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# Rocket Lab Deals NZ Into US Wars



*In this issue:*

Keep Space For Peace; Weapons' Spending; NZ's Belligerent Defence Policy;  
Spies & Spy Laws; Geopolitics; 'Muru' & 'Terrorism' Hysteria

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Cover Graphic by Ron Currie. Clockwise from bottom left: Ministers Stuart Nash, Phil Twyford, Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck, Minister Andrew Little, PM Jacinda Ardern.

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# ROCKET LAB

## Behind The Hype

By Warren Thomson

### Introduction

Rocket Lab (RL), which has launched 31 space flights from its Mahia Peninsula launch site on the North Island's east coast, has been supported by the NZ government and lauded by the business community. The story of a gallant little "NZ" company, pioneering space technology and bringing jobs to this country has spread widely across the media, but criticisms are starting to mount.

Recently, RL spokeswoman Morgan Bailey said the company believes Russia's war on Ukraine "may have made Kiwis more reconciled to its role in launching military-related surveillance satellites" (*Stuff*, 16/8/22, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/129576034/rocket-lab-thinks-war-on-ukraine-has-softened-hostility-to-its-military-ties>) suggesting the company is becoming somewhat defensive.

This article looks at the facts about RL which need to be much more widely known: what the launches are really for, how the company misleads people about its activities, who owns the company (confession – we don't really know). We consider things the Government doesn't want to think about when it rubber-stamps launch agreements, and RL's potential for very negative environmental impacts, as well as the potential for Mahia to become a nuclear target.

### The Latest Rocket Lab Launches

The evidence is clear: seven of ten launches (at the time of writing) from Mahia in 2021-22 have been for military or military/ intelligence purposes.

	Date	Client	Probable Use
2022			
	4-Aug	NRO	Military/intelligence
	13-Jul	NRO	Military/intelligence
	28-Jun	NASA	
	2-May	Rideshare	
	2-Apr	BlackSky	Military/intelligence
	20-Feb	Synspective	
2021			
	9-Dec	BlackSky	Military/intelligence
	18-Nov	BlackSky	Military/intelligence
	29-Jul	US Space Force	Military/intelligence
	15-May	BlackSky	Military/intelligence
	22-Mar	Rideshare	
	20-Jan	OHB Group	

NRO = National Reconnaissance Office, which operates US spy satellites

## Rocket Lab Disinformation

Rocket Lab has such a history of disinformation that anything announced by the company needs to be regarded with a great degree of scepticism. Right back in the beginning of his entrepreneurial journey Peter Beck (RL Chief Executive Officer) announced that he wasn't interested in working with the military, and the company would not go down that track. Now, of course, a major part of the RL business is with American (and Australian) military and intelligence organisations.

Even more damning is the fact that, when the company first approached Mahia residents about the proposed launch site, the whole emphasis was on non-military purposes for the rockets. Some locals are bitter about being lied to; especially when it was not initially known that large areas of their sea and coastal areas would be shut down for days when a launch was due.

Rocket Lab told the *Spinoff* that an early launch - Instant Eyes - was intended for use by "first responders requiring real-time situational awareness in scenarios such as forest fires and search and rescue operations". However, the *Spinoff* reports that marketing materials from the time refer to its applications for "tactical missions" and "covert use" and include images of US soldiers. Rocket Lab's own Website compared it to other intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tools for the battlefield, such as the Pointer, Raven or Predator – all drones used by the US military (*Spinoff*, 20/11/18).

In 2015 Beck told *Stuff* that "Rocket Lab and Lockheed Martin had worked together on collaborative research, the details of which were commercially sensitive. Its investment in Rocket Lab would go towards the Electron (rocket) development as well as other 'strategic joint programmes'" (*Stuff*, "Rocket Lab Teams With US Giant Lockheed", 2/3/15). In a statement to the

*Spinoff*, (*Spinoff Business*, 20/11/18) Rocket Lab said that it had no joint strategic projects with Lockheed Martin, although Lockheed Martin Space Systems made "a minority investment" in the company in 2015.

Lockheed Martin would not be interested in the Electron rocket programme as a weapons platform, Beck has said. "It's just a totally ineffective vehicle for that sort of thing. It's designed to put satellites into orbit, not deliver weapon systems" (*ibid.*). Given the fact that a number of the satellites are for military targeting or locating purposes, the distinction with "weapons systems" seems at best disingenuous, and at worst, an outright lie.

Rocket Lab has separately launched satellites directly for the US Air Force, Space Force and National Reconnaissance Office as well as one for the Mexican military (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/114387492/rocket-labs-secret-payload-owned-by-mexican-defence-agency>) over the past four years. They included one that US Defense documents indicated was designed to assist in accurately directing ground fire (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/124623320/rocket-lab->

When Gunsmoke-J was launched in 2021, Beck dismissed its function as a military targeting satellite. "It was about the size of a loaf of bread and it was to test various communications. You can spin whichever way you want to spin on any of this stuff" (*Newshub* 8/7/21). Compare his comment with that of TriSept CEO, Rob Spicer: "This leading-edge mission for the Army's Space and Missile Defense Command will orbit aboard a satellite smaller than a loaf of bread, but will have a huge impact on milestone developments in *warfighter capabilities* on the battlefield and beyond".

TriSept was the company which prepared and deployed the satellite on the RL rocket (see "US Army Selects TriSept To Integrate And Deploy Gunsmoke-J CubeSat"; *Satellitetoday* Website, 22/10/20, and "The Gunsmoke-J science and technology effort will provide new and advanced capabilities to tactical warfighters in a satellite about the size of a loaf of bread" (US Army Website, 8/7/21).

## Rocket Lab And Lockheed Martin

Rocket Lab's listing on the NASDAQ in 2021 valued the company at \$NZ7 billion, of which Beck has about a 12% share (*Newshub*,



passes-100satellite-milestone-after-successful-launch) against small moving targets, for example in battlefield situations (Tom Pullar-Strecker, *Stuff*, 16/8/22).

26/8/21). Khosla Ventures is currently the largest shareholder, with 18% of shares outstanding. With 15% and 12% of the shares outstanding respectively, Deer Management Company and Peter Beck

are the second and third largest shareholders, respectively. Beck is also Chairman of the Board (*Yahoo Finance*, 6/10/22). There is a significant number of investors with small holdings, but around 35% of the company is difficult to identify.

*Wikipedia* says that Khosla has been a key investor since 2013 and mentions a number of other groups that have funded the company. Interestingly for New Zealanders, our Crown agency Callaghan Innovation was reported to have \$NZ15 million invested in RL by May 2017. And *Wikipedia* also states that "Lockheed Martin (LM) became a strategic investor in 2015". Lockheed Martin is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, weapons manufacturers in the world, including of nuclear weapons.

This theme is repeated by a *NZ Herald* article which says: "Now, Rocket Lab – domiciled in the US, but keeping a new assembly plant and a 400-strong team in Auckland ... is a bona fide, globally recognised player in the world's space scene, with backing from major investors like Lockheed Martin" (Jamie Morton, "Meet NZ's Newest Professor", *NZ Herald*, 3/9/19).

The issue of how much investment LM has in RL is a very tricky one. A CNN business listing of RL shareholding lists LM holdings at less than 2% (*CNN Business*, 10/9/22). The size of Lockheed Martin's stake in the company is not public, in part because Rocket Lab USA is incorporated in Delaware, which requires minimal disclosure by companies (*Spinoff*, 20/11/18).

Rocket Lab's involvement with Lockheed Martin began more than ten years ago. By November 2010, Rocket Lab was supplying Lockheed Martin with thermal plastic products to protect metal on Patriot missiles in high temperatures (RL media release, in *Spinoff*, 20/11/18). It says that Lockheed Martin Space Systems made a minority investment in the company in 2015.

In March 2015 *Stuff* reported: "New Zealand's Rocket Lab has secured financial backing from US aerospace giant Lockheed Martin ... Its investment in Rocket Lab would go towards the Electron development as well as other 'strategic joint programmes'" ("Rocket Lab Teams

With US Giant Lockheed", *Stuff*, 2/3/15).

On July 27, 2022, Rocket Lab USA, Inc. announced that its solar cell assemblies will power three Lockheed Martin Next Gen OPIR GEO (NGG) satellites for the United States Space Force (USSF). Specifically, this RL announcement states: "The NGG programme will deliver resilient global missile warning capabilities to counter emerging missile and counter-space threats and is part of the latest evolution of the USSF's missile warning system ..." (RL Website, *PR* emphasis).

The Emerging Engineering Website (2/8/22) notes the satellites cost \$US4.9 billion and are to be launched in 2025, and will be operated by the US Space Force to "provide early warning of any incoming ballistic or tactical missile launch from anywhere in the world. It's part of the US's increased militarisation of space" following the publication of the US Space Force's statement of military doctrine in 2020.

The same page has the following comment: "We are excited to continue our long-term partnership with Lockheed Martin (*PR* emphasis) by powering the Next Gen OPIR GEO satellites", said Brad Clevenger, Rocket Lab's Vice President & General Manager, Space Systems Power Solutions. "These satellites are critical to the mission needs of the United States Space Force and our national security, and we are proud to be supporting their production on an aggressive schedule," (RL Website, 27/7/22). It may be hard to define LM's financial stake in RL. But of "the long-term partnership", and military purpose, there is no doubt.

Another dodgy ownership issue was raised by the *Spinoff* (20/11/18) revealing Rocket Lab's link with the Central Intelligence Agency's venture capital firm. This was publicised in 2016 by US investigative journalism site the *Intercept* but not widely reported by the New Zealand media. Although it operates independently, (CIA) In-Q-Tel invests on behalf of the CIA and the broader US intelligence community in companies whose products may have national security applications (*Spinoff*, *ibid.*). Also, the *Intercept* shows that Rocket Lab CEO Peter Beck spoke at a summit of In-Q-Tel portfolio companies in February 2016.

## Govt. Support For RL

It's against New Zealand law to help "any person to manufacture, acquire, possess, or have control over any nuclear explosive device", and any launch has to be in New Zealand's national interest - what that means exactly is left to the Minister for Economic Development. RL launches cannot be tied to nuclear devices.

And the question of "national interest" does not arise when the Government sees our national interest as supporting American militarism. NZ investigative journalist Ollie Neas (see *Spinoff* article) has commented that New Zealand officials: "now see Rocket Lab's military launches as a "tangible contribution to the broader Five Eyes intelligence network", in the words of a heavily redacted briefing.

NZ's entry to the space race has been dramatic. Until 2016 and 2018, respectively, New Zealand and Australia did not even have their own space agencies. "Arguably Rocket Lab was the motivating factor for the New Zealand government, which quickly put regulations in place in order to allow the firm to launch rockets from Mahia Peninsula. Wellington has since then provided various support mechanisms to the industry, and numerous space firms are emerging. New Zealand focuses on regulatory reform to help firms do business as they please..." (Keynote speaker: NZ Asia Institute/University of Auckland Business School Seminar: Space Industry Development in the Asia-Pacific, 1/9/22).

In an interview with the *Bit* website, the Green Party's Security and Intelligence spokesperson, Teanau Tuiono, said: "Unfortunately our outer space legislation has so many gaps and grey areas that foreign military powers are literally launching rockets through it". The Government says payloads with the "intended end use of harming, interfering with, or destroying other spacecraft, or space systems on Earth" are banned, as are those "with the intended end use of supporting or enabling specific defence, security or intelligence operations that are contrary to Government policy" or likely to cause "serious or irreversible harm to the environment" (*Bit*, 22/7/21).

Ministers use “contrary to Government policy” as an escape clause and blithely ignore an increasing number of scientific studies suggesting too many flights will cause significant environmental damage (see below). Government policy has been to closely ally this country with the United States, for example, signing the Washington-promoted Artemis Accords for exploration of space. BlackSky satellites (launched by RL in April 2022) are likely to be seen in Wellington as assisting in monitoring nuclear power plants in Ukraine rather than supporting the Pentagon’s expanding militarisation of space.

In reality, NZ Ministers okay RL launches with no proper oversight. “The NZ spy agencies, the GCSB and the SIS, assess ‘national security’ and ‘national interest’ in relation to RL operations. *But no definitions or guidelines have been set for this assessment*” (Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, review of GCSB and SIS assessments under the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act 2017, 20/4/21).

So, our spy agencies blandly assure the Government that the launches are not threats to “national security” and the Government buries any issues related to our nuclear free policy or other issues (*PR* has no information on whether this glaring deficiency – lack of properly defined assessment - has been amended recently).

### Potential Target?

With all three\* of its launch pads online, Rocket Lab anticipates being able to handle as many as 130 missions per year (*TechCrunch* Website, 19/6/20). The important point made, is that it could bring turnaround time down to just days, providing cheaper and efficient responsive launch capabilities that small satellite commercial customers, and, notably, national defence agencies, are increasingly seeking in order to build in network redundancy. \**Rocket Lab has two launch pads at Mahia Peninsula and one in the US. Ed.*

Chillingly, when Rocket Lab said it had won a contract to supply components for an upgrade to the US military’s missile defence system in August 2022, it announced: “The NGG programme will deliver *resilient* global missile warning capabilities to counter emerging missile and counter-space threats and is part of

*the latest evolution of the USSF’s missile warning system... a demonstration of responsive space...*” (*NZ Herald*, 4/8/22).

In other words, Mahia puts this country at the forefront of the system which is supposed to respond to attacks on various US military/intelligence systems by ensuring “resilience”- response capability. Given that Russia has more than 1,500 deployed strategic nuclear warheads, including around 800 on submarines - the likelihood that the Kremlin can find a couple to lob in this direction to prevent the Pentagon utilising its “resilient” systems in a war situation seems quite high.

### RL And Space Pollution

As mentioned above, an American techie Website suggested that by 2021, RL using all three of its launch pads, would be able to handle as many as 130 missions per year (*TechCrunch* Website, 19/6/20). While we are expected to admire the productivity of the company, attention needs to be given to an aspect of rocket launches that has received very little attention from the non-cognoscenti, (and notably ignored by NZ Space Agency and the Government), namely the damaging effects of rocket launches on the environment.

While different rockets have quite different impacts, this aspect of the topic needs much more attention. Amongst other scientists, the US government’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has begun to focus on this. Some typical examples of recent reputable research examples are given below.

Rockets produce “not-inconsiderable amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>”, and “can spew exhaust that depletes the ozone layer through chemical reactions” (*World Economic Forum/NASA*, 23/7/21). “Coming increase in rocket launches will damage ozone, alter climate, study (from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) finds”, (*Space.com*, 28/6/22).

An academic investigation from the University of Colorado, in Boulder (27/6/22), which also involved NOAA researchers, concluded: “Emissions from spaceflight activities play an increasing role in the background stratospheric aerosol population. Rockets used by the global launch industry emit black

carbon particles directly into the stratosphere where they accumulate, absorb solar radiation, and warm the surrounding air”.

“We model the climate response of the stratosphere to an annual, black carbon emission source from rocket launches. We show that the rocket black carbon increases stratospheric temperatures and changes the global circulation, both of which cause a reduction in the total ozone column, mainly in the northern high latitudes. Our results show that the stratosphere is sensitive to relatively modest black carbon injections”.

We must anticipate that increasing the number of Rocket Lab launches will mean “... increases (to) stratospheric temperatures and changes (in) global circulation” with impact on the ozone layer and potentially increase climate change. We certainly cannot rely on RL and its spin-doctor CEO to safeguard our planet. The *Guardian* (24/1/20) reported how astrophysicists had been angered by the company’s cavalier attitude when it launched a satellite in 2018 that Beck said “would be brightest object in the night sky for nine months” and “was designed to be seen around the globe”. Astronomers labelled it “space junk”.

### Close Down Mahia

While the *American* company, Rocket Lab, soars into the business headlines, and excites space techies, behind the jet stream, the wider implications of launches of military/intelligence satellites from Mahia need to be examined. RL operations need to be looked at in terms of exactly what is being sent up into space, and how Peter Beck has sought to deflect attention from his Pentagon assists.

How do the payloads fit with a proclaimed “fiercely independent foreign policy” and the spirit of nuclear free Aotearoa/NZ? Do Mahia launches make this country a potential target? Environmental factors, including local impacts, have to be given much more attention. There is a strong case to shut down the Mahia launch pads now.



# Keep Space For Peace

By Murray Horton

In early 2022 Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) learned that the NZ Aerospace Summit was going to be held in Christchurch in September (it had been postponed from 2021 because of covid). We resolved to do two things – hold a public meeting, and picket the Summit (which was held in Te Pae, Christchurch's gleaming new convention centre) – to highlight our opposition to Rocket Lab in particular, and NZ's role in the militarisation of space in general. Aerospace is being touted as an up-and-coming glamour industry, both nationally and in Canterbury. Both our activities were under the title of Keep Space For Peace.

Although Christchurch is a long way away from Rocket Lab (whose two launch pads are on the North Island's Mahia Peninsula, and its main NZ facility is in Auckland), ABC resolved to do what little we could, to make sure that the Summit did not pass by unnoticed and unopposed. The Summit was a single day affair, held on a Monday. So, ABC held our public meeting the day before, on the Sunday.

## Public Meeting

As was to be expected, turnout was low, in the 20s. But that didn't stop it being a very worthwhile exercise. ABC's Warren Thomson had gone to a lot of trouble preparing material to be displayed and distributed at the meeting. I spoke first, to provide the context for why people are alarmed by, and opposed to, Rocket Lab's role as a contractor for the US military and spy agencies. You can read my speech at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pdf/KeepSpaceForPeaceTalk.pdf> My speech included showing a very short YouTube clip explaining the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and you can view that at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqVtkAFBpgY>.



Wellington solidarity picket, 5/9/22. Photo supplied by Frances Mountier

We then screened a 2021 online video interview of veteran New Zealand peace activist Kevin Clements, talking about Rocket Lab in this country. The interviewer was Bruce Gagnon, the long-serving front person for the US-based Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. You can view that at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XZzYm04xjE>.

The meeting concluded with speeches by, and discussion with, our three guests from Rocket Lab Monitor – Sonya Smith, Puti Moa and Lis Battes – who had all come from the Mahia area to attend the Summit and join with ABC at our activities. They brought an invaluable Māori perspective to the proceedings, because they are from the community directly affected by Rocket Lab.

It was a major task for them to get to Christchurch, both logistically and financially. In Sonya's case, it was third time lucky – in 2021, ABC had paid for her to come and speak at a public meeting on Rocket Lab. Covid put paid to that (we held a Webinar instead, with speakers including Sonya). We then transferred her ticket to get her to Blenheim to speak at the public meeting that ABC had planned as part of our January 2022 Waihopai spy base protest. Covid put paid to that too.

## Picket

The Summit took place the day after our public meeting and a very small number of us (single figures) turned out to picket it. You can read and/or download our leaflet at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pdf/RocketLab2022FlyerCol.pdf>. What we lacked in numbers we made up for in enthusiasm, due in no small measure to John Minto and his sound system, which enabled both speech and music to bombard the delegates for several hours.

The Rocket Lab Monitor women, who went in to the Summit (attendance at which cost several hundred dollars per head) were impressed by our hardiness and perseverance – you can judge how cold it was by the fact that it went on to snow that night, which is pretty unusual in September. And fellow activists in Wellington mounted a solidarity picket outside the head office of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), which is responsible for the aerospace industry in NZ.

Our picket got no media coverage – nobody ran our press release. The *Press* did send a photographer, who took some photos and told me that a reporter would be in touch. That didn't happen and no photos were published. Having

said that, the mainstream media gave little or no coverage of the Summit itself, which is interesting, considering that it featured a couple of Cabinet Ministers (Nash and Verrall) as keynote speakers, plus a whole raft of aerospace industry leaders from NZ and overseas, including Rocket Lab's high-profile CEO, Peter Beck.

Was ABC disappointed by the small turnout at our public meeting and picket and lack of media coverage? No, we're realists – Christchurch is a long way from the aerospace action in this country, and Rocket Lab has received a free ride of gushing propaganda from politicians and media. The campaign against New Zealand's newest US base has to start somewhere, and ABC is happy to play our role in that.

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*This was written as an opinion piece for Stuff in the hope that it would be published before the NZ Aerospace Summit, which was held in Christchurch in September 2022. It wasn't published.*

Christchurch is hosting the New Zealand Aerospace Summit on September 5. This is a big deal, with involvement from central and local government, and aerospace industry leaders from both New Zealand and overseas. Aerospace is being sold to the NZ public as one of the up-and-coming glamour industries, both nationally and here in Canterbury. But that glamorous facade obscures an inconvenient truth - an awful lot of the aerospace industry is committed to the militarisation of space. And none more so than Rocket Lab, whose founder and Chief Executive Officer, Peter Beck, is one of the major featured speakers at the Summit.

Rocket Lab is a US company (which started out as an NZ one) using NZ as its base and launch site for satellites for the US military and spy agencies. In so doing, Rocket Lab directly drags NZ into US wars. Meaning that Rocket Lab's Mahia Peninsula launch site – on the North Island's east coast - is a US base (albeit a privately-owned one), as is its Auckland HQ. That makes both of them potential nuclear targets.

A major investor in Rocket Lab is Lockheed Martin of the US, the world's biggest corporate arms manufacturer, including of nuclear weapons. Rocket Lab makes no secret of its work as a contractor for the US military and spy agencies. It routinely launches, from New Zealand, US warfighting and spy satellites.

"In a 2008 magazine profile (Rocket Lab CEO) Peter Beck ruled out military work when discussing if there were payloads Rocket Lab wouldn't carry. 'Of course, ... we said right from the beginning if it's involved in the military, we don't want anything to do with it. The military can be quite a tempting cherry because a lot of money gets poured into it, but we're about science, we're not about killing people'" (*Press*, 28/7/20).

But that was then and this is now, with Rocket Lab having become an important player in the militarisation of space, dragging New Zealand into US wars, other people's wars, in the process. That company, by itself, makes a mockery of the Prime Minister's oft-repeated claim that NZ has a "fiercely independent foreign policy".

### **NZ Very Much Back In Bed With Uncle Sam**

So far in 2022, Ardern has been in quick succession to the White House (the first such NZ PM's visit in years) and to the NATO Leaders' Summit in Madrid (the first ever such visit by an NZ PM). "Ardern now has the practical distinction of being the most pro-US Prime Minister since Sir Robert Muldoon" (Luke Malpass, *Stuff*, 4/7/22. What an appropriate story for the Fourth of July). Funnily enough, she has not described this achievement as her Government's "nuclear free moment".

Everything, from NZ's involvement in the failed Afghanistan war to operating the Waihopai spy base on behalf of the US National Security Agency, is governed by NZ's decades-long membership of Five Eyes, the electronic spying agreement between the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ). But it is much more than that – Five Eyes is a de facto geopolitical bloc.

It has become the modern equivalent of ANZUS, from which nuclear free NZ was expelled in the 80s. In that same 2020 *Press* article from which I quoted Peter Beck, he said that his views on Rocket Lab doing military work had changed. Rocket Lab now openly acknowledges the central importance of Five Eyes to its business as a contractor to the US military and spy agencies.

### **Appeal To Christchurch Mayor**

I attended the (August 2022) annual Hiroshima Day commemoration at Christchurch's Peace Bell and listened to Mayor Lianne Dalziel's speech, wherein she spoke of her pride at Christchurch being a Peace City. And rightly so. The Mayor is scheduled to open the New Zealand Aerospace Summit on September 5.

The Anti-Bases Campaign has written to her asking her to please not lend Christchurch Peace City respectability to the militarisation of space in general, and to Rocket Lab in particular. We called upon her to either boycott the Summit or to use her speech to denounce the militarisation of space. At the time of writing, we've had no response. Let's keep space for peace and demilitarise Rocket Lab. Or, if it won't do so, make it relocate to the US, where it has a major operation. It is an American company, after all. And let's have a commitment from the Government to a genuinely independent foreign policy, not a sham one.

