

Journal of the Anti-Bases Campaign

November 2020

Number 60



A DEAFENING SILENCE

In this issue:

Rocket Lab; RIMPAC; Operation Burnham Inquiry; Killer Robots; Spies; Geopolitics; "Islands Of The Empire" Update; Jeanette Fitzsimons' Obituary

In this issue ...

- 2 A Deafening Silence On Foreign Policy, Defence & Intelligence *by Murray Horton*
- 4 Rocket Lab Drags NZ Into US Militarisation Of Space *by Murray Horton*
- 8 Cancel RIMPAC Coalition Report *by Liz Remmerswaal*
- 9 Operation Burnham Inquiry Report. Most Serious Findings Against SAS And NZDF In Their History *by Nicky Hager*
- 12 Inspector-General Of Intelligence & Security Report. Intelligence Agencies Also Failed To Follow Up Civilian Casualty And Torture Reports *by Nicky Hager*
- 14 Killer Robots. Growing Support For Ban, But NZ's Stance Remains Weak *by Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots*
- 15 Hiroshima & Nagasaki Commemorations *by Marcus Coll & Liz Remmerswaal*
- 16 **Spooky Bits** *by Warren Thomson*
- 22 Geopolitical Competition & The Challenges For Our Future *by Dennis Small*
- 39 "Islands Of The Empire" Update & Premiere Again A Generation Later *by Murray Horton*

Reviews *by Jeremy Agar*

- 41 "Islands Of The Empire" A Documentary by Vanguard Films
- 44 "Fascists Among Us: Online Hate And The Christchurch Massacre" by Jeff Sparrow

Obituary *by Murray Horton & Catherine Delahunty*

- 46 Jeanette Fitzsimons
- 50 "The 5th Eye" Now Online
- 51 CA/CA/ABC Organiser Account. Financial Report For Year Ended 31 March 2020 *by James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer*
- 52 Important Notice: You Can No Longer Pay Your ABC Sub By Cheque

NOTE: Everything in this issue was written before the 2020 NZ & US elections. *Ed.*

Cover: *Graphic by Ian Dalziel.*

Published by

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC)
PO Box 2258, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand
abc@chch.planet.org.nz
<https://www.converge.org.nz/abc>
<https://www.facebook.com/AotearoaABC>

A DEAFENING SILENCE

On Foreign Policy, Defence & Intelligence

By Murray Horton

It was when I recently watched the updated DVD of the classic documentary "Islands Of The Empire" in 2020 that I was reminded that 1980s' elections featured foreign policy and defence policy as major issues as a matter of course (see elsewhere in this issue for Jeremy Agar's review of "Islands" and my article about that film). In those days, of course, the issue was New Zealand going nuclear free and, as a direct consequence, getting kicked out of ANZUS. Those were major issues in both the 1984 and 1987 elections.

But you don't have to go back to the 80s to find such examples. It's only two elections ago (in 2014) that revelations about the true extent of New Zealand's involvement in Five Eyes and the US-led global covert empire of intelligence were front and centre. As I wrote in *Peace Researcher* 48 (November 2014): "Let's just marvel at the fact that Anti-Bases Campaign's core issue – NZ's involvement in the Five Eyes global electronic spying network, courtesy of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and the Waihopai spy base – was suddenly front and centre in the election campaign and completely dominated the media for several days".

"That has never happened in any previous election campaign and you have to go back to 1987 to find an election where foreign policy was the major issue (that was the election where National unsuccessfully campaigned to reverse Labour's nuclear free policy). And this completely unique state of affairs was brought to us by a line-up of global A listers in the field of intelligence revelations. For a brief time, NZ was in the international spotlight in the continuing fallout from the (Edward) Snowden revelations" (you can read my full article – "Opening The Curtains: Spies & Their Political Mouthpieces Blinking In Unaccustomed Daylight" - at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr48.pdf>).

However, the subject was completely dropped as soon as that 2014 election was over. And it was not mentioned in either the 2017 or 2020 election campaigns. By any party. A lack of public discussion on intelligence matters can be explained away by the fact that spy agencies operate in secret (although that is certainly not a justification for them not to be subject to public scrutiny and discussion. They are public servants, funded by taxpayers, and acting in our name).

But that deafening silence also extends to the much more public realms of defence and foreign policy. Once again, nothing was heard about those in either the 2017 or 2020 election campaigns. For the period 2017-20, we have had a Prime Minister who regularly and soothingly says: "New Zealand has an independent foreign policy", when that is patently not true. New Zealand has a foreign policy now that is no more "independent" than it has been in decades.

More Pro-US & Pro-Military Than National

To quote myself again: "Indeed, under the influence of Coalition partner, New Zealand First and its key Ministers, Winston Peters (Deputy PM & Foreign Affairs) and Ron Mark (Defence), this Government has become more pro-American and pro-military than its National predecessor. The 2008-17 Key-English government had sniffed the imperial wind and realised that new boots needed to be licked, meaning that National got into bed with the new emperor – China – while still trying to have a dollar each way with the old one (the US). But Labour/New Zealand First still prefer to snuggle up under the increasingly tattered and bedraggled Stars and Stripes".

"Meaning that serious money gets spent to keep our old imperial masters happy. The lead article in *PR* 56 (November 2018, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr56.pdf>) was Keith Locke's "NZ Creeping



Deborah Williams with NZ "Defence" Budgets placard, Waihopai spy base protest, January 2020.

More Into The Embrace Of The US Military" and highlighted Ron Mark announcing the spending of \$2.3 billion to buy four P8 Poseidon anti-submarine warfare aircraft from giant US transnational corporation Boeing" ("What A Waste Of Bloody Money! Time To Reset Priorities", PR 59, June 2020, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR59.pdf>).

It is not only the likes of ABC and *Peace Researcher* that are noticing this deafening silence on foreign policy, defence and intelligence. Elsewhere in this issue I have written an article entitled "Rocket Lab Drags NZ Into US Militarisation Of Space". In connection with the increasing involvement of the NZ military with US space warfare projects, that article includes a quote from Paul Buchanan, an independent NZ security expert.

"Buchanan says a lack of public debate is the main problem with NZ's integration into US military space activities. 'Once again, on a matter of national security of some importance, the public is basically left in the dark. In fact, the politicians by and large are left in the dark. We're having no debate about this in Parliament. We're allied for all intents

and purposes with our Five Eyes partners across a range of intelligence gathering and war related things".

"Where do we want to go with this? Do we use our participation in space activity as a substitute for participation in ground deployments by our troops? Is that a trade-off that we could actually negotiate? Or are we now involved in space but we're still going to be doing the bidding of the United States and the Australians when it comes to foreign conflicts?" (Buchanan was quoted in the *Spinoff*, 14/1/20, "Revealed: New Zealand's Role In The New American War-Fighting Frontier – Space", Ollie Neas, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/members/14-01-2020/revealed-new-zealands-role-in-the-new-american-war-fighting-frontier-space/>).

Silence Carefully & Deliberately Cultivated

This deafening silence is not an oversight or even brought about by benign neglect. It is carefully and deliberately cultivated, to conceal the status quo, which is very far from the fond illusions that Kiwis may have about "clean, green and nuclear free New Zealand", with its "independent foreign policy". My

above cited article in PR 59 (June 2020, "What A Waste Of Bloody Money! Time To Reset Priorities") focussed on NZ's military spending.

Peace Movement Aotearoa analysed the 2020 Budget ("Welfare Or Warfare? Military Spending In Budget 2020"): "Military spending in the 2020 'Rebuilding Together' Budget is a total of \$4,621,354,000 - that is an average of more than \$88.8 million every week... While this is a small decrease when compared with the record amount of military spending allocated in Budget 2019, it does not go far enough. This year's allocation shows that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government still has the same old thinking about 'security' - a focus on outdated narrow military security concepts rather than real security that meets the needs of all New Zealanders".

To again quote Paul Buchanan, from the above cited *Spinoff* article: "We're not encumbered by - how could I put it nicely - the political oversight of the military in the way that the other Anglophone nations are. The military pretty much decides where it's going to go over the next 10 to 20 years. It's clearly decided that it wants to be a mini-me to the US Special Operations Command, at least in terms of the NZ Special Air Service (SAS) and the Americans are happy to accommodate them". What happens when there is no oversight of the SAS is detailed elsewhere in this issue, in Nicky Hager's article "Operation Burnham Inquiry Report: Most Serious Findings Against SAS And NZDF In Their History".

In 2020 New Zealand was one of the few countries to persist in continuing to participate in RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific), the US Navy's war training exercise in and around Hawai'i. More countries withdrew their warships and military personnel from the exercise (because of the pandemic) than took part in it. New Zealand was in that minority.

To quote again from my Rocket Lab article, elsewhere in this issue: (in late 2019, the Government) "released updated rules on what can be sent into space from NZ. Payloads that contribute to nuclear weapons programmes or capabilities are banned. Rocket Lab has never been involved with nuclear weapons, so that won't affect it. The rules also prohibit 'payloads with the intended

end use of supporting or enabling specific defence, security or intelligence operations that are contrary to Government policy”.

“But as NZ is an active defence, security and intelligence partner of the US, and Rocket Lab is an American company, this is meaningless. Rocket Lab is working for US defence and intelligence agencies, which is in line with Government policy. But the NZDF wants to develop the capability to launch satellite payloads itself, including US military ones”.

“A heavily redacted 2018 briefing paper to Winston Peters, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said: ‘New Zealand government endorsement of these payloads represents a tangible contribution to the broader Five Eyes intelligence network, a network from which we are primarily a recipient’”. To quote Buchanan again: “The NZDF wants to be completely interoperable with the US”.

Time To Shatter The Cone Of Silence

The powers that be are acutely aware of the potential for public op-

position and protest if the New Zealand people find out too much about the reality of this country’s foreign policy and defence policy and intelligence links. “In the May 2017 briefing to (National Minister Simon) Bridges, the (Government’s) NZ Space Agency suggested the Government should convey to the US that it was pleased the new space industry ‘will enable us to broaden and deepen our security collaboration’. Bridges was also advised that one of the risks was the reaction of the New Zealand public”.

“Certain groups are opposed to New Zealand’s security relationship with the US, and it is possible that such groups would be motivated to disrupt launches if they were aware that US government security payloads were being launched from New Zealand,” the briefing says. ...‘Even a single protestor could have a disproportionate effect on space launch activities from New Zealand’, one briefing says. This risk can be managed, but only to an extent” (“‘She’ll Be Right’ Attitude To Rocket Lab Putting Nuclear Free NZ At Risk, Experts Say”, [https://the](https://the-spinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/)

[spinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/](https://the-spinoff.co.nz/business/17-05-2019/shell-be-right-attitude-to-rocket-lab-putting-nuclear-free-nz-at-risk-experts-say/), *Spinoff*, Ollie Neas, 17/05/19).

This cone of silence applies not only to Rocket Lab but to the whole spectrum of foreign policy, defence policy and intelligence links. I started this article by referencing the classic 1980s’ documentary “Islands Of The Empire”. The 80s had some great quotes – “I can smell the uranium on your breath”; “an orchestrated litany of lies”.

Here’s another one: “We have maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity”, which was a slogan left at the scene (the Wanganui Computer Centre, 1982) by New Zealand’s very own suicide bomber, anarchist Neil Roberts. This needs to be adapted to match today’s reality – we have been maintained in a silence, but not one that closely resembles stupidity. It is a silence that is perpetrated by official cunning. Time to shatter the cone of silence. ■

ROCKET LAB

Drags NZ Into US Militarisation Of Space

By Murray Horton

In *Peace Researcher* 58 (November 2019, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR58.pdf>) I wrote the lead article: “Time To Recognise Rocket Lab For What It Is. A US Facility For The US Military & Spies On NZ Soil”. On the cover we labelled it “A New US Base In NZ”. That article brought together what we knew about Rocket Lab, drawing heavily on the work of NZ investigative journalist Ollie Neas and our very own Dennis Small.

Rocket Lab is cashing in on the US Empire’s mania to dominate not only the planet but also space. Donald Trump’s contribution to this

extra-terrestrial imperialism has been to create Space Force as a new branch of the US military (see “America Really Does Have A Space Force. We Went Inside To See What it Does”, *Time*, 23/7/20, <https://time.com/5869987/spaceforce/>).

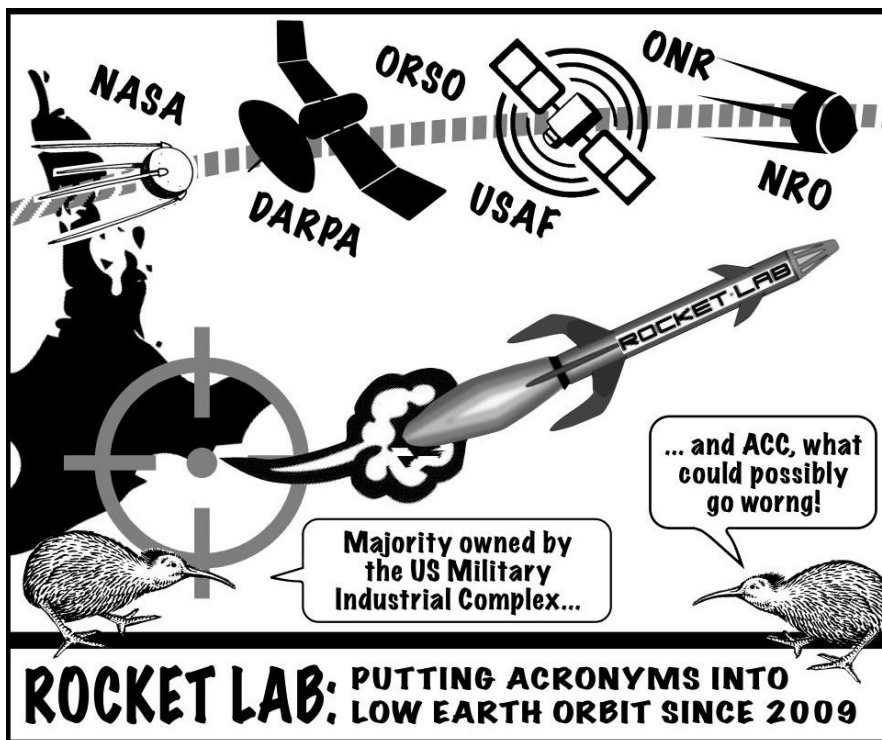
Newest Director: CIA, Laser Weapons, Space Militarisation

If there was any doubt that Rocket Lab is simply an American-owned contractor for the US military/intelligence empire, further proof came in September 2020 with the revelation that: “Rocket Lab’s new Board member headed the CIA’s venture capital firm and is a proponent of deploying high-powered laser weapons in space. Michael Griffin, who was until recently an Under-Secretary of Defense in the Trump Administration, was welcomed onto the Board of the aerospace and small satellite company in August...In the 1980s he held a senior role in then-President Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defence Initiative ballistic missile defence programme (“*Star Wars*”. *Ed*), and later headed NASA”.

“Griffin also once served as the President of In-Q-Tel, which he described in a 2013 NASA oral history as the venture capital fund of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). ‘I was running what was essentially a technical venture capital fund whose purpose was to make products and services available to the intelligence community’, he said”.

“In 2016, Rocket Lab Chief Executive Beck was among the speakers at a summit for chief executives of companies associated with In-Q-Tel. A programme from the summit indicated Rocket Lab was among the firm’s portfolio companies at the time. Rocket Lab is not currently listed as a portfolio company on In-Q-Tel’s Website. A Rocket Lab spokeswoman would not say whether the company remained on In-Q-Tel’s books. Nor would the company disclose how much money it had received or what products it had developed for the spy agency venture capital firm”.

“Griffin appeared at a 2019 summit focussed on directed energy weapons – which include lasers,



Graphic by Ian Dalziel. NASA-National Aeronautics and Space Administration; DARPA-Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; ORSO-Operationally Responsive Space Office; ONR-Office of Naval Research; NRO-National Reconnaissance Office; USAF-United States Air Force; ACC-Accident Compensation Corporation

microwaves and particle beams – hosted by US consulting giant Booz Allen Hamilton...He was described in the *New York Times* as an ‘unabashed defender of American military and political supremacy’ and is also a proponent of hypersonic missiles” (*Stuff*, 18/9/20, “Rocket Lab’s New Hire Has Roots In the CIA, Laser Weapons And Space Militarisation”, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300102583/rocket-labs-new-hire-has-roots-in-the-cia-laser-weapons-and-space-militarisation>).

The Government Is Being Very Obliging

In the year since my original article, Rocket Lab has kept on doing what it does, as an American company operating out of New Zealand (Auckland and Mahia Peninsula) launching – among others – satellites for the US military and intelligence agencies. Some of its payloads are classified (one such 2019 payload was revealed, in 2020, to have been for the Mexican military – Rocket Lab’s first military customer outside of the US). This article updates the story as of late 2020.

Rocket Lab is expanding rapidly. In December 2019 it announced that it had started constructing a second launch pad on the Mahia Peninsula,

as it works towards its goal of wanting to launch rockets on a weekly basis (it is also working towards having a US launch site, in Virginia. The first scheduled launch from there will be in partnership with the US Space Force).

That same month it released updated rules on what can be sent into space from NZ. Payloads that contribute to nuclear weapons programmes or capabilities are banned. Rocket Lab has never been involved with nuclear weapons, so that won’t affect it. The rules also prohibit “payloads with the intended end use of supporting or enabling specific defence, security or intelligence operations that are contrary to Government policy”.

But as NZ is an active defence, security and intelligence partner of the US, and Rocket Lab is an American company, this is meaningless. Rocket Lab is working for US defence and intelligence agencies, which is in line with Government policy. Phil Twyford, the Economic Development Minister, said that Rocket Lab’s earlier launches of US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) payloads would have been fine under these “beefed-up” rules. So, business as

usual.

Shortly thereafter, in January 2020, Rocket Lab announced that it would launch a satellite for the US National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), the military agency in charge of American spy satellites. Minister Twyford approved it – to their credit, the Greens expressed concerns. Peter Crabtree, the head of the NZ Space Agency, explicitly spelled out the politics - payloads have to meet a series of tests, including “our national security and wider national interest... New Zealand has a deep and long-standing security relationship with the US government and a history of collaboration across a range of issues” (*NZ Herald*, 22/1/20, “Greens ‘Concerned’ About Rocket Lab Launch For US Spy Agency”).

Government support for Rocket Lab extends to using taxpayers’ money to facilitate its operations. In February 2020 it was announced that the Provincial Growth Fund (one of the major trophies won by Labour’s Coalition partner, New Zealand First) would spend \$8 million on upgrading Mahia Peninsula roads, including \$1m on sealing the 4 km private road that leads to Rocket Lab’s launch site.

NZ’s First’s Fletcher Tabuteau, Undersecretary for Regional Economic Development, said “...these roading upgrades will enable them (Rocket Lab) to safely transport equipment, as well as allow for further development” (*Press*, 26/2/20, “Taxpayers Fund Rocket Road”). During Level 4 lockdown, the Government granted exemptions for 26 overseas workers to enter NZ to help Rocket Lab launch rockets.

Setbacks

Rocket Lab suffered a setback in July 2020 when its \$11.5 million Electron rocket burned up in space, along with its payload of commercial satellites. If you’re superstitious, then you won’t be surprised that this was its 13th launch. It was the first loss of a rocket but not its first setback. In its late 2019 launch window it launched one satellite whose sole purpose was to rain down artificial “shooting stars” into the night sky. “The satellite is owned by Japanese company ALE, whose goal was described by the (UK) *Sun* in January (2019) as being to ‘wow the world’s mega-rich with dazzling light displays” (*Press*, 7/11/19, “Shooting Star’ Shows Get Space Agency

Approval”, Tom Pullar-Strecker).

After all, why should the “mega-rich” have to wait for the universe to supply them with shooting stars, when they can buy their own cosmic light show? Rocket Lab is happy to play its profitable part in pandering to their whims. So, Rocket Lab is working for the one-percenters who, literally, have money to burn. There was speculation that the satellite was scheduled to put on a celestial light show over the opening ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (which have been postponed to 2021, due to the pandemic). But this monumental hubris came to nought when the satellite malfunctioned and couldn't release its “shooting stars”. Cry me a river.

From the outset, in 2006, Rocket Lab has been treated with kid gloves by a mainstream media bedazzled by stardust. “Little old New Zealand goes into space” has been the predominant theme, ignoring the inconvenient reality that Rocket Lab is an American company, with the world's biggest weapons manufacturer (Lockheed Martin) as its' main owner, and that it uses “nuclear free, out of ANZUS” New Zealand to continually launch payloads for US military and spy agency clients.

“We're About Science, We're Not About Killing People” Yeah, Right 2020 saw a slightly more critical approach taken, in at least one mainstream feature (*Press*, 28/7/20, “Rocket Lab Defends Spy Role”, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/300063842/rocket-lab-peter-beck-defends-spy-satellite-work-exdirector-speaks-of-leaving>). “In a 2008 profile published in *Metro* magazine, (Chief Executive Officer and founder) Peter Beck ruled out military work when discussing if there were payloads Rocket Lab wouldn't carry”.

“Of course, ...we said right from the beginning if it's involved in the military, we don't want anything to do with it. The military can be quite a tempting cherry because a lot of money gets poured into it, but we're about science, we're not about killing people”, Beck is quoted as saying. His views have evolved, and he now believes military intelligence helps keep Kiwis safe”.

“...Beck had a very different reply from 2008 when asked if he had any qualms about sending US spy satellites into space, given the intelli-

gence they collect can be used in military operations. ‘You also have to remember that intelligence keeps us safe. Unfortunately, there's a lot of bad actors in the world.’

‘I am a New Zealander, but you also have to understand that national security is a global thing. It's not a singular country's responsibility. New Zealand is part of the Five Eyes... it's all very well to criticise national security until the very day that you need it”.

That same feature interviewed fellow founder Mark Rocket (who, as a true enthusiast, had changed his name by deed poll). He left Rocket Lab in 2011. “So, why did he leave? ‘Initially we were hoping not to do ... certain types of projects, he said. ‘There were a few projects that I wasn't so keen on’. It was difficult to find customers in those early years, he said. ‘In the end we had to kind of move towards different areas, which wasn't part of the original plan”.

“He would not say exactly what projects led to his departure the year after the early DARPA contract. ‘I'd rather not say, but initially we were aiming for more commercial applications. But the reality is ... it made sense for Rocket Lab to do some stepping stone projects. And that's gone on to work incredibly well for Rocket Lab’. Rocket said it made perfect business sense for the company to work on a range of projects. ‘But I wasn't passionate about that, I was passionate about the commercial side. You've got to sort of work out where that line is for you”.

Moon Mining?

In addition to the work for the US military and spy agencies, other opportunities could present themselves for Rocket Lab. The *Press* (27/12/19) ran a fascinating article with the alarming headline “Moon Mining: The New ‘Wild West””. It detailed the drive by various states and private companies to work towards mining the Moon and asteroids for minerals. It quoted Dr Anna Marie Brennan, a Waikato University senior law lecturer.

“Brennan said there were also opportunities for New Zealand, which was an attractive place for a launch pad because its geographical location meant there was less air traffic for rockets to contend with. ‘It would

be a lot easier to launch missions from New Zealand, so I think New Zealand has, in the future, a great opportunity here to capitalise on this. But, again, there needs to be an open discussion and debate about the extent to which New Zealand wants to engage in the space race”.

Because of its geographical location, New Zealand is proving attractive for other space industry companies. “American company LeoLabs has built a radar in Otago to detect small orbital debris, along with other radars in Texas and Alaska, and soon in Costa Rica” (*Press*, 14/9/20, “NZ's Pole Position In Space”. LeoLab's customers include the US Air Force. Leo = Low Earth Orbit).

NZ Military Busting To Get Involved In US Space Warfare

New Zealand's increasing involvement in the American use of space for spying and warfighting does not only involve Rocket Lab (which is a private and foreign company). The New Zealand State is officially involved. The *Spinoff* published a fascinating article by Ollie Neas entitled “Revealed: New Zealand's Role In The New American War-Fighting Frontier – Space” (14/1/20, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/members/14-01-2020/revealed-new-zealands-role-in-the-new-american-war-fighting-frontier-space/>).

This detailed how the NZ military has, in recent years, become involved in an annual US military war game set in space. NZ is getting progressively involved with the US Combined Forces Command and its Combined Space Operations Center. This was formalised at an October 2015 meeting in Wellington of Five Eyes officials (the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ electronic intelligence sharing agreement). The Combined Space Operations Center (CSpOC) was launched, in the US. NZ is yet to station any personnel at it and doesn't yet have its' own space operations centre.

“Completely Interoperable With US”

The article quotes independent NZ security expert, Paul Buchanan. “NZ Defence Force's partner countries are all headed into space. We have to understand that the NZDF, which is so wrapped up in US-led military security alliances – if not by name, certainly by fact – joins its partners



Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck with PM Jacinda Ardern

in trying to do the same. The NZDF wants to be completely interoperable with the US”.

“We’re not encumbered by – how could I put it nicely – the political oversight of the military in the way that the other Anglophone nations are. The military pretty much decides where it’s going to go over the next 10 to 20 years. It’s clearly decided that it wants to be a mini-me to the US Special Operations Command, at least in terms of the NZ Special Air Service (SAS) and the Americans are happy to accommodate them”.

“In 2015 the NZDF’s research and development wing, the Defence Technology Agency, began developing an experimental ground station as part of ‘a command and control network’, with other countries in partnership with the US Naval Postgraduate School... The station, located on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula north of Auckland, was tested in 2016 with two cube satellites launched as part of a mission sponsored by the US National Reconnaissance Office” (one of Rocket Lab’s clients).

The article details other NZDF links to the US military’s use of space. For example: “New Zealand also has ground stations in Auckland and (RNZAF base) Ohakea to support the NZDF’s use of the Wideband Global Satellite system – a US military communications network to

which New Zealand purchased access in 2012”.

And then, of course, there is Rocket Lab. “The (Air Force) has a close working relationship with Rocket Lab and we have a few staff revolving through their projects, particularly in the avionics area’, the Chief of the Air Force told *Line of Defence* magazine in 2018. ‘We offer Rocket Lab access to our facilities and I see some really exciting possibilities here”.

But the NZDF wants to develop the capability to launch satellite payloads itself, including US military ones. A heavily redacted 2018 briefing paper to Winston Peters, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said: “New Zealand government endorsement of these payloads represents a tangible contribution to the broader Five Eyes intelligence network, a network from which we are primarily a recipient”.

The article quotes a 2017 briefing to the Minister for Economic Development (who was then Simon Bridges): “The Defence Act allows a foreign force to undertake operational activities in New Zealand, where permission has been granted and activities comply with domestic law and our international obligations. Therefore, a foreign military in New Zealand to launch an Earth observation satellite and use the imagery to contribute to joint counter-proliferation efforts could be exempt,

providing permission has been granted”.

The reference to “exempt” refers to the Government’s 2019 guidelines which rule out launches from NZ “with the intended end use of supporting or enabling specific defence, security or intelligence operations that are contrary to Government policy”. But “both the NZDF and friendly foreign militaries are exempt from NZ’s launch approval regime”.

Paul Buchanan has the last say in the *Spinoff* article. “Buchanan says a lack of public debate is the main problem with NZ’s integration into US military space activities. ‘Once again, on a matter of national security of some importance, the public is basically left in the dark. In fact, the politicians by and large are left in the dark. We’re having no debate about this in Parliament. We’re allied for all intents and purposes with our Five Eyes partners across a range of intelligence gathering and war related things”.

“Where do we want to go with this? Do we use our participation in space activity as a substitute for participation in ground deployments by our troops? Is that a trade-off that we could actually negotiate? Or are we now involved in space but we’re still going to be doing the bidding of the United States and the Australians when it comes to foreign conflicts?”.

NZ Is An Accomplice

Rocket Lab, as an NZ base of the US military and intelligence agencies, is dragging this country into the American militarisation of space. It is the most high-profile NZ manifestation of this but it is not alone, being joined by the Government (whether headed by either National or Labour) and the NZ military, backed by a cheerleading mainstream media and a total absence of public discussion on this subject and where it fits into NZ’s broader foreign policy, military and intelligence ties. It makes NZ an accomplice, willingly or unknowingly, in imperialist warmongering. To borrow the catchphrase from an old TV commercial – we’re soaking in it. ■

CANCEL RIMPAC COALITION REPORT

By Liz Remmerswaal

National Director, World BEYOND War Aotearoa/New Zealand/Board member, World Beyond War, NZ Coordinator of Pacific Peace Network.

