Labour Party Leader stopped (if indeed, unofficially, it did).

Police Investigating Role Of UK Spooks In Torture

London detectives have launched an investigation into allegations that MI5 and MI6 officers were involved in the interrogation under torture of

an al-Qaida suspect and committed serious criminal offences. The role of UK intelligence officials during US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) questioning of Abu Zubaydah at secret US military detention centres in Thailand, Poland and Lithuania is being investigated by Scotland Yard. The Saudi-born Palestinian was seized in 2002. He was subjected to waterboarding and eventually transferred to Guantánamo Bay.

A four-year-long inquiry by Parliament's all-party Intelligence and Security Committee published its report in 2018 establishing that the SIS (MI6) became aware that he was being subjected to some harsh interrogation techniques, including sleep deprivation, torture that was rated as being so severe that 98% of US Special Forces would have broken if subject to the same conditions. He was suffocated, subjected to deafening blasts of music and denied solid food.

The report by MPs and peers added: "The case of Abu Zubaydah shows direct awareness of extreme mistreatment - and, probable torture ... However, the Agencies (MI5 and MI6) continued to send the CIA questions to be used in interrogations without seeking any assurances regarding Zubaydah's treatment in detention, until at least 2006". The Parliamentary report noted that, according to a 2014 US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the CIA detention and interrogation programme, Abu Zubaydah was routinely subjected to treatment that by UK standards would be considered torture, including being waterboarded.

"It is equally plain that such conduct on the part of the UK officials amount to the commission of serious criminality, including offences under section 134 (of the) Criminal Justice Act 1988 and misconduct in public office". Previously there have been enquiries into MI5's interrogation of Binyam Mohamed and Police investigation into the actions of MI6 officers who interrogated suspects at a prison in Bagram, Afghanistan in January 2002. In both cases the Crown Prosecution Service concluded there was insufficient evidence to press charges.

"Abu Zubaydah was born in Saudi Arabia in 1971 and was brought up on the Palestinian West Bank. He helped run a training camp, which the CIA said was linked to al-Qaida, and had become the target of US surveillance before 9/11, when he was alleged to have been involved in attacks in Jordan. In 2002 he was tracked down by the CIA and Pakistani intelligence services before disappearing into a secret network of US prisons. He has reportedly been subjected to waterboarding 83 times during interrogations. He was accused of supporting al-Qaida operations and the use of remote-controlled bombs against US and coalition forces in Afghanistan".

"President Bush described the capture of 'al-Qaida's chief of operations' as a great success but there is considerable doubt about his role. His lawyers have claimed he was never a member of al-Qaida. Poland and Lithuania have both been ordered by the European Court of Human Rights to pay Zubaydah



President George W Bush

€100,000 (£86,000) each for violating his rights. He has not been charged by the US government with any offences" (*Guardian*, 31/3/19).

More On CIA Torture

CIA doctors considered using a "truth serum" on suspected terrorists in detention because waterboarding appeared to be ineffective and traumatic for US personnel (no mention of the victims) who witnessed it, according to declassified documents released to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The CIA report, which reviewed the medical office's participation in detainee operations from 2002 to 2007, shows that the Agency's medical staff played a key role in interrogations in the days after the 9/11 attacks (*Guardian*, 14/11/18). They took part in over 120 rendition flights, taking prisoners to secret CIA detention centres. They helped keep inmates alive but provided no proper medical care. The CIA report notes that its doctors were "indispensable" to the effort of "legitimising the programme".

Unbelievably, the documents reveal that the Justice Department under George W Bush issued three memos which ruled that confinement boxes and waterboarding did not constitute torture. Waterboarding, one memo argued, was "simply a controlled acute episode lacking the connotation of a protracted period of time generally given to suffering", and the Department also justified use of torture like confinement in small boxes (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). The CIA decided not to apply for Justice Department approval because of legal complications under international law where there is a prohibition against medical experimentation on prisoners and a ban on the use of "mind-altering drugs".

Seventeen years ago, the CIA detained and tortured Gul Rahman until he died of hypothermia - but the Agency never notified his family that he died in its custody. Rahman was chained up, interrogated and tortured for three weeks. He was also deprived of food and sleep, made to stand for days and was drenched with freezing water until he showed signs of hypothermia.

For almost the entire time he was held, Rahman was either fully

naked, naked below the waist, or naked except for a nappy he wore. Rahman remained in those conditions until he died of hypothermia on November 20, 2002. The ACLU filed a lawsuit in 2018 on behalf of Rahman's family demanding "the CIA to immediately produce all records" in regards to Rahman's death and information about his remains (*Huffington Post*, 29/1/18).

Former GCHQ Head Resigned Over "Horrendous" Misjudgement Of Character

Robert Hannigan, the former Director of Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) resigned after the National Crime Agency (NCA) discovered that he had assisted a family friend to avoid a custodial sentence for possessing 174 child pornography images. The former GCHQ spy chief quit after providing a character reference for a Catholic priest who was later jailed for 31 months, in June 2018, in a case described by the Police agency as "horrendous" (*Telegraph*, 24/2/19).

Hannigan, who quit as GCHQ Director in January 2017, provided a character reference for Father Edmund Higgins at his 2013 trial. In his resignation letter he said his 20-year career as a public servant had "demanded a great deal of my ever patient and understanding family and now is the right time for a change in direction". The big question is how many other serious failures of judgement did Hannigan make during his time as UK Five Eyes boss.

GCHQ Falls Foul Of Environmental Law

GCHQ's data centre is one of the largest power users in the UK. Big data centres, especially those carrying out massive spying operations 24/7, require big back-up electricity systems in case of power cuts. These are provided by an array of diesel generators that emit exhaust fumes when in use. Because of the potential environmental impact, the generators require an environmental permit and the GCHQ's generators do not have the necessary paperwork and have been operating unlawfully.

MI6 Chief Proclaims Technological Arms Race

Alex Younger, chief UK spook, said Britain must "innovate faster" to stay ahead of threats which pose "existential challenges to Britain's national security". In a rare public appearance, Younger said the country faces cyber-attacks, disguised use of military force, misinformation and political obfuscation to probe and undermine Britain's institutions and defences, according to the MI6 boss. This apparently includes spread of fake news and interference in domestic politics.

His comments were mostly focused on Russia and China. "Put simply we've got to innovate faster than they can" (*Guardian*, 3/12/18). He also admitted, without giving any details, that agents had died providing information that had helped to thwart attacks in the UK, France and Germany in recent times.

(At the beginning of April 2019, Younger's 22-year-old son was killed in a car crash on a private Scottish estate. Police Scotland said Younger's death was "being treated as unexplained, however there does not appear to be any suspicious circumstances" (*Guardian*, 2/4/19).

Spyware In Common App

Facebook-owned WhatsApp, commonly used for communications in the belief that it is difficult for authorities to hack, has advised users to update to the latest version of the app after discovering a vulnerability that allowed spyware to be injected into a user's phone through the app's phone call function. WhatsApp has about 1.5bn users around the world.

In the following hubbub, the most fascinating point to discover in the detail was that the spyware was developed by the Israeli cyber intelligence company NSO Group. This was reported by the *Financial Times*, which first reported the vulnerability (*Guardian*, 14/5/19). Another interesting question, which may never be answered, is whether Washington was in on the activity.

Attackers could transmit the malicious code to a target's device by calling the user and infecting the call whether or not the recipient answered the call. Logs of the incoming calls were often erased, accor-

ding to reports on CNN and other news sources. According to the *Financial Times*, the vulnerability was used in an attempted attack on the phone of a UK-based attorney on 12 May, 2019. The lawyer is involved in a lawsuit against the Israeli cyber intelligence company involving a group of Mexican journalists, Government critics and a Saudi Arabian dissident.

The NSO Group told the *Financial Times* its technology “is solely operated by intelligence and law enforcement agencies,” (*Guardian*, *ibid.*) and denied the company targeted any individual or organisation. Sales of NSO spyware are to State intelligence agencies. The spyware’s capabilities are near absolute. Once “Pegasus” malware is installed on a phone, the software can extract all of the data that’s already on the device (text messages, contacts, GPS location, email, browser history, etc) in addition to creating new data by using the phone’s microphone and camera to record the user’s surroundings and ambient sounds (*Guardian* cites a 2016 report by the *New York Times*).

US Spooks Involved In Madrid Embassy Invasion?

In February 2019 ten people broke into the North Korean Embassy in Madrid. They beat up the staff then tied them up before searching for information on the Embassy computers. Spanish investigators have said that two of the intruders were recognised by Spanish intelligence organisations and have links to the CIA. The attackers were caught on video and several were identified although none have been arrested (*Press*, 15/3/19).

According to [Spanish] High Court documents, the dissidents, armed with knives and fake guns, forced their way into the embassy and made off with a mobile phone, computers, hard discs and USB pen drives. The US government denied any involvement in the raid. But according to the BBC (27/3/19) the intruders took phones and computer data and then handed over the information from these to the FBI. On *RNZ* (5/4/19) another commentator raised questions about links between North Korean dissident groups and US intelligence.

Shooting At NSA Headquarters

In February 2018 multiple people were injured after an early morning vehicle collision and shooting at the National Security Agency (NSA) campus at Fort Meade. The NSA headquarters in Maryland is the centre of the Five Eyes world (*Guardian*, 14/2/18). At the time the authorities released little information and said the situation was under control and that “there (was) no ongoing security or safety threat”.

According to the NSA spokesperson, “several” people were injured, but none were struck by gunfire. What really happened we may never know. It may have been a simple case of road rage, or of trigger-happy security guards. But shootings at the heart of the biggest spy operation in the world should evoke serious questions.

Russian Woman Tries To Influence US Politics

A US Federal judge sentenced 30-year-old Russian gun-rights activist Maria Butina to 18 months in prison in April 2019, after she tried to infiltrate US conservative groups and the National Rifle Association (NRA) to promote Russian political interests around the 2016 election. After serving time in prison Butina will be deported. Butina was a former graduate student at American University in Washington and an enthusiastic gun rights activist. This sentencing comes as an interesting sideline at a time when US politics is mired in accusations of Russian influence in Washington and current travails of the NRA (long may it continue).

More Guns, Less Welfare In Trump Budget

In March 2019 President Trump submitted his annual defence budget to Congress. In this budget, \$US750bn (\$NZ1126 bn) goes to the military from the \$US1 trillion intake of taxpayer money, leaving just 31 cents per dollar for education, job training, housing, clean air and water, health and science research, humanitarian aid etc etc. Out of every dollar spent, 62 cents go to the military and the increasingly hardline Department of Homeland Security, with veterans’ benefits taking another seven cents.

The budget cuts billions from non-discretionary anti-poverty programmes including Medicaid and food stamps and cuts \$US4.7bn in economic development and food assistance to other nations. Trump’s Star Wars project, the new branch of the military called the Space Force, gets \$US14bn and there is \$US11bn for contractor Lockheed Martin to build more F-35 jet fighters. In the *Guardian* an opinion writer proposed an alternative budget bringing troops home from the majority of the 800 bases in 90 countries where they’re currently stationed, and cutting the annual gift of more than \$US300bn to Pentagon contractors (27/3/19). *PR* can only agree.

Pentagon’s Climate Change Assessment Contradicts Trump

While lunatic leader Trump continues to deny climate change and push fossil fuels for his mates, the Pentagon has released an alarming report detailing how dozens of US military bases are already threatened by rising seas, drought and wildfire. “The effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to Department of Defense missions, operational plans, and installations,” states the 22-page document which was published in January (*Huffington Post*, 18/1/19).

The Defense Department found that 53 sites are currently vulnerable to repeat flooding. Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, for example, has experienced 14 inches of sea level rise since 1930. Whether the CIA headquarters at Langley is threatened is not mentioned. Additionally, many US military bases are threatened with drought (the military is an enormous user of water) and nearly half are vulnerable to wildfire. There has to be something good about climate change.

The Militarisation Of Australia

Over the last two decades Australia has greatly increased its military firepower and its ability to “project power” overseas (read: carry out offensive military action against other states). Few people realise that Australia is ranked 19th in the world of global firepower, ahead of countries such as Switzerland, Saudi Arabia or Poland.

The Canberra government currently plans to spend a fortune on new submarines, new aircraft, and updated equipment for the Army. But, as well as buying up large on new armaments, Australia has developed a significant arms industry of its own, and is making money by selling arms and military related equipment to other countries. Some of these countries are involved in nasty wars, or have nasty governments that oppress their own citizens, or both. Below we print the substance of a press release by IPAN - the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network – which opposes the growing Government subsidisation and export of weaponry and components.

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), representing a cross section of community organisations across Australia, opposes the Government decision to fund and promote the export of weapons. There is nothing admirable about aspiring to be in the world's top ten arms exporters. In January 2018, a decision to allocate \$A3.8bn to support manufacturers of military equipment to export their products through EFIC (Export Finance and Insurance Corporation) was made by the Government.

This led to expressions of disgust from the members of IPAN and many other community organisations including faith communities. The Australian Stock Exchange-listed company, Electro Optic Systems, has received more than \$A30 million but that is just 1% of the total offered. Dozens more deals are being done. Weapons technology including artificial intelligence is being subsidised by Australians and heading to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Both are involved in extraordinary abuses in Yemen, currently the "worst humanitarian crisis in the

world".

Today's breaking news from Australian Broadcasting Corporation journalist Dylan Welch has been received by those in the Australian community as another example of how low the current Government will go in their ambition to be included in the club of countries and corporations who fund arms exporters and dismiss the human rights of those who bear the brunt of wars as are the people of Yemen. Australia needs to declare our independence from those countries and corporations and work for non military solutions as a good global citizen. (IPAN Statement – "Oppose Weapons Export & Subsidisation By The Australian Government", 20/2/18).

Aussie Spies Allowed To Shoot To Kill

It is now official that Australian Secret Intelligence Service officers (ASIS; Canberra's James Bonds) will now be able to shoot enemies they maintain are a risk to innocent bystanders or hostages during their covert missions overseas. Legislation officially giving the spies this shoot to kill permit was passed through Australia's Parliament at the beginning of December 2018.

"As the world has become more complex it's clear that the legislation that governs ASIS operations also needs to evolve," the Minister responsible declared. "Changes to Australia's national security requires ASIS to operate in hazardous circumstances overseas, especially when operating against terrorists, violent extremists and other threats" (AAP, 5/12/18). Another way to put it would be that the conservative Government is giving the spooks yet more powers.

Australia Is Giving Too Much Power To The State

In December 2018 the Australian government passed a law to give its intelligence services more powers against encrypted communications. The rationale is to prevent criminal and terrorist activity by allowing the spooks to hack any communications

Nick Warner, Australia's first Director-General of newly created Office of National Intelligence

they want. In a *Guardian* editorial entitled "Australia Is Giving Too Much Power To The State" (10/12/18) the writer notes: "The difficulty for democrats who care about human rights is to find some way to limit or balance the powers that encryption might make available to criminals while maintaining the protection it gives to ordinary citizens... what's required are political, legal and cultural constraints on power".

The writer goes on to say: "The Australian law does not appear to provide enough of these. Part of it copies the powers already granted to Britain's GCHQ to hack into phones and other computing devices, and to demand communications companies help it to do so. There is also one clause, sinister in principle and in practice difficult to invoke, demanding that communications providers strip encryption from their products if asked. How oppressive this all turns out to be in reality depends entirely on the diligence and quality of the oversight that gives it democratic legitimacy".

Finally, the editorial notes that one of the big problems is that the collected data is widely disseminated through various Government agencies, which allows for access not intended in the initial snooping. All of the above applies to NZ. As in all the Five Eyes countries, there is a steadily growing repository of power in the hands of the spooks, and it is not at all clear that the rights to privacy have kept in balance.

