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**THE LONGEST,
MOST FUTILE WAR**

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Cover: *Graphic by Ian Dalziel.*

AFGHANISTAN, THE LONGEST WAR And Nothing To Show For It

By Murray Horton

Saigon 1975; Kabul 2021

Many commentators have made the comparison between the American defeat in the former South Vietnam in 1975 and that in Afghanistan in 2021. There are certainly similarities, with the same scenes of mad panic around the US Embassy and the airport in the respective capitals (the former Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City in the now unified Vietnam).

The same stunning collapse of the military and Government of the respective puppet regimes – in Vietnam it took a few weeks before the iconic scene of a tank smashing down the gate of the Presidential Palace and a new flag being raised there. There was some fighting along the way but mostly the South Vietnamese military just ran away.

Exactly the same thing happened in Afghanistan, where the whole thing took just over a week. Both puppet militaries were, on paper, more than a match for their enemies – huge numbers of men and all the latest weapons. But both were riddled by corruption and incompetence and a fatal absence of any will to fight. Why should they fight for such staggeringly corrupt governments, ones which governed only because the US and its allies militarily propped them up? Both governments ruled by a mixture of terror, bribes, incompetence and lies. When it came to the crunch, the leaders of both abjectly ran away.

The only reason there weren't any scenes to match the iconic 1975 Vietnam ones of the US pushing its own helicopters off an aircraft carrier into the sea (to make room for more arriving choppers) is because Afghanistan is a landlocked country. But the fleeing US did try to disarm and sabotage at least some of the aircraft it left behind in Kabul, part of a huge trove of US military materiel that fell into the grateful hands of the Taliban.

And the Western propaganda machine swung into high gear in both cases. There was going to be a bloodbath – well, there wasn't in Vietnam. It remains to be seen whether there will be in Afghanistan but, at the time of writing, there certainly hasn't been anything more than the settling of scores that happens at the end of every war, even the ones won by our side.

Where there was a bloodbath was in Cambodia in the 70s. And who sorted that out? Not the US or any Western country. No – Vietnam went in and did the world a favour by getting rid of the Khmer Rouge. Incidentally, this "bloodbath" theme is a common scare tactic whenever things aren't going the West's way. There were warnings of one "when the blacks take over" in South Africa. The last time I checked, South African whites were doing more than all right.

How To Make People Hate You

In the case of both Vietnam and Afghanistan, the West's enemy was routinely branded "terrorist", while the years of high-tech terror by "our" side – from napalm, herbicides, "tiger cages", land mines and carpet bombing to "precision" drone strikes – killed huge numbers of innocent civilians in both countries, which guaranteed a steady stream of recruits for the intended target and visceral hatred from the surviving victims of the "collateral damage".

In both wars the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and its local henchmen murdered, tortured, "disappeared", and imprisoned people with impunity. In Vietnam CIA atrocities included the Phoenix Program of mass murder, which gave the English language phrases such as "to neutralise" or "terminate with extreme prejudice". In Afghanistan, things went up a notch with "black hole" CIA prisons, and bounty hunters collecting rewards for completely innocent people who were kidnapped and sent to be tortured

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and indefinite imprisonment without charge in Guantanamo.

The language of propaganda is fascinating, particularly the way that it is unconsciously used and accepted. The Western media say that Saigon and Kabul “fell” – actually, according to the other side in the fight, they were both liberated. Imagine the uproar if historians and the media routinely talked about the “fall” of Berlin in 1945.

Vietnam and Afghanistan featured two very different victors over the Americans and their local collaborators (I’m sorry, “allies” and “partners”). In Vietnam it was communists and nationalists, with religion not a factor. In Afghanistan it is Islamic fundamentalists and nationalists, with religion front and centre (and communism is definitely not a factor). But both the “Viet Cong” and the Taliban have one thing in common – a burning desire for their respective countries to be independent and free of foreign domination.

Both had been trampled over by a bewildering variety of empires and would-be conquerors, going back thousands of years in Afghanistan’s case. In both cases, the US military and political Establishment could not comprehend how they could be so comprehensively defeated by “little Asian peasants” and “medieval the-

ocrats” respectively.

Afghanistan has been labelled “the graveyard of empires” and it has seen off plenty of them over those thousands of years. In the space of 40 years, it has defeated both sides in the 20th Century’s Cold War – firstly the (former) Soviet Union and now the US and all its hangers-on, including New Zealand. When the Taliban first ruled Afghanistan (1996-2001), the US had no interest in it, despite it being a totally repressive, backwards, misogynist and murderous regime. The only US interest was in whether it could work with the Taliban to exploit the country’s natural resources.

Indeed, Taliban representatives travelled to the US and were entertained in the private homes of energy company top executives who wanted to discuss the possibility of building oil and gas pipelines across the country. The US certainly had no more interest in the plight of Afghan women than it did, and still does not have, in the plight of women in Saudi Arabia, a key US ally run by a murderous absolute monarchy and a particularly vicious, misogynist sect of Islam (Wahhabism). The “we invaded Afghanistan to liberate its’ women” line was a propaganda fairy tale dreamed up after the event to soothe a gullible Western public.

It Could All Have Been So Different

Actually, on that subject, there was a modern Afghan government that was secular, progressive and empowered women. “What I find astounding is that the Western media never mention that for a brief period of time Afghanistan once had a progressive secular Government, with broad popular support. It had enacted progressive reforms and gave equal rights to women. It was in the process of dragging the country into the 20th Century, and as British political scientist Fred Halliday stated in May 1979, ‘probably more has changed in the countryside over the last year than in the two centuries since the state was established’”.

“It would now be the type of government that most people in Afghanistan and the West would probably welcome. What happened to this Government? Long before the Soviet Union entered the scene, this Government was undermined by the CIA and the mujahedeen, which triggered a series of tragic events that destroyed the country—and ironically led to the disaster of September 11 in the USA, and to the present chaos and tragedy in Afghanistan”.

“On April 27, 1978, in the wake of a huge demonstration in front of the Presidential Palace, the Army came to the support of the people and, af-

ter a brief battle with the Presidential Guard, the Government was deposed. The military officers then released jailed Marxist leaders and invited their party to form the Government, under the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki, a university professor, writer, and poet. The military supported the Marxists because they were the only ones who had a programme for land reform and progressive social and economic reforms”.

“This is how a Marxist government came into office - it was a totally indigenous happening - not even the CIA blamed the USSR for this. In fact, the Soviets were much surprised at what happened. The Government began to bring in much needed reforms; some were controversial but most had popular support. It affirmed the separation of church and State, labour unions were legalised, health care and education became priorities, women were given equal rights, and girls were to go to school”.

“Child marriages and feudal dowry payments were banned. On September 1, 1978, there was an abolition of all debts owed by farmers - landlords and moneylenders had charged up to 24% interest. A programme was being developed for major land reform, and it was expected that all farm families (including landlords) would be given the equivalent of equal amounts of land”.

“Unlike the opium poppy fields that I witnessed in north-western Pakistan, none were to be seen in Afghanistan - in fact, raisins were an important export crop. Opium poppy production was introduced to Afghanistan by the CIA-led mujahedeen for the purpose of helping to finance their offensive on the Government, and poppies have continued to be grown” (“Afghan Tragedy: Still Relevant Today As It Was Analyzed 15 Years Ago”, 10/8/21, John Ryan, *Covert Action*, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/08/10/afghan-tragedy-still-relevant-today-as-it-was-analyzed-15-years-ago/>. The article was originally published, in another publication, in 2006, hence the reference to “15 years ago”).

This Marxist government was undermined by the CIA, using local “freedom fighters” as their collaborators. It was overthrown in a coup and its leader killed. The coup leader didn’t

last long in power – he too was overthrown and killed in a military coup and the Soviet Union sent in the troops. The US jumped at the opportunity to subject their Cold War rival to having to wage a losing decade-long war against Islamic guerrillas (including Osama bin Laden), armed by the US and with the CIA’s active involvement.

It was the Soviet Union’s Vietnam War and was its last hurrah before it disintegrated a couple of years after it got out of Afghanistan. The Russians got out but their puppet government headed by local communists actually lasted for several years after they left (unlike the most recent Americans’ puppet government) before the Taliban defeated them, summarily and publicly hanging their leader (once again, in marked contrast to the Taliban’s 2021 kid glove treatment of former leaders of the US puppet government).

Before I leave the subject of women – there is a noteworthy current example of Muslim women who have fought and defeated murderous, misogynist Islamic fundamentalists. Namely, the Kurdish women’s brigades in Syria who bravely fought and defeated the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fascists, alongside Kurdish men. It was the Kurds who did the heavy fighting and dying on the ground, with US air support, that recently liberated Syria and Iraq from ISIS. And it was the Kurds who were betrayed by Trump when he stood back and let their enemy and America’s ally, Turkey, cross the Syrian border and attack them in 2018.

They Invaded Because They Could

So, no, the US did not invade Afghanistan for any noble “nation building” goals (in earlier centuries that would have been called, unironically, “civilising the savages”). Afghanistan only became of interest to the US when it became the base for Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda, which carried out the huge September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US. Those attacks did not come out of nowhere but I’m not going to go back over all the history of US in the Middle East.

The US went into Afghanistan in 2001 for good old-fashioned revenge, for which I don’t blame them. And, more importantly, because

they could. The satellites of empire all fell into line, including New Zealand. Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who revelled in being called the Deputy Sheriff, happened to be in Washington at the time and invoked the ANZUS Treaty (that an attack on one member was an attack on all members, of whom there are precisely two – the US and Australia).

Interestingly, when New Zealand was the victim of a foreign and fatal terrorist attack – the 1985 *Rainbow Warrior* bombing by the “friendly” French State – neither the US nor Australia invoked the ANZUS Treaty against France, despite NZ still being an ANZUS member at that stage. Indeed, none of our Western “allies” did anything.

Unsurprisingly, revenge was achieved within weeks – al Qaeda was routed and the Taliban dumped out of power. But the victory was deceptive. Bin Laden wasn’t found and summarily killed until a decade later. He was long gone from Afghanistan, and had spent years being looked after by his Pakistani protectors. The Taliban regrouped and spent the next 20 years waging an increasingly effective guerrilla war, which resulted in them making a breathtakingly swift return to power in 2021.

Their local support was greatly boosted by the vicious US tactic of “surgically precise” drone strikes that killed thousands and thousands of innocent civilians, right up until the very last hours of the US military presence. And by the policy of terrorising the civilian population by disappearances, kidnappings (“renditions”), torture in secret prisons, and flying some of their unlucky victims to indefinite imprisonment without charge or trial at Guantanamo.

Remember – not one Afghan was among the hijackers and mass murderers on those planes on 9/11. But an awful lot of them were Saudis, as was bin Laden. Sum total of US revenge against Saudi Arabia – zero. That continues to this day, with American silence about a royal dictatorship headed by a psychopath who brazenly orders his critics to be tortured, murdered and dismembered.

Just A Warm Up For Iraq

Afghanistan was never the end goal of the cabal of war criminals – Bush,

Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz et al – plus their willing accomplices like Blair and Howard. It was just a stepping stone to what Bush saw as the real prize, namely Iraq. A complete farrago of lies about Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction” and alleged links to al Qaeda (Saddam was actually their mortal enemy) was concocted and peddled to a sceptical world by the likes of Colin Powell, the “acceptable” face of the war criminals.

But there was no stopping Bush (who remains a strong contender for the title of Worst Ever US President. Trump didn’t have the attention span or patience to wage wars, beyond a few desultory spasms). So, the US and its satellites turned their attention to Iraq, with its much more tempting oil riches. I’m not going to go over the Iraq War and occupation again here, as it’s all been said before. But a couple of points are worth making once again.

The first one is that the US and Iran have been enemies ever since Iran’s 1979 Islamic revolution. The US was happy to let Iraq’s murderous despot, Saddam Hussein, do the dirty work for it during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, which left at least a million dead. But the sum total of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq (including the judicial murder of Saddam) is that Iran is now a key player in Iraq’s politics, having greatly benefitted from the American misadventure in that country. Iran and Iraq are now much closer than they have been for many decades and both are pretty much united in their opposition to US warmongering and adventurism in that region.

The second point is that the US-led destabilisation and destruction of Iraq led directly to the creation of ISIS, a much more formidable military force and much more fanatically vicious than either al Qaeda or the Taliban. ISIS went on to seize great chunks of territory in both Iraq and Syria, which required an extremely costly military campaign to regain.

It has taken its murderous jihad throughout the world (currently it is strongest in Africa), conducted murderous attacks in various Western countries and inspired lone wolf attacks all over the world – including in Auckland in 2021. ISIS is now established in Afghanistan, where it is a sworn enemy of the Taliban. It was ISIS – not the Taliban – who

killed 13 American troops and hundreds of Afghan civilians at Kabul Airport in August 2021. It was that one terrorist act which led the US and its satellites, including NZ, to unceremoniously get out.

“Nation Building”

Having gone galloping off on their big (and disastrous) Iraqi adventure, what was the US and its satellites going to do with Afghanistan? Their mission was very quickly accomplished vis a vis al Qaeda and the Taliban. But they were stuck with a country which every other empire had ended up sticking into the too hard basket. That was the time they should have got out but, no, they decided to stay for what became America’s longest ever war, what both Presidents Trump and Biden called a “forever war”.

They decided to try their hand at nation building. To put it mildly, that didn’t go well. The US has done nation building before and done it well, namely the Marshall Plan which rebuilt its defeated World War Two enemies, Germany and Japan. But Afghanistan was starting from a much lower base when it came to nation building and the Yanks’ heart was never in it.

They effectively ended up pouring a vast amount of money, human lives and military materiel into a hole in the ground. And ended up having to rely on the cooperation of their victorious enemy, the Taliban, to be able to get out of their last toehold, Kabul Airport. Donald Trump is completely delusional but even he could see the futility of the US misadventure in Afghanistan. In 2020 he concluded a peace deal with the Taliban and that was the deal which his successor, Joe Biden, implemented – however messily – in 2021.

Charlotte Grimshaw (*NZ Listener*, 18/9/21) put it most succinctly: “You can say the Americans have abandoned the people and women’s rights in Afghanistan, but it would be more accurate to say the US should never have been there in the first place; that they went from arming Afghan mujahideen fighters against the Russians in the 80s to invading for no good reason; that the Taliban are not from outer space, they are their fellow Afghans’ horrible problem to deal with, using non-military outside aid; that you can’t enforce women’s rights or democracy via military occupation. It was wrong to

go in and time to get out, even as they leave a colossal mess and misery behind. We should take in lots of the resulting refugees”.

It is worth pointing out that the US continues to reserve the right to conduct “over the horizon” drone or bomber strikes on Afghanistan, and has done so since it pulled all ground troops out. Nor has it abandoned the “War On Terror” launched by George Bush in 2001. US special forces and CIA operatives continue to wage that around the world, either by themselves or in collaboration with local forces. The US presence is most noticeable in Africa, where it has a key military base in the tiny nation of Djibouti in east Africa. But it is fair to say that Biden considers that he has bigger fish to fry, namely China.

NZ Has To Share The Blame

New Zealand doesn’t come out of Afghanistan with clean hands, we were in that war from the outset. Nicky Hager has written the best summation of this, in the *Spinoff* (2/9/21, “The Taliban Won The War. Can We Learn The Lesson?”, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/02-09-2021/the-taliban-won-the-war-can-we-learn-the-lesson/>). That’s not surprising, because Nicky has written books about New Zealand’s role in Afghanistan, one of which led to the Operation Burnham Inquiry (see Nicky’s article on that in *Peace Researcher* 60, November 2020, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-bac-kissues/PR60.pdf>).

This is Nicky’s conclusion, from his *Spinoff* article: “The lesson of the Afghanistan war, like the Vietnam War, and indeed the First World War – for the public and the soldiers – is that we should not have gone in the first place. Was it worth it? No. Should New Zealand have been part of the war? No. Should we have stayed for 20 years? No. Will we learn? That’s up to us”.

His article is full of fascinating material: “NZSAS (Special Air Service) troops first arrived in Afghanistan in mid-December 2001 – the day after Osama bin Laden had crossed into Pakistan, never to return to Afghanistan. A secret briefing for New Zealand Ministers that day said ‘Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for the al Qaeda’ and that ‘the Taliban has now ceased to exist as a governing entity in Afghanistan’. This means the rationale for sending

the NZSAS to Afghanistan had ceased to exist before they even touched the ground at their new Kandahar base. But the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) stayed for another 20 years” (ibid.).

The New Zealand people were fed a constant stream of reassuring propaganda that “our boys” (and girls this time) were engaged in nation building. What the Americans in Vietnam called “winning hearts and minds”. A sort of international version of community policing (which I’ve seen described as “pulling funny faces at kids”). But, no, they were helping the CIA in a dirty war.

“The deployment with the most New Zealand troops and the most troop rotations was the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Bamiyan. NZDF took over the base in 2003 to free up its previous US staff for deployment to Iraq. Viewed through the filter of the military press releases and supplied photos, this deployment was about aid and reconstruction. But Kiwi Base was a standard part of the US command and its function was counter-insurgency warfare; fighting the Taliban. It had units for road patrols, psychological operations, human intelligence (finding local informers), telephone eavesdropping and so on. The aid component was a small add-on to assist military goals”.

“For a while the New Zealand presence in Bamiyan did bring some security for the local people, who are traditional targets of Taliban repression. It was in this respect a positive contribution. The problem was, there was no coherent goal. The US -installed Government in Kabul was chronically corrupt, the Taliban had got better and better at fighting in the stony mountains, and Western nations were getting tired of the endless war and talking about leaving. The strategy was to build up local forces to take over holding back the Taliban once the Western forces had gone. We saw how long they lasted after the US-led forces left”.

“By 2010 a senior military officer said to me: ‘Who were we? As far as the Afghans are concerned you are an invader; you are an invader no different from the Soviets. It doesn’t matter what you do. Eventually I realised whatever we were doing, even in safe little Bamiyan, we were just wasting our time’. And then came the worst part, which is



that New Zealand did not stick with the people it had gone to Bamiyan to help”.

“A former mid-level Army officer described what happened next. The New Zealand troops had brought security while the threat was relatively low but then, when the Taliban grew stronger, they up and left. There were two fatal attacks on New Zealand patrols in 2012 and, the former officer said, the New Zealand force ‘cleared out when things got tough’” (ibid.).

“Another secret military document from 2002 revealed confusion among military officers about what the US-led forces were supposed to be doing. New Zealand’s Joint Forces Commander Martyn Dunne had visited the NZSAS in Afghanistan and talked to a wide range of military officers from different nations. His report on the trip stated the fundamental problem he had discovered”.

“There was, he wrote, ‘no overarching operational campaign plan’ and a ‘lack of coherent strategy or even clear commanders’ intent’. New Zealand could have realised that things were going wrong and come home then, 19 years ago. But as a former senior defence official said to me in 2011: ‘The chances are these concerns were withheld from the Ministers so as not to compromise the opportunity to serve alongside the US forces’” (ibid.).

No More Imperialist Wars; Get Out Of Five Eyes

So, there we have it. Despite the nu-

clear free policy, the “ANZUS Row” and the constant invocation of “an independent foreign policy”, it was all about “the opportunity to serve alongside the US forces”. To win brownie points, to suck up to the Yanks, to be a loyal satellite of the US empire. That’s apparently what ten New Zealanders died for in Afghanistan and that’s why we waged NZ’s longest ever war. And after all of that long, long time, when the end came, it all turned to shit in a remarkably short time. Next time New Zealand’s decision makers feel the need to prove our loyalty to our imperial masters, let them jump over the cliff by themselves. Look before you leap.

There is a bigger picture here. Helen Clark was the Labour Prime Minister who ordered the NZ military into Afghanistan – a decision which led to the death of Labour’s coalition with the Alliance (indeed, the Alliance itself became collateral damage of that decision). Her reaction to the Taliban victory in 2021 was to call it “a catastrophic failure of intelligence in Western foreign policy”.

Yet, NZ is in the Western world’s self-proclaimed elite intelligence club, namely Five Eyes. Which proved to be absolutely useless in seeing what was going on in Afghanistan, a country which had been an adventure playground for Western spies for 20 years. So, why is New Zealand in Five Eyes, what use is it to us (or anyone else, for that matter)? Time for NZ to get out, time for Five Eyes to become four eyes. ■

AOTEAROA/ NEW ZEALAND

New Spook Powers Not Wanted

The Government has passed new “counter-terror” legislation that makes planning a terrorist attack an offence. The Counter-Terrorism Legislation Bill was introduced earlier in 2021 as part of the ongoing response to the 2019 Christchurch mosques’ attacks. As ever, in recent history, new legislation again extends the powers of the Kiwi secret agencies. It includes a new definition for what constitutes a “terrorist act” and gives wider powers for warrantless searches. Parties as diverse as ACT and the Greens opposed the new law being passed without more scrutiny.

Otago University Law Professor Andrew Geddis said when the law was before Parliament, that if the proposed Bill were to pass, it would be “quite an expansion of New Zealand criminal law... It would be saying you are guilty for thinking about doing something not actually going out and starting to do it, but even just thinking about doing it will be an offence for which you could go to jail for up to seven years” (RNZ, 4/9/21). Geddis pointed out that justifying the passage of the Bill by relating the new law to recent Auckland stabbings was not justifiable. He said the idea that previous law was not able to deal with such incidents is untrue.

The Establishment view supporting extension of spook powers was promoted by John Battersby, a specialist on terrorism and counter-terrorism at Massey University, who claimed New Zealand’s terror laws were outdated and NZ was too averse to making new laws about terrorism, which seems to rather fly in the face of recent history when there have been several new laws relating to terrorism, each giving more power to the security agencies, over the past seven years. Battersby claims that “developments in terrorism are going to affect us” and NZ needs to “wake

up” (RNZ, *ibid.*). *Peace Researcher (PR)* notes that Massey University seems to support Battersby’s belief; the University has appointed several ex-spooks to its staff over the last few years.

Another conservative (reactionary?) view was expressed by Chris Wilson, Programme Director of the University of Auckland’s Master of Conflict and Terrorism Studies (he also heads the University’s Conflict, Terrorism and Peace group – presumably with a different interpretation of “Peace” than *PR*). He said the law is necessary because there’s “... a clear gap, not being able to keep people in custody or charge people under the Terrorism Suppression Act”.

Another academic opposed the new law. Richard Jackson, Director of the University of Otago’s National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, speaking before the Bill went through Parliament, stated that there is no evidence the changes will actually protect New Zealanders - and they could actually make another attack more likely. “We know from other countries that this kind of legislation is hardly ever applied to, to put it bluntly, white people. It’s mostly applied to Muslims and people from other ethnic groups,” he told *Newshub* (7/9/21).

“The danger is that it adds to the grievances that are already felt in some of those communities. Treating Muslims harshly under this kind of legislation could create further grievances than already exist and make people even more angry and potentially radicalise them... There’s just no evidence that I’m aware of, having studied this for 20 years now, that a legislative approach is going to make us any safer”.

Dr Jackson said “innocent people doing innocent things” have found themselves targeted by security agencies overseas under similar legislation. Government officials and security officials who are worried about risks could be over-eager and interpret what ordinary people do through the mindset of trying to prevent someone from committing an act. We know there’s been a lot of cases overseas where Muslims have, for example, gone on holiday to Disneyland and taken a video of their trip, then the authorities have taken that video as evidence of them planning a terrorist attack,

even when there’s no other supporting evidence”.

Like Dr Jackson, *PR* is very much afraid that the new legislation will do more harm than good. We certainly do not believe that giving the spooks more powers will make people in this country more secure (the Anti-Bases Campaign’s submission on the Counter-Terrorism Bill can be read at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/SubmissionCTBill2021.pdf> Ed.). ■

Secret Trials

A basic tenet of NZ law is that people are tried in open court. Over the last five years there have been several cases involving the security services where judges have decided to invoke secrecy because the spies want to conceal officers, or methods, or both. In the latest such case, an NZ soldier, arrested in 2019 on charges of espionage, appeared in a pretrial hearing in September 2021. He was a member of a white supremacist group, Action Zealandia, and due to go to a military trial which has been postponed because the judge wants a report on the soldier’s mental health.

The trial had already been delayed because of “...complex legal and procedural issues...” related to “... the implications of presenting evidence before the court which may give rise to concerns relating to the defence and security of New Zealand”. These include orders sought by one or other of the parties for access to certain material, suppression of the identities of certain witnesses, the suppression of the nature of certain evidence and submissions; and the scope of open court rights in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 and the Court Martial Act 2007” (*Newsroom*, 14/7/21). In other words, arguments over the spies being able to keep personnel or actions free from public scrutiny.

The soldier is charged with 17 offences involving spying for a foreign country (a first for an NZ court), obtaining defence base access codes and a document revealing security vulnerabilities with intent to disclose such information to a person acting on behalf of a (suppressed) foreign country (*Press*, 2/10/21).

The issue of suppression of witness details of evidence, etc is a serious concern; over the last few years the

shenanigans of Aussie spooks trying to conceal nefarious activities has delayed justice for years and resulted in nasty persecution of both a whistle-blower and his lawyer (see item re Bernard Collaery in the Australia section of *Spooky Bits*). Courts must ensure that such security agency malevolence, or incompetence, does not happen in this country. ■

Police Computer Systems At Risk

In August 2021 it was revealed that a review of Police information technology (IT) systems showed many problems, including vulnerability to hacking, (of private and judicial information), and this is at a time that the Police have been trying to get more powers to hold citizens' information (RNZ, 2/8/21). The "audit" was carried out in 2019, but little seems to have changed in spite of "very high risk" associated with the deficiencies reported. The Police say they are addressing the issues. The review found they had not done an assessment of the major threats to their cyber "resilience". There had been "insufficient investment" in cyber resilience for years, and confusion between two teams over who was in charge of IT disaster recovery. ■

China Behind Cyber-Attacks?

The Government says the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) has uncovered evidence of Chinese State-sponsored cyber-attacks in New Zealand, after a 'robust technical attribution process' (RNZ, 20/7/21). The GCSB has stated that Chinese State-sponsored actors were responsible for the exploitation of Microsoft Exchange vulnerabilities in New Zealand in early 2021 and says it has established links between Chinese State-sponsored actors known as Advanced Persistent Threat 40 (APT40) and malicious cyber activity in New Zealand (RNZ, *ibid.*). GCSB promotion manager Andrew Little told the media the GCSB has helped the affected local organisations.

The *Press* (21/7/21) reported that the GCSB recorded 353 cyber security incidents between the middle of 2019 and 2020. The newspaper states condemnation of Chinese hacking "...echoes the most recent threat assessment from the US intelligence community (oxymoron?): cyber threats from nation states and their surrogates will remain acute

for the foreseeable future". Waikato Professor of Law Alexander Gillespie notes that the comments on China have "...considerably upped the ante" in an international environment "...drifting ... towards the darkness of increasing lawlessness".