*ABC never did get any response from Mayor Lianne Dalziel, beyond an acknowledgement that our "concerns had been noted". She went ahead and gave the opening speech at the NZ Aerospace Summit on September 5. A month later, at the October 2022 local body elections, she retired as Mayor of Christchurch.*

# Obscene Amounts Spent On Weapons

By Warren Thomson

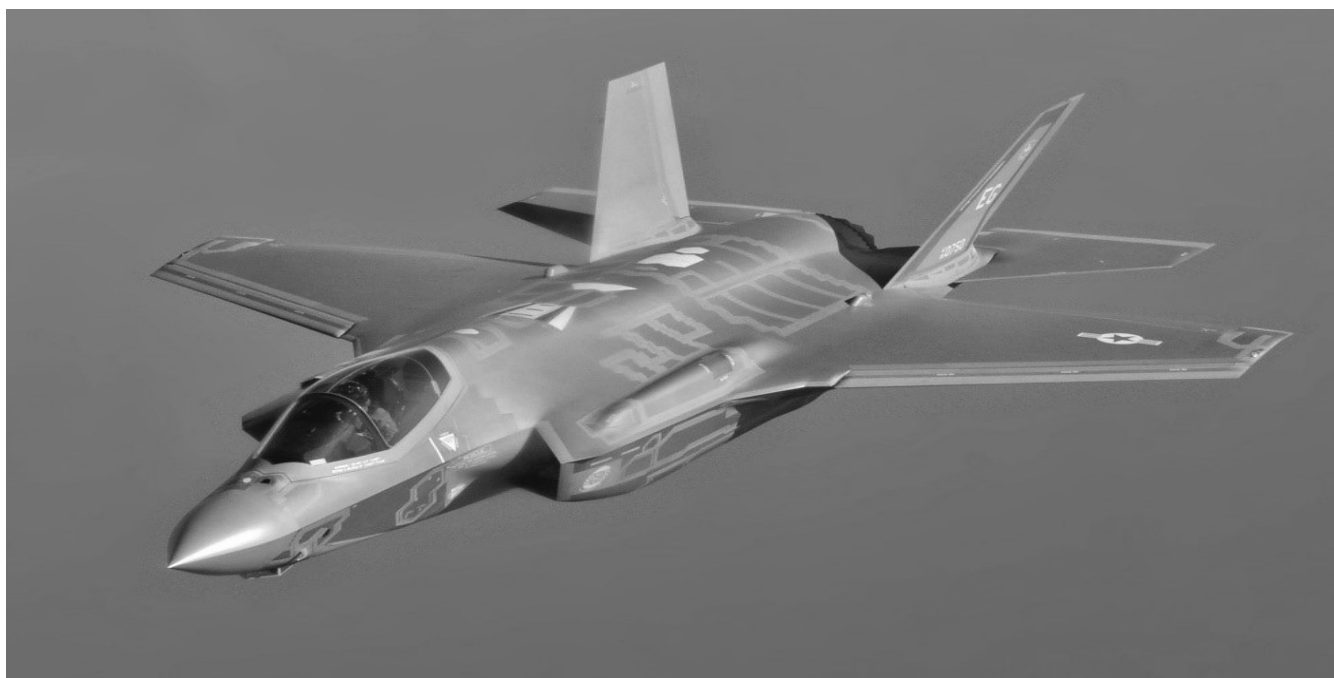
In 2022, the budgets of the top military expenditure countries amount to \$US1,262 billion. The pre-eminent villain, the United States, vastly outspends other top contenders; Washington is forking out \$US770 billion compared to China's \$US230 billion and Russia's \$US154 billion. We should also note that the US Defense budget for 2022 is twice what has recently been passed by Congress to counter climate change and support health and social measures. Aotea-

roa/NZ is spending \$US3.7 billion. This is more than Austria and a little less than Denmark. We register at number 52 in the grim tally of global big defence spenders. The embarrassing belligerent who is our Tasman neighbour comes in at number ten in this list of shame, spending \$US44.6 billion.

It is also interesting to note that while Washington raises the spectre of Chinese military threat, the Pentagon has five times the number of Chinese aircraft carriers (11 to 2), five times the number of nuclear submarines (72 to 14), and four times the number of military aircraft. The number of available nuclear warheads the Pentagon operates (5,550) is slightly outnumbered by Russia (6,255, and Moscow has 45 nuclear submarines – some old), but China has less than 400 warheads (*Worldpopulation review 2022*).

1	USA	770
2	China	230
3	Russia	144
4	UK	68
5	Germany	50.3
6	India	49.6
7	Japan	47.5
8	South Korea	46.3
9	Saudi Arabia	46
10	Australia	44.6

*Billions of US dollars.  
Source: Global Firepower Website*



Lockheed Martin's F-35

Among the most expensive weapons systems ever, the F-35 has numerous failings. It has spontaneously caught fire at least three times — hardly the outcome you'd expect for the top Pentagon contractor's flagship program" (Lindsay Koshgarian, Institute for Policy Studies, *OtherWords*. Reprint *Consortium News*, 1/7/22).



# NZ DEFENCE POLICY BECOMES MORE BELLIGERENT

By Warren Thomson

In July 2022 the Government announced a new review of its defence policy. The last defence assessment was just published in December 2021. That document highlighted challenges from China and climate change as priorities and put engagement in the Pacific as a primary role. It is likely that the Ukraine War and NZ's rush to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) are behind this review of a review.

Worryingly, from *Peace Researcher's* perspective it also possibly reflects the Cabinet's steady march back into the ANZUS fold (*ANZUS was 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.*).

The call is for: "a policy shift from a predominantly reactive, risk management-centred approach to one based on more deliberate and proactive strategy, with explicit and prioritised policy objectives". According to the *Breaking Defense* Website: "If this policy change is adopted in the new Defence Policy Review document, it would represent a considerable shift in New Zealand's outward approach to the world in defence and foreign policy terms" (28/7/022). Terence Johanson, a lecturer at the Centre for Defence and Security Studies at Massey University, told *Breaking Defense* that previous plans were about territorial integrity. His Rightwing view is that: "To date New Zealand has been overly reliant on soft-power engagement and using low-end platforms and capabilities to engage with neighbours in the Pacific region. This may have been suitable for times past,

but this is no longer the case" (*Breaking Defense*, *ibid*). On the other hand, Paul Buchanan, who *PR* has accused of a conservative bias in the past, has welcomed the proposed review but criticises the Government for "leaning too much towards the Australia and United States-centric defence posture and direction in the southwest Pacific.... We need to stick to our emphasis – not only on the Pacific as a community of neighbours and not adversaries, but also focus on non-traditional security concerns" (*Stuff*, 30/7/22).

## A Plan To Make A Plan

The review will be delivered in four parts: firstly, a defence policy and strategy statement was due in October 2022 giving policy interests and objectives; secondly, a set of future "force design principles" in April 2023 that will outline the activities and potential scenarios to expect; thirdly, Cabinet will decide how or whether to proceed; and finally, a White Paper to finalise policy settings and a Defence Capability Plan. So, we have a plan to make a plan.

*Breaking Defense's* analysis is disquieting. "The language of the review's terms of reference suggests that a more proactive defence stance comes with a more threat-based approach to defence planning.... This could mean either reversing some of the defence procurement decisions taken that saw plans to replace the Royal New Zealand Navy's (RNZN's) ageing frigates pushed beyond 2030, or the acceleration of projects expected later in the decade to improve maritime domain awareness or purchase an amphibious ship like a landing platform dock". Both would require more spending on defence, which might be a lot, added to present increased spending to meet recruitment plans (see below). The defence budget has increased since the Labour government was elected in 2017, rising from \$3.165 billion in 2017-18 to \$4.898 billion for 2022-23 and it is expected to exceed \$5 billion for FY2023-24 before reducing again in the years after. Plans for a new Southern Ocean patrol vessel to meet an urgent naval requirement were shelved in March 2022. Johanson said that it is questionable whether a country the size of New Zealand will be able to generate enough

hard power in terms of offensive or combat capabilities to actually impact any combat situation with China. With an army of 5,000, and a navy of 2,000 and an air force of 2,000, the NZ Defence Force (NZDF) is only going to be able to generate so much hard power and whether that would be a credible deterrent to China or anyone else is an open question, he said (*Breaking Defense*, 28/7/22). There are ongoing efforts to modernise what equipment New Zealand has. The Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) is replacing older P-3 Orion patrol aircraft with four P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, and its older C-130H transport planes with five C-130J tactical transport aircraft. The first of the P-8As is expected to be delivered by the end of 2022. Meanwhile the Army is taking delivery of 43 NZ5.5 Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles to replace its existing Pinzgauer vehicles, with the first also slated to arrive later in 2022.

The RNZN's second frigate, HMZNS Te Mana, has just had a three-year systems' upgrade project in Canada and the RNZN has also taken delivery of a new tanker HMZNS Aotearoa and a new diving and hydrographic survey ship HMZNS Manawanui over the past couple of years. The Army is developing new equipment for improved tactical and strategic networking. Lessons from the Ukraine War – the Pentagon testing ground – probably indicate a lot more will be spent (or borrowed from Washington if we toe the line) to keep up with tech changes in warfare.

## Push To Recruit More Personnel

The NZDF has been losing lots of personnel over the last two years and is promoting a campaign to attract 1,200 recruits a year. Bosses are blaming the low salaries and two years acting as guards at Covid isolation facilities for the attrition rate. The latest figures showed, as of August 2022, the annual attrition rate was 14.2% for the Navy, 17.4% for the Army, 11.7% for the Air Force, and 16.4% for civilian staff (*Stuff*, 7/10/22). The recruitment campaign "has shifted focus from promoting the military's marketable skills and trades, to tapping into a desire for an 'idealistic or altruistic' career" according to *Stuff*. Is there a whiff of patriotism in the air?

## AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

### What Is The Nuclear Risk?

Commenting on the upcoming NZ defence review (see my article, elsewhere in this issue), and in light of events in Ukraine, Alexander Gillespie, Professor of Law at Waikato University, briefly discussed what impact a nuclear war might have on this country. The answer is “enormous” although the scale and specific location of any nuclear firefight could vary hugely.

Gillespie notes, however, a defence review must be clear about “associated risks” (RNZ, 18/8/22). Of most interest for Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) members is the further comment that “... it's possible the Waihopai spy base could be a direct target”, not something we hear often from academics. If we add the possibility that Rocket Lab's launch site at Mahia is a potential target, then this country is putting itself right in the nuclear firing line.

### Review Of Intelligence And Security Act

Peace Researcher subscribers will be aware that the Government has been running a review of the 2017 Intelligence and Security Act – a review now required by law every five years. The review is led by former Supreme Court judge Sir Terence Arnold and Matanuku Mahuika. Public submissions closed in September 2022, and the report is expected in December 2022. A review was recommended by the Royal Commission into the Christchurch Mosque massacre, which unfortunately suggested that our spies might need more powers. ABC is totally opposed to this possible outcome, and some analysts agree.

“In a liberal democracy you don't want your intelligence agencies to have unchecked power. That's a dangerous road to go down,” said Auckland University Associate Professor John Ip, an expert in counter-terrorism law. “It's important for us to ensure that the law allows those agencies to do what they need to

do, but also to keep them under control, to ensure ... the rights and freedoms of people are observed”.

Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) Chairperson Abdur Razzaq said the agencies had “more than ample tools” for their work. More control of the agencies was needed, he said. The Government-appointed watchdog of the agencies, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS), could not sufficiently intervene in the agencies' activities.

“IGIS does not have any mandate to stop something which is going wrong. Say, for example, a warrant has been given, and the SIS (Security Intelligence Service) has not done as per the warrant, nobody can stop them” (Stuff, 20/8/22). However, every review over the past ten years has ended with an expansion of spy powers. ABC is not too optimistic about the outcome. ABC's submission to the review, written by Warren Thomson, is elsewhere in this issue. Ed.

### Little Meets Five Eyes Mates At Swanky Resort

In September 2022 Five Eyes spy chiefs jetted into Queenstown for a “clandestine meeting” (RNZ, 14/9/22). Minister of Spooks Andrew Little announced: “It is not in New Zealand's national security interests, or the security interests

(FBI) operatives had been on the ground for several days before the meeting and plain-clothed Diplomatic Protection Service (DPS) officers and undercover armed police were seen in various unmarked vehicles at the luxurious five-star Millbrook Resort near Arrowtown, outside Queenstown. Police officers from various districts across the South Island also provided security.

In early September 2022, Little visited Five Eyes capitals, putting out a media release claiming “the partnership gives us access to more intelligence, support, and better technology,” and that “the NZSIS and GCSB (Government Communications Security Bureau) make unique and highly valued contributions to the Five Eyes partnership across a range of intelligence and security areas, including counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, geostrategic competition, and in countering espionage, foreign interference and weapons of mass destruction proliferation”.

Without a trace of irony, he proclaimed “New Zealand is proudly independent” and that “the NZSIS and GCSB are subject to robust oversight” (RNZ, 14/9/22). PR has a very different view. Who attended the Queenstown meeting and what was on the agenda did not become public. What is clear, however, is that New Zealand is thoroughly bound into this super-secret system and claims by Ar-



of our partners, to provide any further details at the moment”. The NZ Herald (14/9/22) said that Federal Bureau of Investigation

and Little that this country has an independent foreign policy are just disinformation.

## SIS Says It Has Green Light For CCTV Operations

The SIS says it has received legal advice from the Crown Law Office that authorises its use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras. The spooks have access to Auckland Transport cameras around the city, as well as many other systems. They have taken steps to bolster SIS CCTV record keeping and updated the Memorandum of Understanding with the network owner to clarify why it needed access. The Security and Intelligence Inspector-General told the spy agency in 2021 to update its policy for accessing video footage shot by other agencies, although he said that the Service had been using footage in a “responsible” manner (RNZ, 27/9/22).

## Japan And NZ Formalise Data Sharing

In her April 2022 trip to Japan PM Ardern announced NZ would negotiate an intelligence-sharing agreement with Tokyo officials. This is probably a reaction to China's more aggressive policies in the Pacific region. The joint statement from the two prime ministers directly tied this arrangement to concerns about “protecting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific” (Stuff, 22/4/22). Ardern confirmed to media the arrangement could see information classified as highly as “top secret” exchanged.

## How Secure Is Data Held By Our Public Service?

PR has many times questioned whether private data held by our spooks is secure. Sometimes the spook's Inspector-General has also raised doubts. Recent privacy breaches at the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) are a good example of the difficulties in Government departments properly safeguarding confidential information.

An independent review, by lawyer Linda Clark, has heavily criticised ACC, saying its privacy culture was poor, its policies were outdated and its staff not well informed. The review was commissioned after RNZ revealed a group of call centre staff had “shared, and laughed at, client information” in a private Snapchat group, while another client discovered his old sensitive claim had been seen more than 350 times by 92 staff.

These concerns about data held by various parts of the public service reinforce other alarming revelations by RNZ (31/5/22) that: “More than 150 Ministry of Justice staff and contractors tasked with maintaining the integrity of New Zealand's justice system faced employment action after being caught snooping through court records in two years ... The incidents are among more than 1,500 recorded privacy breaches since 2015”.

Many staff were given warnings but almost none were dismissed. Given that the spook's IGIS has criticised data handling by the spies in the past, and that it is much harder for the Privacy Commissioner to intervene, how safe is activists' personal data? Can we expect the ethics of our secret agents to be any better? (See RNZ, 15/6/22).

## Problematic Police Intelligence Gathering To Be Legalised

An investigation by the Privacy Commission and the Independent Police Conduct Authority found police were routinely and illegally taking photos and film of children and adults (RNZ, 8/9/22). The police did not agree with some of the findings which criticised how they take, store and handle peoples' images and information. Questions were raised about systemic problems with the way police were storing and using private biometric information about people. Since this report became public however, Minister of Police Chris Hipkins has said the Government will introduce legislation to allow the police to continue their current policy. PR notes this is a page from the spy books: when an agency is doing something illegal, change the law so they can just get on with it.

## NZ Defence Force Double Standards

In July 2022 peace activist Valerie Morse sent an Official Information Act request to the NZ Defence Force asking about naval personnel involved in RIMPAC (the Rim of the Pacific Exercise), the war games held near Hawaii every two years. In particular, information was requested about NZ personnel on an American ship. In a response to Morse's request on July

14, Defence said there were eight personnel involved, but declined to provide their ranks (other than the captain) on the grounds of “avoiding prejudice to the security or defence of New Zealand” (Newsroom, 23/8/22).

But Newsroom reports (ibid.) that while the ranks of Navy personnel taking part in American war games were deemed too sensitive to give to a peace activist, their names and photos were published just weeks later in a publicity push. Valerie commented: “In my experience, the ‘national security’ excuse has frequently been deployed simply as a way to obstruct inquiries or hide what is potentially inconvenient information,” she said, referring to a previous request where trade material relating to weapons contracts was redacted in one version but visible in another. The New Zealand ship HMNZ Aotearoa took part in RIMPAC along with other Navy, Army and Air Force teams.

## AUSTRALIA

### Differences In ANZAC Defence Policies

Australia is carrying out a major defence review which Sian Troath, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Canterbury, says will have significant implications for this country. “There are several areas of contention in the trans-Tasman relationship. One is Australia's pursuit of nuclear-powered submarines, which clashes with NZ's nuclear free stance. Another lies in the two countries' diverging approaches to autonomous weapons systems (AWS), colloquially known as ‘killer robots’”.

Troath says that New Zealand is involved with international attempts to ban and regulate AWS. Australia, meanwhile, has been enthusiastically developing what it more commonly refers to as robotics and autonomous systems (RAS), claiming they give a military advantage, save lives and the economics are better (especially, to boost Canberra's growing defence industries).

### Insider Threat To Australia's Defence

The new Albanese government was briefed on threats to Australi-

an defence that cited risk of malicious employees accessing and inappropriately using systems (*Guardian*, 12/9/22). Malicious insiders, according to the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), could be “employees, former employees, contractors or business associates who have legitimate access to your systems and data, but use that access to destroy data, steal data, or sabotage your systems”.

Paul Haskell-Dowland, a Professor of Cybersecurity Practice at Edith Cowan University, said working remotely and alone could also make it easier for employees to make mistakes that render systems vulnerable. Working from home could also add to the threat if people’s home systems don’t have good enough security, or if they’re more reluctant to check the veracity of a link before clicking on it.

### ASIO Condones Torture

In another case where a Five Eyes partner has acquiesced in the use of torture, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO, the equivalent of the NZSIS) has been accused of using information extracted under torture from an Egyptian detainee. “Sayed Abdellatif has been held in (Australian) immigration detention since 2012 after being convicted of terrorism offences in Cairo in a discredited trial” (*Guardian*, 12/10/22). Abdellatif came to Australia seeking asylum in 2012, having been in exile for 26 years after being convicted in absentia in Egypt in 1999 for offences he never committed. The mass trial in Cairo was generally discredited outside Egypt.

“ASIO’s willingness to use foreign evidence obtained under torture to

detain an Egyptian refugee for more than a decade on security grounds meant Australia’s spy agency had ‘acquiesced in the use of torture’, the man’s lawyer told the Australian Federal Court” (*Guardian*, 12/10/22; interestingly, this story hardly appeared in Aussie media). But Sayed Abdellatif has been denied a visa on the basis of the tainted security assessments and held in immigration detention. The evidence used to convict Abdellatif of terrorism offences was obtained using torture, and that fact has been known by the Australian government since 2015.

## USA

### US Kills Al Qaeda Leader In Drone Strike

In July 2022 an American drone strike killed al Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahri after an operation that included tracking him down through his family, a senior Administration official confirmed to reporters (*Politico*, 1/8/22). The strike was carried out by a CIA-operated Air Force drone early one morning in Kabul as the al Qaeda leader stood on the balcony of his house.

Washington has claimed a major win for the United States in the “ongoing struggle against Islamist terrorism” although Zawahri has never achieved the influence of his predecessor, Osama bin Laden. Joe Biden said he gave the final approval to kill Zawahri, because he was still planning attacks against the US and its allies, and that “justice has been delivered”. *PR* does not agree; extra-judicial executions do not fit any sound definition of “justice”, no matter who the victim is.

### Planning Coups Official

*Huffington Post* (12/7/22) has reported that it is now official (and not just the conspiracies of the “loony Left”): Washington plans coups in other countries! John Bolton, notorious hawk and former National Security Adviser, admitted to planning coups d’état against foreign governments during a CNN appearance in July 2022, telling host Jake Tapper that “it takes a lot of work”.

Bolton disagreed with Tapper’s assertion that “one doesn’t have to be brilliant to attempt a coup”. He replied: “As somebody who has helped plan coups d’état – not here but, you know, other places – it takes a lot of work”. The only specific coup example Bolton provided was the Trump administration’s efforts to support Venezuelan opposition as it tried to get rid of President Nicolas Maduro. Not the best example because it – like many other Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations – “turned out not to be successful,” Bolton admitted.

### Spooks Back Trump

Where is Kevin Costner (star of “The Bodyguard” movie) when you need him? Amid Trump’s lies and obfuscations about what really happened at Congress on January 6, 2021, when a mob took over the building, we now find that Trump’s bodyguard (the Secret Service, in Washington speak) deleted important text messages related to the events of the day. Messages between January 5 and January 6, 2021, were erased even after a Government watchdog office requested the records of electronic communications between the agents as part of its probe into events surrounding the January 6 attack, (*Huffington Post*, 14/7/22). Talk about guarding Trump’s back!

Also, investigators with the Congressional January 6 Committee are looking into communications between a Secret Service agent and the Oath Keepers militia group, one of the most violent groups involved in the attack on the Capitol (*CNBC News*, 14/10/22). Several Oath Keepers are currently on trial in a Washington Federal Court on seditious conspiracy charges.

Another disturbing facet of the pro-Trump coup is that a number of



FBI agents backed the people assaulting Congress. A top FBI official was warned that a large number of Bureau employees were sympathetic to Capitol rioters who threatened the lives of law makers. NBC reported (15/10/22) that Paul Abbate, number two at the FBI, was warned about agents within the Bureau showing sympathy to 6 January participants.

### Mar-a-Lago A Spy Target

Since the FBI raided Trump's home in 2022 to seize classified documents he kept there, a number of sources have reported former intelligence officials saying the place was a target for spies. The *Washington Post* has reported that Trump was in possession of a document describing an unspecified foreign government's defences, including its nuclear capabilities, and documents marked SAP, for Special-Access Programmes, which are often about US intelligence operations and whose circulation is severely restricted.

Incredibly, there were papers stamped HCS, Humint Control Systems, involving human intelligence gathered from agents in enemy countries, whose lives would be in danger if their identities were compromised (*Washington Post*, 6/9/22). While nothing has been revealed about foreign government spies seriously targeting the mansion, some stories have emerged. A woman who was deported to China in 2021 for trespassing at Mar-a-Lago had been in possession of a device for detecting hidden microphones and cameras, as well as a number of mobile phones, SIM cards and USB drives (*Guardian*, 7/9/22).

A Russian-speaking immigrant from Ukraine was able to mingle with the former President's family and friends at Mar-a-Lago, posing

as Anna de Rothschild, presenting herself as being an heiress of the banking dynasty (*Yahoo!News*, 28/8/22). "I know that national security professionals inside Government, my former colleagues, (they) are shaking their heads at what damage might have been done," John Brennan, former CIA Director, (and waterboard advocate) stated (*Guardian*, 7/9/22).

### Naples Socialite A Russian spy

A woman who spent a decade posing as a Latin American jewellery designer and partied with NATO staff based in Naples was a deep-cover spy from Russia's military intelligence agency, the GRU, according to research by private group Bellingcat, in partnership with a number of media outlets. The woman, who went by the name of Maria Adela Kuhfeldt Rivera, settled in Naples, home of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command around 2013. She was able to befriend many NATO staff and other affiliates. One NATO employee told the investigators that he had a brief romantic relationship with "Rivera" (*Guardian*, 26/8/22). *PR* notes that it was a non-official team, rather than the authorised spooks, who uncovered the spy.

### "Troubling" Flaws In Surveillance Warrant



Recently, there has been a number of reports internationally where authorities have not been honest in applications for warrants for surveillance. A judge in a US Federal Court has expressed concerns about "troubling" claims of miscon-

duct and known falsehoods in a case over which she was presiding. Evidence included a report issued by the Justice Department's Inspector-General in 2019 which found that the first FBI request to begin investigation of a plaintiff contained "seven significant inaccuracies and omissions".

### Too Many Secrets

Biden's White House is pushing a behind-the-scenes effort to rein in the classification system because it says the Government keeps far too many secrets. But whether there will be any success is doubtful because the effort faces almost total opposition from the US spooks (*Politico*, 23/8/22; See list of US spy organisations at the bottom of this section).