Australian/US Military Intelligence Ops

A recent article in *Vanguard* (6/3/19) the online journal of the Communist Party of Australia Marxist/Leninist, reports that a recent statement from the Indonesian government about maritime incursions into their sovereignty has revealed US-led intelligence activities operating from secretive facilities in Australia. Indonesia has become increasingly important in Australian military and security strategy, but there is little trust involved.

Currently for Canberra a major priority has been containing and encircling China, and spying upon other countries across the region has also been prioritised for assessments about traditional allies, their reliability



and diplomatic relations with China. In late February 2019 the Indonesian government issued an official statement criticising foreign countries for using underwater drones in their sovereign waters without notifying Indonesia, and questioned whether the drones were being used for gathering defence intelligence.

Recent official Australian statements recommend that a “distributive and resilient wide-area surveillance network should figure prominently in planning for the future force to maximise the Australian Defence Force’s ability to see deep into the Indo-Pacific region as an essential enabler for striking deep when necessary” and specify “the role of unmanned autonomous vehicles (UAVs) should figure prominently (reports cited in *Vanguard*, *ibid.*).

The article says that recent statements about research and development of mini-satellite systems (note questions for NZ about activities of Rocket Lab) also reveal how important Australian-based facilities have become for the US military planning. Those in control of the massive intelligence systems are able to sit at computer screens and monitor regional developments in real time, greatly extending capability to control the regional environment.

Australia’s Defence Department Exposed To Chinese Hackers

A highly classified review by former Federal Police chief Mick Keelty says the Australian Defence Department left itself badly exposed to cyber attacks due to the poor security practices of its contractors. Since the review was completed, top military officials have scrambled to harden cyber security across the extended Defence network, after intelligence agencies indicated State-sponsored hackers mainly from China were penetrating the department using holes in its information technology (IT) systems (Melbourne *Age*, 29/11/18).

The hackers are understood to have used procurement interfaces and email contact between contractors and Department officials as a back door to enter Defence’s systems. Commentators have said that while the Department itself had solid cyber security, it was badly exposed due to poor practices among many of its small and mid-tier suppliers. ■

BOMBER DIPLOMACY

Why Was USAF B-52 Given Permission To Do Wairarapa Air Show Flyover?

By Murray Horton

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) was alarmed to learn that the “star” of the February 2019 Wings Over Wairarapa air show was supposed to be a US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bomber flying over Masterton (it became a no-show because it suffered operational problems in Australia, en route from its Guam base). ABC is Christchurch-based and we have had a US military transport base (Harewood) at our airport for more than 60 years. We are used to US military transport planes coming and going here, and for those planes to feature at open days at Christchurch Airport.

But a B-52 bomber is a whole different kettle of fish. Because it is synonymous with the systematic aerial destruction inflicted upon Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos during the Vietnam War, people may think that B-52s are historic relics, on a par with the various vintage warplanes that are flown at NZ air shows on a regular basis. But not so – although B-52s date back to 1955, they have been in continuous use by the US Air Force ever since, and remain so today (they have been most recently used to bomb Syria and, in 2019, were deployed as part of Trump’s aggressive military threatening of Iran).

To quote *Wikipedia*: “The USAF continues to rely on the B-52 because it remains an effective and economical heavy bomber in the absence of sophisticated air defences, particularly in the type of missions that have been conducted since the end of the Cold War against nations with limited defensive capabilities. The B-52 has also continued in service because there has been no reliable replacement”.

NZ has been out of the ANZUS Treaty for nearly 35 years (the Australia, New Zealand, US military treaty that was the foundation of all New Zealand’s defence and foreign policy from its inception in 1951 until the

US, under President Ronald Reagan, kicked us out in 1986. It remains in force today, but only between the US and Australia).

Soft Power

So, what was this Masterton flyover all about? It’s aimed at softening up the New Zealand people to support further extending the military alliance with the US, but this time on home soil, rather than overseas. This is called “soft power”. It took until 2016 for the first US Navy warship to visit NZ since the 1980s’ “ANZUS row”. It was invited to Auckland to take part in the multinational celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the NZ Navy. It never actually got to Auckland, instead being diverted to the South Island to assist in the evacuation of people left stranded by the November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake (this was propaganda gold for the US military).

That warship visit was under the Key National government, which is not that surprising. But this (abortive) B-52 flyover was authorised by the Ardern Labour Coalition government. The US knows that it can keep on chipping away at NZ public opinion, aided and abetted by a sympathetic Government. The steady drip, drip, drip of soft power is intended to lead to the full resumption of “hard power” i.e. NZ as a fully functional, albeit junior, US satellite once again (that is already the reality but it is not the perception that is peddled to the NZ people).

“In a statement, US Ambassador Scott Brown said thousands of people made plans based on being able to see the B-52. ‘We know how disappointed they will be. We share that disappointment. We’re gutted’, Brown said. ‘We’ve been in touch with the organisers and I personally called Defence Minister Ron Mark to convey our apologies and regret...”.

“The Wings over Wairarapa air show has established itself as a world class event and we were honoured to be invited. The US Embassy looks forward to future opportunities to collaborate with this great show” (*Stuff*, 23/2/19, “B-52 Debut At Wings Over Wairarapa Cancelled Due To Operational Issue”, Amber-Leigh Woolf, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/110815155/b52-debut-at-wings-over-wairarapa-cancelled-due-to-operational-issue>).

Peters' Letter Raises More Questions Than Answers

ABC sees this as a dangerous precedent, and not simply a day out for all the family to watch a big plane fly overhead. B-52s have no place in New Zealand (including our airspace). Nor do any other US warplanes. We wrote to the Prime Minister, with a couple of key questions: Why did the Government give permission for this to happen? Did the US Embassy satisfy the Government that this particular bomber was compliant with NZ's nuclear free law?

Our letter got transferred to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters. His reply (30/4/19) raises more questions than answers. This is what he wrote: "New Zealand's relationship with the United States exists within the context of our independent foreign policy. The intended flyover by a B-52 aircraft at the Wings Over Wairarapa air show is consistent with that relationship and follows the previous attendance of United States Air Force aircraft at New Zealand air shows. In line with the nuclear free legislation, New Zealand makes its own determinations regarding military aircraft or vessel visits and does not require any state to make a declaration on nuclear armament".

ABC's reaction is to ask: How many previous US aircraft visits were from *nuclear capable* aircraft? And as for: "New Zealand makes its own determinations regarding military aircraft or vessel visits and does not require

any state to make a declaration on nuclear armament" - this means that US military planes visiting NZ could carry nuclear weapons and New Zealand would not know. So, where is NZ's nuclear free law in all of this? Peters' letter makes a mockery of it; indeed, it renders that law null and void.

And we wrote to the Prime Minister: "The nuclear free law requires the Prime Minister 'being satisfied' from your own sources that a military vessel or aircraft entering New Zealand is not nuclear armed. We know that US military aircraft using Christchurch Airport en route to and from Antarctica are exempt from the law. But B-52 bombers do not go to Antarctica".

"In accordance with the Official Information Act, we ask whether you were consulted prior to this USAF B-52 bomber being given permission to take part in the February 2019 Wings Over Wairarapa air show and, if so, what did you take into account before deciding that this aircraft would not be nuclear armed? On what basis did you make the decision to allow the visit?" We'll keep you informed. ■



B-52 in action

TACKLING THE "NEW ABNORMAL" OF DANGEROUS POLITICS

And Taking Positive, Pre-emptive And Amelioratory Action

By Dennis Small

The Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists (BAS) now stands at two minutes to midnight, i.e. nuclear oblivion. The BAS well warns the world that: "Humanity faces two dire and simultaneous existential threats: nuclear weapons and climate change. The longer world leaders and citizens thoughtlessly inhabit this abnormal reality, the more likely it is that we will experience the unthinkable" ("Doomsday Clock: 'A New Abnormal'", Press, 26/1/19).

On 15 March 2019, an Australian white supremacist carried out a barbaric terrorist attack on two Muslim mosques in Otautahi/Christchurch, Aotearoa/NZ, murdering and injuring many people. He now awaits trial. His neo-fascist creed "is largely focused on the notion of 'white genocide' – the idea that around the world, people of European descent are having too few children, and as a result are being replaced in their own countries by foreign invaders", particularly Muslims. He sees US President Trump as a "symbol" of white revival ("What The Christchurch Attacker's Manifesto Tells Us"¹, 15/3/19)

NZ "Students' Plea: We Need To Call Out Racism" (appeal on front cover of the Sunday Star-Times [SST], 24/3/2019).

Immediately after the Christchurch terrorist attack, the opposition National Party removed a far Right, racist-generated anti-immigration petition from its Website ("Simon Bridges Backtracks On Why UN Migration Pact Petition Removed From National's Website"², 19/3/19). The mosques terrorist had an anti-UN (United Nations) pact message scrawled on one of his guns.

"In the wake of [the] terror attack on

two mosques, which killed 50 people; the actions of (Prime Minister) Ardern in swiftly moving to ban semi-automatic guns, as well as her sympathetic response to the Muslim community, has garnered worldwide attention” (“Glowing New York Times Editorial Says ‘America Deserves A Leader As Good As Jacinda Ardern’”, New Zealand Herald, 22/3/19)³. In a tribute from the Muslim world, Ardern’s photo was beamed on the tower of humankind’s tallest building, Dubai’s Burj Khalifa, below a shining banner headline proclaiming “Peace” in both Arabic and English.

*“Oh, I’ve been smiling lately
Dreaming about the world as one
And I believe it could be
Someday it’s going to come*

*‘Cause I’m on the edge of darkness
There ride the Peace Train
Oh, Peace Train take this country
Come take me home again . . .
Everyone jump on the Peace Train
Come on now, Peace Train”.*

From “Peace Train”, sung by Yusuf Islam/Cat Stevens at the National Remembrance Service for the mosques murder victims in Christchurch, 29/3/19.

With the latest scientific warnings about the imminently dire effects of global warming and climate change ringing in the ears of those of us who are willing to listen, humankind should be gearing up for urgent, preemptive, and adaptive action. We need to implement cooperative, positive programmes of international environmental recovery and protection, while promoting sustainable development, embracing effective social participation and fair shares for all. A very tall order indeed, and one demanding a humanely informed collectivism unprecedented in human history. Hearteningly, many people are rising to the challenge across the globe.

From youth movements protesting the lack of relevant action on global warming to a whole range of community and non-government organisations (NGOs) initiatives (e.g., Fossil Free⁴ – see this NGO’s *Fossil Free News*; 350 Aotearoa⁵; Extinction Rebellion: Rebel for Life⁶; & Generation Zero⁷). We must build on this momentum. At present, there is still plenty of reason to lament the lack of action to date, given the Big Picture (“I Despair At The Lack Of

Climate Urgency”, *Press*, article by Dr Mike Joy, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, Victoria University, 20/3/19).

Being Pro-active About Political Problems

There are indeed some hugely concerning political problems to address. Besides global warming, there is the menacing and ever ominous threat of nuclear weapons (“New Nuclear Arms Race Looms”, *SST*, 3/2/19). We are at grave risk of “becoming numb to the chaos and instability underpinning the nuclear balance of terror”, observes Derek Johnson of Global Zero, a group that seeks to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether (“Doomsday Clock”, op. cit.; see: Global Zero, “A World Without Nuclear Weapons”⁸ & also *World Beyond War*⁹).

Meanwhile, in the West the continued rise and spread of racist, especially anti-immigration movements, is seriously aggravating and intensifying both international and domestic conflict. This was most dramatically and horrendously brought home to New Zealanders by the far-Right terrorist attacks perpetrated at two mosques in Christchurch on 15th March 2019.

This terrible episode is yet another graphic indicator of the emergence again of Western fascism, a deeply reactionary movement, which now reaches, in fact, from the very top of society to the bottom in so many of the rich “developed” countries (e.g. “The Terror In New Zealand Is Borne Of The Same Far-Right Ideology Taking Hold In Europe”, *New Statesman*¹⁰, 15/3/19, “The Rise Of Far-Right Populism Threatens Global Democracy And Security”, Center For American Progress¹¹, 2/11/18).

In the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque terrorist attacks, there has been a lot of discussion and scrutiny in the media, including various Websites that are more alternative to the mainstream, about the attacks, the gunman, and far-Right motivations and movements. A good deal of this has been very informative for the general public. We need to support and encourage the continuous close scrutiny and monitoring of racist hate groups.

Towards Creative And Cooperative Growth?

At a more general level, indeed that

of the whole planet, even deeper underlying factors are gnawing away at the very existence of humankind. The conditions for greater conflict are growing and compounding. So, we must properly address these causes, and work far harder to help chart a better future. While these causes lie within the globalist system itself and its travails, the ways ahead demand unconventional, creative thinking coupled with constructive action (e.g. “This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate”, Naomi Klein, Simon & Schuster, 2014). Environmentalists of the past and present have so often charted these ways ahead (ibid.; “Philosophers Of The Earth: Conversations With Ecologists”, Anne Chisholm, The Scientific Book Club, 1974).

More and more the limits to economic growth are impinging on capitalist expansion (“Scientists To UN: To Stop Climate Change Modern Capitalism Must Die”¹², *Big Think*, Stephen Johnson, 29/8/18; “Unregulated Capitalism Is Destroying The Planet”, *Truthout*¹³, 22/6/15; “Limits To Growth’ Was Right. New Research Shows We’re Nearing Collapse”, Cathy Alexander and Graham Turner, *Opinion, Guardian*¹⁴, 1/9/14).

Growing capitalism on a small, vulnerable planet inevitably means increasing conflict and chaos (“Globalisation Into Global War? Terrorism And The Capitalist State”¹⁵, *Foreign Control Watchdog* 98, December 2001, Dennis Small). Ultimately, it spells certain doom. *So, we have to get off this dead-end railway track and on to an alternative one as quick as we can!*

“Warnings about the limits of industrial society have been sounded for decades and largely ignored. If collapse is now upon us, we need to address it and respond to it in terms of its component problems: population, resource constraints, and the ecological contradictions of capitalism” (from introduction to “Energy, Capitalism, And World Order: Towards A New Agenda In International Political Economy”, ed., Tim Di Muzio & Jess Salah Ovidia, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016/Springer 2017). At bottom, the viewpoint and understanding required stems from human ecology (“Why You Can’t Have Free Trade And Save The Planet”¹⁶, *The Conversation*, 30/4/18).

Being Rational?!

You might well think that in terms of

rationality, and indeed common sense, this would be an obvious “no-brainer”, given our ultimately explosive biological evolution on a small, “Goldilocks” planet. But hey, sadly and perversely, the overwhelming majority of the world’s politicians, economists, bureaucrats, technocrats, “entrepreneurs”, and mainstream media are still in denial, dissimulation, or wilfully blind ignorance. So much simulated concern and apparent action very obviously amounts to “greenwashed” pretence because it is riddled with contradictions, e.g., the delusional humbug about perpetual economic growth, consumerism, and free trade.

They are wedded to what has proved to be materially successful and prosperous to date as they see and define it all, whatever the real mounting and ultimate costs in both ecological and human terms. This is the case, even as a large number of these very same people cynically and constantly condition their publics and audiences to social conflict, continuous resource war, environmental pillage, and geopolitical aggression

See: <http://johnpilger.com/articles/>; “It’s Worse Than You Think”¹⁷, Chris Hedges, *Truthdig*, 12/11/16; “A Secret War in 135 Countries”¹⁸, Nick Turse, *TomDispatch*, 24/9/15; “More Media Warmongering Part 1”¹⁹, *Peace Researcher* 41, July 2011, Dennis Small; & Part 2,²⁰ *PR* 42, November 2011.