The GCSB estimates about 30% of serious malicious cyber activity in this country can be linked to various State-sponsored actors (RNZ, *ibid.*). On 19 July 2021, NZ joined a number of other countries in condemning the "malicious cyber activity" of State-sponsored actors (*Press, ibid.*). Earlier in 2021, the NZ government joined the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime, an agreement of more than 60 countries aimed at sharing legal standards, mutual assistance and extradition rules. The Government statements notably omit mention of Russian activities or the massive cyber-attack operations mounted by Five Eyes allies themselves. ■

GCSB Is Not Saving Us From Cyber-Attacks

In the middle of September (2021) NZ suffered another spate of cyber-attacks. Customers of both ANZ and Kiwibank had a number of hours when they could not access online banking; in the case of Kiwibank the problem repeated over several days. MetService, NZ Post and the Ministry for Primary Industries had online breakdowns and the Waikato DHB was also hit with a "distributed denial of service" (DDoS) attack (RNZ, 14/9/21).

(In a denial-of-service attack, the

aim is to make computer services unavailable to its intended users by flooding the target with requests from a variety of sources to overwhelm the system's ability to process the requests. Because of the enormous number of hits needed to make the attack work on a major target, a number of different systems providing the hits have often been pre-hacked to use to multiply the hits).

The biggest impacts come from State actors with vast resources but recent attacks in NZ have more criminal ransom characteristics. On the other hand, some attacks have been carried out by activists, like the attack on major credit cards last year by "hactivist" group Anonymous (RNZ, 8/9/21). Presumably some GCSB staff are getting loads of overtime as they are the central part of Wellington's cyber security organisation. But clearly, what is not happening is that NZ's cyber security organisation, based on GCSB resources, is protecting this country from cyber-attacks. ■

Cyber Security Policies Are Failing

In recent years *PR* has consistently criticised Government cyber security policies, and in particular, the inability of the GCSB to protect us; recurrent themes, besides the need for new policy, are that Government agencies are not the only, or even the best, organisations to counter cyber-crime (indeed, the word "organisation" may not even be relevant), that Five Eyes is not the answer (but in fact is a practitioner of cyber warfare itself on a massive



scale) and that major revision of the Government's cyber security policy is necessary.

Gordon Campbell wrote an excellent piece on NZ cybersecurity failures in *Scoop* (6/7/21). He points out that the Russians, not the Chinese, seem to pose more of a cyber security threat and that a team working within the Russian Intelligence Main Directorate (the GRU) has been charged with interfering in the 2016 US election by American authorities.

As an example, he points to the 2020 hack where Russian military hackers sabotaged a tiny piece of computer code spreading a virus throughout US government agencies and allowing the hackers to access files in the departments of Justice, State, Treasury, Energy, and Commerce and others. According to his information, for nine months, Russians had open access to top-level communications, court documents, even nuclear secrets.

For this SolarWinds hack, the entry was via a software update that contains millions of lines of computer code. The hackers clandestinely rewrote 4,032 lines of that code, thereby creating "back doors" into the computer networks of the firms, Government agencies and think-tanks using the SolarWinds Orion software package.

Campbell reinforces several points that *PR* has been making for years; in particular, that the GCSB is not able to defend this country against cyber-attack: "Probably though, the expertise required to do that job properly is lacking here, even within the GCSB. On cyber security matters, the public is largely being left in the dark" (*Scoop*, *ibid.*).

He suggests that putting all our Kiwi eggs into the FireEye basket may not be the way to go; *PR* suggests that it is often "privateers" (picture a pimply geek or two) who uncover the hacks. In the cases of both SolarWinds and Kaseya (major hacks against the US government, it was non-state actors – the FireEye private security firm and a Dutch NGO – that alerted the world to the existence of a problem. Note also that the enormous task of identifying the Trumpies who invaded the Washington Capitol building in January 2021 has come more successfully from Internet junkies than the FBI).

Additionally, the *Scoop* story makes the key point that: "At enormous expense, we have kitted ourselves out with conventional warfighting tools to meet defence challenges in the Pacific region that even the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) says (in its own reviews and reports) will be non-existent over the lifespan of the gear in question. To counter these phantom threats, we have allocated circa \$20 billion over the next decade".

"That outlay has left New Zealand with almost nothing left over to bolster our defences against the actual threats to our security posed by cyber criminals, domestic and global terrorism and climate change. Against those real and imminent threats, our pricey updated frigates, Poseidon anti-submarine aircraft and heavy lift super Hercules planes will be next to useless". Campbell suggests a possible way forward would be the cyber equivalent of a defence review. (*PR* is not sure – given the long history of Establishment conclusions from such reviews, if this is the best option).■

The Way Of The 21st Century

An item in the *Christchurch Press* (25/9/21) reported the victimisation of a woman after her phone had been illegally accessed by a man who knew her. He had installed spyware on her phone which gave him full control over the device, with remote access to the cameras and microphone on the device. The woman was traumatised when it became clear that her most personal information could be intercepted and posted on the Internet.

The *Press* was reporting the court case where the man was charged with illegally accessing a computer system. The article does not explain exactly how the spyware was installed, but the implications are chilling when we live in a society where not only the security agencies, but Joe Citizen, is able to access and manipulate people's phones and other devices.■

Review Of "Terrorist" Incident

The Government is setting up another security review, this time into what happened before 3 September, 2021, when a Sri Lankan refugee was responsible for the 2021 Auckland Countdown supermarket stabbing, which resulted in the wounding of eight people. Ahamed Samsudeen was shot dead by Police tactical officers who had been

assigned to tail him due to his paranoia and radical views. In July 2021 a judge decided that it was important to try to rehabilitate Samsudeen and gave a sentence of supervision. The Police then independently assessed him as very high risk and they put him under close surveillance.

The Independent Police Conduct Authority, Office of the Inspectorate at the Department of Corrections, and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security will carry out the review together. They will investigate if their organisations did enough to assess - and respond - to the risk Samsudeen posed. Yet another in a long series of reviews into failures by the security agencies, although in this case the Police were clearly on the job and problems seem to have revolved around what limitations should be placed on citizens and this is evidence of a necessary debate.■

Even More Powers For The Spooks?

In July 2021 the report of the Select Committee Review of 2019 Local Body Elections – set up to also look at licensing for booze and local energy supply – bizarrely recommended "more resources for spies to counter 'Foreign Interference'". Recommendations 4 and 5 state: "We recommend that the Government align local authority elections with the legislation and regulations that apply to general elections regarding foreign donations and disclosures".

And: "We recommend that the Government consider increasing the intelligence agencies' resources so that they are able to provide greater support to the local government sector" (https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/reports/document/SCR_11_2173/inquiry-into-the-2019-local-elections-and-liquor-licensing). The "foreign Government interference" in local body elections allegedly involved China.■

GCSB And Rocket Lab

The newest US base in New Zealand – the Rocket Lab site at Mahia Peninsula near Gisborne, used for launching US military and spy satellites – has presented the GCSB with another string to their surveillance bow. In December 2017 the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (SIS) jointly assumed a new regula-

tory role under the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017 (OSHAA). Namely, to support their Minister's role under OSHAA (as a consultee regarding risks to national security), the two agencies conduct national security risk assessments of all licence and permit applications (GCSB Website).

What this actually means is that the spies duly report to the Government that rocket launches pose no "security threat" and the Government deceptively uses this indeterminate phrasing to give the go ahead to rockets that put support equipment for the Pentagon into space. *PR* notes that *Politico* recently reported (21/9/21) that the Pentagon's new Assistant Secretary for Space, a position Congress recently created, *will absorb the responsibility for nuclear and missile defence* (*PR* emphasis). The deputy position formerly responsible was eliminated as part of the reorganisation. Which means that the affairs of organisations such as Rocket Lab now come more directly into the sphere of the Pentagon's nuclear missile strategy.

■

IG Gives Green Light To CCTV Surveillance

At the end of June 2021, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IG), Brendan Horsley, released a report on New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (SIS) use of access to closed circuit television (CCTV). He concluded: "My review found the service uses CCTV in a targeted and specific way, not for general surveillance... It does not retain or record footage" (28/6/21, IG official Website). In previous *Peace Researchers* we have commented on how widespread is the usage of CCTV coverage by Police and others; another growing factor in the surveillance state that has positive and negative aspects but would be alarming in the hands of a repressive Government.

Relative to the SIS it is alarming that the IG is so confident about what the SIS reveals to him. "I'm satisfied the Service's current use of access to CCTV is lawful and carried out in a responsible and proper way," he reports. Horsley said his office had worked closely with the Privacy Commissioner on the review, which is a little more reassuring, but given the long and repetitive history of intelligence agency deceit and cover-up, Horsley's report should not be

taken at face value. ■

GCSB And SIS Criticised By IG

At the end of July 2020, the intelligence agencies' Inspector-General, Brendon Horsley, released his report into Afghan matters during the "War on Terror"; more focus on these activities should have better prepared policy makers for the chaos of the 2021 retreat. The Inspector-General's inquiry was commenced prior to the *Government Inquiry into Operation Burnham and Related Matters*, which also released its report at the same time.

"We found that agencies accurately reported allegations of casualties from the 21 August 2010 operation but could have done more to ensure that the possibility of civilian casualties was considered at an interagency level and reported to Ministers. There were also known risks that persons detained by partner agencies were subjected to human rights violations including torture and that those risks were not adequately identified or responded to by the GCSB or NZSIS".

The inquiry was led by current Deputy IG, and former Acting IG, Madeleine Laracy, who says the GCSB and SIS support to NZ Defence Force (NZDF) was properly authorised and the agencies' efforts provided essential support for the safety of NZDF personnel in Afghanistan at the time. "While they were not the lead Crown agency, the GCSB and NZSIS should have been more alive to the human rights responsibilities that came with their operational activities," Ms Laracy says.

"Both agencies contributed to the NZDF operation to detain Qari Miraj. In light of that they needed to do more after becoming aware of the allegation of Miraj's torture. Our report describes for the first time the risks involved in dealing with the Afghan intelligence agency, National Directorate of Security (NDS), over the five-year period".

Horsley says. "There is a need for all agencies to be proactive in identifying and managing foreseeable risks of human rights violations and for all agencies to ensure New Zealand does not contribute directly or indirectly to such abuses" (the full report is available on the IG Website: <https://igis.govt.nz/assets/Inquiries/Inquiry-into-events-in-Afghanistan.pdf>). Nice. I wonder what the poor

buggers (and their families) who were butchered or tortured would make of these good intentions. ■

Unwanted: Peter Thiel

In 2011, an "entrepreneur" was given NZ citizenship by Key's government although the man had only visited this country a few times and had only spent 12 days here when he applied (normally a permanent resident has to spend more than 70% of their time in New Zealand over five years before they can apply for citizenship).

Peter Thiel is a US multi-billionaire who co-founded Paypal, is a key influence in Facebook and spouts a mongrel political agenda which denigrates women and scorns democracy. He is associated with the extreme Right of the Republican Party. A writer named Max Chafkin has published a new book "The Contrarian: Peter Thiel And Silicon Valley's Pursuit Of Power". He says Thiel is currently pushing a Trumpian agenda through support for US Senate candidates and the Facebook boardroom (see *Politico*, 21/9/21).

But (it hardly seems possible) Thiel has an even more sinister attribute: he runs an enormous data-mining corporation called Palantir which is "...using War on Terror tools" ("Palantir Knows Everything About You", *Bloomberg.com*) to track American citizens, monitor workers, and help nasty governments around the world to spy on their citizens.

Palantir was founded in 2004 by Thiel and some mates and began working for the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their software collects data from a wide range of sources: emails and browser histories, global positioning system (GPS) locations from company-issued smartphones, printer and download activity, and transcripts of digitally recorded phone conversations, financial documents, airline reservations, cellphone records, social media postings - and searches for connections that human analysts might miss.

In a programme begun in 2009, according to the *Bloomberg* website, Palantir's software was used by major corporations to spy on their employees. This was halted when senior bank executives realised they were included in the mass data collection. Also, according to *Bloom-*

berg: "US spies and special forces loved it immediately; they deployed Palantir to synthesise and sort the blizzard of battlefield intelligence. It helped planners avoid roadside bombs, track insurgents for assassination, even hunt down Osama bin Laden".

But use by unscrupulous governments to control their citizens is less well known. And the BBC has reported ("Palantir", 1/10/20) that projects have included work with the UK Government Communications Headquarters' (GCHQ) cyber-spies as well as publicly declared work for the Ministry of Defence.

Bloomberg reports another Palantir scandal from 2010 when the company proposed the US Chamber of Commerce run a secret sabotage campaign against the group's liberal opponents. Hacked emails released by the group Anonymous indicated that Palantir and two other defence contractors pitched outside lawyers for the organisation on a plan to snoop on the families of progressive activists, create fake identities to infiltrate Left-leaning groups, scrape social media with bots, and plant false information with liberal groups to subsequently discredit them.

But while Palantir clients might like to highlight involvement helping fight drug cartels, catching child predators and preventing terrorist attacks, it is accused of having "blood on its hands" by civil rights protesters. For example, its tech is used in the UK to identify places where illegal immigrants are working so the properties can be raided and those arrested deported (BBC Website). In the USA, Palantir works closely with the Department of Defense and the CIA. We need to know a lot more about the activities of Thiel's companies, and there should be open debate about whether this is the kind of person who should have had speedily expedited process in becoming an NZ citizen. ■

AUSTRALIA

SAS Killings

ABC News has updated its account of the murders of Afghan civilians by Aussie special forces (*ABC News*, updated 4/9/21): "*ABC Investigations* first reported on the 'tractor

job' (as it became known by the soldiers involved) in July 2020. But since then, more details and more people with knowledge of the deadly raid have emerged. This includes a Special Operations officer on the deployment who was told what happened on the operation by someone who was involved in it, just hours after the Special Air Service (SAS) soldier and his Zulu 1 comrades returned".

During the operation, on 15th of December 2012, "... the patrol commander had accidentally shot one of this group of farmers," the officer said. "And then they made the decision that they couldn't leave anyone behind to tell (what happened). So, they decided to kill all of them". "The imagery that I saw, it's all pretty close up. Head shots," says the officer. "There was imagery of someone that looked very young (who was) dead. He looked about 13 or 14. So a young adolescent".

The other patrol - Zulu 2 - killed about six people near the village of Sara Aw. Sources have told *ABC Investigations* that at least four were likely to be Taliban, but the rest were probably civilians. The Afghan villagers of Sara Aw showed the ABC a gravesite and provided a list of 12 names of people they say were civilians killed on the SAS operation.

From *Wikipedia*: "The Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Afghanistan Inquiry Report, commonly known as the Brereton Report (after the investigation head), is a report into war crimes allegedly committed by the ADF in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016. The investigation was led by Paul Brereton, who is both a New South Wales Supreme Court judge and a major general in the Army Reserve. The independent commission was initiated in 2016, and delivered its final report on 6 November 2020. A redacted version was released publicly on 19 November 2020".

"The report found evidence of 39 murders of civilians and prisoners by (or at the instruction of) members of Australian Special Forces and subsequently covered up by ADF personnel. The report stated 25 ADF personnel were involved in the killings, including those who were 'accessories' to the incident. Some of those believed to be involved were still serving with the ADF. The

unlawful killings discussed by the report began in 2009, with most occurring in 2012 and 2013" (*PR* has reported on these events previously, but given their appalling nature, deems it important to include updated details. There are also comments on the "warrior hero" culture among the troops on the *RT Website*, 19/11/20). ■

Delay In Investigation Of War Crimes

The agency set up to investigate 'alleged' war crimes by Australian Special Forces in Afghanistan, given the recent change of regime, is unlikely to be able to send investigators to the Taliban-led country for some time. Experts have described the fall of Afghanistan's government as a setback to potential evidence-gathering activities stemming from the Brereton Report, even though it is possible the Taliban would be receptive to such investigations. Asked about the impact of the Taliban takeover on forthcoming evidence-gathering, the Office of the Special Investigator (OSI) said it was "considering the implications of the situation in Afghanistan in the context of our investigations" (*Guardian*, 21/8/21). ■

Judges Rule Against "National Security"

In a victory for democratic rights over the powers of the spooks to conduct secret trials, Australian lawyer Bernard Collaery has succeeded in his bid to overturn secrecy shrouding parts of his trial for allegedly unlawfully sharing classified information about unacceptable Aussie spy activities. In a 2004 bugging operation of negotiations, Canberra despicably turned its spies on hapless East Timor in order to grab lucrative oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. Collaery was defence lawyer for the whistleblower in the affair, and ended up the victim of vindictive spook attention himself.

In an exceptionally important ruling, (which *PR* hopes, without much optimism, NZ officials will duly note) Chief Justice Helen Murrell, and Justices John Burns and Michael Wigney, stressed the importance of the open hearing of criminal trials. They accepted the public disclosure of the information the Government wanted secret would involve a risk of prejudice to national security. They concluded: "On the other hand, there was a very real risk of damage to public confidence

in the administration of justice if the evidence could not be publicly disclosed" (*Microsoft News*, Australian Associated Press, 6/10/21)

Collaery was accused of conspiring with his former client, an ex-spy known as "Witness K" to communicate information to the Timor-Leste government that was prepared by or on behalf of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS). Whistle-blower Witness K was given a three-month suspended sentence in the Australian Capital Territory Magistrates' Court in April 2021 and ordered to be of good behaviour for 12 months. While the sentence is a light one which recognises the morality of the case, both Witness K and Collaery have had their lives turned upside down by relentless hostility from the spooks over the last ten years. ■

Oz Spooks: \$A2.4b Budget But No Whistleblowers

Australia has a law to allow whistle-blowers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, first introduced in 2013. This legislation was intended to promote accountability in Government and public sectors but the nation's spooks have a blanket exemption from it. Now the Australian Human Rights Law Centre is calling for the agencies to lose this exemption. Kieran Pender, a senior lawyer at the HRLC says whistle-blower protections were designed to improve public scrutiny of Government spending and such big budget agencies should be subject to appropriate checks and balances like any other.

The country has seven major spy organisations. These employ more than 2,200 personnel, and have a budget of about \$A2.4 billion. In the 2020-21 budget, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) will receive an estimated \$A591 million with the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) being given \$A630 million.

The Australian Signals Directorate will get a little more than a billion while the Office of National Intelligence will receive \$A147 million. The two defence (military) intelligence groups do not publicly reveal how much they get (*Canberra Times*, 6/2/21) The same ASIS budget is given by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 8/11/20, where Lockheed Martin appears as a sponsor on the Website – hardly conducive to belief in the integrity of

the organisation.

Staffers with a complaint are allowed to make disclosures within their own agencies only. Two major revelations about appalling actions of Government officers – the East Timor affair (see above) and the finding that Australian defence forces had unlawfully murdered 39 Afghan citizens – came from whistle-blowers. Given the size of the spook organisations, and recent history of bad treatment of legitimate whistle-blowers, Pender is making a very good point. ■

Oversight Of Oz Spies Weak

New research by The Australia Institute (a public policy thinktank based in Canberra) shows that Parliamentary oversight of Australia's intelligence agencies is weak compared to others in the Five Eyes intelligence sharing alliance between Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom & the United States, and that increased accountability and oversight measures should be considered. (Australia Institute, 2/9/20, "AUST-INTEL Powers: Parliamentary Oversight Of Intelligence Agencies", by Bill Browne).

"With the Government considering further expanding the powers and scope of the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), the report reveals important limitations that significantly weaken Australia's ability to oversee intelligence agencies - including the inability to review *any* intelligence operations, past, current or planned – in order better to protect the human rights and privacy of Australian citizens" (ibid.).

The thinktank says Australia's Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) has key limitations because it has limited powers to conduct its own inquiries, does not have jurisdiction over all bodies with intelligence functions, and unlike in Canada, the USA and the UK, Australia's Parliamentary Committee cannot review any intelligence operations (past, current or planned).

It says there are widespread concerns over how the Aussie spooks are operating, and: "As the surveillance powers of Australian intelligence agencies increase, it is ever more important that the rights of Australian citizens are fully protected and this requires a stronger Parliamentary Committee to exert

greater control over the agencies and ensure greater accountability to Parliament" (Australia Institute, ibid.). We can, and should, make the same point about NZ as the Government, in October 2021, yet again passed legislation expanding the powers of Kiwi spooks. ■

Covid Tracing And The Privacy Dilemma

It was revealed at the end of 2020 that the Aussie spooks had been caught 'incidentally' collecting information from Australian contact tracing apps. Canberra's Inspector-General for the spies confirmed the collection of the personal data but maintained it was scooped up "in the course of the lawful collection of other data". But the watchdog said that there was "no evidence" that any agency "decrypted, accessed or used any Covid app data" (*msmash* posting, 24/11/20).

Five Eyes agencies routinely grab vast amounts of data that they promise they do not use or store when it falls outside their immediate target. How any oversight organisation can guarantee there is no misuse of information is a mystery. The spooks have a long tradition of hiding material from nosy outsiders; the issue has come up often in relation to the SIS and the GCSB.

On the other hand, the deadly presence of Covid-19 means that we are all faced with issues beyond what existed before 2020. Vaccination certificates and contact tracing, which reveal much private information, seem inevitable. The trick will be to make sure that the Police and the spooks are not gathering this data to use it in ways for which it was never intended. ■

The Submarine Deal

Australia's bellicose defence policies have become mind-boggling with the announcement that the USA, UK and Australia (AUKUS) are drawing up a joint plan over the coming 18 months for assembling a new Australian nuclear-powered submarine fleet, which will be built in Adelaide. The project will make Australia only the seventh country in the world to have nuclear powered submarines.

The agreement terminates a \$A90b contract Australia signed with the French company Naval Group in 2016. France has said Australian military officials sent them a letter

confirming they were “extremely satisfied” with French submarines just hours before they announced the 2016 contract would be cancelled (*Guardian*, 23/9/21).

One commentator (David Crowe, *Age*, 18/9/21) states: “In one decision, (Prime Minister) Morrison has antagonised China, opened a rift with France, scrapped years of effort on conventional submarines, increased costs and exposed Australia to a longer capability gap by pushing back the arrival of the (submarine) fleet”. The *Sydney Morning Herald* said it is “the most perplexing and bamboozling decision in Defence’s acquisition history”, (*SMH*, 14/9/21).

Others say this vastly expensive military thunderbolt places Australia squarely in Beijing’s gunights and weakens, not enhances, its security. It makes Canberra dependent on Washington’s good graces. It has outraged France and other European friends. And it destroys any possibility of a serious nuclear free Pacific policy (e.g., Simon Tisdall, *Guardian*, 19/9/21). The New Zealand government seems to have accepted that this will further remove us from our belligerent Tasman ally, and has announced continuation of its anti-nuclear policy, which will ban these future Australian nuclear submarines from entering New Zealand waters or ports.

The *Age* (21/9/21) is equally critical: “This was not only boof-headed diplomacy. It leaves Australia with no supply contract for any new submarines from anywhere whatsoever, and actually endangers critical capabilities of Australia’s existing six submarines. Australia may have

trashed a relationship it honours every Anzac Day on the Somme... Call it ambitious, but our attitude to regional security ought to be to coalesce democracies that share our vision of a newly coercive China - Japan, Singapore, South Korea, the countries of the European Union - rather than further pursuing a clubby, outmoded three-player strategy with the US and Britain”.

Eric Sayers, an expert in Asia-Pacific security policy at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, said: “This is solely and 100% about China, and we should stop pretending it is anything else. There are no ifs, ands or buts about it” (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). Canberra maintains that this brave new world means the United States will share its closely guarded nuclear submarine secrets (see new spy story below) with Australia. “AUKUS will bring together our sailors, our scientists and our industries to maintain and expand our edge in military capabilities as well as cooperation on missile capabilities, cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, research and development, and industrial supply chains” (*Guardian*, 21/9/21).■

Morrison Ignores Vulnerability Of Subs

Australia’s proposed nuclear-powered submarines could be obsolete by the time they hit the water in the 2040s due to new technologies making underwater vessels “visible”, some experts argue. An Australian National University National Security College report found that transparency is “likely or “very likely” by the 2050s, a decade after Australia’s new fleet of nuclear-powered subs is due to enter service. “Future

technologies will make the oceans broadly transparent and counter-detection technologies will not have the same salience in the decades ahead as they have had previously” (*Guardian*, 4/10/21). China has already developed lasers which can locate submarines under water.

Furthermore, perhaps Scott Morrison should consider the possibilities of submarine accidents. Recently a nuclear-powered US Navy attack submarine struck an object while submerged in international waters in the South China Sea, US officials have said. Eleven sailors were hurt – two suffered moderate injuries and the rest had minor scrapes and bruises, officials said (*Guardian*, 8/10/21).

The newspaper reported that the Pentagon provided few details of the event, only that *USS Connecticut* remained in a “safe and stable condition”, that there were no life-threatening injuries, the sub was still fully operational and the Seawolf-class submarine’s nuclear propulsion plant was not affected. But this brings into play not only the spectre of serious submarine accident, but also that of dangerous international incidents. It should also be noted that the incident took place during aggressive operations to demonstrate law of the sea protocols which involved Australian and NZ vessels. How serious was this incident in terms of the potential involvement of the Chinese military? ■

And What About The Spies?

Stuff reports (11/10/21) that a US Navy nuclear engineer and his wife have been charged with trying to share submarine secrets with a foreign country. The alleged espionage plot was uncovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), according to court documents. Authorities say Jonathan Toebbe, who has a top-secret clearance, “has passed, and continues to pass, Restricted Data as defined by the Atomic Energy Act ... to a foreign government ... with the witting assistance of his spouse, Diana Toebbe,” according to a criminal complaint filed in West Virginia. *PR 61* reported that South Australia, where the new subs are due to be built, has consistently been the target of Chinese spies. So, Canberra’s ultra-expensive new toys will undoubtedly also provide ASIO with lots of reasons for expanding their domestic surveillance operations.■



NZ Herald, 20/9/21

Current Subs

“China is estimated to have about 74 submarines, while the United States has 69. North Korea is widely listed as having the most submarines in the world with 75, but the majority are believed to be outdated and regionally inferior. Australia only has the six Collins-class submarines” (SMH, 14/9/21).■

Where Is Australia's Money Going?

Canberra spends about \$A43 billion on defence per year. In current plans, \$A9b will be spent on the purchase of submarines. Note that this does not cover incredibly high maintenance costs and current submarines have cost far more to keep in service than was ever envisaged. (“The cost of maintaining the Collins submarines has always been significantly beyond any sort of budget that Defence had contemplated”, SMH, 13/9/21). Oz will buy new frigates at \$A45 billion, jet fighters at about \$A18 billion and new armoured vehicles, from \$A17 to \$A18 billion, depending on decisions to be made.■

UK

UK Moves To Shut Down Whistle-Blowers

“The collaboration between whistle-blowers and journalists has for years led to major revelations about corruption and the abuse of power in the United Kingdom” (Al Jazeera, 18/8/21). Now the UK government is intent on shutting down critical information leaks. In the mid-2000s, reporters exposed MI6's* collusion with the CIA's rendition and torture programme. In 2013, journalists exposed the scale of mass surveillance carried out by Western governments through documents leaked by the National Security Agency (NSA) dissident, Edward Snowden.

We should never forget Katherine Gun's revelations that the Iraq War was justified by lies propagated at the highest levels of UK and US governments. Gun, a former linguist at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), passed mind-blowing leaked documents to the *Observer* in 2003, (but unfortunately still did not prevent Blair/Bush embarking on a predetermined war).

* MI6 is Britain's overseas spy agency. Ed.

“More recently, in 2018, two investigative journalists were accused of breaching the Official Secrets Act among other offences after obtaining a confidential report, which contained information about a 1994 loyalist massacre in Loughinisland, Northern Ireland, and a failed Police investigation into the murders. After a judicial review, Belfast's High Court found that the journalists acted in “nothing other than a perfectly appropriate way in doing what the National Union of Journalists required of them, which was to protect their sources” (Al Jazeera, *ibid.*).