The National Security Council is looking at how to overhaul "the elaborate and often arbitrary classification system that (both) Democrats and Republicans contend is undermining democracy and national security". Even some top military officials have called for loosening some restrictions so that more Government agencies, contractors and foreign governments can better coordinate military and diplomatic responses (*Politico*, *ibid.*).

Another reason for an overhaul of the classification system is transparency. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, and similar problems have arisen, with the IGIS questioning some aspects of the spy agencies' classifications. One change that *PR* would like to see is a review of policy that prevents public access to files that are long out-dated.

### Pentagon Involved In Ukraine Targeting

The deputy head of the Kyiv regime's military intelligence told the UK *Daily Telegraph* that the US government is involved in targeting decisions regarding US-supplied Lockheed Martin High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), according to *Covert Action Magazine* (8/8/22). US officials are not providing direct targeting information, General Skibitsky claimed, because it would poten-



tially undermine their case for not being direct participants in the war. But there was a level of consultation between intelligence officials of both countries prior to launching missiles that would allow Washington to stop any potential attacks if they were unhappy with the intended target. A pertinent question for New Zealanders is how many of the military and intelligence personnel sent to Europe and/or the Middle East recently are also involved in the targeting?

### Former CIA Officer Convicted

A jury in New York has convicted Joshua Schulte on nine counts under the Espionage Act for providing information to Wikileaks. The former spook could face up to 80 years in prison, which will not bring any comfort to Julian Assange supporters. John Kiriakou, himself a former agent, says prosecutors had literally no evidence that Schulte had taken the data from the CIA and transferred it to Wikileaks.

But they contended that he was a computer genius who was so brilliant that he was able to cover his tracks (*Covert Action*, 16/8/22). Kiriakou also says the prosecutors alleged that he leaked the information because he was a disgruntled former CIA employee who hated his boss, couldn't get along with his co-workers, and sought revenge against the Agency.

### NSA Analyst Who Sold US Secrets To Soviets Dies

A National Security Agency intelligence communications specialist who was arrested in 1985 for selling Government secrets to the Soviet Union has died. Ronald Pelton is described as arguably America's most damaging traitor. Pelton said he accepted money from America's Cold War enemy because he was desperate. His crimes included selling defence and communication secrets for upwards of \$US35,000. His most notable coup was informing Soviet intelligence of "Operation Ivy Bells", a plan put forward by the NSA and the US Navy to tap the Soviets' underwater communication cables (*Guardian*, 12/9/22).

### Pentagon Resumes F-35 Deliveries After Chinese Materials Discovered

Lockheed Martin's extravagantly costly and trouble-ridden F-35 air-

craft have been cleared for more deliveries after they were stopped because it was discovered that some (relatively small) bits were made from an alloy sourced in China (*Politico*, 7/10/22). The planes are destined for air forces all around the world but are incredibly costly and suffer from a range of problems.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) owns 41 of these jets. A former US Marine Corps captain, Dan Grazier, who served on a US defence watchdog committee says a former US Secretary of Defense called the F-35 "a piece of shit". At least seven major design flaws have been identified, and many minor problems, as well as spare parts shortages. "It's a struggle for the maintenance crews to keep the F-35 in a fully mission-capable state where it is ready to go," according to Grazier and others (*ABC Website* – Australian Broadcasting Corporation – 8/9/21).

### US Intelligence Community Composed Of These 18 Organisations

- Two independent agencies - the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA);
- Nine Department of Defense (DoD) elements - the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Security Agency (NSA), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and intelligence elements of the five DoD services; the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force.
- Seven elements of other departments and agencies - the Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence; the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and US Coast Guard Intelligence; the Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency's Office of National Security Intelligence; the Department of State's Bureau of Intelli-

gence and Research; and the Department of the Treasury's Office of Intelligence and Analysis

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Political Pressure Over SAS Killings

"Political pressure" was applied in 2016 to narrow the focus of a military police investigation into allegations of summary killings by Special Air Service (SAS) soldiers in Afghanistan. *PR* has previously reported on disturbing reports of illegal killings and coverups, (see, e.g., my "Spooky Bits" in *PR* 63, June 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR63.pdf>).

The senior military police officer in the Operation Northmoor team – which investigated the allegations – had said in May 2016 that they were being placed under "political pressure" to limit their inquiries to "tactical level command responsibility", according to High Court evidence (*Guardian*, 26/7/22). In July 2022 a BBC documentary had concluded that 54 Afghans were killed in suspicious circumstances by one SAS unit in Helmand province between 2010 and 2011 and asked whether it amounted to a war crime.

"SAS operatives in Afghanistan repeatedly killed detainees and unarmed men in suspicious circumstances". Edward Craven, a lawyer representing for the claimants, told the court the case "concerns alleged State wrongdoings of the most serious kind" and that there was "a pattern of extra judicial killings, allegations of a cover-up and allegations of a failure to properly investigate them" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

### More Evidence Of MI5/MI6 Dirty Work

New damning evidence has been uncovered that the UK government may have given MI5 and MI6 the green light to pass on information to Indian authorities that led to the abduction, brutal torture, and unlawful detention, of Jagtar Singh Johal (around 2017). This statement comes from the UK NGO Reprieve, which works to free or defend political prisoners. Reprieve is taking the UK govern-



ment to court over Johal's case. Johal is a British citizen.

The *Newsbreak* website reported (8/9/22) that Johal's lawyers had uncovered documents that are before the High Court suggesting MI5 and MI6 tipped off the Indian authorities about Johal. The Website also said the Labour Party had accused Boris Johnson of authorising the sharing of intelligence that led to the imprisonment and alleged torture. Earlier in 2022 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded Johal's arrest was motivated by his Sikh faith and that he should be released immediately (*Newsbreak*, *ibid.*).

Johal's family say his only "crime" was writing blogs exposing the Indian government's mistreatment of Sikhs, and the United Nations says this is the reason he's been targeted. The *Reprieve* posting also states that: "Since 2001, the UK government has had a hand in the torture and rendition of hundreds of people" (*Reprieve*, retrieved 24/8/22).

*PR* cannot verify this statement but notes that *Reprieve* is a well-respected organisation and it is clear that the British spooks have had a hand in a significant number of despicable incidents in a variety of countries. "The Conservative former minister David Davis called on the Government to review its policy towards torture and its complicity in the practice .... The point here is that this is not the first time this has happened" (*Guardian*, 7/9/22). *PR* has reported on some of these events in previous issues; we also note that our NZ spooks work closely with their UK sister organisations and the IGIS has concluded there has been at least indirect association with renditions and torture.

### Yet More Coverups

Mohammed al-Rashed, a spy working for Canadian intelligence, smuggled Shamima Begum, a 15-year-old British schoolgirl, and her two friends, into Syria in 2015, according to a new book and British media reports that have prompted demands for an official inquiry. "The Secret History Of The Five Eyes" by Richard Kerbaj, says that the United Kingdom later conspired with Canada to cover up the role of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in the case of

Begum, who married an ISIL (ISIS) fighter. Kerbaj is a former security correspondent of the *Sunday Times*.

The latest revelations reopened the debate over stripping Begum of her British citizenship as it shows that an asset of Western intelligence gave practical help for her journey to Syria. There was no mention that the British authorities knew how she was smuggled into Syria in 2021's Supreme Court judgement upholding the decision to bar her from returning to the UK (*Al-Jazeera*, 31/8/22).

### Same Old, Same Old

The spies need more money! When have they never not? And they usually get it! UK's Intelligence and Security Committee says MI5 should be given increased funding "to help tackle the rising threat of extreme-Right terrorism", which now accounts for approaching a fifth of the spy agency's investigations (*Guardian*, 13/7/22).

The domestic spies have taken on more responsibility for tackling extreme Rightwing terrorism since 2018, after a review of the murder of the Labour MP, Jo Cox, in 2016. A joint MI5 and police counter-terrorism operations centre is being activated for future operations. MI5 told the Committee that "a significant percentage" of extreme Rightwing terror suspects were under the age of 24, and that the Committee also said extreme Rightwing groups were targeting military personnel as potential recruits (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

### Women Lead Counter-Terrorism At GCHQ

Two women who have young kids and job-share are responsible for the entire counter-terrorism mission at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the UK's security and intelligence agency. It is far from easy. Playing a key role in keeping Britons safe gives them a "huge sense of pride", but a weighty burden of responsibility. "Our teams can feel the weight of personal guilt, grief, and failure for real-world events outside their control. It's critical for us to support them" (*Worldnews Website*, 15/5/22).

### GCHQ To Increase Number Of Female Coders

Britain's intelligence services want to boost the number of female coders in their ranks. At GCHQ, the UK's intelligence, security and cyber agency, the spies believe they need to improve diversity to better tackle the threats they face. Only a third of staff are women, and fewer are in technology roles. GCHQ is funding 14-week "nano-degrees" in data and software to help women who might have previously been put off coding to make a career change.

The Director of Strategy Policy and Engagement at the agency told the *Guardian* (29/8/22) that: "We know that if we get the right mix of minds, it will give us a competitive advantage and that's why we talk labour diversity as being mission critical". Recent GCHQ research showed critical individuals pioneering artificial intelligence developments "are shaped by their own personal experiences and backgrounds".



"ISIS Bride" Shamima Begum

“Acknowledging this is only the first step – we must go further and draw on a diverse mix of minds to develop, apply and govern our use of AI ... we will strive to minimise and where possible eliminate biases, whether around gender, race, class or religion ... draw on a diverse mix of minds to develop, apply and govern our use of AI”. The GCHQ spokesperson also referred to Chinese cultural influences in AI as requiring the spies to have a better appreciation of other perspectives (*Guardian*, 29/8/22).

### Threats From China

The heads of the UK’s MI5 and the US’s Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) have warned about Chinese economic espionage in a rare joint address in London. MI5 Director Ken McCallum said that the Chinese government’s “covert pressure across the globe” amounts to “the most game-changing challenge we face”. He said MI5, the United Kingdom’s domestic intelligence service, had sharply expanded its China-focused operations.

FBI Director Chris Wray warned Western firms that Beijing was determined to steal their technology for competitive gain. While Russia and Iran were also said to be “covert threats”, McCallum said Chinese intelligence takes a slow and patient approach to developing sources and gaining access to information, and few of those targeted recognised themselves as such (*Al Jazeera Website*, 7/7/22).

## REST OF THE WORLD

### Russian Spooks Get It Wrong - Should We Be Worried?

So certain were Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) operatives that they would soon control Kyiv that they spent the days before the war arranging safe houses or accommodation in informants’ apartments and other locations for the planned influx of personnel (*Stuff*, 20/8/22, based on papers viewed by the *Washington Post*).

FSB’s domain includes internal security domestically as well as espionage in the former Soviet states. “The FSB has spent decades spying on Ukraine, attempting to co-opt its institutions, paying off officials and working to impede any

perceived drift towards the West. And yet, the agency failed to incapacitate Ukraine’s government, foment any semblance of a pro-Russian groundswell or interrupt President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s hold on power” (*Stuff*, *Ibid.*). Its analysts either did not anticipate the strength of Ukraine’s response, or did understand but couldn’t or wouldn’t convey such negative assessments to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Senior American officials have declared that “Russia’s mistake was really fundamental and strategic”. Leaving aside the question of how much note we should take of Western intelligence personnel, who wage a relentless war of propaganda with Moscow, a much more serious question arises. If Russia’s spies are really making “fundamental and strategic” errors, and Putin for one reason or another is not getting accurate reports, where does that leave the world when it comes to making decisions about use of tactical nuclear weapons?

### Naughty Spooks In Greece

*Al-Jazeera* reported (5/8/22) that the head of Greece’s intelligence service has stepped down because of a scandal over the alleged usage of surveillance malware. “EYP chief Panagiotis Kontoleon had presented his resignation “following mistaken actions found during lawful wiretapping procedures”, the office of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement.

The announcement came a week after the leader of the opposition PASOK party, Nikos Androulakis, filed a complaint with the Supreme Court over “attempted” spying on his mobile phone with Predator malware. Androulakis, who is also a Member of the European Parliament (MEP), told reporters: “A few days ago I was informed by the European Parliament that there was an attempt to bug my mobile phone with Predator surveillance software” (*Al-Jazeera*, *ibid.*).

The European Parliament has set up a special service for MEPs to check their phones for illegal surveillance software following hacks using Pegasus spyware, which is similar to the Predator app. The software can infiltrate mobile phones to extract data or activate a

camera or microphone to spy on their owners. Both Pegasus and Predator are names that have appeared in *PR* previously in relation to various governments spying on activists/dissidents.

### Whistle-Blower Calls Out Twitter

Twitter’s former security chief has filed a sweeping whistle-blower complaint claiming the company deceived regulators about deficiencies in its security against cyberattacks and didn’t do enough to fight spam. Peiter Zatkó said in his complaint that he attempted to flag the security vulnerabilities to Twitter’s board and alleged non-compliance with regulations putting users’ privacy at risk and failing to protect their personal information.

However, Twitter claims that Zatkó was fired in January 2022 for “ineffective leadership and poor performance”. Zatkó is represented by Whistleblower Aid, the non-profit law firm that represented former Facebook employee Frances Haugen, who filed complaints with the US Securities and Exchange Commission and Congress in 2021, alleging Instagram knew its algorithms pushed unhealthy body images to young girls (*Politico*, 23/8/22).

# ABC SUBMISSION FOR REVIEW OF 2017 INTELLIGENCE & SECURITY ACT (ISA)

By Warren Thomson

## Introduction

This submission is presented by the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC), a group which has been interested in the activities of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) since the establishment of the Waihopai spy base in 1988.

## Parameters Of Inquiry

Because this review is the result of a specific ISA legal requirement, the scope of the inquiry is limited in a way that does not allow the public to discuss alternatives to the established system and hence severely restricts full debate on the intelligence and security agencies and on possible alternatives. Given the recommendation (No. 2) of the Royal Commission Report on the Christchurch Mosque massacre, which recommended the creation of a new spy agency, that is a disappointment. Restrictions on scope of inquiry discourages input from those with alternative viewpoints and suggests that only a limited set of outcomes are possible.

## History Of Problems

This review specifically investigates the Intelligence and Security Act of 2017. When considering whether the Act appropriately balances national, community and individual security with individual privacy and other rights, and whether the Act sufficiently enables and controls target discovery activity by the intelligence and security agencies, the troubling history of SIS and GCSB errors, illegal activities and failures need to be remembered (some examples: the *Rainbow Warrior* affair, the Ahmed Zaoui saga, 86 Kiwis illegally spied



SIS & GCSB heads Rebecca Kitteridge & Andrew Hampton

on by GCSB, MPs spied on, Kim Dotcom raid input, the fixation on Muslim “terrorists” and the Christchurch Mosque killings).

On “balance” the evidence suggests, in terms of the ISA 2017, we should restrict, or even remove, powers given to the two agencies rather than expand their power. There is no evidence that, despite huge increases in annual budgets and large increases in personnel, this country is any more secure. There is no evidence that passing several “national security” and “counter-terrorist” laws in the past ten years, consistently expanding the agencies’ powers, has led to better security outcomes, while privacy and democratic freedoms have been reduced.

Certainly, the various pieces of legislation have not resulted in better oversight or more public control of the spy agencies. Generally, governments, in terms of right to privacy, disclosure, data collection and handling, and covert activities, have erred on the side of granting the agencies more powers each time there is another failure or another review. This must not happen following this current ISA Review.

## Balance Of Security And Rights

The ISA (2017) does not sufficiently balance SIS/GCSB powers and privacy/democratic/general human rights. In recent years, citizens are no closer to being able to access their SIS/GCSB files or learn about surveillance of themselves or their families (even historically). On the other hand, Gov-

ernments have: (1) empowered the GCSB to spy on New Zealanders, (2) introduced secret court trials - with some limited protections - where “national security” is involved; (2) extended warrantless searches; (3) introduced prosecutions for preparing/planning actions (under the Counter-Terrorism Law); and (4) hugely expanded the amount of data the agencies collect. *ABC’s submission on the 2021 Counter-Terrorism Act is at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/SubmissionCTBill2021.pdf> Ed.*

## Enabling And Controlling Target Discovery Activity

The ISA needs to be amended to rebalance democratic/human rights issues against the ever-expanding powers given to the SIS and GCSB. In particular there needs to be more regulation of warrants (see below), more responsibilities given to the Police – in conjunction with community organisations – and more public oversight. It is arguable that in many cases of domestic target discovery the “targets” should be informed that they are under surveillance. This is more likely to prevent serious incidents than clandestine surveillance – especially if relevant community organisations are brought in to assist.

The ISA is virtually silent on SIS/GCSB/special forces operations overseas, most unknown to the NZ population. For example, covert activities related to the “War on Terror” have involved NZ personnel directly or indirectly in atrocities. Five Eyes associates wrongly tortured and imprisoned hundreds of Muslim men in Guantanamo Bay – most were later cleared of

terrorist links. NZ's part in this (associated moral culpability, at the very least) and similar actions or 'renditions' has not been revealed.

An Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) investigation, which took four years because of insufficient cooperation, revealed hundreds of cases where NZ spy agencies used information obtained through torture, and the SIS even sent questions to be given to the victims. Note that the investigation was extremely circumscribed – to 2002-09 only, and only in Afghanistan. We know from Edward Snowden that NZ spies earned a citation from the US National Security Agency (NSA) for tracking Bangladeshi “terrorists” who were handed over to brutal treatment by their local security organisation. We do not know if other events remain hidden from public disclosure.

Recent IGIS reports have described current problems with handling such incidents, and NZ data ethics experts have also expressed concerns (see, e.g., *Newsroom*, 1/4/22). In 2022 Andrew Little, the Minister in Charge of the SIS and GCSB, told the media there had been two cases where approval had been given to use information extracted by torture. Usage was justified because the information came from a third party not involved in the torture rather than the perpetrators directly. Clearly, an area where NZ law does not result in acceptable standards, and legislation is not working.

### Improving Authorisation

Problems with warrants have been a constant theme in annual Inspector-General Reports for many years. Warrants for covert operations need much greater scrutiny both before and after they are issued. Issuing Ministers and/or Commissioners may have to make hurried decisions on the basis of information supplied by the “prosecutors”, and the IGIS does not have the resources to properly post-check warrants (or if activities that require warrants are concealed). (Note that in Australia recently more than 15 police officers were convicted of lying under oath or concocting information to get warrants; *Age*, 1/2/22). Oversight must ensure that NZ “secret agents” are held to higher standards.

Matters of urgent enforcement should be handled by the Police and not warrantless agency searches. The IGIS needs more resources to follow up matters related to warrants. It should be noted for the purposes of this ISA review that the IGIS and the agencies disagree about when warrants are needed – e.g., for GCSB access to data held by overseas partners, amongst other things. “Initial inquiries” are hugely problematic.

### Appropriate Protections And Oversight

Another huge problem is data collection by or for Five Eyes partners. The warrant problem is mentioned above. But whistle-blowers such as Edward Snowden have revealed that sister agencies routinely collect/store/access each other's data. This is almost impossible to trace (in recent years, the spy agencies of the US, UK, Australia and Canada have all built new repositories for data storage with capacities that are almost unimaginable).

Five Eyes mass collection of data leads to other problems (which specifically relate to the ISA). Huge amounts of data are “unintentionally” collected and no spy agency will discard data that might – one day – offer clues to a security problem. This is another argument for the ISA giving more responsibilities to the NZ Police who have much more transparency and much more likelihood of making sensible decisions about people in their community (see Recommendations at the end of this submission).

One solution is for all data to be destroyed after five years if no further matters have emerged. However, unless the IGIS and his staff are given much more resources, this can never be checked, given the multiplicity of means to conceal information in massive computer storage systems. Note that the IGIS has stated that the GCSB policy on data holding is “not fit for purpose” (IGIS Annual Report 2021) and the IGIS and the agencies themselves have alluded to recent multiple expansions of data collection. “The amount and type of information relevant to our work has increased exponentially in recent years” according to an SIS spokesperson (*Newsroom*, 1/4/22).

Other issues need consideration in terms of data handling: (1) The history of data security/access to privileged information for public servants, both “public” and covert, is not encouraging; (2) The SIS and GCSB are periodically reported to suffer from low morale, high staff turnover, and lack of experienced staff to evaluate data – not a recipe for secure retention of privileged information; (3) In Australia the situation has got so bad that the Criminal Intelligence Commission has stopped reporting breaches of data handling conduct and agencies like the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation have downgraded their reporting of breaches (*Age*, 30/12/21).

### Agency Cooperation And Sharing With Other Organisations

#### 1. Other NZ organisations

Recently a historic case was revealed where a covert officer discovered severe family abuse but his agency would not report it to the Police and current authorities backed this decision. This is a clear case where cooperation is needed and where agency directors have too much power to make decisions. The fact is that police have far more experience in handling community and family matters than spies do.

The Police also have much more experience in handling individuals and groups who are anti-social and/or habituated to violence and are trained to respond to shooting events like the Christchurch Mosque tragedy. There needs to be much more responsibility in the ISA given to the Police and a lot fewer powers given to secret agencies.

#### 2. Overseas organisations

Ministers and the SIS/GCSB themselves frequently allude to the advantages this country gets from its membership of Five Eyes. But to the public there are many glaring negatives (also see the above sub-section Enabling And Controlling Target Discovery Activity):

- (a) False information resulted in the persecution of Ahmed Zaoui and possibly others
- (b) NZ agencies have repeatedly used information extracted overseas by torture

- (c) GCSB Director Andrew Hampton has acknowledged that Five Eyes priorities were a reason NZ spies missed the Christchurch Mosque killer's threat.
- (d) NZ has been involved in locating "targets" overseas who have been attacked by special forces or executed in extra-judicial drone strikes – including at least one NZ citizen in Yemen. Significant "collateral" damage frequently means the death of adjacent civilians.

The "ethical" issues are not addressed sufficiently, or are too vaguely defined, in the ISA and other legislation. The IGIS does not have sufficient resources to investigate, and with no real powers, it is easy for the agencies to stall or even withhold information (we note the time and resources needed for the official Government "Hit And Run" inquiry into Defence Force operations in Afghanistan – including the concealing of relevant information by senior NZDF officials). This is the kind of wider policy inquiry that would be exactly suited to investigation by a Parliamentary Select Committee with effective powers!

### Recommendations For Amendments To The ISA

Problems with the ISA and related security agency matters have been previously described. ABC would like to make three recommendations which would go some way to reducing problems with the SIS and GCSB and the current regulations/legislation:

1. The Intelligence and Security Committee, with appropriate clearances, **be given far greater powers to monitor and investigate SIS and GCSB activities** (including operational matters). They should have investigative staff to assist them. The US Senate Intelligence Committee offers a clear example of how elected officials can be given clearances to fully investigate all matters pertaining to security agencies.
2. The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security be given (a) **more staff and resources** and (b) **some powers to enforce discovery** if the agencies are reluctant or

tardy in responding to an investigation.

3. The NZ Police should have a **far bigger role in domestic security issues**, which are far more likely than international terrorist events.

The fact is that Police have far more experience in working with community and whanau. The Police also have much more experience in investigating and handling dangerous individuals and groups than closeted public servants and are trained to respond rapidly to instances of extreme behaviour.

## THE GEOPOLITICS OF BRINKMANSHIP AND MASS MURDER Globalist Capitalist Contortions

By Dennis Small

On his visit to Aotearoa/NZ in 1986 hosted by the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee, ex-CIA

*Agent Ralph McGehee told us that the US Central Intelligence Agency boasted that it could play the West's media like a mighty Wurlitzer (electric piano or organ).*

*Famed investigative reporter John Pilger says that in his whole lifelong career covering conflicts and wars he has never seen such a "tsunami of jingoism and manipulation" as shown in the Western media treatment of the Ukraine crisis/war. We should be critically sceptical of all Western reportage ("This Is A War Of Propaganda. John Pilger On Ukraine And Assange", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9pEotvIW-s>).*

*Capitalism has as one of its ideological pillars what Sociology/*

*Human Ecology Professor William R Catton, Jr calls the Myth of Limitlessness – the belief that the world's resources can support "any conceivable human population engaged in any conceivable way of life for any conceivable duration" ("Overshoot: The Ecological Basis Of Revolutionary Change", University of Illinois Press, 1980). It is otherwise known as the Cornucopian Myth of endless resources for economic and technological progress, and routinely expressed by the NZ Establishment.*

*"Grow or perish!" - the maxim of capitalism. Given looming environmentally-induced disaster spurred by climate change we can reverse this slogan: - "Grow and perish!"*

In a declaratory call for global environmental action, Prince William remarks how he wants “to recapture (US President John) Kennedy’s Moonshot spirit of ingenuity, purpose and optimism, and turn it with laser-sharp focus and urgency on to the most pressing challenge of our time – repairing our planet” (“Earthshot: How To Save Our Planet”, Colin Butfield & Jonnie Hughes, John Murray, 2021, quote from Introduction, p.xi). We only have this current decade left for achieving the goal of human survival!