Such Orwellian double-think, of course, is a function of their presiding power and perceived short-term interests. US President Donald Trump is today the very exemplar of the suicidal stupidity of global capitalism.

Neo-liberalism Negates Humanity And Humankind

Bizarrely enough, one of the great ironies of the neo-liberal era is that some economists have even actually tried to expand “economics” to be more or less defined as the application of human “rationality”. In their view, “economics” as a discipline refers virtually to any activity whereby reason tailors means to ends (for a scathing critique of this tendency see “Economics: The User’s Guide”, Ha-Joon Chang, Penguin, 2014). Books like “Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores The Hidden Side Of Everything”, by Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt

(William Morrow, 2005) epitomise this sort of perverse proclivity.

The embedded culture of such an outlook is yet both pervasive and insidious. From my own perspective, a particularly irksome example that I have noted over the years is the now quite common use of the word “eco-system” in an economic or technocratic sense, with all reference to the natural environment excised. Thus, the capitalist mindset triumphs over the realities of geoscience and Earth systems – *at least in its techno-utopian fantasies!*

Ultimately, the Davos* set, pinnacle of the Western capitalist elite, have been responsible for the deepening perversions of global culture and economy (“Limits To Growth’ Was Right”, op. cit.). Human trashing of our vital planetary habitat continues as social tensions rise (“Trashing the Planet: Examining Our Global Garbage Glut”, Stuart A. Kallen, Twenty-First Century Books, 2017; “Trashing The Planet: 15 New Books About Garbage, Climate Change and Endangered Species”²¹, *The Revelator*, 5/3/19; “From “Big Bang” Space Race To Trashing The Planet: The Struggle Against The Global Corporates”²², *Foreign Control Watchdog* 148, August 2018, Dennis Small). **Davos, Switzerland, is the venue for the annual World Economic Forum of the global political and economic elite. Ed.*

Divisions, as so long predicted and monitored, are increasing perilously within societies and between societies. In these times, Trumpism even signals the spectre of officially sanctioned Western neo-fascism, whatever the portrayal by its public relations (PR) agents. In regard to foreign policy, a current, outrageously evident case in point is the US-led campaign to try and overthrow the democratically elected government of oil and gas rich Venezuela.

The blatant toppling of democratic governments via the means of pseudo-democratic, neo-fascist “revolutions” has become an American specialty in recent decades, with Ukraine being the most dangerous example of such interventionism in recent times. Ongoing close collaboration or complicity in these coups by most Western governments and the media comprise a damning indictment of democratic hypocrisy and capitalist resource predation.

There are many issues involved here, and this article can only treat some in any reasonable detail for its purposes. But I shall certainly return to the Venezuelan situation again below. At this stage, it is worth registering disgust once more at the outrageously farcical pretence of Western commitment to a so-called “rules-based” international order!

Seeing The Big Picture

Many years ago, our esteemed Anti-Bases Campaign Secretary/Organiser and *Peace Researcher (PR)* Editor, Murray Horton, came up with the idea of *The Big Picture* for the name of the newsletter/periodical publication put out by GATT* Watchdog, Aotearoa/NZ’s original anti-free trade NGO. This name was duly adopted and *The Big Picture* flourished for a number of years in our campaigns against the power of the transnational corporations (TNCs), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and related free trade agreements (FTAs). **GATT = General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It was succeeded and replaced by the WTO. Ed.*

I remember Murray telling us that an especially good reason for this particular name was that Big Businessmen and their associates, including politicians, constantly refer to the need to take the “big picture” into account when assessing international trade, the state of the markets, socio-economic trends, political stances, and the world scene overall.

But, as indeed recorded by *The Big Picture* itself, *Foreign Control Watchdog (FCW)*, *PR*, the former *NZ Monthly Review*, and various other related or friendly periodicals and publications over the years - let alone a host of overseas alternative media - the globalising capitalist viewpoint is, ironically enough, distinguished in actuality by a very narrow, self-interested, and self-limiting perspective. Most importantly, it completely discounts, for all intents and purposes, the realities of the global natural environment; and how economic externalities impact on this environment.

At bottom too, and increasingly to the fore in recent years, is the menace of the militarist market and its relationship to planetary resources and the biosphere (“Countering Market Militarism While Growing Positive Change”²³, *Watchdog* 149,

December 2018, Dennis Small). We thus have to strenuously contest the trend to belligerent posturing, conflict, and warmongering. The campaign for human survival has many multi-faceted and inter-connected dimensions.

Civilisation In Growing Crisis Close To Home

A case in point close to home about the dangers of increasing conflict and the need for pro-active programmes to deal with the roots of festering tensions has been horribly demonstrated by the 2019 Christchurch mosques terror attacks. The context and causative background to this heinous crime of course ultimately lies in the geopolitics leading to 9/11 and its aftermath, most egregiously the US-orchestrated so-called "War on Terror". Blowback has been manifold and ongoing. One critical dimension has been the fall-out in human misery suffered by desperate refugees from the deprivations of Western imperialism in the Middle East.

Again, a hugely important human problem can be highlighted close to home by the fact that: "A UN anti-racism official has sounded for several years concerns about populist Australian politicians fanning hostility against migrants. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms

of racism, Mutuma Ruteere, also warned against changes to race laws opening the door to xenophobic hate speech. Ruteere stated how: "I note with some concern that some populist politicians, *cheered on by sections of mainstream media* (my emphasis), continue to stereotype and fan hostility against certain categories of migrants,' he said" ("Aussies' Racist Warning", *Press*, 6/12/16).

Australian and American ownership and content dominate the Australasian media scene. Australia itself has a lot of the responsibility for the refugees washing up on its own shores, given its enthusiastic, bloody participation in imperialistic wars in the Middle East and elsewhere, as legitimated by the mass media ("The Media Will Never Quit Warmongering. How A Refugee Crisis Became Another Excuse For Militarism"²⁴, *Salon*, 9/9/15).

Repelling Refugees Versus Humanitarianism!

In its *World Report 2019*, Human Rights Watch has well warned that: "The Australian government's refusal to end its offshore warehousing of asylum seekers and refugees is hurting Australia's global reputation on human rights" ("Australia: Reverse Cruel Refugee Policy"²⁵, 17/1/19). The NGO further declared that:

"After more than five years, Australia's offshore processing policy has proven to be nothing more than a cruel experiment in using suffering as a deterrent to seeking asylum", said Elaine Pearson, Australia Director at Human Rights Watch" (ibid.).

Blatantly and unashamedly callous at the time, the Rightwing Australian government reacted angrily to a new law passed over its head by the Australian Parliament itself. Most commendably, this Parliament has passed a humanitarian law, enabling "sick asylum seekers (in camps on Papua New Guinea and Nauru) access to mainland hospitals" in Australia for proper medical treatment ("Australia To Reopen Christmas Island Detention Center After Defeat On Refugee Policy"²⁶, *Reuters*, 13/2/19).

At the same time, it was reported in February 2019 that: "Australia is reopening Christmas Island detention centre in anticipation of new asylum seekers" (ibid.). It is said that this "decision was made before the Senate passed the legislation" enabling humanitarian access to the mainland for hospital treatment ("Wave Of Migrants Feared", *Press*, 14/2/19). So, the evil Australian terrorist mounted his attacks on mosques in Christchurch, NZ, a month later against a backdrop of further antago-



Sharon Murdoch, 24/3/19

nism to migrant refugees in his own country – *along with all the associated controversy* – from the conservative Scott Morrison government.

Kneejerk Reaction Or Positive Response?

But then, in the immediate wake of the Christchurch terror mosques attacks, the Australian government seems to have got a new pro-active lease of life (*however momentary?*), galvanised by the dangers posed by violent, home-grown Right-wing extremism and its repercussions. It moved with admirable speed to legislate against Facebook and other online media platforms that had allowed livestreaming of the far-Right terrorist's attacks in Christchurch.

(See e.g. "Facebook-Streamed Violence Banned Under New Australian Law"²⁷, *Bloomberg*, 4/4/19; "Australia Passes Social Media Law Penalising Platforms For Violent Content"²⁸, *Guardian*, 4/4/19).

While the new Australian law has copped criticism from various quarters, and on a number of grounds, at least it signals a start to a hopefully ongoing international effort to curb the power of the tech giants – especially Facebook, Google's *YouTube*, Twitter, Amazon, Apple, & co. that so freely purvey racial antagonism. There are certainly competing considerations of enormous import here that we have to take into account in a continuing international conversation. But we need to keep tackling hate speech head-on.

Scoop's Gordon Campbell well reviews the complexity of the challenges and issues involved in trying to rein in hate propaganda ("Gordon Campbell On The Policing Of Social Media Content"²⁹, *Scoop News*, 11/4/19; note that *Scoop News*, especially the *Top Scoops* series, regularly provides an excellent source of alternative news and information on various topics).

These matters include hugely important questions about governmental "Big Brother" censorship and surveillance; problems with the effectiveness of officially prescribed regulatory efforts, including the new Australian legislative measures; and how Facebook's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Zuckerberg & co. cunningly play the field in dodging any meaningful responsibility.

Facing Up To The Challenges Of A Besieged Democracy

Democracy is faced with a massive, continuing challenge in getting the proper balance between censoring online violent extremism and ensuring free speech, and most crucially, the right of freedom of political expression. In May 2019 in Paris, our PM, Jacinda Ardern, co-hosted with French President Emmanuel Macron an international meeting inspired by the Christchurch mosque terrorist attacks on better international coordination to control online hate speech. This meeting was part of the G7 Conference, and is entitled "The Christchurch Call".

Jacinda Ardern has certainly garnered lots of international respect since she became NZ PM in the September 2017 general election. Writing in 2017, Australian journalist Ginger Gorman, who has specialised in researching the purveyors of Internet hate, declared that: "It's time for big, ongoing conversations about the values we hold as a community" ("Troll Hunting: Inside The World Of Online Hate And Its Human Fallout", Ginger Gorman, Hardie Grant Books, 2019, p256). She goes on to cite Jacinda Ardern.

Gorman poses the question: "Are we truly willing to tolerate extreme hatred, bigotry, polarisation and misogyny that leads to real-life violence? Or will we, like New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern suggested at the United Nations General Assembly, barrack for kindness and tolerance and inclusiveness? As so many great leaders have asked over the decades, will we judge ourselves not just by how the most privileged in the community are treated, but by how we treat those who are marginalised? And if we did the latter, how would things change?" (ibid.).

Ardern is now employing her globally acknowledged mana in tackling this problem. The constant challenge is to keep the balance on free speech and its responsibilities as best we possibly can. So, the widest participatory discussion is essential. We need to repeatedly hammer this home on the noticeboard of public discourse. All sorts of issues are indeed involved in constructively tackling the online media transnational corporations (TNCs). The relevant subject matter even includes the mental health of the thousands of people that Facebook and other

firms employ to monitor so much of the awful material peddled online, and - if necessary - to exclude from view, according to the current criteria set.

At the same time, with the trends worldwide to more authoritarian states - *and most worryingly* - even towards neo-fascism at worst as in Trump's rogue state America and certain European nations, closer surveillance and monitoring of people only enhances a parallel dangerous momentum already very much under way, including in NZ/Aotearoa under the umbrella of the so-called "Five Eyes" intelligence/covert dirty work agreement.

Blowback In All Its Fiery And Fulminating Forms!

Various governments and many Rightwing politicians would indeed welcome such regulation of "free speech" – *as construed in line with their own specific agenda!* – with open arms (noted in: "Gordon Campbell On Policing Social Media Content", op. cit.). So, we have at the crux of the central problem of free speech and censorship: the issue of corporate self-regulation vs. greater governmental control of the Internet, and the overriding question of ensuring better democratic accountability all round.

In the meantime, the April 2019 arrest and imprisonment of Julian Assange, co-founder of Wikileaks, demonstrates the tightening and very dangerous grip of the national nuclear security state (NNS) and its pervasive reach throughout the West ("John Pilger: Julian Assange Exposed US 'KILL THEM ALL' Mentality!"³⁰, *YouTube*, 13/4/19). Australian Assange's political commitment has been at the very opposite end of the spectrum to that of fellow Australian, the terrorist killer Brenton Tarrant, who so savagely struck down our Muslim sisters and brothers in Christchurch/Otautahi.

But, at root, much the same underlying geopolitical forces have produced their respective actions and the consequences that continue to unfold. We are, of course, all caught up in this history and its ongoing process. The ways in which we respond are thus absolutely critical. Above all, the so-called "War on Terror", and what in turn produced this phenomenon, weigh on everybody ("Blowback: The Costs And Consequences Of American Em-

pire”, Chalmers Johnson, Time Warner, 2000/02).

Wikileaks has proved so positively and immensely influential in exposing the murderous malevolence of the Anglo-American axis; and in doing so, demonstrating the essential role of free speech and freedom of information for the best of reasons. *Consequently, the NNSS wants to stifle this freedom, and strangle its proponents as much as it can!*

Blowing Away Bullshit

Any prospect of a democratic future – *indeed the survival of humankind!* – depends on the free access to such information. This is so absolutely vital in an age where the NNSS is moving relentlessly to geopolitical war across the globe. In this sphere, as continually stressed in my article, the Western mainstream media overwhelmingly operate as an arm of the NNSS, conditioning and indoctrinating Western publics to malign lies and “fake news” (“Julian Assange’s Arrest Exposes Rightwing-Liberal Alliance In The US”³¹, *Medium*, 17/4/19).

Rival NNSS states like Russia and China are likewise fully engaged in similar mass manipulation. There is no doubt that Wikileaks has been crucial in blowing away some of the veil of malevolent secrecy, which protects the viciously cynical routine violation of international law and human rights (ibid.; John Pilger, op. cit.). In reaction, certain NNSS members like the UK may well pretend to take serious action against hate-mongering, while moving to safeguard their own belligerence and warmongering by trying to crush whistleblowing and consequent exposure of their lies and crimes.

There is surely plenty of inspiration from the forces openly backed by the Anglo-American axis. Take the former Egyptian military chief President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi’s tightening “authoritarian grip on the Arab world’s most populous nation” (“Constitutional Changes Expand el-Sissi’s Power”, *Press*, [courtesy of the *Washington Post*], 18/4/19). As part of the Rightwing dictatorship’s clamp-down on any democratic opposition, it has stamped out “an online protest campaign by shutting down [the movement’s] website. It has also taken steps to restrict online content that allowed Egyptians access to the opposition campaign” (ibid.).

Trumpeting Tyranny

“When President Donald Trump [during a meeting in April 2019 with Sissi at the White House], was asked about what human rights groups describe as a power grab in Egypt, Trump described Sissi as ‘a great president’” (ibid.). Sissi is increasing military influence in his government, saying that “the military’s role is to protect ‘the constitution and democracy’” (ibid.).

We can bet that any pious “tut-tutting” by elements of the Western mass media would soon disappear once, say, Sissi and the White House started to play up an alleged threat from Islamic State (ISIS); or, *heaven forbid*, a nationalist movement genuinely motivated by democracy, human rights concerns, and an *independent foreign policy!* Social media and messages disseminated were certainly of critical importance in the touted “Arab Spring” uprisings. But hopes have unfortunately been dashed in Egypt for the foreseeable future (see the semi-fictionalised account of the protest movement in “The City Always Wins”, Omar Robert Hamilton, Faber & Faber, 2017).

In his excoriating study of Anglo-American warmongering and war making, Richard Keeble shows, in particular, how the British State apparatus works hand in glove with the Establishment media to safeguard the secrecy of its machinations (“Richard Keeble, “Covering Conflict: The Making And Unmaking Of New Militarism”³², reviewed in *Peace News*, October/November 2017).