The UK already has an Official Secrets Act (OSA) whereby it is a criminal offence for Government officials to reveal certain kinds of classified information and for journalists to publish it. Boris Johnson's government wants to strengthen the capability to shut down inconvenient truths on the basis that new technology presents greater threats to good order.

Proposals to “update” the law include expanding the scope of what information should be covered by the act and extending the punishments for breaking it. It also recommends extending prison sentences for those who make unauthorised disclosures from two years to up to 14 years. The independent UK Law Commission recommended any new law include a new legal defence for those deemed to be acting in the public interest. The Government has ignored it.■

Who Is Responsible For Drone Assassinations?

A report has been published that concludes that it was probable that data collected at the UK's Menwith Hill base provided the detail for the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Suleimani in January 2020. This has brought the secret activities at the Five Eyes base to public attention once more. Suleimani and four others were killed by a drone near Baghdad International Airport on 3 January, 2020.

The *Guardian* (2/10/21) reports that Menwith Hill campaigners (ABC's UK colleagues) are calling on ministers in the British government to reveal the part played by personnel at the base in this and other drone attacks.

Leaked Edward Snowden documents revealed in 2013 that Menwith Hill is (like Waihopai, near Blenheim) part of the massive Five Eyes spy network, able to collect data from hundreds of millions of emails and phone calls daily and of pinpointing the location of phones on the ground. Over the last eight years the capabilities of the base will have increased exponentially.

The report, which has again put the issue of Five Eyes accountability in the public eye, was presented at a special meeting of the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign and demands “any US military activity or US security agency activity carried out at Menwith Hill be carried out in such a way as to make those responsible fully accountable to the UK” (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). It also raises



Katharine Gun, GCHQ's Iraq War whistle-blower

questions about whether British personnel on the site are involved in assisting deadly US drone strikes – in particular in Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia, all conflict zones where the UK is not formally at war.

According to the *Guardian*, Barnaby Raine, an investigative journalist, complains in the report that the US and UK forces at Menwith Hill “operate beyond public scrutiny and accountability” – and that, unless there is change, “Orwellian surveillance systems and extrajudicial executions exposed in recent years will likely continue”.

Suleimani was in charge of clandestine Iranian activities, and not a particularly nice chap; he has been held responsible for abuses in Iranian prisons amongst other things, but he was a leader in Iran, and locally popular. His killing was authorised by Trump, but not by the US Congress and not by the Iraqi government in whose territory the drone strike took place.

Given that tit-for-tat military strikes followed the assassination and Iran and the US faced off in a tense confrontation, there have been strong calls for clarification about such clandestine decision-making which could bring London or Washington to the brink of war. Hours after Suleiman’s burial on 7 January 2020, the Iranian military launched missiles against US military bases in Iraq; while no lives were lost in this counter-attack, the Pentagon reported that 110 American troops were wounded in the strikes (*Wikipedia*).

Although nominally an Royal Air Force (RAF) base, Menwith Hill in Yorkshire is, in fact, the largest known overseas site of the US National Security Agency (NSA, the GCSB’s big brother), with 600 US personnel and 500 British civilians on site. “Intelligence programmes at Menwith Hill have reportedly played a key role in operations to ‘eliminate’ people in Yemen, as part of a deadly drone bombing campaign that has resulted in dozens of civilian deaths in a country that neither the UK nor US has declared war with,” Raine stated (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). ■

UK Happy To Strike With Drones

If there was any doubt about the current UK government’s enthusiasm for drone strikes it was dissipated recently by the British Defence Secretary announcing that UK was

prepared to undertake lethal strikes against elements in Afghanistan if “international terrorism” was taking hold in the country (*Guardian*, 9/9/21). The newspaper comments that: “For Britain to re-engage in combat operations in Afghanistan would normally require a fresh vote in Parliament”.

“But Wallace, (the Defence Secretary), also hinted at using drones in situations that could permit military action in ‘self-defence’”, (*PR* emphasis) so any such deployment would be controversial. And as the previous article has shown, decisions about use of drones are certainly not subject to Parliamentary approval. Critics say the Government wants to develop their drone strike capability so they can intervene militarily anywhere around the globe without endangering British service personnel.

Wallace’s comments above were made while he was demonstrating a £16 million (\$NZ32m) prototype of the remotely piloted Protector aircraft. This is a very large drone capable of bearing 16 missiles. Britain has ordered 16 of these monsters at a cost of over \$NZ500 million and aims to have them in service by 2023 or 2024. They have a much greater range than the current Reaper drones.

They will be piloted miles away from any battlefield at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). The BBC reports that nearly £200 million will be spent on upgrading the Lincolnshire base which is to become home to a new training centre for RAF and international crews to be trained to use the remotely piloted aircraft (9/9/21). ■

More Spook Misbehaviour

A BBC report from 2020 revealed that MI6 officers were accused of attempting to interfere in a major legal battle over crimes linked to intelligence agencies (27/7/21). Secret Service (MI6) officers sought to prevent documents being provided to one of the country’s top judges, Lord Justice Singh. In March 2020, two MI6 officers contacted Susan Cobb, who was the Secretary of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal (IPT), the organisation responsible for oversight of spy activities.

They complained about the Tribunal providing copies of secret documents, potentially relevant to a court case involving the spooks, and tried

to stop the information being given to the presiding judge as evidence. The documents were highly sensitive inspections of MI6’s work. The IPT clearly had a legal right to not only see the documents but also to consider them as relevant. MI6 was forced to make an official apology. Another case of Five Eyes personnel being a law unto themselves. ■

MI5 Expects More Terrorist Attacks

The head of MI5, the UK’s domestic security agency, has said the Taliban’s recapture of Afghanistan will give Islamic extremists a boost and increase the possibility of more terrorist attacks. In an interview, he also claimed the spy agency had helped foil six “late-stage” terrorist attacks during the covid pandemic. The British Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, has said the UK is prepared to use drone strikes in Afghanistan if the Taliban failed to prevent the growth of international terrorist groups in the country (*Guardian*, 10/9/21). ■

Hit And Run Okay For Spooks

PR has previously reported the death of 19-year-old Harry Dunn, killed in a collision while riding his motorcycle outside RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire, UK, in August 2019. The family of Harry Dunn have now reached a “resolution” with the teenager’s killer, American spook Anne Sacoolas, who fled the scene without calling for emergency aid. Anne Sacoolas struck the teenager’s motorbike while driving from the airbase on the wrong side of the road. Sacoolas, who has been described as a CIA officer, fled from the UK with official help and has evaded justice ever since. Another example of Five Eyes personnel evading the local law of the land.

Australian *9news* reported in August 2021 that a statement that “Mr and Mrs Sacoolas were employed by an intelligence agency of the United States, and that’s why she left” was affirmed in a US district court. The media source also says it is likely that Sacoolas’s phone records were deleted to conceal whether she was using her mobile at the time of the accident (10/8/21). President Biden has refused to allow UK authorities to extradite Sacoolas to face trial in England. ■

USA

US Drone Murders Aid Worker And Family

The US military has admitted that a high-profile drone strike in Afghanistan in August 2021 killed as many as ten civilians – including seven children – rather than an Islamic State extremist as initially announced (*Age*, 18/9/21). After the Pentagon praised themselves for successfully killing a bunch of terrorists who were intent on making an attack around Kabul Airport, a *New York Times* investigation revealed the drone strike was a murderous cock-up (*NYT*, 10/9/21).

Later, the head of the US Central Command, Frank McKenzie, said that he now believed it was “unlikely” that those who died were terrorists or posed a threat to US forces at Kabul’s airport. The Pentagon had previously maintained that at least one member of an Islamic State-linked terrorist group and three civilians were killed in the strike (*Age*, *ibid.*).

The *Times*’ reporting was compiled from extensive video analysis, interviews with victim Zemari Ahmadi’s

colleagues and family, and visits to the scene, and “casts considerable and potentially devastating doubt on that US official version of events” (*Guardian*, 11/9/21). In other words, yet another coverup for a drone attack that went wrong.

In what the US military labelled “a horrible mistake”, in a tragic and murderous irony, the picture of 43-year-old Ahmadi and his family that has emerged is of people who had worked for Americans and were trying to gain visas to the United States, fearing for their lives under the Taliban. The “explosives” in the vehicle were water cartons that Ahmadi filled from a hose at his office and was taking home to his family.

The family said that when Ahmadi, alone in his car, pulled up to the house, he honked his horn. His 11-year-old son ran out and Ahmadi let the boy get in and drive the car into the driveway. The other kids ran out to watch, and the Hellfire missile incinerated the car, killing seven children and an adult son and nephew (*Age*, *ibid.*). ▀

CIA Plotted To Assassinate Assange

A former US national security official has revealed that the CIA discussed

kidnapping or killing Julian Assange in revenge for the Wikileaks founder publishing information about secret American hacking tools in 2017. While Assange was holed up in the Ecuadoran Embassy in London, senior CIA spooks asked for “options” for getting even with the whistle-blower. *Yahoo* claims the plans came to nothing because the British refused to allow a rendition operation to take place on English soil (*Press*, 29/9/21).

The *Independent* (1/10/21) notes: “... a senior US counter-intelligence official said that plans for the forcible rendition of Assange to the US were discussed ‘at the highest levels’ of the Trump Administration. The informant was one of more than 30 US officials – eight of whom confirmed details of the abduction proposal...”. Wikileaks had released documents which showed how the CIA could hack Apple and Android mobile phones in spying operations.

Years earlier, in April 2010, Julian Assange appeared at the National Press Club to release a classified video depicting a US military helicopter killing 18 people, including two Reuters journalists. Over the following year, Wikileaks released massive tranches of classified and



sensitive documents related to the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as more than 250,000 US diplomatic cables (*Yahoo*, 26/9/21). ■

US Officials Claim CIA Success In Kabul Fiasco

According to *Politico*, (1/9/21) which was given access to “sensitive information” and officials “speaking on condition of anonymity”, American forces ran a successful evacuation of hundreds of American citizens and at-risk Afghan citizens through a secret CIA base outside Kabul over several weeks in August 2021. At least 1,000 members of the elite Afghan special forces and their family members were rescued from the incoming Taliban.

The story may be true but has the patina of a desperate attempt to make the US forces look better in the face of international criticism that they left many Afghans at the mercy of the incoming reactionary government. We have yet to learn of the fate of thousands of Afghan military personnel and civilians who supported the Americans, and New Zealanders, over many years, but the indications look dismal. ■

Washington’s Awful Defence Priorities

The US House of Representatives aims to spend \$US768 billion on defence in the next financial year, although Biden would like to cut this back. *Politico* reports that a bipartisan vote added \$US25 billion to the President’s proposed defence budget. The Bill would require women to register for a military draft.

It authorises \$US28.4 billion for 13 new Navy ships, the purchase of 85 of the ultra-expensive Lockheed Martin F-35 fighters, and procurement of 24 Boeing F-15EX jets for the Air Force, double the number actually requested by the Pentagon (*Politico*, 23/9/21).

The greatest concern stems from the comments of the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee, Mike Rogers of Alabama, who stated that the Bill is “laser-focused on preparing our military to prevail in a conflict with China” (*Politico*, *ibid.*). Pentagon officials have increasingly become strident over China’s growing nuclear arsenal and Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall warned recently that “whether intended or not, China is acquiring a first-strike capability” (*Politico*, 21/9/21). No problem

with the US having such a massive first strike capability then.

The worst aspect of this military priority madness is that what Biden is aiming to allocate to poorer countries to develop clean energy and adapt to the relentless advance of climate change is less per year than what is spent on a single aircraft carrier. Note that the US has spewed the second-most carbon into the atmosphere each year since 2006, when China became the worst offender.

The US military is “one of the largest polluters in history, consuming more liquid fuels and emitting more climate-changing gases than most medium-sized countries,” it was reported in June 2019. By burning fossil fuels, the US military emitted more than 25,000 kilotons of carbon dioxide in 2017. If the US military were a country, its fuel usage would make it “the 47th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world” (see *Project Censored* website, 1/12/20). The President has proposed giving poorer countries \$US11.4 billion per year by 2024, equivalent to less than 15% of the defence budget, but even this is unlikely to get Congressional approval. The suggested annual figure falls far short of what other major countries are contributing. The European Union (EU) members together, for example, currently contribute about \$US25 billion each year and are set to increase this (*Huffington Post*, 21/9/21).

On the other hand, to see the glass half full, it is a remarkable turnaround from the regime of Trump which withdrew the US from the global pact to cut carbon emissions and cancelled all payments to the world’s main climate aid fund. Biden’s proposed defence splurge includes support for development of the existing nuclear strike capability (although he has previously advocated for less reliance on nuclear weapons) and, in particular, funds two controversial projects involving a low-yield nuclear warhead to be fitted onto submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and research into a new sea-launched cruise missile. The first project is a matter for concern because less gung-ho strategic analysts argue that lower impact nukes are more likely to be used. ■

US Spooks State Dangers Of Climate Change

American intelligence agencies

have warned that the United States and its allies will face new problems from “a diverse array of threats” that include “degradation” at home and abroad due to the climate crisis. In an annual threat assessment spy chiefs said that the climate emergency “will continue to fuel disease outbreaks, threaten food and water security, and exacerbate political instability and humanitarian crises” (*Independent*, 14/4/21). The Pentagon has long accepted the reality of human-induced climate change and talked of dangers from resource wars and forced migrations.

The spies’ evaluation came in an unclassified assessment prepared by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) for Congressional hearings in mid-2021. In the assessment, the agency says that “scientists warn that warming air, land, and sea temperatures create more frequent and variable extreme weather events, including heatwaves, droughts, and floods”. They note that these events could “directly threaten the United States and US interests” but note that “adaptation measures could help manage the impact of these threats” (*Independent*, *ibid.*). Imagine if a chunk of Pentagon and Langley (i.e., the CIA HQ) funds could be diverted into saving the planet! ■

The Price Of US Wars

American Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who was the only one of 485 House representatives to vote against war in Afghanistan, has asked a key question: Why have Americans been paying \$US32m every hour for wars since 9/11? (*Guardian*, 9/11/21). The decision to plunge the US into a state of perpetual war was taken rashly, without the debate that such a momentous decision demanded, Lee says. The Afghanistan War cost more than \$US2.5 trillion dollars and more than 238,000 people died in the conflict.

In the *Guardian* article (*ibid.*) the Congresswoman, who is the highest ranked Black woman in the House of Representatives, says the 2002 Authorisation for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which authorised war against Iraq, was based on fabricated claims of weapons of mass destruction and has been used by three successive Presidents to engage in war in several countries – from Yemen to Libya to Niger – against a continually growing list of

adversaries that Congress never foresaw or intended. ■

The Costs Of America's "War On Terror"

A study focusing on post-9/11 wars in which the US initiated combat or took part in military operations concludes that this involvement has displaced at least 37 million people since the beginning of the "War on Terror" nearly two decades ago. Nearly ten million people (twice the population of Aotearoa/NZ) have been displaced by the invasion of Iraq and the decades of instability that followed.

Drawing on data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, among others, Brown University's Cost of War Project makes a "most conservative" estimate that 7.1 million people had been displaced in Syria, 5.3 million in Afghanistan, 4.4 million in Yemen, 4.2 million in Somalia, 3.7 million in Pakistan, 1.7 million in the Philippines and 1.2 million in Libya. The report did not suggest the US was solely responsible for the vast displacement, the authors said (*Guardian*, 8/9/20).

"The Project's other research has estimated that more than 800,000 people have died in conflicts with US involvement due to direct war violence, along with at least 335,000 civilians, and that the engagements have cost the US Treasury an estimated \$US6.4tn" - \$10 trillion NZ dollars (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). ■

More Spook Public Relations Whitewashing

The CIA has set up a number of social media sites that aim "to dispel some of the negative press and conspiracy theories that have dogged the Agency over the years by showing the public that CIA staffers are just like us" (*Politico*, 8/9/21). A dozen spooks are employed on the task of getting "likes" out of the public and even trying to attract potential recruits.

The CIA joined Facebook and Twitter in 2014 and has been increasing its public image campaign ever since. Some of the harder-nosed spooks object to the trivia served up on the platforms because they believe it is bad for the image, but the bosses apparently believe it gives the Agency an opportunity to tell its own stories. CIA officials believe the

effort has been critical to drawing people to the Agency. Lichterman said that the CIA's incoming 2021 class is the third largest in a decade and "represents the most diverse talent pool, including persons with disabilities, since 2010".

Former CIA boss Mike Pompeo (yes, the one that continues to propagate the myth that Trump won the 2020 election) got angry about the Agency prioritising "some liberal woke agenda" (*Politico* *ibid.*) when the social media sites were used to promote diversity in the CIA. "When I was Director of the CIA, we valued individuals based on their talent and skill, not their race or sexuality," Pompeo is cited as saying.

Politico notes that the CIA's social media feeds "... largely omits waterboarding, drone strikes, bad weapons of mass destruction (WMD) intelligence, failed coups, or even successful coups". Like the extensive soft-soap media approach being pushed across the Five Eyes spy universe, the grotesque truths are not allowed to interfere with the blatant attempts to persuade the public to support the clandestine operations of hardcore operations without proper oversight. ■

CIA Problems

On the anniversary of what the Americans call 9/11, but what normal folks refer to as the 11th of September, *Politico* (9/9/21) ran a long series of interviews with ex US defence and foreign affairs people. Most of them reflect the conservative line of the Washington Establishment, but there was a lot of criticism of policy, and particularly the activities of the CIA.

For example, some said the Agency had strayed from its core purpose and that "the consequences of this tactical tilt are real: a diminished ability to understand, anticipate and counter longer-term threats - like China's rise and Russia's information warfare - that could threaten American lives and interests far more than today's terrorist plots" (Amy Zegart, who is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution).

John Brennan, who ran the Agency under President Obama, (and whom *PR* has often pilloried for his support of waterboarding and other nasty policies) told Congress that "the CIA should not be doing traditional military activities and operations" and

that the Agency's drone programme was "an aberration" from its historic mission.

The comments reflect ongoing Pentagon/Langley turf wars since President Bush pushed the CIA's clandestine military activities in his "War on Terror". In the two decades since 9/11, the CIA's reported involvement in counterterrorism activities has deepened and expanded dramatically. The first troops on the ground in Afghanistan after 9/11 weren't troops. "They were CIA officers carrying boxes of cash to recruit Afghan warlords". The spooks were there even before special operations forces and the allied bombing campaign.

"Today, it's often hard to distinguish the work of intelligence officers and military troops. Drone strikes, for example, are sometimes carried out by the intelligence community alone, sometimes by the military and sometimes by the two together" (*Politico*, *ibid.*). And President Trump's CIA Director, Gina Haspel, (notorious for destroying video evidence of abuse of "terrorist suspects" in Abu Ghraib prison) is reported to have stated in a 2019 speech that in its focus on the counterterrorism fight, the Agency had fallen behind on tracking Russia, Iran and other adversaries, its more traditional functions. She was promising a change of priorities (*Politico*, 11/9/21).

According to Amy Zegart: "CIA officers used to roam foreign streets to learn the culture and recruit foreign officials by attending cocktail parties and official functions. Since 9/11, however, finding high-value terrorist targets has required CIA officers to take physical risks and work with visible military security in war zones. Old-school, country-on-country spy-craft is becoming more important again, yet much of the CIA's workforce has less experience doing it because they were hired after 9/11".

So, these Establishment critics are worried that the CIA's quasi-military activities are preventing it from doing the work inspired by Pearl Harbor - to save the USA from surprise attack. We would all be much better off if Langley did, in fact, stick to this, and gave up the drones, the rendition tactics, the media manipulation and the subversion of other countries' politics that are so much its stock in trade. ■



IN MEMORY OF AZIZ CHOUDRY

Aziz died in May 2021, aged 54, in Johannesburg, South Africa. He had only lived there for a few months, having moved there from Montreal, Canada, where he'd lived and worked since leaving Christchurch in 2002. He led a very full life as a political activist, author and academic in several countries. During the years he lived in Christchurch he was a very active and high-profile political activist.

Anti-Bases Campaign worked with Aziz during the campaign that arose – a quarter of a century before his death – as a result of what happened when he involuntarily crossed paths with the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) in Christchurch. It led to him becoming a household name in NZ and going into both the history books and the law books. I wrote the below article in Peace Researcher 19/20, November/December 1999. MH.

AZIZ CHOUDRY WINS CASE AGAINST SIS Out Of Court Settlement; Damages; Government Apology

By Murray Horton

Peace Researcher has been following this story since it first started, back in 1996, and we're pleased to report that we have some good news to report, a rare victory in fact. Aziz Choudry has won his case. The (Jenny Shipley National) Government has settled it out of court; has paid him damages (the amount of which, as part of the settlement, remains confidential in perpetuity); paid his legal costs; and, most significantly, begrudgingly apologised to him.

To refresh your memories, let's recap the events. In July 1996 Security Intelligence Service (SIS) agents were caught breaking into the Christchurch home of GATT* Watchdog's Aziz Choudry, during activities to counter the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Trade Ministers' Meeting. Aziz sued the Crown for \$300,000 and the first preliminary legal questions came before the Christchurch High Court, in 1998. It was at that point that the

SIS admitted that it was their agents, but claimed that the break-in was legal, as they were authorised by an interception warrant. (*GATT= General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, now called the World Trade Organisation).

In August 1998, Justice Panckhurst ruled that he was not prepared to accept a blanket defence of "national security" as good enough reason to withhold from Aziz a large number of documents (including the interception warrant) needed to pursue his civil damages claim against the Crown. Panckhurst had specifically rejected a certificate signed by Jenny Shipley, Minister in Charge of the SIS (and Prime Minister) asserting immunity from producing the documents.

Panckhurst ruled that he wanted to inspect the documents for himself, at the SIS's Christchurch office, before ruling on their release. The Crown appealed. In December 1998, the Court of Appeal ruled that Shipley be given until February 1999 to produce an amended certificate with more details on why the documents should be withheld; then it would rule on whether or not they should be released.

The judges were quite scathing in their opinion of the Crown case. Justice Thomas said: "The Courts today are not prepared to be awestruck by the 'mantra' of national security". The amended certificate was duly produced, along with 20 of the disputed 70 SIS documents (re-

leased in full or part) and was the subject of a further Court of Appeal hearing, in April 1999. Once again, decision was reserved.

Court Of Appeal Backs Down

That decision was delivered in July 1999 and it was a major climbdown by the Court. By a four to one majority, it ruled that judges have no place in matters of "national security", and that Shipley's certificate stating the documents needed to be withheld for unspecified reasons of "national security" must be respected, and Shipley herself trusted. The Court accepted that there is an unspecified "ongoing operation" that would be jeopardised (now, isn't that intriguing?) and that allowing inspection of the documents would endanger the SIS's operational relationship with the Police and other State agencies, such as the Land Transport Safety Authority.

Scathing Minority Decision

The minority decision, by Justice Thomas, was scathing: "Like any citizen, Mr Choudry is entitled to access to the Courts. He has a right to bring a claim based on an alleged infringement of the law on the part of the defendant. In exercising that right he has the same expectation of receiving justice in a court of law as any other litigant".

"But to the extent that he is not able to achieve full and proper discovery he is disadvantaged and his right of access to the Courts is correspondingly impaired. He will not be able to obtain the justice to which he is enti-

tled and which other litigants routinely receive. The public interest in the fair and effective administration of justice is not, therefore, an empty slogan. It reflects the rights of every citizen, including Mr Choudry...".

"The Prime Minister is the Minister in charge of, and responsible for, the Service. She is not independent of the Service in the sense that Parliament and the Courts are independent of it. Further, as I have previously observed, it is to be realistically appreciated that the certificate is initially prepared by senior officers of the Service who, by virtue of the very nature of their work and their own conscientious performance of their task, may be over-zealous in their perception of the secrecy which is required. Nor, by virtue of the secrecy which attaches to the Service's advice, can the Minister in charge look elsewhere for assistance or verification. The Minister is very much dependent on the Service".

"It should not be overlooked that the Service is a covert intelligence agency. It is by definition not an open organisation accustomed to outside scrutiny. It will not welcome that scrutiny. Its officers are by virtue of their occupation practised in the art of deception. The Service, as with any covert intelligence agency, will strive under the cloak of secrecy to protect this country from perceived subversive interests and hostile forces".

"There is no reason to suspect that its officers will not believe, perhaps passionately, in the importance of their task or that they will be anything other than assiduous in carrying it out. Once it is accepted that the trust necessary to accept the certificate on its face is in reality a trust reposed in or embracing the covert intelligence agency itself, the manifestation of such abiding judicial trust seems strangely out of place...".

"There is an apparent inconsistency between the majority's deprecation of the competence of Judges to assess the sensitivity of the documents and the trust placed in the Minister in Charge of the Service to do the same. Apparently, the nuances and intuitive deductions which form part of the specialist capability required for covert intelligence operations are beyond Judges but will be quickly assimilated by the Minister in

charge of the Service".

"Certainly, the Minister working with the senior officers of the Service may seek and obtain more advice and information relating to particular documents, but it is advice and information emanating from within the Service itself. It is not difficult to perceive that in reality the Minister in charge will be close to and heavily dependent on the Service, and that this closeness and dependency will necessarily impair the objectivity which he or she can bring to bear in assessing the sensitivity of particular documents".

"To illustrate this point reference may be made to the prosecution brought under s1 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 in the United Kingdom in 1977 known as 'the ABC case'" (*in this case, ABC stood for the three defendants - Aubrey, Berry, Campbell. I was living in London at the time and attended several sessions of the 1978 trial at the Old Bailey. It was very much the cause celebre of its day. ABC - the Anti-Bases Campaign - hosted Duncan Campbell in NZ, in 1996/97. He is a world expert on intelligence matters. MH.*).

"The Attorney-General at the time was persuaded by MI5 (*British internal security and intelligence agency. Ed.*) to authorise the prosecution against three defendants. Notwithstanding that it became known that the security service had secretly vetted the jury, the trial proceeded. **It became a farce** (*emphasis added. Ed.*). Documents which security service witnesses claimed would, if disclosed, be a danger to national security were shown to be public knowledge, at times the publication having been authorised by MI5 itself".

"The prosecution under s1 was discontinued. Two defendants were given conditional discharges and one a suspended sentence in respect of the much less serious offences under s2 of the Act. Editorials called for the Attorney-General to resign or, at least, to explain why he had authorised an oppressive prosecution. The terms of his explanation are telling in their relevance to the present point".

"He said: 'I personally and critically questioned those who made the damage assessment ... **How could any responsible Attorney General**

ignore the unanimous views presented to me that evidence of both the material collected by Campbell [one of the defendants] and the information imparted by Berry [another defendant] could do damage ranging from serious to exceptionally grave to the national security?" (*Emphasis added.*). (See Geoffrey Robertson, *The Justice Game* (Vintage – 1999) Chap. 5, pp 104-134; the above quotation is at p 133) ...".

"The casualty will be the administration of justice and public confidence in the legal system to ensure that public interest immunity is constrained by law. Judicial inspection may be an imperfect process but having regard to the nature of a covert security service, it is the only system available to hold the Service accountable. If the courts are not prepared to perform this supervisory function, the decisions of the Service to claim immunity will go unchecked...".