In trying to induce a more openly militarist and space warfare mindset in Australian public culture consonant with America, Malcom Davis, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute senior analyst, opined that: “The Americans are very forward. You only need to look at how they support movies like ‘Top Gun – Maverick’. It’s a very different culture, and it’s a frustrating one down [under] here” (Guardian, 2/8/22, “Rocket Lab To Launch Second US And Australian Joint Spy Satellite Today”, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2022/aug/02/us-hails-antipodean-adventure-and-australia-silent-as-second-spy-satellite-set-to-launch-from-new-zealand>). Witness here an egregious example of the pathological “death wish”, spaced-out mentality so characteristic of the military-industrial complex at work!

In the last chapter of his book “Cosmos”, astronomer and astrophysicist Carl Sagan posed the question “Who speaks for Earth?”, given the mounting risks of technology for human self-destruction in nuclear war (Macdonald, 1980, ch. 13).

“... the US has been at war or has invaded other countries almost every year since independence” (“Base Nation: How US Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World”, David Vine, Metropolitan Books, 2015).

“The greatest purveyor of violence in the world: My own Government, I cannot be silent” (Martin Luther King, Jr).

“Looking at it this way, the major losers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were those who believed too sincerely

in the existence of a liberal international order, those who trusted too much in democracy, or too much in what the United States said it supported, rather than what it really supported – what the rich countries said, rather than what they did. That group was annihilated” (“The Jakarta Method: Washington’s Anti-Communist Crusade & The Mass Murder Program That Shaped Our World”, Vincent Bevins, Public Affairs, 2020, p243).

“I have never made any secret of my opinion that the decision to expand NATO (in eastern Europe) was a major strategic blunder on the part of the West and a move that tended to destabilise the political and military situation in Europe” (“What Is At Stake Now”, Mikhail Gorbachev, Polity Press, 2019/20, p5).

“To Survive The Threat Of Nuclear Weapons, Climate Change And Poverty, We Must Have A Different Security Order Based On Dialogue, Cooperation, Disarmament For Human Security” - Conclusion of NO to NATO action summit in June 2022 at Madrid (World BEYOND War: WBW News & Action: new billboard, book club, videos, events, 12/7/22 – see article “No To NATO In Madrid”, by Anna Wright, Popular Resistance, 7/7/22: World BEYOND War: <https://worldbeyondwar.org>).

Biden “is fuelling the fire in Ukraine” - Roger Waters of Pink Floyd

“The West is trying to destroy our country” (Russian President Vladimir Putin, reported 21/9/22).

Humankind is: “... just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation”, warns United Nations (UN) chief Antonio Guterres, at the opening session in August 2022 of the 50-year old Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [NPT] (“UN Chief Issues Grim Warning Of Risk Of ‘Nuclear Annihilation’”, 2/8/22, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/world/europe/nuclear-war-un-guterres.html>). As Guterres has said: “The planet is in peril... the planet is burning... Our world is in big trouble”.

“We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind

is to survive” (Albert Einstein).

“We must wake up before it’s too late!” (Message of the President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF), Dr Ivana N Hughes, NAPF President, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference: NAPF AT THE NPT, 9/8/22: Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Homepage: 2022: <https://www.wagingpeace.org>).

The watchwords of the US-mandated Western global empire are “freedom” and “democracy”. But there are multiple glaringly obvious built-in contradictions to this officially proclaimed Anglo-American creed. As we have charted over decades in both Peace Researcher (PR) (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>); & Foreign Control Watchdog:(FCW) (<http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/index.htm>) the record is often grisly and damning.

Not only does the pretence of the projection of economic/military power for democratic principle clearly clash with the record of “neo-con” cultivation of elite or even neo-fascist governance overseas, but so many public declarations of official US State policy - let alone neo-con ideology itself - openly refer to both the armed protection and projection of perceived American interests across the globe at virtually any cost. Hegemonic objectives are blindly proclaimed whatever the obvious dangers. Consequently, the risks from geopolitical confrontation are growing across the globe – from Ukraine to Taiwan, and from Iran to the Korean Peninsula.

### Current Central Flashpoint: The Ukraine Crisis/War

By late September 2022 (cut-off date for this article was 1<sup>st</sup> October), the war in Ukraine was escalating very dangerously with the Kremlin mobilising over 300,000 reservists and making increasingly dire warnings of nuclear retaliation against a perceived mounting Western threat. At this point, it is most apposite to highlight some excellent resources readily available online about the Ukraine crisis and NATO’s history and current role.

For example, see Covert Action Magazine, <https://>



covertactionmagazine.com/teach-in-webinar-war-in-ukraine-how-the-lies-of-empire-stand-in-the-way-of-a-diplomatic-resolution/; see also CAM's "Categories" list for entries on Ukraine, War in Ukraine, NATO & NATO Expansion, etc. *The first casualty in war is indeed the truth so we need to seek it out as much as we can!*

As well, it is most important to check out World BEYOND War (WBW), which is the most dynamic international peace/anti-nuclear NGO (World BEYOND War: <https://worldbeyondwar.org> – refer to: "How To Respond To Common Misconceptions In The US About Ukraine"). Note also that if you subscribe (free) to WBW you get regular excellent periodical news with often batches listed of immediately accessible articles and commentaries on international relations, geopolitics, and peace-making. This similarly holds for WBW's sister NGO RootsAction (<https://rootsaction.org>). It is desperately urgent to help build the global movement for peace and sustainability and spread the word.

*Indeed, the looming potential outcome of the Ukraine War is self-inflicted mutual suicide! But the zombie mind-set is today as pervasive in Aotearoa/NZ as elsewhere in the West. With the rise of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) so expressive of this syndrome, our Government – cheered on by the media – is now hooking us ever more deeply and stupidly into all of this dangerous globalist militarism. It is joining the rush towards World War III (WWIII)!*

Even if somehow – *almost miraculously!* – humankind was to come out of this particular geopolitical brinkmanship confrontation without widespread mayhem, the US-led West has taken us all into a terrible cul-de-sac of global breakdown and disruption. Ongoing militarist confrontation is locked in with Russia and China and a growing number of other countries. This syndrome is creating all sorts of obstacles to urgently needed preemptive work on a host of global problems.

### **The West Against The Rest**

US/NATO, however, are clearly prepared to take geopolitical conflict to the very brink of total war in trying to impose their will on the

rest of the world. This particular confrontation was sign-posted decades ago (e.g., see *WBW News & Action* 27/6/22, <https://worldbeyondwar.org/nato-and-a-war-foretold/>). Monies for American geopolitics keep pouring forth.

Five billion dollars for subverting Ukraine under the Obama Administration, and \$US17 billion more in arms and other aid for prosecuting the war on Russia by the Biden Administration all stand as testament to America's neo-fascist geopolitics. *But wait!* There's more! At the very start of October 2022, President Biden announced another \$US12 billion in military and economic aid. The danger to all humankind keeps ticking away on the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists'* (BAS') Doomsday Clock . . .

"UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says one-quarter of humanity – two billion people – are now living in conflict areas, and the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, when WWII ended. Guterres cited conflicts from Yemen, Syria, Myanmar and Sudan to Haiti, Africa's Sahel, and now the war in Ukraine . . . The UN estimates that this year (2022), at least 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance – a 17% increase from 2021" ("Cost Of Conflict Growing", *Press*, 1/4/2022). International NGOs have appealed to the UN for a greatly boosted programme to deal with the increasing hunger crisis. Oxfam International has stressed how "Hunger [is] worsening in hotspots" (*Sunday Star-Times* [SST], 18/9/22).

In the context of such deteriorating conditions on Mother Gaia Earth, growing geopolitical conflict and brinkmanship, driven by Western capitalist imperialism, and camouflaged by the malign corporate owned and/or controlled media, will inevitably destroy humankind – *unless somehow enough of the world's people can manage to pull off a miraculous save just in time!*

Meanwhile, the UN's Guterres is trying desperately to rally so-called "world leaders" to come to their senses and address the whole complex of unprecedented challenges that we face now, and in the future (e.g., "UN Chief Issues Grim Warning", op. cit.). From increasing conflicts to deepening socio-

economic inequalities, so many indicators are getting more critical as time goes on. In particular, Guterres stressed the importance and challenge of the environmental crisis – "*our suicidal war against the environment*" – as planetary conditions worsen dramatically with the impact of global warming. 2022 is proving to be a stellar year for dramatic climate change disasters.

### **Nuclear Dominance Facilitates Human Rights Crimes**

There has been a long accumulating pattern of behaviour and events that has brought us to the present state of the world that we now so precariously inhabit. Former Pentagon strategist and Vietnam War whistle-blower Daniel Ellsberg describes in his book "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions Of A Nuclear War Planner" (Bloomsbury, 2017) how the US regularly uses nuclear threats and missile-rattling for imperial coercion. This pattern of behaviour serves as a protective, intimidatory umbrella for the whole range of politico-economic bullying and aggressive intrusions characteristic of such hegemonic power.

With the world trembling on the brink of nuclear war, as so momentarily warned by the UN Secretary-General (Humankind is: "... just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away . . .", op. cit.), the seething militarist American-led lurch to oblivion is even stepping up a gear. As it takes us all closer to the edge of catastrophe in escalating the Ukraine War, the evil Biden Administration has registered the most expensive military budget in US history (*Covert Action Magazine*, 11/8/22, Jeremy Kuzmarov, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/08/11/the-most-bloated-military-budget-in-u-s-history-is-being-specially-named-to-honor-an-87-year-old-disciple-of-barry-goldwater-and-ronald-reagan/>).

A doddering old fool of a Senator now retiring, James Inhofe of Oklahoma (Democrat), known as "the hawk's hawk", recently succeeded in pushing a \$US45 billion addition to the latest "defence" budget that brings its total to "a staggering \$US850 billion" (ibid.). His mind-zapped colleagues on the Senate Armed Services Committee unanimously voted to name this latest

budget after him. Such is the reigning “death instinct” of the American military-industrial complex! Inhofe has thrived throughout his career by brazenly lining the pockets of the arms manufacturers, whilst ensuring that these same companies lavished political donations on his political prospects. The weapons industry is the largest employer in Oklahoma with six military bases (ibid.).

Given that the military-industrial complex and the CIA “deep state” are the very embodiment of the American power elite – whoever happens to front it - the way has always been clear for the worst of human predatory behaviour. The US and its allies could thus perpetrate gross forms of foreign subversion and control – whether coups, regime changes, human and environmental exploitation, and whatever else suited their corporate and geopolitical objectives. Most chillingly, even mass murder at will evolved into a global programme of State terror.

### **How To Cover Up Human Rights' Abuse**

Documentation on human rights abuses perpetrated by the US & co. is very often readily evident and available if you have the motivation and time to look for it, despite the prevailing propaganda of the political Establishment and the mainstream media. However, as Noam Chomsky and other prominent American critics of their country's conduct of foreign affairs have long pointed out, the supposedly democratic media instead very deliberately choose to either studiously ignore this record, or put a perversely misleading spin on it. Their intention is to keep their publics in the dark and misled as much as they possibly can.

Damning evidence yet still keeps accumulating. A central US Cold War strategy of extermination, stemming from the CIA-orchestrated genocide in Indonesia 1965-70, is described and documented in a widely acclaimed study by Vincent Bevins, titled “The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anti-Communist Crusade & The Mass Murder Program That Shaped Our World” (op. cit.).

The Anglo-American Five Eyes' intelligence/covert action club of the US, UK, Canada, Australia,

and NZ was intimately instrumental in bringing about this landmark genocide and its turning-point implications, although the club does not get a specific index entry in this book. Australia's role in the Indonesian mass killings is simply noted on one page of this 258-page study. Overall, author Bevins is focused very much on the paramount actions of the US.

But in connection with Australia, Bevins quotes the judgement of “an International People's Tribunal assembled later in the Netherlands” [Indonesia's former colonial ruler] (ibid., p156). The judges of this Tribunal found that the crimes of the Indonesian military “were carried out for political purposes – to destroy the Communist Party and then ‘prop up a violent dictatorial regime’ – with the assistance of the US, the UK and Australia” (ibid.).

Ominously enough, Britain's Ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, had recommended to his nation's Foreign Office that “a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change” (editorial by Mark Curtis titled “Democratic Genocide” in the *Ecologist*, Vol. 26, no. 5, September/October, 1996, pp202/04). The British Labour government headed by Harold Wilson was eagerly looking forward to a plethora of business investment opportunities opening up in the wake of an Anglo-American-backed military takeover.

### **Cartwheeling Capitalist Progress Gets Oiled With Plenty Of Blood**

The back cover blurb of “The Jakarta Method” remarks that the transition of the “developing world” to capitalism was not as peaceful as conventionally portrayed. It concludes that the book “demonstrates that the brutal extermination of unarmed Leftists was a fundamental part of Washington's final triumph in the Cold War” (op cit.). Some of the very same corporate media like the *Financial Times (FT)*, the *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)*, and the *Washington Post (WP)*, which were to the fore during the Cold War in covering up American war crimes and human right abuses, felt smug enough now to even praise “The Jakarta Method” for its revelations. *Oh dear, yes, it's true that we*

*might have got a bit carried away at the time in our anti-communist crusade...*

A very key and obvious reason for such corporate media indulgence is that author Vincent Bevins writes for such media and does not frame his study in terms of American imperialism and/or environmental meltdown. There are no relevant index entries or related commentary characteristic of a really Left-wing and/or “limits to growth” critique of capitalism (ibid.). His framework for analysis is very much the Social Darwinist geopolitical competition and confrontation of the Cold War.

Ironies, often dependent on timelines, may yet abound. In his introduction, Bevins records how in 2017 he moved from being a correspondent in Brazil for the *Los Angeles Times*, relocating from Sao Paulo to Jakarta to cover South-east Asia for the *WP* (ibid., pp3/4). The *WP* can apparently relax now with the Cold War under the West's belt although most ironically there is a very dangerous hot war under way against Russia in Ukraine.

In regard to the Indonesian genocide, Vincent Bevins comments of how “most people know almost nothing about what happened in 1965-66 in that archipelago nation. Indonesia remains a huge gap in our collective general knowledge . . .” (ibid., p2). “The truth of the violence of 1965-66 remained hidden for decades. The dictatorship established in its wake told the world a lie, and survivors were imprisoned or too terrified to speak out” (ibid.). But the genocide of Leftists inspired a model programme which America coldly and deliberately applied elsewhere around the Earth.

*PR* highlighted the Indonesian mass murder programme and its inspiration for further targeted repudiations like Chile's 9/11 in a special issue I wrote back in 2002 (*PR* 25, March 2002, “Ghosts Of A Genocide: The CIA, Suharto And Terrorist Culture”, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr25.pdf>). While the peak of the slaughter took place during 1965-66, killings went on until 1970.

The NZ media and political Establishment have been very rigorous

in almost comprehensively covering up the reality of Anglo-American instigation and involvement in the genocide, and indeed for burying memories of the whole episode. Silence is for sure a most effective method of suppressing the truth and a fundamental propaganda technique of the media. As well, they have very carefully protected NZ's role, however indirect, in the mass murder programme. Mind you, back in the mid-1960s, they did clearly signal their support publicly for the bloody regime change.

### **Covert Dirty Work: “Jakarta's Coming”!**

Of course, the mainstream media carry on today with their bloody promotion of the Anglo-American/Western empire in all its latest propaganda machinations and phases, whether about the war in Ukraine, the gathering Taiwan crisis, and a host of other conflicts and capitalist predations around the world – from Syria to Venezuela, and from Yemen to drone warfare and covert “ops” across a wide range of target countries.

The media coverage of foreign policy issues is indeed now the worst it has ever been, overwhelmingly and uniformly propagandistic, as currently illustrated above all by the extremely biased treatment of the Ukraine crisis/war – a conflict many years in the making (for a deep background analysis, see the article by Portland University of Oregon Professor Gerald Sussman in *Covert Action Magazine*, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/09/12/ukraine-the-cias-75-year-old-proxy/>. Sussman is author of numerous books, including “Branding Democracy: US Regime Change In Post-Soviet Eastern Europe” (2010).

It is certainly true that the contradictions and ironies run very deep indeed. Given the US State terrorist “War on Terrorism” since 9/11, we can look back to the original 9/11 in Chile in 1973 when a CIA-instigated military coup overthrew the Leftwing Popular Unity government of President Salvador Allende. In the Chilean capital of Santiago before the savage coup, a sinister message was scrawled on walls in Spanish: “*Jakarta is Coming!*” (“The Jakarta Method”, op. cit., p194). An extermination programme of Leftists duly ensued.

This programme was perpetrated and coordinated by the US-suborned national military and security services, just as happened in Indonesia.

Leaving aside outright invasions and mass bombing raids, there are various ways of portraying the scalar dimensions of American bloody interventions. One way is a polar dimension with remote targeted killing at one end per drone strikes right out to the other end, which can be typified by the highly organised and systematic Phoenix death squad programme implemented in Vietnam during the period 1967-73.

Phoenix was conducted by on-the-ground CIA personnel, US special forces, etc. While it was a very secret programme at the time it was also very much American-handson (see two books by intelligence expert Douglas Valentine: “The Phoenix Program”, William Morrow & Co, 1990; & “The CIA As Organised Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America And The World”, Clarity Press, 2017). In the middle of this polar spectrum, we can place the fountain-head model of the Indonesian genocide with its mass killings, both covertly initiated and directed by the CIA, US Defense & State Departments, etc.

### **“Phoenix Redux”!**

Evidently, the neo-fascist backed Zelensky regime in Ukraine is using a Phoenix Operation-type programme to eliminate political dissidents and opposition figures (see: <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/04/25/cia-behind-secret-plots-to-kidnap-torture-and-assassinate-ukrainian-dissidents-for-president-zelensky-says-ukraine-defector/>, 25/4/22; <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/05/02/ukraine-hunts-down-traitors-helping-russia/>, 2/5/22; & see also the interview with Douglas Valentine, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/?s=Intelligence+Expert+Believes+CIA+Behind+Car+Bomb+Assassination+of+Daughter+of+Alexander+Dugin>, 24/8/22– all articles by Jeremy Kuzmarov, CAM Managing Editor).

Following on from the US-orchestrated coup against a democratically elected government in 2014, Ukraine has been systematically saturated with Western weapons and training, firepower capaci-

ty, intelligence and security assets, etc. The West has been unrelenting in its support for a regime that has banned 11 political parties, clamped down on free expression, murdered opponents, savagely repressed any pro-Russian sentiment, etc. It was surely very revealing that in the early days of the Russian invasion our TV media even demonstrated open approval of the murder of alleged “traitors” and saboteurs. We were shown photos of some victims' dead bodies in the streets.

CAM Managing Editor Jeremy Kuzmarov has described how Phoenix-style death squads in Ukraine, operating through liaison with the neo-fascist Ukrainian Secret Service (SBU), routinely captures certain identified civilians and executes them without trial (ibid.). As he so tellingly remarks: “State terror operations that follow from the CIA playbook contradict the saintly image of Zelensky promoted in the US media” (“Ukraine Hunts Down...”, ibid.)

It is only very rarely that any glimmers of insight into the reality of the Zelensky regime filter out from the mainstream media but the odd item can appear. A brief report at the start of May 2022 declared that: “SBU cracks down on Russian supporters”, noting that “nearly 400 people in the Kharkiv region alone . . . had been detained under anti-collaboration laws” (SST, 1/5/22).

### **Letting Loose The Neo-Fascists!**

In his writings, intelligence expert Douglas Valentine stresses the proven power of the two-tier model of Phoenix. He puts great emphasis on how the structure and functioning may meld together so efficiently. The political management and oversight at the top can connect seamlessly with local operations, via the monitoring and surveillance centres spread out across a country. These centres can operate for capture, torture and in-the-field killing as was seen to be so successfully perpetrated against a pervasive Vietcong in South Vietnam.

He warns most chillingly that the model has been adopted – to date for surveillance and monitoring – by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (“The CIA As

Organised Crime”, op. cit.). “Phoenix is the conceptual model for DHS” (ibid., p299). “Both are based on the principle that governments can manage societies through implicit and explicit terror”, guaranteeing rule by the presiding power elite (ibid.).

Neo-fascism is running free in the West in various forms. America could be under a Rightwing dictatorship by 2030 or even earlier <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jan/03/us-rightwing-dictatorship-2030-trump-canada>, 3/1/22). Following the illegal and violent US coup in early 2014 against a democratically elected Ukrainian government, regime change had unleashed the neo-fascist militias into eastern Russian-speaking and related areas. The militia rampage was replete with atrocities and brutal repression like the burning of people alive in the Odesa trade union hall in May that year.

As Kay Weir, once Editor of the ground-breaking environmental *Pacific World/Ecologist* magazine, has aptly written regarding Ukraine: “The US and NATO refused to address even this pressing issue facing Russia – the murdering of Russian-speaking civilians in the Donbass that would have become genocide” (letter to the editor, *SST*, 15/5/22). *But these victims are not the right brand for the West's propaganda machine, just “collateral damage”!*

### **American Deep State Diving Into Very Dangerous Destabilisation “Ops”**

American intelligence and logistical support per NATO, and even assisted by countries like NZ, is reaching out into Russian-held territory in Ukraine and, most likely, into Russia itself, in deep covert operations. There have been some precisely targeted attacks on Russian military assets in Crimea, and also very ominously, a car-bombing that killed the daughter of an ultra-Russian nationalist in the outskirts of Moscow itself. Given the history of US foreign policy, it is totally predictable that America is very intimately involved in all aspects of the actual coordination of Ukrainian military targeting strategy and tactics. As indicated, other NATO-aligned and associated countries are involved one way or the other, whether directly or indi-

rectly.

“Major General Vadym Skibitsky, the deputy head of the Kyiv regime's military intelligence directorate, admitted in an interview with the British *Daily Telegraph* that the US government is involved in targeting decisions regarding US-supplied Lockheed Martin High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS)” (<https://covertactionmagazine.com/?s=High+Ukrainian+Intelligence+Official+Admits+U.S.+Deeply+Involved+in+Ukraine+Conflict>, Jeremy Kuzmarov, 8/8/22).

As indicated above, glimmers of truth sometimes seep out from the mainstream media. A report from the *Times* stated that “CIA personnel are reportedly playing a crucial role by orchestrating the intelligence-sharing operation between the US and Kyiv” (“CIA Spies Among Commandos Bolstering War Effort”, *Press*, 28/6/22). The US – as routine practice in various battle zones – is supplying intelligence and targeting information in real time as even indicated by another Rightwing British media outfit (“‘Official Confession’ Implicates US In War, Says Russia”, *Press*, 4/8/22 – per the *Telegraph Group*). *America was deeply implicated in the sinking of the Moskva warship, virtually an open declaration of war on Russia, and a very big step up the escalation ladder!*

### **Trying To Destabilise Russia**

The more that the Russian leadership feels threatened on its very border, and indeed even inside its very own homeland, the more the risks of nuclear war are being ramped up! Western propaganda, constantly pushed by the US/NATO brigade, has for decades painted Russia and Putin as constituting a dire threat to world peace.

In fact, it has been – *and continues to be!* – the US and NATO, which represent the greatest threat to humankind by their commitment to Social Darwinist imperial warfare. The political line trotted out regularly by US/NATO has been that Putin's government is intent on reviving the former Soviet empire in eastern Europe, at least as far it can. But the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military and the ensuing war have only

demonstrated the weakness of the nation's conventional forces.

Putin's government, as Mikhail Gorbachev has laid out, never had any such ambitions (“What Is At Stake Now”, op. cit.). It was all fantasy self-justifying hogwash cooked by the imperialist US/NATO brigade. Just a look at the obvious problems and practicalities of trying to take over a nation now in the West's ambit makes the notion preposterous, let alone the nuclear threats openly directed against Russia. But in NZ, media and political commentators go on spouting this rubbish.