Confronting And Tackling Challenges And Contradictions Galore

So, again, we can acknowledge that ensuring democratic accountability, the practice of free speech, and freedom of association are massive, continuing challenges. Concurrently, with these criteria in mind, we still have to keep contesting the flagrant abuse, and calculated subversion of these human rights by the far-Right. “Free speech” has, in fact, become a key battle-cry for the neo-fascists. They are so very obviously and deliberately exploiting this issue in order to undermine and destroy human rights in general, as well as aggressively aggravating the conditions for both civil strife and war.

Neo-fascist elements, so much on

the offensive, have developed a whole system of semi-underground and even occult code words, symbols, and disguised communicative practices, along with the “in-your-face” blatant posturing by various leaders – *from the posturings of President Trump all the way down the societal ladder!* Make no mistake, we are now confronting a potentially most dangerous movement that, given mounting world problems, has huge underlying impetus for both internal and external conflicts. This movement is both a generator and reflection of general societal disintegration.

Effectively Answering The “Alt-Right” & Co.?

The horrible hate speech online forums have been running hot for a number of years, fuelling the growth of Rightwing extremism, the incentives for violence, and even specific actual hate crimes. In his study of the “Alt-Right: From 4chan To The White House”, Mike Wendling see this particular very influential strand of the wider far-Right movement as “*Trump’s shock troops*” [my emphasis] (Pluto Press, 2018, p6).

Wendling observes that: “Taken collectively, race is the movement’s top obsession - only just nudging out topics such as gender, anti-feminism, free speech, Western civilisation, video gaming” (ibid., p4). It is worth taking note that Mike Wendling differs from a lot of us, who strongly oppose the far-Right, on what appropriate action to take. He actually warns against calling them out, since many of the “alt-Righters” are quite prepared openly to accept the labels of “racist” and “sexist”.

But unless we do call them out and marshal societal disapproval and condemnation of their attitudes and behaviour, they will only become emboldened in promoting their Social Darwinism. Certainly, we should promote the values of kindness, compassion, and love as enjoined by our PM Jacinda Ardern. Multi-culturalism and tolerance should be to the fore. At the same time, PM Ardern is leading an international effort to try and curb racist hate speech as much as possible.

Once again, of immense import and irony in recent times is that the greatest concern of all relates to the US President’s anti-refugee, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim rhetoric and inflammatory twittering diatribes.

And, whenever it comes to the crunch in geopolitical conflict, the media will move to protect the “leader of the free world” and “Commander-in-Chief”! So, our local and global campaigning has to focus above all on calling out this neo-fascist President and Administration.

Taking Amelioratory And Pre-emptive Action

All this stuff has so obviously triggered, or at least certainly encouraged, related terrorist attacks in America itself, and elsewhere, that have expressed the same kind of antagonisms and aggression (“Gordon Campbell On The Policing Of Social Media Content”, op. cit.). And now the Christchurch mosques terrorist is serving as an inspirational model for other such killers, e.g., an anti-Semitic gunman at a San Diego-area synagogue in California in April 2019.

I shall elaborate more on this syndrome later on. After all, the toll of the “War on Terror” and associated military and covert interventions have cost millions of lives, let alone all the other terrible “collateral damage” in the Middle East and beyond. *And very few in the West show any real sympathy for the human costs of this ongoing mayhem and chaos! The pitiful funding and support for UN aid in such areas reflects the sad reality.*

While ensuring the protection of legitimate free speech (as constantly and democratically negotiated and monitored), we have to keep plugging away for more effective curbs on racism and related incitements to extremist violence. I shall also explore this topic further as the article proceeds. We need integra-

ted campaigns of positive amelioratory and pre-emptive action.

Addressing The Deeper Causes

At this point, it is apposite to register here that after the swiftly implemented new gun control legislation in Aotearoa/NZ to help prevent future terror attacks, the Government is intending as well to review the adequacy of existing hate speech laws. Pertinently enough, a public opinion poll has shown overwhelming support for the Government’s move to ban semi-automatic and military-style weapons like those used in the Christchurch mosques murders, along with other relevant measures.

Discussion and debate over possible curbs on inflammatory hate speech in order to strengthen existing legislation will be conducted in this context, and the painful legacy of the Christchurch terror massacre. The mosques mass murders in NZ/Aotearoa, along with other such atrocities – like those on an even greater scale perpetrated in Sri Lanka in April 2019 against Christian churches and tourist hotels by ISIS-affiliated Muslim jihadists – may hopefully elicit greater global cooperation and preventive programmes. Root causes have to be addressed in order to achieve any progress.

At the deepest level, we must acknowledge the trends of social and political extremism in all its manifestations, and this has to take account of the West’s State terrorism and predatory, militarist economics (e.g. “Countering Market Militarism”, op. cit.). But these most important matters in our present political culture inevitably remain for the moment the brief of concerned NGOs and activists. We must gain more trac-

tion on them.

Corporate Globalism And The Abuse Of Power

To take up again a continuing thread in this discussion, nothing more obviously illustrates the power of global corporates over governments – at least in certain sectors – than the operations of the monster tech media and e-commerce companies (“Troll Hunting”, op. cit.; “The Four: The Hidden DNA Of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google”, Scott Galloway, Bantam/Penguin Press, 2017).

The compounding contradictions and dynamics of capitalism in its latest phase are truly epitomised by the current clash of governments and these corporates. In the now critically important, and ever rapidly developing, online communications sphere, the greedy profit-seeking interests of the TNCs rule the roost. Ineffectual law and the general “hands-off” lack of oversight by governments, elected and otherwise, have both facilitated and promoted the spread of hate speech, hate crimes, social antagonisms, and warmongering.

For certain, far-Right social media played a central role in shaping the murderous motivation of the Christchurch mosques terrorist, Australian Brenton Tarrant. (e.g., see “What The Christchurch Attacker’s Manifesto Tells Us”, op. cit.; “What Is Known About The Identitarian Movement Backed By The Christchurch Shooting Accused”³³, *Stuff*, 13/4/19). Racist Internet “echos-chambers” can contribute in radicalising participants for aggressive posturing and behaviour, and even truly evil, violent deeds like mass murder.

Capitalist Crap Continues

Whatever the brand subscribed to – whether “alt-Right”; “European ethno-nationalist”; “Nazi”, “identitarian”, or whatever, white racist and neo-fascist movements are emerging more and more from the shadows. Meantime, Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg has put out a predominantly and typically disingenuous public relations (PR) spiel about how this TNC is taking action to purge hate speech from its network. But experts are very sceptical about the effectiveness of the new strategy. They are similarly sceptical about why Facebook will not move to better regulate, let alone properly stop live-streaming.



Facebook's PR can be tellingly placed within the context of the company's history. As one analyst observes: "More believable are Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's messages to a friend in the early days of the platform. In response to his friend's query about why people were signing up in droves with all their personal information, Zuckerberg reportedly replied: "I don't know why. They 'trust me. Dumb fucks'" ("Troll Hunting", op. cit., p254).

Zuckerberg & co. have surely played, and continue to play, countless people for suckers around the world in more ways than one! Our own NZ Privacy Commissioner, John Edwards, has called Facebook "morally bankrupt, pathological liars"³⁴ (NZ Herald, 8/4/19). He said that they "cannot be trusted"; and that: "They don't give a *zuck*!" (ibid.).

While the Privacy Commissioner was admittedly exasperated at the time of his Twitter posts as he soon acknowledged, the owners and bosses of the tech giants are subject now to gathering global attention ("NZ Privacy Commissioner Right To Delete His Facebook Tweets About Live Stream"³⁵, Stuff, 10/4/19). They have been very rightly put on notice.

The fact of a few huge, profit-driven and manipulative American tech firms dominating and controlling the world of online communications has become one of capitalism's biggest challenges to humankind ("Troll Hunting", op. cit.; "The Four", op. cit.). From peddling rampant consumerism to hate speech, the downsides of the Internet, and the monster firms that pervade and run it so much, have become more and more right in our face.

Controlling The Giant Corporates?

Australian lawyer Josh Bornstein, in commenting on the social media companies, has remarked that: "If they are made liable for the damage that cyberhate and trolling causes that will have a massive effect on their business model ... and they will try and minimise their [compensation] payments" ("Troll Hunting" ibid., p125). For sure, the struggle to rein in these TNCs now covers a very wide spectrum of wrongful activity. At every stage, they have resisted accountability and tighter regulation. They have deployed the

greasiest of PR along with heaps of monetary power, trying to protect their corporate image and exorbitant profits to the maximum

In a closely scrutinising summary article, Professor Jane Kelsey examines the challenges for Aotearoa/NZ of better regulation of the digital and e-commerce TNCs ("A Sleeping Giant: The Scope & Implications of NZ's Obligations On E-Commerce & Digital Services"³⁶, Watchdog 150, April, 2019). She concludes by forcefully calling for the extrication of these corporates from the protective cover of free trade entanglement and camouflage. By doing so, we can then have a properly free and open discussion on these corporates, technology, and all the ramifications unfolding for our society and elsewhere (ibid.).

Meanwhile, a major case at issue parallel to the portentous problem of the corporate online purveying of hate speech and livestreaming of hate and other vicious crimes pertains to tax. This includes Government efforts in NZ to more effectively tax the "online shopping giants Alibaba and [Amazon's] eBay" ("Amazon Tax' May Trigger Shutdown", Press, 6/4/19).

TNCs Taxing The Earth To Death

These TNCs are now threatening the NZ government that they would "temporarily close down their marketplaces to Kiwis if our Government doesn't delay the introduction of its proposed (so-called) 'Amazon tax'" (ibid.). The Government's proposed tax got this particular label in its early stages since the tax was seen as being aimed at Amazon above all.

There is a whole complex of interwoven matters involved here in trying to get TNCs like Amazon, Google, Facebook, etc. to pay their fair share of taxes. Ironies abound as usual. For instance, and of enormous moment, the online shopping companies are leading the world in a huge consumerist spree, which is bound to end in tears as we trash the planet, plundering its diminishing resources and ruining its eco-sphere and viable habitat. Our media regularly celebrate the huge shopping binges and turnovers in dollars spent. *And our mainstream political parties, cheered on by the mass media, are still set on maximum economic growth, come hell or high water!*

Significantly, and symbolically enough, Alibaba's NZ representative "said the NZ law change (proposed on tax) as drafted would 'violate a fundamental principle of free trade upheld by the WTO'" (ibid.). Meanwhile, free trade costs the Earth, as well being a major factor in the generation of Brexit, Trumpism, the rise of racism, and hate crimes like the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques.

Again, we need to embrace a really comprehensive, genuine and cooperative transition to far more sustainable lifestyles. But for any hope of this to happen, we first have to shift public discourse to truly address and tackle the "Big Picture" issues of the environment, resources, and sustainability. This means confronting the central questions of political power, corporate control, and social justice.

Fascism Rampant!

Whatever might be the generally acceptable academic definition of "fascism", Donald Trump certainly exhibits a number of key elements of this political creed, and is now very instrumental in leading a global populist movement towards this sort of future (e.g., "How The US Went Fascist: Mass Media Makes Excuses For Trump Voters"³⁷, Informed Comment, 24/2/16; "Donald Trump May Not Be A Fascist, But He Is Leading US Merrily Down That Path"³⁸, HuffPost, 14/1/16; "Father Of Fascism Studies: Donald Trump Shows Alarming Willingness To Use Fascist Terms & Styles"³⁹, Democracy Now, 15/3/16).

So, let's get this right then. President Trump is a grossly narcissistic, obnoxious and politically volatile billionaire, who is on record as endorsing and promoting: the openly imperialistic predatory usurpation of Middle Eastern oil and gas reserves; the desire to grab Afghanistan's minerals; the use of nuclear weapons; the use of torture and the reinstatement of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) "black site" rendition prisons.

Not to mention: rabid and militarist white nationalism; rampant greed and selfishness (even denying public scrutiny of his tax returns); building walls to enforce social divisions; anti-refugee/immigrant sentiments; antagonism and discrimination against Muslims, while goading a "War of Civilisations"; the ruthless

conduct of death squad-style irregular warfare, careless of civilian casualties and human suffering, let alone the cultural and socio-economic costs inflicted on unfortunate societies.

Plus, generally misogynist and racist attitudes; denial of anthropogenic climate change; the pursuit of fossil fuels and economic growth at the expense of the environment; anti-green attitude and views; etc. *All this stuff reeks of selfishness, suicidal stupidity, and indeed brazen fascism.* But the leader of the so-called “free world” is bent on fiercely brandishing the torch of Western civilisation as his clique sees it, and so will consequently be cheered on by much of the media as international conflict is further inflamed.

Bloody Belligerence And Pernicious Propaganda

Trumpist belligerence purveyed by modes of interventionism or open conflict with foreign countries is thus heartily egged on by the media for the most part – *witness*: Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, Russia, China, and Venezuela, as well as many other places around the globe. The West's evil, geopolitical hypocrisy may be systematically screened from view for the most part by its crony media but the documentation is abundant and damning (e.g. “How Many Millions Have Been Killed in America's Post-9/11 Wars? Part 3: Libya, Syria, Somalia And Yemen”⁴⁰, *Consortium News*, Nicholas JS Davies, 25/4/18).

After “16 years of war, about six million deaths, six countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia and Yemen) destroyed, and many destabilised”, the American public and others in the Anglo-American axis need to wake up to the true cost of Western barbarity (ibid.). Most significantly, journalist Nicholas Davies, who is the author of “Blood on Our Hands: The American Invasion And Destruction of Iraq” (Nimble Books, 2010; now also available in a Kindle edition), shows in detail how the US systematically violated the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, and virtually every principle of international law and order.

But geopolitical hypocrisy is a deeply ingrained feature of Western capitalism, and has indeed been operative for several centuries. Legions of self-serving PR agents in the tightly

marshalled ranks of politicians, bureaucrats, academics, and media functionaries have been only too eager to push the pernicious propaganda of empire, greed, and predatory control. So, *we have a monster challenge to deal with!*

Confrontations And Contradictions

As the very embodiment and symbol of reactionary politics, Donald Trump and his “death cult”, paleo-conservative set signify Social Darwinist conflict, the doomsday nuclear threat, environmental catastrophe, and, in general, the total opposite to any positive international cooperative options for the future. To be sure, the logical path of Western capitalism is a slide into neo-fascism, given resurgent geopolitical competition, market militarism, nationalist rivalry, the mounting impact of resource constraints, global warming, and deteriorating ecosystems.

This is the increasingly fraught cultural context that is so conducive to various elements of Western society to the appeals of racist ranting, hate speech, and the heinous, hate-driven rampages of terrorists like the white supremacist Christchurch shooter. Competitors and rivals confront the Anglo-American axis and its allies as never before. The planetary cul-de-sac and its ecological noose is tightening on this axis with looming limits to both economic growth and projection of power.

Yet, bizarrely and ironically enough, despite Trump's dangerous belligerence, his Washington Establishment advisers have had to work hard to keep him on a consistent geopolitical track (“Fear: Trump In The White House”, Simon & Schuster [a CBS company], 2018). His volatile instability is proving very unsettling not only for Washington insiders but has been rife in inducing international uncertainty.

Since Trump views the world primarily in terms of narrowly defined economic self-interest, his advisers ironically alternate between pushing a longer-term posture for aggressive geopolitical projection where their President fails to see any real benefits, e.g., in Syria, and (*for a while*) even on the Korean peninsula. On the other hand, the same advisers have to work hard, sometimes deviously, to try and curb Trump's volatile personal aggression, e.g., in regard to the risks of fiery nuclear

brinksmanship at one point on the same Korean peninsula (ibid.). It is proving so very hard to get the balance of aggression and its perceived benefits just right in the Trump Administration!