Despite a global pandemic and a pan-Pacific campaign against it, the 27th biennial RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific) war games exercise took place in August 2020 in Hawaiian waters, although for a shorter duration and with a much-depleted lineup of countries. Because of the coronavirus only ten countries took part compared to 26 two years previously, with only 22 ships and 5300 troops compared to 26,000 troops last time.

However, New Zealand was one of the few countries that didn't pull out, sending HMNZS Manawanui, a hydrographic dive vessel with 66 personnel on board for the "at sea only" exercises led by the US Navy. Concerns have been expressed that the seismic survey work this vessel does can damage marine mammal life. The Hawaiian based Cancel RIMPAC Coalition, made up of activists, environmental groups and concerned community members around the Pacific, was set up to campaign against the increased militarism and environmental damage caused by RIMPAC and for endangering Hawaiian people.

Campaigning During Lockdown

A group in Aotearoa led by Valerie Morse opposing RIMPAC was also created during Level 4 lockdown and saw lots of action online as well as a day of actions around the country which were shared on social media. There was a lot of education to do about RIMPAC as most people aren't aware of it, and video footage was a useful way of showing the impact. The Hawaiian coalition hosted several Webinars with a focus on creative arts activities and poetry videos and also an online petition, and an emphasis on working internationally with groups

such as Veterans for Peace and Code Pink internationally and developing the network.

In Aotearoa there was also some good media coverage from Radio NZ, Maori TV, the *NZ Herald* and *The Spinoff*, some featuring Hawaiian academic Dr Emalani Case from Victoria University of Wellington, sharing her personal story of growing up near the Pohakuloa Training Area, one of the locations where RIMPAC exercises commonly take place.

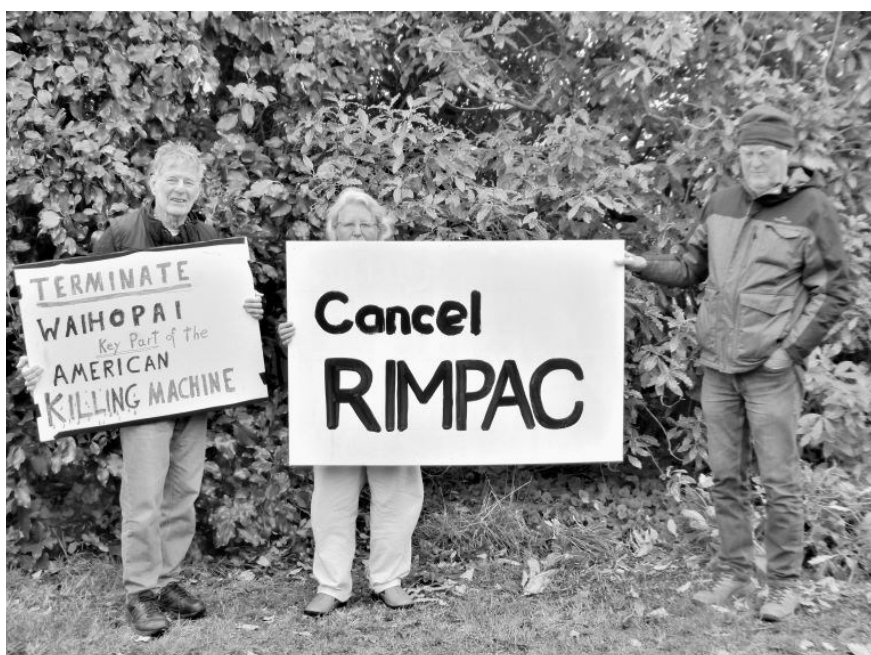
Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) Coordinator Annette Brownlie says the Coalition showed the importance of working together in opposing military exercises and the damage they do. She hopes the Coalition will work together on future campaigns such as the biennial Talisman Sabre exercises in North Queensland which endanger the Great Barrier Reef. Making the connection between the climate movement, the peace movement and indigenous sovereignty she says is particularly important, while noting the creation of the fledgling Pacific Peace Network in conjunction with World Beyond War Aotearoa who together hosted an international Webinar on RIMPAC.

Hawaiian activist Kyle Kajhiro says the Coalition appreciated the involvement of the *Golden Rule* peace boat which in 1958 sailed to the

Marshall Islands during the beginning of direct action by boats which helped end atmospheric nuclear testing there. He says the Covid lockdown also forced activists to be ingenious doing such things as car protests involving over 80 cars, and banner drops in high traffic locations. Locals in Hawai'i were pleased to see that the scaled down RIMPAC exercises without the amphibious training component had the beneficial effect of enabling the Honu green sea turtles to nest again without being disturbed.

The Cancel RIMPAC Coalition has started a new campaign called Koa Futures which is about heading in a positive direction while recognising that the US military is currently using large areas of land in countries such as Guahan (Guam), Okinawa and Jeju Island, South Korea, as well as Hawai'i, whose communities have also been resisting the US military occupation for many years. It will continue to protest against RIMPAC in two years' time and hopes others will join.

This article refers to information used with permission from the Cancel RIMPAC Coalition Webinar: "Koa Futures: A Demilitarized Pacific Future" (20/9/20) and which can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/CancelRIMPAC/videos/1029672084136123> ■



ABC Committee. From left: Warren Thomson, Robyn Dann, Murray Horton. Photo by Dot Lovell-Smith

OPERATION BURNHAM

INQUIRY REPORT

Most Serious Findings Against SAS And NZDF In Their History

By Nicky Hager

The Operation Burnham Inquiry Report (*released at the end of July 2020. Ed.*), concludes that a child was killed and other civilians were injured during Operation Burnham in Afghanistan in 2010, and that NZSAS (Special Air Service) officers denied and hid evidence of the civilian casualties. It finds a prisoner was handed over to torture and the same prisoner was assaulted by an NZSAS trooper. Thus, after nearly ten years of denials, the Inquiry has confirmed the main allegations in the book "Hit & Run" (*reviewed by Jeremy Agar in Peace Researcher 53, June 2017, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr53.pdf>. Ed.*).

The Report says the book has "performed a valuable public service". The Report goes further than the book and finds that named SAS officers hid and denied evidence of civilian casualties following Operation Burnham (see below). The Report contains the most serious findings against the NZSAS and NZDF in their history. This should prompt a lot of soul searching inside the New Zealand Defence Force.

The Report also recommends major changes to NZDF. This is a huge achievement. It is very important that New Zealand is prepared to investigate wrongful actions by its military, thoroughly and independently. The Operation Burnham Inquiry has done that. I welcome the findings and recommendations. I thank the Commissioners and their staff for two years of hard work. I am very pleased. This is a tremendously important result.

At the same time, the public should know that the Inquiry process was highly unequal. NZDF and other Government agencies spent millions of dollars of public money trying to deny any wrongdoing, while the authors (*Nicky Hager & Jon Stephenson. Ed.*) and public were not allowed to analyse and contest the

agencies' secret submissions and evidence. Military officers were repeatedly given the benefit of the doubt; but not so the villagers.

However, this makes it all the more significant that the Inquiry has confirmed the main allegations in the book. Moreover, the Government has accepted the Report's recommendations, which is very important. These changes will strengthen civilian control of the military in the years ahead. The Report confirms most key allegations in the book. It....

Confirms civilians were killed and injured (and did not reach a decision for most other deaths whether or not they were civilians).

Confirms a child was killed (I and the Inquiry differ over whether there is "sufficient evidence" to be sure she was called Fatima).

Confirms that reports of civilian casualties were denied and hidden by named SAS officers.

Confirms NZDF did not give aid to the wounded (I and the Inquiry differ on whether it was legally obliged to do so).

Confirms the NZDF mission failed in its objective; the troops did not capture or kill either of the insurgent leaders they were seeking.

Confirms NZDF failed to investigate civilian casualties.

Confirms no weapons were fired at the NZ-led forces at any stage of the operation.

Confirms that, contrary to NZDF claims, the raid occurred in the two villages named in the book, Naik and Khak Khuday Dad.

Confirms that both target houses were burned during the raid, and one of them was further damaged at

a later date (however, I and the Inquiry disagree over whether this was deliberate).

Confirms the NZSAS breached the Geneva Conventions by handing over a prisoner to torture.

Confirms an NZSAS trooper assaulted a prisoner while bound and blindfolded, again breaching the Geneva Conventions.

Confirms Ministers were misled by NZDF.

Finds the NZDF response to reports of civilian casualties was "deeply troubling", reflecting conduct and events over a number of years.

Finds a "surprising level of ineptitude and disorganisation within NZDF Headquarters".

This is an extremely serious list of findings.

Severe Criticism Of SAS Officers For Hiding And Denying Civilian Casualties

Four former Commanding Officers of the NZSAS are found to have acted improperly. This is unprecedented. The officers are:

1. Brigadier Chris Parsons (NZ SAS Commanding Officer 2010): when he sent a "seriously misleading" email from Afghanistan saying that there was no evidence of civilian casualties, his position was "implausible", "fundamentally inconsistent" with what he knew, it was a "serious failure", and "unreasonable and unacceptable". He directed a subordinate to remove words from a report that acknowledged civilian casualties. His actions were "inexcusable" and the Commissioners said "we do not accept his denial". Parsons quietly left his job as New Zealand's Defence Attaché to London after the draft Inquiry Report was circulated.

2. Peter Kelly (NZSAS Commanding Officer 2004-6, Director of Special Operations 2009-11) produced a Ministerial briefing paper denying civilian casualties that was "inaccurate in fundamental respects" and "misleading", despite it being "contradicted by other information available to NZDF, including video footage, intelligence reporting and International Security Assistance Force's own media releases".

He told the Inquiry he was unaware of a second US civilian casualty investigation but his own email shows he knew about it.

3. Jim Blackwell (NZSAS Commanding Officer 2006-9, Director of Special Operations 2011-15):

The Inquiry members “do not accept his account” of how he obtained a report on civilian casualties that he quietly deposited in an NZDF safe. They do not believe him when he said he had told other NZDF officers about the report. They were “concerned” that he “failed to mention in his evidence that he visited Afghanistan”. He appears to have misled the Inquiry.

4. Tim Keating (NZSAS Commanding Officer until 2001 and Chief of Defence Force 2014-18):

His claims publicly and to Ministers that “Hit & Run” was not about an operation NZDF conducted were “implausible” and “ignored, unfairly, what was accurate in the book”. Keating had “erred in giving the prominence he did to the location errors in ‘Hit & Run’ and not acknowledging that the book was accurate in important respects”. The Report adopts the names of the villages used in the book as the location of Operation Burnham, contradicting Keating.

Chapters 8 and 9 on the “cover up” are deeply embarrassing for the NZSAS and NZDF. This includes finding that someone in the SAS had deleted a video of the child’s funeral off the SAS computer system (see “Other Important Parts Of The Report” below). NZDF lobbied the Inquiry recently with an “expert opinion” trying to disprove that the funeral video showed the wrapped corpse of a child. This gives the public a picture of the way NZDF has fought the Inquiry from beginning to end.

Disputing a dead child, who had already been conceded by the Chief of Defence Force, is astonishingly bad taste. It seems the Inquiry thought so as well: it restated its opinion that the video showed a child and asked why NZDF had not done “this style of forensic analysis” immediately after Operation Burnham (i.e. to investigate the reports of a dead child). We get an unattractive snapshot of NZDF, just in recent months, using yet more public money to try to deny the child was killed. I doubt many NZDF staff

will be impressed by this behaviour.

Errors In The Book Accepted

The Inquiry Report acknowledges the difficulty of researching the long-hidden subject and unsurprisingly finds some errors in the book relating to Operation Burnham. I agreed with the Inquiry about various errors identified, including acknowledging that three men were seen carrying weapons on video I obtained under the US Freedom of Information Act. The book also appears to have had the age of the child Fatima wrong and several photos used as illustrations in the book, including of the child, are incorrect. Fortunately, these errors are minor compared to the main findings.

The main force of the “Hit & Run” allegations does not start until chapters 8-12 of the Inquiry Report: the actions of SAS officers in response to reports of civilian casualties and the abuse of a prisoner. The book is found to be correct on nearly every point here. This is what the “Hit & Run” title of the book was about: NZDF not investigating the reports of civilian casualties (which at the time appeared twice in the *New York Times*), and the torture, and instead trying to pretend nothing had happened.

Claimed Errors Not Accepted

There are other issues where I do not agree with the Inquiry. We were never going to get every point over the line, against an army of lawyers and massive resources. I do not agree with the Inquiry Report on the dead child’s name, whether the acknowledged burning and blowing up of insurgents’ homes was deliberate, and the civilian status of various unarmed people who were killed, including four unarmed men shot in a separate valley and an unarmed man shot by an NZSAS sniper (the main areas of disagreement are listed in the below notes). The chapter 1 summary of findings gives a very one-sided account of these issues. Of the five “key allegations” on Operation Burnham listed in Chapter 1 para 9, the Report finds the book correct or largely correct on three, 9(b), (d) and (e), we disagree on 9(c) and we had already conceded 9(a) in 2019.

Mistreatment Of A Prisoner

The Report devotes chapters 10

and 11 to the subject of mistreatment of a prisoner, agreeing in full with the allegations in the book about torture and assault. It finds that NZSAS delivered a prisoner to the National Directorate of Security (NDS) secret police in the knowledge that NDS was torturing prisoners. The prisoner was indeed tortured and when NZDF learned this it did nothing about it.

The Report says delivering a prisoner to possible torture makes New Zealand in breach of international law. When NZDF heard about the torture, it had an obligation to report the torture and investigate it, but it did not. The Report recommends that the Government take action on these breaches, including developing new policies, procedures and training programmes. This is a very important result.

Thanks To The Key Whistle Blower

The book and Inquiry would probably never have happened without the assistance of insiders. I especially thank my main confidential source – the person who first talked about “Operation Burnham” and a tortured prisoner called “Qari Miraj” – without whom the book would not have been written. He is an outstanding example of the importance of whistle blowers. Thanks to the numerous other people who helped, notably lawyers Deborah Manning and Simon Lamain who represented the affected villagers.

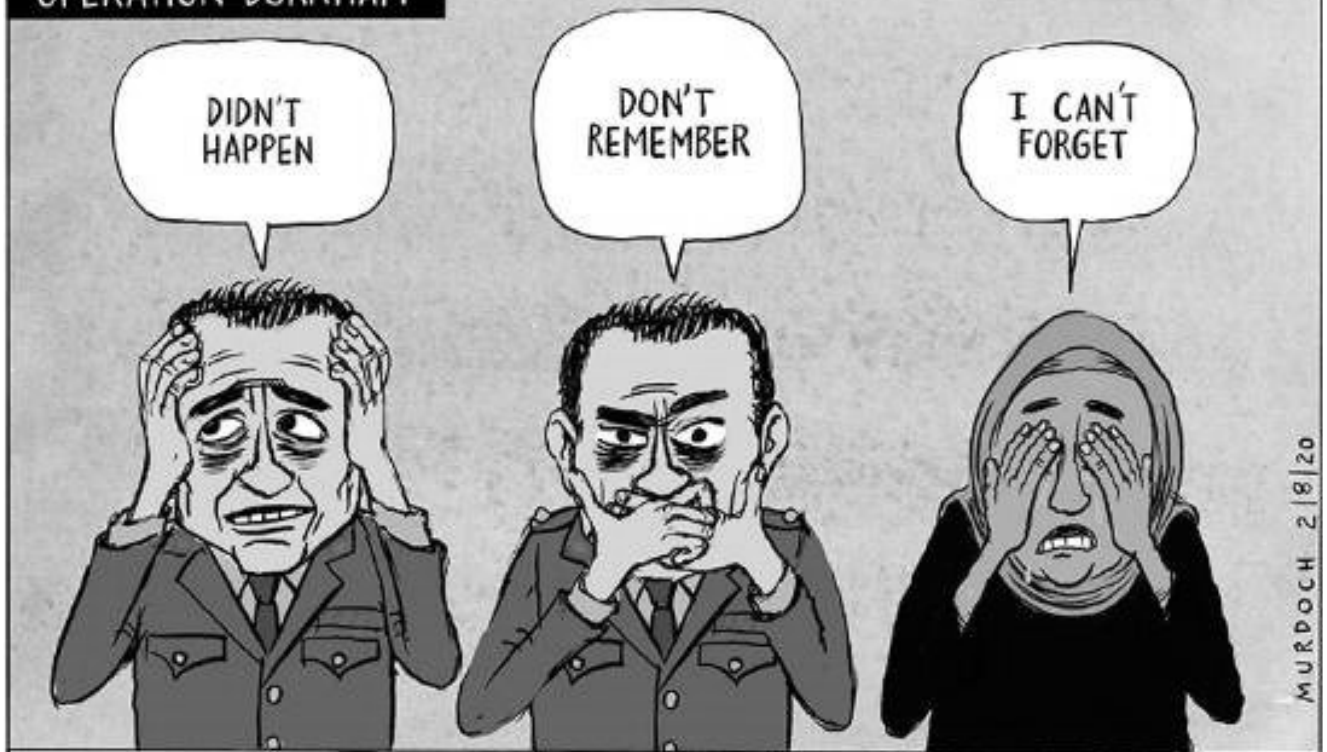
Background Notes

Areas Where I Do Not Agree With The Inquiry Findings

1. I believe that the NZSAS Joint Tactical Air Controller should have checked and questioned much more carefully before clearing the 1.19 a.m. helicopter attack into the midst of a civilian village. NZDF shares responsibility for the civilian deaths and injuries in that village, and for the breach of international law that resulted.

2. The Inquiry found that the NZSAS did not search for and give aid to the wounded during Operation Burnham, but accepts the NZDF’s excuses. I believe that giving aid during or at least soon after the operation was necessary morally and under international law.

3. Four men were killed in a



separate valley, far from the NZ ground forces and posing no threat, by a US helicopter late in Operation Burnham. The attack was cleared by the NZ Commander. They were identified as being unarmed. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, the Inquiry should have concluded that they were civilians. They appear to have been persuaded not to conclude this as otherwise it was a breach of the laws of war.

4. The Inquiry found that the NZSAS ground force Commander ordered an NZSAS sniper to shoot an apparently unarmed man during Operation Burnham. The Report states that the Inquiry has been “unable to reach a definitive conclusion” on whether this man, Abdul Qayoom, was a civilian or an insurgent”. But, “although there are arguments either ways and reaching a view is not straightforward”, the Inquiry decided the ground force Commander’s decision was justified in case he turned out to be a threat.

I believe that the man posed no immediate threat and there were other options available to continue to monitor him. I believe that if the Commander was in doubt about whether the man was a civilian, he should have erred on the side of not ordering the shooting. The troops were under specific orders from the US Commander to avoid civilian casualties.

5. I believe that the NZSAS inflicted more damage to houses in the villages than can be accepted as necessary or accidental. Operation Burnham targeted the homes of two known insurgents (as stated in the book) and the NZSAS managed to burn down a substantial part of both of them. NZDF says both were accidental. With the first, Abdullah Kalta’s house, the NZSAS troopers set half the house on fire, blew open one wall trying to gain access, blew up more building walls a second time while disposing of some munitions - all during Operation Burnham - and then the remaining wing of the building was destroyed entirely sometime more than a week later (the Report proposes, unconvincingly, that it may have fallen down on its own).

With the second house, Naimatulah’s, the Report says an NZSAS officer saw a small fire had started inside but told the Inquiry there was no time to put it out and that NZSAS are not trained to put out fires. These five separate pieces of damage seem too much to be credibly dismissed as accidents. Most NZSAS missions involved no such damage to buildings. I believe that the Inquiry gave NZDF too much benefit of the doubt.

Other Important Parts Of The Report

Video Evidence Hidden By NZSAS:

The video showing the funeral of a child following Operation Burnham was obtained by NZSAS staff in Afghanistan shortly after the raid, but mysteriously could not be found in the NZSAS records when the Inquiry asked for it. The Report says: “This raises an obvious question: why was NZDF unable to produce the funeral video from its systems when it had been able to produce other videos provided to Task Force 81 at the same time? In the circumstances, we consider the most likely explanation is that the funeral video was deleted or misfiled, most likely in Afghanistan”. “All witnesses who recalled the video continued to believe that it showed the funeral of a child”. The video “had a file name indicating that it may have shown casualties of Operation Burnham”.

CRU-Led: NZDF repeatedly claimed, including in written briefings for the Minister of Defence and Prime Minister, that Operation Burnham was “CRU-led” (referring to an Afghan Police commando unit) and only supported by the NZSAS. The implication was that the NZSAS was not responsible for what happened. However, the Inquiry says that “to suggest that the CRU planned or led the operation, or were even involved in planning or leading of the operation in a meaningful way, is simply inaccurate and misleading”.

The Inquiry's Recommendations: Chapter 12 of the Report has important recommendations. The Commissioners say: "We have not arrived at our views lightly. Change is necessary". They make four main recommendations:

1. that the Minister of Defence take steps to satisfy him or herself that NZDF's

a) organisational structure and

b) record-keeping and retrieval systems are in accordance with international best practice and are sufficient to remove or reduce the possibility of organisational and administrative failings of the type identified in this Report; for instance, the Commis-

sioners expressed concern about "a culture of exclusivity and secrecy associated with the NZSAS";

2. the establishment, by legislation, of an office of Independent Inspector-General of Defence "to be located outside the NZDF organisational structure"; and

3. NZDF produce a Defence Force Order "setting out how allegations of civilian casualties should be dealt with".

4. the Government develop and promulgate effective policies and procedures for people detained in overseas operations.

These are very serious recommen-

dations, reflecting the seriousness of NZDF's wrongdoing.

The Role Of "Crown" Lawyers

Throughout the Inquiry a team of lawyers representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and intelligence agencies made submissions and spoke at hearings, in virtually every instance presenting legal advice that implied that NZDF had at no stage done anything wrong. The Inquiry has concluded that these "Crown" positions are in various instances incorrect. The activities of this pro-NZDF public service group, resisting all suggestions that NZDF had done wrong, is a worrying situation revealed by the Inquiry process. ■

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF INTELLIGENCE & SECURITY REPORT

Intelligence Agencies Also Failed To Follow Up Civilian Casualty And Torture Reports

By Nicky Hager

A second Inquiry into civilian casualties and torture of a prisoner, conducted by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS), was also released at the end of July 2020, at the same time as the Operation Burnham Inquiry Report. The Report looks at the actions of the two main New Zealand intelligence agencies, the Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) and the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), both of which had staff in Afghanistan assisting the NZDF military operations. It is a sister Inquiry to the Operation Burnham Inquiry.

The IGIS Report independently confirms the two main allegations in the book "Hit & Run": that there were strong reports of civilian casualties after Operation Burnham that

should have been investigated by New Zealand agencies but were not; and that New Zealand authorities handed over a prisoner to the Afghan secret police when there was a high risk he would be tortured, and then did nothing when they learned he had been tortured.

Operation Burnham

The IGIS Inquiry found that both the NZSIS and GCSB staff gathered intelligence in preparation for Operation Burnham and then helped assess the casualties and damage in the days afterwards. The Inquiry finds, based on intelligence agency records, that "it soon became apparent from intelligence reports that none of the targeted insurgent leaders had been killed in the raid on the village".

The Report states: "it is indisputable on the evidence we saw that the *reasonable possibility* of some civilian casualties was known to the intelligence agencies shortly after Operation Burnham. We found civilian casualties were referenced in a significant volume of intelligence available to them". In other words, the people responsible for collecting intelligence were well aware of the civilian casualty reports from soon after the NZSAS raid. Moreover, the IGIS Report says: "We saw evidence that at least two Wellington (GCSB) team employees were concerned about the deaths of civilians and raised this with management". But IGIS finds that the agencies took no action on the reports.

Civilian Casualties

The Report concludes: "*Both agencies actively supported preparations for Operation Burnham. Afterwards, there was a consistent theme of civilian deaths in the totality of the intelligence they held. In all the circumstances, and given the extent and nature of their involvement, the New Zealand intelligence agencies should have taken a broader and more proactive approach to their role at that point. This means more than accurately reporting the intelligence to interested partners by standard methods.*"

"In the Inquiry's view the NZSIS and the GCSB were especially well



placed to ask the following questions in wider Government circles: did the reasonable possibility that plainly innocent civilians were killed in the NZDF led operation, to which they contributed, require any part of the New Zealand Government (as a matter of law or ethics or State sector propriety) to take any further steps? In particular, should anyone assess whether civilians have been injured or killed? Should Ministers receive a focussed briefing on the picture of civilian casualties, and/or should legal advice be obtained?"

Prisoner Torture

As with Operation Burnham, the IGIS Report finds that the NZSIS and GCSB staff played "a significant role" in the capture of the known insurgent Qari Miraj. An NZSIS officer was involved in decisions to hand over New Zealand prisoners to the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS). Two weeks later NZSIS "released a report of a confession made by Miraj... which had been 'officially passed to NZSIS by a senior NDS Officer'.... Management within the NZSIS and the GCSB raised no questions about the conditions under which the confession report was obtained".

Reports of torture emerged soon afterwards. "In late February 2011...

New Zealand Government officials became aware of information that included an allegation of Miraj's torture while in NDS custody. The suggestion was that the torture had led to Miraj's earlier confession. "On 25 February the GCSB recorded this torture allegation in a document which it shared within the New Zealand Government".

Again, the IGIS Inquiry "heard evidence from some members of the Wellington team that they were shocked by the allegation of torture. The Team Leader took immediate steps, on 25 February 2011, to inform senior managers of the allegation.". "The GCSB ensured that the record of the torture allegation was shared appropriately with other Government agencies. The Team Leader of the GCSB team additionally took the proper step of drawing the attention of senior management to the report".

But no practical action of any sort was taken. Meanwhile: "The Inquiry found that the NZSIS did not turn its mind to the question whether there was any realistic risk Miraj's confession was obtained as the result of torture or mistreatment, and if so, whether that led to any subsequent responsibilities, legal or ethical, in the particular circumstances". "NZSIS receipt of the report from

NDS did not trigger any processes within the NZSIS to check whether there was an inherent risk of abuse associated with the confession report. As with the GCSB the organisational response to the confession was the operational consumption of the intelligence it contained".

Instead, the IGIS Inquiry found that the NZSIS was encouraging the NDS, "on behalf of the New Zealand Government", to continue to detain the prisoner. "In the Inquiry's view, these facts squarely put a duty on the New Zealand Government, through its relevant officials, to assure itself that there was no real risk that Miraj was being tortured or mistreated".

"In particular, we are concerned that despite the concerted effort to keep this particular individual in custody, NZSIS did not, either separately or in conjunction with other New Zealand agencies, identify any responsibility to ensure the New Zealand Government understood the conditions of Miraj's detention and to assess whether they were appropriate in light of New Zealand's legal obligations". The IGIS Report says: "We conclude that NZSIS simply failed to see for itself the significance of the reported allegation of torture". "The NZSIS should have recognised that it needed to undertake due diligence with respect to the serious risk of mistreatment to Miraj even if NZDF, MFAT and others failed to do so".

I thank the IGIS for all the work it did to investigate these events and then make them available to the public in an unclassified form. The intelligence agencies, of course, dislike being criticised, but this Report is practical and fair and will help future intelligence staff to do their jobs better. It shows the great value of an independent Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. It is very important that intelligence agency actions can be reviewed in this way.

■

KILLER ROBOTS

Growing Support For Ban, But NZ's Stance Remains Weak

By Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, 11/8/20

Link to share: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/peace-movement-aotearoa/killer-robots-growing-support-for-a-ban-but-new-zealands-stance-remains-weak/3213233385397443>
Tweet: <https://twitter.com/PeaceMovementA/status/1292982870047207424>

An increasing number of states have affirmed the need to take action to protect humanity from the escalating threat of fully autonomous weapons, but New Zealand is regrettably not among them. Fully autonomous weapons - known as killer robots - are weapons systems that select and engage targets without any meaningful human control. Such weapons are unacceptable, and there is an increasingly urgent need to prevent their development and deployment.

"Stopping Killer Robots: Country Positions On Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons And Retaining Human Control"¹, a new report released in August 2020 by Human Rights Watch, reviews the policies of the 97 countries that have publicly elaborated their views on killer robots since 2013. The vast majority regard human control and decision-making as critical to the acceptability and legality of weapons systems. Most of these countries have expressed their desire for a new treaty to retain human control over the use of armed force, including 30 states that explicitly seek to ban fully autonomous weapons.