Implications Of Decision Are Alarming

The APEC Monitoring Group, which organised the activities to counter all the APEC meetings held in New Zealand throughout 1999, said: "This judgement is particularly disturbing coming as it does in the year New Zealand hosts the APEC forum. The Government has already shown its willingness to break the law when it comes to opponents of APEC and its free trade agenda".

"Given the extreme measures the Government has been willing to employ to avoid explaining the activities of the SIS during the 1996 APEC Trade Ministers' Meeting, any assurance given that opponents of APEC in 1999 will have their right to dissent protected and respected can only be treated with suspicion and contempt... If, as this judgement seems to suggest, Jenny Shipley and the SIS are totally unaccountable to Parliament, the judiciary and the New Zealand public, then we should be afraid, be very afraid" (press release, 6/7/99).

Even the *New Zealand Herald* editorially attacked the Court's decision: "Times and circumstances are changing, and with them the demand for greater accountability of elected representatives. We look to the courts to help to ensure that the Executive knows it is not immune from independent scrutiny. In decid-

ing to accept at face value - its own words - the Prime Minister's latest security certificate, the Court of Appeal has disappointed those expectations" (8/7/99; "Court In Awe Again").

The headline in a regular legal column in the *Herald* said it all: "Who Will Hold PM Accountable If Appeal Court Will Not?" (23/7/99; *Passing Judgement*; Steven Price). *The Independent* also attacked it editorially: "Suppose this case had been heard in Washington, not Wellington and the burglars had been ex-CIA men, not SIS men, and the break-in had occurred at the Watergate complex, not Choudry's house".

"What would our judges have done with the Nixon tapes? Who ordered the illegal break-in? Might this information be contained in the documents Shipley wants to keep secret? Anyone valuing our civil liberties would sleep a lot better if Justice Thomas's dissenting view had prevailed" (14/7/99; "Appeal Court Abdicates Its Role As Democratic Watchdog"; Warren Berryman).

Government Admits Blame; Settles Out Of Court

Despite the Court of Appeal setback, Aziz was keen to continue the case. But the legal reality was that, without access to those withheld documents, he could not take it through to a full trial. Nor did he have the \$100,000 or so needed to appeal to the Privy Council, in London. The Government had previously offered an out of court settlement (a standard procedure in suits of this kind): Aziz was amenable, so the only remaining question was the sum of damages to be paid.

After some haggling, a mutually satisfactory (and substantial) sum was agreed upon. Another standard feature in suits of this kind is that the amount paid will remain confidential in perpetuity, as a part of the settlement. The damages were over and above Aziz's legal costs - those were also paid by the Government. Plus, he got an apology - nothing gracious or heartfelt, simply a statement that the Government apologised to him. This was all publicly announced in August 1999, just before the APEC Leaders' Summit in Auckland. The Government was eager to get the matter out of the way before the VIPs and world media came to town.

Aziz Has No Illusions

"This is a victory but I'm unimpressed by the calibre of the apology. The Government is only really sorry that its SIS agents got caught. It has gone to great lengths to cover up its dirty tricks. The case has put a lot of issues about the SIS on the map and shown the Government to be not much better than those countries it likes to point its finger at" (*Press*, 27/8/99; "Activist Gets Govt Payout; Victory Claimed Over SIS").

He also said that "despite countless assurances to the contrary, the SIS had taken unlawful action against people involved in lawful dissent and protest". Supposed checks and balances on the SIS did not work when they were put to the test in his case. The 1999 legislative amendments had expanded SIS powers, not restricted them... 'Mr Choudry said he could have continued to fight the case but felt that he had to 'recognise the parameters of the New Zealand legal system'. The money he had received was 'small bikkies' compared to the \$10.5 million spent on the SIS each year and the \$18 million APEC security was costing, he said" ... (ibid).

He told the *Dominion* (27/8/99): "I'm pleased to have scored what I think is a rare victory over the SIS, given their long history of being unaccountable to either the public or the courts... The break-in occurred when I was involved with organising an alternative conference opposing the APEC Trade Ministers' meeting. Ironically, the settlement comes as I'm part of a group organising an alternative conference and rally opposed to the (September 1999) APEC Leaders' Summit...". He had agreed to the out of court settlement because: "Unless you have \$100,000 to take a case to the Privy Council, then it's actually quite difficult for an individual who has relied on the support of people in the community".

From the moment the Government admitted (as part of its statement of defence) that it was indeed SIS agents who were caught breaking into Aziz's house, an out of court settlement was a possibility. It became inevitable as soon as the Court of Appeal ruled that the break-in was illegal. Justice Thomas, in his July 1999 Court of Appeal dissenting opinion, said:

"I consider that it should not be overlooked that the entry and search of Mr Choudry's home which the Service undertook on 13 July 1996, and which is central to his claim, was illegal. This is the effect of the Court's previous judgment. Consequently, the Service has every reason to be concerned that it will be held liable for damages and that its image will be seriously damaged".

New Law Retrospectively Legalising SIS Break-Ins

The Government did not appeal that December 1998 decision, but rushed through new legislation retrospectively legalising all such SIS break-ins - except for the one at Aziz's house. Thus, it clearly telegraphed its intentions. In fact, it had no option but to settle. Its' one day in open court (the 1998 Christchurch High Court hearing, which was only about legal questions) had been an unprecedented and highly unsettling experience for the SIS - the prospect of a full trial, with witnesses to be cross-examined, etc, etc, had to be avoided.

There is no suggestion of Aziz having sold out - he was suing for money; he won some money. It was not a case seeking a judicial review of the SIS or suchlike. It was a claim for damages arising from a specific incident, an incident that would have resulted in criminal charges by the Police if committed by anybody other than covert agents of the State.

Of course, the case ends with none of us (including Aziz) any the wiser about why the SIS was breaking into his house. That is why the Government settled the case and paid up - to keep the SIS operation shrouded in secrecy. There has been public speculation that the break-in was aimed not at him but at his 1996 Mexican guest, Dr Alejandro Villamar, a speaker at the counter-APEC conference. Other speculation is that it was aimed at Maori activists Mike Smith and Annette Sykes, who were also at the conference. But we'll never know, not officially anyway.

Police Raids; Hoax Bomb

It is the end of Aziz's legal action, but not the end of legal action arising from the incident. David Small was the person who actually caught the SIS agents breaking into Aziz's house. It was he who took down the vital clue of their numberplate

(which led to the SIS; the agents have never been named) and reported it to the Police - who waved the agents on their way.

In the most sinister feature of the whole episode, the Police raided the homes of both Aziz and David Small, looking for "bombmaking equipment", shortly after the foiled SIS break in. A hoax bomb had been left at the Christchurch City Council building. This mysterious episode has never been explained (a remarkably similar hoax bomb disrupted Auckland Airport when it was inadvertently left behind there during a security exercise prior to the 1999 APEC Leaders' Summit. Coincidence, surely?).

"Dr Small said the (Aziz) settlement gave him immense satisfaction but it was not the end of the matter as far as he was concerned. He was going to court to ask for a judicial review of a Police search of his house a week after the SIS break-in of Mr Choudry's house. Police had a warrant to look for bomb-making equipment but the whole episode smacked of SIS and Police complicity after his catching the SIS agents, he said".

"Dr Small expected the Police would have to own up to conducting the search on dodgy information provided by the SIS. 'This case vindicates our conclusion that something fishy was going on', he said" (*Press*, 27/8/99; "Activist Gets Govt Payout; Victory Claimed Over SIS"). In October 1999, David Small filed his claim with the Christchurch High Court, suing the Crown for \$300,000 damages, alleging trespass and a breach of his rights under the Bill of Rights.

So, what were these Police raids all about? Simple revenge on Aziz and David for having caught the SIS in the act? Or something more serious? Were the SIS agents breaking into Aziz's house to plant something there that would be "found" in a subsequent Police raid? "Bomb-making equipment", drugs, things to implicate him in terrorist activities. Who planted the highly sophisticated hoax bomb at the City Council building? It was good enough to convince an explosives expert, who had it blown up before being able to pronounce it a fake. This whole thing reeks of a dirty tricks' operation, one to discredit and criminalise opponents of the State ideology (free

trade and unrestricted foreign investment).

The *Sunday Star Times* editorialised (29/8/99; "Useful Humiliation For Our SIS Spies"): "They botched the burglary of the anti-APEC protester's home, again confirming their legendary incompetence. They also confirmed the suspicion their real job is spying on dissidents, not fighting subversives...The new law supposedly tightens the definition of a security threat, saying it is 'foreign or foreign-influenced'. This is meaningless and dangerous. Every sentient being in the country is foreign-influenced and none more so than our leaders. These orthodox souls, who arguably and by turn have variously damaged our economy, won't be persecuted. The people at risk will be dissenters like Choudry".

For Once, Congratulations Are Due To The Media

We in the ABC know how hard it is to get any coverage of "our" intelligence agency, the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which is much bigger than the SIS. Ever since Nicky Hager published his seminal 1996 book "Secret Power", detailing what the GCSB does, specifically at the Waihopai spybase, it's had much better coverage overseas than in NZ. But no such worries when it comes to the SIS, and specifically the Choudry case. From Day One, it's been a frontpage lead item in all the papers, plus a major item on TV, and the subject of magazine features. The media dug up a lot of the incriminating dirt in this story.

For three years, the bungling SIS and Aziz himself have been a major media event. He became a household name, with his singularly unflattering passport photo scowling from papers up and down the country. Indeed, it's only a matter of time until it's made into a Hollywood movie - David Small and Aziz can toss up between Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny De Vito as to who plays them. Just remember, guys - it was me who put out the original press release that (correctly) fingered the SIS. I suggest a cameo role, played by Tom Cruise, would be in order.

More seriously, heartfelt thanks are due to all the individuals and groups that donated the thousands of dollars needed to mount a court case. Even at mates' rates, lawyers are very expensive, and the legal pro-



David Small

cess is inherently weighted against the poor. I freely confess that I was one of those who doubted the wisdom of taking a court case, considering it far too costly, very risky, a serious drain on time and resources, with an unsatisfactory result the most likely outcome. I was wrong and I'm glad I was. It achieved much more than we could have ever dreamed possible when we set about tackling the secret State three years ago. The spies and their political masters (or should that be the other way around?) have had a most timely boot up the arse.

And David Small Won His Case

This wasn't the end of the matter. David Small was the person who actually caught the SIS agents breaking in at Aziz's home. For his troubles, David was then subjected to a Police raid on his home (they raided Aziz's too). As with Aziz, David sued the Crown, specifically the Police, in a separate case. In 2000 he was awarded \$20,000 damages. You can read the full story in Foreign Control Watchdog 94 (August 2000, "David Defeats Goliath. David Small Wins \$20,000 From Police In Second Court Case To Result From 1996 SIS Break-In", Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/94/7david.htm>). ■

ACTIVISTS AND THE SURVEILLANCE STATE

Learning From Repression
edited by Aziz Choudry
Pluto Press, London, 2019

This is a great book. Activists on any issues in all countries should read and reflect on its insights and challenges. As with his previous edited collections, Aziz has brought together a range of contributors who speak from their on-the-ground experience of surveillance as activists informed by critical analysis.

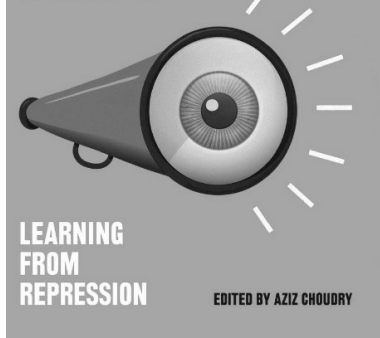
It is a fitting swansong for Aziz, who passed away in May 2021, and a tribute to his insistence that grounded voices are the best guide to a progressive future, rather than the abstract analyses of cloistered academics or liberal non-Government organisations' (NGOs) campaigns that ignore history, politics, power and imperialism.

The 11 essays shine a historical and comparative light on State and corporate surveillance, its effect on progressive politics and, as importantly, on strategies to expose and challenge those practices. There is nothing pollyannaish here. Several writers share their raw experiences of mental health crises, fear and mistrust, financial threats through blacklists, and lessons learned by mistakes and failures.

The book has three parts. The first three essays provide the analytical framework: one from Aziz, written while he was still at McGill University in Montreal before moving to South Africa early in 2021; one from Radha d'Souza, who lived in Aotearoa in the 1990s and early 2000s and is now a Professor of Law at the University of Westminster in London; and one from South African journalist/academic Jane Duncan.

Part two hosts the bulk of essays

ACTIVISTS AND THE SURVEILLANCE STATE



from community activist/researchers, investigative journalists and activist academics on experiences of surveillance across many countries. Their stories and analyses will resonate with activists in Aotearoa. Part three focuses on strategies for researching surveillance, although that is a theme across the whole book.

Aziz's introduction frames the essays with several critical reflections: the historical underpinnings of surveillance under colonialism, imperialism and capitalism; how secrecy shields State and capital from scrutiny; international collaboration among State agencies; the hybridisation of public surveillance and lucrative forms of private security; the State's cosmetic responses to exposés by convening inquiries and promising greater transparency and accountability; and the real life consequences of surveillance for people and resistance (something Aziz was acutely aware of).

History And Capitalism

The history of security and surveillance is a constant theme. Aziz writes on the first page how: "Many of today's covert (and overt) policing and State security policies, practices and concepts have their roots in counter-insurgency techniques [or] pedagogies of oppression" "tested against earlier anti-colonial/independence struggles, in policing Black life under slavery and Indigenous peoples' resistance".

David Austin describes this continuity, in an interview with Aziz, as "slavery's afterlife" that delivers "emancipation without freedom". Val

Morse captures the pitfalls of amnesia about this history by quoting from Milan Kundera, cited by: "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting".

An inter-related theme is the State's intimate relationship with capital. Radha traces four epochs of surveillance, culminating in the current "warfare state", epitomised by the US, which "bears the imprint of the epoch of Imperialism - global in scope and outreach and with the capacities to command and control other states". This warfare state operates within the system of transnational monopoly finance capitalism.

Radha documents how the omnipresent Wall Street and America Inc organised self-regulating institutions within and outside the US intelligence, surveillance and security apparatus, and "blurred the boundaries between public/private, civilian/military, national/international". The military and civilian governance frameworks of the warfare state link other states together in a global imperial chain. Yet each state is different with its own internal structure, history and capacities for resisting external pressure.

Bob Broughton demonstrates this theme in his chapter on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's (ASIO) intensive surveillance of the Communist Party of Australia as it worked clandestinely with the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) before the 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Bob's story is familiar: spy agencies use their obsession with the "communist threat" as "ideological cover for the defence and extension of capital's control over [East Timor's] strategic resources and trade routes essential to its continued growth".

Other authors show how the State-corporate-military complex continues to grow, with support from the rapidly revolving door between government and corporations, despite repeated exposés and scandals. The latest is the complicity of Big Tech and the State. The collection and/or storage of State data is now being outsourced to private companies, giving them enormous power and commercial resource. While abuses by Cambridge Analytica and social media are now well-documen-

ted, Jane Duncan's chapter exposes less well-understood forms of "data-veillance", such as blacklists compiled for governments and corporations.

"National Security"

A third theme is the power to define. The term "national security", of itself, implies the exclusion and expulsion of some groups of people, often violently. It silences fundamental questions about what the national interest is, who decides that, based on what sources. The reality, as Canadian Gary Kinsman writes, that those with political and class power define *their* interests as the "national interest".

"It is *their* security that is being defended, and it is our various movements for justice that challenge *their* national security". In states that are constituted by class, gender, colonialism, race and heteronorms, movements of dissent, resistance and transformation are intrinsically viewed as threats to national security.

National security has been redefined in the era of neoliberal globalisation with the explicit goal of protecting capitalism. Security laws that protect economic and financial interests remove any need to justify surveillance of Indigenous, ecological, climate, anti-poverty and anticapitalist resistance to corporations and economic policies, meaning: "Their national security is a threat to the security and progress of our movements".

Other terms like "domestic extremists" enable "mission creep". Nafeed Ahmed discusses how far-Right ideologues radicalised UK political parties' notions of "national security" beyond violent extremism to non-violent extremism. The UK's Prevent strategy, for example, targets "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". This is used to drive a wedge within communities. Those who are deemed obstructive, and those who align to government objectives, are slotted into the "bad Muslim/good Muslim" dichotomy.

Counter-Surveillance Strategies

There are lots of examples of overt and covert surveillance that aim at intelligence gathering, deterrence,



disruption, protection of corporate and government interests, and disinformation designed to foment division and have a chilling effect. Those are largely familiar. The counter-strategies are much more interesting.

As you would expect from an Aziz book there is a major focus on multi-layered, historically informed strategies to confront systemic causes of oppression and advance alternatives for systemic change. Aziz himself urges activists to learn from peoples' experiences, alongside other forms of critical knowledge and political analysis, to "better understand State surveillance, build a broader politics of resistance, and learn from history". For example, Duncan points to the importance of older South African activists sharing historic memories of surveillance abuses and how to challenge them.

Activists also need to understand the broader politics of both surveillance and their campaigns. Community activists need to join the dots across movements, laterally and internationally, and engage in dynamic inter-generational conversations that connect "the intelligence and experience of youth ... with the experience of the older generation, engaged in an ongoing conversation".

Passive resistance and non-cooperation can also be powerful, although people may fear penalties and consequences. When those who are systematically targeted can't mobilise, solidarity activists have an important role to play, from behind. Sometimes non-movements of fragmented, but collective, prac-

tices can also be effective, too.

I found the critiques of "successful" strategies and State co-option especially thought-provoking. Kinsman's critique of State apologies as a State management device resonates with those on Te Urewera and the Dawn Raids. The Canadian state apologised for purging queers from the public service in which began as an "apology from below", fought for and secured from the State by decades of resistance.

It became an "apology from above", designed by the State to incorporate the targets into the mainstream without confronting the structures of repression or celebrating their successful resistances. This "social amnesia" effectively divorces the State's contemporary responses from their targets' histories of repression and their victories of resistance (and their limitations).

A related tactic is the normalisation of deviants. Kinsman challenges Canada's use of vacuous buzzwords like inclusiveness and diversity, which also litters New Zealand government-speak: "On whose terms are people being included (and who has already been included) and who is diverse and who is at the centre and is not defined as 'diverse'?" "Pedagogies of resistance", by contrast, "remember not only State violence but also our diverse resistance to it" as an empowering way forward.

Assessments of hard-won public inquiries, and court cases against the State or as part of defences against charges, note they have rarely delivered real change, and most of the

evidence, including testimony, remains hidden. But they have served to shine the spotlight on abuses by states and corporations. Their political effectiveness relies on targets, independent journalists and other researchers to produce counter-narratives. Consciousness raising on the issues is also important, including with opposition politicians and mainstream media, while recognising their imperatives may not align with the campaigns' (how true!).

Research And Investigation

Reliable, quality research is crucial. Broughton refers to a "pedagogy of mobilisation" that harnesses technical skills, experience and knowledge of activists on the ground and develops communication frameworks, while minimising disruption by security forces. Some activism centres on researching, investigating and exposing states' surveillance practices, usually with the goal to raise awareness of security among campaigners and alert others who have had dealings with the same person, hold those responsible to account and "rattle the tree" for more evidence.

Eveline Lubbers tells how activists turned the tables on the UK Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT) by establishing Fitwatch. She stresses the importance of careful sourcing to support exposés, including the mapping of undercover infiltrators to identify patterns and "tradecraft", and networks of former Police and spies working in the corporate sector. Years of meticulous documentation, media coverage, and sharing of information on undercover Police officers forced the Government to hold

a formal inquiry, but provides very little accountability.

Her chapter highlights several really important strategic challenges. Longer-term research requires reciprocal respect and trust. While anti-surveillance campaigners might want to publish exposés, the groups targeted for surveillance might not want to go public for various valid reasons. Publication can compound distress and personal trauma. Sources and other groups may lose trust and become unwilling to share crucial information. Funders may see them as high risk and pull the plug. Lubbers talks of learning to "go with the flow" and not judging people for the decisions they make.

A second risk is that exposés and heightened awareness of security can fuel unnecessary paranoia and conspiracy theories. Lubbers discloses the harm she suffered to her own mental health. Alongside their documentation work, Fitwatch added a personal dimension that provides support and counselling to help activists deal with trauma and burnout and provide solidarity, support campaigners who are targeted, and help work through issues of betrayal and distrust within infiltrated groups.

Duncan insists that research based NGOs must play a supporting role: "Technical knowledge can be built in mass movements, if technically proficient NGOs have the humility to place those social forces that are most likely to change how power is organised in society at the centre of anti-surveillance work". An empowering train-the-trainer approach is one way to remove dependency and

enable community activists to defend themselves.

Liberal Rights Versus Structural Transformation

Much of Aziz's writing and activism challenged NGOs' depoliticised issue-based analyses and campaigns that target "expert" or liberal constituencies. Several essays explore these tensions with varying degrees of pragmatism. Broughton's account of ASIO and East Timor explores the tensions between two traditions of international solidarity: international socialism that centres the downfall of global capitalism, and liberal solidarity among the likes of church groups and NGOs who believe an explicit anti-imperialist line would alienate a broader support base. Security agencies exploit and foment such divisions.

These tensions are especially pronounced in semi-clandestine resistance. Security of information and sources dictates the sharing of information on a "need to know" basis. That relies on reciprocal trust among campaigners. That trust can easily be eroded by informants and disinformation and by ideological and strategic differences, unless those issues are honestly worked through. Broughton sees the key to effective solidarity as supporting the priorities of the "front-line" movement. By definition, liberals tend to see it differently ...

Garry Kinsman's chapter provides similar insights into surveillance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) activism. The positions of moderate legal campaigners and neoliberal queers, who opposed the "excesses" of Canada's anti-terrorism legislation, excluded militant and often more effective struggles, and legitimised the continued use of "national security" against those activists.

Another example is the individualised, legalistic and depoliticised nature of rights-based campaigns. Duncan's review of strategies to counter digital surveillance in UK, South Africa and Mauritius highlights the limitations of privacy-centred campaigns, while Susaina Maira shows how rights-based activism ignores the way that "freedom of expression is racially distributed".

Bringing It Home To Aotearoa

Val Morse's chapter on Aotearoa New Zealand brings together many



of these themes ... The “inherent and ever-present colonial settler project”. The State’s role in the limitless appetite for capitalist expansion, whether for land, mining or armaments. The many episodes of State abuse against Māori, trade unionists, pacifists, communist parties, anti-apartheid and anti-nuclear activists. Tracking and data gathering. The unwillingness of successive governments to curtail privatised surveillance and their use of paid informants such as Thompson & Clark to spy on Canterbury earthquake claimants and environmental activists.

Well-documented violations of the State’s own laws, from the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) burglary of Aziz’s Christchurch home in 1996 related to anti-APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) activism, the “antiterrorism” raids on Tuhoe in Te Urewera in 2007, the Snowden revelations and Kim Dot-com saga from 2011, Ahmed Zaoui’s imprisonment, all produced social discomfort about the security forces and surveillance.

Yet those powers continue to expand. A charm offensive by the two main spy agencies (SIS and the Government Communications Security Bureau – GCSB), and the focus on rising cybercrime, has blunted the ability to run effective campaigns. Val calls for integration of the struggle against surveillance and social control into all struggles, and conversely for all struggles to take a genuinely intersectional approach to political struggle based on analyses of power. ■

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU

By Murray Horton

Of all the review books that we’ve ever received through the post from overseas publishers, this one was unique. The packaging had been completely cut open. There was an apologetic note from NZ Post saying: “Received in this condition”. An unfortunate accident in transit? Possibly, but no other book sent to us has ever suffered that same fate. It was cut open, not accidentally torn. It seems more than coincidental that it was a book by Aziz and co. Obviously, the surveillance State wanted the activists to realise that the title is accurate. ■

IMPLODING GEO-IMPERIAL FRONTIERS!

And The Challenges Ahead

By Dennis Small

“The Roman Empire, in spite of economic retrogression, the political shortcomings of its constitution and lastly of the general decay manifesting itself in morals, literature, science and arts, might have been able to continue with a diminished life, like many other empires which have dragged out their existence through long centuries, if the struggle against the barbarians had not engrossed the life of the state from the middle of the second century AD” (“The End Of The Ancient World And The Beginnings Of The Middle Ages”, Ferdinand Lot, Harper Torchbooks, 1961, p187).

“Some empires have ended with catastrophic speed. Alexander the Great of Macedon destroyed the Persian Empire in the 330s BCE. The Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in South America were extinguished within two or three years of the arrival of the Spanish in the early 16th Century” (“The Little Book Of Big History: The Story Of Life, The Universe And Everything”, Ian Crofton & Jeremy Black, Michael O’Mara Books Ltd., 2016, p216).

In the aftermath of the crumbling of the Spanish Empire: “The Central American states were subsequently annexed to the ephemeral Mexican Empire of 1822-23, and later subjected to repeated US interventions, which continued through the Reagan and Bush Administrations (the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran interventions, the ‘Contras’ affair, the invasion of Panama)” (“The Wrath Of Nations: Civilisation And The Furies Of Nationalism”, William Pfaff, Simon & Schuster, 1993, p163).

“The Great Game between England and Russia began in 1830. It involved the confrontation of the two empires as their influence in Central Asia moved gradually closer to one another” (“The Great Game And Afghanistan”)¹. In our own era, the renewed geopolitical Great Game

spans the globe with the rise of China.

“The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001, did not ‘attack America’, as political leaders and news media in the US have tried to maintain; they attacked American foreign policy”, employing the strategy of the weak in targeting civilians (“Blowback: The Costs And Consequences Of American Empire”, TimeWarner, 2000/02, in ‘Preface: The September 11 Blowback’, pviii).

On 2nd November, 2001, the British Defence Secretary, Geoffrey Hoon, claimed in Parliament: “The use of cluster bombs (in Afghanistan) as entirely appropriate. Against certain targets they are the best and most effective weapons we have”. Cluster bombs killed and injured thousands of civilians, including women and children, in the post-9/11 invasion (“The New Rulers Of The World”, John Pilger, Verso, 2002/3, in ch. ‘The Great Game’, p102).

Back in February 2002, the now US President Joe Biden then said: “History will judge us harshly if we allow the hope of a liberated Afghanistan to evaporate because we failed to stay the course”.

A nationalist fighter, using the nom de guerre Muslim Afghan, has called the failure of the American war effort in Afghanistan “another golden page in Afghan history . . . First the USSR and now the USA have collapsed in Afghanistan. There is no doubt the Taliban smashed the USA in Afghanistan. America never had mercy on the killing of Afghans but despite all their brutality they failed” (quoted in a Telegraph Group article reproduced in the Press, 3/7/21).

“Well-known counter-insurgency (COIN) ‘expert’ and death squad enthusiast Professor David Kilcullen has advocated as relevant models of Western intervention for the future the following “Historical examples (Oman in the 1970s, El Salvador in the 1980s, Afghanistan in 2001, & Syria in 2015-18) [which] show that light-footprint missions with a strong civilian component can achieve results out of proportion to their size” (“The Dragon And The Snakes: How The Rest Learned To Fight The West”, Scribe, 2020, p247).

“Over 929,000 people have died in

the post-9/11 wars due to direct war violence, and several times as many due to the reverberating effects of war” (Costs of War Project – The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs)².