“Armageddon Man” Running Amuck!

This has become even more potentially difficult and fraught with danger now that the warmongering, zombie John Bolton has become Trump's National Security Adviser (NSA). *“Armageddon Man” Bolton is an implacable enemy of arms control, including for nuclear weaponry.* Bolton, a military draft dodger, who has never had any experience of frontline war, is the ultimate armchair warrior. He actually revels and delights in killing and inflicting pain and misery for his Social Darwinist tribalism. *In the last analysis, the Christchurch mosque terrorist, Brenton Tarrant, and John Bolton have much in common!*

Bolton actually wanted to launch war on Iran in September 2018 (“Bolton Wanted Attack On Iran”, *Press*, 15/1/19). Evidently, his hawkish behaviour even “rattled” the Pentagon and State Department” (ibid.). Before he took office in April 2018, John Bolton was known for his fiery anti-Iran rhetoric, including calling for regime change” (ibid.). *His real aim, in effect, is to try and start World War III (WWIII) – one way or another!!!*

With his oddly bristling moustache, the psychotic Bolton radiates “killer ape” aggression on a whole range of geopolitical fronts. He wants Taiwan to “have official diplomatic recognition separate from China; and that the US should stop paying dues to the UN; and that the US should be indifferent to whether it ever has 'normal' diplomatic relations with North Korea” (“The New Nuclear Danger: George W Bush's Military-Industrial Complex”, Scribe Publications, 2002, pp170/1).

In recent times, the NSA madman has been heartily advocating American armed intervention, and more mayhem and chaos in the Middle East and beyond. In fact, Bolton is notoriously and malevolently anti-UN, and against UN international agreements in general. His Social Darwinist/neo-fascist ideology spurns the very idea of international law. *Oh, the fire, fury, and angst of American imperialism and State terror-*

ism.

Venezuela And Yankee Imperialism

As Washington, in typical style, lashes out at Venezuela for allegedly starving many of its own people and forcing millions to flee, Trump's ongoing big obsession remains his promised wall on the Mexican border. His hatemongering, Twittering bullshit against refugees and migrants from the Central American countries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador reaches the depths of malicious irony in that so many of these refugees/migrants are escaping countries previously wrecked by US counter-insurgency (COIN) and death squads, especially during the Reagan era in the 1980s.

The grim ironies of all this legacy are now being amplified by the fact that the master organiser of former President Ronald Reagan's Central American death squads, Elliott Abrams, is Trump's appointee to the so-called position of the President's Special Envoy to help "fully restore democracy and prosperity" to Venezuela ("Elliott Abrams: A Human Rights Horror Show In Three Acts"⁴¹, *CounterPunch*, 1/2/19; "The Crimes Of Elliott Abrams"⁴², *CounterPunch*, 18/2/19; "Elliott Abrams: The War Criminal Running US Policy In Venezuela"⁴³, *The Real News*, 25/2/19). Once more, the US is brazenly and proudly proclaiming its Orwellian hypocrisy to the rest of humankind. "Elliott Abrams is a cipher for US imperialism in Latin America and the world" (The Crimes Of Elliott Abrams, *ibid.*). But the geopolitical gangster crew of Trump & co. can count on the crony protection of the corporate media – *as per normal best practice and dedication to truth!*

To be sure, Orwellian "fake news" is contemptuously flaunted in our faces today by a White House bristling with neo-fascists and evil State terrorists. Western general alignment and conformity with this Administration is yet another huge, and perhaps fatal, nail in the prospective coffin of any pretensions to democracy and human rights in foreign policy. The signs are very ominous too for the policies and practices of domestic democracy.

Just as the US has used fascist forces from Central America to Ukraine in order to suppress Leftist and ethnic rebellions, so it is currently and brazenly using fascist elements



to try and subvert the Venezuelan government. Violence will continue to be a key tactic in one form or another. Opposition leader Juan Guaidó has emerged to be the local frontman for this latest phase of the US campaign ("The Making Of Juan Guaidó: How The US Regime Change Laboratory Created Venezuela's Coup Leader"⁴⁴, *Mint Press News*, 29/1/19). And Guaidó spent years at the forefront of a violent campaign of calculated destabilisation.

Imperial Reach And Its Grasping, Greedy, Helping Hands

From the start of 2019, the Trump Administration has unloaded on Venezuela in orchestrated fashion, as even acknowledged by the *Wall Street Journal* ("Pence Pledged US Backing Before Venezuela Opposition Leader's Move"⁴⁵, 25/1/19). President Trump has quite unashamedly threatened the big stick of military interventionism on yet another sovereign nation, one more potential victim on an already very long and bloody list. Western hypocrisy and resource predation have again been grossly exposed, i.e. if we penetrate the propaganda fog.

Washington's backing for Guaidó is indeed the culmination of a long reaching campaign against the Leftist/nationalist Bolivarian movement, or "Chavismo", since the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1999 ("US Regime Change In Venezuela: The Documented Evidence"⁴⁶, *Global Research*, 25/1/19). This dirty tricks campaign has included coup attempts; assassination attempts; covert, and not so covert, assistance for civil protest action (including violence); cultivated media antagonism, both within Venezuela and internationally; and economic/trade sanctions targeted at undermining the country's viability (*ibid.*).

Almost needless to say, all this has been virtually ignored by the Western media, and so very pointedly in the most recent stage of the American-led subversion campaign, and the early international drama of events in 2019. Anglo-American news agencies like the CIA-linked CBS, along with the BBC, etc, pump out a stream of propaganda whenever required by the NNSS. NZ's Prime TV is so American-oriented and biased it might as well be based in the US!

Crony Media Collaboration At Work

Yet again, why had media attention evaporated so much by April 2019? Well, if some 50 or more nations joined the US in targeting Venezuela, some 50 or so other nations rallied to its support under the banner of the UN, which has continued to recognise current President Nicolas Maduro as Venezuela's legitimate leader ("Venezuela Enlists 50 Countries At UN To Show Support"⁴⁷, *France 24*, 14/2/19).

Consequently, as international geopolitics shook down in ways reminiscent of the Cold War between the US and the old Soviet Union, there seemed to be a sobering up among the West's mainstream media with the realisation that Venezuela is not going to be any easy pushover. Russia and China are supporting Venezuela. Most importantly too, since the American-led campaign to subvert Venezuela runs counter to the principles of the UN, there are obvious issues of credibility at stake.

As so typical of the foreign owned/controlled media in Aotearoa/NZ, we got an early diet of American co-ordinated propaganda on the subject, but then things went strangely quiet. The constant cynical manipu-

lation of the NZ public, including via State-owned yet commercially run and oriented TVNZ, is an ever-present outrage. Neo-liberalism, and its neo-con foreign policy spin, remain pervasive in our mainstream media presentation. Most of this media has been morally bankrupt on foreign policy, the “Five Eyes” alliance, the war crimes of the Anglo-American axis, etc., for decades. This has been regularly reinforced by our largely very self-serving academic commentariat.

Rorting The Rules

With typical Trumpist contempt for the UN and the so-called “rules-based international order”, NSA John Bolton had engineered his favoured ploy of aggressive American action, as assisted by a group of like-minded nations, in ganging up on the targeted country (or countries): *in this case – Venezuela*. Most commendably, our own Government has refused to take part in this charade of human rights concern, calling for mediation and a peaceful resolution for the people of Venezuela.

Oil, of course, is the central cause uniting this US-led gang, and the desire to regain full control of a country long under the Yankee boot (“Venezuela; Oil, Neo-liberalism And White Supremacy”⁴⁸, *Scoop News*, 27/2/19, Joseph Cederwall). *In fact, Venezuela has the largest oil reserves of any country in the world, with more than 300 billion barrels of proven reserves, and natural gas reserves second in the Americas, only to the US itself* (“Top Ten Countries With World’s Largest Oil Reserves, From Venezuela To Iraq”, *Compelo*, 5/4/19).

So, Venezuela has become a big bone of contention in the global resource wars. But, as normal, for the Western media, *don’t mention the oil!*; or if they do mention it, make sure any blame, e.g., mismanagement, is directed squarely at the Venezuelan government. However, the Anglo-American capitalist PR cards have still to be played as carefully as possible (for the moment anyway), using everything from the facade of food aid to transparent appeals about safeguarding democracy and human rights.

Whatever the failings, faults, and mistakes of the Venezuelan government, the facts incontrovertibly stand as testimony to US ongoing geopolitical machinations. These machi-

nations have comprised the long-term, dominant factor in the destabilisation of the Venezuelan government and the creation of the current crisis (e.g., see “US Regime Change In Venezuela”, op. cit.).

US/Guaido Coup Attempt

On the last day of April 2019, there was news of Juan Guaido openly calling for a *violent* uprising in Venezuela, and, of course, openly and enthusiastically backed by the US. The immediate future looked very dark for this country, with a fascist-led and US-backed coup attempt underway. Civil war and direct foreign military interventions are looming.

In his usual Orwellian fashion, NSA John Bolton called for a peaceful handover to Guaido, Washington’s puppet, even as the American NNSS covertly instigated and aided the uprising. This latest mass protest bore many of the hallmarks of the culmination of so many past US-orchestrated coups and takeovers in foreign lands. It is certainly resonant with the style and components of the subversion of the Ukrainian government in 2014.

The cut-off point for this article was 1st May, that special day honouring workers round the world and their struggles. TV1, however, showed its true colours in a special report on its evening news bulletin (*1 News At 6pm*, 1/5/19). Reporter Paul Hobbs presented another very pro-Guaido, pro-US item on the violent uprising against the socialist Venezuelan government. He even gave a plug for NSA John Bolton (ibid.).

Washington State terrorist Bolton has indicated that all options are on the table, something obviously approved by our zombie State-owned TVNZ, which, as demonstrated by its long track record, truly mirrors at bottom the values expounded by Bolton. We so very desperately require real public service media. Our own democracy is imperilled by the hegemony of neo-liberal/neo-con ideology and its media PR agents. *The Guaido coup attempt fizzled out, and Maduro remains in power (for now)*. Ed.

The First 9/11 – A Terrorist Exemplar

The basic model for the US subversion in the case of Venezuela goes back to the original 9/11, i.e. the CIA-engineered coup d’etat on September 11, 1973, to topple Presi-

dent Salvador Allende’s elected Government in Chile. When he visited Aotearoa/NZ in 1986, former CIA agent, Ralph McGehee, stressed to us the importance of being well informed about the strategy, tactics, and mechanics of this particular coup.

At the time, we applied, along with the wider NZ peace movement, the lessons of the Chilean coup d’etat in effectively countering the US programme to try and subvert our nuclear free Labour government. The then National Party Opposition was in de facto league with this programme. But the NZ nuclear free peace movement prevailed in the 1980s in asserting our independence and freedom. We won then a great victory for a better future! *These days we have to pretty well do it all over again!!* I shall explore the various issues raised so far in this article in further detail below.

Brazen Barbarity

At the same time as the unfolding geopolitical struggle over Venezuela, Yemen continues to suffer the world’s worst humanitarian disaster, thanks to the US-backed war against the people of this poor, tragically exposed nation. Meanwhile, the prevailing media silence is deafening! In general, there is only minimal coverage and criticism in the Western media, thus protecting the murderous role of the Anglo-American axis.

However, a few voices of late have been commendably scathing in their condemnation of President Trump’s doubling down on the siege of Yemen. *“An estimated 24 million people - close to 80% of the population – need assistance and protection”* (“Humanitarian Crisis In Yemen Remains The Worst In The World Warns UN”⁴⁹, *UN News*).

An effort to try and impose US Congressional consent, and therefore control, over the Administration’s power to continue its war on Yemen sadly failed in April 2019. Congress had moved, again commendably, in bi-partisan fashion to try and “force an end to American participation in the Yemen war” (“Trump Now Owns The Yemen War”⁵⁰, *Washington Post*, 18/4/19; “Trump’s Veto Over Yemen Is A Scandalous Abuse Of Presidential Power”⁵¹, Simon Tisdall, *Opinion, Guardian*, 17/4/19). But President Trump vetoed the Congressional resolution. Very few me-

dia have bothered to call him out for his brazen barbarity, with the NZ lot as bad as usual.

Battlegrounds For The Future?

Contradictory tensions can certainly run deep alright. Trump's advisers have argued that a continued American presence on the Korean peninsula, and corresponding military commitment there actually signifies the most important US intelligence deployment anywhere ("Fear", op. cit.). The Korean deployment purportedly comprises "the most highly classified and sensitive Special Access Programmes (SAP), which provide[s] sophisticated Top Secret, codeword intelligence and military capabilities" (ibid., pxxvii).

Famed *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward, now an Associate Editor, promotes the value of the SAP as absolutely essential for safeguarding the US from a possible nuclear strike by North Korea. Woodward, who is very much a Washington insider close to the intelligence/military-industrial complex, takes this particular claim by his informants at face value. He says: "These programmes enable the US to detect an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) in North Korea within seven seconds, compared with the equivalent capability in Alaska of 15 minutes".

"The ability to detect an ICBM launch in North Korea within seven seconds would give the US military the time to shoot down a North Korean missile. It is perhaps the most important and most secret operation in the US government. The American presence in South Korea represents the essence of national security" (ibid.). This claim of such a deployment to serve the cause of peace by preventing an ICBM strike by North Korea however also provides a camouflage cover for a far more sinister American aim.

The Korean peninsula obviously serves as a forward fighting-platform in any military confrontation with China. Wargaming between China and its adversaries in the South China Sea could flare up into something very serious indeed. *The SAP strategic forward projection provides the crucial capacity – i.e., as the Pentagon sees things! – for a first strike on North Korea, and also directly on China itself.*

Unsinkable Aircraft Carriers And Survivable Space Assets

In US nuclear war fighting plans, island allies like Great Britain, Japan, and Taiwan would function as unsinkable aircraft carriers. The Korean peninsula would be another similar launch-pad and battleground. These two islands, and peninsula, along with other similar warfighting bases, effectively surround the Eurasian continental mass and likely enemy nations Russia and China.

Back in the Reagan era, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig described Israel as "the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk". In its planning for WWIII, the US aims to have plenty of strategic bases and other targets overseas in order to draw enemy fire, as well as act as launchpads for missile and aircraft attacks. The overall objective is to deliver maximum mayhem to its enemies, and to try and take as much heat off the homeland as possible!

Back in the 1950s: "[US] Strategic Air Command, whose presence in Britain was largely responsible for its new significance as a strategic target, estimated that Britain and its bases could not be relied on at all after the first 60 days of atomic war" ("War Plan UK: The Secret Truth About Britain's 'Civil Defence'" (Paladin, 1983, p47). But total destruction for Britain would divert a considerable amount of weaponry from targeting the US homeland.

Incidentally, note the inane, or rather insane, official assessment here that Britain could somehow manage to fight a nuclear war for as much as 60 days! Such is the "walking dead" zombie mentality of American war strategists, so symptomatic today as they seek to further militarise space, and devise supposedly survivable space assets.

Nuking Mad!

Rocket Lab, an arm of the US military-industrial complex in Aotearoa/NZ, continues to help in militarising space for WWIII, cheered on by purblind politicians, Government officials, techno-freaks, space war enthusiasts, and the media. This American TNC has been helping the Pentagon improve "the performance of a radar system used by the military to detect missiles and stealth aircraft"⁵² (*The Spinoff*, 30/3/19).