"Removing human control from the use of force is now widely regarded as a grave threat to humanity that, like climate change, deserves urgent multilateral action", Mary Wareham, Arms Division Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch and Coordinator of the global Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (KRC), said. "An international ban treaty is the only effective way to deal with the serious challenges raised by fully autonomous weapons."²

Disappointingly Weak

Despite repeated calls from the Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (ANZKRC) and others for New Zealand to take action on killer robots at both the national and international levels, New Zealand's stance remains disappointingly weak. In 2013, the Government stated it would develop national policy on killer robots³ but this has not yet been done. New Zealand diplomatic representatives have stated in international forums that governments should work with civil society to develop and implement effective solutions to the challenges raised by new technologies such as fully autonomous weapons⁴, but this has not happened to any discernible degree.

While New Zealand has been present at the eight Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings on fully autonomous weapons systems from 2014 to 2019, it has not spoken up in support of the states who are advocating for new international law to ensure meaningful human control over the use of armed force is retained into the future, and to prohibit the development and deployment of killer robots.

Instead, in April 2019, the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control said "our view is that international law already sets limits" on such weapons and that New Zealand would focus on using existing law "to make sure there will always be meaningful human control over weapons incorporating autonomy"⁵. In response, during a Foreign Affairs Select Committee hearing on fully autonomous weapon systems in May 2019⁶, Committee members repeatedly urged New Zealand to

take a principled position on fully autonomous weapon systems, but there has been no progress since then.

It is particularly disappointing that New Zealand - which has in the past taken a leading role in the development of new humanitarian disarmament law to prohibit particularly harmful weapons (for example, being actively involved in the negotiations for the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions and the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons) - has remained on the side lines of the international debate about killer robots.

Two Priorities For Action

The 2020 election provide(d) an opportunity for all who are concerned about the development and deployment of fully autonomous weapons systems to check out political parties' positions on killer robots by asking questions based on the ANZKRC's two priorities for action:

- development of national policy leading to legislation to prohibit the development, production or use of fully autonomous weapons systems in Aotearoa New Zealand; and
- for New Zealand to fully support the immediate start of negotiations on a new international treaty to prohibit autonomous weapons and to retain meaningful human control over the use of armed force.

Further Information

Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Killer Robots, <http://stopkillerrobots.org.nz> ; Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, <http://www.stopkillerrobots.org> ; Human Rights Watch reporting on killer robots, <https://www.hrw.org/topic/arms/killer-robots>



References

¹ 'Stopping Killer Robots: Country Positions on Banning Fully Autonomous Weapons and Retaining Human Control', Human Rights Watch, 10/8/20, <https://www.hrw.org/node/375914>

² As at note above

³ Minister of Foreign Affairs' reply to Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to

Stop Killer Robots, 12/7/13, available at <http://stopkillerrobots.org.nz>

⁴ See, for example, New Zealand Statement to the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, 30/10/13, http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com13/statements/30Oct_NZ.pdf

⁵ Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control's reply to Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, 16/4/19, available at <http://stopkillerrobots.org.nz>

⁶ Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee Briefing on autonomous weapon systems, 2/5/19, available at <http://stopkillerrobots.org.nz> ■



Ringling the Christchurch Peace Bell

HIROSHIMA & NAGASAKI

CHRISTCHURCH REMEMBERS

By Marcus Coll

Researcher, Disarmament and Security Centre, Christchurch

On August 9 2020 (Nagasaki Day), over 200 people gathered at the World Peace Bell in Christchurch's Botanic Gardens to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Held every year since 1976, the ceremonies are attended by people of all ages, Members of Parliament and City Councillors, to keep alive memories of the horror and destruction that the two nuclear weapons inflicted on Japanese civilians.

Christchurch Councillor Jimmy Chen spoke on behalf of

the Mayor Lianne Dalziel and the City. He stressed the need to spread peace and disarmament education to younger generations and the importance of commemoration ceremonies such as the one which was held. He then rang the World Peace Bell initiating a minute's silence.

With the lighting of candles and lanterns placed under the Peace Bell, acknowledgments were given to all hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) around the world, especially in Japan and across the Pacific. University of Canterbury postgraduate student Olivia Shimasaki read an excerpt from hibakusha Bun Hashizume's book, "The Day The Sun Fell", and Year 13 student Sarina Mackey gave a speech on behalf of hibakusha Takaaki Morikawa.

Disarmament verification expert Angela Woodward spoke of the current state of arms proliferation across the nine nuclear-armed states and their moves to upgrade their respective nuclear arsenals. New Zealand remains strongly committed to its iconic nuclear-free legislation adopted in 1987 and welcomed the ratification of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) by three more states - Ireland, Nigeria, and Niue - on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6th.

Christchurch has a long history as a bastion of anti-nuclear activity, becoming New Zealand's first nuclear-free city in 1982, and the country's first Peace City in 2002. The World Peace Bell was unveiled in the heart of the central city's Botanic Gardens in 2006 and has served as a site to commemorate significant days for peace throughout the year. This year's commemorations also had singing, and a reading from Alison Locke, daughter of well-known peace campaigner Elsie Locke. People were then invited to ring the Peace Bell and place flowers in the River Avon in tribute to the victims of the atomic bombings some 75 years ago.

HAWKES BAY REMEMBERS

By Liz Remmerswaal

National Director, World BEYOND War Aotearoa/New Zealand; Board member, World Beyond War

The 75th anniversaries of the deadly nuclear bombs which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were commemorated in August 2020 all over the world in a variety of ways. In Hawke's Bay, kaka beak plants were presented to the Mayors of Napier and Hastings which will be the first plants to go in two Peace Gardens in the cities. World Beyond War Aotearoa is working with the Environment Justice and Peace Network and other community groups to create special places of peace for all-comers. ■

SPOOKY BITS

By Warren Thomson

GCSB Has "No Clues" About Cyber Attacks

Over recent years the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) has touted its role as defender of NZ cyber-security. But when the NZ Stock Exchange (NZX) came under attack at the end of August 2020, Andrew Little, the Minister responsible for the GCSB, told Radio NZ that the organisation had "no clues" about who was responsible for the attacks (*Stuff*, 31/8/20).

RNZ itself, the *Stuff* Website and some NZ banks also reported attempts to hack them. The NZX had to shut down trading for short periods on successive days. Generally, opinion is that the attacks were motivated with criminal intent; hackers trying to get financial advantage. However, given that this took place in election year, and the appalling advantages given to Brexiteers and Trump in voting situations, Kiwis need to be confident that hackers will not have undue influence in our domestic political affairs.

Andrew Hampton, GCSB Director, was significantly unforthcoming on the reported cyber-attacks. *Peace Researcher (PR)* has frequently criticised his public talks and media releases as blatant attempts to promote the organisation and embed its place in NZ business infrastructure. GCSB, with its arcane operations and lack of transparency, is not an agency to be relied upon.

It should be noted also that many attacks go unreported. The *Press* (1/8/20) reported that gangs of cyber-criminals forced British companies to pay out millions of pounds in ransoms to prevent distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks and that many companies are fearful of public embarrassment and keep such transactions secret. 🗨️

NZ And Aussie Support Drone Weapon Development

Around the world a vastly expanding use of drone attacks is occurring; for the military, the weapons are cheap, easy to use, have no risk for operators (except perhaps post-traumatic

stress disorder [PTSD]) and can be covert and deniable. Attacks by drone increased significantly under Obama and more under Trump. What is less known is the contribution this country and Australia are making to the development of these weapons of often indiscriminate slaughter.

According to the *NZ Herald* (24/7/20), "NZ-designed light aircraft ... have been converted into drones for the Chinese military". The adaptation of the Pacific Aerospace P-750 is cited by Canterbury University China researcher Anne-Marie Brady (see further reference to Brady below). The Hamilton-based plane builder is part owned by a Chinese State company that Brady says specialises in developing unmanned aerial vehicles for military purposes. However, the P-750 development is probably more for cargo than use as a primary attack vehicle.

On the other hand, "Australia has unveiled an artificially intelligent drone designed to operate in swarms to overwhelm enemy defences" according to a report in the *Press* (8/5/20). A primary aim of the weapon is reconnaissance, decoy, and electronic warfare operations. It does not need even a remote pilot; it is essentially guided by an artificial intelligence system, and has a range of about 3,500 kilometres. It is not clear whether the vehicle can carry missiles or cannon. 🗨️

Huge Increases In Funding For Spooks Again

If you thought that having a Labour-led government would cut the large amounts of money dished out to our spies, think again. The increases in Budget funding for the GCSB and the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) are enormous. It is abundantly clear that Labour has enthusiastically bought into (literally) the Five Eyes circus and the expansion of domestic spookery (although the latter was probably predictable given the tragedy at the Christchurch Mosque in March 2019).

Grant Robertson has expanded the GCSB budget from \$122.6 million in 2019-20 to \$221.4 million for 2020-21; this is an increase of 100 million dollars! In 2019-20 the SIS spent \$85.7 million and got an extra \$23 million for 2020-21 to make a total of \$108.7 million. For the current finan-

cial year our spies will spend 330 million dollars (including capital expenditure) with virtually no questions asked. 🗨️

More Crap Emerges In SIS History

Dangerous peace and environmental protestors get serious Security Intelligence Service attention, but girls being sexually abused don't rate. A former SIS agent has said that he was involved in a covert operation in the late 1980s and early 90s that involved entering a home where clear evidence of abuse was found. He took numerous photographs showing sexual abuse was occurring.

But the spook said he was ignored when reporting the situation to his supervisor at the time; he wanted to involve the Police. According to RNZ, (24/9/20) it wasn't until years later that the abuser was convicted for sex crimes, including rape, against his daughter. And the former agent said that ever since he had been "deeply troubled by the failure of the Service to protect the young woman".

RNZ has also reported that the former SIS agent, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, believed the spy agency threatened him when he tried to speak out about the issue in 2020. After the former agent went to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, the SIS wrote to him warning about the consequences of releasing classified information. In a letter to the former agent, which has been viewed by RNZ, SIS Director-General Rebecca Kitteridge said that following "recent media commentary" about SIS activities between the 1950s and the 1990s she was writing to a "range of people" who had access to classified information.

She said the obligation to protect classified information was lifelong and failure to do so could have "serious implications" for the New Zealand government. "We take any failure to comply with undertakings to protect classified information very seriously. This includes consideration of referral to New Zealand Police for investigation of any criminal wrongdoing" (RNZ). The whistleblower took this as a threat (RNZ, 24/9/20). The former spy, who worked in a covert role for the SIS between 1986 and 1992, wrote that

one of the operations "involved very serious ethical and moral issues and a failure of the Service to ensure the protection and safety of a young woman".

This spy with the bad conscience had carried out *more than 1000 covert operations* for the Police and SIS). Why the SIS was breaking into the person's home was not revealed. But the number of operations cited is astounding. Just who were the spooks targeting on such a massive scale in these years? Minister for Spook Coverups, Andrew Little, said he did not know the details of the offending but said the SIS would handle it differently today (why does *PR* feel less than comforted by this?). 🤖

NZ In Afghanistan: It's A Disgrace

A damning Report into a 2010 raid in Afghanistan led by New Zealand special forces has revealed an Afghan child was among at least eight people killed in the operation and that the Defence Force misled senior leaders and Ministers about the incident. The raid took place on 21-22 August 2010 in Tirgiran Valley, Afghanistan.

Several Afghan men were killed in the Special Air Service (SAS) raid, the subject of "Hit & Run" the Nicky Hager/Jon Stephenson book which revealed the story (see Nicky's article, elsewhere in this issue, for detailed comment on the Inquiry findings). The Operation Burnham Inquiry, carried out by Sir Geoffrey Palmer and Sir Terence Arnold, did not confirm any of the victims to be insurgents. Two men had possible links to an insurgent group. Three more were later deemed by intelligence to be insurgents but the Inquiry found there was insufficient

evidence.

Palmer and Arnold fudged the issue of the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) plotting to cover up casualties, but their Report said the NZDF never corrected claims made to the public and Ministers by its personnel that allegations of civilian casualties were "unfounded". The Report found that the failures to properly pass information to senior NZDF leaders and Ministers meant they did not have the appropriate information and could not respond to Parliament or the media. "...senior NZDF personnel ...advanced a false narrative, which misled Ministers and the public and unfairly undermined public confidence in the accuracy of some aspects of (Nicky and Jon's) work".

The Inquiry found that it was likely a female child possibly eight to ten years old was killed during the operation. It also considers that the way a prisoner was treated and handled shows New Zealand's detention policy was inappropriate and did not reflect New Zealand's values. Captured insurgent Qari Miraj was handed over to Afghan authorities based on the knowledge he was likely to be tortured (see Nicky's article, elsewhere in this issue, on the separate Report into the same events by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security).

The Report states: "Ministers were not able to exercise the democratic control of the military. The military do not exist for their own purpose, they are meant to be controlled by their Minister who is accountable to Parliament" (*PR* notes that if this is the case for NZ's somewhat transparent organisations, how can we possibly have any faith in Ministerial oversight of the covert spook agencies?).

The Government Inquiry made four recommendations:

- An expert review group should look at NZDF's organisational structure, record-keeping and retrieval processes.
- An office of the Independent Inspector-General of Defence (located outside the NZDF organisational structure) should be established to facilitate independent oversight of NZDF and enhance its democratic accountability.
- An NZDF order should be put into effect setting out how allegations of civilian casualties should be dealt with in-theatre and in New Zealand.
- The Government should set effective detention policies and procedures in relation to people detained by, or with the involvement of, New Zealand forces overseas and how allegations of torture by such persons are treated. 🤖

SIS Saving Us From Chinese Data Collection

The SIS is looking into a "huge leak" of data believed by some to be used by China's intelligence service. The information was initially leaked from Zhenhua Data, a company based in the southern China city of Shenzhen, to American academic Christopher Balding, a researcher at the University of California, Irvine. More than 250,000 listings in the company's 2.4 million-strong Overseas Key Information Database (OKIDB) were given to Balding, who had worked in China until 2018, and extracted by Australian cybersecurity expert Rob Potter (*RNZ*, 16/9/20).

The data leaked from Zhenhua Data is said to contain personal details of 2.5 million people around the world, including politicians, their family members, judges, business people, journalists and criminals. Almost 800 New Zealanders are featured on the list, including Jacinda Ardern and her family. According to the *NZ Herald* (16/9/20) the listings include town of residence, links to social media accounts and notes indicating a particular interest in job titles or criminal convictions for tax or trafficking offences.

The newspaper reports particular interest seems to have been paid to prominent executives in telecommu-



NZ Herald, 2/3/20

nications, biotechnology and venture capital firms, along with foreign affairs diplomatic staff focused on China. According to Canterbury University Professor Anne-Marie Brady, who has herself apparently been a victim of Chinese surveillance and/or harassment, and who has been at the forefront of a campaign to publicise Chinese manipulation in NZ's domestic affairs, this data held on prominent New Zealanders by a Chinese company (probably owned by the Chinese government) can be linked to attempts to influence New Zealand politics and business (*RNZ*, 16/9/20).

The leaked data included lists of New Zealanders identified by the Chinese company as "politically exposed" and of "special interest" and includes senior court judges, former ambassadors and the present Ambassador to China. "This is evidence, if any was needed, of the global reach of China's efforts to use political interference as a tool of foreign policy," Brady said (*RNZ*, *ibid*).

The Australian government in 2018 introduced new laws to try to limit Chinese spying and interference. (*Age*, 14/7/20). The *Age* quotes the 2019 book "Chinese Communist Espionage: An Intelligence Primer", by Americans Peter Mattis and Matthew Brazil, which says China has more people engaged in its spying effort than any other country (*PR* notes that this may not be a surprise given how much larger the population is). In November 2019 Canberra introduced measures to examine funding and research in universities that might have Chinese connections or funding (*Press*, 16/11/19).

In NZ there has been controversy over university research connected to Chinese companies but little public reaction. Several leading National Party figures have close links with Chinese companies, and up until the 2020 election, one National Party MP had been involved with a military college which was associated with Chinese military intelligence.

However, the database currently in question is apparently built with open-source information. SIS Director-General Kitteridge said her organisation would be investigating the matter although the information was primarily drawn from publicly accessible sources, such as social media and news reporting. In other words,

pretty much what Facebook, Amazon and co have on the average social media person, and certainly less than what NZ's Five Eyes mates would have available in their astronomically sized databases. 🤖

High Tech Surveillance At Work

Big technology companies may already be complying with secret Chinese requests for personal user information held by the companies in Hong Kong, a senior US State Department official has said. This probable secret cooperation between major tech and social media companies and Hong Kong authorities follows the implementation of a sweeping new national security law that allows Hong Kong authorities (appointed by Beijing) to demand any sensitive user data alleged to be "a threat to national security".

While some tech and social media companies, like Facebook, Google, and Microsoft, have said that they would hesitate to comply with any such Hong Kong data requests, interviews with activists, legal experts, and US government sources have raised doubts about whether they will, or can, refuse to supply the data.

The *Guardian* reports the State Department official as commenting: "There is a possibility that things are happening but because of the restrictions put on by the Hong Kong authorities, they (the companies) would not be able to divulge (their cooperation)...." "The company would be told by mainland authorities 'you will be breaking the (law) if you reveal the fact that I'm asking for this information,'" the official said (*Guardian*, 30/9/20). 🤖

Aussie Special Forces War Crimes

While NZ has been conducting its "Hit & Run" Inquiry into unacceptable actions by our soldiers in Afghanistan, Paul Brereton, the Australian Defence Force Inspector-General, has been conducting an inquiry since 2016 into allegations of war crimes by a small number of Australian special forces troops also in Afghanistan. Brereton – who is reported to have interviewed some 250 former and serving special forces soldiers – is due (as *PR* is being written) to report to the Federal government. There is speculation that the report could lead to significant

reorganisation and reform of the elite units involved.

The investigation has included looking into the actions of Australian Victoria Cross winner Ben Roberts-Smith and other soldiers and reflect very badly on the usually idolised Australian special forces, including the Special Air Service, the regiment the Victoria Cross winner served in during six tours in Afghanistan. While Roberts-Smith is the highest profile member of Australian special forces in question, allegations of unnecessarily brutal behaviour by other serving and former SAS and commando soldiers in Afghanistan are also being investigated – including for summarily executing, and otherwise abusing, unarmed suspected militants and civilians (*Guardian*, Australia 16/8/20).

Spooky Bits in *PR* 59 (June 2020) reported that British detectives had found credible evidence that the UK government had covered up the killing of civilians by British troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, so this continued theme of war crimes by NZ/UK/Australian soldiers participating in "other people's wars" is very disturbing. 🤖

High Tech Surveillance Expands Even More In Aussie

Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and now the Aussie Police are rapidly expanding their surveillance powers, a trend that shows no sign of diminishing. The new cop capability will allow the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to penetrate the computer networks of criminals operating domestically for the first time. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the agency will be given \$A88 million to bolster its cyber capabilities under a \$A1.66 billion cybersecurity package unveiled in August 2020 (*SMH*, 5/8/20).

Significantly, and predictably, the justification for the powerful new cyber tools is that they will enable the cops to break into the networks of online paedophiles and terrorists using computer servers on the "dark Web". Prime Minister Scott Morrison, a godly family man, says the new powers are needed to "track criminals in the darkest corners of the Internet to protect our families and children" (*ibid.*). Those protesting against Government policies

can obviously rest easy.

The strategy will put new obligations on the operators of critical infrastructure such as power plants, communications and ports so they can better fend off serious cyber-attacks, including giving them \$A66 million to assess their networks for vulnerabilities. What is clear according to the *SMH* is the "...massive broadening of what is considered 'critical infrastructure' under laws passed in 2018, allowing the Home Affairs Minister to step in and compel the operators to improve their defences against 'sabotage and spying'".

Under a previous proposal floated within Government, the Australian Signals Directorate – Australia's premier foreign cyber-intelligence agency – was to be enlisted by the security services, such as the AFP, to help track down serious criminals using domestic servers. Instead, under this plan the AFP and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission will be given the tools and enhanced powers to go after individuals and networks engaging in serious criminal activity.

The new laws, which will require warrants and oversight, would give law enforcement agencies the tools to more easily identify perpetrators during the initial stages of investigation. Information collected under this new power would then help lead to Police making more targeted requests for information under existing laws, such as interception and computer access warrants. 🗨️

Expansion Of ASD And Its Oversight Agency

Amid the escalating threat of cyber-attacks against governments and critical infrastructure operators, (a threat that *PR* recognises as real and present), the Australian government announced in June 2020 that the ASD would recruit 500 newly trained specialists at a cost of \$A470 million. On the other side of the fence, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, Margaret Stone, reiterated her call for an additional five full-time staff members to deal with the increased workload from new tasks such as overseeing the encryption laws. "With the increasing technical requirements for oversight, we will for instance need more technically competent, or expert staff ...we will need more expertise than we currently have," she

said (*SMH*, 5/8/20). 🗨️

ASD Dumps Official Historian

While the Rightwing Morrison government makes a pretence at encouraging transparency, the military historian contracted to write the Australian Signals Directorate's official history has been fired. Professor John Blaxland had been working on the two-volume book for more than a year when he was abruptly dismissed. The decision has stunned colleagues of Professor Blaxland, a former intelligence officer with the Australian Defence Force who previously co-authored "The Official History of ASIO".

ASD Director-General Rachel Noble, who has been the spook boss since February 2020, also claims to be in favour of introducing more transparency, but hasn't explained the unexpected sacking of the history writer. The agency will go ahead with an official history but security sources said it wanted more control over the project (18/9/20).

Some Government officials have expressed concern about the event at a time when they are trying to convince the Australian public to extend the ASD's powers. Under new laws the Federal government wants to pass before the end of 2020, the country's most important and sensitive infrastructure operators will be required to provide details of their systems to the Government to create a "near real-time threat picture" (*SMH*, 18/9/20).

And plans for ASD spooks to lend their "offensive capabilities" to the Federal Police to go after the computer networks of individuals and networks engaging in "serious crimi-



Rachel Noble, Director-General, Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), 2020

nal activity" within Australia are widely opposed (note that NZ has already given the spooks both these powers). One of the most depressing aspects of this is that the intrusive encryption snooping powers given to ASIO and the Police have not been used because tech companies volunteer to assist the spying.

Australia's domestic spy agency and Police forces have not needed to use compulsory powers to hack into messages under encryption laws passed in 2018, as tech companies have *voluntarily* allowed them to spy on targets instead (*SMH*, 7/8/20). It is not entirely clear whether the big techs have been enthusiastically cooperating with the spooks or if it is a situation of jumping before being pushed. It should be noted that such voluntary action avoids the spooks having to go through a messy, and slightly more transparent, warrant route.

Noble has declared the ASD has been collecting intelligence on Australians for at least 20 years, saying it should not come as a surprise as it is laid bare in legislation. But under current laws, the ASD can only spy on and hack into the systems of criminals, including Australians, who are overseas (*SMH*, 1/9/20). Again, Kiwis should be proud to be way ahead of the Aussies on this (not).

Along with "Technical Assistance Requests" there are two compulsory encryption-subverting powers under the Act, which was rushed through Parliament at the end of 2018. Security agencies can order a "technical capability notice" (TCN) requiring that service providers create new capabilities to gain access to encrypted messages, and a "technical assistance notice" (TAN), which compels companies to decrypt information when they have the existing means to do so. Currently the spooks are determinedly combatting a recommendation from the Aussie IG for more oversight of the laws, arguing that it would make the approval of operations more difficult. 🗨️

ASIO Catches Chinese Spy

ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess announced in February 2020 that the spies had uncovered cases where foreign spies have travelled to Australia with the intention of setting up sophisticated hacking infras-

structure, targeting computers containing sensitive and classified information. Burgess also said a foreign intelligence service sent a "sleeper" agent to Australia, who lay dormant for many years and quietly built community and business links, while secretly maintaining contact with his offshore handlers (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24/2/20).

Analysis by officials of Brian Chen's communications devices, travel and immigration records revealed that he adopted multiple identities, including as a paint brush manufacturing manager, military vehicle manufacturer and Hong Kong journalist. He also had a connection with the Chinese military manufacturer Norinco. The agent started feeding his spymasters information about expatriate dissidents in Australia, which directly led to harassment of them and their relatives overseas.

Brian Chen was stopped at Melbourne Airport in March 2019 after ASIO learned of allegations he attempted to recruit Liberal Party member Nick Zhao (*Liberals are the ruling Party in Australia. Ed.*). Mr Zhao died in March 2019 after alerting ASIO that Mr Chen allegedly offered him \$1 million if he ran for a seat in Federal Parliament. There is no suggestion that Mr Chen was involved in Mr Zhao's death.

But the suspected spy was able to leave Australia after being questioned at the airport. According to ASIO, this exposed a gap in national security laws, requiring, naturally, more powers for the spooks. But ASIO already has the power to coercively question suspected terrorists, and multiple state and federal agencies can use such powers to investigate organised crime and corruption and, in some cases, issue questioning warrants as suspects seek to flee Australia. Another interpretation would be that it was another ASIO cock-up. 🐞

More On Anti-Democratic Aussie Spook Powers

(The following is a summary of an article written by David Neal, a barrister and co-chair of the Law Council of Australia's Criminal Law Committee, published by the *Melbourne Age*, 27/7/20). Australian Ministers meeting with their US counterparts in late July 2020 announced they would talk about dealing with key security issues in the region, in-

cluding the threat that Australia may be exposed to disinformation campaigns designed to undermine democratic systems. They said that this threat will be defeated because of the countries' liberal democratic values, open political systems, and the rule of law.

But Neal writes that "a series of recently passed or pending measures in the Commonwealth Parliament give rise to concerns about our own, home-grown authoritarianism". They include a roll out of facial recognition technology, forcing technology companies to decrypt information held on their customers' computer systems, forcing technology companies to provide access to their customers' cloud-based information without notification to the owner of the information and extending ASIO's compulsory questioning powers. "These measures raise serious questions about the border between citizens and Government, but the ASIO Bill is particularly worrying".

Unlike any of the other Five Eyes countries, ASIO was given power to compulsorily question people for *up to seven days* (*PR emphasis*) in relation to terrorism offences. Neal says it might be accepted that extreme violence justifies these extraordinary powers but the "sweeping and vague" definitions used in proposed bills to trigger the compulsory questioning power are unacceptable; prejudice Australia's political, military or economic relations with another country; activities which are clandestine or deceptive and are detrimental to Australia's interests (they echo the similarly unacceptable wide phraseology of NZ legislation already entrenched).

ASIO would be allowed to compulsorily question *anyone* (*PR emphasis*) about these things – not just suspected offenders. This includes journalists, business people, university academics and staff, lawyers, citizens, residents and visitors (again, echoing Police raids in NZ). ASIO would simply have to show the questioning would "substantially contribute to the collection of intelligence" about foreign interference. The person could then be questioned for up to 40 hours (not including breaks). If the person refused to attend, they would be arrested. Refusal to answer or giving false or misleading answers would carry a maximum five-year sentence.

Neal points out that rules that are fundamental to a democratic system are overturned by this Bill. People – including people already facing charges – will be compelled to provide evidence that may then be used to prosecute them. Powers of a defence lawyer are limited. The new Bill transfers the decision to issue a questioning warrant from a judge to the Attorney-General (a political appointee).

The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security has noted that this goes against trends for increased requirements for external authorisation in other Five Eyes jurisdictions (Ed: which, however have doubtful efficacy). The new Bill also proposes to expand the questioning power to children who are at least 14 years old, but only to those engaged or likely to engage in activities prejudicial to the protection of Australia and people from politically motivated violence.

Neal states that conferring a power to compulsorily question anyone about information which "prejudices Australia's economic relations with another country", or activities which are "detrimental to Australia's interests" is beyond the pale. And no other Five Eyes country goes so far. Genuinely liberal democracies guard against authoritarian measures.

"The conduct of our security agencies in relation to the bugging of the East Timor Parliament, the trials of Witness K and Bernard Collaery, the secret trial and imprisonment of a former intelligence officer, the recent search warrants executed on two journalists, and the prospect of charges against one of them in relation to stories on suspected murders by Australian soldiers in Afghanistan show why we should not be lowering our guard". 🐞

Aussie Spies Review Kept From Public

The Morrison government has been sitting on the results of a spook legislation review by former ASIO Director-General Dennis Richardson since the latter part of 2019. As *PR* is being written, Canberra is looking to pass significant laws before the end of 2020 that expand spook powers (see other items above). These include an overhaul of ASIO's compulsory questioning powers and new cyber security laws

to protect the nation's critical infrastructure.