For instance, a *Press* editorial can say in a malicious perversion of the truth when reflecting on Gorbachev's death: “That the former leader, who deconstructed the Soviet Union's military ambitions, died just as Russian President Vladimir Putin is undertaking a brutal war to rebuild a lost empire is a savage irony lost on no-one” (“How Hope Can Be Thwarted”, 3/9/22).

In fact, the “savage irony” lies in the *Press's* promulgation of the Big Lie. A long-time dedicated PR agency for the American empire and its “military ambitions”, the *Press* has been in the vanguard of those covering up the damning facts of the Indonesian Genocide and the subsequent application of the Jakarta Method around the Earth.

### **Contradictions Galore**

During his speaking-tour in Aotearoa/NZ in 1986, hosted by the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee (NZNFZC), ex-CIA agent Ralph McGehee especially recommended to us an analysis of the techniques used by the CIA in its organisation of the Chilean coup d'état. He gave us a copy of this report, which proved very useful for its review of various tactics applied in the lead-up to the coup like the subversion of certain sector groupings, politicians, opinion-makers, media, etc., along with the establishment of new interventionist agencies.

Similar tactics were applied against the 1980s' David Lange-led Labour government, including the initiation and cultivation of several new pro-US, pro-nuclear pressure groups. The activist counter-subversion group Nuclear Free Kiwis, which was connected with the NZNFZC



Indonesia's Suharto & US President Nixon, 1970

and PR, worked particularly hard to combat both covert and overt American interventions (as quite extensively documented in *Nuclear Free*, *NZ Monthly Review*, and the original historic series of PR).

One of the great ironies associated with the 1973 Chilean coup is how British Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher so admired and lauded its vicious neo-fascist leader, General Augusto Pinochet, who himself became the country's President. But Thatcher's own government ended up in the Malvinas/Falklands War (April-June 1982) fighting against the parallel CIA-backed military junta in Argentina.

For sure, Chile had inspired the formation of the Argentinian junta. The CIA-inspired Chile's Operation Condor, a death squad strategy a la the "Jakarta Method" aimed at exterminating Latin American Leftwing activists, turned the continent into "a veritable anti-communist killing zone" ("The Jakarta Method", op. cit., pp214-15; for some readily accessible information, refer to <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/09/21/murder-on-embassy-row-46-years-on-remembering-the-assassination-of-orlando-letelier-and-ronni-moffitt/>, Jeremy Kuzmarov, 21/9/22).

"In 1976, a coup in Argentina brought to power the bloodiest of these regimes. Under General Jorge Rafael Videla, the dictator-ship kidnapped, tortured, and dis-

appeared tens of thousands of people. Videla's regime cast a much wider net than Pinochet's men did" ("The Jakarta Method", op. cit., p215). This so-called "Dirty War" was actually "a top-down anti-communist extermination campaign with ideological roots in Argentina's fascist movement" (ibid.). Thatcher, Reagan, & co. were very pleased with this kind of slaughter as aided and facilitated by the Anglo-American axis.

The Argentinian generals applied their techniques of repression – murder, torture, disappearances, etc. – with messianic fervour. According to a couple of Argentinian journalists, the Argentinian and Central American death squad purveyors had even discussed in the early 1970s the idea of employing the Jakarta Method systematically wherever they could (ibid., pp223/4). The CIA keenly incentivised and supported the adoption of this approach

What a stunning upset then for so-called "Iron Lady" Thatcher when the Argentinian regime tried to take back the plundered colonies of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1982! For at least a short period, there were some awkward tensions between London and Washington as fanatically anti-communist Argentina morphed into a Third World enemy of the old British empire. The Anglo-American axis even got a bit tested for unity but, of course, there was never any question as to the winning side when the chips were really down.

## Systematic Mass Murder

Subsequently, despite this hiccup, Anglo-American leaders continued to urge on the mass murder programme of their Leftwing opponents. The Jakarta Method was widely employed throughout Latin America, especially under Reagan's watch in the 1980s. The slaughter was indeed bloody and systematic. For example: "From 1978-83, the Guatemalan military killed more than 200,000 people ... The Salvadoran civil war took 75,000 lives; again, the majority were innocent people killed by the Government. Argentina killed 20,000 to 30,000 civilians, and other Operation Condor nations killed tens of thousands more".

"Anti-communist extermination had spread all across Latin America, always with the assistance of the US. Taken together, the death toll approaches the estimated size of the 1965-66 massacres in Indonesia", i.e., up to one million (ibid., p228 & p155). It can yet be noted here that an Indonesian general boasted of a total of about three million killed in the original application of the Jakarta Method! (ibid., p155). Nobody was counting as time rolled on and the bodies accumulated over a vast archipelago landscape. Around a quarter of Indonesia's population were affiliated somehow with the communist PKI party in 1965 (ibid.).

Those who escaped either the mass death or the mass imprisonment (another million) were intimidated into silence (ibid.). Over quite a number of years, some prisoners were annually paraded out for ritual show trials and subsequent executions a la the Stalin era of Russia. The Western media openly gloated over this State terrorist tactic as an ongoing lesson to any Leftwing enemies, or would-be enemies of the empire. The Jakarta genocidal model had a similar impact throughout Latin America. But the spirit of rebellion has not been quelled and *la lucha continua!*

## Camouflaging A Genocidal Coup

While the massacres of 1965-66 soon came to be cloaked in silence, there certainly was a covering camouflage of propaganda at the time – both to screen the truth of Western manipulation and to help usher in the new regime. US-



coordinated “fake news” and lies promulgated the myth of a spontaneous people’s uprising in Indonesia following an alleged communist coup attempt. “The leading political thinker of the *New York Times* (*NYT*), James Reston, chimed in under the heading “A Gleam Of Light In Asia” (“Year 501: The Conquest Continues”, Noam Chomsky, Verso, 1993, p128). The dominant media theme was a welcome tale of justified, if ruthless, revenge by an outraged nation!

Reston, a regular voice for the US State Department, unashamedly lauded the “the savage transformation from a pro-Chinese policy under Sukarno to a defiantly anti-communist policy under General Suharto” (ibid.). Other American news media from *US News & World Report* to *Time* celebrated the genocide in the same way. The latter proclaimed – quite unashamedly – that it was “The West’s best news for years in Asia”, below the heading “Vengeance With A Smile”, and replete with gloating text and pictures (15/7/66, Vol. 88, No. 3).

The *Time* cover cited above featured the banner headline: “INDONESIA: The Land The Communists Lost”, graced by a photo of a smiling General Suharto, the West’s airbrushed version of the execrated Khmer Rouge’s Pol Pot. *Time* still proudly advertises this cover for sale! Analyst Vincent Bevins tells how US assistance was indeed very much to the fore “in the crucial early phase of spreading propaganda and establishing (Suharto’s) anti-communist narrative” ... (“The Jakarta Method”, op. cit., p133).

As Bevins himself affirms: “The Western press did its part too. Voice of America, the BBC, and Radio Australia broadcast reports that emphasised Indonesian military propaganda points, as part of a psychological warfare campaign to demonise the PKI” (ibid., pp133/4). These international outlets reinforced the Army’s messages to the Indonesian people (ibid., p134).

### Demonising The Enemy

The same sort of “psych-warfare” dominates the media nowadays on Ukraine. Demonisation of President Putin as the enemy that the West’s military-industrial complex

and geopolitical ambitions so urgently need is, of course, central to the propaganda on Ukraine. Personalising the enemy in such a way is a fundamental propaganda technique, even though the murderous record of American President after President far outweighs that of Putin in the field of foreign policy.

For example, Rightwing NZ *Stuff* Political Editor Luke Malpass, one of the West’s multitudinous PR flunkies for US/NATO, very nastily promotes the image of Putin the “rat” (“Putin, The Rat, And Why The West Should Worry”, *Press*, 24/9/22). Malpass says that Putin started the war but now feels cornered (ibid.). As an assiduous purveyor of lying geopolitical propaganda, Malpass says that: “Attempting to frame the war as a battle of the West versus Russia is a way of trying to galvanise the Russians” (ibid.). But in a revealing Freudian slip, Malpass worries that a cornered Putin “might strike back against his enemies with nuclear weapons” (ibid.). So, the US/NATO are still pressing Putin further into a desperate corner . . .

Ever since the nuclear-armed US/NATO/CIA, etc. started advancing on Russia, the West’s war-like imperial intentions were glaringly clear. The ultimate blame for the dangerously deepening Ukraine crisis/war lies squarely with the US-headed West. The current outcome has always all been so very predictable, as so many American strategists well warned long ago.

### Corruption Greases Corporate Exploitation

Returning to the experience of Indonesia, it is appropriate to reproduce an editorial note from a previous issue of *Foreign Control Watchdog* about the original smiling Western agent of the Jakarta Method: “*Suharto, Indonesia’s genocidal dictator for several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, is the undisputed world champion of kleptocracy. At the turn of the century, CAFCA played a leading role in a high-profile national and international campaign calling on the Government to seize the Suharto family’s NZ assets.*”

*“It got quite a lot of publicity in NZ and attracted the attention of the post-Suharto Indonesian govern-*

*ment. Here’s the CAFCA Website link to the various Watchdog articles about it : <http://www.sitelevel.com/query?query=seize+the+suhartos%27+assets&crd=0c76d290&B1=SiteLevel+Search>”* (the editorial note accompanies Jeremy Agar’s review of “American Kleptocracy” in *Watchdog* 159, April 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/59/10.html>).

To use a mixed metaphor, the Five Eyes intelligence/covert action nations – i.e., the US, UK, Canada, Australia & NZ – as well as other countries in the Western camp, or allied to it like Japan, were very happy to milk the corrupt gravy train provided by the Suharto regime. They have long exploited cheap labour and ripped off natural resources, besides helping Suharto and his successors eliminate any of the locals rash enough to get in the way.

Instigated by the US, and effectively backed to the hilt by its Five Eyes mates, including NZ, Indonesia invaded East Timor in December 1975 in order to crush the Leftwing FRETILIN movement on the island (“The Jakarta Method”, op. cit., p213). “The people of East Timor did not want the Indonesian military there ... To put down the freedom fighters, the Indonesian Armed Forces killed up to three hundred thousand people ... Washington’s closest ally in Southeast Asia annihilated up to a third of the population of East Timor, a higher percentage than those who died under Pol Pot in Cambodia” (ibid.).

(Regarding Indonesian repression in the region, see two books by veteran NZ peace/anti-nuclear activist Maire Leadbeater: (a) “Negligent Neighbour: New Zealand’s Complicity In The Invasion And Occupation Of Timor Leste”, Craig Potton Pub., 2006; & (b) “New Zealand’s Betrayal Of The People Of West Papua”, Otago University Press, 2018).

While capitalist corruption can serve as a ready route for imperial intrusions and exploitation, comprador elites can yet prove problematic at times if they try and demand too much, and/or become an encumbrance to effective foreign control. Then a dictator’s use-by-date comes up. “With Suharto



gone after May 1998, one British Minister at least was able to talk frankly of the regime Britain had supported”

“It could now be admitted that under Suharto there was 'severe political repression', the 'concentration of economic and political power in a few, extremely corrupt hands', and the 'involvement of the security forces in every tier of social and political life', for example. All these things had been miraculously discovered” (“Complicity In A Million Deaths”, Mark Curtis [2003], in “Tell Me No Lies: Investigative Journalism And Its Triumphs”, ed. John Pilger, Jonathan Cape, 2004, p515).

*But hey look out!* Maybe, the Five Eyes club will be motivated to try and repeat the Jakarta Method-type of interventionist genocide against the Chinese in the Solomon Islands, or somewhere else in the Pacific. You can be sure that the CIA will be constantly looking out for opportunities as it does around the globe . . . *There's nothing like a good, politically correct genocide – wherever and whenever – to get the CIA's vampirish juices really going! – all appreciatively slavered up by the Five Eyes' partners, including “Godzone” NZ, as the record to date clearly shows!!*

### **Transiting To The Next Pernicious Phase**

Following the end of the Cold War, with arms reduction deals negotiated by Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the Reagan Administration from 1985, great power confrontation seemed to be winding down quite momentarily. As well, in the ensuing years the Soviet Union fell apart pretty peacefully on the whole, winding back to the Russian homeland.

But, as Gorbachev himself has written, the prospective peace dividends were sadly squandered by the West (“What Is At Stake Now”, op. cit.). He outlines this process as it took shape: “Since the mid-1990s, however, a countertendency has emerged: the gradual remilitarisation of thought and action, a continual increase in military spending and the dismantling of the arms control system” (ibid., p4).

Writing in 2019, he observes that:

“Of the three main pillars of global strategic stability – the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) and START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) – only the latter remains. But the future of the New START Treaty, signed by President Medvedev and Obama in 2010, is now also being questioned” (ibid.).

In expressing concern about the New START treaty, Mikhail Gorbachev points to American lack of commitment (ibid.). Such lack of commitment to genuine disarmament has been the hallmark of American policy for many, many years. Instead of pursuing peace, the US power elite is obsessed and deluded with the hubris of power, and maintaining the obscenely indulgent lifestyle of the top one percent of its population. I have tracked this syndrome in my article, emphasising that mass murder is fundamental to this Anglo-American strategy, whatever the particular form it might take – whether accumulating over time with selective assassinations, or outright massacre, however directly or indirectly contrived.

At the end of the Cold War, the US very deliberately chose to reject the hand of friendship offered by President Mikhail Gorbachev. Under Gorbachev's leadership the peoples of the Soviet empire had been allowed to freely choose how they wanted to identify themselves in terms of nationality and type of government. He himself proudly talks of a “peaceful revolution” and “the new democratic Europe” that appeared to be forming (ibid., p12).

In particular, he points to a mutual agreement the “Charter of Paris for a New Europe”, signed in November 1990, “at a meeting of the heads of state and government of Europe, the USA and Canada:” (in ch. 2: “Equal Security For All: The Charter Of Paris”, ibid., quote p9). But he goes on to lament how this agreement has lapsed. He points the finger of blame squarely at the main culprit – America!

### **Planning To Rule The World**

One of the great illusions of capitalist “smoke and mirrors” is the myth of the “free market” in all its guises as opposed to the alleged pitfalls of socialist governmental or communist planning. In fact, high-level

planning – or more accurately, plotting and scheming – are central to the Washington-coordinated Western empire. David Armstrong, who in 2002 was the Washington bureau chief of the National Security News Service, wrote an excoriating expose of the so-called “New World Order”, proclaimed by President George Bush senior in 1990 (“Drafting A Plan For Global Domination” in “Tell Me No Lies”, op. cit., pp516-30).

In the words of Colin Powell, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the vision of the US was “*to be the bully on the block*” [my emphasis] (ibid., p516). John Pilger further explains in his introductory note to David Armstrong's article that: “The conquest of Iraq was to be the pivot” (ibid., p517). Lies were central to the neo-con propaganda. Further, the overreach of ambition was enormous. “Iran would be next, then Syria, North Korea, even China. The Plan was to ensure that nothing got in the way of America's dominance of the strategic world, its resources, and politics” (ibid.).

As Armstrong expounds: “Before the Plan was about domination it was about money. It took shape in late 1989, when the Soviet threat was clearly on the decline, and, with it, public support for a large military Establishment” (ibid., p519). Instead of the Soviet threat, the key theme became one of promoting the idea of a 'capability-based' ongoing assessment of a range of regional threats” (ibid., pp520/1). “The US would move from countering Soviet attempts at dominance to ensuring its own dominance. Again, this project would not be cheap” (ibid., p521).

It was imperative for the corporate state to keep feeding the monster of the military-industrial complex. So, key creatures of the monster like Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld were only too eager to help. Yet, it was only after 9/11 “that the Plan emerged in full” (ibid.). President Bush junior labelled “Iraq, Iran and North Korea an 'axis of evil'”, and committed the US to pre-emptive action against weapons of mass destruction (WMD) possessed by such proscribed enemy nations (ibid., p527).

Rumsfeld, who was an enthusiast for WMD and nuclear-war fighting, pushed “the concept of pre-emptive strikes with nuclear weapons” (ibid., p528). “Commentators parroted (the Bush jr.) Administration’s line, portraying the concept of pre-emptory strikes as a ‘new’ strategy aimed at combating terrorism” (ibid., p529). The American Establishment media, like the *NYT*, *WSJ*, and *WP*, were moved accordingly to extol this strategy in a typical exultant bout of American hubris and self-love. *The sense of supreme power surely corrupts alright and the whole world can suffer its outcome!*

### Further Elaborations And Adaptations Of The Grand Master Plan

In his article, David Armstrong lays out how the US’s Plan for world dominance developed. His analysis is however astray in one crucial area – *the rise of NATO*. He observes that during the 1990s the Clinton Administration, “chastened by their early misadventures in Somalia and Haiti, found themselves struggling “to articulate a coherent Bosnia” strategy when Yugoslavia came apart after the death of dictator Josip Tito (ibid., p526).

For a while, the Clinton Administration was somewhat divided over the right action to take. Then it strongly intervened, not wanting to miss the opportunity of unravelling a formerly stable communist state, even one that had kept a substantial measure of national independence within the Soviet empire. “In 1995, a US-led NATO bombing campaign, combined with a Croat-Muslim ground offensive, forced the Serbs into negotiations, leading to the Dayton Peace Accords” (ibid.). Cheney and Wolfowitz, however, were happy to see the Clinton Administration wind up, considering that the President had lost sight of The Big Picture, and the programme for a step-by-step assault on the countries listed above.

Nevertheless, there is a huge irony in that it was in the mid-1990s that President Bill Clinton really boosted the advance of NATO in eastern Europe. And as justification for this, Russia came slowly to the fore again to eventually take centre-place in Eurasia as a threat that had to be confronted and dealt to. Hence, the ever so predictable

Ukraine Crisis/War that we confront now!

### Wheeling And Dealing In Death

During the Clinton Administration, the geopolitical warmongering wheel had pretty well turned full circle from the Soviet Union to Russia, the very hard core of the old empire. In our times, the highly aggressive, militarist advance of the nuclear weapon flaunting NATO alliance goes on ever more dangerously. As continually stressed in my article, its’ leadership is quite prepared to risk world war in trying to destroy Russia. This evil, crazy imperialist enterprise – and its continuing escalation – is even most bizarrely and lamentably aided and abetted by our very own Government, whatever its’ hypocritical, contradictory posturing about doing away with nuclear weapons altogether.

The Ardern Labour government is just a puppet of the blood-soaked, US-dominated nuclear weapons Five Eyes alliance. Almost in self-satirical mode, it has become a cheerleader for the belligerent nuclear-armed NATO! It blatantly – and with complete lack of integrity in light of the overwhelming evidence – disregards the criminally undemocratic, militarist, and imperially neo-fascist usurpation of Ukraine as contrived by the US & co., which has ushered in an escalating war on Russia’s very border.

At the same time that the Government promotes the Big Lie a la its master Joe Biden about Russia acting “unprovoked”, PM Ardern and the media – with the eager collaboration of the US – have banged on aggressively about the Chinese threat in “our own backyard” in the Pacific. Mind you, all our Government’s outlandish hypocrisy, contradictions, and total lack of credibility should give the peace/anti-nuclear movement plenty to work on for the future!

All this kind of propaganda, as I have shown, fits within a long, well-worn pattern of Western malevolence. Maliciously, and ever so cynically calculated, President/Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s nation was painted as a most dangerous enemy to the West on account of its alleged militarist imperial ambitions. This lying propaganda has served so very conveniently as the

key pretext for the predatory advance of NATO and the ever enlarging and expanding military-industrial complex.

### But Hey, Don't Mention NATO's Nukes In The War On Russia!

The profits of the biggest weapons transnational corporations (TNCs) have thus waxed enormously over more recent years for their blood-sucker beneficiaries. In a hugely weird and viciously ironic twist of the truth, US/NATO’s actual imperial takeover of most of eastern Europe was projected in a psychological warfare programme on to the Kremlin. As the Ukraine War grinds on, the major arms TNCs go on making a killing.

Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, and other major arms manufacturers are certainly reaping the profits out of the Ukraine war and the misery of its inhabitants (“The Weapons Industry Sees The War In Ukraine As A Goldmine”, 7/4/22, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/national-defense-industrial-association-war-weapons-lockheed-martin-raytheon-ukraine-russia-military>). Stinger and Javelin missiles, HIMARS and an array of high-powered, accurate weapons, have had a deadly impact in Ukraine, upping the ante enormously, as Russia scrambles to maintain a foothold.

“The mainstream media have constructed an undiluted narrative about “Putin’s War” that disguises America’s imperialist expansion into eastern Europe. It is utterly Orwellian in its effort to project onto Russia what the US and its main imperial ally, the UK (which a British journalist called ‘America’s tugboat’), have been doing non-stop since 1945 – and indeed for centuries” (“Ukraine: The CIA’s 75-Year-Old Proxy”, op. cit.). *If Britain is a tugboat, NZ is just a raft trailing in the wake!*

Our own mainstream media, as emphasised and illustrated again and again in my article, are eminently the mouthpieces of the US war machine – of the White House, the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department, etc. George Orwell would have an absolute field day in these times, documenting the whole range of propaganda techniques used out of the endless examples supplied – ranging from the brazenly gross to the most subtle.

Every item on President Putin and Russia is given a negative angle in a sustained daily barrage while whitewashing the West of any responsibility.

### **Pigging Out On Predatory Profits**

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, a former board member of Raytheon, soon rewarded this particular defence contractor with more than \$US2.36 billion in deals in the most egregious “revolving-door” fashion (Jeremy Kuzmarov, 19/4/21, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2021/04/19/defense-secretary-lloyd-austin-former-member-of-raytheon-board-of-directors-has-awarded-over-2-36-billion-in-contracts-to-raytheon-since-his-confirmation-in-january/>). Raytheon is a key TNC.

Other defence contractors on whose boards that Austin has sat include “Booz Allen Hamilton, the world's 'most profitable spy organisation', according to *Bloomberg News*, and Pine Island Capital, a private equity firm that invests in military industry” (ibid.). These firms have also benefitted handsomely from the largesse of the Biden Administration.

In pushing the biggest war budget in American history, retiring Senator James Inhofe, “the hawk’s hawk”, is no doubt set to enjoy the spoils of his retirement. “In 2018, Inhofe was found to have purchased tens of thousands of dollars in Raytheon stock just a week after he lobbied the Trump Administration to increase military spending to record levels” (“The Most Bloated Military Budget...”, op. cit.).

All these kinds of geopolitical machinations and war profiteering excesses have been accompanied in recent years by the parallel promotion of China to the role of the West’s emerging other big enemy. There was first the pivot to the Pacific under the Obama Administration, and then most recently in its updated version by Biden and co., the so-called “pivot to the Indo-Pacific” – all in the ongoing attempt to try and surround and contain China, as has been happening vis-a-vis Russia. And so, geopolitical confrontation, as initiated and cultivated by far the most part by the US, has grown menacingly in

global reach with only one end in sight for the planet’s “killer ape”.in its evolutionary overshoot . . .

### **Blowing Away A Windbag Of Bullshit!**

To justify its treachery in breaking its promises to the Gorbachev government not to expand NATO into eastern Europe, NATO officialdom claims there was no written agreement. While Western leaders were very careful to avoid any formally made agreement, there was a plethora of promises and pledges made to Secretary-General Gorbachev and the Russian leadership (2/1/18, <https://natowatch.org/newsbriefs/2018/how-gorbachev-was-misled-over-assurances-against-nato-expansion>; *National Security Archive*, 12/12/17, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>).

But these early promises have been buried in the high tide of Western malicious disinformation and propaganda that we witness today. As repeatedly noted, there are countless examples in the Western media blitz on Putin and Russia, but take the implicit conclusion of a Rightwing commentator Roger Boyes in Murdoch’s *The Times*, as indicated by his article’s title (“Not So Different From Putin In Many Ways: It took time for Gorbachev to see Russian President as a blight on its future”, reproduced in the *Press*, 3/9/22). Boyes is ostensibly comparing Gorbachev’s record with that of Putin, following the former’s death, and how supposedly Gorbachev came eventually to see Putin.