Sadly, as *The Spinoff's* Ollie Neas

points out, NZ is breaking its "stated commitment to the peaceful use of outer space" (ibid.). Lamentably enough, NZ is also flagrantly violating its touted nuclear-free zone status. But, then, by its very integration in the Anglo-American axis, the "Five Eyes" agreement, and the American military-industrial complex in a host of ways, NZ is heavily locked into a nuclear warfighting stance and a commitment to Doomsday.

Ollie Neas, who has done a great job – *in such glaring contrast to the rest of the NZ media!* – in monitoring and exposing Rocket Lab's space war-related activities, pertinently notes that there is a deeper reason behind this latest satellite launch, and its equipment with an antenna having a military communications application. In actuality, the US Department of Defense is testing "its ability to rapidly develop and launch a spacecraft" (ibid.). The whole encompassing scenario here is about the Pentagon's crazy plans for fighting and winning a nuclear war. That we have reached such a point in the history of our species shows just how evolutionary overshoot can induce a mindset of suicidal stupidity on a global scale!

American war planners want to be able to get "more rapid launch capabilities so that disabled space assets can be swiftly replaced during conflict" (ibid.). Apparently, Rocket Lab has helped the American doomsday machine in providing the capacity for the ultimate day of reckoning. *Oh joy. Yet another marvel of entrepreneurial success for CEO Peter Beck & co.?! By enabling all this, the NZ government and the NZ Space Agency have grossly violated both international law and our purported nuclear free status – and all for another step towards WWIII!!*

Boom And Bust

If the Pentagon's nuclear warriors are the most pre-eminent zombies on Earth, there are like-minded strategists of various tribalist and Social Darwinist stripes around the globe. *Their eyes might as well be already blind with radiated stardust!* To be sure, contradictions and ironies are mounting rapidly. For example, Britain is the junior arm of the Anglo-American axis and yet looks today to Chinese growth and investment for economic salvation. In addition, NZ as the most junior partner in the so-called "Five Eyes" intelligence/



dirty work web of the Anglo-American axis, is similarly oriented to the Chinese economic powerhouse.

Two-way trade between NZ and China amounts to about \$NZ30 billion. The glittering highway to heavenly riches beckons in the form of China's touted "One Belt and Road", as hyped up by corporate pundits, e.g. Simon Draper, Executive Director of the Asia NZ Foundation ("What Belt And Road Means For NZ", *Press*, 8/4/19). Meantime, economic sanctions imposed on China by the US ramp up the trade wars.

Of late, the controversy over the cyber safety of the Chinese telecommunication corporate giant Huawei has stirred the "Five Eyes" network. NZ has clearly bowed to US pressure, despite assertions of independence, to reject the Huawei communications system for use by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). Amid allegations in Australasia of Chinese spying and covert activities, the NZ government is trying to steer a middle ground between the US and China. But unless humankind can work together to prevent ultimate evolutionary overshoot as fuelled by global warming, etc., we are stuffed! See *Doug Craig's article on Huawei, elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*

Vapourising Values In Order To Save Them!

Trump's successful rise to Presidential power represents yet another stage in the progress of increasing American extremism. This political platform has been fuelled in recent years by rabidly prejudiced and inflammatory media like Rupert Murdoch's Fox News. The Murdoch media's facilitation of the crackpot Tea Party movement was a prime

example of this syndrome at work. Fox News's blatantly predatory propaganda and warmongering are constant. All the while, President Trump is out there, openly and repeatedly parading his Social Darwinist views, obviously striking a chord with racist and imperialistic Westerners.

For example, in a speech in Warsaw, Poland, in 2017, he vented his spleen ("Western Values At Risk, Says Trump", *Press*, 8/7/17). Trump freely spewed his malevolent rhetoric in Warsaw: "Do we have enough respect for our citizens to protect our borders? Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilisation in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?" (*ibid.*). The threatening forces for Trump are especially represented by "radical Islamic terrorism" and extremism (*ibid.*). But he also lashed out at Russia for its allegedly "destabilising activities" in Ukraine and elsewhere (*ibid.*). And a rising China seems to be the main enemy of all.

Failing And Flailing Fault Lines

Yet, a huge irony lies in the fact of Trump's fractious relationship with so much of the American media and elements of the so-called "Deep State" (the core US security/intelligence apparatus). In particular, at the centre of contention has been his allegedly cosy chumminess with Russia's President Putin. Yet if Hillary Clinton had been elected the world would very likely have moved immediately even closer to war between Russia and the US. No wonder Putin wanted to try and influence the 2016 American elections. So much then for the rotten warmongering America media!

But the charges of Russian interference in the US elections have increased geopolitical tensions. The Trump Administration has been moved to adopt a more antagonistic towards Russia. In July 2017, Putin ordered a large number of American diplomats out of Russia in riposte to further economic sanctions imposed by the US. Relations between the two powers have continued to worsen, harking back to the days of the Cold War.

For instance, a critical flashpoint for conflict has emerged in 2019 in the waters off the Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine. "Russia has warned that it will 'harshly suppress' any attempt by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) warships to enter a flashpoint area off Crimea after the US said that the military alliance should act to ensure the free passage of Ukrainian vessels" ("Russia Threatens Response If NATO Warships Enter Strait", *Press*, 5/4/19).

A defence and security representative of Russia's Parliament said that any attempt to "try to stage a provocation under the pretext that Crimea is not ours, and to break through the Russian border in violation of international norms" would face forceful repulsion (*ibid.*). The Ukrainian regime wants to pass through the Kerch Strait between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov in order to reach its ports there, in particular Mariupol.

But Russia has accused Ukraine of deliberate provocation, having illegally entered Russian waters in November 2018. It "fired on three (Ukrainian) Navy vessels and seized their crews" (*ibid.*). NATO's reaction, currently shaping up in a programme of proposed actions against Russia, raises the very scary "prospect of a direct confrontation between NATO and Russian warships" (*ibid.*).

It seems that further NATO aggression in the Black Sea region was partly aimed at trying to boost the corrupt, neo-fascist regime of President Petro Poroshenko in the April 2019 election. In fact, Poroshenko lost out to Volodymyr Zelensky. NATO's "port visits, training activities, and exercises in the area" are all in line with the Western alliance's long-term strategy of undermining the border and closely neighbouring or allied states around the Russian motherland – whether in the form of

support for Muslim jihadists in Syria, or Nazi-type elements in the Ukraine. NATO's reach has been very wide-ranging and invasive.

“Made In America” For Trumping The Planet!

From a wider perspective, Trump's war of civilisations posture poses what he called: “The fundamental question of our time ... (which) is whether the West has the will to survive. Do we have the confidence in our values to defend them at any cost?” (“Western Values At Risk, Says Trump”, op. cit.). Trump did not specify any Western values but in his case, to recap – as expounded above – these comprise: Hobbesian* competition; racism; warmongering militarism; maximum exploitation of both peoples and resources in a host of foreign lands; subversion of opposing governments; military interventionism; the promotion, and even advocacy for the use of nuclear weapons; egregious hypocrisy; contempt for human rights; etc., etc. In a word, Social Darwinism or neo-fascism! * *Named after English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Sample quote: “The condition of Man... is a condition of war of everyone against everyone”. Ed.*

President Trump's State terrorist attacks on tragically afflicted Yemen in aid of the proxy Saudi-led coalition, and his huge boost in arms sales to Saudi Arabia exemplify American barbarism in action, all applauded, excused, or rationalised for the most part as usual by the mainstream media. According to him, in effect, the struggle for survival should exact “any cost” (my emphasis) supposedly necessary, however horrible and barbaric, and despite the obvious damage to his purported Western values. For Trump then, *the ends can justify any means!*

He reinforced his nakedly “killer ape” approach with his proclamation that the US's new nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the US\$12.9 billion USS *Ford* is a “100,000 tonnes message to the world” about America's military might when it is ultimately deployed” (*Press*, 24/7/17). Whether brandishing missiles or flaunting aircraft carriers, weapon exultation is almost a religious rite for Trump, Bolton, & co.

Embracing Thanatos

Exulting in his militarism, Trump

boasted that “America's enemies will 'shake with fear' when they see the *Ford* cutting across the horizon” (ibid.). Such macho posturing reverts back to the time of primitive warlords and beyond. This then is the sorry state of Western civilisation today. *The “killer apes” are prancing about in their crazy death dance!* Trump has even obscenely labelled this latest large warship “an incredible work of art” - *unsinkable perhaps like the Titanic and the Bismarck?! (ibid.)*.

Meantime, the Anglo-American inspired attempt to surround Russia and China on the Eurasian continent as much as possible continues to evoke a corresponding response. In the very same week as Trump's celebration of the advent of the USS *Ford*, Russian and Chinese warships were engaging “in military exercises off the coast of Europe (near Kaliningrad) ... as the two nations continue to strengthen ties” (“Xi Fleet Sails To Europe For Naval Exercise”, *Press*, 25/7/17).

Since 2012, there have been joint Sino-Russian naval exercises in the Pacific or the Mediterranean but these noted here are the first in the Baltic Sea (ibid.). Chinese State media portrayed the exercises as sending “a strong signal to other countries who plan to provoke us” (ibid.). Yet again, we see the dangerously escalating interaction of big power politics, and the growing number of potential flashpoints. *The ancient Greeks certainly knew the calamity of human hubris before self-destruction!*

Forward With The Furies Of The Future?

A news item at the end of April 2019, neatly, and most ironically, highlighted both US militarism and State terrorism, if not for the actual participants in the event described (“LBJ's Daughters Crack A Couple For Their Dad”, *Press*, 29/4/17). “Former [Democrat] President Lyndon B Johnson's daughters christened a stealthy warship bearing his name”, smashing champagne bottles on its hull (ibid.).

One of Johnson's daughters said that “her Texas-born father would be honoured to have his name on the futuristic ship because he always looked to the future. 'Daddy would be proud to have a stealthy ship that's looking forward, not backward at past things that have

happened, but forward for the great things', to come” (ibid.). *We can see just how mad the American military-industrial complex is – looking forward in reality to the Apocalypse!*

Further, President Johnson was certainly looking forward to more Social Darwinist struggles when he presided over the CIA/“Five Eyes”-orchestrated Indonesian genocide (1965-70), not to mention the Vietnam War. All this legacy and its futurist projections are thus warmly embraced and celebrated by the Washington Establishment and its crony media. *All the way then with LBJ, eh!?*

We need, therefore, to press as hard as we can for positive, pre-emptive action, e.g., peacemaking mediation, etc. NZ/Aotearoa has plenty of scope in the Pacific region (e.g., for a proposed NZ initiative on the Korean crisis, see: “Korean Nuclear Standoff In The Context Of International Rivalries – How Nuclear-Free New Zealand Could Help Out”⁵³, *Village Connections*, &, as originally published by John Gallagher⁵⁴ in *Peace Researcher* 52, November 2016).

American Dream, Global Nightmare

Blowback into Western society these days is coming not only from hard-line Islamists but also – so *very significantly and ironically enough* – even from fascist forces that the Anglo-American axis has unleashed in its imperial projections into Eastern Europe. One of the latest blowbacks stems from the debacle created in 2014 by the US/NATO engineered-overthrow of the democratically elected Ukraine government (“It's Not Russia That's Pushed Ukraine To The Brink Of War”⁵⁵, Seumas Milne, *Opinion, Guardian*, 30/4/14). I shall take a closer look at this phenomenon but first it is important to give some relevant background.

“America is with you’, Senator John McCain told demonstrators then (in Maidan Square, Kiev), standing shoulder to shoulder with the leader of the far-Right Svoboda Party, as the US Ambassador haggled with the State Department over who would make up the new Ukrainian government” (ibid.). A bit later, in their visits to the Ukraine, Vice President Joe Biden and the CIA Director, John Brennan, encouraged the new regime to carry out a military

crackdown on those protesting its US-appointed takeover. Most of the Western media supported all this, boots and all! (ibid., for a pro-Russian view, see: "How And Why The US Government Perpetrated The 2014 Coup In Ukraine"⁵⁶, *Strategic Culture*, 3/6/18).

It is worth noting at this point that when Senator John McCain died in August 2018, the NZ TV channels went into bizarre overdrive as if it was their hegemonic President himself who had died. They were lavishly fulsome in their coverage and praise, *and it all went on for day after day!* Once again, as so continually reinforced, the episode demonstrated just how closely our State-owned TVNZ operates as a de facto propaganda arm for the American Establishment and its war machine. TV1 has even excitedly promoted Joe Biden as a possible contender for what it called the position of "Commander-in-Chief".

Likewise, American-owned TV3, as well as Sky TV NZ's Prime, regularly pump out stuff from the CIA-oriented CBS network, and other similar US or UK-allied sources. Such is our media's subservience to the empire! Indoctrination, aside from the odd mainstream exception, and some more alternative online sources, seems otherwise very conventional and standard.

White Nationalist Blowback

Against this recent historical background of American-led cheering for the subversion of a democratically elected government in Ukraine, the West is now getting – as indicated – a neo-fascist blowback. Far-Right groups from the societal core of the Anglo-American axis, i.e. the US and the UK, are going to Ukraine to get radicalised and trained by the fascist militias there (*NewsHub Live At 6pm*, 24/3/19). They are then returning to their home countries to generate racist social division and even violent hate crimes. The Christchurch mosques terrorist claimed to have visited Ukraine.

Back in 2014, the *Guardian* political columnist Seumas Milne well warned that the US/NATO subversion of the elected government in Ukraine had created a potential tinderbox for WWII ("It's Not Russia", op. cit.). This tinderbox still continues to simmer away dangerously, as we have noted above, as well as

having deleterious spin-offs like the one just flagged.

As Milne indicated at the time, the Western media were generally crony collaborationist in protecting the fascist credentials of the purportedly democratic protestors in Maidan Square and its coup outcome. So, we did not "hear much about the (new) Ukrainian government's veneration of wartime Nazi collaborators and pogromists, or the arson attacks on the homes and offices of elected Communist leaders", and similar far-Right policies and practices (ibid.).

White Supremacism Reigns Supreme?

Moreover, the "anti-Semitism and white supremacism of the Government's ultra-nationalists" was systematically and "assiduously played down" (ibid.). The same sort of syndrome is currently being played out once more in Venezuela, in conjunction with imperially oriented media agencies like our own TVNZ. With regard to Western far-Right groups having connections to Ukraine, American former FBI agent Ali Soufan, who used to track al Qaeda, is now on the trail of white supremacists, warning about the great new danger posed by this racist movement around the globe (*NewsHub*, op. cit.). Once more, the contradictions of the Western NNS are glaringly evident.

I have continually stressed how the terrorist "War on Terror" has hugely promoted and facilitated Islamophobia, white racism, and even anti-Semitism. Anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and other hate-motivated terrorist acts have therefore become all so very predictable. Country after country are suffering such horrible violent crimes. A vicious, continual cycle of interactive violence has developed over the years. Some ethnic/racist terrorist atrocities in April 2019 claimed, or were attributed motivation – *either for revenge, or inspirational incitement* – to the Christchurch mosques massacres, i.e. the horrific attacks in Sri Lanka, and also the anti-Semitic synagogue attack in California.

Buggering Things Up, Big Time!

Ukrainian neo-fascists are not only training Western far-Right activists. They now also have the ambition of extending their influence and presence directly. In an irony of ironies, even the US government-funded propaganda news service, Radio

Free Europe/Radio Liberty, has signalled the increasing influence of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi movement, especially the Azov Group, in both the US and Europe ("Azov, Ukraine's Most Prominent Ultranationalist Group, Sets Its Sights On US, Europe"⁵⁷, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 14/11/18).