Australia, like NZ, has made a large number of "national security" legislative changes in the last six years, most of which involve increasing agency surveillance powers. The Richardson review is expected to recommend an overhaul of national security laws to allow for "greater inter-operability and intelligence sharing between agencies" (Age, 19/8/20). The Opposition Labor Party has been rightly making the point that withholding the report while planning related legislation is manipulative and undemocratic. 🤖

Murdoch's Evil Influence

As this article is being written, the USA has recorded the shameful statistic of more than 200,000 Covid-19 deaths, and Trump continues to rant about Beijing's responsibility for American citizens dying. But in a classic story of how such Rightwing propaganda is picked up and spreads around the world to fuel conspiracy stories in Trump's America, the *Guardian* reported in May 2020 that allegations of a Chinese cover up over the coronavirus were grossly, and purposefully, distorted.

Rupert Murdoch's Sydney tabloid, the *Daily Telegraph*, published a six page "bombshell" based on "a dossier prepared by concerned Western governments" that exposed China's "batty science" and backed up US claims that Beijing was covering up the true origin of Covid-19. This story was quickly seized upon by Rightwing media. The *New York Post* labelled it a 'damning dossier' and attributed it to Five Eyes intelligence sources. Fox News reported it as objective evidence the coronavirus came from a lab in Wuhan.

The Murdoch story was mostly fabrication. It was based on old information, it had no direct evidence of a connection with Chinese labs, and it did not come from intelligence collected by Five Eyes. *The Guardian* reports from unnamed official sources that the material had been produced by the US State Department as "a fairly straightforward timeline and summary of publicly available material" and that the material relevant to the Wuhan lab leakage theory was only a small portion of the file, and it did not include any conclusive findings (*Guardian*, 26 May 2020).

The former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told the *Guardian* he believes the document "was leaked to News Corp in Australia with the clear intention that it would be funnelled back into the American media, giving the appearance that Australian spies were backing Trump's claims". In reality, though, "Australian intelligence officials don't believe Trump at all".

Just like the glory days of the US Central Intelligence Agency when they were experts at placing inflammatory articles in news sources around the world so that they could be picked up and broadcast globally to buttress US propaganda. Alternatively, if you are a Make America Great Again fanatic, the *Guardian* story could just be another example of how the "hard Left" is covering up the truth in its aim to impose socialism on America and the rest of the world (*Guardian* 26/5/20). 🤖

Five Eyes Spying Again Declared Illegal

In a ruling handed down at the beginning of September 2020, the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said the warrantless telephone dragnet that secretly collected millions of Americans' telephone records violated the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and may well have been unconstitutional (Reuters Website, 3/9/20).

Significantly, for the citizens of Five Eyes countries, besides finding the spying illegal, the Court declared that the US intelligence leaders who publicly defended it were not telling the truth. Top intelligence officials, before Edward Snowden's bombshell leaks, publicly insisted the National Security Agency never knowingly collected information on Americans at all. Snowden, who fled to Russia in the aftermath of the 2013 disclosures, still faces US espionage charges. He has said on Twitter that the ruling was a vindication of his decision to go public with evidence of the National Security Agency's domestic eavesdropping operation. 🤖

More Dirty Politics From Trump

This was written before the November 2020 US election. Ed.

PR has referred several times to Trump's manipulation of the Washington spy system (and hence,

indirectly, NZ's Five Eyes activities). The Trump Administration's top intelligence official announced in late September 2020 that he had declassified Russian intelligence alleging damaging information about Democrats during the 2016 election, even though he acknowledged it might not be true. The statement was made in a letter to Rightwing Republican, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, just hours before the first 2020 Presidential debate which was widely criticised for the way Trump lied and bullied his aged Democratic opponent Joe Biden.

Trump's National Intelligence Director, John Ratcliffe, said that in late July 2016, US intelligence agencies obtained "insight" into Russian spy-craft alleging that Hillary Clinton, who was running for President, had "approved a campaign plan to stir up a scandal against" Trump. But Ratcliffe added that American intelligence agencies do "not know the accuracy of this allegation or the extent to which the Russian intelligence analysis may reflect exaggeration or fabrication" (Associated Press, reported in *Huffington Post*, 30/9/20).

The announcement, according to the AP, was a startling break from convention given that the nation's intelligence chiefs generally do not publicly discuss sensitive unconfirmed intelligence material. But the President has appointed many Trump loyalists to leadership positions in Government agencies (often with no expertise in the roles) and Ratcliffe and his predecessor, Richard Grenell, have authorised a series of disclosures in recent months aimed at undermining the Russia investigation and providing a political advantage to Trump.

Another example of political manipulation of spy data is cited by Natasha Bertrand (*Politico Website*, 1/9/20). She reports that one of Trump's Twitter themes – often reiterated by Fox News – claims that US intelligence shows that China would prefer a Joe Biden Presidency and is trying to help him win. But the intelligence community has said no such thing, according to public statements by the country's top counterintelligence official Bill Evanina and multiple sources who have seen the underlying intelligence.

Furthermore, according to the same source, national security officials and others briefed on the latest election threat intelligence are now expressing concern that the Trump Administration is trying to draw attention away from the more acute threat posed by Moscow, which is again trying to boost Trump's reelection, they said.

Even retired General Michael Hayden, former Director of the CIA under President George W Bush, has severely criticised Trump, particularly his "...disregard for the truth, his refusal to act against violent white supremacist groups and his disregard for America's allies" (*Huffington Post*, 7/10/20). In 2016, Hayden was among 50 former national security officials to sign a letter that Trump was a threat to the nation's security and well-being.

Meanwhile, *Politico* (18/8/20) reported that a US Senate committee has concluded that Paul Manafort, Trump's 2016 Presidential Campaign Chairperson was a "grave counterintelligence threat" due to Russian contacts. Manafort worked closely with a Russian intelligence officer who may have been involved in the hack and release of Democratic emails during the election, the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded in a bipartisan report. 🗨️

The Dangers Of The White Right

White supremacists present the gravest terror threat to the United States, according to a draft report from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Draft documents

seen by *Politico* journalists describe the threat from white supremacists as the deadliest domestic terror threat facing the U.S., listed above the immediate danger from foreign terrorist groups (*Politico*, 4/9/20).

The analysis seems to be consistent with earlier intelligence reports from DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other law enforcement sources: that the most significant terror-related threat facing the US today comes from violent extremists who are motivated by white supremacy and other far-Right ideological causes, a former counterterrorism official said. None of the drafts *Politico* reviewed referred to a threat from Antifa (*antifascists. Ed.*), the loose cohort of militant Left-leaning agitators who senior Trump Administration officials have described as domestic terrorists. Two of the drafts refer to extremists trying to exploit the "social grievances" driving lawful protests.

The alarming militancy of Rightwing groups is confirmed by an article in the *Guardian* (23/9/20) which revealed that pro-Trump activists plotted violence ahead of rallies in Portland, Oregon, in 2020. One group called Patriots Coalition suggested political assassinations and said "laws will be broken, people will get hurt", leaked chat logs show.

The leaked materials show Portland-area pro-Trump activists planning and training for violence, sourcing arms and ammunition and even suggesting political assassinations ahead of a series of contentious rallies in the Oregon city. The chats on

the GroupMe app, shared with the *Guardian* by the antifascist group Eugene Antifa, show conversations between Oregon members of the Patriots Coalition growing more extreme as they discuss armed confrontations with Leftwing Portland activists, and contain a considerable amount of online disinformation about protests and wildfires. 🗨️

More On Artificial Intelligence

The Australian Human Rights Commission has warned that the Federal government's growing reliance on artificial intelligence and automated decisions is dangerous and will increasingly put vulnerable Australians at risk. In an article in the *Age* (15/9/20), HR Commissioner Edward Santow stated that the risk is you have an AI decision-making system that gives a veneer of technological accuracy when, in fact, it may be less accurate than other analysis, and less effective than the conventional ways of making decisions.

The Aussie government, in a previous cock-up, was forced to repay \$A721 million to 373,000 Australians because of errors in the system (the "robo-debt" scandal). People were hit with debt notices for alleged overpayments based on flawed calculations. AI is coming. Just another of a number of social change impacts of tech change that need a lot more examination and a lot more public debate. 🗨️ ■

GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION & THE CHALLENGES FOR OUR FUTURE

By Dennis Small

After virtually eradicating "the native inhabitants of the vast western territories of America", the US embarked on "expansion beyond the continent" ("American Dream; Global Nightmare", Ziauddin Sardar & Merryl Wyn Davies, Icon Books, 2004, p174). This expansion was ultimately "driven by desire for stepping-stones to the markets of China" (ibid.).

"From the moment the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the US has relentlessly pursued a strategy of encircling Russia, just as it has with other perceived enemies like China and Iran. It has brought 12 countries in central Europe, all of them formerly allied with Moscow, into the NATO alliance. US military power is now directly on Russia's borders" ("The Globalisation Of War: Ameri-

ca's 'Long War' Against Humanity", Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, 2015, quoting analyst Steven Kinzer, pxii).

"Exposing Western hypocrisy – how much more exposed can they be? Which decent human being on Earth harbours any illusions about it? These are the people whose histories are spongy with the blood of others. Colonialism, apartheid, slavery, ethnic cleansing, germ warfare, chemical weapons – they virtually invented it all. They have plundered nations, snuffed out civilisations, exterminated entire populations. They stand on the world's stage stark naked but entirely unembarrassed, because they know

that they have more money, more food, and bigger bombs than anybody else" (*"The Cost Of Living"* by Arundhati Roy, *Flamingo*, 1999, p144. Roy is also the author of *"The Ordinary Person's Guide To Empire"*, Harper Perennial, 2004).

In delivering the 2020 Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture, held online for the first time, in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres drew attention to the historic causes of so many of today's problems. He observed that: "The Global North, specifically my own continent of Europe, imposed colonial rule on much of the Global South for centuries, through violence and coercion".

In confronting unjust legacies from the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the apartheid regime in South Africa, along with other similar challenges, we have to reassert "the importance of international cooperation and solidarity" ("*Inequality Defines Our Time: UN Chief Delivers Hard-hitting Mandela Day Message*")¹.

In the context of "NZ's economic reliance on China", Dr John Battersby, a teaching fellow in Massey University's Centre for Defence and Security Studies, states: "We are far more careful now in our 'criticism' of Chinese policy than we were in the 1980s of the Americans, who we knew would tolerate our dissent" ("*Pandemic Should Not Make Us Blind To Other Security Threats*", Press, 22/7/20).

Besides more cheer-leading for World War III, Dr Battersby helps perpetuate the local "conspiracy of silence" of academia and the political Establishment on the well-documented US attempts to subvert our democracy and nuclear free zone in the 1980s (e.g., see some citation in *"The ANZUS Crisis, Nuclear Visiting, And Deterrence"*, Michael Pugh, Cambridge University Press (CUP), 1989; plus also the defunct NZ Monthly Review & Nuclear Free and the first series of Peace Researcher).

"The US and its allies have launched a military adventure which threatens the future of humanity... US and NATO forces have been deployed in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. US military intervention under a humanitarian mandate is proceeding in sub-Saharan Africa. The US and its allies are threatening

China under President Obama's 'Pivot to Asia'. In turn, military manoeuvres are being conducted at Russia's doorstep which could potentially lead to escalation" (*"The Globalisation Of War"*. op. cit., pxi).

(Russian President) Vladimir Putin warned that a Third World War "would lead to the end of civilisation" as he accused America of violating the nuclear balance" ("*Putin Says US Is Spoiling For World War*", Press, 9/6/20).

"It's you (US President Donald Trump) who have created the hate" (Mayor Ted Wheeler of Portland, Oregon, excoriating Trump during a press conference when addressing a shooting at a protest that left one person dead, during Black Lives Matter protests (per TV report, 31/8/20). Portland has suffered from both race rioting and the terrible wildfires fuelled by global warming.

"Two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the universe" (Albert Einstein)

Several Telling Events

By October 2020, NZ society had processed some of the recent fallout stemming from being a member of the so-called "Five Eyes" club in the imperial Anglo-American axis of geopolitical power projection. There have been several telling events stemming from previous history. An official Inquiry into a joint American-NZ "death squad" raid on a couple of re-mote villages in Afghanistan had condemned the NZ Defence Force in certain capacities regarding the conduct of so-called "Operation Burnham" and the civilian casualties inflicted.

This inquiry was sparked by the investigative journalism book (*"Hit & Run: The New Zealand SAS In Afghanistan And The Meaning Of Honour"*, Nicky Hager & Jon Stephenson, Pottom & Burton, 2017). Certain interpretations aside, the official Inquiry essentially validated the concerns expressed in this book (see Nicky Hager's article about the Inquiry, elsewhere in this issue. Ed.).

Staying with the issue of terrorism, the Australian terrorist gunman Brenton Tarrant has also received a life sentence without parole for his bloody white supremacist rampage at two Christchurch mosques. He

had perpetrated his atrocities against our Muslim community in March 2019. His fascist creed, however, was not properly addressed by the media and the political Establishment ("*Brenton Tarrant & The F Word. The Swastika In The Room*", Murray Horton, CAFCA press release, 28/8/20).²

Meantime, although NZ has largely withdrawn from participation in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, certain intelligence officers are still functioning in the Middle East theatre in service of State terrorist targeting and killing of American designated enemies³ (see: "*New Zealand's Role In US Middle East Military Base*" in *Spooky Bits* by Warren Thomson, *Peace Researcher (PR)*, 59, June 2020). We still have about 12 personnel in Afghanistan too. And, so, it goes . . .

Endless Enemies

As part of the Anglo-American empire, NZ is constantly being lined up against new foes. The most immediate prospective enemy emerging is China. There has been some redeployment and positioning of our diplomatic, aid, and military resources in the Western Pacific to try and help counter what are seen as increasing intrusions by this rising power. NZ has been operating in close conjunction with its so-called "Five Eyes" partners.

Meantime, old prejudices and antagonisms have been reawakened, or are awakening. The roots of growing geopolitical confrontations run very deep indeed. While the international Black Lives Matter movement may have rallied many of us on the Left in active support, divisions in America and elsewhere seem to be increasing. In the context of mounting global problems, we need to rally for urgent peace-making and conflict de-escalation. Unless we can devise new ways of positive engagement internationally, the future can only get worse. Growing confrontations will otherwise inevitably deepen and sharpen into blatantly open, widespread, and destabilising hostilities.

The Toxic Threat Of White Tribalism

Meantime, in the wake of the sentencing of the Christchurch mosques mass murderer, Islamophobia bubbles away under the surface of NZ culture, sometimes breaking out into the open. For

example, Nelson Bible Baptist Church pastor Joe Flynn did a mail-drop of some American anti-Islam leaflets “during the March 15 (2019) terror attacker’s sentencing” (“Pastor’s Anti-Islam Leaflet Drop”, *Press*, 2/9/20).

His action was condemned by “a spokesman from Baptist Churches of NZ”, who explained that anyone can use the term “Baptist”, however flaky (*ibid.*). The Nelson pastor defended his racism as “free speech”, a standard ploy of the far Right. The problems of hate speech, and racism generally, are entrenched in our society, with the looney ACT Party happy to play to its own rotten hypocrisy, among other such groups.

But the Rightwing media have continued to give as much disproportionate publicity as they can to this party, hoping to greatly boost its number in Parliament at October’s general election. Overall, the media have proved most happy to cheer on ACT’s climate change scepticism, anti-environmentalism, and greedy upper-class warfare policies, etc! Other crackpot far Right parties like the New Conservatives, the NZ Public Party, and Advance NZ are currently gaining some political traction here (*written pre-election. Ed.*).

Our Race Relations Commissioner, Meng Foon, “hoped the Government would change its hate speech legislation to include discrimination against religion, disability and gender, despite promises from Justice Minister Andrew Little being on hold until after the election” (*ibid.*). Foon added that: “delays in strengthening legislation on hate crime were not helping communities feel safe” (*ibid.*).

A spokesperson, Azad Khan, for The Foundation Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), has expressed concern about “a sudden spike (in Islamophobic incidents)”, including very nasty stuff on Facebook (*ibid.*). “He did not believe racism and Islamophobia had gone away, but that it had moved underground where it was sinister and covert” (*ibid.*). Many victims feel intimidated and are thus afraid to “report incidents for fear of repercussions” (*ibid.*). We certainly have to keep looking over our shoulder, and make sure we report any such incidents to the authorities.

Imperial Iniquities

The imperial roots of all this cultural heritage are far reaching indeed. That touted former “jewel” in the crown of the old British Empire can serve as an example. While the British failed in the 19th Century to add Afghanistan as an extension of their imperial domination of India, they are still very much part of its foreign occupation today. Their presence might have been substantially reduced in the light of their failure to suppress the Taliban and other insurgent groups. But they continue to have a role as part of the Anglo-American empire. Britain has today about 1000 troops stationed in Kabul, along with its logistical and intelligence set-up there.

The Afghanistan present has echoes with a not so distant past. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first PM of independent India, once observed that: “British rule (in India) is based on an extreme form of widespread violence and the only sanction is fear” (“Inglorious Empire: What The British Did To India”, Shashi Tharoor, Scribe, 2017, p88). Sadly, in the present day, NZ has been helping carry on this Anglo-American tradition in neighbouring Afghanistan, let alone in Iraq and elsewhere.

Thankfully, however, this year (2020) we have withdrawn our troop training unit from Iraq. NZ now has only a fairly token presence in Afghanistan, an outpost of the empire very much under siege from the local people and some foreign jihadi allies. The Yankee imperialists have predictably bungled their occupation of this most unfortunate country.

At the end of his book, “Fighting Season: Tales Of A British Officer In Afghanistan” (Duckworth Overlook, 2012, p267), Graham Lee’s girlfriend asks him, given that his side can shoot “further than them”, i.e. the Taliban, with artillery guns and rocketry at enemy positions using coordinates radioed to the gunners, “then why haven’t you won the war already?” Lee had no answer other than that the Taliban were hard to locate and pin down. *Exactly, the guerrilla can swim like a fish among the people!*

Expansionist Extremism At Work

In June 2018, the US Army was gloating over a seemingly killer blow delivered to the Taliban (“Artillery Strike Kills 50 Taliban Chiefs, Says US”, *Press*, 1/6/18). “More than 50

Taliban leaders were killed by an artillery strike... as they gathered for a meeting in southern Afghanistan, according to the US military” (*ibid.*). The American occupying force had “used its most advanced mobile artillery system to fire guided rockets at the command and control site in Musa Qala, Helmand province, where the high-level targets were meeting” (*ibid.*).

Again, according to the official spiel: “The high-mobility artillery rocket system, or Himars, which can fire GPS-guided rockets 500km, destroyed the site” (*ibid.*). This celebrated gory destruction was apparently another mark of progress in the US-led counter-insurgency (COIN) programme. The US military declared that: “The impact would be felt ‘beyond Helmand province’ and was [taken as] further evidence of the more aggressive stance taken by American troops following the revised strategy approved by US President Donald Trump” (*ibid.*). With the superpower’s usual Orwellian flair, the COIN programme itself is called “Operation Enduring Freedom”!

Helmand province has been one of the key provinces for the operation of British forces as well. Yet despite all the sophisticated fire-power used by the US/NATO military in Afghanistan, another people’s war has succeeded in repelling the foreign invaders back to their citadels. Both sides have often been brutal and ruthless. A peace settlement is now urgently needed. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of distrust and uncertainty

British officer Graham Lee’s girlfriend had posed the right question as recorded back in 2012 (“Fighting Season”, *op. cit.*). Artillery bombardments and high-powered assaults have failed to succeed in cowering the Afghan resistance. We can hark back here to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the resulting US-backed Muslim jihadist war against this occupying force. The Yankee imperialists, so very ironically and symbolically, learnt nothing from the Vietnam-type quicksand-trap they laid for the Soviets. They have ended up getting caught in another Vietnam-type situation themselves!

Being Blinded By The Light!

It is interesting to read the anti-Soviet accounts of the heroic Muja-

hidden resistance so assiduously backed by the Pentagon and other American agencies during the 1980s. The Mujahideen boasted how they had withstood “the modern, mechanised onslaught of the Soviet Army” (see: “Afghan Guerrilla Warfare: In The Words Of The Mujahideen Fighters”, Ali Ahmad & Lester W. Grau, Compendium Publishing Ltd., 1995, 2001). Many of the fanatical fundamentalist Mujahideen morphed into the Taliban of the more recent era.

The book just cited got some input from “experts” belonging to the US Marine Corps and similar military/intelligence commentariat. Its conclusion was: “If you think superior numbers and firepower means overwhelming your enemy, think again” (ibid.). As indicated, the Americans have been hoist with their own petard!

“The US Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) ‘Operation Cyclone’ trained and armed at least 35,000 zealots who became the Taliban and al Qaeda” (“The New Rulers Of The World”, John Pilger, Verso, 2002/03, p7). In fact, during the 1980s’ Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Americans had helped the Mujahideen not only with intelligence and the regular recruitment of foreign fighters, but had given the resistance movement a crucial up-to-date weapon advantage. This took the form of the ground-to-air, hand-held Stinger missile. The Stinger proved deadly for Soviet aircraft.

Despite the Taliban lacking such a vital asset, the guerrilla resistance to yet another blundering and brutal foreign invader/occupier is triumphing with a vengeance. Again, we can only hope for an imminent genuine peace that brings real relief, stability, and improvement for the lives of the long-suffering Afghan civilian population after so many years of debilitating internecine war. The warning signs were already there back in 2001. During the 1980s: “The Soviets (had) intervened on behalf of their clients, while the opposition received mostly clandestine American support – payback, as it seemed, for Vietnam, with which the Soviets’ Afghan adventure has sometimes been compared”.

“In contrast to Vietnam, however, the fighting in Afghanistan did not end with the Soviet departure, but

metastasised into a multilateral civil war” (“Wars Of National Liberation”, Daniel Moran, Cassell & Co., 2001). The Americans, having used Afghanistan for their own geopolitics, abandoned it in a bloody mess. But their free dispensation of “collateral damage” came to rebound on them in 9/11.

Predatory Imperialism's Grim Reaper

Nowadays, the blundering predatory West has also spawned ISIS around the globe – from Syria to Afghanistan, from the Philippines to Libya, and from Yemen to Mozambique. In the case of the last mentioned, it was reported in August 2020 that: “Islamic State militants have overrun Government forces and their South African mercenary allies to capture a strategic port city in northern Mozambique” on the shores of the Indian Ocean (“ISIS Seizes Key Port City”, *Press*, 14/8/20).

Ominously enough: “Analysts say the insurgents’ capture of (this port city) of Mocimboa da Praia, which they have declared their new capital, marks a turning-point in a three-year conflict” (ibid.). In a country left so torn apart by the Portuguese colonialists (“*the last to leave*”) and the white South African-backed reactionary Renamo movement, this legacy now reaps a grim outcome with the establishment of yet another ISIS foot-hold.

Renamo's Rightwing-inspired aggression has so fractured Mozambique that this guerrilla movement, which was instigated by white Rhodesia's intelligence unit back in 1975, only came round to signing a final peace settlement in August 2019. For sure, this kind of outcome has just been so much more of the multiple “collateral damage” delivered to enemies, openly and covertly, by the Anglo-American imperial axis and the rest of the West. As we can see, the ironies are heart-rending indeed!

There are some 30 million black African inhabitants of Mozambique, one of US President Donald Trump's “shit-hole” countries on this continent. ISIS has been making various inroads into Africa of late (“ISIS Militants Pose Growing Threat Across Africa”, International Institute for Strategic Studies, www.iiss.org, 2/6/20). From poaching and decimating wildlife in the West African nation of Burkino Faso as

part of its calculated terrorist activity, ISIS and al Qaeda are intent on extending their reach and influence across the continent (“Wildlife Reserves Have Become A Battle Zone”, *Press*, 15/9/20).

Burkino Faso, the former French colony of Upper Volta, is considered by the UN to be “the world's fastest-growing humanitarian crisis” (ibid.). Yemen, brutally crucified by the Anglo-American axis via its proxy Saudi Arabia, remains the worst humanitarian crisis. Then there is a string of other formerly colonised and exploited countries still subject to Western power games and resource rip-offs – Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Nigeria, etc.

Growing Geopolitical Competition

Of course, nowadays, China has its own competitive development model and imperial agenda across Africa too. Meanwhile, imperial America can use the camouflage cover of combatting ISIS and al Qaeda to pursue its geopolitical goals (“Documents Show Vast Network Of US Military Bases in Africa”, 1/12/18⁴; “The Extent Of US Special Forces Involvement in Africa”, Pulitzer Center, 11/08/20⁵).

Nick Turse, investigative journalist and the author of “Tomorrow's Battlefield: US Proxy Wars And Secret Ops in Africa” (Haymarket/Dispatch Books, 2015) has exposed the US Africa Command and its operations to withering scrutiny. As he emphasises: “From Niger To Somalia: US Military Expansion In Africa Helps Terror Groups Recruit” (see YouTube, 28/10/17; also on YouTube, his “America's Secret War In Africa”, 5/11/19).

From a global perspective, the Black Lives Matter movement certainly needs all the help and support we can give it! The historically tormented continent of Africa is once more very much in the firing line. It requires close monitoring and humanitarian assistance, and whatever genuine aid we can render its peoples. We have to foster real sustainable development in Africa and elsewhere.

Following the failures and debacles of US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, etc., Nick Turse pointed in 2012 to a new, multi-pronged and flexible, adaptive strategy taking shape. This strategy was being formulated and developed for the fu-

ture by the Pentagon and related American agencies (see: "The Changing Face Of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, And Cyberwarfare", Haymarket/Dispatch Books, 2012). As Turse stresses, the overwhelming bulk of all this "dirty work" is studiously ignored by the mainstream corporate media, determined to carry out their propaganda function for Western capitalism.

Geopolitical War-Gaming

Looking then at the "Big Picture", the trend to geopolitical militarisation and increasing divisions between and within countries draws heavily on previous US warmongering, piratical predation, and bungling "mistakes". Let's take again the example of Afghanistan's experience because it's so soberly enlightening. America had a hand in stirring up unrest in Afghanistan during 1979. This unrest, which even included anger triggered by the Soviet-backed Afghan government's encouragement and provision of education for girls, led to an armed uprising in Herat in March that same year.

Subsequent events had sparked the Soviet invasion by the end of 1979. It was certainly of great significance in the decades to come that Soviet-supported initiatives like agrarian reform and female education ran counter to traditional religious norms and presiding systems of social authority, hierarchy, and control. Afghan society as a whole (at least to a very considerable extent) can dig in against an invader, whatever social differences the invader might attempt to exploit.

The US seemed to succeed in its aims by contriving a Vietnam-style defeat there for the Soviet invaders. But, as noted above, America's consequent abandonment of this country allowed the Islamist extremism it had fostered for geopolitical purposes to rebound on the homeland itself, as so dramatically and horrifically demonstrated by 9/11.

Social Darwinists Show Their Teeth!

Then came the drastic and ruthless American retaliation. "The presumption was that the US had been attacked by Afghanistan on September 11, 2001, an absurd proposition" ("The Globalisation Of War", op. cit., p34). Afghanistan has now indeed endured some 40 years of

brutal war, with all the consequent horrendous suffering for its people. These days the US empire is struggling to get a sort of resolution, a less demanding commitment, so that it can concentrate more on certain other geopolitical objectives.

To be sure, the Anglo-American empire has drastically over-reached itself and continues to do so. Peoples everywhere struggle with all the dire fall-out, whether directly or indirectly, e.g., America's savage slashing of its contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO). In true Social Darwinist style, however, the US wants not only to hold on to what it has got as much as possible, but grab more where it can as in Eastern Europe.

Since the voyages of Columbus, American and Western progress has meant relentless exploitation of both humans and the environment ("Year 501: The Conquest Continues", Noam Chomsky, Verso, 1993). Today, correspondingly: "Militarisation supports powerful economic interests. America's 'Long War' is geared towards corporate expansion and the conquest of new economic frontiers" ("The Globalisation Of War", op. cit., pxii). Hence, *the current US-led space race as humankind overshoots the Earth's limits!*

But Dazzled By The Death Stars In Their Eyes!!

The so-called touted "revolution in military affairs" [RMA] (meaning the development of new weapons systems) consists of the *Strategic Defence Initiative* (SDI), the concurrent weaponisation of space and the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons" (ibid., p9). SDI is an umbrella term that primarily describes "Star Wars"-type missile defence systems, i.e. anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems. These are designed ultimately to enable first strike scenarios and nuclear war-fighting – thus, ever so perilously, undermining the very concept of nuclear deterrence.