By mid-August 2021, it was reported that: “Half the population [of Afghanistan] – more than 18 million people, including nearly ten million children - need humanitarian assistance... Over 12 million are at emergency or crisis levels of food insecurity” (Afghanistan Needs Your Help – Help Children in Afghanistan:)³. This crisis has got even more direly acute with the turmoil of the Taliban takeover against a background of drought and Covid-19.

“Both the [US] executive and legislative branches were trending toward fascism, but a mainstream media that had been reluctant to call a liar a liar, or a racist a racist during the first three years that Donald [Trump] was in the Oval Office certainly couldn't be counted on to find the language necessary to describe the reality of our increasingly fraught political moment [election year 2020]” (“The Reckoning: America's Trauma And Finding A Way To Heal”, Mary L Trump, Allen & Unwin, 2021, p61).

Following its subversion of the democratically elected government of Ukraine in 2014, the US has continued to cultivate a network of neo-fascist/Nazi-type militias, especially the Azov organisation (“Inspiring Rightwing Extremists Across The Globe”),⁴.

From aggressive posturing at the boundaries of empires, and even terrorist attacks in antipodean Aotearoa/NZ inflicted by perpetrators from opposing politico-ethnic extremes, to a host of other immediate global threats – most pre-eminently the ravages of Covid-19 and global warming – humankind has surely entered an era of unprecedented challenges. Problems and concerns are fast compounding.

We need all hands to the pumps in preemptive and ameliorative work! Unfortunately, history has repeatedly shown that when humans face worsening conditions of instability, uncertainty, and insecurity, then the more inclined they are to lash out wildly and blindly at what they blame for their plight. Enemies are readily found and seen as deserving of violent retaliation.

In this article, I continue my ongoing exploration and examination of international relations in this time of greater volatility and peril. My basic aim, as usual, is to repeat and reinforce the call for far more support for anti-nuclear and peacemaking organisations, groups, and movements in their efforts to help defuse conflicts; and to help raise awareness about the dangerous networks and trends on the rise in the West as corporate capitalism comes under increasing pressure.

For sure, activists have to work even harder in coordinating and growing global cooperative programmes that more effectively address the challenges of Covid-19; anthropogenic climate change; compounding conflicts; the quest for genuine sustainability; social justice; etc. A key point of emphasis in my article is how we have to confront the extremely dangerous leadership of the Anglo-American axis, and the Joe Biden/Boris Johnson “junta”. *More than ever today, humankind trembles on the brink of nuclear annihilation because of the impetus under way!*

Belligerent Blowback!

American Professor Chalmers Johnson noted in a book he originally published in 2000, how: “The term 'blowback', which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) first invented for their own internal use, [was] starting to circulate among students of international relations (“Blowback: The Costs And Consequences Of American Empire”, TimeWarner, 2000/02, p8). It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people. What the daily press reports as the malign acts of 'terrorists' or 'drug lords' or 'rogue states' or 'illegal arms merchants' often turn out to be blowback from earlier American operations” (ibid.).

Of course, openly articulated and hugely hyped-up operations can also eventually result in awful blowback, most dramatically the US-led invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Currently, the latest blowback from American intervention in Afghanistan is still unfolding with the Taliban takeover. And, yet so very ironically, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan had ousted both the Taliban and al Qaeda from power in the wake of 9/11, *the most dramatic blowback of all!*

Islamist movements from the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salaafists and Wahhabism; from the Taliban to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and from al Qaeda to al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, have all proved highly problematic for the West. At the same time, these movements owe a lot in their origins to the record of Western imperialism, both directly and indirectly. *Am-bivalence, paradox, and contradiction have proliferated!* Much of this blowback stems indeed from the systematic, political use of the tradition of Muslim conservatism to counter socialist inclinations and tendencies. The bulwark of Muslim conservatism was of course entrenched in the American pact with the feudalistic Wahhabi kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the end of World War II (WWII).

Mass Murder And Mayhem

Since the 1960s this kind of collaborationist strategy has even included the deliberate employment of mass militant and violent Islamist extremism (*flexibly applied according to time and place!*) in order to ruthlessly stifle any Leftwing stirrings. The most horrendous example of this strategy was the Indonesian Genocide, which was covertly instigated and facilitated by the Anglo-American “Five Eyes” intelligence/covert action club, including NZ, over the period 1965-70. Peace Researcher 25⁵, *March 2002, is a Special Issue on that subject, written by Dennis Small. Ed.*

Nowadays, in all the chaos flowing from the failure of US strategy in Afghanistan, our priority should be the desperate humanitarian crisis currently being experienced by the Afghan people (Afghanistan Needs Your Help, op. cit.). This is a crisis that stems so much from the legacy of the former US/NATO occupation and the horrible mess they have left behind.

The Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs estimated in 2021 that about 241,000 people have been killed in the Afghanistan and Pakistan war zone since 2001, with a large proportion of the civilians directly killed (over 71,000), and many more dying indirectly because of the exacerbation of other problems like lack of health care, malnutrition, poor sanitation, etc. (Afghan Civilians/Costs of War, Costs of War Project; Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs)⁶.



Malcolm Evans, 14/3/18

The so-called “graveyard of empires” is still today suffering its own horrendous human cost. This has been the price exacted by its former imperial overlords, and now their revenge in cutting off desperately needed aid, including the freezing of Afghani bank accounts. NZ non-government organisations (NGOs) working in aid and development have been responding to the urgent United Nations (UN) call for over \$US600 million in humanitarian assistance for the rest of 2021. Oxfam⁷ and Christian World Service (CWS)⁸ have been prominent among these NGOs.

Biden Blatantly Bait The Russian Bear In The Black Sea

Meanwhile, the unashamedly self-proclaimed “aggressive” Biden Administration is openly reorienting to confront more directly both China and Russia. There are huge concerns mounting now about the exploding evils of American foreign policy (“No More Attacks On Afghanistan And No Moving The War To China”⁹, World BEYOND War; WBW News & Action, “Don’t Get Yanked Into War With China”¹⁰).

In early July 2021, we got some stunningly disturbing news about a US-led naval push right up to Russia’s borders on the Black Sea. There were TV reports relaying a

dangerous confrontation brewing in the Black Sea as President Joe Biden, who had formerly run the American campaign to subvert Ukraine under the Obama Administration, was now poking naval warfare sticks at the Russian bear off Crimea (e.g., TV3, *Newshub Live At 6pm*, 7/7/21).

US-owned *Newshub* on TV3 pours out a constant flow of American foreign policy propaganda, mainly courtesy of the CIA-groomed CBS. In the particular news bulletin just referenced above, the relevant CBS item, titled “Confronting Russia”, declared that Russia had seized Crimea illegally in 2014. CBS ignored the fact, of course, that the US back then had just brazenly orchestrated the overthrow of a democratically elected government in the Ukraine, one more such victim on a long list; *and all quite unashamedly cheered on by the eminently self-styled democratic mainstream Western media!* In the latest annually coordinated round of the so-called “Sea Breeze” set of exercises (June 28-July 10, 2021), the US and Ukraine hosted some 30-odd North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies, supposedly testing the waters off Crimea for freedom of navigation rights. Russian jet fighters were said to have “threatened” a British destroyer on an earlier occasion so the lat-

est move in the confrontation game was purportedly payback time, using combined Western military might to send a message to the enemy occupying the Crimean peninsula!

All the bellicose, provocative NATO war posturing was bizarrely celebrated by the worst of the power-drunk American mainstream media, the kind so regularly peddled by TV3 and Prime TV (“US Warship Leads Drills In Russia’s Backyard, A Message”; etc!)¹¹. For sure, the US/NATO alliance openly embraces military madness in its march up to Russia’s borders! When in turn shadowed and buzzed by Russian military craft, TV reports showed a Western warship crew at one stage actually donning protective gear as if a real attack was possible. *A British interviewee even boasted about baiting the Russian bear in its own backyard!*

Playing “Nuclear Chicken” War Games!

As then so very dramatically and starkly shown in such TV reports, the potentially “nuclear chicken”-style posturing by the US/NATO fleet provided a chillingly graphic demonstration of the sheer stupidity and mindless bellicosity of the Western warmongering alliance. *Ironically in context, the specific TV3 report cited earlier aptly presented the*

CBS item as showing how Russia and the West could go to war! (TV3, op. cit.).

Revealingly enough, another war-mongering major American media outlet also had some links with more sobering information (“The US-Ukraine Sea Breeze Naval Exercise Explained”)¹². It noted straight up that the Black Sea and nearby areas constitute an increasing geopolitical friction point between NATO and Russia (ibid.).

At this juncture, I pick up again on the incident concerning the British warship. In June 2021, British destroyer HMS Defender (“Aggressor”?) was apparently harassed by Russian planes in “Black Sea waters that are considered internationally as Ukrainian but are claimed by Russia after its 2014 annexation of Crimea. Russia says it also unleashed warning shots and bombs but Britain denies any such actions took place” (ibid.).

Most ominously, and in former US President Richard Nixon's avowedly “madman” style of nuclear brinkmanship, “Russian President Vladimir Putin... called it a provocation by Britain and the US, saying he could have sunk the ship and it would not have provoked a world war” because “the other side knows they cannot win” (ibid.). Putin accused the US-led NATO alliance of calculated and systematic aggression. *All this amounts to crazy killer ape antics on both sides and shows just how easily events could spin out of control! One misstep, one miscalculation, one mistake – and it could be all over for everybody!!*

Meantime, the Anglo-American Atlantic alliance now intruding so rampantly into the Black Sea is intent on building up the war fleet of Western-urged Ukraine. Given the aggressively attempted NATO encirclement and containment of Russia, the Kremlin bear has been angrily baring its teeth in reply for some years now. “Moscow claims Washington is trying to turn the Black Sea into a zone of military brinkmanship”, yet another potential and very dangerous global flashpoint (ibid.). Any open hostilities there could very quickly escalate to nuclear war. Russia would be defending its very borders.

Stormy Waters Ahead!?

“[President] Putin said NATO uses

exercises such as Sea Breeze to deploy military infrastructure in Ukraine in what Putin sees as a direct security threat” (ibid.). Correspondingly, “Russia responded to Sea Breeze, with a show of force, testing air defence systems in Crimea”, and deploying warplanes, helicopters, and surface-to-air missile weaponry” (ibid.).

Most ominously, the predatory, imperialist NATO plans almost 100 military exercises in 2021. So, we have reached the point at which both sides are posturing more perilously, a situation that urgently needs to be ratcheted back and scaled down. *The sword of Damocles long hanging over us all is surely getting very shaky as the thread gets more and more frayed!* Again, at the same time, the US, Britain, and Australia are bellicosely lining up to counter what they denounce as China's militaristic advance in the South China Sea and beyond. There is a similar Western attempt at encirclement in process.

The Anglo-American axis is even eager to supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines in a new AUKUS pact (e.g., “AUKUS: UK, US And Australia Launch Pact To Counter China”, BBC, 17/9/21,¹³). In addition, as another element in the gathering momentum to WWII, “UK's Nuclear Subs [Are Gearing Up] To Use Australia As [A] Base For [The] Indo-Pacific” battleground (headline of a *Times* article, reprinted in the *Press*, 22/9/21).

Thankfully and hearteningly, Aotearoa/NZ has stood firm on its nuclear-free zone (e.g., “AUKUS Submarines Banned From New Zealand As Pact Exposes Divide With Western Allies”, 18/9/21)¹⁴. However, NZ still participates in provocative military exercises in the “Indo-Pacific” region. *We are plunging into very perilous waters!*

Contortions Of Capitalist Imperialism

Central to the development of the capitalist West over centuries has been the extension and maintenance of the imperial frontiers. “European domination of the world reached its apogee before WWI, and the five centuries of European expansion had been accompanied by crimes including torture and genocide” (“Amnesty International Report on Torture”, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1973, p25; “The Econo-

tics Of European Imperialism”, Alan Hodgart, WW Norton & Company, Inc., 1977).

Right up to the end of WWII – and for quite some time beyond – the British Empire, which had boasted at one stage of painting a quarter of the Earth's land surface red (*ironic in terms of the growth of communism later!*), was still struggling to hold on to significant areas. But by 1968, the British government announced that it would be withdrawing from its military commitments east of Suez, primarily retreating out of Malaysia and Singapore in the South-East Asia region.

Britain was more or less handing the ruling hegemony of the Anglo-American axis further into the hands of the Americans. Axis enforcement of imperial rule and the international order was being transferred into the control of a far more powerful nation, one with an already very extensive and increasing empire of its own - stretching from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia, and from Venezuela to Iran.

Again, the last-mentioned nation incisively illustrates the transfer of power. A 1953 Anglo-American engineered putsch in Iran overthrew the democratically elected Mossadegh government and restored the dictatorial Shah to the throne. This CIA/MI6 contrived-coup may have been partly in the interests of the Anglo-Persian (later Anglo-Iranian) Oil Company - and renamed again British Petroleum [BP] in 1954 – which had been the object of Iranian resource nationalisation, but American oil and strategic designs came instead to dominate the Shah's regime. There were some big ironies as ever. Britain, along with France, even fell out for a while with the US over the 1956 Suez Crisis. At the time, America was more worried about Soviet influence gaining ground than Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal. Then in the early 1970s with the rise of the countervailing power of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Shah of Iran openly endorsed the hike in oil prices by Middle Eastern countries and others, and even criticised the US for trying to keep oil cheap in its own politico-economic interests.

Forward once more to the present day: Certain dimensions of the

“Great Geopolitical Game” seem dangerously close to the verge of *spinning out of all control!* Following the fall of Afghanistan back into fundamentalist Taliban rule; the tragic mess of Iraq stemming from the illegal, cynically contrived 2003 Anglo-American invasion; the recent Russian riposte to the US/NATO aggressive advance in eastern Europe; the increasing tensions in the Indo-China/Pacific region as America and its allies try to counter China’s rise; and various risky conflicts in the rest of the world, we face a range of compounding geopolitical problems at the edges of the Anglo-American led Western empire.

Western imperial hegemony is now increasingly contested around the globe in a number of critical dimensions even as it ramps up the rhetoric and hostile behaviour. We must do all we can to boost the growing international peace/anti-nuclear movement, and all its connections to social justice and sustainable development NGOs, and related activism. *And support the UN and other global agencies to the hilt when and where working positively in the same direction!*

“Barbarians” At The Gates Of The Empire?!

In the third century AD, the new Roman Emperor Decius had only just seized power for a few months “when (in AD 250) he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the Goths. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western Empire that the name of Goths is frequently but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism” (“Gibbon’s Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire”, Edward Gibbon, Abridged and Illustrated One Volume Ed., Bison Books, 1979, p67).

Historian Edward Gibbon, who wrote his original magisterial six-volume study between 1776-78, goes on to observe that “the Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers...” (ibid.). The Empire was beginning to be besieged on various fronts by the

“barbarian hordes” portrayed in Roman literature.

It was certainly significant and symbolic enough that Emperor Decius was soon defeated and killed by the Goths in 251 AD. Some rulers in ancient times used to lead bravely from the front whereas American Presidents these days regularly deliver death from the skies or via special forces, or even large-scale interventions and invasions, acting as the so-called “Commander-in-Chief” from the rear.

The goal generally too, is to inflict far greater human costs on enemies, with plenty of civilian collateral damage to reinforce the message of superior violent power unleashed. There are some haunting parallels between the Roman experience as depicted in history and what is presently happening at the edges of the Anglo-American-dominated Western empire in the third decade of the 21st Century. History can indeed repeat itself in certain senses, depending on the definitions and interpretations used.

Tackling Global Conflicts Constructively

To reiterate and stress again what I have already highlighted above, geopolitical conflicts have been ratcheting up in a most dangerous way. Paraded on the global stage today are a host of problems and potential flash-points across the globe. These include the regional conditions left in the wake of the debacle of the chaotic American withdrawal from Afghanistan as the Taliban rapidly took over; the related US phase-down in Iraq; the fractious contest on the Ukrainian-Russian border, and elsewhere around the perimeters of Russia subject to US/NATO aggression; the heightening tensions in the South China Sea and adjoining regions of the “Indo-Pacific”; and various other conflicts either directly, or indirectly expressed, or simmering away.

We need to mobilise in more effectively urging governments for far more concerted and meaningful action on defusing these conflicts. We have to do our best in helping unravel the bellicose zombie syndrome! We can, for instance, liaise more closely with some excellent American NGOs, e.g., World Beyond War [WBW]¹⁵; Beyond the Bomb: A Grassroots Movement to Stop Nuclear War¹⁶; & Nuclear Age

Peace Foundation¹⁷.

A major lobby group launched in 2008 in Paris by more than 100 political, civic, and military leaders has become an important think tank and campaign vehicle for the abolition of nuclear weapons (Global Zero / A world without nuclear weapons)¹⁸. This organisation “has grown to include hundreds of eminent” such people, as well as “hundreds of thousands of engaged citizens” (ibid.). The UN even officially confirmed the successful global campaign to ban nuclear weapons by its establishment of the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This represents a hugely inspiring model of international cooperation for peace and the survival of humankind on our “Goldilocks” planet Earth.

Malign Media Spin

In the wake of the chaos in Afghanistan, the Anglo-American mainstream media went into an overdrive of self-serving hypocritical angst. For instance, the *NZ Listener* – now owned by Australian company Are Media, which in turn is owned by the Sydney investment firm Mercury Capital – had an article titled “Back To Barbarity”, along with other related reportage and commentary under the same title, in its August 7-13, 2021 edition (pp30-37). The lead article by journalist Paul Thomas lamented that: “The US withdrawal from Afghanistan signifies the failure of the 20-year effort to introduce stability and human rights, and is a terrifying prospect for women and girls” (ibid., p30).

The rest of the NZ mainstream media have sung the same tune of woe, so hypocritically picturing the Western “20-year effort” as somehow the victim of its own good intentions. There has been very little acknowledgement of any aspect of the glaringly condemnatory record of Anglo-American perfidy in Afghanistan, a record in keeping with that elsewhere around the world in multitudinous cases since the end of WWII. *But then we always have the Orwellian memory-hole at work on instant and repetitive notice whatever the unfolding history!*

In addressing American perpetrated and facilitated atrocities in Afghanistan in 2001 a *Guardian* columnist, Isobel Hilton, wrote: “Surely, the point about civilization... is that it does not descend lightly into terror

and barbarism?... The Afghans, we hear, have a bent for savagery and it would be absurd to expect a war in Afghanistan to be fought by Queensbury rules. But whose war is this? ... ("The New Rulers", op. cit., p105).

While there might be the very odd note of concern about our own barbarity, as registered here, the cultural hegemony of institutionalised hypocrisy dominates overwhelmingly in the mainstream media and its pervasive "cancel culture". This hegemony is mandated and prescribed by the West's ruling class. There has now indeed been a host of malign media hand-wringing and related crocodile tears over the failure of Western repression in Afghanistan.

As another local illustration of the foreign controlled media in propaganda mode take American Discovery Inc.-owned Newshub's TV3. This outfit pours out a constant fount of CIA-groomed propaganda courtesy of CBS, as well as news from other corporate channels. In its own summary of events on 14/8/21, TV3, in the style of the *NZ Listener*, presented a typically US-oriented overview of events, interspersed with Biden Administration statements (*Newshub Live At 6pm*). The item concluded with a lament that the human rights gains of the last two decades will be lost.

Hyping Up The Hypocrisy!

This has been the dominant common theme of the mainstream media. The *Press* had an especially hypocritical editorial "Freedoms Gone In Blink Of An Eye", 17/8/21). This is an NZ paper that for many years has acted as a consistent public relations (PR) agency for the US – the country with by far the worst foreign policy record in human rights on the planet since WWII, let alone specifically its abuses in Afghanistan.

In its editorial the *Press* went into Anglo-American/Western excesses of criticism of the victorious Taliban: - viz. a "rapid descent back into the horror show of life under the Taliban"; "the Taliban's twisted ideologies"; "its intentions are as oppressive as ever"; etc. (ibid.). The origins of the Taliban naturally remain unmentionable in such media.

To quote Professor Chalmers Johnson, a former conservative and hardline anti-communist, again on

the torturous history of Afghanistan: "It was only after the Russians had bombed Afghanistan back into the Stone Age and suffered a Vietnam-like defeat, and the US walked away from the death and destruction the CIA had helped cause, that Osama bin Laden turned against his American supporters".

"The last straw as far as bin Laden was concerned was that, after the Gulf War (1991), the US stationed 'infidel' American troops in Saudi Arabia to prop up that decadent, fiercely authoritarian regime" ("Blowback", op. cit., p.xv). US intervention had "also helped bring to power the Taliban, a fundamentalist Islamic movement", that embraced extremist policies on the implementation of an ideal Muslim society (ibid., p13).

If you want to get a sense of some of the motivation in the twisted, horrific ideology that drove the white Australian mosque murderer in Otautahi/Christchurch, Aotearoa/NZ, on March 15, 2019, then you can find certain aspects of such sentiment expressed in this *Press* editorial, the *NZ Listener* article cited above, and TV3 *Newshub*/CBS reportage, plus lots of other similar media stuff. The American-defined "War on Terror" and the doctrine of Western superiority and its "culture wars" form the framework, and global context for the politico-ethnic terrorism of our times. *Western imperialist reach, racism, hubris, and ignorance have certainly all combined in generating bloody blowback!*

This includes, of course, the opposite polar extreme to the mosque murderer as demonstrated by the ISIS-inspired terrorist attack in an Auckland New Lynn supermarket on the 3rd September 2021 ("Auckland Mall Attack: ISIS-Inspired Terrorist Stabs Six Shoppers", 3/9/21). The similarity lies in extremist tribal violence. ISIS arose out of the US-led 2003 invasion of Iraq, as well as the Islamist experience in Afghanistan. Fifty one people were savagely killed in the Christchurch mosques' murders, children, women, and men all gunned down in cold blood. In the Auckland ISIS-inspired terrorist incident, seven people were ultimately found to have been injured in a berserk knife attack.

It should be noted that running amok, wielding murderous knives can be quite okay for the Western power elite in the right circumstances. How

American capitalist propaganda can celebrate the worst barbarity can be quite stunning. A *Life International* magazine article in July 1966 (Vol. 41, No.1) gloated over what it called the "Haunted Face Of A Red Defeat" during the CIA-orchestrated Indonesian genocide 1965-70, including even colour photos of death squad members practising and showing off their knives (photos on pp62/3 & 65).

Frenzied Running Amok!

Along with all its revelling in the butchery being committed, the magazine spouted CIA propaganda with targeted malign calculation, especially about the alleged Communist coup attempt that supposedly triggered the massacres (ibid., p63). This CIA-contrived coup attempt was cunningly portrayed as the pretext for societal outrage, and so the ultimate legitimization of bloody revenge. Once again, the black arts of psychological warfare played a crucial role in generating the motivation for mass murder and genocide.

Life International was famed for pioneering photojournalism. The cover of this particular edition sported several young male models posing in "mod" fashion. *Haute couture can go hand in hand with high genocide for capitalist celebrants!* The magazine even slyly embraced the exponents of the barbaric killings with headlines like "The corpse-laden rivers ran red from butchery (ibid., pp62/3); and that: "Even in lovely Bali, killing became an orgy of cruelty" (ibid., pp64/5), while also portraying exemplars of death squad members, as indicated above, almost in heroic mode. In the 1960s, Bali was thus made safe to serve as an Australasian tourist playground.

"For Moslems, the rising against the Communists was a *holy war*" [my emphasis] (ibid., p63). There was lots of chopping off heads carried out by "the Army and civilian anti-communist youth organisations like Anzor, a militant Moslem group", and even the grisly handing out of wrapped, severed heads to passing motorists as souvenirs (ibid.). Plenty of ears and fingers were freely distributed as trophies. *At the end of the day, though, it was all good as the ends, you see, so obviously justified the good means!*

The Anglo-American/Western treatment of the Indonesian genocide in such colourful, glorified terms – by

which a “national bloodbath” is openly welcomed! – reeks of the extent to which so-called “Western civilisation” is steeped in systemic institutionalised hypocrisy. One has only to mention the reviled names of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in order to grasp the very deep Orwellian nature of this syndrome!

A Clash Of Cultures And Civilisations?

Let us take a step back for a broader if still relatively snapshot overview of what has happened in Afghanistan. We need to especially evaluate how the scene was set long before the officially announced US invasion in October 2001. Indeed, an intervention had already been planned to some extent during 2001 even before 9/11 took place and gave an obvious pretext for invasion. But first a look at the deeper and wider background in the Middle East and adjoining Central Asia regions is so crucial for our understanding about how events have turned out.

A lot earlier than the events of 9/11, the Western cultivation of Muslim conservatism as a bulwark against socialism was starting to unravel. Tensions were increasing in certain areas and spheres of contact. The key turning point came with the Iranian revolution in 1979 with “revolutionary fundamentalism in power” (“Islamic Fundamentalism”, Dilip Hiro, in *Paladin Movements And Ideas* series, Paladin, 1988/9). *But, as usual, ironies abound!*

I need to further set the regional scene. Writing in 2003 in a book originally published in 1990, Chris Horrie and Peter Chippindale gave a snapshot picture of traditional society in Afghanistan (“What Is Islam: A Comprehensive Introduction”, 1990, latest revised edition 2003, Virgin Books, pp221-224). They observed that: “The highly traditionalist warlords have preserved an ancient and conservative form of Islam strikingly resembling that of the equally ungovernable Bedouin Arabs” (ibid., p221).

Furthermore: “As in Iran, the only other Muslim country to remain independent since the Middle Ages, Afghani Islam has become fused with militant nationalism and *jihad* (Holy War in defence of Islam). And at the same time, Afghan independence has become a potent symbol of how ‘fundamentalism’ can survive

[and resist] European domination” (ibid., p222).

When a Marxist movement, backed by the Soviet Union, took over the Government and tried to bring about socialist changes, “the pace of change was slow and fiercely opposed by traditionalist Muslim groups led by the Muslim Brotherhood” (ibid.). Among the various changes being attempted by the regime, the efforts to implement education for women became a very sore issue indeed for the tribal chiefs (ibid.). It was against this background and in this context that the more than 40 years of civil conflict and war in Afghanistan developed and extremist jihadis emerged to take centre stage.

The “New Great Game” - Scrambling For Oil And Power In Central Asia!

When expounding in 2002 on the great sham of the so-called “War on Terror”, famed investigative journalist John Pilger observed that: “The search for Osama bin Laden and his cohorts in the mountains of Afghanistan was a circus spectacle. The American goal is, and always was, the control, through vassals, of former Soviet Central Asia, a region rich in oil and minerals and of great strategic importance to competing powers, Russia and China” (“The New Rulers Of The World”, op. cit., in ch. ‘The Great Game’, p108).

Zbigniew Brzezinski, an enormously influential National Security Adviser to several American presidents, had earlier pushed the strategic message that the key to controlling Eurasia – i.e., “all the territory east of Germany and Poland, stretching through Russia and China to the Pacific Ocean and including the Middle East and most of the Indian sub-continent” – is *Central Asia* (ibid., p116). Not only would such control ensure the US “new sources of energy and mineral wealth”, but it would also provide for “a ‘guard post’ over ... the oil of the Persian Gulf” (ibid.).