Blowback these days certainly takes a myriad of forms. So, we have now in Ukraine a bunch of fascist militias, even avowedly neo-Nazi types, gearing up to try and extend their reach into the American home-land and elsewhere. Their intentions and early ventures are already causing some unease. But the US was very happy to use such fascist forces in overthrowing the elected Ukrainian government in 2014.

Such policy and practice, as highlighted in this article, has been traditional American strategy in so many foreign interventions, stemming back from the dying days of WWII, and even well beyond (see e.g. "The Good Neighbour: How The United States Wrote The History Of Central America And The Caribbean", George Black, Pantheon Books, 1988). By the 1980s and the depredations of Reagan's death squads in Central America, the rules of the US-prescribed "Monroe Doctrine*" had already registered a long and bloody history of imperial enforcement (ibid.). **The 1823 Monroe Doctrine, named after President James Monroe, basically asserted (from then until now) that South and Central America are the US sphere of influence. Ed.*

Yet a key American government propaganda agency is now raising concerns, at least indirectly signalled, about the Azov fascist movement's growing connections with home-grown far-Right groups ("Azov", op. cit.). Some other media and agencies are openly expressing angst about the Ukrainian fascist blowback into the West (e.g., "Ukraine Rightwing Presence Now A Daily Fact Of Life"⁵⁸, *Christian Science Monitor*, 15/4/19).

Defending The Borders Of White Tribalism

Oh dear, President Trump dismisses any white nationalist threat. After all, it's his own special brand, suitably coded of course when pressed on such issues. But let's take a look at his beloved border wall, and how his hateful Twittering

rants have spurred on local, anti-immigrant vigilante groups operating on the US-Mexican border. It is certainly portentous that these days: “Armed citizen militias roam the border – and legal gray areas – to detain migrants” (“Militia Like ‘George Zimmerman’ On Steroids”, Alex Horton, *Press*, 27/4/19, reproduced from the *Washington Post*). *George Zimmerman is the Florida man who fatally shot a black teenager in 2012 and was acquitted of all charges. Ed

While there has been public controversy, and even open condemnation of the belligerence of one militia band by New Mexico’s Democrat Governor, these groups appeal to the sort of patriotism drummed up by President Trump himself (ibid.). A militia spokesman, Jim Benvie, representing the specific group at the centre of current controversy, the so-called “United Constitutional Patriots (UCP)”, has made an appeal explicitly in the President’s name.

Benvie said that: “We are simply here because President Trump declared a national emergency on the border; we came down to find out what that emergency is” (ibid.). He added that: “We are sitting here right now and we’re doing what we need to do” (ibid.). He also claimed the official Customs and Border Protection agents (Border Patrol) had never asked the militia band, which boasts some 4,000 members, to stand down (ibid.). Benvie has been active in pushing his views on Facebook.

Controversy And Conflict

Controversy had erupted about the UCP’s activities, following the scrutiny of an incriminating video. This particular video, filmed by the militia themselves, went viral on “social media and news outlets, amid concerns by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) that the actions of the UCP amounted to armed kidnapping and coercion” (ibid.).

The authorities have been moved to act against the UCP. The FBI has arrested Larry Hopkins, leader of this particular vigilante militia group, drawing verbal fire from Jim Benvie, who denounced the arrest as a declaration of “war on American citizens” (“FBI Arrests Head Of Militia Group Seizing Migrants”, *Press*, 23/4/19).

The “vigilante group (had) filmed

themselves seizing at gunpoint more than 200 migrants, including women and children, who had crossed into the US” (ibid.). But their coercive and menacing behaviour has rebounded on them, courtesy of their own gloating PR and self-image. We can see in the case of the UCP, a number of parallels with patterns of belief and behaviour exhibited by the Christchurch mosque terrorist. There are certain common elements such as: anti-immigrant attitudes and actions; the use of firearms; military-style dress; the willingness to contravene established laws and norms; the use of Facebook, and other social media; and so on.

As well, what is common to both cases and of central importance relates to issues of societal regulation. We have discussed the challenges involved in better regulating free speech online and elsewhere. In the case of the American border militias: “Experts say the legal world these groups exist in is murky”, and open to strong views and opinions (“Militia Like George Zimmerman”, op. cit.). There is already plenty of public debate and, even more so, since some matters pertain to the right of an individual to bear arms and the National Rifle Association’s (NRA) policies and propaganda. Controversy and conflict thus abound and social division can deepen and intensify.

“Armageddon Man” And Evil Unleashed!

Meantime, the full evil of the paleo-conservative, neo-fascist Trump Administration continues to unfold on the world stage before the Earth’s increasingly traumatised inhabitants. In its latest move just before

the end of April 2019, Trump & co. announced that they were withdrawing from another UN arms control treaty. This is exactly in line with what is wanted by the zombie US National Security Adviser John Bolton, and his goal to be free from all UN commitments. *The Four Horsemen of global capitalism are galloping to catastrophe.*

“Donald Trump has announced that the US will withdraw its support for a UN treaty regulating the multibillion-dollar global arms trade” (“Trump Withdraws From UN Arms Treaty As NRA Crowd Cheers In Delight”⁵⁹, *Guardian*, 26/4/19). In an address to the militarist National Rifle Association, “the President said he would revoke America’s status as a signatory of the arms trade treaty regulating conventional weapons, including small arms, battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships” (ibid.).

Meanwhile, world military expenditures, including those of NZ, are steadily increasing⁶⁰ (Peace Movement Aotearoa, 28/4/19). Trump unashamedly trumpeted American Social Darwinist sovereignty to the world. “The US [had] signed the treaty in 2013 but never ratified it” (“Trump Withdraws From UN Arms Treaty”, op. cit.). Now the Administration is totally rejecting this particular agreement, as the US drags us all towards the fires of Hell. The mad “Walking Dead” are now firmly in charge of the White House and Washington. For sure: *“Fear the Walking Dead”!*

Extinction Rebellion

Given the growing crisis of human survival, along with the rapidly declining numbers of so many of the fellow species with which we share



Extinction Rebellion protest, London, 2019

planet Earth, what is to be done here in Aotearoa/NZ? As recorded at the start of this article, the real driving force for social change today is coming from the younger generation, more and more of whom are coming to understand the necessity for urgent action to avert looming disaster. This is especially evident in regard to the imperatives mandated by global warming and climate change (Fossil Free, op. cit.).

Demonstrations by the Extinction Rebellion movement in London, and elsewhere around the world, including in Aotearoa/NZ, during April 2019, have helped ram the message home that we must act right now, and on an unprecedented scale. This message has again been reinforced by the UN itself (“UN: Do More Faster On Climate Change Or Face Catastrophe”, *Press*, 27/4/19). “The UN climate chief (Patricia Espinosa) says world leaders must recognise there is no option except to speed up and scale up action to tackle global warming, warning that continuing on the current path will lead to ‘a catastrophe’” (ibid.). Therefore, our collective full commitment is immediately required.

Towards Unprecedented Positive Pre-emptive Action

UN-backed scientists are giving the world a “window of opportunity” of just 12 years to make meaningful transformational change, to keep global warming at an increase of not more than 1.5 degrees Centigrade (ibid.). Espinosa said that we cannot go on with “business as usual”; we cannot continue “to produce, consume, to function as we are doing now”, because that would indeed mean certain ‘catastrophe’” (ibid.).

At the same time, if we have to take unprecedented action in tackling global warming, there is an acute risk that we may fatally overlook the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and geopolitics. To be sure, the threats of climate change and nuclear war are becoming intimately intertwined.

The world has to unite as much as we can to counter the threats mounting from both violent rogue nations – most pre-eminently the US – and violent rogue groups and individuals. As previously indicated, there is a direct link, however fuzzy, leading from Donald Trump and what he symbolises, and the murder-

ous Christchurch mosques gunman. Above all, we need to address the relations and interactions between the conduct of geopolitics at the highest level and the derelictions of behaviour at the lowest.

People of goodwill everywhere must rally for peace and sustainable development. Our own PM, Jacinda Ardern, has given the world an inspiring message of compassion and clearly struck a widely responsive chord. We must build a positive model for the future in Aotearoa/NZ and internationally. This means working through our socio-economic and political contradictions and confusions, thus forging better prospects for the youth of our times and coming generations. ■

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REVIEWS

By Jeremy Agar

SOLDIERS WITHOUT GUNS

A Film By Will Watson

Soldiers without guns might sound an unlikely proposition but the soldiers in question conducted a brilliant military operation which succeeded just because the troops were unarmed. In 1997 in Bougainville, a Melanesian island east of Papua New Guinea, a war for independence from New Guinea had been going on for too long, with neither side looking likely to be able to deliver a decisive outcome. Bougainville had collapsed into a sullen anarchy.

New Zealand's Foreign Minister at the time, Don McKinnon, wrote of seeing "the vacant stares on people's faces" and "a generation of young people who had received no education of any kind". In a context of mutual mistrust and habitual violence numerous attempts to broker a peace deal had failed. Families were split as rival factions kept shifting. Yet the soldiers without guns delivered peace.

The fighting had been triggered by the usual dismal follies of greed and ignorance. When copper was detected Rio Tinto, an Australian mining giant, took advantage of Bougain-

ville's undeveloped economy and its small and isolated population to dig a huge hole in the jungle – the deepest hole in the world – and make piles of money, the ruined landscape and violated society being of no concern.

The often-arbitrary boundaries of post-colonial societies also betrayed the locals, who were politically locked into the larger and unsympathetic Papua New Guinea (PNG) to the west. Despite governing the land between the Bougainville mine and the infamous Freeport mine in West Irian*, the PNG government, itself poorly resourced and compromised by the Aussies, was not about to heed the wishes of some importunate neighbours. For them, surrendering territory was not an option. **The Indonesian-annexed half of the island of New Guinea is now called West Papua. Ed.*

Before PNG took over, Bougainville had been a plaything of imperialists, having been ruled by England, Germany, Japan (in World War 2) and Australia. The film captures the beauty of the island, where a lifestyle based on a simple and harmonious co-dependence between humanity and Nature had already been shattered in World War 2. The fighting in the archipelagos of the western Pacific had been among the most brutal ever.

NZ The Honest Broker

To their credit the pointlessness of the violence got through to Australian leaders like the then-Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, who made public statements that recognised the need for a new deal. At the same time the Aussies knew that their history in the area meant that they would not be trusted to be



NZ soldier in Bougainville, armed only with guitar

honest brokers. Enter New Zealand, which had no such record and a reputation of being fair and competent.

First, the disputing factions needed to be taken to neutral and fresh ground. The NZ Air Force flew over seventy Bougainvilleans to Waiouru Army base, in the central North Island, where they were introduced to Maori protocol – indigenous and potentially a more likely bridge to mutual respect than standard old Pakeha officers might have proved. It worked. The haka, a warlike action but also an expression of cultural pride within a post-Treaty society, and performed by New Zealanders of various ethnicities, came to be a requested item.

The talks moved to Burnham Army base, near Christchurch, where there was no competing distraction and no tropical warmth. Perhaps it made sense to come to an agreement and get back home. A measure of trust established, when the NZ Army went to Bougainville they carried no guns, and thereby could be no threat. One key moment was when a rebel leader, still unconvinced that the war was a bad idea, shot at the NZ lead negotiator's helicopter. John Hayes, the chopper passenger and a very senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade official, said the incident was mechanical failure and the moment was rendered harmless.

A Bougainvillean narrator recalls how Brigadier Roger Mortlock, the NZ Commander, used an analogy of a river to describe the peace process. The river might be blocked in all sorts of ways, but the water will always find a way to flow down the hills to the sea. In rainy, mountainous Bougainville this image was

adroitly chosen. As shown here an important fissure was between men and women, with women being a significant impulse towards peace within the island. The men, it's suggested, had kept up the fighting as a bad habit, as part of a misplaced ethos of masculinity.

A female NZ Army officer, now retired from the Army but who is shown maintaining her interest in matrilineal* Bougainville, offers a tip. The island, she says, is motivated by two impulses: the influences of women and beliefs about God. The peace brokers took care to sympathise with island values. **A matrilineal society is one where land is passed from mother to daughter. Ed.*

This sort of attention to local mores and the resulting mutual respect between the men who had wielded guns and the men and women without guns has meant that the peace held and it still holds now, 20 years later. The Panguna mine, shut down when the talks got under way, is still idle, being reclaimed by the bush. A necessary political compromise also holds, with Bougainville existing as an "autonomous" entity within Papua New Guinea. "Soldiers Without Guns" was many years in the making, with Will Watson's long dedication manifest in very frame. The result is most satisfying. ■

RESISTANT ISLANDS

Okinawa Confronts Japan And The United States

by Gavan McCormack and Satoko Norimatsu, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Second Edition, 2018

The resistant islands are the Ryukyu Islands, which curve south-west from mainland Japan almost to Taiwan. Okinawa is just one of many in the chain. If its name is familiar it's probably because of what happened there in 1945, when the advancing Americans ousted Japanese forces as World War 2 came to its bloody end. Okinawa became synonymous with military carnage. These days the Japanese and American governments would have it that the Ryukyus are normal parts of Japan. The authors will have none of it. Their thesis is that Japan is a "client state" of America, and that both the big powers deny Okinawa its freedom and independence.

Unlike some other commentators, who see the Yanks as the main culprit, McCormack and Norimatsu frame matters as "Japan versus Okinawa". In the immediate post-war years, with Japan having been the recipient of two atomic bombs, total subservience to American power was inevitable, especially as the late 1940s coincided with an American panic over the success of Mao's Communists in nearby China. The US saw the island's ruined landscape as a convenient base from which to settle in for the upcoming cold war. And the Japanese government, which shared the American take on China, was just as keen.

So, an immediate Japanese accommodation of imperial America was no surprise, but the authors insist that Japan has never felt any solidarity with Okinawa, whose people are ethnically different. On the contrary. Like Washington, Tokyo regarded it as a property to be exploited. We read here that as the Yanks were island hopping their way north, Okinawans were ordered to commit mass suicide lest they welcome the invaders.



Okinawa anti-bases protest, 2018

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been destroyed in the only nuke attacks (yet) that the world has endured, a contrite Japan was told it had to become a democracy in the Western style, and post-war Japanese elites, resolved to purge the country from the militarism and brutality which had brought about the disaster, were mostly happy to go along with that.

Client State

But if it's supposed that a liberal and humane contemporary Japan has learned to feel warm and inclusive about Okinawa, the authors take an opposite view. Using the same phrase that they employ to characterise Japan's relationship to the US; they regard contemporary Okinawa as the same "client state" it has always been. It is still no more than a convenience for the Government and its American boss.

Going back centuries, we're given a historical context which argues that Okinawa has never been a consenting part of the rest of Japan, and that its past included relationships with China and Korea, the implication being that a more just resolution would see the Ryukyu archipelago as an independent federation, looking west rather than north. In other words, it will be stuck in subjection for the foreseeable future, not least because the land to the west is the world's second biggest superpower, and a historic enemy of Japan.

What a sad story this is and what a passionate plea. Past war and present occupation define Okinawa. There are 400 war memorials there – and a lot of American soldiers and airmen lording it over the locals. There is a constant protest and resistance, a talking truth to power that's greatly admired by our authors, but the imbalance of resources is grotesquely wide. Japan might be (otherwise and elsewhere) a conventional liberal democracy, but the gap between the governors and the governed in its satellite islands is stark. ■

Dick Cheney

VICE A Film By Adam McKay

Dick Cheney was Vice-President for the second George Bush – Dubya - from 2001 to 09. The general view is that he has been the most powerful Vice ever, largely because Dubya was bored by government, never keen on looking closely at details of policy. When Bush approached Cheney to join his ticket, Cheney assessed this disposition. We see him at his job interview, at which he told his nominal boss that he would accept a role as Vice so long as Dubya left him free to deal with the stuff that interested him. Bush was relaxed about that from the start.