SDI also now encompasses "a wide range of offensive laser-guided weapons with striking capabilities anywhere in the world" (ibid.). This goes along with the capacity to wield "instruments of weather and climatic warfare under the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Programme [HAARP]" (ibid.). This latter is a most ominous extension of

America's global reach in an era of dire anthropogenic climate change.

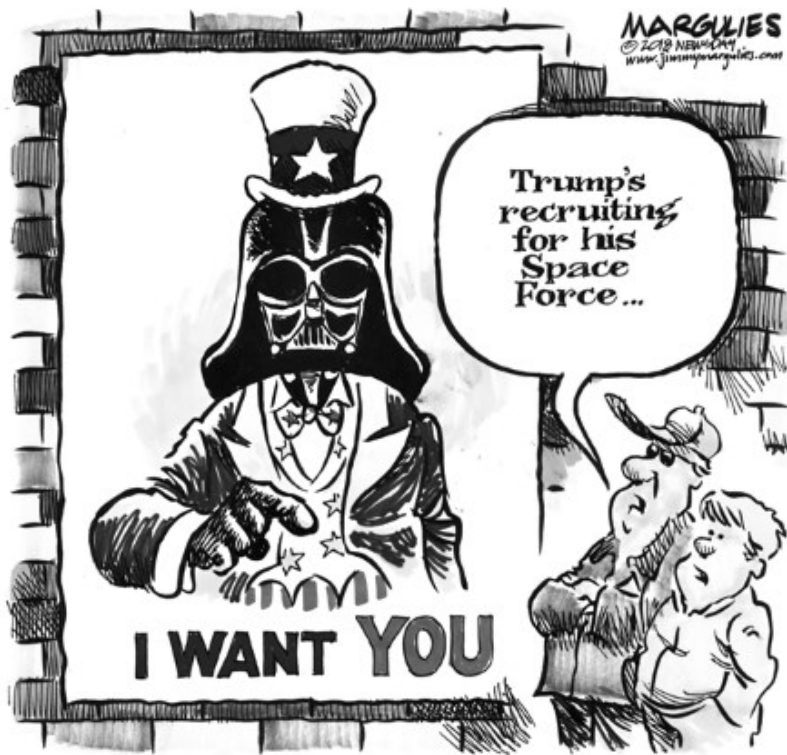
During the 1980s, US President Ronald Reagan's introduction of the "Star Wars" SDI and its ABM nuclear war-fighting strategy served as a big impetus for space war systems. Even though Reagan's mad and dangerously destabilising SDI strategy was just so much fantasy, it has – as illustrated above – carried on in various ways. Scientific assessment was overwhelmingly contemptuous about the prospect of "a comprehensive and effective missile shield" ("The New Nuclear Danger: George W Bush's Military-Industrial Complex", Scribe, 2002, p27). But enormous stacks of money have been wasted on SDI and its proliferating components ever since.

At the same time, Russia has developed a new range of supersonic weapons to defeat any ABM system. And so, the killer ape and his technological innovation constantly rack up the arms race... The Patriot surface-to-air missile (SAM) system manufactured by Raytheon is widely used by US and allied forces for short/medium range defence against mainly battlefield-type rocketry and missiles. It has had a long and controversial history, and its deployments and use have clearly demarcated the boundaries of what is reliably possible and practical with such anti-missile weaponry (MIM-104 Patriot, *Wikipedia*⁶). *But war fantasies go on!*

American Technological Triumphalism Tipping Us All Over The Edge!!

Space is not only now seen as the endless new frontier by the American power elite and its corporate backers but more widely as the new and very unstable, dynamically shifting competitive battleground for the arms race. A vast array of potential misunderstandings, confusions, and accidents, which could trigger a disastrous confrontation, is now proliferating. And, this is aside from deliberate, calculated aggression! *It all amounts to sheer madness and Freud's "death instinct" unleashed on an absurd scale of excess and evolutionary overshoot exuberance!*

Trump's new Space Force is a crazy war-fighting project geared to accelerate the arms space, and destabilise nuclear deterrence even further. The American Establishment magazine *Time* lays out the global contro-



versy in exploring some of the issues and mounting tensions involved (“America Really Does Have A Space Force. We Went Inside to See What It Does”, 23/7/20⁷).

“The Trump Administration, and the majority of House Democrats, who voted in December (2019) to create and fund Space Force, agree that to limit the danger of a 21st Century war in space, the US must deter nations by expanding American military capabilities”. So, get it! *In order to prevent and avoid war you have to keep on developing and deploying ever more dangerous military systems!!* “Russia and China say it is the US that is militarising space. Both have lashed out about the creation of the Space Force as a violation of the international consensus on the peaceful use of outer space, which they say undermines global strategic balance and stability” (ibid.).

As Sir Solly Zuckerman pointed back during the perilous nuclear-fraught 1980s: “From the mid-thirties onwards, there has been an unceasing technological race between the great powers in every field of armaments...” (“Nuclear Illusion And Reality”, Collins, 1982, p90). He indicated and emphasised how the “nuclear arms race” is pushed along so much by the “defence scientists and ‘intelligence’ experts who are at the heart of the race [and who] are always able to generate alarm about what the other side is doing, or may

be doing. But this need not go on forever” (ibid., p129).

Things That Go Bump In The Heavens Above

Sir Solly Zuckerman could certainly talk from experience, having been Chief Scientific Adviser to the British Ministry of Defence for six years, and to Prime Ministers for a further seven. He called for an urgent political solution. But, lamentably, as can be seen from the *Time* quote above, American politics is now more badly warped than ever against the prospect of a meaningful peace. To be sure, the US has been central in driving the arms race for decades. It could have taken truly meaningful measures to defuse the arms race and dangerous competition but instead chose not to.

In recent times, the Western Establishment has expressed military concerns about Russian and Chinese space manoeuvres. Such posturing and uncertainty have plagued the realm for decades. For instance: “On October 1975, NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) found that one of the early-warning satellites was being dazzled. These satellites that detect... the heat of ballistic missiles during launch are watched over more jealously than any other instruments in the solar system”.

“The blinding of one of them provoked, not the civilian question, ‘What is wrong with the darned

thing?’, but the military question, ‘Are they about to hit us?’ When no missile attack ensued, a theory emerged that the Soviet Union was testing an infra-red laser beam for jamming early warning satellites – an act that might have seemed as threatening and provocative as the stationing of missiles in Cuba”.

“The dazzling continued intermittently and eventually the mundane explanation became clear: the radiant heat from an accidental fire in a gas pipeline was over-taxing the satellite’s sensors. As the mishap did not occur when the Americans and the Russians were angry or scared for other reasons, the world survives to chuckle about the non-event”.

“But we learn from it how sacred and yet how delicate are the space systems on which the superpowers increasingly rely” (“Nuclear Nightmares, An Investigation Into Possible Wars”, Nigel Calder, BBC, 1979, p102). Preparations and competition in space warfare systems threaten us all now in unprecedented ways. This competition is adding further shifting and perilously complex layers to the computerised weapons systems already on Earth, which are already intimately inter-connected to satellite communication, surveillance, and monitoring.

Crazily Cheering On Catastrophe
In Aotearoa/NZ, the zombie brain-dead mainstream media continue to cheer on Rocket Lab, an American transnational corporation (TNC) company integrated into the military-industrial complex and Trump’s new Space Force. NZ is now proudly doing its bit toward speeding up the space war scenarios (see *PR* Editor Murray Horton’s excoriating examination in “Rocket Lab Drags NZ Into US Militarisation Of Space”, also in this edition of *PR*).

There has hardly been any critical examination of Rocket Lab by the mainstream media. Even in a rare such case, the essential message is still that this NZ-initiated company is something to be proud about instead of yet another obscene contribution to Doomsday (“Rocket Lab Defends Spy Role: Rocket Lab’s meteoric rise in the global space industry hit turbulence recently with its first operational mission loss. Meanwhile, questions continue over its launch of US intelligence satellites from NZ soil”, George Block, *Press*, 28/7/20).

The article just cited covers issues highlighted in the title, with commentary on both the company and its founder Peter Beck. Reporter George Block also interviews another key figure of the Rocket Lab enterprise, which started up in 2006 (ibid.). This person sports the name Mark Rocket, having been so enamoured of rocketry that he changed his surname “about two decades ago” (ibid.). He helped Peter Beck, the NZ leading figure in Rocket Lab and current Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to get the aerospace company off the ground, as it were.

Mark Rocket is a utopian sci-fi addict, promoting the infinite exploitation of resources in space for humankind. In such visionary mode, he had ruled out any “military work” for the enterprise, and Peter Beck had also endorsed this commitment early on, saying “*we’re not about killing people*” [my emphasis] (ibid.). But, in fact, Beck got hooked early on military work, even landing “a contract with the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which develops cutting-edge military technology” (ibid.). Rocket Lab’s contract has contributed to the powering of “inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), which are primarily designed to deliver nuclear weapons” (ibid.).

These days, in his zombie stupidity, Peter Beck comforts his narrowly focused self-interested career focus with the blind belief that American “military intelligence helps keep Kiwis safe” (ibid.). But Rocket Lab is certainly *about killing people!* It has demonstrated a chilling willingness to eagerly earn money from helping the American empire in its blood-soaked operations around the planet.

Outrageously, too, Rocket Lab unashamedly exults in the violation of NZ’s purported nuclear free zone. This company and its transnational corporation (TNC) drivers – *most egregiously Lockheed Martin* – are blatantly programming us, along with our Defence Force’s new Boeing Poseidon-8A patrol/anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft, etc. for WWII . . .

Milking The Heavenly Money Manna While Opening the Gates of Hell!

“Defence work continues to be lucrative for Rocket Lab. US government records show the company

won another DARPA contract, valued at almost \$US7 million, in 2018. It also secured a \$100,000 contract from the Department of the Army and a \$50,000 deal with the Department of the Air Force” (ibid.). As well, it has gone on to have similarly lucrative contracts with the US National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA).

In 2019, Rocket Lab “was selected by the US Air Force as one of eight launch providers” competing for almost a billion dollars’ worth of orders (ibid.). Among the various war-related American agencies for which the company has launched satellites is the US spy outfit, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), which boasts an octopus logo, boasting that: “Nothing Is Beyond Our Reach” (ibid.).

Make no mistake! – *while it lasts there is always lots of money preparing for a really good Doomsday and the ultimate horrific spectacle!* Such are the antics of the killer ape gripped by the Freudian “death instinct”. Are there are enough motivated and active people in the world to call a stop to this self-destructive drive?! So far what journalist George Block has described is certainly most revealing, if so very damning in its implications. Block does then briefly mention some of the controversy relating to this American military work, particularly as it concerns the NRO (ibid.).

“Mark Rocket parted ways with Rocket Lab, now headquartered in California, in 2011” (ibid.). But Rocket is cagey about why he left the company and still cheers on Rocket Lab as being “at the cutting edge of private space flight globally, continuing to succeed” (ibid.). Rocket now “runs his own aerospace company in Canterbury, Kea Aerospace” (ibid.). This firm most admirably steers clear of any “defence contracting” and is focused on “developing a high-altitude pseudo-satellite to fly in the stratosphere”, and provide “high-resolution imagery that could be used for agriculture and disaster management” (ibid.).

Meantime, Peter Beck defends Rocket Lab’s military work and spy role. He is a keen participant in the “Five Eyes” intelligence/covert action network. According to his eminently self-serving spiel, American “intelligence keeps us safe”; and that: “Unfortunately, there’s a lot of

bad actors in the world” (ibid.). To be sure, he is proud and “honoured” to be an operative in the US war machine. *In sum, Beck is happy these days to work as an agent for some of the worst and craziest of the world’s “bad actors”!*

Off Their Rockets!

Reporter George Block goes on to claim that: “Rocket Lab’s Electron rockets carry far more than just defence satellites to space” (ibid.). But the glaring problem here is that so many commercially secretive payloads can be geared for “dual use”, i.e. both civilian and military, let alone military alone. Moreover, so many payloads launched by Rocket Lab can be unknown and disguised in their military reach, whatever the commercialised hype.

Again, the inter-connections of commercial ventures and military projects go a lot deeper. As the history of the American militarisation of space shows: “Space-based communications have spread with the explosion of commercial systems. Today, the US needs military *and commercial* (my emphasis) communications satellites to conduct operations” (“Defending Space: US Anti-Satellite Warfare And Space Weaponry”, Clayton KS Chun, Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2006, p29).

Even years well before Rocket Lab and similar ventures took off, “the (US) military (had already increasingly) turned to the commercial market to enhance its communications capabilities with leased lines” (ibid.). The connections between civilian and military indeed go even much further. Weather satellite networks “have been a key element of military space programmes since its inception” (ibid., p31). Despite his obvious unease with defence contracting in the aerospace industry, Mark Rocket admits to retaining “a small commercial interest in Rocket Lab” (“Rocket Lab Defends Spy Role”, op. cit.). He also heartily praises his former business partner Peter Beck “and the creation of an orbital space programme” (ibid.).

For certain, the conclusion of George Block’s article ends on a “*Rah, Rah, Hooray!*” note for Rocket Lab. Block quotes Mark Rocket elaborating to the effect that: “The reality is Rocket Lab has contributed a lot to making space more accessible. It is an incredible success story for NZ, and Peter Beck and

the team have done a marvellous job” (ibid.). In all, Western, and especially Anglo-American, capitalism is becoming more and more pervasively militarised. It surely all amounts to an ultimately self-destructive momentum. And Aotearoa/NZ is now very intimately involved...

Space War Into World War

The stark grim reality, in fact, is that Rocket Lab is a brazenly engineered intrusion into Aotearoa/NZ, undermining our national independence, subverting our democracy, perverting our priorities, and oiling the tentacles of the American military-industrial complex and its pernicious grip on our country! The agents of Doomsday are among us and exulting in their success to date!!

“Rocket Lab now builds a new Electron launch vehicle every 18 days” (ibid.). In July 2020, it was lining up a rocket that would “take off in a few months from its Launch Complex 2 on Wallops Island, Virginia, in a US Space Force Mission” (ibid.). The launch will help the US Air Force’s Space and Missile Systems Center’s projects. Founder and CEO Peter Beck wants his company to keep growing and facilitating WWII scenarios.

“The Wallops complex is in partnership with the (US) Department of Defense’s Space Test Programme and the Space and Missile Systems Center’s Small Launch and Targets Division” (“Rocket Lab Rolls Out Launch Vehicle At Its Wallops Island Complex”⁸, 30/4/20).

In its perversity, Rocket Lab exults in this sort of “war toys for the boys” stuff. It is locked in the technological death cult “battle-cry” mind-set. As Rocket Lab’s chief exponent, Peter Beck exemplifies the very epitome of evolutionary peak exuberance in his entrepreneurial enthusiasm, so lavishly celebrated by our media and business/politico Establishment.

Pre-empting The Space Industry's Inevitable Boom And Bust?

Over time, corporate continuity has been pre-eminent. Lockheed Martin is the key investor in Rocket Lab. For Lockheed Martin, reaching to militarise the heavens is just par for the course. This corporate war machine designed the original booster system for “Star Wars”, a programme which included Payload Launch Vehicles. Indeed, it manu-

factured as well a whole range of military infrastructure from Airborne Lasers to the mass destruction Trident missiles (“The New Nuclear Danger”, op. cit., p216).

There is now mounting concern here in our own country that Peter Beck’s cynically calculated entrepreneurship – so widely extolled and lauded to the skies by the political Establishment and its media – has actually made Aotearoa/NZ a likely target in a nuclear-oriented confrontation (e.g., “Sooooo, When Will We Talk About How Rocket Lab Has Made NZ A Legitimate Military Target?”, Martyn Bradbury⁹, 22/9/20). *Zombie stupidity has been rampant again in little “ole NZ”!*

A recent example of Lockheed Martin’s contribution to the militarisation of Earth was demonstrated by the highly controversial deployment of its Theater High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in South Korea – “a ground-based system intended to destroy theatre ballistic-missile threats to troops and military equipment” (ibid., p216). This THAAD deployment is just another thrust of America’s “Armageddon” proclivities around the world, intent on deflecting as much of the mayhem away from the Homeland as possible.

Overall, then, the space industry, so integrally linked with Trump’s new Space Force, not only locks us further into global warmongering but represents a huge waste of resources in planetary overshoot. The energy that is currently channelled into these space war preparations could, and surely should – *most urgently and comprehensively!* – be directed at pre-empting, mitigating, and coping with global warming and related environmental problems.

As well – *and so importantly!* – we should be alleviating and offsetting human suffering as far as possible in transition to more sustainable paths of livelihood. Similarly, we desperately need to address all the other dire aspects of the rapidly increasing environmental crisis: human population growth; wildlife extinction; plastic pollution; forestry and ecosystem destruction; etc. The only international approach that can work is founded on far greater co-operation and the fairer sharing of resources.

Compounding Geopolitical

Confrontations

Yet the US and its allies are squaring off against major rivals Russia and China. Under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) umbrella, they are intending to intrude as far as possible hard up against the borders of Russia in an encirclement strategy. Long-entrenched dictator Alexander Lukashenko’s seemingly crumbling regime in Belarus is the latest land in the capitalist West’s sights. Many people there may well wish for freedom, independence, and democracy but they are currently caught up in the political cross-fire of rival foreign forces playing a much bigger game.

As always, Washington targets potential comprador personnel in the countries it wants to influence, invest in, rip resources out of, etc. (“Confessions Of An Economic Hit Man: The Shocking Inside Story Of How America REALLY Took Over The World”, John Perkins, Ebury Press, 2005). An example is Valery Tsepkalo, who fled Belarus in July 2020. “Tsepkalo, a former Ambassador to the US and founder of a successful hi-tech park (modelled on Silicon Valley), had been widely seen as President Alexander Lukashenko’s top rival in the August 9 vote, but he was denied a spot on the ballot” (“Politician Flees With Kids”, *Press*, 26/7/20).

As can be seen from his biography on *Wikipedia*¹⁰, Valery Tsepkalo is a Belarusian politician, who espouses far Right entrepreneurial views. He has had very close ties to American movers and shakers (ibid.). But the US power elite have a damning and horrendous record of callous disregard and freely dispensed “collateral damage” to the peoples of the countries they target.

Very Scary Times Ahead!

Stephen F Cohen, Professor of Russian Studies and History at New York University, posted a most prophetic warning at the start of this century. “If NATO moves farther toward Russia, acting on Clinton Administration statements about including the former Soviet republics of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and possibly even Ukraine, it will cross a Rubicon fraught with even greater perils. If nothing else, Moscow is likely to redeploy missiles in Belarus, now in a Union with Russia, on the border of NATO Poland. The result would be a new nuclear confrontation in Europe, this time with

Moscow in considerably less control of its hair-trigger weapons" ("Failed Crusade: America And The Tragedy Of Post-Communist Russia", WW Norton & Co., 2000, pp233/4).

In the northern autumn of 2020: "Minsk and Moscow have both accused foreign forces of attempting to destabilise Belarus. The European Union and US have called for fresh elections and are planning sanctions in response to police violence" ("Putin Props Up Belarus Dictator", *Press*, 16/9/20 - note here the sort of headline never applied in the US's long sordid history of propping up dictators around the world!). Since President Putin has made clear that Belarus is vital to Russia's national security, the West's aggressive march of encirclement could certainly end in a most catastrophic fashion!

As Professor Cohen stressed back in 2000: "The use of NATO for offensive military purposes, a radical departure from its original defensive mission, particularly in Russia's traditional backyard, also must stop. Coming on the heels of the alliance's expansion, the US-led bombing of (the former) Yugoslavia in 1999 inflicted 'a deep psychological wound' on Russian political life. Its consequences, all of them bad, continue to unfold" (ibid., p234).

One such consequence was that these attacks influenced Russia to unleash itself in the conflict with Muslim Chechnya (long the object of hypocritically focused Western propaganda). "It diminished Moscow's willingness to cooperate with NATO or the US on strategic matters. It even aroused the fear that Russia might be NATO's next victim - 'Yugoslavia yesterday, Russia tomorrow'" (ibid.). Russia made its concerns clear. "One immediate consequence was the new Kremlin doctrine reinstating the West as an enemy and expanding the conditions under which it would use those nuclear weapons" already in its arsenal, and those which it would further develop (ibid.).

Greedy Geopolitical Gaming Could Certainly Generate Crisis

Professor Cohen also made a heartfelt appeal about the: "Reckless behaviour on the other side of Russia, in the Caspian Sea region with its large oil and gas reserves, also must end" (ibid.). He was specifically referring here to the Clinton

Administration's aggressive pursuit of "pipeline arrangements with several former Soviet republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia designed to limit or shut off Moscow's access to those deposits".

"In the pursuit, there has been a growing US political, financial, and even military presence in a potentially explosive region that for centuries was part of the Tsarist empire" (ibid., p235). Already back in the 1990s, Russia was confronting the spectre of "hostile encirclement" (ibid.; see: "The Globalisation Of War", op. cit., pxii; for more historical detail and context, refer to "The New Great Game: Blood And Oil In Central Asia", Lutz Kleveman, Atlantic Books, 2003).

There is a serious danger of widespread violence breaking out between Russia and the West. In late August 2020, NATO carried out what were meant to be intimidatory manoeuvres along Russia's frontiers. One incident of Russian retaliation was the warning given to this provocation by Putin's jet fighters, which buzzed an American B-52. Such incidents have also taken place in the South China Sea vis-à-vis China.

To be sure, aircraft and warship "chicken" war-gaming can, at worst, end up in a very dangerous nuclear "chicken"-type confrontational crisis! International peace-making agencies coordinated by the UN have to try and do their best in calming everyone down, and working out viable means of long-term cooperation and accommodation. There is also a growing host of other geopolitical players and lesser foes, including North Korea, Iran, Venezuela, etc. As well, the American empire is endeavouring to suppress or foster insurgencies across the world in accordance with its globalist aims. *The big powers risk going off barking mad!*

Western Human Rights Hypocrisy Can Be Horrific!

For states with a geopolitical agenda, propaganda techniques to mobilise their peoples are standard routine practice. The Anglo-American axis is pervasive with such propaganda. "Khmer Rouge Executioner Joined In The Slaughter Of A Fifth Of Cambodia's People" read the banner headline of the obituary cum "Life Story" of one of the 20th Century's most reviled evil doers, Kiang

Guek Eav, better known as "Comrade Duch" (*Press*, 9/8/20). The fanatically extremist "Khmer Rouge regime that ruled Cambodia between 1975 and 1979" had a madly perverted Communist creed of creating a pure new society from so-called "Year Zero".

In pursuit of its extremist utopian vision, the Pol Pot-led regime "killed about 1.7 million people - a fifth of the population" (ibid.). On "the killing fields" of Cambodia, "class enemies" were cleansed from society, and the rest put to work on farms where many died from "starvation and overwork, or were executed" (ibid.) Comrade Duch became known as the head prison executioner and torturer. He accounted for some 20,000 horribly unfortunate victims at the notorious Tuol Sleng, "a secret political prison known as S-21" (ibid.).

Cambodia's Communist neighbour Vietnam invaded in 1979 and thankfully overthrew the viciously repressive regime. The Khmer Rouge, however, have lived on in Western culture as a ghastly example of enemy forces to which we should be implacably opposed, both on human rights grounds and on grounds of obvious self-interest. In reality, perceived self-interest immediately took pride of place in the West's treatment of Cambodia, even immediately in the very wake of the liberating Vietnamese invasion. Indeed, the US had already prepared the ground. I explain and expound on this below.

When invading or intervening in so many countries as the American-led West has done, proclaimed freedom for the people concerned is often a major component of the propaganda arsenal. And so often this claim is just pure bullshit! The human cost of Anglo-American crimes is enormous, let alone all the still unfolding consequences.

The outcomes can be dire on multiple fronts. The covert American intervention, and then the overt invasion of Vietnam led in turn to the secret invasion under the Nixon presidency of Cambodia. But the biggest war crime was the secret and illegal bombing of neutral Cambodia as guided by the then US National Security Adviser (and later Secretary of State), Henry Kissinger.

A Hidden Horror Story

"The Western version is that Cambodia's nightmare began in 1975, 'Year Zero', when the Khmer Rouge took power. In fact, 'Year Zero' was 1969, when President Richard Nixon and his (then National Security Adviser) Henry Kissinger, launched their secret and illegal bombing of neutral Cambodia, with American pilots' logs being falsified to conceal the crime." ("Hidden Agendas", John Pilger, Vintage, 1998, pp32/33).

Nixon wanted his bombers "to hit everything" and Kissinger relayed the order: "A massive bombing campaign in Cambodia. Anything that flies on anything that moves" ("Kissinger Tapes Describe Crises, War And Stark Photos Of Abuse", *New York Times*, 27/5/04¹¹).

"Between 1969 and 1973, American bombers killed three-quarters of a million Cambodian peasants in an attempt to destroy North Vietnamese supply bases, many of which did not exist. During one six-month period in 1973, B-52 aircraft dropped more bombs on Cambodians, living in straw huts, than were dropped on Japan during all of WWII: the equivalent of five Hiroshimas" ("Hidden Agendas", op. cit., p33).

The slaughter perpetrated by American aircraft became the crucial factor in fuelling the desire for revenge among Khmer Rouge cadres on those they saw as collaborators with the US (ibid). Many entire villages were razed to the ground, leaving huge craters, "still visible from the air" ("From Pol Pot To ISIS: 'Anything That Flies On Everything That Moves'", 8/10/14¹²).

In the words of John Pilger, the top investigative journalist on the Cambodian war experience (and indeed on many Western modern war crimes), it ignited "an Asian Holocaust" ("The New Rulers Of The World", op. cit., p8; see also his "Year Zero (1979)", chapter 7, pp120-157, in "Tell Me No Lies: Investigative Journalism And Its Triumphs", ed., John Pilger, Jonathan Cape, 2004).

There are grim parallels right up to what is happening in 2020 and trending on into the future. To quote Pilger again: "ISIS is the progeny of those in Washington and London who, in destroying Iraq as both a state and a society, conspired to commit an epic crime against humanity. Like Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, ISIS (is) the mutation of a Western State terror dispensed by a venal imperial elite undeterred by the consequences of actions taken at great remove in distance and culture. Their culpability is unmentionable in 'our' societies, making accomplices of those who suppress this critical truth" ("From Pol Pot To ISIS", op. cit.).

But Wait! There's More, A Lot More!!

"The trail of blood is endless: from the subjugation of the Philippines and Central America, to the greatest terrorist acts of all, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; from the devastation of Indochina, such as the murder of 600,000 peasants in neutral Cambodia (*to reiterate for emphasis*); and the use of chemicals and starvation against civilian populations; to the shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane, and the

bombing of prisoners of war in a mud fort in Afghanistan. The documentation of American terrorism is voluminous ..." ("The New Rulers Of The World", op. cit., p141).

Since 2002, when the paragraph was written, the US-led "War on Terror" has devastated the Middle East with millions more people killed, injured, displaced, and severely deprived. By 2014, Syria was "at least the 14th country in the Islamic world that US forces have invaded, or occupied or bombed since 1980" ("How Many Muslim Countries Has The US Bombed?"¹³). Again, since 2014, the time of the latest quote above, the misery and mess inflicted on the Middle East has proceeded to bite even deeper and spread further.

At this point, I want to return to the situation of Cambodia in the wake of the Vietnamese invasion in 1979. With the replacement of the Khmer Rouge regime by a Vietnamese-controlled government, the US was profoundly disturbed by this geopolitical power shift, just as was the case as it seemed with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Pilger damningly points out that "when the Khmer Rouge were finally driven into Thailand by the Vietnamese on Christmas Day 1978, they were received and welcomed into border camps by American covert operations officials, including the same Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) colonel who had planned the secret bombing that had helped bring them to power.

Headquartered in the American Embassy in Bangkok, the Kampuchea Emergency Group set about restoring the Khmer Rouge as the 'resistance' to the Vietnamese-backed regime in Phnom Penh" ("Hidden Agendas", op. cit., p33). American covert operations went on to funnel UN World Food Programme relief to the Khmer Rouge guerrillas and provide military training; including the use of land-mines courtesy of Britain's Special Air Service [SAS] (ibid., pp32/33). But Western aid to the rest of the Cambodian population, over whom the Anglo-American media have ever since so lavishly cried crocodile tears, was absolutely piddling.

On the overt level, the Anglo-American axis went on to brazen effrontery in actually defending and promoting the former Khmer Rouge re-



Henry Kissinger (left)

gime – suitably and conveniently camouflaged – on the world diplomatic stage. This strategy got very little attention in the compliant Western media. “In order to undermine the Vietnamese-supported Hun Sen government, the UN (under US pressure) welcomed back to Phnom Penh the exiled politicians and generals of the ‘Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea’, which was an invention of the US and dominated by the Khmer Rouge” (ibid., p42).