Boyes says that when Putin annexed Crimea in 2014, Gorbachev “understood it as a protective move. The risk from Ukraine, it seemed to him, was that a fickle government would try to play off the West against Russia. He opposed the Western sanctions that followed Putin’s land grab. He seemed to suggest the West was trying to instigate a new Cold War. ‘I am absolutely convinced that Putin protects Russia’s interests better than anyone else’, he declared. That certainty weakened over time” (ibid.).

Well, Mikhail Gorbachev was certainly right about the role of Ukraine and its potential for the

West’s ongoing crazy proxy war against Russia. As for Russia’s leadership, he could also still write in 2019 that: “Putin’s popularity and high standing among the population are real, as are his services to Russian society. This has to do with his personal qualities: he is smart, strong-willed, and hard-working. The people appreciate the positive changes they have experienced in their life under Putin. Many of them believe they must hold on to the President if they do not want to lose what they have attained” (“What Is At Stake Now”, op. cit., p110).

### **Calculated Evil Western Disinformation Geared To Create Catastrophe**

Of course, Gorbachev had his own criticisms and reservations to make about aspects of life in Russia, including the nature, role, and centrality of the Presidency. The point I want to make here is to stress again just how calculatedly contrived are such propaganda pieces as that written by Roger Boyes. Gorbachev’s essential message as laid out in “What Is At Stake Now” (op. cit.) is studiously ignored, and his foreign policy position deliberately perverted.

Roger Boyes concludes his brazen propaganda piece with this statement: “Gorbachev understood Putin and the narrow segment of the security elite that had fostered him. But he understood too, that Putin’s obsession with making Russia feel safe from its largely imaginary enemies was blighting Russia’s future” (ibid.). So, we have here Gorbachev’s thesis as publicly proclaimed in “What Is At Stake Now” completely turned on its head by a vicious, lying Murdoch propagandist.

Not only does Boyes himself act as a PR agent for the top one percenters of Western society but he totally misrepresents the aim of the US/NATO advance. As noted, President Joe Biden’s aim of destabilising Russia has even been openly broadcast however much his Administration tries to dissemble afterwards. The Anglo-American political Establishment and its mainstream media are shot through with the most outrageous contradictions.

Horrendously, there is today a dominant malign commitment in so

-called “democratic governments” and the media to deliberately and systematically mislead civilian populations about the dangers of nuclear war and critical factors making for the worst of outcomes. These dangers are fast accumulating from the geopolitical confrontations created by the wealthy power elite seeking their greedy, short-sighted vested interests. A la Rupert Murdoch, they own and control the media.

### Malicious Mainstreaming

“US Secretary of State James Baker's famous 'not one inch eastward' assurance about NATO expansion in his meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1990 was one pledge of a cascade of similar assurances ...” (“How Gorbachev Was Misled...”, op. cit.). Newly released documents show that possible NATO expansion was being considered and rejected by Central and Eastern European leaders from early 1990 and through 1991 (ibid.).

Furthermore, these documents reveal “that subsequent Soviet and Russian complaints about being misled about NATO expansion were founded in written contemporaneous 'memcons' and 'telcons' at the highest levels”. Multiple Western leaders gave such assurances to the Russian government. To quote the relevant sentence in this specific connection: “Declassified documents show security assurances against NATO expansion to Soviet leaders from Baker, Bush, Genscher, Kohl, Gates, Mitterand, Thatcher, Hurd, Major, and Woerner” (ibid.).

To be sure: “The documents reinforce former CIA Director Robert Gates's criticisms of 'pressing ahead with expansion of NATO eastward' [in the 1990s] when Gorbachev and others were led to believe that wouldn't happen” (ibid.). This is all confirmed, if not with reference to such documentation, by Gorbachev himself in “What Is At Stake Now” (op. cit.).

The *Times'* Roger Boyes carefully avoids mentioning NATO at all in his propaganda piece and instead describes the Western push into eastern Europe in these words: “The Putin Doctrine has long since replaced Gorbachev's laissez-faire

policy towards Russia's neighbours. If a country in the post-Soviet space shows signs of entering a formal security or economic partnership with the West it can now expect hostile action from Moscow, starting with disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks, the weaponisation of Russian-speaking minorities, annexations, and invasions” (“Not So Different From Putin...”, op. cit.).

Instead of the reality of a whole phalanx of Western machinations to prise countries out of Moscow's orbit, Boyes slyly conveys the impression that such countries are making free choices about their future direction. Some of us active back in the 1980s in a newly proclaimed nuclear free Aotearoa/NZ know full well what rubbish the American power elite talks when it uses the words “democracy” and “freedom”. These words mean what Washington wants in its malign geopolitics and it will use any foul means if necessary to achieve the goals desired. Disinformation, as peddled by the likes of Roger Boyes, is just one weapon in Washington's armoury.

### Countering The Eagle's Claws

We have the great irony in Boyes's article that he levels criticism at President Vladimir Putin for “building up police powers and diverting scarce resources into creating a huge invasion force” (ibid.). Not only has Putin's invasion force in Ukraine proved to be very weak in conventional terms and underfunded for his country's enormously spread borders, the NATO nations actually spend about 20 times more on so-called “defence” than Russia.

Furthermore, the US alone spends at least more than ten times what Russia spends on its military. These facts alone show up the absolute hogwash of NATO's posturing about the Russian threat. America's social well-being in particular, especially for poorer people, suffers immensely as a consequence. The political fall-out is mounting (e.g., “Historians Privately Warn Biden That America's Democracy Is Teetering”, *Press*, 13/8/22).

Of course, there is one huge critical caveat here about increasing pressure on Russia as posted by

even Rightwing pundits like *Stuff/Press* Political Editor Luke Malpass (“Putin, The Rat, And Why...”, op. cit.). Russia actually has the most nuclear weapons of any country. Since the Motherland has, in fact, been weak in conventional forces compared with the massive Western line-up, it has sought to build up a nuclear arsenal, including super-sonic nuclear weapons capable of eluding any anti-missile defence that the US and its allies could come up with.

As the Australian militarist Professor David Kilcullen has argued, the 1991 Gulf War demonstrated to America's rivals that they could not hope to defeat it in a conventional war and needed to develop other strategies and tactics (“The Dragon And The Snakes: How The Rest Learned To Fight The West”, Scribe, 2000). In Kilcullen's terminology, the dragon is China and the snakes include nations like Russia and guerrilla or terrorist enemies of the US and the West in general (ibid.).

Kilcullen, ironically, was a counter-insurgency (COIN) adviser to US General David Petraeus during the so-called “surge” of US troops into Iraq during the period January 2007 to July 2008. The surge proved to be a crucial recruitment factor in the rise of ISIS and thus yet another blowback for the imperialists. In another of the mainstream media's endless perversities, Kilcullen was paraded about as a COIN expert during the height of the ISIS rampage!

Professor David Kilcullen is an enthusiast of the Jakarta Method of mass murder for the US-led West's enemies. More specifically, he endorses the Phoenix version of the Method. Intelligence expert Douglas Valentine points out that “Kilcullen was a COIN adviser to the Bush and Obama Administrations and in 2004 he called for a global Phoenix operation” (“The CIA As Organised Crime”, op. cit., p23; see David Kilcullen, “Countering Global Insurgency”, *Small Wars Journal*, September-November 2004). Kilcullen said that Phoenix style organisation and death squads would be “highly effective” for safeguarding the Western lifestyle (ibid., p24).

## Contriving Cynical Geopolitical PR Crap

Over the years, the US-headed NATO poured into eastern Europe torrents of money, techniques and agents of societal and political manipulation, as it has done in so many countries all over the world, in pursuit of its corporate and geopolitical interests. The US State Department, the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), TNCs, etc. have worked over-time for these objectives with all the accompanying PR.

Both before and after the 2014 neo-fascist coup that the US organised in Ukraine these American outfits have saturated the country with Western weaponised means of foreign control. There are apparently some 150 PR firms on hand to orchestrate the news and narrative for Western audiences, as well as Ukraine's own population.

As President Putin remarked in July 2021, he "saw little point in meeting President Volodymyr Zelensky to discuss the fighting in eastern Ukraine" ... since: "Key issues for Ukraine are not resolved in Kyiv, but in Washington and to a certain extent in Berlin and Paris" ("Ukraine Handed Over To Europe And US, Says Putin", *Press*, 2/7/22).

An especially good analytical article in CAM's portfolio on Ukraine is one by long-time social justice activist and writer Charles Pierce, who very usefully sets out a lot of his facts and key points in summary list form, 17/9/22, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2022/09/17/ukraine-war-divided-left-social-patriots-and-the-anti-imperialism-of-fools/>). Looking back there were indeed many years of accumulating Western subversion of Ukraine and eventual provocation for war ("Ukraine: The CIA's Proxy", op. cit.).

As mentioned earlier, in his *Times'* opinion piece Roger Boyes makes out it has just been a simple matter of the eastern European states freely choosing what path to take without any outside interference or influence from the Anglo-American axis & co. Yet even the emblematic anti-Soviet Polish union leader Lech Walesa was a CIA agent! ("The CIA As Organised Crime, op. cit., p135).

## West Squanders Opportunities For Peaceful Cooperation

Towards the end of his succinct tract, Mikhail Gorbachev recalls his earlier description of "how Russia was too weak after the collapse of the USSR to make a clear decision on what direction its foreign policy should take. While the US strove for a unipolar world, Russia responded hesitantly to events and challenges that directly touched on its interests" ("What Is At Stake Now", op. cit., p107).

"While there was near unanimity in both Russia and many other countries that a unipolar world harboured great dangers", with the advent to office of President Putin at the turn of the century in May 2000, the Kremlin was open to dialogue and negotiation (ibid.). "... Putin emphasised that Russia recognised the role of the West, and the USA above all, in world politics and the world economy. Russia took several steps that accommodated the West. Putin was the first head of state to call the US President directly after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001" (ibid.).

Indeed, Putin's positive approach was most pronounced. "He offered wide-ranging support in the fight against terrorism and opened Russian airspace for deliveries of military goods to Afghanistan. *Russia was ready for a partnership with the West, including NATO* (my emphasis). Russia was also willing to be flexible on issues in dispute, provided its own interest were taken into account".

"Neither then, nor later, did Russia's foreign policy proclaim the goals often attributed to it. Russia never sought the 'rebirth of the empire', 'zones of influence' or geopolitical expansion. But even Russia's natural interest in integration processes with its neighbours and closer cooperation with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was met with distrust and sometimes open pushback from the West. Our Western partners also failed to appreciate the initiative of then-President Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 to create a new Europe-wide security system reinforced by consultation and conflict-prevention mechanisms" (ibid.).

## Contesting The West's Pernicious Power Plays

Gorbachev sums up the result of the West's pernicious power plays. "In general, it must be said Russia's attempt at constructive interaction was not acknowledged by the West. The Western leaders did not show a real willingness for dialogue or for accommodating Russia on issues of vital importance to it" (ibid., pp 107/8). "These included the enlargement of NATO, the problems of strategic stability and missile defence, trade and economic relations and Europe's energy supply. Every step Russia took was eyed suspiciously by the West, and it was unjustly accused of wanting to revive the Soviet Union and take geopolitical revenge" (ibid., p 108).

For certain, Gorbachev points out that: "Russia had much more reason to criticise its Western partners, as President Putin finally did at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007" (ibid.). Although this speech was called a "declaration of a new Cold War", the former Secretary-General of the Soviet Union, and the person who initiated its dismemberment, finds in Putin's speech "much that any sensible person must agree with" (ibid.).

In Gorbachev's opinion, Putin's speech was certainly not aggressive, nor "anti-American, anti-Western", or expressive of an "uncooperative attitude" (ibid.). Far from it! What President Putin made clear was that in the light of negative developments in recent years, "Russia would in future pursue an independent foreign policy" (ibid.). From Russia's perspective, "a unipolar model for the modern world is not only unacceptable but not viable" for the future prospects of humankind (ibid.). Putin upheld "the UN Charter as the only mechanism for approving the use of military force as a last resort" (ibid.).

## Poking Both Gorbachev And Gaia In The Eye

Gorbachev cited the additional points in Putin's speech about how "it is necessary to find a balance between different national interests"; and: "That no state may force its own legal system on another state" (ibid.). These were the very reasonable considerations that the Russian leadership endorsed at the time. Consequently,

Gorbachev cannot “see how one can object to them” (ibid.).

*Finally, in 2022, the West has certainly forced Putin into a desperate corner! Biden & co are arrogantly stupid, evil, and blind to the very max!! Biden has even crazily boasted that he won't be intimidated!* The West has demonstrated its moral bankruptcy again and again. Russia had made reasonable appeal after appeal for meaningful dialogue and cooperation on important international issues. These appeals were spurned. Once more, it is apposite to strongly stress here how the imperial ambitions of US/NATO have ended up in undercutting any realistic hope for meaningful cooperation with Russia on world problems and put the whole world in crisis.

### **The Militarisation Of World Politics**

The sub-heading immediately above is the title of the opening chapter of Mikhail Gorbachev's book. His very first paragraph indeed declares: “*World politics is moving in an extremely dangerous direction. Militaristic and destructive tendencies are on the rise*” (my emphasis) (ibid., p3). He denounces the American decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty as “a major blow to the world's security” (ibid.).

As I contend throughout this article, geopolitical confrontation is to be the continuous name of the game in US plans for world dominance, given the reigning zombie mindset and arrogance of ever-lasting superiority for the US and its mates! The crazies are certainly out there, as bad as ever. Daniel Ellsberg well warns about them in “The Domsday Machine” (op. cit.).

Gorbachev most aptly states, given what the Russian leadership had done towards ending the Cold War: “The Soviet Union, and its successor, Russia, thus had the right to expect that our country's security interests would be taken into account in this new Europe. We viewed the Charter of Paris as the start of a development towards a shared, indivisible security” (“What Is At Stake Now”, op. cit., p12).

However, so very unfortunately for all humankind, the spirit of the Charter of Paris slipped away. Not a single step was taken to imple-

ment the Charter's commitment to peaceful cooperation and stability in any meaningful fashion. Indeed, nothing was done “to 'develop mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts among the participating States” (ibid.).

Gorbachev lays it out plainly on the table: “Ignoring the commitments of the Charter of Paris was just one symptom of a peculiar disease afflicting the Western political elite in the first decade after the end of the Cold War: *triumphalism*” [my emphasis] (ibid.). This myopic short-term, self-serving triumphalism carries on relentlessly, if nowadays with an increasingly desperate edge.

### **NATO On The March!**

Instead of acknowledging the end of the Cold War as a cooperatively achieved and mutually beneficial success – indeed, for all peoples of the world, “the West declared itself the victor. For the West, the Cold War did not come to an end until the Soviet Union did. American leaders attributed this to a policy taken from strength. *They concluded that it was now necessary to further boost their military power, impose their own will and create a unipolar world, an American empire. The consequences are obvious, in the Middle East and North Africa, Yugoslavia and Ukraine. Even in Europe, the very continent that lived through two world wars! This is inexcusable*” [my emphasis] (ibid., p13).

As Gorbachev says, in the light of recent events (i.e., as he was seeing them in 2019): “*The USA wants to dominate world politics by relying on military superiority... In the process, the USA wants to marginalise the UN and the Security Council and, in effect, replace them with NATO – a military alliance that is not only enlarging its own territory but that also aims to expand its 'sphere of influence' all over the world*” (ibid., pp4/5). *NZ is proving to be a compliant, conformist sucker for the imperial imperatives of US/NATO and its global reach! Our Government, and any foreseeable NZ government, is just a patsy for Biden & co. and their successors – if we manage to survive that long!?*

It has got so bad that some NZ mainstream commentators are unashamed PR pundits for NATO's warmongering imperial

advances and neo-fascist bent. For instance, take Josie Pagani, a long-time conservative commentator so beloved by the mainstream media, openly cheering on the US empire – and in a sickening moniker – “*the cool kids at NATO*” [my emphasis] (“UN And Commonwealth Must Step Up Or Step Out”, *Press*, 1/7/22).

Pagani indulges in a flagrantly warmongering promotion for the nuclear-armed NATO. She ignores the alliance's brutal and flaunted illegal record of interventionist adventures from Yugoslavia through Libya and Afghanistan. She actually portrays this “Cold War outfit” rising “to the defence of international law and the right of states to be free and independent”, as supposedly shown in the case of Ukraine (ibid.).

Pagani proceeds to praise a militarist nuclear alliance, which aims to position first strike nuclear weapons in a “Cuban-missile”-style crisis on Russia's very border. NATO's objective is currently being conducted via a proxy war of attrition intended to destabilise Russia as much as possible. It is all stunning zombie stuff, comprising American-inspired perversely contrived propaganda about alleged evil versus good. It all amounts to the deliberate provocation of WWII!

She bizarrely exults in the fact that: “NATO is meaningfully supporting its values by sending weapons to Ukraine, and helping rally more than 40 countries to contribute more, and increase their aid. This muscular response to Ukraine has made NATO increasingly popular with voters too” (ibid.). We thus have militarist Western imperialism being urged on to the maximum whatever the risks for all humankind.

### **Media Promoting Murderous Militarist Imperialism**

In a world so obviously heading for growing confrontation and conflict, with mounting flashpoints from Taiwan to the Korean Peninsula, let alone Ukraine, Josie Pagani's propaganda spiel lamentably typifies the overwhelming thrust of the Western capitalist mainstream media and the narrow, vested interests that own and/or effectively control them. Blatant, obscene warmongering is paraded as moral



rectitude! (e.g., check out the CAM and World BEYOND War Websites as cited and recommended earlier).

In more PR for the US/NATO military-industrial complex, Pagani enthuses that: “Nearly 80% of member-country citizens now support maintaining or increasing defence spending. More than 70% support their countries’ membership in NATO. Finland and Sweden are joining after more than 100 years of neutrality” (“UN And Commonwealth Must Step Up Or Step Out”, op. cit.). *Yippee, let’s annihilate the whole living planet!*

She goes on to dismiss the UN and the Commonwealth as “moribund” and irrelevant. As a Russophobe like so many in the Western media, Pagani’s role is to demonise President Putin and anything bad that Russia does – or can be so construed as doing – while contentedly overlooking all the multitudinous war and human rights crimes of the West.

Since the “blowback” of 9/11, the West’s victims have been multiplying rapidly as the empire claws out into the rest of the world (“Blowback: The Costs And Consequences Of American Empire”, Time Warner, 2000/02; & “The Sorrows Of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, And The End Of The Republic”, Verso, 2004 – both books by Chalmers Johnson).

There has been at least a million unfortunate people dead due to the illegal Anglo-American invasion of Iraq; over 164,000 dead Afghans, and many more otherwise victims as a result of the former US/NATO occupation of their countries. Afghanistan is now wracked by looming starvation; as well as being subject to continued Western callousness and killing as coordinated by the Biden Administration. *The Western political Establishment and mainstream media could not give a damn!*

Then we have the ongoing crucifixion of Yemen; the US-orchestrated recolonisation of Africa; regular illegal drone murders; multiple covert actions; violent special forces’ raids; economic, trade and “aid” manipulation-coercive measures; migration barriers; plus, the wholesale use of sanctions to keep the world’s rebellious poor in line; etc.,

etc. While the US works systematically to undermine certain targeted countries in the name of democracy, it props up dictatorships in others – all again with the close conniving collaboration of the mainstream media (“20 Dictators Currently Supported By The US”, David Swanson, Barnes & Noble, 2020). Existing dictatorship backed by America range from Egypt to Thailand, and from Saudi Arabia to Rwanda.

### **Genocidal War Crimes And Mass Murder Go On**

The reputable Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, US, reports (updated as of November, 2021): “At least 929,000 people have been killed by direct war violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and Pakistan” (<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human>). Many more than this number have died indirectly due to the societal disruption caused by hostilities, e.g., by the destruction of hospitals and vital infrastructure, environmental contamination, starvation, among other war-related problems (ibid.).

The US post-9/11 wars have forcibly displaced *at least 38 million people* (my emphasis) in and from the countries named just above, plus also Somalia, Philippines, and Libya (ibid.). “This number exceeds the total displaced by every war since 1900, except WWII” (ibid.). The extensive human misery has meant little to the West, other than instead dramatically driving the rise of far Right, racist anti-refugee and anti-immigrant movements. Some such sentiment has even surfaced in antipodean Aotearoa/NZ, sparked to a degree by the Opposition political parties of National and ACT.

As the Indian writer and social activist Arundhati Roy aptly wrote in 2004 of a remark made in July 1988 by former CIA Director and “President George Bush the First”, when Bush said, “*I don’t care what the facts are*”: – “*What a perfect maxim for the New American Empire*” (“The Ordinary Person’s Guide To Empire”, Harper Perennial, in the chapter on ‘Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy’, pp104-32, quote on p104).

Roy was commenting on Bush’s

remark about the terrible incident when “the USS Vincennes, a missile cruiser stationed in the Persian Gulf, accidentally shot down an Iranian airliner and killed 290 civilian passengers” (ibid.). She adds the pertinent observation that: “*Perhaps a slight variation on the theme would be more apposite: The facts can be whatever we want them to be!*” (ibid.).

*No worries then, eh? – all grist to the imperial mill for all the propagandists in the NZ media and political Establishment with regard to the unfolding Ukraine crisis/war. From a broader perspective, the West’s body count and trail of societal wreckage in its war both on rival powers and the world’s poor far and away outweighs that of Russia and China together to date in the practice of foreign policy.*

### **Bullshit Propaganda Rules Supreme**

Stuff/Press writer Josie Pagani cites the fact that the: “Need for change in the world today is as great as it was in 1945” (“UN And Commonwealth”, op. cit.). She goes on to extoll the Western-imposed order as set up by the “Allied Countries” and their creation of “the UN, the World Bank, the OECD, to make the world a safer place”, and enjoins similar action now. In her words: “We need the same vision and muscular courage today to defend universal values, international law, and human rights” (ibid.). And in the most outrageous Orwellian style, the great beacon of light for Pagani is NATO!

To be sure, her notion of “muscular courage” takes the form of killing enough people to achieve the kind of geopolitical outcomes she wants. Pagani quotes the very Rightwing so-called “Russia expert Anne Applebaum” about Putin’s alleged aim of reviving the old Soviet empire (ibid.). This is utter rubbish as I have recorded both above, and in previous articles in PR and FCW, let alone all the relevant resources on the websites of CAM, World BEYOND War, and RootsAction, etc. Ever since the US-instigated neo-fascist coup in 2014, and even long before, Russia has been clearly very much in defensive mode in trying to protect its borders against the imperial West.

Anne Appelbaum is a notorious

Russophobic American neo-con, who cynically perverts the truth of the Ukraine crisis. As Mikhail Gorbachev has well pointed out before the outbreak of war on the current scale, the evidence lies in the very well-documented record – however denied – of US/NATO perfidy, and the efforts made in the past by the Russian leadership for peaceful cooperation (“What Is At Stake Now”, op. cit.). Putin certainly feels nostalgia for the old Soviet empire and considers that Gorbachev made a grave mistake, but Russia has been on the back-foot for decades.

Again, President Putin can certainly be ruthless and brutal enough when motivated but his career stands as testament to his grip on reality. He, like so many Russians, might feel a sense of betrayal by Gorbachev about the old empire, and express nostalgia for it in rhetoric but he has only reacted with violence under the US/NATO hammer of real threats to the Motherland. Meanwhile, as ever, daily murderous global depredations go on – all courtesy of the US-led Western empire.

As recorded, Russian forces have not had the constant imperial adventures and thus actual war-training and weapons development like those of the US. The blundering invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has clearly demonstrated this, and Russia's lack of capacity for this sort of military enterprise must have been well known to NATO intelligence.

**Western Warmongering Goes Off The Planet!**

Let me pull together at this stage some very important points. In order to cover up their predatory penetration into the former Soviet republics and client states, the US/NATO brigade operatives have camouflaged their real objectives over decades by maliciously concocted and hugely inflated accusations about their enemy's capacities and alleged objectives. It is of the greatest concern, however, that Russia has compensated for its relatively weak – compared with the full range of NATO's reach and armaments – conventional capacities by an increased reliance on nuclear weapons and strike power capability.

*So, let's really go zombie, eh, and*

*try and pressure Putin and his comrades into feeling the Ukraine War is hopelessly lost and that NATO's war machine is coming right up on Russia's borders ready to attack whenever!* Let's make them feel any meaningful negotiations for peace-making and compromise are just a waste of time, and then see if Putin really has the guts to start the nuclear war that he has been threatening... We will try and destabilise Russia, and get him tossed out of power before he reaches for the button.