Another reason for Cheney's prominence was his ability to exploit the vast Washington bureaucracy. Even Presidents (like Barack Obama) who pay attention to who was doing what within the federal network know only a few of the functionaries tasked with enacting policy and only a little about what they're doing all day. Cheney made a point of locating key staffers and dealing directly with them.

Cheney routinely chatted to Bush about what they should do next. The best estimate is that he ensured the appointment of over two dozen people who were personally loyal to him to policy-making positions in many agencies. He then exercised control over many agency policy decisions

by calling one of his people at an agency and persuading him or her to make a decision.

A typical example was Cheney's interest in how dams operate in order to balance the wishes of farming and fisheries, something that Dubya neither knew about nor would have wanted to know about. Most of Cheney's successful efforts to control agency policy decisions were also unknown to the head of the agency involved. In the example of dams, Cheney intervened decisively by chatting with the person who was 19th most senior in the federal department concerned (this is the analysis of an academic researcher).

Bush's inattention was not just the result of his lack of curiosity. President and Vice-President had a common need to not know what was going on in the country over which they presided. They wouldn't have needed to talk about this approach, both taking it for granted that the role of the Government was to do as little as possible. That was why Bush picked Cheney in the first place. He was a maverick from deep red Nebraska.

The whole Washington apparatus exists historically as the enabler of public activity. The federal Government is the means by which American social values can be expressed. This frustrates modern day Republicans, who want the Government to get lost. They see it as needing to boost the military, cut taxes for billionaires, and outlaw abortions, but doing as little else as



they can get away with. Health care? Education? Public transport? Not so much. Anything that could be privatised, Bush and Cheney wanted to privatise. They set the stage for the even cruder manifestations of the last two years under Trump.

Denier In Chief

Cheney's strongest impulse was probably his need to deny climate change so that the extractive elite – coal and oil – and automobiles and agribusiness were free to go on polluting. Avoiding action that would allow the Earth to remain habitable was the chief motivation of Bush's two terms. Cheney was effective as his denier in chief.

Truth was never an issue, Cheney being able to say whatever might work at any given time. In that he was worryingly successful. Apart from Dubya's dad, who was denied a second term by Bill Clinton, the last GOP (Grand Old Party) President had been Ronald Reagan (1981-89). Reagan ran huge deficits by cutting taxes on the rich and throwing vast sums at the military. This does not prevent Republicans from telling America that Reagan was a "fiscal conservative", a paragon of restraint, of "small Government".

They do so even today, despite their story reversing the facts. As Noam Chomsky reminds us, Cheney said: "Ronald Reagan showed us that deficits don't matter. He meant deficits that Republicans create to get popular support but are then blamed on someone else - on Democrats, if possible. When Democrats are in power, deficits are a horror story" (the quote is from Noam Chomsky's "Global Discontents").

As one journalist puts it: "Cheney had the ability of making wild and extreme ideas sound measured". McKay includes an assertion that one such linguistic success was Cheney's managing to change talk of "global warming" to "climate change". Where is the evidence for this? There are multiple examples of the more likely gambit; the Bush Administration doing all it could to suppress both phrases (and currently there are allegations around Washington that Trump has issued such a ban).

Disaster Capitalism: 9/11 An "Opportunity"

In a classic – and totally unsurpri-

ing – example of disaster capitalism's penchant for wishing crises on societies so that rich privateers can take advantage of chaos to grab ever more, Cheney urged his colleagues to see 9/11 as an "opportunity" to extend America's global reach. You can't do better than exploit sympathy.

Cheney's political life began in 1968, when he got to Washington as a Congressman. McKay emphasises his relationship with that other Donald, Rumsfeld, whose amoral opportunist style Cheney admired. Rumsfeld served as Dubya's hawkish Defense Secretary. As played here by Steve Carrell, he thought that any notion of putting consistency and principle ahead of self-serving opportunity was absurd. From 1975, when the White House Chief of Staff still functioned as a conventional executive – that is in pre-Trumpian times – Cheney did the job for President Gerald Ford (1974-76).

Roger Ailes, one of the legions of disgraced sexual predators in powerful positions, founded and was for years the boss at the rabid Fox News. Ailes was a Cheneyesque cynic, but here he is only mentioned. Whatever schemes he might have concocted with Cheney are not touched on. This might be because during the 1968-74 Nixon Administration, at the start of Cheney's public life, the two did not meet, so it's not clear why he's here at all (Russell Crowe plays Ailes in another current movie).

Obama's Vice, Joe Biden, has said that Cheney was "the most dangerous Vice-President we've had in American history" because of his constant manoeuvring to get the system to accept his theory of the "unitary executive", an evasive way of saying that Dubya should have been able to do whatever he wanted.

The shock doctrine pretext was usually the "war on terror", with Bush's lawyers arguing that the President could do anything he wanted to do in this context, including authorising the torture of prisoners. Constitutional scholars have no doubt these claims are bogus, totally unrelated to the real unitary executive theory. Within a tradition that's always lauding the "separation of powers", the phrase does sound suspect.

McKay told an interviewer that Cheney was "a symbol of an era where a lot of powerful messaging was put forth that Government doesn't solve things. School shootings, the opioid crisis, global warming – there doesn't seem to be any even remotely serious effort to deal with these problems". That's one way of putting it, but it is more accurate to say that Republicanism exists in order to make sure nothing is done about these vital concerns.

Drifting into senility, Reagan, with his insistence that Government was the "problem", the cause of whatever worried American neo-liberalism, had set the tone. The much worse and stupider Donald Trump is the current expression of the malady. Cheney links the two epochs. He has been the williest conniver. Importantly, for all the pretence that he was nothing but a good old boy, he was the ultimate insider. He knew the system and had the energy and the personality to make it work for the Know-Nothing* GOP.

**The Native American Party, re-named the American Party in 1855 and commonly known as the Know-Nothing movement, was an American nativist political party that operated nationally in the mid-1850s. It was primarily anti-Catholic, xenophobic, and hostile to immigration, starting originally as a secret society. They were called Know-Nothings because members of the Party were told to say "I know nothing" when asked about it. They were also called "nativists" because they believed that foreign-born Americans should not be allowed to hold Government posts. Wikipedia*

Dark Comedy

Some critics have panned McKay's comic approach on the grounds that the Bush-Cheney Administration was anything but funny. McKay, who's previously written for TV's *Saturday Night Live*, has always had an eye for the absurd, but if his movie is comedy, it's dark comedy. He told an interviewer that the Bush-Cheney tag team was "ridiculous" – as is, even more crudely, the Trumpian bunch. Cheney orchestrated a farcical burlesque show. The movie never goes deep or serious because Dubya and Dick were never deep or serious. As much as it is dark comedy, the movie is improvisational comedy and Christian Bale as Cheney is spot on in his rendering of it.

Cheney made it up as he went along, living in a permanent present tense, reading the needs of those he needed to manipulate. He was smart enough, but given to neither introspection nor systemic analysis. That extended to how he lived his own life. McKay shows his series of heart attacks. From each one he bounced back like Abbott and Costello bouncing back from a pie in the face. ■

WAR ON PEACE

The End of Diplomacy And The Decline Of American Influence

Ronan Farrow, WW Norton & Co, New York, 2018

Reviewed by Greg Waite

War On Peace" isn't just a great title, it's a great book – a very readable combination of telling smaller

stories with excellent research and insightful interviews with experienced diplomats. It follows the undermining of diplomacy through successive governments from Bush to Obama to Trump, which by default has led the United States closer to total reliance on military intelligence and military solutions for international conflicts.

Even the conservative *New York Times* praised the book, noting "when the Trump Administration has called for gutting the State Department's budget and filled foreign policy jobs with military officers, Farrow draws on both Government experience and fresh reporting to offer a lament for the plight of America's diplomats — and an argument for why it matters".

To give just one particularly telling story about the risks of military solutions, he describes the case of two young backpackers who were picked up by South American paramilitaries in the "war on drugs" and narrowly escaped being murdered. Local units got incentives to produce evidence

of captured drug runners, so they had taken to random killings (usually locals; these two were just unlucky), presenting the bodies alongside planted drugs and guns to feed the news media and justify continuing military aid.

The diplomat's job, as described by Farrow from direct experience as a staffer, is often difficult, tedious and infuriating: "Hammering out deals between governments ... can sometimes give the job the feel of Thanksgiving dinner with your most difficult relatives, only lasting a lifetime and taking place in the most dangerous locations on Earth".

He emphasises though that while diplomacy is imperfect and negotiated solutions often have a negative impact on the Government's popularity, they are essential. "The point," concludes Farrow, "is not that the old institutions of traditional diplomacy can solve today's crises. The point is that we are witnessing the destruction of these institutions, with little thought to engineering modern replacements". ■

BOB HAWKE

Faithful Servant Of US Empire

By Murray Horton

Bob Hawke, Australia's 1983-91 Labor Prime Minister, who died in May 2019, aged 89, was lionised in the mainstream media obituaries as a dinkum Aussie bloke, with a dash of loveable rogue. In fact, he was as authentic as Crocodile Dundee or a three dollar note. He certainly had charisma and the gift of the gab. I only ever saw him in action once, addressing a big open-air central Sydney rally in 1975 during the political crisis that accompanied the bloodless constitutional coup that overthrew Gough Whitlam's Labor government.

Hawke drew roars from the crowd when he told a ribald story involving Queensland's then Premier, the revolting Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Hawke was the then President of the Australian Labor Party (having risen there from being head of the Aus-

tralian Council of Trade Unions). My obituaries of both Gough Whitlam and his Tory usurper, Malcolm Fraser, can be read in *Peace Researcher* 49, June 2015, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHSFY1VDA0blc1ZU0/view?pli=1.

This is not an obituary of Bob Hawke, that is best left to the Aussies to write. Although I did receive one obituary that was remarkably concise and damning. It reads, in its entirety: "Yellowcake Bob - Dead At Last. Leave Him In The Ground: High Priest of Uranium Mining; Long-time friend of Australian Capitalism; Servant of the Bourgeoisie; Associate of the CIA; Appeaser of the 1975 Canberra Coup; Obscurantist agent of US military bases; Fake ocker extraordinaire; Wrecker of the Australian Trade Union Movement; Deregulator without equal; Advocate of the corporate state". I can't do better than that.

I'll stick to the bits of Hawke's Prime Ministership that are relevant to New Zealand and the concerns of the Anti-Bases Campaign. Whitlam was overthrown in 1975 because he was starting to assert an independent foreign policy and act "contrary to the interests of the US", Aus-

tralia's imperial master. Hawke, Labor's next Prime Minister (he defeated Malcolm Fraser) made no such mistake.

There was no more devoted servant of US imperialism than "dinkum Aussie" Bob. He came to power promising an inquiry into ANZUS (the Australia, New Zealand, US military treaty that was the foundation of all New Zealand's defence and foreign policy from its inception in 1951 until the US, under President Ronald Reagan, kicked us out in 1986. It remains in force today, but only between the US and Australia).

The inquiry was duly held and pronounced ANZUS to be the best thing for Australia since they started putting beer into cans. End of discussion. He renewed the leases on the vital US bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar (the latter has gone but Pine Gap is still one of the most important US spying and warfighting bases in the world).

Here's a quote from *Counterspy*, June-August 1984 ("Rightwing Subverts Australian Labor", Joan Cox-sedge): "A recently leaked secret defence strategy policy document is causing acute embarrassment to



Reagan and Hawke bullying Lange.
Cartoon by Trace Hodgson

the Hawke Labor government because it shows just how close Hawke's thinking is to Reagan's. This secret policy, acknowledged to be far more Cold War than that of Hawke's conservative predecessors, totally accepts Pentagon-CIA strategy for the Pacific region".

"Ignoring poverty and all the other problems in the region, it sees the entire world in terms of super-power rivalry. It repeats the US Rightwing myth about Soviet superiority in nuclear weapons, and urges that Australia should move more closely towards having nuclear weapons of its own. The policy offers unlimited support for the US war machine to the extent of harbouring US nuclear-armed and nuclear-armed aircraft..".

"The document states that, in some naval exercises in the Indian Ocean, Australian naval ships are under di-

rect US command. The entire document not only ignores Australian Labor Party policy but goes in a totally opposite direction. It expressly opposes our policy for a nuclear free Pacific... It is best summed up in the way it describes Australian participation in the US alliance as the 'status to comment in Washington on any moves that we consider detrimental to our security'".

Trans-Tasman Bully

Hawke, in partnership with Reagan, went to great lengths to try and bully the 1984-90 NZ Labour government out of going nuclear free. It can be argued that what made New Zealand nuclear free and out of ANZUS was much more the blundering heavy-handedness of the American

and Australian bullies than any visionary leadership by David Lange, the Prime Minister who gets the credit.

I can attest that this foreign bullying backfired, from the experience of my own family. My late father was no supporter of either Labour or David Lange. He voted National at every election from 1960 until 1996 inclusive and routinely referred to Lange as "that fat bastard". But he was outraged by the attempts by Reagan and Hawke to bully NZ back into line. The old man's view was summed up as: "I didn't vote for this Government or this nuclear free policy, but it is the democratically expressed wish of the New Zealand people, so outsiders must accept that and respect our decision".

Hawke may have failed to stop NZ going nuclear free but he, and his Minister of Defence bully boy, Kim Beazley, did succeed in pressuring Lange's government to commit New Zealand to the cripplingly expensive Anzac frigates, despite overwhelming public opposition. They were painfully keen not to be seen as soft on defence.

And, of course, it was that same "nuclear free" Lange government that approved the Waihopai spy base which, to this day, constitutes NZ's single most important contribution to the US military/intelligence alliance. Bob Hawke epitomised the bullying Aussie bullshit artist, doing the dirty work of the biggest bully, the US. He was no friend of the New Zealand people, let alone the Australian people. ■

PEACE RESEARCHER WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

Peace Researcher is published by the Anti-Bases Campaign. The Editor is Murray Horton; the Layout Editor is Becky Horton. It covers a range of peace issues with emphasis on foreign military bases and intelligence topics. Contributed articles will be considered for publication based on subject matter and space requirements. We are particularly interested in reports of original research on peace topics in Aotearoa and the wider region of Australasia and the Pacific. We welcome your feedback and constructive suggestions on how we can improve.

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You can read *Peace Researcher* online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You Won't Be Able To Pay Your ABC Sub By Cheque After February 2020

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) banks with Kiwibank, which has announced that, after February 28, 2020, it is completely quitting cheques. Meaning that it won't accept deposits of cheques from any bank (including its own) after that date. **Therefore, to pay your ABC sub, make a donation, register for a Waihopai protest, etc – you will have to make the payment online by Internet banking.**

Our bank account details are:

**ABC
Kiwibank
7 Waterloo Quay, Wellington
389000 0619007 00**

Please include your name and "Sub" or "Sub and Donation" or "Waihopai registration" as references so that we can identify your payment, and please email abc@chch.planet.org.nz when the deposit has been made so that we know to look out for it.

If you wish to make a donation to the separate CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account (which exists solely to provide Murray Horton's income), you will not be able to do it with a Kiwibank cheque after February 28, 2020. Cheques from any other bank are fine – the Organiser Account is with Westpac, which still accepts cheques (so far).

Online donations can be made to:

**CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account
Westpac, Sydenham Branch, Christchurch.
030866-0300063-00.**

You can, of course, send us cash through the mail (some people do, including from overseas) but you do so entirely at your own risk. It is not something to be encouraged. ■

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