In order to block the influence of Vietnam, the US-led West effectively succeeded in its charade of keeping the de facto Pol Pot regime as the supposedly legitimate UN representatives of the Cambodian people for a number of years. By 1992, the country itself was opening up to the global market. The US-led Western bloc contrived this move under the cover and auspices of the UN (ibid.).

Hyping Up Hypocrisy

Writing in 1998, John Pilger posed the really big question: “How is it that Western Establishments can invert the public truth of their own power and terrorism? The answer is that it is apostasy in Britain and the US to describe the democracies as terrorist states. That distinction is reserved for the likes of Libya and Iran, which of course are pipsqueak terrorists” (ibid., p34).

In the jargon of typical American propaganda, we are the “good guys” and they are the “bad guys” – *simple, eh!*? The Western, especially the Anglo-American self-image, is indeed strictly for simpletons. But it has prevailed as the mainstream creed, with well indoctrinated and brain-washed publics, which gives us a real revelatory insight into our purportedly civilised culture.

Let us return to the *Press* item on the death of Comrade Duch (“Khmer Rouge Executioner...”, op. cit.). “In 2007, Duch... was formally charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, and detained by Cambodia’s UN-backed tribunal, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia” (ibid.). He was “the first Khmer Rouge figure to face justice”, and duly ended up getting life imprisonment (ibid.).

In the wake of 9/11, the Khmer Rouge took a new lease of life as the kind of enemy terrorists we have

to loathe – from Communist revolutionaries to Muslim jihadists. By the time Duch was indicted in 2007, the Anglo-American axis had jettisoned its covert support for the Khmer Rouge and the documented records had conveniently gone down the Orwellian memory-hole.

Contorted And Contrived Political Posturings

The established media continued on with their themes about the evil genocide wrought by Pol Pot and his henchmen. They also readily condemned any Western commentators who had initially been mistaken in their assessment of the Khmer Rouge revolution. In particular, Noam Chomsky got a drubbing for a time. One of these Establishment media figures calling out Chomsky was Francis Wheen, a prominent columnist and author, who has written a biography of Karl Marx.

Wheen can be described as broadly liberal in approach, dishing out criticism to both political Right and Left, but basically a Western ideologue when and where it matters. For example, along with his mate Christopher Hitchens, he was an avid cheer-leader for the illegal Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003. In his book “How Mumbo-Jumbo Conquered The World: A Short History Of Modern Delusions”, Harper Perennial, 2004), Wheen reports that Noam Chomsky first denied the Cambodian genocide, and then played down what had actually happened (pp302/3). But while initially very suspicious of the Establishment line on this particular genocide, Chomsky certainly came round to accept the evidence and fully express his disgust.

Francis Wheen, however, was happy to ignore all the outrageous Western collaboration with the Khmer Rouge after the Vietnamese intervention. He was also content in keeping silence on the US prior bombing and invasion of neutral Cambodia, which proved to be the critical factor in the rise of this revolutionary movement. All this sort of stuff obviously did not fit his own agenda of linking allegedly humanitarian aims to certain Western geopolitical projections and associated military action, as in the former Yugoslavia. Wheen has his own forms of “mumbo-jumbo” (ibid.) As noted, Wheen was a close mate of the late Christopher Hitchens and a comrade-in-arms of the latter’s late-in-

life imperialist bent.

As for the horrors of the Cambodian genocide, one only has to contrast it with the West’s gory celebration of the 1965-70 Indonesian genocide to get a sense of the absolutely stunning hypocrisy at work. Noam Chomsky documents and lays bare US policy in “Human Rights: The Pragmatic Criterion”, Chapter 5 in his “Year 501: The Conquest Continues” (op. cit., pp127-37; see also: “Indonesia History, Genocide: 1965-1966, 40 Years Of Silence”¹⁴; and as well, check out relevant back issues of *PR* on this genocide, and Western State terrorism generally).

Undermining Crony Conspiratorial Crap

So, we have seen how the established Western media treat the Khmer Rouge-perpetrated genocide as a monumental indictment of evil, as compared with this same media’s initial fulsome celebration of the Indonesian genocide. Then there ensued in the West a subsequent embarrassed silence as the international political climate shifted somewhat.

At this stage in the exposition of my essay, I want to look a bit more closely at the horrible ironies implicated in what was entailed in the Anglo-American aid for the Khmer Rouge after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979. John Pilger had revealed how the British SAS had helped Khmer Rouge cadres conduct a guerrilla warfare resistance against the occupying Vietnamese with a special emphasis on landmine use.

Later, the plight of peoples facing landmines around the world was highlighted by the personal international campaign admirably waged by the late Princess Diana. The shocking problems go on (“20 Years After Diana Visit Landmines Still Killing Angola’s Children”, 9/1/17¹⁵).

In recent years, Britain has actually been helping with landmine clearance in a number of affected countries, including Cambodia. This has been happening despite the fact that the major powers like the US continue to abjure international treaties that try and reduce, and indeed eliminate landmines as weapons of war. A news story that caught world attention in September 2020 was that about the African giant pouched rat given international recognition

for its work in landmine clearance (“Magawa The Rat Wins Bravery Medal For Sniffing Out Mines”¹⁶). Magawa has been helping clear landmines in Cambodia.

“Leftover mines are a legacy of the nation's brutal civil war in the 1970s and the 1980s. Up to six million remain undiscovered, according to data from the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). Mine-clearing HALO Trust says over 64,000 casualties and more than 25,000 amputees have been recorded in Cambodia since 1979” (ibid.). There is, of course, a veil of silence over the former role of the Anglo-American axis in pushing the deployment of landmines throughout Cambodia. *This is just another of those many “unmentionables”!*

Civilising Barbarism On A Small Planet

If anyone wants to find out why and how the West, especially the spearhead Anglo-American axis, gained its grossly privileged position and hegemony on planet Earth, then Shashi Tharoor can serve as a most enlightening introductory guide. Tharoor is a former Under Secretary-General at the UN, a Congress MP in India, and a prominent author.

His “Inglorious Empire: What the British Did To India” (op. cit.) presents a damning indictment of the exploitation exacted by British imperialism. India, of course, was the prize “jewel” of the British imperial crown. Shashi Tharoor was one of the international guests at the Auckland Writers' Festival in May 2018. Meanwhile, however, Western civilisation must naturally forge on, whether to the stars and beyond, or grabbing raw resources from under the Earth's melting cryosphere. For example, the Arctic is fast becoming an open ice-free sea subject to growing geopolitical competition!

Yet at the same time, again, according to the lights of the prevailing cultural hegemony, never mind sweating too much angst over geopolitics bumping up against the planetary limits of economic growth!! After all, the Western Establishment and its neo-liberal culture have routinely rationalised the militarised market, with its growing competition for energy sources, minerals, and other materials, etc., as simply embracing the heavenly manna of “free trade” (see my “Beyond Cargo Cultism: Political Economy At Issue”, in

Foreign Control Watchdog 146, December 2017¹⁷).

Green parties are regularly pilloried on the slightest pretext by the crony corporate media. In truth, this all amounts to the stuff of elitist cultural hegemony, with reality screened as much as possible from public view (“The Race For What's Left: The Global Scramble For The World's Last Resources”, Michael Klare, Metropolitan Books, 2012). *There certainly has been lots of “fake news”!*

Inflammatory Imperialism

In the early years of the 21st Century, post-9/11, as one Rightwing professor of history and analyst of international relations acknowledged, there was “a more militaristic attitude on the part of the American government and a related burst of war” (Jeremy Black in preface, “War And The New Disorder In The Twenty-First Century”, Continuum, 2004, pix). The tentacles of empire were activated again in a renewed bout of imperious predation.

Militarist reactionism, enhanced and amplified by accompanying propaganda, was indeed grossly inflamed by the Anglo-American power elite. This militarist mindset and its belligerent results both fuelled and reflected a broad and very ugly trend (e.g. “The Rise Of Anti-Muslim Hate”, *International Socialist Review*¹⁸). Hateful hostility has continued right up to today, whatever crocodile tears that, for instance, the British media might have momentarily shed over the horrible 15th March 2019 mosque mass murders in Christchurch/Otautahi, NZ.

The factors driving hate and antagonism were by this stage very much in operation, and drawing on a long-term pattern of behaviour and sentiment (“Anti-Muslim Hate Is Now Widespread In The UK – And The Media Is Helping Normalise It”, 30/3/18¹⁹). But in the West, and especially within the Anglo-American axis, the sense of white supremacist civilisational superiority is taken for granted, and draws on centuries of overlordship. Currently, the Black Lives Matter movement and associated social stirrings are taking this overlordship to task. But, in turn, the reactionary movements are still very much simmering away.

Anglo-American ideological capitalist fundamentalism and its connec-

tions with aggressive expansionist strategies thus constitute the central issue. Yet, as emphasised, such deep, intertwined linkages are assiduously and systematically excluded from serious purview for the most part by the Western political Establishment and its corporate media. Obviously enough, these institutions do so for eminently self-serving reasons.

As ever, the Anglo-American empire's central goal is the continuing control of Middle Eastern resources. It lies at the base of so much of our angst (“Shadow Wars – The Secret Struggle For The Middle East”, Christopher Davidson, Oneworld Publishing, 2016). The empire marshals its “media, financial power, and military power in order to use both covert and overt mechanisms to maintain” hegemony in the region (ibid).

Ironies Of Imperial Rule And Islamist Insurrection Run Amok!

Not only is oil, as regulated by Saudi Arabia, of crucial importance as humankind's key source of energy, but ultimate foreign control of this oil by the US underpins the American domestic economy in a number of ways. It is surely most significant that: “Without the dollar support (as relayed by oil imperialism and the kingdom only selling it in \$US), the US would more than likely lose its preferential position as being the global fiat currency” (ibid.).

Oil prices, of course, have slumped heavily during the current Covid-19 crisis but the US has taken the opportunity to build up its strategic reserves. The great irony underlying all this, of course, is that humankind has to phase out the use of fossil fuels, including oil, as much as possible in order to properly tackle anthropogenic climate change.

Meantime, in the greatest of geopolitical ironies and, indeed, contradictions, whilst the fundamentalist Wahhabi version of Islam has facilitated the US-led control of the Sunni kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it has also been the primary cause of Muslim jihadi resistance and terrorism against the West. If “the Western neo-liberal economic/political order”, especially per means of the Anglo-American empire, still keeps its grip on the Middle East for the moment, this grip is starting to slip.

For example, the phenomena of

Houthi rebels in Yemen launching drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities represent yet another indicator of this increasing instability and loss of imperial control. Similarly, the recent anti-government and anti-corruption rioting throughout Iraq points to this same pattern of eroding Anglo-American hegemony in the Middle East.

Moreover, American-orchestrated efforts to overthrow the Russian-backed Shiite Assad dictatorship in yet another “regime change” have so far failed badly. In fact, the only thing that the US-backed jihadi groups have succeeded in doing is the systematic dissemination of chaos and mayhem, cunningly camouflaged by the Western corporate crony media.

The presence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Syria has been the perennial excuse for a continuing American foothold there. As usual, the “collateral damage” in terms of human lives lost and suffering, let alone the physical destruction inflicted, has been enormous and horrendous. Both sides of the Syrian civil war have been ruthless in the devastation wrought. But Western responsibility is consistently covered up or deflected.

Malevolent Murdoch-Led Media Propaganda

And what caused the emergence of the extremist ISIS, the alleged reason for so much of the American intervention in Syria, in the first place? *Oh dear, don't ask our public purveyors of false news!* It's just too painfully embarrassing for the Anglo-American political Establishment, its crony media, collusive academic commentariat, etc. *For sure, power without accountability is very dangerous indeed!!*

For many, many years, Middle Eastern civilian lives have been just so much “collateral damage” at the hands of its imperial masters (“The Great War For Civilisation: The Conquest Of The Middle East”, Robert Fisk, Harper Perennial, 2005/06). Today's “normal” pernicious policy and practice, as perpetrated by the Pentagon and its allies, follow on in the same tracks (ibid.).

Malign Western media spin is the name of the game. Whenever the causes of the emergence of ISIS ever happen to be mentioned now, truth is very likely to be the first casualty.

For instance, take a typical Murdoch *Times* article (“Turkey Strikes At Kurdish Towns”, reproduced in the *Press*, 11/10/19). A clause actually reads that, among other outcomes, the Syrian civil war “led to the birth of ISIS” [my emphasis] (ibid.).

So, there we have it. According to the British Establishment *Times* a la Rupert Murdoch-peddled propaganda, ISIS was a product of the Syrian civil war. In terms of the actual origins of ISIS, this spiel is a calculatedly malign perversion of the truth. In fact, as we very well know, in light of the indisputably damning evidence, ISIS was a direct outcome of the chaos and mayhem unleashed in the “shock and awe” Anglo-American illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003.

“Fake News” And Fighting For The Future

So, to recap then on the origins of ISIS, this extreme Islamist movement arose primarily out of the fighting in Iraq. Having effectively originated in Iraq, the incipient terrorist organisation was driven out of Iraq into Syria by the so-called US-led “Surge” (January 2007 to July 2008) and ensuing conflict. The American command employed its special forces in a range of tactics to crush the Sunni insurgents and their supporters.

Yet, ever so ironically and conveniently in Syria, the Americans and their mates were already supporting a host of Islamist jihadists in armed insurgency against the Assad regime, including a large number allied with al Qaeda one way or another – *directly or indirectly!* So, ISIS had lots of fertile ground there on which to take root and grow.

Loretta Napoleoni, an Italian journalist and political analyst, has traced the sources and channels of financial funding for Islamist terrorist networks, especially ISIS. Napoleoni has been intimately involved with the Western political Establishment to the extent of chairing the countering terrorism financing group for the Club de Madrid.

This body coordinates former Presidents and PMs from 65 countries with the proclaimed aim of promoting democracy. Founded in 2001, Club de Madrid even has NZ's former National PM Jenny Shipley as a Vice-President, *something perhaps rather disturbing given her very self-*



seeking record!

Despite Loretta Napoleoni's specific anti-terrorist role with the Western-oriented Club de Madrid, she has made some scathing commentary on the West's role in the Middle East. Her seemingly glaring conflicts of interest stand out starkly in multiple ways, not only regarding her function in tracing the money trails of Muslim terrorists. Most significantly, Napoleoni epitomises the Anglo-American axis in certain critical dimensions, living in both London and Montana (US), while acting as a consultant for the commodities markets, and travelling regularly to Middle Eastern countries for this purpose, among others. But, yet again, in the light of various alternative associations, she can be seen as quite Leftist in political outlook!

Anyway, given this complex context and set of associations, Loretta Napoleoni's writings pose a quite dramatically contrasting foil from a Western perspective to the Rupert Murdoch-type line on the so-called “War on Terrorism” (e.g. see her “Terrorism And The Economy: How The War On Terror Is Bankrupting The World”, Seven Stories Press, 2010). She can indeed even echo themes from Robert Fisk's “The Great War For Civilisation” (op. cit.).

A Burning Phoenix From The Ashes . . .

More specifically, for my purposes here, Napoleoni skewers the reasons and setting for the rise of ISIS. Calling at the time for “a new approach to stopping this hostile politi-

cal entity”, she went on to challenge the denialist propaganda of the West (“The Islamist Phoenix: The Islamic State And The Redrawing Of The Middle East”, Seven Stories, 2014, p7).

She said: “Such a strategy cannot be produced by denying the obvious fact that the genesis of the (ISIS) Caliphate is deeply intertwined with decades of Western politics and interventions in the Middle East” (ibid.). The illegal 2003 Iraq invasion and subsequent American self-justifying propaganda created so much of the myth that fed the rise of ISIS. Let another critic of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, Peter W. Galbraith, a political player who has had a vested interest in the country's Kurdistan oil resources, give a further take on what happened. Note Galbraith was writing in 2006 when things were unravelling fast in the aftermath of the invasion.

A relevant quote follows: “The turmoil in Iraq's Sunni Arab regions provided a golden opportunity for foreign terrorists and jihadis to fight the US. Al-Qaeda moved into Iraq, generating spin-offs, allies, and imitators. A Jordanian thug, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, set up al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, and claimed responsibility for some of the most spectacular bombings and gruesome killings, including the videotaped beheadings of Western hostages. Like Ba'athists (Saddam Hussein's base), the foreign terrorists and the indigenous fundamentalists seem well funded” (“The End Of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created A War Without End”, Simon & Schuster, 2006/7, p180).

Al-Zarqawi had created his own maverick Iraqi insurgent group called Tawid al Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad). It became what Galbraith calls “al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia”. This group is better known as al-Qaeda in Iraq or the Islamist State in Iraq (ISI). It is worth registering here that the start of ISIS, given al-Zarqawi's history, can even be traced back to 1999 in Jordan, i.e., if we want to be esoterically pedantic, and so let the US off the hook for the real impetus behind this terror movement!

Once again, ironies emerged to run rampant on the Iraqi battleground! In the so-called “Sunni Awakening”, under the tutelage of the US-concocted counter-insurgency “Surge” (January 2007-July 2008), a lot of the

regional population turned against al-Zarqawi's jihadi group. The traditional sheikh leadership worked to eliminate it. In 2006, al-Zarqawi himself was killed, along with his daughter, by an American air strike.

While both Napoleoni and Galbraith are strong critics of the illegal 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, they still – significantly enough – reserve the terms “terrorist” and “terrorism” for the retail-type perpetrators of the Muslim world like al-Zarqawi. They do not similarly so label the Western agents and purveyors of wholesale “State terrorism”. Imperial Western State terrorists exact their human rights abuses per invasions, drone attacks, special forces' death squads, covert operations, etc., as well the open use of economic sanctions and bullying diplomacy. As George Orwell so brilliantly showed, language can be vital in shaping perceptions and understandings.

Deepening Disruptive Divisiveness

With the arrival of al-Zarqawi in Iraq, fresh from the battlefields of Afghanistan, the resistance to the American invasion took a new turn on an old conflict inherent in Muslim civilisation itself. Most crucially, in Napoleoni's words: “The late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a man, who openly challenged the leadership of al Qaeda, ... (savagely) reignited the ancient and bloody conflict between Sunnis and Shiites as a key tactic for the rebirth of the Caliphate” (“The Islamist Phoenix”, op. cit., p8).

Al Qaeda, as enjoined by Osama bin Laden, had worked to unite Sunnis and Shiites together against Western foreign control and occupation. But al-Zarqawi deliberately blew this approach apart in a sectarian frenzy. Suicide attacks, as earlier highlighted, were the hallmark of al-Zarqawi's approach. But indiscriminate killing proved to be a counter-productive tactic for his group, among other factors failing to fire up widespread collective resistance against the US-led invasion.

Yet problems grew for the invaders. The US “Surge” strategy underlying the “Sunni Awakening” might have harnessed the motivational energies of a considerable number of locals, particularly as channelled by the more conservative traditional leadership. But the “Surge” strategy in turn also alienated, and even activated, others in revenge mode by the de-

ployment of repressive “death squad” methods, among other tactics employed.

Such American methods were modelled on the “Phoenix” counter-insurgency programme (1967-73) against the National Liberation Front - the “Viet Cong” - in Vietnam (for the Vietnam experience, see: “The Phoenix Program”, Douglas Valentine, William Morrow and Company, 1990). To emphasise once more, the silence and complicity of the Anglo-America media on such war crimes is systematic and pervasive. “When it comes to the CIA and the press, one hand washes the other” (ibid., p339). The same goes in general for the Western media and its relationship with the military/intelligence apparatus.

Phoenix Rising!

After Zarqawi's assassination in 2006, ISI continued to operate as al Qaeda's branch in Iraq. But the “Surge” and the “Sunni Awakening” movement had left this particular insurgent group very much on the back foot. “Not until 2010, when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became the leader of what was left of al Qaeda in Iraq, did things start to change” (“The Islamist Phoenix”, op. cit., p11). The group wanted now to be called ISI as an independent entity, i.e., separate from al Qaeda. Al-Baghdadi targeted the Shiite government, which had got very unpopular under the rule of Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki (2006-14).

From 2011, al-Baghdadi looked increasingly to Syria to grow his organisation. Then later: “In 2013, following its merger with a section of Jabhat al Nusra, a Syrian jihadist group affiliated with al Qaeda, the organisation renamed itself Islamic State in Iraq & the Levant (al Sham), better known by the acronym ISIL or ISIS” (ibid., p16). In actuality, ISIS soon ended up in a vicious turf war with Jabhat al Nusra in Syria. *Birds of a feather can sometimes tear themselves apart!*

Stemming back to its origins under the leadership of the Jordanian al-Zarqawi and his confreres, ISIS had embraced radical Salafism. This reactionary fundamentalist creed amounts to a total rejection of Western values, although with a major qualification. ISIS was to prove ironically, and even outrageously pragmatic in the use of various modern technologies, especially the Internet.

ISIS most dramatically demonstrated its syncretic terrorist tactics with its Internet videos aimed at inspiring rebellion and recruitment. In the end, however, ISIS's horrible pictures of beheadings (at least as regards the immediate procedures) were used successfully against it. The Western Establishment media marshalled strongly antagonistic opinion, both in the West and much of the Middle East, as well as elsewhere. This public opinion endorsed all the violent interventions to wipe out ISIS.

Al Baghdadi himself was eventually trapped by US special forces in October 2019 in Syria's conflict-torn north-western Idlib province. He then committed suicide, sadly taking his two children with him. Idlib has been undergoing a very painful humanitarian crisis with refugees and other civilians caught out in the contest rife with all the competing forces involved.

Voluminous Volatility And Compounding Complexity

From 2011 on, the conflict sparked in Syria turned into a horrible ongoing human tragedy. The complexities of the conflict and the contortions of the various rival forces got even deeper and more entangled. By mid-October 2019, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had actually moved in support of the formerly rebel Kurds against the invading Turkish forces. There are multiple ironies here. In seeing Shiite-ruled Syria as an enemy regime, NATO-affiliated Sunni Turkey had allowed jihadist fighters, including ISIS-aligned insurgents, to pour into this country across a porous border.

Later, however, when exercising greater domestic control, it suffered some karma in a backlash from ISIS terrorists within Turkey itself. But the dictatorial Erdogan-controlled Turkish State's main focus was the civil war against its own Kurdish population in the south-east of the country. The Anglo-American warmongers later went on to lament the US retreat in Syria. But the US still maintains a military foothold there in the north-east. The corporate media never contrast the legal presence of Russia with the illegal intrusion of America anyway!

With America's latest betrayal of the Kurds, Turkey's repeated invasions of Syria, recent mass rioting in Iraq, the perilous ongoing US stand-off

with Iran, etc., the whole region is constantly wracked by heart-breaking conflict and misery for its inhabitants. *Sometimes the declared concerns of the West for freedom, democracy, and human rights can just get too overwhelming, choking one up with raw emotion!!*

Assad, of course, is strongly supported by Russia, which "opposes the Turkish operation", and has urged the Kurds to unite with the Syrian government ("Turkey Strikes At Kurdish Towns", *Press*, 11/10/19). Indeed, the Russians swiftly moved to replace the Americans, who retreated back to Iraq for the most part (e.g., "Russians Move In After US Deserts Battlefield", a report reproduced from Rupert Murdoch's *The Times*, in the *Press*, 17/10/19).

Fracturing Frontlines

The key Manbij base, "on the western edge of territory controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the group that joined forces with the US five years ago to fight Islamic State (ISIS)" was taken over by Russian soldiers. SDF's dominant faction, the Kurdish YPG, is the Syrian arm of the PKK guerrilla group that has fought a long war with Ankara inside Turkey itself. The US has helped the Turkish State wage a ruthless counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign to try and crush the PKK ("Spoils Of War: The Human Cost Of America's Arms Trade", John Tirman, *The Free Press*, 1997).

In the 1990s, "Turkey's 'front-line' status was forged in the Cold War but was reconfirmed as a bulwark against Muslim radicalism, whether it be Saddam's version of Arab nationalism, or Khomeini's (Shiite Iranian) revolution", (or even Assad's Shiite regime) (ibid., p235). American exports of military helicopters and other aid to the Turkish regime flagrantly overrode human rights protests (ibid.).

To return to the near present, Assad's forces were given permission by the SDF and its Kurdish leadership to enter Manbij to bolster its positions" ("Russians Move In...", op. cit.). The YPG had wanted to establish a Kurdish separatist republic in north-eastern Syria but its proximity to Turkey's south-east, as well as the Kurdistan region in Iraq (despite differences in politics) was always going to cause acute unease in various quarters. To be sure, Turkey's main objective is to prevent unity between the Turkish and Syrian Kurds and so the formation of a joint bloc.

Following the American betrayal of the Kurds (*yet one more episode in a long and cynical record of betraying Kurds!*) and a green light for the Turkish invasion, "Turkey's Western allies, including the UK and the EU, have also voiced their opposition to the (joint Turkish-US) operation" (ibid.). Since Turkey, as indicated, is part of the NATO military alliance, this voiced opposition adds



Graphic by Ian Dalziel

yet another level of complexity to the crisis.

Ramifying Reactions Running Deep

Meantime, Russia's intervention is proclaimed as intended to keep Turkish and Syrian forces apart, aiming at a mediated ceasefire and, ultimately, peace. But Russia has been heavily and ruthlessly engaged in military action in support of the Assad regime. Indeed, its intervention has effectively, for the moment, dealt a crushing blow to any American hopes for a Syrian regime change!

Turkey's President Erdogan, however, is refusing to back off, intent on carving off a supposed "safe zone" along the Syrian-Turkish border, controlled by his troops and allied Syrian rebels like the so-called "National Army" (ibid.). Lamentably once more, Syrian civilians, especially children, have fallen victim to the ongoing Turkish assault and continuing presence (e.g., "Civilians Bear Brunt As Turks Advance On Kurdish Districts", *Press*, 12/10/19)

For the "civil war" background regarding human rights in Syria, see my "Growing Challenges For Peace: Compounding Geopolitical Confrontation, Insurgency & Counter-Insurgency", *PR* 55, June 2018²⁰ (That issue had this all caps banner headline on its cover: THE WAR WITH NO GOOD GUYS).

A temporary ceasefire was later negotiated in a US-Turkey deal, with President Trump obviously pushed to this action by Congress. Russia clearly had an input too. ISIS sleeper cells and escaping prisoners had taken advantage of the turmoil to carry out further terrorism. The SDF warned that the Turkish invasion was re-opening the ISIS can of vipers. But the complications and causal chain underlying the present ongoing turmoil and uncertainty go even deeper, as we have continually recorded.

Deadly Entanglements And Dissension

Establishment Western commentators are muttering darkly about the political dynamics in the region having shifted in favour of Russia, following the US withdrawal. Yet I have never come across any acknowledgement by such commentators that the American military, along with the CIA, etc., are actually

operating illegally within Syria. Western arrogance and power projection routinely treat both the aggressive and destructive covert and overt intrusions by its agents/forces into other countries as simply a matter of right (see "The Cost Of Living", op. cit.). As I have again emphasised throughout this article, hypocrisy has long been embedded in our culture, flowing naturally from imperial traditions.

Hence the howls of righteous indignation about alleged interference by Russia in American elections, whereas the US/NATO brigade could earlier brazenly engineer the overthrow of a democratically elected government in the Ukraine, and push their aggressive march right up to Russia's borders. We have noted that the official reason for the continuing American presence in Syria, aside from transparent propaganda about trying to protect civilians, has been to fight ISIS. America's critics can point to evidence of calculated machinations in the purported "War on Terror" (e.g., "Protecting Assets: There Is No US War Against ISIS"²¹).

The presence of ISIS, of course, provides an excuse for the US to try and justify its continuing intervention in Syria. But at the same time, we can certainly reject any conspiracy theories about the origins of ISIS. For instance, we do not have to go along with the contention of Professor Michel Chossudovsky that ISIS has been a calculated invention of the Anglo-American axis (e.g. see boxed statement titled: "Who Is Behind The Islamic State Project?", suggesting a "Black Ops" project, in his "The Globalisation Of War", op. cit., p35).

Chossudovsky further elaborates on this thesis, alleging that ISIS was a product of the collaboration between the Saudi National Security Council and the American State Department (in another box titled: "The Islamic State (ISIS) 'Made In America'" (ibid., p157). What is clear enough, however, is the kind of evidence revealing the typical adaptability of American strategy, tailored according to the situation and the greater goals desired. For instance, Chossudovsky points out that: "... according to Israeli intelligence sources (Debka), NATO, in liaison with the Turkish High Command, has been involved in the recruitment of jihadist mercenaries from the outset of the Syrian crisis in March 2011" (ibid., p35).