At this point, I return to the sequence of events that unfolded in Afghanistan in the late 1970s when a Soviet-supported but deeply divided Communist Party took control of the Government there in April 1978. This particular Party was so wracked with internal factional conflict that it soon proved perilously unstable. Moreover, it “almost im-

mediately sought to give women equal rights and introduce land reform [my emphasis]. As a result, it had to confront diverse bloody [Islamist-style] rebellions – which Iran and Pakistan aided” (“Another Century Of War?”, Gabriel Kolko, *The New Press*, 2002, p46).

Leading Indian journalist and political analyst MJ Akbar is one of those numerous commentators who have panned Brzezinski’s most callously calculated and short-sighted geopolitics. Akbar sets the scene in Afghanistan in late 1978 as the Soviet-backed regime there implodes: “The Soviet Army and KGB troops seized Kabul in the last week of December 1978, and placed Babrak Karmal on what was now a socialist throne. Kabul once again fell without a fight” (“The Shade Of Swords: Jihad And The Conflict Between Islam & Christianity”, Lotus/Roli, 2002, p217).

Contriving Covert Cataclysm!

Portentously again: “When Islamic fundamentalists took power in Iran in January 1979, Afghanistan’s geopolitical importance increased greatly. It was at this point that both the Soviet Union and the US began to pay [serious] attention to what had been a relatively unimportant country”, i.e., Afghanistan (“Another Century Of War?”, op. cit., pp46/7). Afghanistan’s internal conflicts quickly became internationalised as it fell victim to the competing designs of other countries. Iraq and later Syria have suffered similar fates.

By March 1979, American officials were already looking at further support for the Afghan insurgency and “sucking the Soviets into a Vietnamese quagmire”. On July 3, President Carter signed a directive authorising secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime, and as Zbigniew Brzezinski, his National Security Adviser, correctly recalled in 1998, the explicit aim was ‘to induce a Soviet military intervention ...’.

“I wrote to President Carter: *We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War*’ [emphasis added]” (i-bid., p47; “Blowback”, op. cit., pp. xiii/iv). Thus, predatory Western geopolitics dictated this specific momentous decision. “The American objective was to see the Soviet Union mauled, not to help Afghans. It was to bait the Russians, and a bloody war on Afghan soil was only a means to this end” (“Another Century Of War?”,

ibid.).

A big “added attraction” [was] that Soviet intervention would “inflame Muslim opinion against them in many countries” (ibid.). And to hell with the Afghan people who were destined “to pay an immense human price in the process ...” (ibid.). As MJ Akbar so pertinently observes: “A country that had either been too remote or too exotic for America suddenly became its opportunity base. One and a half million Afghans died and the world was a different place by the time the defeated Soviets withdrew in 1989” (“The Shade Of Swords”, op. cit.).

Yet in a 1998 interview, Zbigniew Brzezinski even boasted about delivering a killer blow to the Soviets, and dismissed the Taliban (and by implication, al Qaeda too) as just “some agitated Moslems” (“Blowback”, op. cit., pp.xiii/iv). Among the horrible grim legacy for which the US bears “some responsibility” were “ten million landmines left in the ground there” to continue killing and maiming people, including many unfortunate children (ibid., pp.xiv). This was a “collateral damage” problem to which NZ later contributed during its part in the post-9/11 occupation.

Blowback From Battling The Bear
MJ Akbar cites the “Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid, author of the excellent book ‘Taliban: Islam, Oil And The New Great Game In Central Asia’ [IB Tauris, 2000], who quoted Lt. Gen. Hameed Gul, the then ‘chief of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the intelligence agency that spearheaded the Pakistan effort against the Soviet occupation’” (“The Shade Of Swords”, op. cit.). Rashid

had asked him in 1989 whether encouraging violent jihad could be “playing with fire” (ibid.).

Gul justified “the first Islamic international brigade in the modern era” as similar to communist “international brigades” and the West’s NATO (ibid.). The US and Saudi Arabia had backed to the hilt the Islamist resistance in Afghanistan and correspondingly the ruthless Islamist dictatorship of President Zia ul Haq, which acted as a funnel for Pakistani and foreign jihadi fighters.

America’s imperialist culture even celebrated and glorified Gul’s “Islamic international brigade” with a 2007 Hollywood film about how the dissolute Texan “cowboy” Congressman Charlie Wilson and CIA operative Gustav Avrakotos were instrumental in initiating “Operation Cyclone”, which organised and supplied the Afghan mujahideen (“Charlie Wilson’s War. The Culture Of Imperialism And The Distortion Of History”, Jeremy Kuzmarov, *History News Network*)¹⁹.

As described above, and to elaborate and emphasise a bit more: “America dismissed the threat from the aftermath [of Operation Cyclone] as of little consequence. In an [in] famous remark, Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to Jimmy Carter, asked whether a few stirred up Muslims were more important than the defeat of the Soviet Union and the liberation of eastern Europe” (“The Shade of Swords”, op. cit., pp217/8).

“Among those stirred up Muslims was Osama bin Laden, who first came to Peshawar in 1980 with the

gushing support of Prince Turki bin Faisal, head of the Saudi intelligence agency, the Istakhbarat. In 1984, Osama’s friend and perhaps mentor Abdullah Azam set up the Makhtab al Khidmat, or Centre for Service; from here originated the network that became al Qaeda”, the base for Islamist revolution (ibid., p218).

More Background To The Afghanistan Fallout, Etc.

The Caspian Sea region and adjoining areas had become the prime focus of the American greed for fossil fuels after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992. In sync with John Pilger, US-based journalist Lutz Kleveman wrote in 2002: “The war against al Qaeda focused international attention on the Caspian region as an area of strategic importance. However, the Afghan campaign is only an episode, albeit an important one, in a much larger struggle: the ‘New Great Game’” (“The New Great Game: Blood And Oil In Central Asia”, Atlantic Books, 2002-3/4, p2).

Like John Pilger, Klutzman evokes the idea of how episodes of history can repeat so much in form and content. The term “Great Game” originated in the 19th Century, describing the struggle between Britain and Russia for hegemony in Central Asia. Throughout the period of this particular conflict, Britain was most concerned about keeping control of the borders and access routes for its prize possession of India, the “Jewel in the Crown” of Empire. Much of the competitive posturing between the two powers centred on the crumbling Ottoman Empire.

Returning to the late 20th Century, yet another investigative journalist and historian Tom Bower has described how, during the mid-1990s in the capitalist chaos unleashed in Russia under newly re-elected President Boris Yeltsin, Washington saw the “opportunity to replace Russia’s historic control over the estimated 200 billion barrels of oil and gas around the Caspian Sea” (“The Squeeze: Oil, Money, And Greed In The 21st Century”, Tom Bower, Harper Press, 2009, p93).

In the coming years, US-led foreign control predators worked to stake out the region as much as possible, including in Russia itself. However, President Putin’s assertive resource nationalism eventually got American



Vice-President Dick Cheney fired up and spitting tacks of frustration (ibid., p296). "Obtaining Caspian oil without Russian interference [had] preoccupied [President] Clinton" (ibid., p93).

But the struggle had outstripped America's greedy geopolitical ambitions! Anglo-American operatives – intelligence agents, diplomatic missions, transnational corporations (TNCs), business investors, economic fixers, etc. – were all pouring into the former Soviet republics, trying to grab their energy and other natural resources, and generally move them into the Western commercial and political orbit.

"International security expert" Michael T Klare in a chapter on "Energy Conflict In The Caspian Sea Basin" recounts that by the start of the 21st Century literally "hundreds of companies [had] flocked to the region in search of the new 'oil El Dorado'", including "many of the world's leading energy concerns" - from BP Amoco to Agip of Italy, and from ExxonMobil to "Lukoil of Russia and the China National Petroleum Corporation" ("Resource Wars: The New Landscape Of Global Conflict", Owl Books, p86).

NATO And The Neoliberal Militarist Marketeers

By this stage, too, the blatantly militarist neoliberal market had stepped up aggressively. Stephen F Cohen, a Professor of Russian Studies and History at New York University, pointed out in August 1997 [per a diary report] that NATO's increasing intrusion into former Soviet territory was potent with very disturbing implications for the future ("Failed Crusade: America And The Tragedy Of Post-Communist Russia", WW Norton & Co., 2000, p148).

Cohen reported that most Russian foreign policy specialists spoke "of a looming crisis, not normalisation" given this continuing intrusion (ibid.). Symbolically enough, the "July NATO summit in Madrid [had seen] President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine, the second most populous and strategically important former Soviet republic, [sign] a highly publicised agreement with the Western alliance" (ibid.). These specialists also certainly did not "minimise statements by US officials that NATO's expansion eastward [had] only begun", and that the Baltic states were next on its takeover list (ibid.).

Again, Professor Cohen - writing right on the turn of the century - aptly condemned "the folly of the American crusade to reinvent Russia" (ibid., p246). Both Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W Bush, the two Presidential candidates at the time, were firmly committed to this US-led capitalist crusade (ibid.). "As its co-sponsor in the 1990s, Vice President Gore [during the Clinton Administration] seemed eager to pursue the same intrusive imperial policy already under way in Ukraine. Governor Bush did not object, his chief foreign policy adviser echoing the crusade's missionary premise: 'The 21st Century will be based on American principles'" (ibid.).

Later, during the Obama Administration, Vice-President Joe Biden (2009-17) headed a coldly calculated and lavishly funded campaign to prise Ukraine out of the Russian sphere of influence. There were evidently some "potentially explosive conflicts between Russia and Ukraine", which the US/NATO phalanx could exploit to their advantage, along with all the various means of manipulation at their disposal that had been so tried and tested in a multitude of countries (ibid., p99).

The US/NATO subversive campaign duly culminated in the 2014 overthrow of a democratically elected Ukrainian government, and all the ongoing fallout from this contrived destabilisation. To this day, these militarist neoliberal forces can count on the malicious spin of the Western mainstream media. More specifically, as for ongoing fallout from the Western subversion of the Ukraine, the risks range from another possible trigger point for WWII to its contribution to the growth of the neo-fascist movement throughout the West ("Inspiring Right-Wing Extremists Across The Globe", op. cit.).

Pipeline Geopolitics Burst Open!

In the years around the advent of the 21st Century, i.e., during the late 1990s and early 2000s, as part of the scramble for resources in Central Asia and adjoining areas, pipeline geopolitics came to the fore as a major issue. The Anglo-American axis was intent on trying to install or secure gas pipelines in both the conflicted states of Afghanistan and the Ukraine.

These pipeline concerns were significant aspects of a perceived need

to ensure stable supplies of fossil fuels, both oil and gas. A series of complex, entangled resource controversies ensued with the contest between Russia and the US central to this new sphere of geopolitical competition. For a crucial period, Afghanistan figured prominently in the "Great Game". The Clinton Administration welcomed the Taliban to power in 1996 and even portrayed the takeover as "a peaceful political process" that would hopefully "lead to stability in the Hindu Kush" ("The New Great Game", op. cit., p160).

Unocal, the American energy TNC, prepared to build gas pipelines through Taliban-controlled territory (ibid.). "In February and November 1997, two Taliban delegations accepted an invitation from Unocal and travelled to Washington and Houston for talks with Government representatives and Unocal executives" (ibid.). But the pipeline plans fell apart with lack of societal stability due to continuing civil strife, and the US then cynically switched support to the Taliban's Northern Alliance enemies. Thousands of deaths and atrocities flowed from this move, culminating in the post 9/11 invasion and its deeply painful aftermath.

Meanwhile, geopolitical strife over gas supplies in Eurasia went on. By the mid-years of the first decade of the 21st Century, disputes over the pricing of energy resources, especially natural gas, had aggravated tensions between Russia and the US. In January 2006, Russia's Gazprom turned off the taps to Ukraine, also adversely affecting Western Europe as the pipeline concerned fed gas to the West. And, so, the struggle over energy supplies and resources, plus a plethora of other issues, has gone on ever since...

Losing Afghanistan

It is sobering to note that the so-called "Great Game" began in 19th Century Afghanistan but this country has only got attention when Western interests are directly impacted ("Freedom Next Time", John Pilger, Black Swan, 2006, in the conclusion to chapter 5, "Liberating Afghanistan", p414). Since the 9/11 invasion, as John Pilger has so pertinently observed, Afghanistan was only ever "a front-page 'story' when NATO forces [were] under siege to a resurgent Taliban" (ibid.).

This very biased pattern of report-

age, of course, has long been the norm for Western geopolitical interventions. To be sure, it conforms to the general treatment of lands that seem to have little relevance for our self-interest as defined by the ruling power elite, except in a moment of crisis for Western interests and lives. Paradoxically, and ironically enough, the dark side of the coin also covers all the covert “dirty work” that the West, especially the Anglo-American axis, wants to keep under wraps. Yet, as Professor Chalmers Johnson has stressed in “Blowback” (op. cit.), a lot of the deleterious outcomes eventually spill out into the daylight, even though the mainstream media still do their best to mislead and suppress the truth.

John Pilger concludes the ironically titled chapter “Liberating Afghanistan” in his book “Freedom Next Time” cited above with a piece of very dark outraged satire on what was just “a minor BBC news item” about “More Afghan Children Die In Raids”, dated December 10, 2003 (ibid.). After citing an American apology for killing nine so very unfortunate children in one bombing attack, the BBC news item revealed [that] another such raid had killed six more children (ibid.). This second murderous raid came hard on the heels of the first raid.

“However, the US warned it would not be deterred by civilian casualties. A US spokesman said [the dead children] were partly to blame for being at a site used by militants ...” (ibid.). This kind of operation set the pattern of US/NATO COIN up to the disastrous withdrawal in August 2021. Western special forces death squads carried out routine night raids on rural villages as described in “Hit And Run: The New Zealand SAS in Afghanistan And The Meaning Of Honour”, Nicky Hager & Jon Stephenson, Potton & Burton, 2017. (Hager’s “Other Peoples’ Wars: New Zealand In Afghanistan, Iraq, And The War On Terror” [Potton & Burton, 2011] provides an extensive examination of NZ’s participation in targeted killing operations).

Deadly Depredations

We can see from the narrative of “Hit And Run” just how counter-productive the US/NATO occupation strategy would prove to be. The cynically contrived camouflage of supposedly trying “to win hearts and minds” while routinely carrying out death squad “kill or capture” raids

and artillery/bomber/drone attacks eventually produced a plethora of angry resistance across the country.

Douglas Valentine, an expert on the deadly depredations and criminal nature of the CIA, has several chapters in his excoriating in-depth study of the “Firm” with titles like “What We Really Learned From Vietnam: A War Crimes Model For Afghanistan And Elsewhere” (see ch. 5 in his “The CIA As Organised Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America And The World”, Clarity Press, Inc., 2017). In reality, US/Western barbarism and “Dirty War” tactics were set loose again in Afghanistan (ibid., chs 5 – 8).

This became particularly evident during the Trump Presidency 2017-21 when the American Administration dropped any pretence of human rights concerns in its military operations, despite the UN presence. In the end, a Maoist-type revolutionary strategy succeeded with the peasants surrounding the cities and towns, and defeating the foreign oppressors and their comprador elite. Like the Soviets were, the NATO alliance has been triumphantly evicted in a Vietnam-type rout.

It was yet so sadly symbolic that the US’s parting-shot as it scrambled ignominiously to leave Afghanistan was to kill another ten civilians, including seven children, in a drone strike in Kabul. The US military, in typical fashion, mistook an aid vehicle for an ISIS attack mechanism, despite hours of close surveillance (“US Says Kabul Drone Strike Killed Ten Civilians, Including Children”, 17/9/21)²⁰. In the end, glaring policy contradictions comprehensively undermined the Western COIN programme. “Hit And Run” co-author Nicky Hager has succinctly summed up the failure of the latest Western attempt to subjugate Afghanistan²¹.

Pragmatic Digging In At The Outposts?

Let us take a wider perspective on the issues ahead. In an exposition of the latest threats to the West’s frontiers, Australian David Kilcullen, a leading Social Darwinist analyst, State terrorist, and touted Western COIN “expert”, warns darkly about the mounting challenges (“The Dragon And The Snakes: How The Rest Learned To Fight The West”, Scribe, 2020). These days, Kilcullen is a Professor in the School of Humanities & Social Sciences of the

University of New South Wales and a Professor of Practice in Global Security at Arizona State University. He is billed as a former soldier and diplomat “who served as a COIN adviser during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan” (ibid.).

David Kilcullen is very happy to embrace the historical imperial legacy in his advocacy for protecting the perimeters of Western dominance according to current and future priorities as he perceives them. He even draws lessons to some extent from the previous experience of Britain in securing the borders of its Indian empire.

His current concerns revolve around the new threats from the enemy forces which he sees as gathering against the West - the Chinese “dragon” and the so-called “snakes”, which include both states, e.g., Russia, and non-state actors like ISIS. In using this specific terminology, Kilcullen is echoing a prediction made by James Woolsey, a “Cold War insider”, on the latter’s Congressional confirmation as President Bill Clinton’s CIA Director in 1993. This particular prediction inspires Kilcullen’s own analyses and interpretations.

In the Introduction to his book cited above, Professor Kilcullen describes the general threat as he defines it: “Already clear was the growing influence (and increasingly sophisticated methodology) of competitive or actively hostile nation-states that were exploiting our exclusive focus on terrorism”, seeking to fill the geopolitical, economic and security vacuum we had left as we became bogged down in the wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan” (ibid., p1).

He proceeds with some examples: “... the Chinese-constructed container terminal on Colombia’s Pacific coast, as well as Chinese military advisers and hardware across Africa...; Russian private military contractors appearing in Syria to support Bashar-al Assad’s regime; Russia’s decision to reopen its signals intelligence station at Lourdes [near Havana], Cuba, directly targeting the US; the Iranian and North Korean advisers and military operators in Venezuela; the competition for influence among Turkey, South Arabia, and Iran (and their Gulf allies) in the Horn of Africa and across North Africa...” (ibid., p2).

David Kilcullen proclaims these examples as “signs that, as we had doubled down on terrorism, other risks and competitors were growing apace” (ibid.). Further concerns according to Kilcullen relate to China's militarisation of the South China Sea and Russia's seizure of Crimea and “barely covert invasion of Ukraine” (ibid.). His book goes on to review these growing threats and how the West should deal with them. I shall examine his thesis again later in a bit more detail.

Expanding The Imperial Frontier?

Dr Thomas Barnett is another exemplar of warmongering American Social Darwinism, cheered on by the Washington “beltway”. Barnett preached in the early 2000s what he promotes as a reformulated version of US-led globalisation. He operates as a very closely connected Pentagon adviser and military “geostrategist”. Around the 2004 publication date of his book on this theme – “The Pentagon's New Map: War And Peace In The Twenty-First Century”, (Berkley Books) – he was a professor at the US Naval War College. He is now a director at Enterra Solutions, a high-tech consultancy firm, as well as holding an academic post (Thomas PM Barnett, *Wikipedia*)²².

According to his *Wikipedia* entry: “Key to Barnett's geostrategic ideas is that the US should ‘export security’ from what he calls ‘the Functioning Core’ [i.e., the West and its allies] to the [‘Non-Integrating’] ‘Gap’, i.e., poor “underdeveloped countries”, or largely what used to be called the “Third World” or the “South”, comprising Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (ibid.). This project is aimed at integrating “those regions with the Core, even if this means going to war in Gap countries, followed by long periods of nation-building” (ibid.). So, this is Anglo-American/Western imperialism openly and unashamedly writ large!

Note that despite the implicit reference to Barnett's warmongering, the *Wikipedia* entry is a typically friendly and bowdlerised piece of American propaganda in itself. The most extreme and vicious imperialism is spun as relatively benign. A geographical arc, which incorporates most of Africa/all the Middle East/and much of Central Asia, i.e., an arc from Nigeria to Afghanistan, currently and graphically illustrates what the neo-colonialist views of Barnett

& co. have meant in actuality. Similarly, the fallout from Western State terrorism and imperial intervention has been full in the face of New Zealanders in recent years.

Such views as expressed by Thomas Barnett have been, of course, a dime a dozen among the American power elite and the multiple agencies of their dissemination. The US in general has a very Rightwing capitalist cultural orientation, and President Joe Biden has even proudly proclaimed an “aggressive” foreign policy. The move to neo-fascism has become more openly visible as time goes on. It is grounded in the brutal subjugation of its indigenous population and the systematic repression of black African Americans, rooted in the long history of slavery (“The Reckoning”, op. cit.).

Generating And Cheering On Chaos

In effect, and ironically enough, Barnett enthusiastically embraces what had earlier come to be known as “dependency theory” in the Leftwing lexicon. According to this Leftwing critique, the wealthy imperialist core exploits the periphery in modes that generate “underdevelopment”, especially by the extraction of natural resources (“*dependency theory*” in “The New Fontana Dictionary Of Modern Thought”, ed., Alan Bullock & Stephen Trombley, Harper Collins, 3rd Ed., 1999, p213).

Barnett happily turns such criticism of neo-imperialism on its head, grossly misrepresenting history and current reality as suits his thesis. Dependency theory certainly continues to have a great deal of truth. Barnett & co. only affirm this truth! *For these ideologues., Pax Americana and militarisation of the neo-liberal market imposes new sets of international rules for the greater good!*

From his own viewpoint, Barnett contends in particular that the energy cockpit of the Middle East is insufficiently connected to the US-centred Core, and that this is really the reason behind the rise of al Qaeda and Muslim anti-Western antagonism. Hence, the need for pre-emptive violence not just to secure oil and gas reserves but to impose the kind of economic globalisation trumpeted by free market ideologues like Thomas Friedman and Francis Fukuyama. The Core has to close the Gap as it were, even it

means steamrolling any independent nationalist opposition. Of course, Leftwingers are the real ultimate enemy and totally beyond the pale!

Consequently, Barnett was an enthusiastic cheerleader of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and the purported programme of “nation-building” there. In actuality, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at one point even openly rejected any pretence of such a programme. And the same post-invasion failure at societal stabilisation has obviously happened in the case of Afghanistan.

But for Barnett: “Taking down Saddam [in the 2003 invasion of Iraq] forced the US to take responsibility for the security environment in the Gap, and that's why I [i.e., Barnett] supported the war” (“The Pentagon's New Map”, op. cit., p155). And what a horrible mess has ensued for the unfortunate inhabitants of this afflicted and broken land. So much then also for a “rules-based international order” policed by the US... (“Lawless World: America And The Making And Breaking Of Global Rules”, Philippe Sands, Allen Lane/Penguin, 2005).

Development of the rich countries has certainly long depended on the exploitation of poor countries, and the plunder of the planetary environment. So, naturally enough, Establishment media like the *New York Times* (NYT) and key institutions like the Council on Foreign Relations have been full of praise for the exposition of this particular doctrine of global power. Barnett has indeed been a very influential member of America's ruling class. *Some other commentators see Barnett instead as just another crazy imperialist warmonger! Check out his online videos!!*

Containment And Compounding Geopolitical Challenges

It is important however at this point in my article to flag the ways in which imperialist doctrine is being adapted and honed up to meet the new perceived priority threats since the early 2000s. This new set of threats, as identified and portrayed by the likes of Professor David Kilcullen, takes the form of both traditional and newer rivals and belligerents who have better modified their strategies and tactics to contest the West.



Execution of a Viet Cong Guerrilla 1968

Photograph by Eddie Adams/AP

The rise of China and Anglo-American/Western efforts to counter this rise have now come front stage. We can cite another leading American neo-imperialist ideologue in this regard. Robert Kaplan pontificated in 2005 that: "The Middle East is just a blip. The American military contest in the Pacific will define the 21st Century. And China will be a more formidable adversary than Russia ever was" ("How We Would Fight China", *Atlantic*, 1/6/05)²³.

Correspondingly in reaction, the Anglo-American axis and its allies have more or less abandoned certain key elements of Barnett's earlier prescription of conquest wars on frontier lands. The Biden Administration has withdrawn large-scale occupier forces from Afghanistan and similarly phased down to a considerable extent in Iraq ("US, Iraqi Officials To Announce US Military Shift To Advisory Role In Iraq By Year's End", *Politico*, 22/7/21)²⁴.

In a major strategic shift, the US has reoriented to face off directly against both Russia and China. At the same time, it has shifted to a more flexible approach in the Middle East and other conflict areas in the rest of what used to be called the "Third World", and elsewhere. Overall, this more flexible approach reflects the kind of advice proffered by the likes of Kilcullen & co. The principal injunction made by Kilcullen is that our enemies have adapted and that the West needs to adapt in response, or "our decline is only a matter of time" ("The Dragon And The Snakes", op. cit., p6). At times, Professor Kilcullen is hilarious in the kind of crap analysis he tries to spin.

For instance, he declares that just as non-State group ISIS drew on the "techniques, organisations, and equipment from nation-states, Russia proved increasingly adept at drawing from the playbook of non-State actors. Sponsorship of militias and guerrilla groups (both in the physical world and via cyber militias and botnets online), the promotion of coups and separatist movements, the application of agitation and propaganda to destabilise adversaries, the manipulation of migration, the assassination of political opponents, the weaponisation of energy supplies, and election interference [have] all showed Russia's willingness to adopt the techniques of non-State actors while pursuing nation-state objectives" (ibid., p5). *Is this guy for real!* All of these techniques have been pioneered in one way or another, or long adopted and adapted according to specific aim and circumstance, by the US and its agents whether State or non-State.

American Aggression In Aid Of Imperialist Accumulation

We can trace the roots of so much militarisation and ultimately self-defeating aggression back to the neo-liberal warmongering Reagan/Thatcher era. For a fuller understanding of the present and currently unfolding future, it is well worth looking in more depth at the underlying assumptions and rationales making for the syndrome of compounding geopolitical conflicts, along with some of the various strategies and tactics applied.

Let a militarist US publication set the context and background back in the Reaganite 1980s with a state-

ment of its self-justifying doctrine for a more aggressive foreign policy strategy. Coupled with a perception of a growing threat from international terrorism was "a perceived increase in the level of Soviet and Cuban support to guerrilla movements in the Third World countries of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South-east Asia" ("The Green Beret: US Special Forces From Vietnam To Delta Force", Adrian English, et al, Villard Elite Forces Military Series, 1986, p90).

This rationale, as spelt out in "The Green Beret", elaborates on these perceived rising threats. "The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and intelligence reports on the strengthening of Soviet Spetsnaz special forces have fuelled the growing demand for military forces capable of dealing with what have become as 'low-intensity' conflicts. As a 1983 report commissioned by the US Army stated: 'We have come to realise that we cannot slug it out with nuclear weapons and we must prepare for an era when low-intensity conflict is the norm'".

"Dealing with peacetime instability in the Third World, where the deployment of large, regular forces is impossible, has now become the central concern of the Special Forces. In this role, it is the job of the Green Berets to be ready at all times for rapid deployment at a moment's notice anywhere in the world, either as a shock force or as a military advisory mission" (ibid.). "*Ready Reaction*" became the dominant mantra!

Death Squad Depredations

The authors of "The Green Beret" extol the death squad "recon" (reconnaissance) teams who were pictured as preying on the Viet Cong insurgents during the Vietnam war. It gloats that: "The VC were learning that it was hard to hide from the recon teams, who would often appear from nowhere in the gloom of the South Vietnamese jungle to wreak havoc, and then fade back into the countryside, their mission accomplished. '*Sat Cong*' (kill communists) [my emphasis] was the motto of many recon teams" (ibid., p43).