So goes the crazy warmongering line of the current US/NATO leadership and its brain-dead PR media, along with all the rest of their Western backers! Even pro-US, war-mongering Political Science Professors like media favourite Robert Patman of Otago University can push this line, prepared to call Putin's bluff about nuclear missile

trous. Professor Patman calls Putin “delusional”. Well, there are surely lots of delusional Western warmongers banging away in extreme fashion on Russia's borders.

**Provoking WWII!?**

The evil US President Joe Biden, who has been the prime mover, both under the Obama Administration and his own Presidency, in deliberately provoking the Ukraine crisis/war, keeps pushing harder and harder to try and fatally disrupt Russian society. At the same time, he keeps giving out warnings in his eminently slimy, sinister, gimlet-eyed style to Moscow not to resort to chemical/biological or nuclear weapons in retaliation.

But he is intent on forcing Putin further into a more desperate corner. If Vladimir Putin is a real control freak, as well as a Russian patriot, the obvious dangers could not



threats. Let us then extend this particular scenario.

Whatever his obvious faults, Vladimir Putin, as endorsed by Gorbachev, brought stability to Russia in the wake of the greedy cowboy capitalist era under President Boris Yeltsin, as then fostered by the Anglo-American axis and its cultivation of wealthy oligarchs (e.g., see: “Failed Crusade: “America And The Tragedy Of Post-Communist Russia”, Stephen F Cohen, WW Norton & Co, 2000).

That anything positive in today's world could come of a Russia inevitably plunged into turmoil is simply the ultimate in fantastical thinking. Revenge seeking ultra-nationalists could instead start firing off nuclear missiles, or whatever. One way or another, the fallout would be disas-

be more ominous. And, again, the reality of forcing Putin into a desperate corner is so at odds with all the pantomime Western propaganda of painting him as virtually Old Nick himself!

Both nations of Russia and the US are ruled by power elites prepared to blow up everything in a last gasp roll of the dice. Anthony Blinken, the militarist US Secretary of State, declared on the first day of the NPT Conference in August 2022, that “the US would only use nuclear weapons in the most extreme circumstances”, a position that Dr Ivana Hughes, Director of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF), found morally and ethically repugnant (NAPF At The NPT, op. cit.).

We should roundly condemn both

Putin and Blinken for their nuclear threats, which indeed mirror each other. Most ironically, Blinken has featured on TV, saying that Putin's warnings might signal catastrophe for many countries and that this was totally unacceptable. *But he and the rest of the Biden Administration – in the most extreme irony imaginable – still keep piling the pressure on Putin and his coterie!*

We really have entered an extreme zombie era of humankind, graced by some of the worst kind of global leadership possible. As Dr Hughes makes clear, it has been the US which has led the nuclear weapon era, with both testing and actual use (ibid.). *Her own country is now planning to spend nearly two trillion dollars in pursuit of geopolitical power and the consequent extermination of humankind by modernising and developing new weapons!*

### **Exacting A Bloody Pound Of Flesh In Aid Of The Empire**

*Stuff/Press* political commentator Josie Pagani is simply another mouthpiece for the flood of eminently hypocritical and malign imperialist American propaganda (“UN And Commonwealth”, op. cit.). She paints a picture of Putin and his Government as wanting to conquer all of Ukraine, and intent on rejecting a peaceful, constructive compromise settlement of the war, even though he has turned instead to try and shore up the Russian-speaking east. Her spiel is just a travesty of all the evidence and record to date of what has actually happened in the train of the US/NATO's very aggressive project of prising Ukraine out of Russia's traditional orbit.

Russia's failed attempt to decapitate the US/NATO-backed puppet Zelensky regime, and which proved such a grossly miscalculated overreach in the circumstances, has inflamed the civil war in all kinds of ways since it gave the West the excuse to greatly step up its military involvement. But Pagani is so blindly belligerent that she wants “Putin and his war criminal generals” and “funders” punished in order to force them and “the Russian people (to) see the war as a terrible mistake” (ibid.).

Once again, we see illustrated here the breathtakingly enthusiastic stupidity of escalating a conventional war on the very borders of a nucle-

ar-armed state – *to be sure, an unparalleled “terrible mistake”!* Meantime, all the American war criminal Presidents (highlighted by Pink Floyd's Roger Waters in his recent American music tour) and their State terrorist mates are apparently forgotten and forgiven for their misdeeds, along with all the “collateral damage” inflicted on so many millions of people. Pagani, in unconscious self-satire, can actually talk about extending “new security arrangements . . . to deal with “any other country threatened by a militant bully” (ibid.). *Colin Powell would go into peals of laughter!*

To be sure, the US/NATO long-planned and manipulated subversion of Ukraine is proving a terrible mistake for its inhabitants (for background and context, and regular relevant, up-to-date information analytical assessments, and opinion, refer to the entries of “Ukraine” & “War In Ukraine” in Categories, CAM, op. cit. “Ukraine: The CIA's 75-Year-Old Proxy”, op. cit.).

### **Unleashing The Horrors Of World War**

Josie Pagani concludes her article by citing another notorious neo-con - “Historian Francis Fukuyama” talking to Christine Amanpour on CNN about how people in Western democracies have mistakenly got complacent about “the peace and prosperity” they have been enjoying since “the fall of the Berlin Wall” (“UN And Commonwealth”, op. cit.). Fukuyama is sending out the message that Westerners need to work very hard to maintain such a status quo in the future (ibid.). This echoes the imperial militarist line of Professor David Kilcullen in his “The Dragon And The Snakes”, op. cit.).

Professor Fukuyama, of course, in an earlier time had made an egregious fool of himself by predicting an endless future of Pax Americana capitalism across the whole world, and even an “End to History”! But Pagani is perversely keen to push his latest message. She actually declaims that: “NATO alone has understood this moment. The crises we now face demand that the Commonwealth and other institutions step up, too, or clear out. The day of the way things were is done” (ibid.).

So, let us look more closely at the line of argument being wheeled out here. We have a writer unashamedly giving us the model of the warmongering US-led NATO nuclear alliance and its imperial advances around the globe, including in the Pacific, as the way for the future. Pagani defines “the crises we now face” as “a long war in Europe, global economic stress, poverty, an emerging new Cold War between the US and China, and the global problem of climate change” (ibid.). Yet, her solution, in essence, as illustrated by her advocacy for the “cool kids at NATO”, is the violent takeover of Ukraine, the further advance of Western imperialism, and escalation to WWII.

*This is ghastly stuff indeed!* Pagani's position is riddled with deep contradictions, as is the case with so many of the agents of the corporate mainstream media. We have seen that she is obviously neo-con. In fact, her views reflect the neo-fascist trend of Western capitalism as resource conflicts and the struggle for profitable investments rack up around the globe.

It is now a state of the West openly against the rest, as preached by the likes of Pagani and a host of Rightwing ideologues and strategists like “death squad” pundit Professor David Kilcullen. Violent, or potentially violent, geopolitical confrontation and conflicts of interest are being openly embraced, even flaunted, and paraded by so much of the media and political commentators.

### **Capitalist Contradictions Running Crazy Amok!**

The seemingly stunning contradictions in Josie Pagani's case include the fact that the note at the end of this *Press* opinion piece says she “spent six years as Executive Director of the Council for International Development” (CID). Now, ever since foreign aid became a feature of Western foreign policy, most aid has been directed for geopolitical purposes and the cultivation of capitalism in the so-called “developing world” or “Third World”. But it is sobering to consider the fact of someone with Pagani's views having held such a position in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Back in the 1970s, I was an activist

supporter of Corso over a considerable period, both in Christchurch and Wellington. Corso campaigned hard for justice in economic and trade relations between the West and developing countries. As a consequence, it came to draw some strong criticism from the Muldoon National government for its Leftwing stance. Muldoon labelled it “Marxist” - *oh dear!* In particular, Corso backed the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), which was overwhelmingly endorsed by majority vote by Third World nations at the UN in 1974. NZ’s CID was a leading NGO in this campaign and I enjoyed working with its progressive leadership in this particular era.

Initially on the international scene, even some Western countries supported the NIEO. One was the Whitlam Labor government in Australia, which was trying to protect its own natural resources from foreign exploitation and control just like Third World nations. However, a CIA-organised coup got rid of the Whitlam government in 1975, surely a symbolic harbinger of things to come. NZ’s Kirk Labour government similarly supported the Third World bid for the NIEO. But Kirk died suddenly in August 1974, and Muldoon’s National government was to soon take power.

Of course, the hard core of the Anglo-American axis – i.e., the US and Britain – were vehemently opposed to the NIEO and were two of the six nations voting against it. Because the developed countries came to form a united and implacable opposition bloc that used all kinds of ploys to sabotage the NIEO initiatives and proposals, the whole project crumbled away (for the concerns of poor countries, refer to: “Commodities And The Third World”, Goutam K Sarkar, Oxford University Press, 1983).

Instead, the US & co. further developed a capitalist “free trade” programme, geared to grease and subsidise the wheels of Western corporate power (“Recolonization: GATT, The Uruguay Round & The Third World”, Chakravarthi Raghavan, Zed Books, 1990; “Fixing The Rules: North-South Issues In International Trade And The GATT Uruguay Round”, Kevin Watkins, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1992; & “The New Protectionism: Protecting The

Future Against Free Trade”, Tim Lang and Colin Hines, Earthscan Pubs., 1993/4). NZ has long been involved in the West’s unjust and unsustainable capitalist exploitation of both peoples and the environment. *TNCs rule, ok?! NZ always thinks only of its own short-term, narrowly focused self-interest.*

While historically there was an industrial component to the NIEO, the proposed framework of cooperative international development would have allowed an increasing orientation to greater environmental awareness and sustainability. It would have enabled meaningful efforts to tackle global warming far earlier. At the same time, it would have provided far better protection for the human rights of poorer peoples, and fairer shares in the distribution and allocation of resources.

### **Growing And Compounding Geopolitical Confrontation**

But the rulers of corporate globalisation wanted none of this, as was so ironically signalled by a former NATO Commander in 1991 after the collapse of Soviet Union. To quote: “Now that the Soviet threat has receded (Sir James) Eberle was candid about the role of security pacts like ANZUS within the Western alliance. Such pacts will exist not so much to defend the West from an external threat, he explains, but to serve as platforms for launching forces to ensure our access to key resources in the Third World ... to confront those who do not recognise the norms of civilisation about who should be the haves, and those who should be the have-nots” (*NZ Listener*, 8/7/91).

With the big expansion in 2022 of NATO’s ready reaction force in tandem with its proxy war on Russia in Ukraine and general militarisation against both Russia and China, the West is gearing up for full-on geopolitical confrontation with designated enemies across the globe. Resource conflicts and wars have a very long history and since 2001 have really fired up – in a context of gathering environmental disaster – and increasing impetus and menace to all humankind (“Resource Wars: The New Landscape Of Global Conflict”, Owl Books, 2001/02; “The Race For What’s Left: The Global Scramble For The World’s Last Resources”, Metropolitan Books, 2012; & “All

Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon’s Perspective on Climate Change”, Henry Holt and Co, 2019 – all three books by Michael T Klare).

A media report in August 2022 described how several leading Anglo-American kleptocratic oligarchs are funding a new wave of geopolitical competition with China in the Arctic in the hunt for “strategic metals” like nickel and cobalt (“US Tech Barons Racing China For Rare Arctic Metals”, *Press*, 20/8/22 – per the *Times*). Portentously: “... some of the world’s wealthiest technology barons ... including Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Sir Richard Branson” are financing Kobold Metals to extract these mineral resources in melting Greenland (*ibid.*). We can also note NATO’s warning about competition from both Russia and China versus the West in this region (“NATO Wary Of Rivals In Arctic”, *SST*, 28/8/22).

### **Stirring Up Conflicts**

Get the irony of the massive contradictions now at the core of Western society and its empire. We have some of the planet’s greediest kleptocrats, who – along with a few more of their mates – own a staggering half of the world’s wealth, continuing to plunder Earth’s environment in order to create so-called “green technology”. They are doing this supposedly to try and save the planetary habitat, which they and their ilk have been destroying for many years!

Their special focus is electric cars, vehicles that in fact take a lot more to make and use in terms of mineral resources, especially rare minerals. *Such is the bankrupt high-tech, high-consumerist vision of the rapacious West!* (“The Rare Metals War: The Dark Side Of Clean Energy And Digital Technologies”, Guillaume Pitron, Scribe, 2020; “Imploding Capitalism: Grappling With The Neoliberal Militarist Market”, *Watchdog* 157, August 2021, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/57/08.html>).

In early August 2022, the visit of the 82-year-old Democrat Speaker of the House of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, to Taiwan sent the Chinese government into a paroxysm of fury. China had openly warned Pelosi and the Biden Administration that any visit there would be interpreted as

an act of aggression. It responded to her visit with a simulated full-on invasion of the island and an angry demonstration of concerted firepower in nearby waters surrounding the landmass.

The US is now guilty of provoking the imminent probability of major wars on *two* fronts. It has greatly aggravated the looming violent threat of China against what the latter regards as the renegade province of Taiwan – a breakaway part of China, backed furthermore for many years by Washington & co. President Biden followed up Pelosi's visit with renewed commitment to defend Taiwan and has further bolstered its armoury, affirming earlier pledges of support (e.g., "Biden Pledges Military Protection For Taiwan", *Press*, 24/5/22; "Taiwan Gets Big US Arms Boost", *SST*, 4/9/22).

China's simulated invasion exercise could be the prelude to the real thing. Pelosi, of course, had previously visited Ukraine, preaching the same sort of hypocritical spiel as she did in Taiwan. She has been out in the field again warmongering, promising this time "to support Armenia as a beacon for democracy amid signs that the Kremlin's influence is waning in the former Soviet state" ("Pelosi Woos 'Dissatisfied' Kremlin Ally", *Press*, 20/9/22).

By late August 2022, it was estimated that: "About 9,000 Ukrainian soldiers and at least 5,000 civilians (were) thought to have been killed since the invasion began, along with 25,000 Russian troops" ("Burnham Soldier Dies In Ukraine", *Press*, 25/8/22). The horrors of this war go hand in hand with all the Western belligerence recorded in this article, as opposed to calls for peace. Many ordinary people are suffering horrendously – *victims in all kinds of ways!*

Meanwhile, further afield, the dangerous tit-for-tat sparring between Israel and Iran and the civil war in Yemen, fuelled by the Western-backed fundamentalist Saudi regime, continue to inflict horrible suffering. Things are hotting up too on the Korean Peninsula. As well, there is persistent internecine fighting in countries such as the Congo, Myanmar, and Ethiopia, along with a host of other conflicts of varying size, significance, and

intensity.

International aid agency Save the Children identifies a list of current global "Emergencies: Climate Crisis; Yemen; Syria; covid-19; East Africa Food Crisis; Rohingya Crisis; Ukraine; Afghanistan" (Save The Children New Zealand–Support Save The Children New Zealand: <https://www.savethechildren.org.nz/>). We can take note here that US-led forces have been operative for many years, both covertly and overtly, in Yemen, Syria, East Africa, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. Such is the plethora of bloody mess and blowback that American-orchestrated interventions can create and perpetuate.

These highly problematic issues and foci of concern all add up to a most disturbing Big Picture of a world inching more and more to the ultimate knife-edge as region after region collapses into strife of some sort. Divisions are increasing both within and between nations. Again, as competition between the West and the majority of the world's population heats up the potential for that final fatal mis-step highlighted by the UN Secretary-General can only grow ("UN Chief Issues Grim Warning ...", *op. cit.*).

### **American Aggro Just Goes On And On ...**

Just as the US has shown its treachery in breaking promises to Russia not to expand NATO beyond Germany into eastern Europe and the former republics and client states of the Soviet Union, so has it cynically broken official international agreements made with China about Taiwan (*Covert Action Bulletin*: "Pelosi's Visit to Taiwan Could Be Start of World War III", Rachel Hu and Chris Garaffa, 2/8/22, <https://covertactionmagazine.com> > Podcasts). Once again, the evidence on this is clear.

Following President Nixon's historic rapprochement with China in 1972 – as a way in particular of getting greater clout against the Soviet Union by the "divide and rule" strategy – a series of communiques and agreements solidified America's recognition of mainland China as the sole legitimate government of China (*ibid.*).

Moreover, as Ken Hammon, Professor of East Asian and Global

History at New Mexico State University, has pointed out, the US was consequently obligated on legal grounds to reduce military assistance to Taiwan (*ibid.*). But since the 1970s, America has instead – *to put it mildly!* – grossly violated the officially formulated and mutually agreed policy with China regarding armaments supplied to Taiwan (*ibid.*). And it goes on doing so.

An invasion by China of Taiwan would certainly in the present circumstances be a hugely unjustified act. This geopolitical confrontation is crying out for a reasoned and civilised solution. Yet if the US positions more powerful weaponry on this island, and there is even the potential – *if the Taiwanese government were crazy enough!* – for the stationing of nuclear weapons, then China would understandably consider the forces there as constituting a very dangerous American foreign base right at its backdoor. China is already intent on breaking out beyond the confines set by the US and its allies. Hence its engagement with the Solomon Islands, and elsewhere in the Pacific and beyond.

American nuclear war-fighting plans obviously treat a raft of island nations from Britain to Taiwan, and from Japan to even the state of Hawaii as unsinkable aircraft carriers, aimed at spreading war far and wide away from the Homeland as physically possible. WBW and other peace/anti-nuclear groups are campaigning to end military bases around the planet as these bases comprise a global complex of causes making for war and greatly increasing its risks.

(See: "War Endangers Us" – World BEYOND War Has Developed A Global Security System: An Alternative To War"; "The United States Of War", David Vine's 2020 book, <https://worldbeyondwar.org>; & also The No Bases Campaign – World BEYOND War: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/bases/>). *Anti-Bases Campaign, of course, has been long been a pathfinder in this international movement to try and pre-empt war.*

### **"The War-Horse Is Out Of The Barn!"**

To reinforce the concerns and issues posted so far in this article, I can cite most appropriately some

observations from the American organisation Veterans For Peace (<https://www.veteransforpeace.org>). Its Russia Working Group of Veterans For Peace (RWGVFP) rightly laments that: “The war-horse is out of the barn!” (“Veterans Call for Diplomacy To End The War In Ukraine, Not More Weapons To Escalate It and Risk Nuclear War”, 13/6/22 (ibid.; also per WBW). RWGVFP made the worrying but pertinent observation as to how the public at large and also the peace movement itself are very divided over events in Ukraine. As the group said, the fact that the peace movement is divided is dangerous – it’s exactly what the warmongers want.

Meanwhile, as RWGVFP points out, American-orchestrated sanctions against Russia are causing economic stress in Europe and contributing significantly to food shortages in Africa and Asia. Inflation has soared in comparison with recent years. An energy crisis is now really hurting many Europeans as Russia puts the brakes on gas supplies in reaction to American-inspired sanctions. The costs of goods and material costs and shortages have bit hard as supply chains have faltered and suffered disruption.

President Biden even went crawling to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (you know, the guy whom he had earlier denounced for the horrible murder of *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi!) to try and get cheaper oil by advocating the Kingdom increase production. Biden’s trip and appeal, as well as his now notorious fist-bumping signal of friendship with the Crown Prince, proved fruitless on this matter. Ironically enough, Saudi oil company Aramco has just posted record profits as much of the West suffers a worsening energy crisis. *Blowback in all its forms goes on as ever!*

### **Western War-Mongering For WWII**

Human stupidity driven by a sense of prevailing superior strength is deeply endemic to our species. RWGVFP highlights this pathology further in regard to Ukraine. President Zelensky has at various stages used his saturation media exposure to even call for a No-Fly Zone,

which would have put the US and Russia in direct combat, risking nuclear war (ibid.). “(Meantime), President Biden has refused to even discuss the security assurances Russia has diligently sought” (ibid.).

RWGVFP’s summary of what has been happening can serve as a recap of much of my article so far. This NGO points out that since the Russian invasion in February 2022, the US has poured “more fuel on the fire with weapons, sanctions, and reckless rhetoric” (ibid.). Rather than stop the killing, the US has been pressing hard to try and “weaken Russia” (ibid.). Furthermore, instead of encouraging and embracing diplomacy and peace-making, the Biden Administration is prolonging a war that is so very obviously endangering the entire world.

Such is the mounting cost of democracy as defined by US imperial geopolitics and its increasing neo-fascist edge. *This escalating proxy war on the border of nuclear-armed Russia as promoted by America’s zombie “one percenter” power elite and its corporate mass media is pushing the world ever closer to the brink of complete catastrophe!*

### **An Urgent Appeal For Peace**

Rightly declaring that: “*This is madness!*”, RWGVFP calls “for an entirely different approach” (ibid.). It enjoins a suite of urgent alternative positive actions, which the Biden Administration could promote:

a/ “Support an immediate Cease-fire and Urgent Diplomacy to End the War in Ukraine”;

b/ “Stop Sending Weapons that Will Cause More Death and Terrorism”;

c/ “End Deadly Sanctions that are Hurting People in Russia, Europe, Africa, and the US”;

d/ “Remove Nuclear Weapons from Europe”.

Only an unprecedented international movement of people strongly agitating for genuine and meaningful mediation and negotiations for peace and nuclear disarmament can hope to turn things around in this gathering crisis. It is certainly an ongoing challenge to sift through the various media ac-

counts from a wide range of sources in order to get a clearer picture of events and the underlying factors at work, especially and most importantly, including alternative outlets critical of American and Western foreign policy (e.g., *CAM & WBW*). But there are even heartening indications of resistance to the flood of militarist mainstream media messaging revealed in the Rightwing phalanx itself.

### **Battle For The Public Mind**

For instance, poll results reported in June 2022 by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a Berlin-based think-tank, has found a large bloc of European voters would support territorial losses for Ukraine in return for an end to the war as soon as possible (“US Gives Ukraine \$1.6b Of ‘Crucial’ Military Aid”, *Press*, 17/6/22, per the *Washington Post*, *Telegraph Group*, the *Times*, *AP*). Across the ten countries surveyed, which included Britain, 35% back “peace” while only 22% back “justice”, defined as the position “that only Russia’s clear defeat can bring peace” (ibid.).

The first point about the poll just cited above is that about a third of the respondents wanted Ukraine to make some compromise on territory and the regional identity of the peoples concerned. This exactly tallies with what the Minsk Agreements were about, recognising a form of autonomy for the predominantly Russian-speaking Donbass region.

But the US/NATO puppet regime headed by President Volodymyr Zelensky, the darling of the West, has violated these agreements and was obviously trying to take back the areas concerned by force before Russia’s invasion. As with so much else, this history is just purged down the Orwellian memory-hole by the West’s propaganda machine! The second important point pertains to the poll itself. A question in the poll asked whether the respondents backed “justice” according to the definition given earlier (ibid.). This is very obviously a question loaded with Rightwing bias of the most dangerous sort.

### **Not Caring What The Facts Are**

Just think what this perverse defini-



tion of “justice” really means. “Justice” in this context, whatever its otherwise positive connotations, would mean the victory for a de facto neo-fascist puppet regime controlled by the US and allies, with NATO free to wheel their nuclear missiles right up to the Russian border. So, *stunningly enough*, “justice” here is tantamount in meaning to WWII!

Is the Kremlin going to allow a situation parallel to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis in reverse to develop right on its doorstep without throwing all its weight against it? The answer is obviously no. In 1962, America blatantly threatened world annihilation. *Fast forward to 2022*: the US/NATO proxy war on Russia continues to mount in breadth and intensity and to hell with the land of Ukraine and its people.

The West is clearly not interested in any meaningful negotiations, as has been its track record to date. It could defuse the war virtually overnight by guaranteeing nuclear-free neutrality for Ukraine by both sides and agreeing to no NATO pres-

some heartening signs of growing resistance to this Western impetus towards total war among European peoples. Despite the very biased question on “justice” in the ECFR poll, only about a fifth of respondents said “yes” (ibid.). A third instead backed the practical compromise policy necessary for peace (ibid.).

### Western Propaganda Merchants Double Down

The *Press* article quoted about the ECFR poll is revealing in other ways too (ibid.). According to US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who, as we have seen, is himself very deeply and corruptly involved in the armaments industry, boosting armaments was “crucial” to helping Ukraine repel Russia’s assault in Donbass” (ibid.). It was then reported that the coming days were “critical for Ukraine’s future as Russia makes military gains in the region and key EU countries seek a diplomatic solution” (ibid.).