This is the basis of the force that Turkey continues to support for its own aims in the tragically conflicted Idlib province (e.g. "Turkish-Backed Rebels Say They Seized Town In Syria's Idlib In First Advance", 24/2/20²²). The news item cited immediately above related to a battle within the ongoing armed contest between Turkey and Syria.

Chossudovsky continues: "In relation to the Syrian insurgency, the ISIS fighters together with the Al Qaeda-affiliated jihadist forces of the Al Nusrah Front are the foot soldiers of the Western military alliance. They are covertly supported by US-NATO-Israel. Their mandate is to wage a terrorist insurgency against the Government of Bashar al-Assad" ("The Globalisation Of War", op. cit.). Putting aside Professor Chossudovsky's anti-American bias here in seeing the US as the source of all evil, the reality is that both direct and indirect Western support for Sunni jihadism against the minority Shiite regime has played a big role in the current humanitarian and wider geopolitical tragedy ("Growing Challenges For Peace", op. cit.).

The Serpentine Contortions Of Geopolitics

Anglo-American geopolitical strategy in playing off Muslim militancy against Leftwing or other proscribed enemies has long been standard practice in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Muslim militancy has often been encouraged and deliberately manipulated. It has reaped a whirlwind as in Afghanistan. The 1965-70 Indonesian Genocide mentioned earlier has been the bloodiest and most cynical episode. Then later came the Afghan wars, first against the Soviets, and then, ironies of ironies, against the Taliban, and now also ISIS, etc.

Similarly, since 9/11, groupings of Islamist jihadists have been supported to the hilt by the Anglo-American axis, and other Western agencies, in a concerted strategy in both overthrowing Gaddafi in Libya, and in trying to overthrow the Assad regime in Syria (ibid.). And welcome to Hell for the unfortunate regional inhabitants with all the socio-economic mess, ongoing political instability, and widespread suffering created – *just so much more collateral damage, eh?!*

The West's militarist market de-

mands, along with fossil fuel security, drive the geopolitical struggle in the Middle East, as well as elsewhere. "The Turkish invasion has opened another bloody chapter in Syria's nine-year war, which has already killed over half a million people, (and) forced 13 million others from their homes..." ("Turkey Strikes At Kurdish Towns", op. cit.).

"Syria's Foreign Minister (has) accused Turkey... of 'a war crime and a crime against humanity' for cutting water to more than a dozen towns that resisted Turkish occupation" ("Syria: Turkey 'One Of The Main Sponsors Of Terror'", *Press*, 28/9/20). This "cut-off of water supplies endangered civilian lives, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic" (ibid.).

It is apposite to note here that Russia and NATO-aligned Turkey had, of late, been cosyng up together, but that the latter's intervention in Syria has added a new stressful dimension to their relationship. The two countries square off on opposing sides with Russia backing Assad militarily, and Turkey doing the same for its so-called "National Army" fighting against the regime ("Turkish-Backed Rebels Say...", op. cit.). In the latter part of 2020, tensions remain highly strung across this region for all the various participants.

The Imperialistic "War On Terror" In Action

By September 2020, the American armed foothold on the frontline in north-eastern Syria was crumbling under increasing pressure from Assad and his Russian allies. Face-saving American propaganda aside, it is of fundamental importance that: "Syria is the only significant crude oil producing country in the Eastern Mediterranean region" ("Petroleum Industry In Syria", *Wikipedia*²³). Indeed, the industry "forms a major part of the economy" and accounts (in relatively good times) for about a quarter of the state's revenue" (ibid.). *Guess then the real American motive for hanging on in this part of Syria?!*

To be more specific about the oil resource: "Syria's known oil reserves are mainly in the eastern part of the country – in the Deir ez-Zor Governorate near its border with Iraq and along the Euphrates River" (ibid.). ISIS had "controlled most oil fields in eastern Syria starting from 2013", until it eventually lost its grip (ibid.).

America's illegal intervention and subsequent control of eastern Syria signalled the arrival of a far bigger predator!

"Following the American control of eastern Syria, American President Donald Trump (brazenly) claimed on 28 October 2019 that \$US45 million a month could be earned from the Syrian oil. In November 2019, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad indicated that ISIS terrorists have two partners in stealing the Syrian oil since 2014, (Turkish President) Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his coterie, and the Americans who always try to loot the other countries" (ibid.).

The Yankee imperialists have even blatantly set up a puppet enterprise to steal the oil. "On July 30, 2020, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria signed an agreement with an American oil company, Delta Crescent Energy LLC, to develop oil fields in the region. The Syrian authorities condemned the agreement, and mentioned that: "This agreement is null and void and has no legal basis" ("American-Led Intervention In The Syrian Civil War"²⁴).

America's military planners have long wanted to engineer regime change in Syria. While they have so far failed in this particular case, helping themselves to the country's oil is a bonus in the meantime! The US flouts international law with utter contempt whenever and wherever it suits its imperial aims. Syria's oil industry used to depend quite a lot on Western oil companies like Shell and Total but American-driven economic sanctions have crippled production and exports. This drastic loss of revenue has hit the population hard in a strife-torn country with traditionally a very low per capita gross domestic product (GDP) – *yet one more case of pain and suffering inflicted on millions of people by the American empire in a seemingly endless series of State terrorism and exploitation!*

Conflicts Compounding Across The Globe

One only has to peruse recent newspaper headlines to get a disturbing sense of how geopolitical conflicts are spreading. For example, headlines range from: "Shots Fired On India-China Border" (*Press*, 10/9/20) to "China Boosting Forces To Rival US - Pentagon" (*Press*, 3/9/20); and from "Iran And US Exchange Threats

And Sanctions" (*Press*, 21/9/20), followed by "New US Sanctions [on Iran] Are Illegal: Most Of The World" (*Press*, 22/9/20) to "Standoff [between Greece and Turkey] At Sea Continues As EU [European Union] Tries To Ease Tensions" (*Sunday Star-Times*, 16/8/20).

It is very significant that in the last case cited, the standoff between Greece and Turkey, "the neighbouring countries' navies continue a game of brinkmanship over eastern Mediterranean Sea drilling rights" ("Standoff...", ibid.). Turkey, which under the Erdogan regime has become increasingly belligerent, has been "searching for oil and gas between Cyprus and the Greek island of Kastellorizo" ("Erdogan Threatens Greece", *Press*, 15/8/20).

Yet another potentially dangerous conflict involving Turkey has broken out in the Caucasus. Muslim-majority Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, is engaged in bloody confrontation against the mostly Christian Armenia, which is supported by Russia (e.g., "Attack By Separatists Raises Fears Of Caucasus Conflict", *Press*, 29/9/20). Armenian separatists currently control the hotly disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which broke away from Azerbaijan in the early 1990s (ibid.). *This has since escalated into war. Ed.*

Even proclaimed peace deals can really represent the opposite of what the Anglo-American axis would like to portray them. A recent example is the new so-called "Abraham Accords" between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. This deal is just confirmation of an existing geopolitical junta consolidating America's imperial reach in the Middle East ("Israel Deal With UAE May Lead To 'NATO-Like Alliance' Against Iran", *Press*, 17/8/20). There are some heartening moves in countries such as Yemen and Libya towards peaceful settlements. But the problems are still great and demand far more urgent attention, as in a number of other conflict flash-points.

Dampening Down The Wildfires Of Human Conflict

Portentously, "Mikhail Gorbachev has urged the winner of the (imminent) US election to hold an early meeting with Vladimir Putin amid fears that the nuclear arms race the then Soviet President helped to end three decades ago is again spiral-

ling out of control" ("Gorby: Reach Out To Putin Or Risk New Arms Race", *Press*, 28/9/20). As Gorbachev says, "The situation is very worrying" (ibid.). He appealed for urgent and positive dialogue between the two nations (ibid.). The world is indeed trembling on the brink with multiple conflicts threatening to spin out of control. We are facing an unprecedented global crisis, having to deal with the rampant Covid-19 disease, global warming, etc. We must unite internationally in addressing these problems, or we face certain extinction...

Weblinks:

- ¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068611,18/7/20>
- ² <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/press-statements/brenton-tarrant.html>
- ³ <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR59.pdf>
- ⁴ www.theintercept.com

- ⁵ <https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/extent-us-special-forces-involvement-africa>
- ⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIM-104_Patriot
- ⁷ <https://time.com/5869987/spaceforce>
- ⁸ www.delmarvanow.com
- ⁹ <https://thedailyblog.co.nz>
- ¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valery_Tsepkalo
- ¹¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/27/us/kissinger-tapes-describe-crises-war-and-stark-photos-of-abuse.html?searchResultPosition=1>
- ¹² <http://johnpilger.com/articles/from-polpot-to-isis-anything-that-flies-on-everything-that-moves>
- ¹³ <https://theintercept.com/2014/11/06/many-countries-islamic-world-u-s-bombed-occupied-since-1980>
- ¹⁴ www.indonesia-digest.net/3200genocide.htm; & <http://www.theguardian.com/film/the-act-of-killing>
- ¹⁵ [https://www.halotrust.org/latest/halo-updates/news/20-years-after-dianas-](https://www.halotrust.org/latest/halo-updates/news/20-years-after-dianas-visit-landmines-are-still-killing-angolas-children-landmine-free-2025/)

- ¹⁶ <https://www.dw.com/en/magawa-the-rat-wins-bravery-medal-for-sniffing-out-mines/a-55051001>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/46/06.html>
- ¹⁸ <https://isreview.org/issue/74/rise-anti-muslim-hate>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/anti-muslim-hate-is-now-widespread-in-the-uk-and-the-media-is-helping-normalise-it>
- ²⁰ <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr55.pdf>
- ²¹ <https://libya360.wordpress.com/2016/05/31/protecting-assets-there-is-no-us-war-against-isis/>
- ²² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-idUSKCN20J0SO>
- ²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum_industry_in_Syria
- ²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American-led_intervention_in_the_Syrian_Civil_War ■

"ISLANDS OF THE EMPIRE" UPDATE & PREMIERE AGAIN A Generation Later

By Murray Horton

"Islands Of The Empire", by Vanguard Films (Alister Barry, Rod Prosser and Russell Campbell), was the definitive 1980s' documentary about all aspects of New Zealand's military and intelligence relationship with the United States. It was made during one of the pivotal periods of that relationship, the one which ended with New Zealand becoming nuclear free and, consequently, being booted out of 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).

I was one of those interviewed for the film. When those interviews were shot, in 1983, Piggy Muldoon was Prime Minister. When the film premiered, in 1985, David Lange

was. So, it spanned that really critical period, not only in the NZ/US relationship, but in New Zealand's history per se (my obituaries of Muldoon and Lange are in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 71 (November 1992, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/24209988/Watchdog-November-1992>) and *Peace Researcher* 32 (March 2006, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr32.pdf>) respectively).

Mountain Top Interviews

Filming involved some great locations. I was interviewed on top of two mountains, both of which contained now long gone US military facilities - Mount John, near Tekapo in the Mackenzie Country, and Black Birch, in Marlborough. At Mount John, our filming actually coincided with the US military observatory being dismantled. We followed a truckload of its parts being driven to the (still present) US military transport base at Christchurch

Airport and watched it being loaded onto a US Air Force cargo plane and flown to its new home in Hawaii. At Black Birch, I was filmed, in fog and rain, in front of the then US Naval Observatory.

This was all before the existence of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) or the Waihopai spy base (both of them date from the late 80s). It predates CAFCA (Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa) - in those days we were CAFGINZ (Campaign Against Foreign Control In New Zealand; we changed the name in the mid 80s) and CAFGINZ was heavily involved in the anti-bases campaigns that arose out of the 1960s and 70s' anti-war movement. That involvement not only consisted of me being interviewed for the film - CAFGINZ provided transport and accommodation for the three-man film crew (they stayed with me and my then partner in what is still my home, and work place).

The late Bob Leonard drove us all up to Mount John in his van, one of the first of many, many trips and adventures I had with Bob over the next 30 years (my obituary of him is in *Peace Researcher* 46, December 2013, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr46.pdf>). And, in 1985, CAFGINZ organised and

hosted the film's premiere in Christchurch, filling a cinema and getting mainstream media coverage in the process. Once again, the Vanguard Film boys stayed at our place.

CAFCINZ/CAFCA duly helped to promote and publicise the film and to distribute it, once it became available on video. Then we all moved on to other things, as you do. Alister Barry, Rod Prosser and Russell Campbell kept making films, collectively and individually. For instance, in the 90s, Alister made "Someone Else's Country", the seminal film on Rogernomics (you can watch that, plus his later film "In A Land Of Plenty", on CAFCA's Website at <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/backgrounders/vanguard-films.html>).

And, in 1989 Russell came to my home (I was living there by myself at that stage) and filmed the series of interviews with me and others that make up the central core of his film "Rebels In Retrospect", about the first group to which I belonged, the Christchurch Progressive Youth Movement (PYM, which I joined in 1969, more than 50 years ago, God help me. You can view "Rebels" here <https://vimeo.com/350717298>). In my Anti-Bases Campaign capacity, I worked again with Vanguard when they filmed at Waihopai spy base protests in years gone by.

But I hadn't watched "Islands" for decades. Even if I wanted to, we no longer have the means of viewing videos. So, I was rather surprised to be told by Russell Campbell, in 2018, that they planned to re-issue the film, digitised and on DVD and with a series of interviews to update it. He asked me to come to Wellington to be one of those interviewed (I always stay with Russell when I'm in that city, his place is my Wellington home away from home).

Owen Wilkes The Star

I duly went there in May 2019. That enabled me to view the original and what a blast from the past that was. When originally filmed, I was a long haired and bearded Railways worker in my 30s. Funnily enough, none of that any longer applied 36 years later. It was a shock to see my 1983 and 2019 selves on screen. All I'll say is that I reckon I look younger now.

I've never been back up Mount John since that 1983 interview and I last

went up Black Birch in 1990 during ABC's Touching The Bases Tour (once again, the weather was lousy - it bloody snowed in November). It was a shock to the system to watch Sir Tim Shadbolt, the Mayor of Invercargill in perpetuity, being interviewed in his previous life as the country's most high-profile protest movement leader. Maire Leadbeater appears throughout the film - this was years before we'd met.

But the undoubted star was the late Owen Wilkes. I found it poignant watching him (including bobbing around in a protest boat on Wellington Harbour, with a US Navy warship in the near background). It reminded me what an irreparable loss he is, not only to the NZ and international peace movements, but to his friends. *Peace Researcher 31* (October 2005, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr31.pdf>) is entirely devoted to Owen.

It was wonderful to be filmed by the same three friends and colleagues - Alister, Rod and Russell - as in 1983. This time it wasn't done on top of fogbound mountains but in the Wellington Trades Hall (itself the target of a still unsolved 1984 fatal terrorist bombing, which gives you some idea of the broader political tensions and class battles that were taking place during the period that "Islands" was being made. That terrorist murder once again became a major media story in 2019 - but nobody has ever been charged with it).

What Has Changed & What Hasn't

I was asked a whole series of questions, a lot of them along the lines of "what has changed since 1986?" (the year when NZ was kicked out of ANZUS). I won't detail my answers - you can hear them for yourselves in my appearances on the DVD's Bonus Features). But - spoiler alert for what has changed in



Top: Vanguard Films, Wellington, 2019. From left: Russell Campbell, Rod Prosser, Alister Barry. Bottom: Still from film: Mt John, 1983

the NZ/US military and intelligence relationship – precious little.

I realised that I'd forgotten about quite a number of things in the intervening generation. Most embarrassingly, I answered "no" to one particular question and was then presented with incontrovertible evidence that the answer should have been "yes". To make it worse, the evidence was an article that I'd written about that very subject, which was NZ's military involvement in the Philippines. I'm still actively involved in Philippines solidarity work, as is Rod Prosser. We've worked together and Rod has filmed in that country.

One basic thing has changed - my by-line on the "Islands" DVD is not CAFCA, but Anti-Bases Campaign. Since ABC was founded in 1987, CAFCA has left the bases issue, and the whole broader US/NZ military/intelligence relationship issue, to ABC. That's not to say that CAFCA does not take any interest or have any involvement in that whole subject - far from it - but it is no longer a major subject for us, unlike in our early years.

Being asked to take part in the "Islands" update provided a rare opportunity to revisit a key aspect of my CAFCA anti-bases past, and to reflect on what has changed and what has stayed the same in the film's subject matter, in the intervening generation. It was also an unexpected opportunity to work with old friends again.

World Premiere & Only Cinema Screening

Vanguard Films decided that they wanted its premiere (and only cinema screening anywhere in the country) to take place in Christchurch - as the original premiere had been in Christchurch, in 1985. That plan got mucked up by 2020's pandemic lockdown but, ironically, it was during lockdown that I was able to get the venue sorted out.

In the course of one of my State-sanctioned solitary walks, on a deserted central city bridge, I passed a stranger using an expensive video camera with attached microphone. As I walked past, he called after me: "Excuse me, aren't you a campaigner"? (I've never been hailed by that particular phrase before). I pleaded guilty and he introduced himself as a prominent local filmmaker.

I've never had any previous contact with him, nor seen any of his films. So, we had a good old long chat (keeping a suitable distance) about a whole range of topics of mutual interest. He told me he knew Alister Barry decades ago in Wellington. I told him that ABC had, unsuccessfully, tried to find an affordable cinema venue. He said to contact Nick Paris, the co-owner of Christchurch's newest cinema, the Lumiere, in the Arts Centre (I've known Nick for decades but I hadn't thought to ask him about hosting this). That was entirely appropriate as the 1985 premiere had also been in the Arts Centre, at the former Academy.

That chat with a stranger on a street during lockdown (and on Easter Sunday, to boot) led to me immediately getting a confirmed Christchurch cinema venue for the premiere. Nick Paris said "yes" straight away, at mates' rates, and publicised the solitary screening on the cinema's Website. ABC's role was to find the venue, publicise and host the screening (I was sceptical as to how many people, particularly the "vulnerable elderly", would come out on a Christchurch midwinter week-night, during a pandemic, to watch a 1980s' film. I was delighted to be proved wrong).

That screening went ahead in July 2020, with a nearly full house and a great night was had by all. I was both a speaker and MC at the event. Alister Barry, Rod Prosser and Russell Campbell all attended and spoke (several other Vanguard Films people also attended, having come from various parts of the country). The whole thing didn't cost ABC a cent – Vanguard paid for the lot. Admission was by koha, there were no ticket sales.

I'll leave the last word to Russell Campbell: "Yes, a great success! Gorgeous venue, full house, interesting characters, high-spirited MC, the film looked good on the screen, gratifying reception, generous koha, lots of DVD sales (with more coming via Internet), choice beer, camaraderie. What more could one want?". ■



ISLANDS OF THE EMPIRE A Documentary By Vanguard Films

The islands of New Zealand are not the only ones that the empire enfolds. There's the south west Pacific, Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, and the Philippines archipelago too. They are all contained within the emperor's domain. They are all (in the opinion of American leaders) vassals of the United States. This important record charts the history of NZ foreign and "defence" policy in the context of the last 75 years, the era of what some (but probably not the people on display here) dub the "American Century".

The film starts with the month the Second World War ended, August 1945. That's when the US dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, with massive loss of lives. Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain the

only two targets to have received such treatment, though we now know that the world has subsequently teetered on the edge several times, and there might well be other occasions that we will never hear about.

It seems that the American President back then, Harry Truman, gave little thought to the devastating human and environmental implications of the bombs. The rationale, that too many American casualties, already heavy, would result from prolonged "conventional" war, was undoubtedly the main motive, but debate still continues over other possible considerations. The former Soviet Union had announced that it would soon join the attack on Japan. Did the Americans want to pre-empt a So-

viet advance? Or were the bombs a warning to the Russians - and the world - that the Yanks were top dog and not about to mess around?

Cold War

In any case that was the result. Hiroshima marked the start of the Cold War on this side of the planet, and for the next 40 years New Zealand - and all the other islands - were locked into a rigid obedience to the needs of the empire. The first hysterical years culminated in 1951 - the year of the McCarthy "witch trials" in the USA and the waterfront lockout here - with the ANZUS Treaty. ANZUS was said to be a guarantee to hapless Australia and NZ that big brother would rescue us from the supposedly inevitable invasion that would otherwise be our fate. The source of the barbarity had become China, which had in the meantime itself succumbed to a Communist revolution.

China was a useful stand in for the Russians, being closer, and also populous and poor and racially not too different from the Japanese, the prospect of whose imminent and unwelcome arrival a few years earlier

had terrified the country. In reality the US had committed only to "consult" if Australasia was threatened, and there is good reason to doubt whether it would have intervened if Indonesia, say, had attacked Australia - an event as unlikely as a Chinese invasion.

So, the Cold War played to various fears and prejudices. It was also a useful tool for the State to keep the lid on domestic opposition. The short-back-and-sides years were the era of conformity. These considerations need to be borne in mind now that the country has evolved into a more relaxed tolerance of social and ethnic variations and there is no foreign bugbear to rival earlier monsters.

When "Islands" was filmed, in the early 1980s, the Prime Minister was National's Rob Piggy Muldoon, an angry and bitter little man of a strongly reactionary bent, whether the issue was economic or social. His world view was similarly simplistic. There were the good guys and the bad guys, just as there had been when the Cold War first froze foreign relations.

Two years later, when the original doco came out, David Lange was leading a Labour government. Although temperamentally a very different type from Piggy, Lange was not really into peace, his reputation as the brave leader who defied the bully in Washington having been forced upon him by the pressure from the likes of Campaign Against Foreign Control In New Zealand (CAFCINZ, now CAFCA) and its mates, but he came to enjoy the role.

Behind the rhetoric, though, not much had changed and a vital service provided by the peaceniks over the years has been to expose the inconsistencies and evasions. Or it might be more accurate to speak of hypocrisy and lies. In the 1970s and 80's forays were mounted into US sites like Mt John, near Tekapo, and Black Birch in Marlborough. Both of these US military observatories are now gone, with Mt John now hosting the much more sensible activity of looking at the night sky.

Invaluable Film Makers; Dedicated Activists

Three invaluable film makers cap-



Still from film: US warship, Wellington Harbour, early 1980s

tured the 1980s and are back now. Russell Campbell, Rod Prosser and Alister Barry all have a distinguished record of highlighting progressive themes. A quartet of dedicated activists feature in the 2019 update: Keith Locke, Maire Leadbeater, Nicky Hager and Murray Horton. Two of them appeared in the original film as well (Maire and Murray), having long been talking truth to power. The four work independently, but by a happy coincidence their campaigning styles complement each other's.

Locke was a Green MP from 1999-2011 inclusive, alerting the country to what would otherwise have been swept under rugs, at a time when the bulk of Parliament was either indifferent or hostile to peace issues. He had to put up with the often-puerile insults from politicians like Winston Peters. Leadbeater, Locke's sister - the issue of Jack and Elsie Locke, also indefatigable progressives - has published insightful analyses on Timor-Leste and West Papua (*Murray Horton's obituaries of Jack and Elsie Locke are in Foreign Control Watchdog 84, May 1997, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/24211537/Watchdog-May-1997>, and Peace Researcher 23, June 2001, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr23.pdf>, respectively. Elsie appeared in the original "Islands". Ed.*).

Hager has recently exposed the NZ Army's sometimes less than perfect role in Afghanistan (see *his article on the Operation Burnham Inquiry Report, elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*), and previously published other powerful accounts of successive Governments' policies. And Horton of course is the Organiser of both ABC, the Anti Bases Campaign, and Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA). It has been the focus on foreign policy as it intersects with economic and defence policy that created both campaigns, as Murray explains in the article accompanying this review.

The common factor of the quartet is that they have informed the country about what would otherwise have been mostly unremarked. Whether the focus has been on education and analysis, or demonstrations and protests, the work has been essential. Knowledge about the world or action to change it? You need both in equal measure to have any hope of success. In the original film, we

see a lot of the late Owen Wilkes. Is it fair to suggest that he was pure activism? It was through Owen's forays around the country and indeed the world that much of our knowledge of what the warmongers were up to first emerged.

The new part looks at Waihopai, another happy choice, and not only because the international disorder as it affects NZ is essentially unchanged from what it was in 1985. Waihopai is a clear and present - and future - concern. NZ's involvement in Five Eyes makes us complicit in anything that the real powers, the US and the UK, are up to, and we won't know what that is. Neither will present or future PMs. Lange once complained that he had no idea what went on at Waihopai or who or what the Eye was spying on.

This secrecy is even worse when it is remembered that it's not just about snooping on supposed enemies and their weapons. The Five Eyes are an imperial club with a general political and economic interest. It was said - a lie as it turned out - that the members of the club did not snoop on their own people, but others could do it for them. And they spy on countries that are supposedly their mates for reasons that have nothing to do with national security. Another lie. To say that the governments of America or Britain or Australia act in the sovereign interests of New Zealand rather than their own interests is to stretch credibility beyond breaking point.

Have we emerged from the "American Century"? Numerous commentators point to the rise of China as a counter to Yankee dominance, but the US remains the one global superpower, its military being bigger than those of all of the next biggest countries combined. And even if China's economy keeps surging, US reach won't be seriously challenged in the foreseeable future. What has changed is what they call soft power.

America had emerged from World War 2 as the world's superpower not just in matters military but also culturally. In the post-Hiroshima years its influence peaked. The world wanted American movies, music, nylons, bubble gum. The war foes were ruined. Only the Soviet Union rivalled the US, and that rivalry did not extend beyond the

nuclear standoff. Economically the Soviets were comparatively insignificant.

This cultural influence has been weakening as other cultures and products emerge, an inevitable shift that the buffoon in the White House has accelerated. Trump's America is an embarrassment to Americans and a joke internationally. Then there's the direct attack on the alliances themselves, as Trump insults his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) partners and heaps praise on dictators and thugs who his generals have always seen as the problem.

After The Present Chaos, Where Will We Find Ourselves?

Some might welcome a shrinking NATO; others might fear an unpredictable one. The thug that the moron likes most is Vladimir Putin, but despicable as he is, Putin had a point when he complained that there is no justifiable need for NATO, as the former enemy, the Soviet Union, the reason NATO even existed, has gone. Why still encircle Russia? Maybe we have an opportunity to think afresh. But the doco shows Jacinda Ardern in glowing praise of NATO, a reminder that her Government has done nothing to move NZ to a more independent position. Is Ardern scared of economic reprisal if she strays outside the tent?

Helen Clark had previously suggested that NZ is in a "benign" strategic position, a remark which could have implied that our military budget, a whopping and unnoticed \$4.6 billion, could be cut or at least spent on internationalist peacekeeping rather than the hugely expensive - and surely unnecessary in a purely military sense - ships and planes that Defence Minister Ron Mark so adores. But neither of the main parties has shown any hint they might find better uses for our taxes. The trend is actually veering the other way, towards closer integration with the warriors.

Foreign policy as an election issue did not exist and it's not easy to see how it might be resumed. A good starting point could be stepping up attempts to close one of the Five Eyes, the one at Waihopai, but as things stand there is no chance of that. The Green Party alone, and probably only one part of Greenery, has shown that it has thought about our entanglements with the US.

Labour has long been silent.

More's the pity. The nuclear ban and other progressive, internationalist gestures had raised NZ's profile. When the talk is of how we are "punching above our weight", it often means that NZ is exercising soft power. We saw it after the nuclear ban and the withdrawal from ANZUS, and again when the Ardern government responded to crises with skill and empathy. These moments have undoubtedly been helpful in projecting the country favourably and - to point out something that Rightwing types might not have considered - even helped economically.

We could build on this legacy. I'm writing this before we know the result of the 2020 election, but whatever it was, the PM won't be talking about foreign relations. The last time an NZ PM did so was when the Lange government spoke up only because peace activists were pushing it. They are the true patriots. As a record of the peace movement in NZ the doco is not going to be bettered. It can't be, as much of its material would not otherwise exist. As part of telling future generations our history, it will be a treasure. ■

FASCISTS AMONG US

Online Hate And The Christchurch Massacre

by Jeff Sparrow
Scribe, Melbourne, 2019

Since this book was published, Person X – Brenton Tarrant – has pleaded guilty to all charges against him (51 murders, 40 attempted murders and one charge of terrorism) and become the first person in New Zealand history to be sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. Ed.