Special forces' dirty work evokes the epitome of "killer ape" glee in Western culture, which in turn affords another insight into human pathology. As famed investigative reporter John Pilger described the reality on the ground: [American aid money]

"mostly bribed local elites - while American-led death squads conducted terror campaigns against those suspected of supporting the 'internal aggression' of the 'insurgents'" ("Hidden Agendas", Vintage, 1998, p62).

"The central coordinating body responsible for organising and evaluating the performance of field teams was the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group (MACV/SOG). More commonly known as the Special Operations Group, SOG was activated in 1964 and through MACV was directly accountable to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff ..." ("Green Beret", op. cit., pp43/4). According to the "The Green Beret" exposition: "The newly-created SOG also attracted some of the finest, most experienced senior officers available, such as Colonel John Singlaub ..." (ibid., p44). I take a close look at Singlaub's record in the rest of my article.

From time to time, as well as being the bulwark of many repressive regimes, the US has also been the backer of various insurgencies according to its imperialist imperatives, however artificially contrived such insurgencies can be. In the case of the latter strategy, notorious examples of such geopolitical insurgency range from the creation and support of the Contras in attacking Nicaragua to both covert and overt backing for Islamic jihadists against President Assad's Syrian regime. Correspondingly, the corporate mainstream media have exulted in peddling "fake news" propaganda.

Nazi Inspiration For Competitive Geopolitics

Rightwing extremists and notorious "death squad" practitioners have been the exemplar of special forces glory for the Pentagon, the CIA, & co. A graphic and illuminating case study is the pivotal role played by retired Army Major General (and CIA agent) John K Singlaub. His patriotic, tribalist fascism is admirably highlighted by "military capabilities expert" and "Army intelligence officer" Joel Nadel of the US Defense Department, and naval warfare proponent co-author JR Wright, in their "Special Men And Special Missions: Inside American Special Operations Forces 1945 to the Present" (Greenhill Books, 1994, pp94/5)

Nadel and Wright are especially rapt

with Singlaub's record regarding what they call the "anti-communist Contra movement in Nicaragua", against the socialist Sandinista revolution in the early 1980s (ibid., p94). For them, the evil Singlaub is an American hero, who rescued the Contra insurgents from "the verge of collapse", when he led the fascist/Nazi "World Anti-Communist League (WACL) ... to privately resupply and train Contra fighters" (ibid.). These Pentagon PR agents duly echo President Reagan's praise of the Contras as "freedom fighters", and their confrere Singlaub as another such exemplar!

Even caustic critics have also seen John Singlaub, albeit from a very different point of view, as a most capable functionary for the fascist cause. In the words of some very perceptive analysts: "The highly effective front man for the [Reagan] White House aid effort in Central America was retired General John Singlaub" ("The Iran-Contra Connection: Secret Teams And Covert Operations In The Reagan Era", Jonathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter, South End Press, 1987, p197). Singlaub himself, however, got caught up in the "Iran-Contra Affair", which exposed much of the covert murderous malevolence of the Reagan Administration (ibid.).

Back in the 1960s, the secret "special ops" SOG missions that the then Colonel Singlaub - "the covert warrior *par excellence*" - formerly organised in Indo-China were CIA-linked "provocative raids conducted with no consultation of Congress" (ibid.). But then this is the militarist/fascist defined version of democracy and the defence of freedom! Reportedly, Oliver North, the National Security Council (NSC) officer, "who ran amok carrying out covert [Reagan] Administration policies" at the core of the "Iran-Contra Affair", met Singlaub in Vietnam during SOG's conduct of COIN missions in Laos (ibid., p200).

Incidentally, the book just referenced has a lot on Singlaub and his fellow operatives, including former CIA Deputy Director Dr Ray Cline, who played a very prominent role here in Aotearoa/NZ during the 1980s, trying to subvert our newly declared nuclear-free zone. Like his very close mate Singlaub, Cline was a very enthusiastic death squad promoter and organiser.

"Pentagonese" Propaganda

At this point, it needs to be said that Nadel and Wright's book on American special forces (earlier cited above) is a pretty dry technical-type study pervaded with Pentagonese jargon and acronyms ("Special Men And Special Missions", op. cit.). It is certainly not one of those colourful, coffee-table style books crudely glamourising "derring-do killing sprees"! So, an insight into the underlying ideological principles of the American military-industrial power elite as afforded by the authors' comments on Singlaub's role with the Contras is most revealing.

For Nadel and Wright, Singlaub is obviously a very "special" man, "*par excellence!*" Their warped ideology is so perverse that they actually extol Singlaub for having "breathed new life into the democratic movement in Nicaragua" ("Special Men And Special Missions", op. cit., p94). You see, in their terms, the retired Army Major General most admirably "travelled the world, soliciting funding from private individuals and governments sympathetic to the Contra cause" (ibid.). "*Democracy*" so often means "*fascism*" in American foreign policy and practice!

Moreover, as they even so bizarrely go on to portray the situation, "Singlaub undertook this effort for *altruistic* [my emphasis] reasons: he believed that Americans should stand behind their commitments, that the despotism and excesses that were communism should be destroyed wherever they manifested themselves, and that the Sandinistas as Soviet surrogates intended to export revolution throughout the Americas" (ibid., pp94/5). It must be said of course that Nadel and Wright's self-serving hypocrisy simply reflects routine American geopolitics.

John Singlaub was in fact, as already noted, the leading operative under the Reagan Administration at the heart of a CIA/Pentagon-linked, public-private network of governments, fascist/Nazi groups, and assorted individuals ("The Iran-Contra Connection", op. cit., pp15-17). Indeed, loosely interrelated subsidiary "shadow networks" functioned under the umbrella of WACL & co. - in line with CIA/Pentagon direction - to carry out much of the "dirty work" (or "dirty politics") of Reaganite foreign policy. They included Oliver North's "Iran-Contra" operations.

Projecting Democracy?!

A tiny, secret White House group connected with the National Security Council (NSC) coordinated so-called "Project Democracy", using in particular "former Pentagon special operations veterans" as headed by Singlaub & co. These operatives were tasked with missions in Third World countries to crush Leftwing stirrings wherever found (ibid., pp9/10). As indicated, Singlaub's mate Dr Ray Cline tried in various ways to derail Aotearoa/NZ's newly proclaimed nuclear-free zone, most prominently by setting up a so-called "ANZUS think-tank", in conjunction with a whole raft of other techniques employed by the US.

Check out relevant documentation in publications of the time, especially: *Nuclear Free; NZ Monthly Review*; & historical series of *Peace Researcher (PR)*²⁵; for a fascinating analysis of CIA-concocted politico-economic manipulation in NZ and Australia in the 1970s & 80s, complete with a photo rogues' gallery, see: Murray Horton's 2021 article in *Covert Action Magazine*, 24/09/21²⁶.

Among the organisations coordinated by WACL & co. were "Cuban exile terrorist veterans of the secret war against Castro...; former CIA contract pilots who flew supply missions to Central America; former Pentagon special operations officers skilled in covert missions; and a private aid network", which even included "CAUSA, a political arm of Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church i.e., a branch of the South Korean "Moonies" ("The Iran-Contra Connection", op. cit., p16).

In the late 1980s, CAUSA - as fronted by the "Moonie" cult - even popped up rather bizarrely as an active pro-American, pro-ANZUS, and pro-nuclear group in Aotearoa/NZ. It was one of a number of US-sponsored groups in this era aimed at undermining our new democratically decided nuclear free zone (*Nuclear Free*, op. cit.). As a prime mover in WACL/CAUSA, Ray Cline had especially cosy connections with this movement. Significantly enough, and true to form, some National Party MPs of the day were closely associated with WACL/CAUSA, and very clearly in touch with the American programme to subvert our democracy.

Death Squad Shadow Governments – Guatemala,

El Salvador, & Co.

A scrutiny of Singlaub's "dirty work" record serves several purposes at this stage in my article. It not only points up the fascist/Nazi underpinnings of so much of American foreign policy intervention strategy in other countries but identifies issues and factors critical in the evolution of this policy. It helps to illuminate aspects of current geopolitics and the various crises and humanitarian disasters consequently engendered, and still unfolding.

Singlaub's fascist foreign policy duties proceeded in a series of Governmentally greased steps, aside from a hiatus following a political disagreement. I have outlined above how as a veteran of CIA and military "special operations" in Indo-China, Singlaub proved ever eager for further bloody, dirty work. After a forced retirement from official duties in protest at President Jimmy Carter's proclaimed more moderate human rights foreign policy during 1977-81, he set out on his own private anti-communist crusade. Singlaub first made an enthusiastic connection with the US-backed Guatemalan State terrorist regime in Central America, acting as a delegate for Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan.

By the early 1970s, it could be said that: "For many years, the characteristic feature of Guatemalan political life [had] been the large number of disappearances of Guatemalan citizens" ("Amnesty International Report On Torture", Duckworth, 1973, p202). The "terrorist groups of a Death Squad type, including off-duty policemen and military elements among their members", stemmed from "the massive anti-guerrilla operations of the 1960s" (ibid.; "The American Connection", Vol. Two, "State Terror And Popular Resistance In Guatemala", Michael McClintock, Zed Books, 1985).

"In December 1979, and again in 1980, the ASC [the privately organised, so-called 'American Security Council'] sent him "to meet Guatemalan President Lucas Garcia and other officials. According to one of Singlaub's 1979 contacts, the clear message was that [soon-to-be new President] Reagan recognises that a good deal of dirty work has to be done" ("The Iran-Contra Connection", op. cit., p54). As world chairman of WACL, Singlaub worked "in liaison with both William Casey

[chief] of the CIA and Col. Oliver North of the NSC staff", the key figure in the "Iran-Contra Affair" (ibid.).

All this in the name of altruistic freedom naturally – i.e., *freedom for US corporate and geopolitical interests, and their greedy comprador Central American mates!* "On his return to the US, according to [journalist Jenny] Pearce, Singlaub called for 'sympathetic understanding of the death squads'" (ibid.; "Under The Eagle: US Intervention In Central America And The Caribbean", South End Press, 1981, p178).

An Amnesty International investigation in February 1981 reported "that the links between the death squads and the authorities had been particularly blatant during the Presidency of Lucas Garcia, and that officials at the highest level had been involved in orchestrating a centralised programme of illegal actions" ("Political Killings By Governments", An Amnesty International Report", 1983, p32).

Fostering Entrepreneurial Freedom To Kill, Terrorise, And Exploit

The ASC and WACL with their closely integrated Pentagon and CIA connections served as crucial platforms in the implementation of American State terrorism. As Professor Edward Herman and co-author Gerry O'Sullivan have pointed out, "WACL [was] linked extensively to the US terrorism industry, including the experts of the Hoover Institution, CSIS [the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a CIA-linked Washington think tank], and other Rightwing institutions and groups".

"These linkages to real terrorists add poignancy to the media's heavy dependence on these authorities to identify 'terrorists'" ("The Terrorism Industry: The Experts And Institutions That Shape Our View Of Terror", Pantheon Books, 1989, p69). State terrorism and war have been fused together in Pentagon/CIA strategy and practice ("Terrorism And War", Howard Zinn, Allen & Unwin, 2002).

Herman and O'Sullivan emphasise how: "The Mass Media [act] As Transmission Belt Of The [US] Terrorism Industry" (ibid., in ch. 8 of the same title). With the utmost cynically calculated hypocrisy: "The Western model of terrorism focuses on

non-State actors, as many Western client states would have to be condemned if the traditional meaning was allowed to prevail", let alone the global ringmaster itself – *the US!* (ibid., p205). Terrorist insurgents backed by the West like the Contras are ritually called "freedom fighters", although this propaganda ploy has lost public plausibility over time in the context of the Middle East, etc.

US/Western COIN has routinely pitted ethnic groups against ethnic group, and even factions within an ethnic grouping. This indeed hails back to the glorified "conquest of the West" in North America during the war against the indigenous Indian tribes ("Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee: An Indian History Of The American West", Dee Brown, Pan Books, 1970/72; & "The American West", Dee Brown, Pocket Books, 1994/2004).

A graphic and most revealing ongoing example of this strategy is the US support for "the [so-called] Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in eastern Syria. The SDF is the Kurdish-dominated alliance of local militias that defeated ISIS in eastern Syria with US and British support" ("Biden Won't Abandon Us, Says Kurd Leader", *Press*, 29/9/21).

In actuality, this support for the SDF gives the Anglo-American axis a blatantly illegal [*though never acknowledged by the media!*] toehold in Syria, and even provides cover for the pillage of oil reserves there. Biden actually "sent General Frank McKenzie, head of US Central Command, on an unannounced visit to give a personal assurance" to the SDF leader (ibid.).

The SDF has been caught in regional crossfire, having been the victim of repeated Turkish attacks across the border. But, for its part, the SDF has also been guilty of human rights abuses ("UN Report Accuses SDF Of Rights Violations In Syria", *Anadolu Agency*, 7/3/18)²⁷.

Geopolitical Games

From a wider geopolitical perspective, the US presence in Syria not only enables its continuing attempts on the ground to undermine the Russian-backed Assad regime but furthers its "divide and rule" policy on Kurdish nationalistic aspirations. The strategy fits with the de facto balkanisation of Iraq, and the exploitation of oil in the Kurdish-held north

of that country. At the same time, American support goes on as ever for the ruthless suppression of the Leftwing-oriented Kurdish minority in south-east Turkey. To be sure, history records the repeated betrayal by the US of Kurdish nationalism as in Turkey, Iran, and whenever, and wherever, this has suited US geopolitics.

In their study of Western State terrorism, Herman and O'Sullivan record that "Singlaub was close to the [Reagan] White House. From April 1983 until October 1984, he chaired an official Pentagon panel established to design US policies toward developing countries" ("The Terrorism Industry", op. cit., p69). This was a panel packed with "extreme Rightwing military officers and academicians" (ibid.). Given that Singlaub's "altruism" knew no bounds, he was also appointed by the Reagan Administration in April 1984 as "the chief fund-raising contact" to the Contra army in Central America" (ibid.). And, so it went ...

Partisan politics can make objectivity difficult at times, even with the best of intentions and a real effort at open-minded fairness. So let us take cognisance of revered, if conservative, assessment in the form of *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Under the entry of "Contras", it is registered that: "The US CIA played a key role in training and funding the group, whose terrorist tactics were decried by the international human rights community. In 1984, the US Congress banned military aid to the Contras; the Ronald Reagan Administration's efforts to circumvent the ban led to the Iran-Contra Affair. The Contras were finally demobilised in 1990" (*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, 2003, p450).

CAUSA, Singlaub, And The Philippines

During May 1987 a human rights US-Philippine fact-finding mission visited the Philippines. Its concern was focused on the recent formation and proliferation of Rightwing vigilante groups and death squads ("Rightwing Vigilantes And US Involvement: Report Of A US-Philippine Fact-Finding Mission To The Philippines, May 20-30, 1987). Former US Attorney-General Ramsey Clark headed the six-person fact-finding team, which included ex-CIA agent Ralph McGehee (ibid., p2). This investigative mission found damning evidence of Reagan Administra-

tion involvement in murderous COIN.

Among the human rights violations they reported on were the atrocities being perpetrated by various vigilante-death squad groups like "Alsa Masa, the NAKASAKA, and the Tadtad", which had "become notorious for harassing, torturing and executing Philippine civilians" (ibid., p1). "Tadtad" in the national Tagalog language means "chopped", or more colloquially "*chop, chop!*", and referred to the big "bolo" machetes used by group members.

"Despite confirmed reports of these gross human rights violations, Government and military officials [appeared] favourably disposed to these vigilante groups. President [Corazon] Aquino has publicly endorsed NAKASAKA as a form of 'people's power' and an 'effective weapon against communism'" (ibid.). At the time, there were some 70 vigilante groups prowling the Philippines (ibid.).

In a preface to the Philippine edition of the mission's report, it was observed that the testimony of history clearly showed: "that the US government will not hesitate to interfere in the internal affairs of our country in the pursuit of its economic, political and military interests" (ibid., p.iv). The documented Reaganite role in setting up the vigilante-death squads fitted "within the COIN plan" and "Low-Intensity Conflict" (LIC) operation spectrum then being enforced (ibid.).

The US gave lavish training to the military, police, and intelligence institutions in the Philippines. "In addition, three Military Training Teams (MTTs) composed of Green Berets [were] permanently stationed in US bases on Philippine territory" (ibid., p75). Furthermore, most "certainly the concept [of vigilante-death squads] has striking parallels with the experience of El Salvador, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and other Third World countries. The sad thing is, as in the case of the others, the victims are innocent, non-combatant civilians" (ibid., p.iv).

On the island of Cebu, the inquiry mission found that the US Information Service (USIS) was even distributing CAUSA anti-communist propaganda (ibid., p20). It was disclosed that "retired Major General John K Singlaub" had been snooping a-

round “a Roman Catholic human rights organisation, pretending to be a German journalist” (ibid.). Many more revelations were recorded in the report. For instance, “John Whitehall, an Australian who [resided] in Long Beach, California and [served] as Vice-President of the World Christian Anti-Communist Crusade”, along with others of his ilk, were obviously collaborating with Singlaub in setting up the death squads. The fact-finding report demonstrates this (e.g., pp20/1).

Public-Private Enterprise And Out-Sourcing!

In connection with Singlaub's role, Ralph McGehee has described how US governmental liaison works with sponsored private groups. He noted that in the Philippines, Singlaub apparently served “in the capacity of a CIA contract agent, as well as chairing WACL”, urging politicians, businessmen, and military officers to help form a national vigilante movement (“Playing Dirty In The Philippines”, *Briarpatch*, Sept., 1987, Vol. 16, No. 7, pp22-24). Singlaub could draw on his special forces career in promoting LIC (ibid.). His CIA/WACL mate of long-standing, Ray Cline, was also involved in organising this “dirty work” programme. For sure, Cline was clearly very active during this period – *trying to subvert our new nuclear-free zone policy as well!*

A couple of related points should be made here. The first is that implementation of the US death squad/vigilante COIN strategy has resulted in the current murderous regime of Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte. The second is that ex-CIA agent Ralph McGehee visited Aotearoa/NZ in 1986 on a speaking tour as a guest of the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee, with huge benefits for our anti-nuclear/peace movement in Aotearoa.

We certainly owe McGehee a very deep debt of gratitude. He was exactly spot on in his predictions of what the American State Department, the CIA, the USIS, and US-sponsored private organisations like WACL/CAUSA/etc., and other American agencies of one sort or another would do in trying to subvert our democracy.

The general geopolitical aim of such strategy is to cultivate and promote “a national Rightwing network with covert American sponsorship”, whe-

ther in Central America, the Philippines, or elsewhere (ibid.). Naturally, the US subversive programme actioned in Aotearoa/NZ during the 1980s remains mostly unmentionable for our political Establishment and mainstream media – *for a host of reasons!* We still have heaps of work to do in the years to come in order to be genuinely nuclear-free but at least a foundation stone was laid in the 1980s on which we can take our stand. Likewise, we must stand warned against any American programme to attempt again to undermine our democracy. *Keep alert!*

Continually Contriving Coups And COIN

As the very junior member of the so-called “Five Eyes” intelligence/covert action “club”, NZ has demonstrated its own quality of ruthlessness. In particular, it did so under the PM “Kiwi” Keith Holyoake-led National Party government of the day by its complicity in the Indonesian genocide 1965-70, and the coup overthrowing President Sukarno in favour of General Suharto's dictatorship.

It is pertinent in the context of what has already been outlined in my article to note that the “Indonesian ‘Red Berets’, or Army Paracommandos (RPKAD)” led off the mass slaughter of Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) members in Central Java in mid-October 1965 ...” (“Political Killings”, op. cit., p35). These Red Beret death squads were explicitly modelled on the American Green Berets.

“In some areas, the Army was assisted by gangs of youths belonging to Ansor, an affiliate of the Nahdatul Ulama, a fundamentalist Muslim party” (ibid., p24; as well, refer to the details described in *Life International* earlier, op. cit.). Once more, too, note how the American foreign policy tradition of using Muslim fundamentalists later resulted one way or another in the blowback of al Qaeda, the Taliban, ISIS, and other similar militant movements.

The death squad syndrome was pervasive as well in Latin America, especially in Central America - *long a US stamping-ground!* A photo caption in the booklet “The Green Berets” states that: “The outbreak of full-scale guerrilla warfare from the end of 1978 in El Salvador led to the training of three counter-insurgency battalions by US forces, including

the Green Berets. The Atlacatl Battalion [as depicted] is considered the finest of these units, and entered service in 1981” (op. cit., p69).

This particular brigade soon gained a notorious reputation. As an Amnesty International Report a couple of years later duly observed: “Recently, the Atlacatl Brigade, a special new unit trained by US military advisers, has been blamed repeatedly for killings of unarmed peasants in rural areas” (“Political Killings”, op. cit., p17). The whole American death squad strategy was designed to act as camouflage for Government-mandated murder and torture. State terrorist regimes like those in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala could thus conveniently deny any responsibility for atrocities and the “disappeared”, and instead blame out of control vigilante-type groups.

COIN Chain Reaction

During the mid-1970s, US military and CIA operatives kept oversight “while Israeli advisors taught El Salvador's major landowners how to organise criminals into vigilante death squads. The death squads used intelligence from El Salvador's military and security forces to target and murder labour leaders and other opponents of the [notorious 14 family] oligarchy.” (“The CIA As Organised Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America And The World”, Douglas Valentine, Clarity Press, Inc., 2017, p207).

CIA lawyer John Rizzo helped develop “rules for CIA operatives who were backing anti-communist [sic] rebels in Latin America. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, he concluded that the Agency could legally pay informants who were members of death squads – provided they weren't the ones carrying out assassinations” (“CIA Lawyer Who Sanctioned The Killing And Torture Of Suspected Terrorists”, from a *Washington Post* obituary reproduced in the *Press*, 17/8/21).

Subsequently, State terrorist murder was further updated in the light of new technological applications. “As the CIA's top lawyer after 9/11, Rizzo later approved targeted killings through drone strikes, which also killed and wounded numerous civilians” (ibid.). In an epilogue in his self-serving biography, John Rizzo commented about his CIA legal work post-9/11 that it is easier to

openly murder people by drone strikes “than it is to capture and aggressively interrogate” [i.e., *torture!*] suspected or known terrorists (“Company Man: Thirty Years Of Controversy And Crisis In The CIA”, Scribe, 2014, p297).

Rizzo voiced apparent wonderment as to why that there was noisy outrage “about secret prisons and interrogation techniques, while all the while al Qaeda operatives were getting blown to bits, in plain sight, by US drone aircraft without generating a ripple of criticism anywhere in Congress, the media, or from any international human rights organisation? To these entities, killing didn’t appear to be that big a deal, up through the time I retired at the end of 2009” (ibid.).

Decapitation And Mutilation As State Terrorist Strategy

“The following testimony by a Salvadorian refugee was given to an Amnesty International mission which visited refugee camps in Honduras in August 1981”: ‘Thirty heavily armed men wearing Army combat vests, but masked with hoods lettered ‘death squad’ came to my village and seized and killed a number of *campesinos* [peasants]. They went then to the neighbouring village of Santa Helena, seized Romilia Hernandez, aged 21, raped and then decapitated her. Her relatives buried her head: the rest of her body was burned by her murderers. The head had been left in front of her relatives’ house. The members of the ‘death squad’ were evacuated that day by a Salvadorian [US-supplied] Army helicopter” (“Political Killings”, op cit., p11).

Long before the emergence of ISIS (*caused by US State terrorism!*) and the brazenly public exultation of decapitation as a weapon of psychological warfare, American COIN practitioners, trainers, and advisers had assiduously cultivated the dark arts of terrorist barbarity. Its roots go back to the activities of CIA operative Edward Lansdale and the war on the Huks in the Philippines, and similar historical episodes (Edward Lansdale, *Wikipedia*)²⁸.

Yet ultimately this barbarous history derives from the genocide against the indigenous Indian peoples of North America as the outcome of European colonisation and the continual conquest of new frontiers (e.g., “Bury My Heart At Wounded

Knee”, op. cit.). Historian Dee Brown observes that: “The Europeans may or may not have introduced scalping to the New World, but the Spanish, French, Dutch, and English colonists made the custom popular by offering bounties for scalps of their respective enemies” (ibid., p21).

This kind of Anglo-American/Western racist barbarism has carried on right up to the present day. In the Vietnam War “killing Vietnamese became almost mundane, almost like a movie in which the Americans were the cowboys and the Vietnamese the Indians” (“The First Casualty: From The Crimea To Vietnam: The War Correspondent As Hero, Propagandist, And Myth Maker”, Phillip Knightley, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975, p387). The Americans freely mutilated bodies and kept trophy body parts, e.g., ears strung together like beads (ibid.). And, of course, there was the regular macabre body count of dead enemy as a way of bringing up more bodies ...

White Supremacists On The Loose!

America’s most servile deputy sheriff and “gung ho” comrade is another country with a very racist colonialist history, namely Australia. It is a dedicated member of the white colonialist “Five Eyes” intelligence/covert action club, along with Britain, Canada, and NZ. Significantly enough, the Australian Special Air Service (SAS) followed in US footsteps with barbaric practices in Afghanistan.

For some years now, even as far back as 2013, there has been a

measure of ongoing controversy and international outrage (*at least among those who care!*) about atrocities committed by Australian SAS members. “A *Four Corners*’ documentary shown on *Al Jazeera* (17/2/21) revealed unhappy details of Australian SAS soldiers killing unarmed civilians in Afghanistan” (*Spooky Bits by Warren Thomson in Peace Researcher* 61, June 2021, p20)²⁹.

Evidence emerged about the practice of “bleeding”, which meant getting a novice SAS soldier to kill a captive or civilian as a “*first kill*” (“Killings Of Afghans ‘Happened All The Time’”, *Age*, 15/11/20)³⁰. Body part mutilation and trophy hunting was also to the fore (“What The F*** Are You Doing: Chaos Over Severed Hands”, *ABC News*, 10/7/17)³¹.

Sahar Ghumkhor, an Afghan academic in Australia, has posted a brilliantly insightful article on Western white supremacist culture and the role of the so-called “Lucky Country” in the land of her birth (“Australian War Crimes And Racist Fantasies In Afghanistan”, *Al Jazeera*, 3/12/20)³².

In terms of the Australian record, this country’s military deployment in Afghanistan has been in line with historical trajectory, given the white settlers’ genocidal treatment of the indigenous Aboriginal people (“Evidence Of 250 Massacres Of Indigenous Australians Mapped”, *Guardian*, 26/7/18)³³. There were probably in fact more than 500 massacres of Aborigines, with mass killings even occurring well into the middle of the 20th Century! (ibid.).

NZ Herald, 21/11/20



“And just like in colonial times when white men went after trophies, including human ones”, the Australian SAS carried the same mindset and behaviour pattern as part of the US/NATO invasion and occupation of Afghanistan (Australian war crimes, op. cit.). These soldiers exulted in “killing for sport” while imagining themselves in a type of frontier “saviour fantasy” (ibid.).

The neo-fascist American strategist Robert “Kaplan reports that many [US] soldiers view certain parts of the world where they are operating as 'Injun Country', which must be civilised by the same methods used to subdue the American frontier in the 1800s” (see Kaplan's book: “Imperial Grunts: On The Ground With The American Military: From Mongolia To The Philippines To Iraq And Beyond”, Vintage, 2005 – quote from Robert D Kaplan, *Wikipedia*)³⁴.