Mention of fascism can deter, the word having been overused for so long, but here it is appropriate. Per-

son X, as Jeff Sparrow calls the Christchurch mosques murderer, uses it to describe his views, so to understand him, a starting point is to understand what he means by such a self-description. Sparrow offers an outline of fascism, comparing the anti-Semitism of the 1930s with the Islamophobia that has been with us since 9/11.

They're very much alike, the very big difference between Jewish lives over the last century and Muslim lives these days being of no relevance to the haters. We're not talking about anything real. Sparrow traces the strains of fascism that led from Mussolini and Hitler to Person X, discussing the ideology's essential traits. It's as good an account as any.

Lives Spent Online

Besides the familiar emphases on identity, violence, and authority, Person X and his ilk are "outsider anti-elitists", resenting expertise, liberalism and tolerance. Typically, young and lonely males, much of their lives are spent online, where they message each other in a coded language that the rest of us might not be able to access.

The Internet appeals as its disengaged anonymity allows postings which can avoid the embarrassment that real world contact might produce. Sparrow thinks that "the Internet allows activists of the far Right to dissolve the distinction between Rightwing populism and genuine fascism". The emergence of social media intensified the process.

We're introduced to some of the Australian fascists that Person X trolls with. In "troll culture", one writes, the idea is to "make hate fun" so that an outsider, a normal person, can't tell if it's a joke or not. They call this irony. It's done because they know what they're saying is dreadful and if things go wrong, they might need to disown their real intent, which is to stir hatred and kill people.

They have to go online because since Charlottesville in 2017, the time in America when Nazis marched, Australian fascists have mostly given up on street rallies as they know they'll be outnumbered by counter demonstrators. The time when they will be able to overthrow civil society is in an as yet unattainable future. So, as one of them puts

it, they can't yet "show their full hand".

First, they agree, they should target Muslims and "cultural Marxism" and leave the destruction of Jews till later. They sense that since the Holocaust anti-Semitic violence has been unacceptable in places like Melbourne. While they wait, they can rehearse their lines, picking up "blood and soil" from Hitler in 1933 and the cry of "Jews will not replace us" from Charlottesville in 2017.

The history of recent mass shootings in America is curious. It sometimes seems that a school or a church is being targeted every month or so, but Sparrow indicates that these atrocities are mostly recent events. In 1966 a gunman killed his mother and his wife and then climbed into a tower in a Texas university and opened fire on the students below. In the fifty years previously there had been a mass shooting, defined as an episode in which four or more people were killed, "only" 25 times. Yet since 1982 there have been 110 such events.

One observer has noted that what he calls "rage murder" has been around since Reagan's presidency, a time when shooters were "going postal", so tagged because several workplace killings that occurred in the 1980s were in post offices. Interviewed survivors, acknowledging the stress of the perpetrators, often had a "surprising sympathy" for them. Sparrow notes that schools have been shot up mostly since 1997 - though he does not offer any possible explanation for this timing.

Young Fascists Knotted In Frustration

Sparrow quotes Hannah Arendt, who thought that rage was ignited by a belief that things "could be changed and are not". The young fascists are knotted in frustration. It's not just Muslims and Jews who need to be killed; so too are "liberals" and "Marxist elitists" - and people with skins that are not pink. There's also a lot of time spent trolling resentment against happily coupled up men and women who seem to enjoy life. The fascists feel inferior sexually and socially.

Sparrow notes how much of the online language is about status. Men and boys have long learned to



NZ Herald, 27/3/20

associate masculinity with autonomy, control and dominance, the qualities claimed by Hitlerian supermen in fantasy but the lack of which is mourned in reality. This can be resolved by getting yourself some heavy guns. They dispense power and authority in no time.

Apparently, Vietnam veterans often expressed a love of war and satisfaction gained by shooting, and this released them from feelings of complexity and doubt. And they weren't screwed up fascists. The kick of instant destructive power allowed "escape from the everyday into a special world where the bonds that hold us to our duties... disappear".

Nazi mythology used to drivel on about pure landscapes - the "soil" part of "blood and soil" - and rural idylls, where damsels and their swains wandered free, untainted by un-Germanic pollution, "purity" being a favourite conceit. Metaphors about invasion and infection abound in fascist rhetoric, most obviously when referring to matters racial, so the latter-day disciples like to say that they are keen environmentalists. In reality, they are not at all. They lock themselves in basements, fantasising about how climate change will kill off the swarthy masses, the "invaders", allowing the supermen to reclaim a cleansed world.

Sparrow is keen to make the point that we talk about Person X and his manifesto because we need to understand where he was coming from and where his successors - who almost certainly exist - might want to

go. His massacre, and especially his live streaming of it, excited his fellow ideologues. One is quoted here as finding it "very funny". The Police need to be on top of these bastards. They were not prepared on March 15, 2019.

The problem is not that conventional discussion might give too much information about (in this case, Australian) fascists but that it gives too little. Sparrow rejects euphemisms that depict them as "far Right" or "nationalist" (some people use "far Left" to denote people seeking social justice or a clean environment). The more accurate term is the one Person X accurately deploys: they are "fascists".

Self-Described "Weird Assholes"

The well-intentioned NZ media, Sparrow continues, agreed not to quote Person X's manifesto, but he disagrees. The killer did not want mainstream attention, his audience being his fellow weirdos staring at their computer screens. A ban gave them cachet. The fascists know they're dismal. Sparrow quotes a typical response to the idea that they should take to the streets. Since Charlottesville that has become very much a minority view: "We would look 'weird ... marching around like assholes'".

Perhaps the most urgent argument for not avoiding a direct analysis of the weird assholes is that it thereby fails to point out that Person X's ideas are flaunted in the mainstream. Sparrow looks at a certain Andrew Bolt, who also complains of an "invasion" by foreigners which is destroying "our national identity...

We should resist this colonising of Australia by Muslims, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodians and Indians", says Bolt, who needs to remind his country that a large number of the residents of a certain Melbourne suburb are Jews.

Bolt and Person X don't sound different, but they are in one respect. Person X knows he is a weird asshole, but in Australia Bolt is a prominent figure. He can be seen regularly in this country on a Rupert Murdoch TV "news" channel. Sparrow is surely right about this. Only a tiny number of Australians or New Zealanders hold views akin to those of Person X or Bolt, and those that do will not be reading the *New Zealand Herald* or listening to Radio NZ. It's not easy to imagine that someone not already poisoned by fascist ideology would hear of a call to gun down a mosque or drive a car into a gathering of local citizens and feel impelled to do so.

We have heard recently that NZ Muslims want to have access to a prison interview with Person X so they can try to understand. Of all people they cannot be denied, though some of the Nazi and troll talk might baffle. Inevitably we get Sparrow's take on Trump, who is often labelled fascist. Sparrow says he's more accurately deemed a populist. This is being more than fair. If Trump lacks some of the scale of the barbarity that impelled Hitlerian hate it's partly because the US is (still) a place where totalitarian impulses are (somewhat) curbed. But it's not for lack of trying, and if some of the outlook of the young Aussies reminds you of the old man with the orange hair, it might be because they're much the same.

Hopeful Programme Needed To Counter Fascism

Sparrow offers an alternative to the current ambiguities and hesitations. Progressive opinion needs to offer a hopeful programme which has the potential to unite people in countering the "squalid and miserable" fascists by cleaning the polluted environments in which they thrive. He recommends a look at the ideas of Naomi Klein. Yes, indeed. I made the same call (see my review of her "This Changes Everything", in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 138, April 2015, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/38/07.html>). ■

JEANETTE FITZSIMONS

1945-2020

By Murray Horton

Anti-Bases Campaign has had an activist relationship with the Greens ever since they first entered Parliament in 1996 and every Co-Leader (bar James Shaw) has spoken at one or more of ABC's Waihopai spy base protests during that nearly quarter of a century. That close relationship continues until today. The biggest crowd to attend a Waihopai protest in many years was in January 2006, when the Greens combined with ABC to honour the memory of Jeanette's fellow Co-Leader, Rod Donald, who died in November 2005. That was the one she spoke at. My obituary of Rod is in *Peace Researcher* 32, March 2006, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-bac-kissues/pr32.pdf>.

Wearing my other hat – Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa - Jeanette Fitzsimons was a CAFCA member, in two bursts a decade apart, spanning the period 1997 until 2017. She was also a generous regular donor to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income. The last time I saw her was at the Thames public meeting during my 2014 CAFCA national speaking tour. And of course, throughout her time as Greens Co-Leader, CAFCA had an active and productive working relationship with that Party, primarily with Rod. That relationship continues until now – although it is not as close as during Rod's time. ■

By Catherine Delahunty

Jeanette Fitzsimons lived a big and generous life, full of a tenacious commitment to green ideals. She

was my neighbour in the Kauaeranga Valley in Hauraki, my flat mate in Aorangi Terrace, Thorndon (Wellington), and my Co-Leader when I first entered Parliament. Writing about her life and legacy is challenging because she was a friend and I cannot really feel she can be gone. Her voice is still speaking to us about climate change, about limits to growth and walking our talk.

I have written a number of obituaries of her and none of them feel like the whole story. The whole story would be a book about her as one of the most critical people in the creation of the Green Party in Aotearoa. However, I could never write that book, I was not a founding member of the Green Party, I can only share what I know. Some people are remembered not only for what they do but also for the grace with which they do it. She is one of those people.

Jeanette Gaston was born in Dunedin (as her family lived in Mosgiel) in 1945 and was proud to be from Te Wai Pounamu, the South Island. Although she spent most of her life in the North Island she did not forget where she came from. The family moved from Mosgiel to Awhitu area near Pukekohe when she was an early teenager and she then gained her later education in Auckland. She was an academically able and truly intellectual person as well as a talented musician who played the violin.

She was called by both music and academia but her true calling as a politician emerged later after other adventures. Jeanette married Bevin Fitzsimons and they lived for some years in Geneva where he was working. She was also working raising their two sons Mark and Jeremy and starting her involvement in environmental politics. It must have been a stimulating time to be there in a political European city as some of the Western world woke up to the fight for the planet and groups like Friends of the Earth were taking strong international stands.

Values Party

Back in Auckland the Fitzsimons household was a hub of the emerging green debates and Jeanette was developing her passions and knowledge about clean energy, energy conservation and limits to growth. She was also part of the back to the land ethos being a

shareholder at Waterfall Farm, communal land near Warkworth where she plunged into organic farming activities. These were heady days as the organics and environment movement began to find a political voice in the Values Party.

The Values Party started in 1972 and invested years of work into developing structures and policies that would express a new vision of genuine sustainability for this country. They were pioneers of political party-based environmentalism and they did gain electoral support but without winning any seats due to the First Past The Post system. Jeanette and Rod Donald were both active members of Values.

Jeanette started lecturing in Environmental Science at Auckland University and participating in some of the big energy battles of the 1980s. This included the Methanex synthetic fuel plan hearings. By 1988 she had separated from Bevin and was starting a relationship with Harry Parke, her second husband, who was also a Values Party member and part of Waterfall Farm.

In May 1990 the Values Party and other groups set up the Green Party. The following year they joined the Alliance. In 1995 the leadership for the male Co-Leader role was strongly contested and Rod Donald, a young articulate upstart won it, but the female leadership was reported as no contest, there was just a remarkable woman, Jeanette Fitzsimons. She never faced a contest to her leadership and after the first contest neither did Rod. They were much loved leaders and Jeanette was also revered for her calmness, wisdom and coherence. Rod was admired for his energy, media savvy and strategic leadership.

Into Parliament

In 1991 Jeanette and Harry Parke had moved to a steep piece of farmland in the Kauaeranga Valley near Thames where they married and started building a house and working in the land. Rod, Jeanette and Phillida Bunkle were the first Green MPs as part of the Alliance in the first MMP election (1996). The Alliance era was difficult for Jeanette who was a Co-Deputy Leader of the Alliance but struggled with Jim Anderton (Murray Horton's obituary of Jim Anderton is in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 147, April 2018, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/47/>



Jeff Bell, 9/3/20

10.html. Ed.).

Their styles of politics were utterly different and Jeanette described to me a number of conflicts with the old school autocratic leadership model which Anderton imposed. A consensus-based Party could not accept this for long and in 1997 Jeanette was pleased that the Party hui at Tapu Te Ranga marae voted to leave the Alliance and become truly independent.

Jeanette and Rod stood alone but together as Greens in Parliament for the next two years, working harder and longer into every night, to try and establish their Party as a political presence. They flatted together throughout their time in Parliament often with Bronwen Summers who ran Rod's office. They built a successful Co-Leadership model which was based on trust, respect and true warmth in private as well as public. They showed what shared leadership can achieve.

I started working for the Auckland Green Party in 1999 when Jeanette was contesting the Coromandel seat. Many Auckland Greens headed down to help the locals in the mammoth door knocking effort which electorate seats require. The

hope was that with National in a deep political slump the seat could be won despite National having held it for as long as anyone could remember. Coromandel is basically a safe National seat but in 1999 there was a gap and Jeanette stepped into it. She was well known locally and she won by a whisker. This is thought to be a world first for a Green.

The Greens gained 5.16% of the Party Vote and seven MPs, plus the Coromandel seat after the final count. It was an exciting time as the Co-Leaders could at last hand over some portfolios and get on leading a Parliamentary Party with added muscle. I know that Jeanette found the negotiations with Labour pretty tricky. At one stage Helen Clark offered her the Environment Minister position but as that was really in exchange for key policy gains and was not Party mandated, so she refused it. That is quite a remarkable approach for a political leader but it shows her commitment to the Party's agreed goals.

She was always aware that Ministerial roles without real strength could lead to division between that person and the rest of caucus, and she held to a longer view. The rela-

tionship with the Clark government was productive in some ways, especially when Jeanette and Sue Bradford gained Government Spokesperson roles and resources on Energy Efficiency and Conservation issues and Buy Kiwi Made. There were also struggles over the genetic engineering (GE) issue which culminated in a Green walkout of the House in 2002. Jeanette saying the Greens would not enter a Coalition next term without a strong GE moratorium was very badly received by Labour.

The amount of work Jeanette put into understanding the science and articulating the issues was huge. The public concern over GE was a defining issue and it's interesting to see how this has dissipated and lost momentum as it becomes a more nuanced scientific issue, or is at least perceived that way. I know Jeanette looked back and questioned the walk out decision but, when you read the Clark comments on how pathetic the Greens were to be worried about this technology, I can see why a line was drawn. However, I think she was most proud of her energy work and the establishment of EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority).

Rod's Death A Terrible Blow

The 2005 election was even tougher than the previous years. The Greens had gained nine MPs in 2002 and some real policy wins, but the Labour Party chose to form a Government with NZ First and United Future. It's my personal view that being blocked from Coalition was a devastating blow to an exhausted Rod Donald who had fought so hard for MMP. He had pinned his hopes on having a real opportunity to make Green change happen as part of the Government. Jeanette was far more philosophical and able to roll with the punches until November 6, 2005, when Rod died very suddenly.

Rod's death was a terrible blow for the Party but worse for Jeanette. He was her political younger brother and comrade with whom she built the political wing of the Party and who shared the burden of leadership. I went and stayed with her for the days after his death in the house at Aorangi Terrace and shared her grief. She was carrying on alone and she felt it very deeply.

We all felt it when she stood by his coffin in the former Christchurch Cathedral and quoted from his favourite Pink Floyd song about "shining on, you crazy diamond". His loss was so personal for her but also so huge for the Party and so unexpected.

Jeanette was the one planning her retirement but now she had to hold the kaupapa without him. Rod's family suffered the worst loss because he had sacrificed so much time with them for the sake of the Party and all the public accolades mean nothing when Dad is never coming home.

The Greens struggled on to the 2008 election and Jeanette and Russel Norman forged a new partnership which was effective and respectful. They also began leading a change in the Green language around working with National, flirting with "maybe one day if they change", which was an effort to force Labour not to take them for granted. A number of us fought this issue tooth and nail for the next five or so years because we believed it to be disingenuous and far less preferable than opting for independence rather than a move towards the Right. I have always wanted to know what Rod would have thought

about this as he was pretty staunch about being to the Left of Labour.

At the 2008 election John Key won and the Greens became the third largest Party with nine MPs. Jeanette continued to lead with Russel but she was preparing to leave. I lived with her for the last few months at Aorangi Terrace and watched her tired but resolute as she did her best to mentor the new team and prepare to hand over leadership.

I also did my best to sabotage her work habits by making her walk home with me at 10 p.m. instead of staying on to 1 a.m. She was so used to overworking but it was taking a toll. During those years she was very focused on the climate issues and became more disillusioned with the emissions trading scheme (ETS) as a solution to climate issues. She told me she had felt she had to support Labour's ETS as the only game in town, not because it was a better idea than a carbon tax with equity provisions.

This had been a big debate in the Greens because some of us had nil faith in market solutions to climate change, a position Jeanette came to agree with after Parliament. She was a pragmatic operator when she saw small gains but this was sometimes in conflict with her very strong values around limits to growth on a finite planet.

In my opinion one of her greatest contributions as a leader was her position on the Takutai Moana /Fore-shore and Seabed issue when Labour took away tangata whenua customary rights to the coastal and marine area and breached Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Jeanette and Metiria Turei as a junior MP worked together to articulate the "double hulled waka" metaphor as a way forward under Te Tiriti o Waitangi during this challenging era.

This position reflected the Green constitutional commitment to Te Tiriti Articles and tangata whenua sovereignty which a group of us had been working on since 1999 and which was adopted in 2001. Jeanette showed her leadership in the Takutai Moana debate and provided support for Metiria to make her mark on this fundamental issue.

Voted "Most Trusted Politician"
Jeanette handed over the Co-

Leadership to the winning contestant Metiria Turei in June 2009 and actually left Parliament in February 2010. Her final speech included lines such as "I have spent 13 years of my life weeping at the tragedy of so many people wasting the precious gift of life chasing the mirage of a bigger GDP" (gross domestic product).

She said her greatest concrete achievement was persuading Parliament to invest in large scale home insulation to better family health and reduce carbon emissions. Jeanette had been voted "most trusted politician" in a public poll which was an extraordinary achievement and it shows that her personal integrity was stronger than the stereotyping the Greens suffered during all the years she was in the House. She left the Parliament with no personal enemies and many admirers but a sense of frustration at what she had been able to achieve in terms of lasting change.

The Green Party will hopefully never forget the debt owed to Jeanette for the work she did during 14 years in Parliament. Also no one should forget the sacrifice made by Harry Parke, her husband who stayed at home and ran the farm. He is a former Co-Convenor of the Party and as politically passionate as anyone I have ever met. He backed Jeanette so that she could play her role and he waited patiently for her to come home in weekends where at least half the time she was on the phone or the Internet.

Jeanette loved coming home to the farm. She loved milking the cow and using the chain saw and gathering the chestnuts and pecans. She was a dedicated farmer and she gained sanity and strength from the outdoor days at home. In later years in Parliament she also gained so much happiness from her two grandchildren and Harry's grandchildren who came to the farm in the holidays.

The children and the Woofers (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) had the benefit of her practical skills and her wisdom. While she was an MP Harry and Jeanette had some wonderful adventurous holidays in Aotearoa and the Pacific and the occasional trip to see her son Mark in England. They enjoyed these times all the more for the long months when they were apart.

Radical Activist “Retirement”

However, leaving Parliament was not retirement. Jeanette was extremely concerned about climate politics and became very active in groups such as Coal Action Network. She worked tirelessly on clean energy issues and projects and continued to travel to make speeches and inspire others to action. She did make the huge adjustment from Parliamentary leader to community leader with her usual serenity but it wasn't all easy. In conversations we had she made me aware of her sense of despair. She believed it was too late to stop the climate chaos which was beginning and that all our actions could only achieve so much.

This did not stop her from trying her best every day but it coloured the last decade of her life with that sense of sadness. She read the science, she did the numbers and she observed the refusal to change the systems that were killing her hopes. However, she also felt liberated from the burden of Parliamentary leadership and was determined to get arrested at the first opportunity. I vividly remember her dressed as “the elephant in the room” (climate change) at an anti-mining protest in Rotorua when we broke into a miners' cocktail party. An angry miner knocked the elephant over, only to discover it was Jeanette Fitzsimons. He slunk away embarrassed.

She was also more than happy to chain herself to a milk factory gate in South Canterbury to challenge Fonterra to stop burning coal. We also worked together with locals and Coal Action Network to stop a new coalmine for Fonterra at Mangatangi. Jeanette led the Climate Declaration work, a manifesto for immediate climate action supported by many notable people and she never stopped participating in climate work locally and nationally.

Her leadership to try and make the Resource Management Act recognise climate change took her to the courts as well as the streets. We had an enjoyable protest against gold mining in our home valley, whereby Jeanette, I and others were apparently so intimidating the mining company packed up and left. She was a regular visitor to the dirty energy frontline in Taranaki, joining the barricades against Big Oil.

I think one of her greatest experiences was joining the trip in November 2013 on the Greenpeace yacht Vega which challenged the oil drilling ship *Noble Bob Douglas* off the coast of Taranaki. Jeanette was on board with Bunny MacDiarmid and the crew for several weeks and I was present when she stepped ashore into Harry's arms looking refreshed and invigorated by this expedition.

Political legacy is a funny business. Often the concrete gains in politics are eroded by the next Government. I see this in Jeanette's work and in the remarkable list of gains that Sue Bradford championed. Legacy however is more than gains; it is manifest in the type of a leader a person has proven to be and where in history they have nailed their colours.

Jeanette was not primarily Left or socialist, her passion was ecological limits to growth, but she stood up for progressive measures for people every day of her political life. She was not an ardent feminist, as she felt personally free from patriarchal constraint, but she was committed to gender balance and supported all young women to take leadership for change. Her passions for clean energy and energy conservation were both philosophical and practical and her work on climate change connected her to thinkers and activists all over the world.

Not Happy With Green Capitalism

Jeanette always kept close to the Young Greens who met every summer at Pakaraka Farm. She and Harry loved having the young people camp there and participated in the activities and storytelling with them. Her eye was on the future while sharing the lessons of the past, and her time was generously shared. One of my last conversations with my friend was about the state of the world and the state of the current Green Party. She was not at all happy with either. Much like the Australian Greens the more radical founders have looked with anxiety at the risk-averse moves to the Centre which other Green Parties have made all over the world.

The slow electoral progress has caused some Greens to work for a move to green capitalism and a commitment to incremental not fundamental change. Jeanette did not settle in that camp as she saw the situation was too urgent for status

quo thinking and for the Green Party to aim so low. It was understandable that other Parties were not transformative or radical but it was not her vision for the Greens.

It was quite painful for her to see the tinkering around the edges of an economic system which she said could never stop climate chaos and inequality. Of course, when you are no longer in power it looks quite different from surviving day to day, but Jeanette was more radical as she aged, less interested in wasting time on compromises that deliver so little change given the profound crises we face.

With her health struggles and her sadness at the absence of change she was sometimes depressed but never stopped working on the issues and being an active member of her local community. She never stopped mentoring many people across the country. I used to see her on Monday nights at yoga in our local hall and she would tell me how hard it was getting to carry on chain sawing and cutting gorse, let alone balance at yoga class as her body became less able to obey her will.

Nevertheless, it was a great shock the morning in March 2020 when I got a call that she had died in Thames Hospital after a fall and a stroke. I came home from the play I was part of in Wellington to MC her funeral, struggling all the way with the fact that she was gone. I sat by her coffin which my partner Gordon Jackman built and tried to say thank you for all she had been and done. We took her to the natural burial cemetery at Omahu which she had worked hard to help create.

She was not meant to be the first person buried there. Hauraki tangata whenua honoured her and called us into that place, welcoming Jeanette to rest in their whenua. They told me this was their honour. To rest in peace after such a life is her reality and our reality is missing her every day. Our reality and our responsibility are also to continue our best efforts for climate justice and an end to all systems that damage people and the Earth. ■



“THE 5TH EYE” NOW ONLINE

“The 5th Eye” is the 2016 documentary by Errol Wright and Abi King-Jones (it was reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* 52, November 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHOW5iQWdHdHhaczQ/view). The film is about the Waihopai Domebusters – Adi Leason, Peter Murnane and Sam Land – who, in 2008, got into the Government Communications Security Bureau spy base in Marlborough and deflated one of its gigantic domes (concealing its satellite spy dish).

They stood trial, in Wellington in 2010, and were acquitted. The Government then sued them personally for the purported \$1.2 million cost of replacing the dome. That backfired in a public relations fiasco for the covert State (see “Three Cheers For The Domebusters Who Kicked Waihopai In The Ball!”, by Murray Horton, *Peace Researcher* 47, August 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr47.pdf>). The Domebusters suffered no criminal or civil consequences for their brilliant

act of non-violent direct action.

To coincide with the 2020 release of the two Inquiry Reports into Operation Burnham (see Nicky Hager’s article, elsewhere in this issue), Errol Wright and Abi King-Jones decided to upload “The 5th Eye” and make it permanently available online. “You will remember that the film is about the Waihopai 3 who broke into the spy base and deflated one of the radomes”.

“But the film is also about NZ’s role in Afghanistan, focusing on reporting by journalist Jon Stephenson, and the surveillance and harassment he received unearthing details about secret NZ Special Air Service (SAS) raids that killed civilians” (the Operation Burnham Inquiry resulted from the book “Hit & Run”, written by Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson. This was reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* 53, June 2017, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr53.pdf>).

“The 5th Eye” is available on:

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/The5thEye>;
<https://www.facebook.com/VanguardFilmsNZ>;

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCKa7ohVMT-q856Gxecg3FQ> ■



Nicky Hager (left) & Jon Stephenson, 2017 launch of “Hit & Run”

CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account

Financial Report For Year Ended 31 March 2020

James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer

Presented to Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa Annual General Meeting 21/9/20

	2020	2019
Income		
Pledges	\$ 20,755.20	\$ 20,928.20
Donations	\$ 8,362.25	\$ 19,487.94
Interest	\$ 1,776.31	\$ 1,790.62
Other	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Income	\$ 30,893.76	\$ 42,206.76
Expenditure		
Contractor	\$ 43,464.00	\$ 42,436.00
Internet/phone	\$ 797.55	\$ 1,481.48
Printer	\$ 36.55	\$ 61.70
Other	\$ 170.00	\$ 160.00
	\$ 44,468.10	\$ 44,139.18
Cash surplus (Deficit)	-\$ 13,574.34	-\$ 1,932.42
<i>Summary</i>		
Opening Funds	\$ 17,252.13	\$ 19,184.55
Add surplus (deficit)	-\$ 13,574.34	-\$ 1,932.42
Closing total funds	\$ 3,677.79	\$ 17,252.13
<i>Represented by</i>		
Term deposit Kiwibank	\$ 0.00	\$ 13,409.15
00 Account Westpac	\$ 3,677.79	\$ 3,842.98
Total Organiser Account funds	\$ 3,677.79	\$ 17,252.13

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.

Our address is:

Peace Researcher
PO Box 2258, Christchurch 8140, Aotearoa/New Zealand
e-mail: abc@chch.planet.org.nz

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You Can No Longer Pay Your ABC Sub By Cheque

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) banks with Kiwibank, which has completely quit cheques. Meaning, that it will no longer accept deposits of cheques from any bank (including its own).

Therefore, to pay your ABC sub, make a donation, etc:

- ⇒ make the payment online by Internet banking, OR;
- ⇒ personally deposit cash into ABC's account at any Kiwibank branch, OR;
- ⇒ instruct your bank to set up an annual automatic payment into the ABC account.

Our bank account details are:

**ABC
Kiwibank
389000 0619007 00**

Please include your name and "Sub" or "Sub and Donation" 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. Otherwise, it is impossible to identify you.

If you wish to make an online donation to the separate CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account (which exists solely to provide Murray Horton's income), the details are:

**CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account
Westpac
030866-0300063-00.**

You can also personally deposit cash into the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account at any Westpac branch. If you do that, make sure that you include your name as the reference. Otherwise, it is impossible to identify you.

Or you can instruct your bank to set up a regular automatic payment into the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account. ■

JOIN ABC AND GET *PEACE RESEARCHER*

Peace Researcher is the newsletter and journal of the Anti-Bases Campaign, Box 2258, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. If you would like to join ABC, the details are below. All ABC members receive *Peace Researcher*.

Membership is \$20 per year (ABC is not registered for GST)

Overseas subs: Australia \$NZ25; Rest of world \$NZ30. Donations welcome.

You can **pay online** by internet banking, or personally **deposit cash** at any Kiwibank branch.

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

Our bank account details are:

**ABC
Kiwibank
389000 0619007 00**

If you're a new member, please e-mail us your name, postal address, e-mail address and phone number/s. ■