Failing Frontiers Fragmenting Into The Future . . .

In this article, I have reviewed a range of issues impacting on the West's imperial borders, with some examples of the different strategies employed to hold the line, as it were, while penetrating further in other areas according to the imperative of economic growth. There has been a series of crises, accompanied by shifting priorities, adaptations, and reactions.

In simple terms, the stark conundrum for humankind is the contradiction of being the dominant mammal on a planet with very definite and constricting ecosystem and Earth system boundaries. Hooked on technological innovation, industrialisation, and economic growth, we are destined to fight to the death over limited resources, or instead recognise the boundaries and adapt accordingly and appropriately. The enormously big and urgent question is whether we can develop the common identity as a species to choose the latter path.

Meanwhile, the tribalist struggle over imperial borders is sharpening up. From the Ukraine to Taiwan, and from Syria to the Korean peninsula, scenes of tension and conflict are mustering. So, we have to redouble our efforts and campaigning under the auspices of the UN and international bodies like Global Zero in charting an alternative vision and ways beyond the threat of war. But plenty of positive initiatives and pro-

jects are already providing hope and models of inspiration. We still have a window of opportunity to make real progress. The key is rallying far more people to the cause around the world!

Weblinks:

- 1 <https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=a0930b1f4e424987ba68c28880f088ea>
- 2 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/>
- 3 <https://www.unicef.org.nz/>
- 4 <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/07/29/our-mission-is-to-lead-the-white-races-of-the-world-in-a-final-crusadeagainst-semite-led-untermenschen-subhumans/>
- 5 <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr25.pdf>
- 6 <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar>
- 7 <https://www.oxfam.org.nz/afghanistan-emergency-support/>
- 8 <https://cws.org.nz>
- 9 <https://worldbeyondwar.org,2/9/21>
- 10 <https://worldbeyondwar.org,24/8/21>
- 11 <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/uss-ross-warship-military-exercises-russia-black-sea-crimea/,6/7/21>
- 12 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/02/ukraine-us-military-black-sea/>
- 13 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-58564837>
- 14 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/16/aukus-submarines-banned-as-pact-exposes-divide-between-new-zealand-and-western-allies>
- 15 <https://worldbeyondwar.org>
- 16 <https://beyondthebomb.org>
- 17 <https://www.wagingpeace.org>
- 18 <https://www.globalzero.org>
- 19 <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/45974>
- 20 <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-military-says-10-civilians-killed-kabul-drone-strike->

last-month-2021-09-17/

- 21 <https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/02-09-2021/the-taliban-won-the-war-can-we-learn-the-lesson/>
- 22 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_P._M._Barnett
- 23 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2005/06/how-we-would-fight-china/303959/>
- 24 <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/22/us-iraq-military-shift-500564>
- 25 <http://historicalpeaceresearcher.blogspot.com/2010/>
- 26 <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/09/24/how-the-cia-tried-to-overthrow-new-zealands-progressive-labor-government-by-stoking-white-racial-rage-against-the-indigenous-maori-population/>
- 27 <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/un-report-accuses-sdf-of-rights-violations-in-syria/1081813>
- 28 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Lansdale
- 29 <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR61.pdf>
- 30 <https://www.theage.com.au/national/killings-of-afghans-happened-all-the-time-20201115-p56erx.html>
- 31 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-11/afghan-files-shed-light-on-notorious-severed-hands-case/8496654?nw=0&r=HtmlFragment>
- 32 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/12/3/australian-war-crimes-and-racist-fantasies-in-afghanistan>
- 33 <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jul/27/evidence-of-250-massacres-of-indigenous-australians-mapped>
- 34 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_D._Kaplan ■

JIM STUART

By Leigh Cookson

Jim Stuart was a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) from 1992 until his death. Ed.

Jim Stuart died on 29th May 2021. Planning was underway for his 85th birthday at the end of June. Whisky and ice cream were on the menu. Jim was born William James Stuart in New York, USA, in 1936. He spent much of his childhood in Philadelphia and arrived in Aotearoa/New Zealand at the beginning of 1980, employed by St John's Trinity Theological College as the Wesley Lecturer on Systematic Theology. Don't panic, I don't know what that is either!

I met Jim in about 1991 when his wife Gillian Southey became the Christian World Service rep on a committee I co-convened, the former GATT* Watchdog, and she and I became fast friends. Jim and Gillian joined the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) in 1991 and ABC in 1992. *GATT = *the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Now the World Trade Organisation. Ed.*

Although sometimes frustrated at the baggage he was assigned by New Zealanders in a casual dismissive way for being American, he brought skills honed in the US civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam War protest experiences which he shared generously from the day he arrived here. He had worked as a Methodist minister at a church in Philadelphia. The German migrants had prospered and moved out but the manse was in the inner city. He got to know his neighbours and supported local efforts to stop developers, gentrification, rent hikes and poverty for the mainly black communities.

From US Navy Officer To NZ Activist

From Philadelphia he walked with Martin Luther King on the 1963 March on Washington and he burnt his officer's card in protest at the US war on Vietnam. Yes, before he was a minister, Jim was for a short time Chief Engineering Officer on a des-



troyer in the US Navy. He told one of my favourite Cold War stories. About the time of the stand-off history calls the Bay of Pigs his destroyer and a Russian ship met each other off the coast of Cuba. They challenged each other in a race. When the Russians burst their boiler and went dead in the water, they threw potatoes at the US ship - Jim and others threw them right back.

He wasn't the best Navy recruit maybe but he took what he learned there - the damage of what racism, classism, militarism, authoritarianism does to people - into his life and work. Jim left the Navy and embarked on a theological education. He studied in the US and then completed his PhD in systematic theology and social ethics in Zurich, Switzerland. This was the right fit. Jim was a scholar and a deep and critical thinker. He was a philosopher and theologian, and saw his role as minister as less about God and more about dealing with the world, being involved and engaged, and always community facing.

These experiences and education shaped the rest of Jim's life. Before Jim and his family moved from the US to live in Aotearoa he came on his own in 1979 to interview at St John's. He dived right into the big political and social justice issues, heading to Bastion Point almost from the airport. He was introduced to the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) activists, various peace groups, and the Waitangi Action Committee, relationships he maintained throughout his time in Tamaki Makaurau.

Jim, working alongside George Armstrong and Raymond Pelly, had a profound impact at St John's. His theology was always political. He looked to Jesus as a challenger of authority and the status quo. He instituted a class in cross-cultural theology and started it by refusing to teach allowing Māori students to fill the space with their kaupapa. He was skilled at creating space for people and then supporting them while they worked out how to fill it and learn from each other.

It can be said that this time was both rewarding and challenging for Jim. He provided a catalyst, alongside others, for some much-needed progressive change within the church and the wider society. Such spaces are not always easy to occupy but Jim was very much committed to confronting the powerful and challenging that which was unjust.

Involved in the 1981 Springbok Tour protests both Jim and Gillian found themselves on the field in Hamilton. Used to US civil rights protests he expressed surprise at the New Zealand way of running headlong into a situation and then figuring out what to do. He had come from a more disciplined tradition, you could say. Being at St John's meant that he and other members of the community had plenty of opportunities to protest. Jim supported George Armstrong in the Peace Squadron - the anti-nuclear flotilla that bravely protested visits by US warships and supported the NZ anti-nuclear movement. He was probably the only ex-US Navy man charging down a warship on a small yacht!

In 1984 Jim accepted the role of Chaplain at Lewis and Clark College in Portland USA and he and Gillian moved back to the US for a few years. Gillian described the five years in Portland as fast and furious. She says Jim was a popular figure on campus building strong relationships with students. He was deeply involved with every struggle, supporting a successful student-led campaign to divest from South Africa.

It was Reagan's America and there were weekly protests in support of Nicaragua, or to stop the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) supporting a Rightwing coup almost anywhere they could. He received death threats after writing articles in the local papers supporting the Nicaraguan Sandinistas - late night phone calls calling him a commie bastard were standard.

Returning to Aotearoa in 1989 he took on the role of Chaplain at the University of Canterbury. Not exactly a welcoming environment. The University didn't even provide a chair or a desk. Jim was used to building from scratch though. He just got on with it. He started by supporting the students in the campus peace group, the student executive and the Student Christian Movement. He offered a sage wisdom, a generous and hopeful view of the world, and always a caring and compassionate ear for those in trouble. He was the University Chaplain but he was still comfortable teaching in a paper on socialism and participating in protests against student fees or opposing the war on Iraq. He saw the connections bet-

ween ideas and ideals and could explain them in a way that caused that "aha" moment for many. He was one of few to support Rose Parker who was the first Māori woman to teach bi-cultural studies at the monocultural UC. Jim was a confidante, supporter, colleague and friend. They were both interested in Freire and developed a Stage 3 course together based around "Pedagogy Of The Oppressed" that analysed the power relations within the university (*Brazilian Paulo Freire, 1921-87, wrote that book. Ed.*).

He taught in Sociology, the Peace Studies programme with Kate Dewes and others. Something he was passionate about. Maybe his time in the US Navy gave him a unique insight there. In 1994 he left UC for St Andrew's on the Terrace in Wellington and then returned to Christchurch in 2001. He was the Minister at Wainoni Methodist Church before he retired in 2006. While at Wainoni he supported the setting up of a community services programme for older people in the neighbourhood. He brought the people together, created the space for them to talk and found the funding to get the project off the ground. Skills he had brought to so many organisations and projects.

In retirement he wrote a book, "The John Wesley Code: Finding A Faith That Matters" and become a regular columnist for the Methodist magazine, *Touchstone (John Wesley, 1703-91, was the founding father of Methodism. Ed.)*. Jim had such a strong sense of social justice and a deep concern and love for people. I

cannot count the number of protests and meetings we attended together.

He Always Knew Whose Side He Was On

The side where equity, justice and love prevailed for everyone no matter who they were. Even when his Parkinson's made walking difficult he would come to protests pushed in his wheelchair by Gillian. He was maybe the oldest person at the school climate strike protest on March 15th 2019 with a placard Gillian made for him. "I'm skipping school to climate strike".

It is rare to find people who help create spaces for change to happen and then let those most affected lead that change. Jim was that rare person. He was at heart a scholar and an educator. But, also, an activist and campaigner. It is not surprising that more than one of the speakers at his funeral quoted from an interview David Bell did with Jim a few years ago. He was challenging the church but his words speak to our organising, educating and campaigning work:

- Vision before Preservation
- Accountability before Uniformity
- Resourcing before Constraint.

Jim encouraged people to think deeply about their actions, to build community with others and stand up for what is right. To keep grace at the centre of our interactions with people. When people were hurt, or confused, or had done something that hurt or damaged others he encouraged your first question to be "what can I do to help" and to listen.

■

MALCOLM MOORE

(10/11/1930 - 12/8/2021)

By Peter Moore

Malcolm was a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) from 1993 until just a few years before his death. He was also a regular donor to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income. Murray Horton.

My father Malcolm Thomas Moore, a long-time supporter of peace and disarmament causes, died recently in Christchurch, just three months short of his 91st birthday. Malcolm's parents were Eugenie Fail ("Jean"), eldest daughter of George Fail, proprietor of Fails Café & Restaurant in central Christchurch, and Thomas John Moore ("Tom"), who arrived in Christchurch in May 1921 from County Cork in the south of Ireland, where life had



become decidedly uncomfortable for a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary who also happened to be a Protestant!

Tom and Jean married in 1926. But they were beset by sorrow for much of their marriage: their daughters Betty and Vonnie both died very young, and after suffering from tuberculosis for several years, Jean died in 1939. During his mother's illness, Malcolm spent two years in the Presbyterian Boys' Home in Papanui. Next door to the Boys' Home was the Presbyterian Family Home, where Malcolm's future wife Mary Taylor lived with several of her sisters. After two years at the Boys' Home, Malcolm returned in 1940 to the family home in Sydenham, where his father Tom was assisted by a series of house-keepers. Malcolm attended Beckenham Primary School, and then Christchurch Boys' High School.

In 1943, Tom remarried. He and his new bride Lucy had a daughter, Margie, with whom Malcolm would always be close; however, he had a very difficult relationship with his stepmother. He became rebellious, and this eventually led to his early departure from Christchurch Boys' High School. Although he was well suited for higher education, this was no longer an option, and he had to find a job.

Worked For Press & Star

He secured a printer's apprenticeship, and began a career in the printing trade at Whitcombe and Tombs (later to be merged into Whitcoulls). A workmate, Ross Brown*, became a life-long friend, and a fellow supporter of peace and disarmament causes. Two further shared interests were a fondness for drawing caricatures of self-important people, and cricket: they played together for the Sydenham Cricket Club.

**Ross Brown permanently left NZ in the late 1960s and has lived in Norway for many decades. He became a good friend of ABC founder Owen Wilkes when Owen spent the years 1976-82 working for peace research institutes in Norway and Sweden. Ross and Owen remained mates until the latter's death in 2005. PR 61 (June 2021, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR61.pdf>) contained my article "Owen Wilkes. Interest Never Fades".*

It said: "In late 2020 I was contacted, out of the blue, by an octogenarian Kiwi expat in Oslo, who had been a good friend of Owen's in Scandinavia in the 70s and 80s and then for most of the rest of Owen's

life... He told me that he had a small collection of Owen's letters and other material about him, and as he was decluttering and couldn't think of any Scandinavian home for them, would I like them? I was happy to do so". That "octogenarian Kiwi expat in Oslo" was Ross Brown and the package of fascinating material he sent me became the basis for that whole article. Ed.

In those days, the printing trades offered steady if not particularly well-paid employment. But always frugal and careful with money, Malcolm was able to save enough for a "Big OE" in 1953: a sea voyage through the Panama Canal to the United Kingdom and Ireland, where he stayed a couple of months, seeing much of both countries, and meeting various relatives, before returning home via the Suez Canal and Australia.

Back in Christchurch, Malcolm secured a job as a compositor at the Press, and proposed to Mary. They were married on 1st October 1955. A couple of years later, they bought a section and built a house in the Christchurch suburb of Moncks Bay. It was an ideal location for a family home, with a pleasant micro-climate, close to the sea, and with a large park nearby. Over the next ten years, they had five children. Mary had previously worked as a kindergarten teacher, but as she was now a full-time mum, Malcolm's printer's wages supported the whole family. To stretch the budget further, Malcolm cultivated an extensive vegetable garden, and Mary preserved and bottled the fruit that grew on the property, which had previously been part of an orchard.

Although his formal education ended prematurely, Malcolm retained a life-long love of learning. He read widely on many subjects, and compiled a large personal library, almost all non-fiction: mainly history, biography, geography and politics. During his time at the Press, he also attended evening classes to gain additional qualifications. This eventually enabled him to obtain better-paid employment, first as manager of a small printing business owned by Christchurch business mogul AM Satterthwaite, and later as Advertising Supervisor for Farmers department store in Cashel Street, where he remained for several years.

However, the heyday of the depart-

ment store was coming to an end. In the mid-1980s, Farmers merged with Haywrights, and Malcolm and his team were laid off. With his acceptance of a compositing job at the Christchurch Star, he had now almost come full circle. With the youngest of their children now at high school, Mary returned to kindergarten teaching. In Malcolm's mind, there appeared to be no question that Mary should use the family car to travel to work, and he probably considered purchasing a second car to be unjustified extravagance. So, although he was now in his late 50s, he chose to travel to and from work by making a 20km daily round trip on a 10-speed bicycle, only resorting to the bus when the weather was particularly bad.

Unfortunately, the Star had been suffering from declining circulation for several years. In the late 1980s, it became a weekly paper, and the majority of the staff, including Malcolm, were laid off. Malcolm decided, in effect, to retire early, and he and Mary embarked on a lengthy overseas trip, visiting Canada, USA and Britain, then taking a guided tour through several European countries. In later years, they would make several more trips to Britain, first for the wedding of their daughter Katherine, who was by then living in London, and then for the births of Katherine's children.

But for now, back in Christchurch, Malcolm kept himself busy. He served a term as a community board member; he was secretary of the local Residents' Association; he was a civilian volunteer at the Sumner Police Station; and he and Mary maintained an award-winning garden at home. Malcolm also attended classes at Canterbury University, eventually gaining a Certificate of Liberal Studies. He was proud of this achievement, which made him eligible to enroll for a regular degree course at the University. Unfortunately, at about the same time, the Government of the day brought in very substantial increases in university fees, and Malcolm decided not to pursue his dream of higher education any further.

Handwritten Letters To Editor; Peace Activist

In addition to his avid consumption of books, Malcolm was a lifelong subscriber to the Press, and usually started every day by reading each issue almost in its entirety. For ma-

ny years, he was also a frequent writer of letters to the editor. He wrote on a variety of topics, but with a few common themes: support for the Labour Party and for society's underdogs; opposition to the arms race; criticism of the foreign policy of the USA, and sympathy for their rivals, the former USSR and China. His letter-writing probably reached its height in the 1980s, when he was sending them at the rate of about one per week. Many of these letters advocated passionately for the anti-nuclear stand taken by the 1984-90 Labour government.

Malcolm joined several peace and disarmament groups, such as the former Sumner Peace Group and the former New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Committee* frequently assisting with delivery of leaflets, and he made several trips to various parts of the South Island, mostly at his own expense, to speak at public meetings on disarmament and anti-nuclear themes.

**My obituaries of the Sumner Peace Group and of Larry Ross, the leader and driving force of the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee, are in PR 23 (June 2001, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr23.pdf>) and PR 44 (November 2012, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr44.pdf>) respectively. Ed.*

He always felt that these efforts had been worthwhile, and that he had, as he stated with characteristic modesty, "contributed in a small way" to the anti-nuclear movement eventually becoming the mainstream view in New Zealand. His letter-writing slowed, then eventually ceased when it became increasingly rare to have his letters published: Malcolm never learned to use a computer, and his letters were always handwritten.

In the last decade or so of his life, Malcolm began to suffer from various health problems, including heart trouble and diabetes. In 2012 he had an operation to replace three

heart valves, and was fitted with a pacemaker. In 2016, he suffered a stroke that greatly reduced his mobility. In March 2017, he moved into Edith Cavell House, a retirement home in Sumner. He eventually became wheelchair-bound. However, his mind remained quite sharp, and he continued to enjoy reading the *Press* and the *Listener*, and participating in weekly quizzes.

In June 2020, Mary joined him in the rest home after also suffering a stroke. They were fortunate to be able to share a sunny room at the front of the building (jokingly referred to by Edith Cavell staff as the "honeymoon suite"), and Malcolm was clearly pleased to have Mary with him. In October 2020, Malcolm & Mary celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary at Edith Cavell House. In recent months, Malcolm had increasing breathing difficulties, and was clearly declining. But the end came relatively peacefully, at about 3a.m. on the 12th of August, 2021. ■

BOB WHITE

(1930-2021)

By Peter Wills

Peter is a veteran peace activist who has recently retired from the Department of Physics, University of Auckland. Ed.

Robert E White was a nuclear physicist who ended up spending a major part of his career opposing military applications of scientific knowledge taken from the field to which he had contributed most. It wasn't just that experimental nuclear physics was being squeezed at the University of Auckland, faced off against some cabal of the privileged wielding academic-financial swords.

In Bob's case it was personal, an overriding frustration with where he found himself and no easy way to where he had wanted to be. So, the peace movement of the 1980s was an opportunity to take on the mantle of a new obsession: the NCND policy of the United States Navy to "neither confirm nor deny" the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard their vessels, especially when they were visiting foreign ports.

Everyone knew the policy was a farce, nothing more than a blanket cover up, but for Bob it was an affront that had to be reduced to a state of universal disgrace with irrefutable facts; and, in the process, the gospel of ANZUS* would be exposed as a monumental lie (**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. Ed.*).



He set out to obtain legal proof, meeting the highest scientific standard of truth, that "not denying" was actually a demonstration of guilt. The documents proved it and any government, anywhere in the world, that had done less than the 1984-elected Lange government, which effectively said "we don't believe you, we'll make up our own mind", was complicit in US nuclear policy, especially its holding on to the right to carry out a nuclear first strike against an enemy, as it had already done in 1945. As a result of his tenacity, he eventually came to the end of his quest, but his final achievement and all the other things he had accomplished in the process were never properly recognised by academic officialdom.

SANA; Centre For Peace Studies

The New Zealand chapter of Scientists Against Nuclear Arms (SANA) was born in April 1983 at the annual meeting of the NZ Institute of Physics (NZIP). Bob's newly arrived nuclear physics colleague, Patricia Lewis, was the midwife who knew what to do and Bob and I lent our support, along with chemist Brian Davis. Not

everyone at the NZIP meeting appreciated political themes being discussed and referred to, but nationwide support for the initiative was so great that there were soon branches of SANA in four or five centres, everyone enthusiastic about participating in and applying their expertise within the context of the general anti-nuclear sentiment that was taking hold of the country.

SANA served as an enabling umbrella organisation for scientists who were involving themselves in diverse activities of the broader peace movement, so it is not surprising that Bob was as likely to be found out on a yacht protesting the visit of a US cruiser or submarine as writing a tract about nuclear power or organising a meeting of SANA members.

By the mid-1980s Bob was devoting most of his time to peace issues, so much so that he found it possible to normalise what he was doing within the University's academic programmes. Aply assisted by Pam Oliver and others, he was the driving force behind the foundation of the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS), which opened at the end of 1988, initially housed within the Department of Physics. He retired from his salaried position in 1990, motivated partly by a desire to free up a position for a younger person who might "freshen up" the department.

Bob continued on as Director of the Centre, serving in that role for 18 of its 20 years of operation. He wrote ten of the 15 Working Papers published by the Centre, the first entitled "The Neither Confirm Nor Deny Policy: Oppressive, Obstructive and Obsolete". Much of his research for these papers involved working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Wellington, examining files released under Official Information Act requests. He obtained access to a considerable number of significant documents relating to the history of the nuclear free legislation and its operation, not all of which are yet freely accessible.

Bob was invited to a number of international conferences where he spoke on aspects of his research and other peace issues, particularly as they applied to the Asia-Pacific region. These conferences included the first international conference to be held in Vladivostok (in 1988) after the easing by the Soviet Union of relations with the West.

Undermined By University

The Centre survived on occasional grants from the Public Advisory Committee for Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC) and the time "donated" by academic staff of like mind with Bob, as well as visiting fellows and students who managed to gain degree credit for work on some aspect of peace studies. Then, in the same way as he had corralled around four score willing colleagues from disciplines across the academic spectrum to support the founding of CPS, Bob initiated the offering of a university course on conflict resolution in the Centre for Continuing Education. The course ran for three years (1994-1996). He also pursued an initiative to set up a graduate diploma course, but there was no support forthcoming from the University's power structures.

It was around then that the Centre was forced to transfer its administrative allegiance to the Faculty of Arts, the university hierarchy being concerned that peace studies was certainly not a part of physics and may not even be a proper academic discipline at all. It seemed evident to the powers that be that the Centre did not embody the appropriate expertise, credentials or experience to continue in its then current form.

Subsequently, Bob and I attended a meeting at which we were told that Nicky Hager did not have the academic credentials to be allowed to join the Centre in an honorary capacity in order to continue his research into what we now call the Five Eyes intelligence network (then the UKUSA Agreement). Thwarted again, Bob grumpily mumbled something virtually inaudible (a characteristic one eventually warmed to) and found a way to keep on doing everything else. In the event, the Centre published a Working Paper by Nicky entitled "The Origins of Signals Intelligence in New Zealand" before his monumental book *Secret Power* came out in 1996.

One of the most important events that Bob organised was a seminar to evaluate the 1992 report of the Bolger government's Special Committee on Nuclear Propulsion. Our immediate boss, Head of Physics at Auckland, Alan Poletti, was the only member of the Committee who turned up and since the Committee no longer existed, he was unfettered in expressing his personal opinions. He gave a scathing account of the

peace movement's opposition to nuclear powered warships and characterised the movement's *modus operandi* as nothing short of scurrilous.

Champion peace researcher Owen Wilkes was there, having newly done a complete about turn on the issue, agreeing with Alan that nuclear propulsion was nothing to worry about and it was high time the peace movement grew up and stopped their scaremongering. However, Poletti and Wilkes had quite different ideas about what the peace movement should be doing instead.

Alan advocated that we embrace the post-Cold War *Pax Americana* and Owen declared that there were "overwhelming important reasons for keeping out of military alliances with the US" (Peace Researcher 31, October 2005, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr31.pdf>, is a special issue devoted to Owen Wilkes. In Murray Horton's obituary of Owen, see the subsection headed "Leaving The Peace Movement". Ed.).

We all had our say and Bob compiled the talks into a CPS Occasional Paper, a document that exists today as a valuable historical record of a significant episode in the unsuccessful struggle to prevent global developments such as the recent advent of AUKUS (*the 2021 pact between the US, UK and Australia, which will start with the US providing the means for Australia to build nuclear-powered submarines*. Ed.).

The Centre was finally closed in 2008, partly because the University of Otago had accepted a generous offer for the founding of what is now the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies after Auckland had shown no interest in the proposition. Bob just kept on going with his own work, moving to Christchurch in 2012 and becoming involved in research into the shipment through some of our ports of cargoes of uranium material from Australia to the United States and other destinations.

"Unfinished Symphony"

His health deteriorated in 2013 and he never finished the book he was writing on New Zealand's nuclear policy and its ramifications. He intended to provide wide access to the documents he saw as historically significant and not yet present in the

public domain. Others of us, with the help of his daughters, will now see to it that this important part of Bob's bequest is preserved and eventually made available as a sort of "unfinished symphony".

Bob was a fairly quiet, unassuming man who did not compete for attention or prominence in the male-dominated professional environment in which he served. He respectfully had no time for all that nonsense. However, when he stepped out into the arena of the peace

movement his modest working style enabled him to get on and accomplish what he set out to do and he greatly affected those of us who were alongside him. We will be reminded of him as we join our friends in Australia opposing the grotesque nuclear submarine deal that AUKUS has delivered. We will wish that Bob could still be here to help us.

(Thanks to Rosemary and Melanie White and Paul Barker for their assistance in writing this obituary).■

CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account

Financial Report For Year Ended 31 March 2021

James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer

Presented to Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa Annual General Meeting, 29/9/21

	2021	2020
Income		
Pledges	\$20,821.20	\$20,755.20
Donations from members	\$12,834.02	\$8,362.25
Interest (incl. CAFCA term deposit)	\$1,259.12	\$ 1,776.31
Other	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total Income	\$34,914.34	\$30,893.76
Expenditure		
Contractor	\$45,132.00	\$43,464.00
Internet/phone	\$131.71	\$797.55
Printer	\$39.00	\$36.55
Other	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$170.00</u>
	\$45,302.71	\$44,468.10
Cash surplus (Deficit)	-\$10,388.37	-\$13,574.34
Summary		
Opening Funds	\$3,677.79	\$17,252.13
Add surplus (deficit)	-\$10,388.37	-\$13,574.34
Add CAFCA donation	<u>\$15,000.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Closing total funds	\$8,289.42	\$3,677.79
Represented by		
Term deposit Kiwibank	\$0.00	\$0.00
00 Account Westpac	<u>\$8,289.42</u>	<u>\$3,677.79</u>
Total Organiser Account Funds	\$8,289.42	\$3,677.79

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

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



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Donations welcome.

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