As it has, in fact, transpired, the high-powered weaponry given Ukraine has turned the tide back

with day-to-day intelligence, surveillance, and targeting. A prime aim was to effectively ruin any chance of a diplomatic solution and recognition for the autonomy of Russian-speaking areas as formerly acknowledged under the Minsk Agreements! “Key EU countries” seeking a “diplomatic solution” had to be stymied at all costs!

It is graphically evident that military aid packages touted as having “crucial” importance go on and on, ever further entrenching and escalating this horrible war with all its dire ultimate dangers. Naturally, of course, only Putin and the Russian military get the blame for escalation. President Putin had earlier warned the West about the risks of escalation in sending more high-powered weaponry to Ukraine (e.g., “Putin Warns West To Stop Arming Ukraine”, *Press*, 5/5/22; “Putin Warns West Not To Send Long-Range Rockets”, *Press*, 7/6/22).

“Allies ‘will stay focused on this for as long as it takes’”, US Defense Secretary Austin has affirmed (“US Gives Ukraine . . .”, op. cit.). This crazy nuclear cowboy has boasted that the US will be digging in its spurs. *In the Pentagon’s terms, this means stirring up turmoil until the world fries in WWII!* And our own Government has gone out of its way to be a part of this rush to Doomsday, exulting in its own eminently stupid militarism. The standard political Establishment-media line, as per US/NATO, is that this is “Putin’s war”.

### Boosting NATO From Ukraine To The Pacific

Indeed, PM Jacinda Ardern in her eagerness to demonstrate her subservience to the Western war machine has gone out of her way to show strong support for the Kyiv regime and opposition to Russia’s “aggression”. Newspaper headlines proclaim the story here like “PM’s Call Assures Ukraine Of NZ Support” (*SST*, 20/3/22) and “Ardern Speaks With Zelensky After NATO Gathering” (*Press*, 1/7/22). She reinforced her position on the Ukraine crisis/war when attending the 77<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly in New York in September 2022. Jacinda Ardern then, formerly celebrated internationally for her inspiring empathy and empathetic political style, has transformed herself into a militarist im-



PM Jacinda Arden, NATO Summit, 2022

ence. But it wants to support the neo-fascist backed regime in Kyiv whatever the dire risks.

Yet, as already noted, there are

on Russia. Not only have the new weapons proved very potent but it is very blatantly clear – as registered – that US/NATO are involved very intimately and heavily involved

perialist a la US/NATO-Five Eyes-etc. ("Biden Talk Has Strengthened Links, Says PM", *Press*, 2/6/22). There is a photo of the "compassionate" Ardern, laughing and joking with Joe Biden, serial killer and geopolitical aggressor in nuclear brinkmanship (ibid.). The supposedly "nuclear free" Ardern has even been openly warmongering herself towards both Russia and China, ironically charging them both with aggression. And so, it goes . . . The usual Western hypocrisy is thus running rampant with our PM theatrically pillorying Putin for perceiving and acting in response to threats in his backyard while sounding off herself about alleged Chinese threats thousands of kilometres away in "our own backyard" (e.g., "PM Denounces China's Solomons Defence Pact", *Press*, 21/4/2022).

Even amid recent criticisms of Russia's intervention in Ukraine, the PM could still actually talk about the need of protecting "our backyard"! In accordance with this sort of rhetoric, she is most enthusiastically embracing militarist alliances, including ever so ironically nuclear-armed NATO, and all the while still proclaiming the values and example of being supposedly "nuclear free". *Hysterical laughter sounding off stage . . .*

### The Crushing Contorted Coils Of Growing Conflict

With regard to Russia, we can actually get the absolutely outrageous Big Lie from Biden & co. that the US/NATO present no threat to Russia, a lie promoted by the likes of the *Times'* Roger Boyes and countless others. It is all, in essence, just black comedy but the media peddle this Big Lie with an absolute straight face! They project this kind of statement as simply part of their routine propaganda.

Yet, at the same time, in brazen contradiction, the West peddles on the other hand a totally specious line of fear-mongering about Putin's alleged imperial ambitions in order to beef up its arms industry, grab more land, extend its corporate reach, and set up nuclear attack batteries right on Russia's border. This has all been the anticipated culmination of a very long plan in the making.

"Under pressure to find new ways to confront Russia" . . . the NATO

allies announced by the start of July that they were making "a historic surge of forces along Europe's eastern flank", and welcoming Finland and Sweden as members ("Troop Boost To Shield NATO's Eastern Flank Against Putin", *Press*, 1/7/22 – reproduced from *TWP* and *AP*). And the fear-mongering goes on while the US/NATO carry on with their own de facto massive land-grab!

In a vicious taunt to Moscow, James Baker's promise to Gorbachev of not "one inch" eastward has been turned on its head by Biden & co., vowing "to defend 'every inch' of NATO territory", with nuclear weapons, of course, if deemed fit (ibid.). On the same *Press* page as the article cited, there was also a report from *AAP*, *TWP*, titled: "China Now Officially 'Threat' To The West" (ibid.). *The war drums are beating louder and louder.*

### Redoubling Efforts For Peace

The prospect of human self-destruction has loomed large ever since America developed the atomic bomb and experimented on live victims at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in August 1945. Since then, the US-headed West has used its huge firepower and global reach to impose its hegemony on the rest of the world, or most of it. Mass murder of civilians, as heralded by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has been a key strategy in this imperial project. The Jakarta Method has set the framework of this strategy since the mid-1960s. The propagandist corporate mainstream media have indoctrinated Western publics with the values and attitudes of militarist capitalism.

But the imperial project itself is bringing us into increasingly dangerous geopolitical brinkmanship with both Russia and China, and a growing list of enemies. *All the warning bells are sounding furiously!* Unless Earth's peoples can mobilise enough resistance and successfully chart alternative paths for sustainable development on a global scale, humankind will lose the struggle for survival. In order to survive, we have to suppress "killer ape" competition and work together peacefully and cooperatively in unprecedented ways. As the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* warns, the clock is ticking . . .

## CORRECTION

By Murray Horton

Dennis Small wrote "Imploding Geo-Imperial Frontiers! And The Challenges Ahead", in *Peace Researcher* 62, November 2021 (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR62.pdf>). In the section headed "Converting Covert Cataclysm", paragraph 3 starts thus: "I (i.e. Chalmers Johnson) wrote to President Carter: 'We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War' [emphasis added]" (ibid., p47; "Blowback", op. cit., pp.xiii/iv). The "I" in question is not Chalmers Johnson, the author of the book "Blowback", but the person he was quoting, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Adviser. This has been corrected in the online edition. The mistake is on page 32 of the hard copy *PR* 62.

### Grappling With The CIA!

By Dennis Small

*Here's the proof that Dennis can write something shorter than "War And Peace". He e-mailed it to me in September 2022, saying "it might get a laugh in PR?". Ed.*

I rang the 105 Police line to report a drone sighting. Drones were causing a nuisance in Reefton (where Dennis lives) in the past, even snooping around. Consequently, they got banned. I thought the Police would be monitoring any breaches of the law. For my part, you can't get too paranoid about snooping drones circling overhead.

I finally got a guy live on the line and duly reported the sighting. Hold on to your sides and guess my reaction. He told me that I would have to contact the CIA - Lol! The paranoia bit hard! I said that "you have got to be joking!" He repeated that I would have to contact the CIA because they deal with such flying complaints! It took a bit of thinking that he didn't really know me and was pulling my leg. He obviously meant the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)! Lol! again.

# REVIEW

By Jeremy Agar

## MURU

A Film By Tearepa Kahi, 2022

In 2007 police raided the Ruatoki Valley in the Ureweras with the claim that they were responding to a “terrorist” threat. The life of the Prime Minister (Helen Clark) had been threatened. Loose emotional rhetoric had been discerned as sinister intent. The Government was mindful of the war game exercises being run by Tame Iti, long a figure to worry people in their Wellington offices, and so it came about that the locals were surprised by the arrival of loads of cops charged with apprehending the non-existent schemers. Initiated under misapprehension, the raid could only be clumsy as families were disrupted.

For a charge so serious to be levelled on the basis of so little precise and considered analysis was bad enough. What made the raid even worse was its insensitivity to history. The hills between the Bay of Plenty and Gisborne have a long history of unease between Māoridom and the State. The locals, the Tuhoe iwi, never signed the Treaty of Waitangi and there is a body of opinion there which holds that the present constitutional arrangements are illegitimate.

The film centres on Cliff Curtis’ character, a local policeman, the bridge between the remote Government and the village. Curtis drives the school bus. He knows the place intimately. He tries to blunt the crude misunderstandings of an intervening force. It was the bureaucratic impulse of the outsider police to leave local cops out of the loop that was the essential error.

### A History Of Poor Judgement

It’s not only about tensions between ethnicities. The Police, and NZ authorities in general, have a history of poor judgement when it comes to distinguishing between the playful and ironic and serious intent. They would say that they have to initially respond by taking

every piece of information at face value. Maybe, but look carefully before you respond.

Tame Iti is very much within this tendency and it was not the first time that he has bewildered officialdom. But as Cliff Curtis remarked in an interview on RNZ, Iti is an “artist” more than a terrorist. Which he is not, and never has been, but the moody hills provide a great location for some theatre. By playing himself - were we witnessing documentary or fiction? - Iti added a further layer to the ambiguity he cherishes.

Curtis suggests that the film itself can be seen in this vein, that Kahi’s “sly” approach is fitting as his film is essentially an “allegory”. Director and actor have both sought to remind us that “Muru” is a “response” rather than a re-enactment. As such, it is admirably restrained, always resisting any urge to slip into easy caricature. The police we see were not bullies so much as fellow victims of a clumsy State. It was only a few years after the raid that the 2019 events at the mosques in Christchurch, for which the system was unprepared, were to emphasise just how misplaced has been the official understanding of actual terrorism and where it comes from.

## A BAD CASE OF “TERRORISM” HYSTERIA

By Murray Horton

*“Muru” is publicised as being a “response” to the 2007 Tuhoe raids, rather than a re-enactment. Below is the article I wrote about the actual events, for Peace Researcher 35, December 2007. Those “anti-terrorism” raids also took place in other centres, such as Auckland, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hamilton, and even as far away as Christchurch. And they involved pakeha, as well as Māori, activists being arrested and facing trial. I’ve included this historic article to provide context for the film. MH.*

I have a confession to make (so pay attention, spies, and have those black ninjas on full alert). I’ve spent a week in the Ureweras with gun toting Māori. From memory they also sported bullet belts, camouflage gear and cowboy hats. It was in 1981 (if ever there was a year when activists were tempted to become “terrorists” that was it) but it was a tourist – not terrorist – trip run by the country’s first Māori-run tour company.

The only shots fired were by one of the guides at a deer (I was his spotter and, I’m pleased to say, he missed). But God knows what weird and wonderful distortions would be made of it in today’s climate of hysteria and paranoia. After all my then partner and I were both leading “Leftwing radicals”, with impressive criminal records to prove it. Case closed; we must have been up to no good.

Like the rest of the country, I’ve been watching agog as recent events have unfolded. Indeed, I’ve been feeling rather left out, I’m obviously no longer on the cops’ A list. Two journalists rang me on October 15 to ask if I was included in that day’s “anti-terrorist” raids – I didn’t have a clue what they were talking about. Nor can the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) claim any inside knowledge about what has or, more to the point, what hasn’t, been going on.

On a November Monday morning I was reading the Police’s leaked “evidence” against the “terrorists” who never were when the *Marlborough Express* rang to ask for comment on the “fact” that surveillance intercepts had revealed suspects talking about bombing the Waihopai spy base. The reporter asked if I knew who might be likely to do that? Funnily enough, I don’t.

He then asked if I thought that Waihopai is a “vulnerable target”? How’s that for a leading question over breakfast? I suggested he ask those tasked with defending the place and was duly quoted as saying that I thought the biggest physical threat to the spy base is the grapevine monoculture relentlessly taking over the whole Waihopai Valley.

## Bloody Funny Sort Of "Terrorists"

As for the arrested "terrorists" (who are now facing only Firearms Act charges, which could still have serious consequences for them) I know a couple of them. I've known Tame Iri for more than 35 years, starting from when he lived in Christchurch in the early 1970s (he had nothing to do with my Ureweras' trip, I've only met him in various cities).

I don't know him at all personally but from my dealings with him I find the very notion of him being described as a "terrorist" to be laughable. To be sure, a provocateur, a showman (he'd probably prefer to be called a performance artist), a bloody nuisance to a lot of people, with highly questionable views on subjects like Fijian coups, but terrorist, no way.

He's always depicted in the media as this scary tattooed Māori radical (a godsend to scaremongers who face the problem of a dearth of scary bearded Muslim radicals in NZ) but what sort of "terrorist" has such an extremely high public profile, let alone attracts attention for the various "offensive" public stunts of the sort that Tame has regularly pulled?

I don't recall Osama bin Laden venturing within shooting distance of his enemies and giving them a brown eye. Speaking as a South Island pakeha activist of the sort possibly expected to be given a hard time by "Māori radicals", I can honestly say, using very old-fashioned language, that in all the decades I've known him Tame has always been the perfect gentleman.

As for the pakeha anarchists and other activists picked up in the October 2007 national dragnet, we in ABC know Valerie Morse from Wellington. The only terrorising she's done (and she's done it plenty of times) is getting naked in public, to make a political point, in settings ranging from outside Parliament to lying down on the boiling hot asphalt outside the gate of the Waihopai spy base. So, Valerie's definitely an exhibitionist, a political nudist and very much a bloody nuisance to lots of people as well but, once again, I am incredulous at the description of her as a "terrorist" (who tend to make themselves as

inconspicuous as possible).

None of the faceless guys who flew the planes into the Twin Towers in 2001 had any previous form, let alone a propensity for spectacular public nudity. And, of course, the dragnet extended as far as the Christchurch activists of the environmentalist Save Happy Valley Campaign. The cops tried to get into the home of Campaign spokesperson Frances Mountier and she had the nous to tell them to bugger off as they didn't have a search warrant. Now this one does affect ABC directly as Francie is a valued member of our Committee. She is a very determined and successful non-violent direct action specialist, with the criminal record to prove it, and a very articulate and effective campaigner. But not a bloody "terrorist" by any stretch of the imagination!

I can't comment on what Tame and Valerie et al are alleged to have been up to in the Ureweras because I know no more about it than any other member of the public. And, if I did, I would try not to lower myself to the gutter tactics of the Police who, having had their "domestic terrorism conspiracy" so comprehensively rubbished by the Solicitor-General, resorted to selective leaks of "evidence" (it's no such thing until it's been proven in court) to a salivating media. The "radicals" found themselves in the ironic situation of defending the "conservative" position on the sub judice rule and the defendants' right to a fair trial – in a court and not in the media.

This is not the first time that the State has played dirty when it couldn't make sensational politically motivated charges stick – after the Security Intelligence Service failed to have the late Bill Sutch convicted as a Soviet spy in his 1975 Official Secrets Act trial, the SIS stage managed a whole series of defamatory leaks about Sutch to the media, in the hope of provoking him to sue and thus have the case re-heard in a civil court where a lower standard of proof is required. Failing that, to permanently smear him in the process. He didn't take the bait but died just a few months later, which may well have been the aim of the whole grubby exercise. In those Cold War days, of course, Communists and Russian spies were the bogeymen.

## Deliberate State Intimidation

But seeing that the case is now (very selectively) in the public domain I feel free to comment on the Police tactics in these raids. The leaked "evidence" claims that they had had this "domestic terrorism conspiracy" under surveillance for more than a year and that one of these Urewera "terrorist camps" took place just the weekend before the Monday raids. So why didn't they bust it and catch everyone red-handed? What a field day the media would have had with that.

But, no, they had to put on the show of Monday dawn raids throughout the country, with a complete lockdown of Ruatoki in Tuhoe country, traumatising innocent people and kids in the process. Why? Because the anti-terror laws say that they can. This was an exercise in muscle flexing and mass intimidation by State forces, a forceful demonstration of "we're the boss and don't you forget it", a further illustration of the militarisation of the Police (who are not called the Police Force for nothing) which behave in such situations like an occupying army.

They dressed, looked and acted like their military counterparts in Iraq, Afghanistan or Palestine, or their Police counterparts in the US where heavily armed cops routinely behave like an occupying army towards their own people. They were supposedly looking for terrorists – as many commentators have pointed out, the Police were the only ones looking and acting like terrorists that day. Because that's what they were – State terrorists.

In continuing the finest traditions of colonisation, the worst manifestations of this behaviour were directed at Māori and specifically in Ruatoki. This was just the latest example of occupation, dispossession and powerlessness that Tuhoe have had to suffer in the 160+ plus years since the British Crown and pakeha settlers came to New Zealand. The tribe has never signed the Treaty of Waitangi and was never defeated militarily by the British but it paid a heavy price, to this day, in terms of massive land confiscation. It continues to resist and has accordingly attracted official heavy-handedness.

This spectacular attack by the State was intended to lay the first

ever charges under the 2002 Terrorism Suppression Act (much as the 1975 unsuccessful prosecution of the late Bill Sutch was intended to be the showpiece use of the Official Secrets Act). Instead, it came an inglorious gutser and never made it to court when the Solicitor General declared it “incoherent” and basically unworkable in relation to alleged domestic terrorism.

ABC is happy to join the chorus of those (such as unflappable Green MP, Keith Locke) who could say “we told you so”. Back in 2001, ABC was among those who made submissions opposing this law, which was rushed through in the American-led global panic after the terrorist atrocities of September 11 that year. A central point we made was that the Act would suppress dissent, not terrorism. You can read our full submission online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/abcterr.htm>.

So, what was the Government’s reaction to this stinging rebuff by its own top legal official? Did it have a rethink? No, within hours of the Solicitor General’s decision, it rammed through Parliament, with the backing of all parties except the Greens, Māori Party and Act, the Terrorism Suppression Amendment Act which simply makes a bad law worse (in 2007 ABC made a submission opposing that one as well, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/terramend.pdf>). If the medicine doesn’t work, then double the dose. It’s just a pity if the patient dies in the process.

### **Putting It Into Global Context**

These laws don’t exist in isolation, they are simply part of a plethora of security and intelligence laws dating back to the mid 1990s, when the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) was given an extended mandate to target people who “damage New Zealand’s economic interests”. Within a fortnight of that law coming into effect, SIS agents were caught trying to break into the Christchurch home of anti-globalisation activist, Aziz Choudry.

The resulting successful court cases brought by him and David Small (who caught the bungling spies and suffered Police harassment and dirty tactics as a result) were extensively reported in *Peace Researcher* over the several years

they took to reach their conclusion. This established that domestic dissenters were targeted by the State and were also smeared with the “terrorist” tag (the homes of both Aziz and David were raided by cops looking for non-existent bombs, after a highly suspicious “mock bomb” was planted in central Christchurch by persons unknown).

Post-September 11 the securocrats in every Western country, including New Zealand, were given a major boost and saw it as a godsend to push through a whole range of ever more repressive laws. The Terrorism Suppression Amendment Act is just the latest manifestation of this hysteria. Up until these raids, the main New Zealand victim of this has been Ahmed Zaoui. That was another total malicious cockup by the State.

Globally, terrorists have replaced Communists as the bogeymen. The powers that be have taken to labelling everyone who opposes them as “terrorists”, ranging from the thousands arrested without charge in Pakistan’s martial law regime to seaborne environmentalists challenging Japanese whaling ships in the Southern Ocean, to give just two of the most recent, 2007, examples. It has become a catchall label to easily smear opponents.

For example, in the Philippines, the Government was able to get the Communist Party and its New People’s Army and Party founder, Joma Sison, put on lists of international terrorists. This is patently absurd as, throughout the nearly 40 years of armed struggle waged by the Party and its Army, it has always been exclusively a civil war, with no foreign content to it at all. Even in the days when the US had huge military bases in the Philippines, the Communists did not target them.

This terrorist listing has had real personal consequences for Sison, who has lived in Dutch exile for 20 years. He has been denied the ability to work, earn an income or live in State housing, having to rely on friends and supporters for the wherewithal to live. Things got worse in 2007 when Dutch police arrested him on completely trumped-up charges of conspiracy to murder (the actual murders hav-

ing taken place in the Philippines).

After nearly three weeks in solitary confinement, the charges were thrown out for lack of any evidence and he was freed. Another ignominious defeat for “the security State”. The irony is that the Philippine State really is a terrorist regime, with its forces committing hundreds of political murders, disappearances, torture and false imprisonments with complete impunity. It routinely terrorises its own people and has done for many decades, only now that repression is justified as being part of the “War on Terror”.

And the “War on Terror” is the global context for these unprecedented raids in NZ. All around the world governments have seized the opportunity to ram through repressive laws and to act outside any law by actions such as torture, abductions, “renditions” of “terrorists” who then disappear into extra-judicial black holes such as Guantanamo. “Anti-terror” raids and lengthy or even indefinite imprisonment without charge or trial are the norm in many so-called First World countries.

Australia harassed and detained a perfectly innocent Indian Muslim doctor for weeks in 2007 after claiming he was involved in the abortive “doctors’ plot” to bomb civilian targets in Britain. At its worst, the “War on Terror” authorises the State to murder the innocent, which was the fate of the unfortunate Brazilian man shot repeatedly in the head at point blank range by British cops as he sat on a London Underground train in 2005.

Those State terrorists and murderers are still free, untouched by the law and unidentified. So, that very culture of State impunity which is the norm in countries such as the Philippines is fast becoming the norm in the “civilised” countries of the West as well. In this case the treatment is much worse than the disease.

### **Bringing Home The “War On Terror”**

New Zealand is internationally involved, of course, in the “War on Terror”. From the outset, in 2001, this country has had troops in Afghanistan, either directly involved in combat, in the case of the Spe-

cial Air Service (one of whose members was awarded NZ's first post-World War 2 Victoria Cross as a result, and hasn't that been milked for its maximum propaganda value), or in reconstruction, "winning hearts and minds" work.

The war in that benighted country is rapidly becoming a quagmire, just like the bigger swamp in Iraq, with this latest bunch of foreign invaders destined to go the same way as all the other foreign invaders who have come to grief in Afghanistan over the centuries (the British and Russians being only the most recent before this lot). The occupying armies are definitely not helping their hearts and minds mission by inconvenient facts such as that more Afghan civilians were killed by their "liberators" in 2007 than by the resurgent Taliban forces.

New Zealand's main contribution to the "War on Terror" (and any other US-led war) is the Waihopai spy base. *Peace Researcher* readers don't need me to spell out what it does and how it is involved in waging war and killing innocent people thousands of kilometres from the tranquil setting of its Marlborough valley. In October 2007, for the first time, I took to Waihopai a member of one of the "target groups" of the international network of spy bases of which Waihopai is part. Amirah Ali Lidasan is a leader of the Moro (Muslim) people of the southern Philippines, a people who have been waging a struggle on many levels, including a decades-long civil war, for autonomy and/or independence.

The US never paid it any attention until after September 11, 2001 whereupon President Bush and his Philippine counterpart, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, declared the Philippines to be the "Second Front in the War on Terror", and the Philippine Muslim struggle suddenly became important to the US (and its regional allies, particularly Australia which has signed a Status of Forces Agreement with the Philippines, already has intelligence agents operating in the Muslim South and will be stationing troops there as of 2008).

By taking Amirah to the intimidating gate of that top secret spy base, and having her visit there well covered by the mainstream media, we

(the [former] Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa, another one of my hats) made the very clear connection between aggressor and victims. New Zealand has blood on its hands by dint of that spy base and will continue to have as long as it functions in this country as a vital outpost of US electronic intelligence gathering.

So, the October 2007 "anti-terror raids" are the logical conclusion of New Zealand's involvement in the "War on Terror". This was the bringing home of that war, in all its manifestations (short of actually killing people) – the repressive laws; the ninja attire of the heavily armed and militarised stormtroopers cum police; the treatment of a small rural Māori community as an occupied territory; the deliberate whipping up of a terrorism hysteria in the media and among the public; the dragnet approach to a wide and disparate group of activists, Māori and pakeha and the attempt to brand them as "terrorists"; the criminalising of dissent and the demonising of dissenters as "terrorists".

Having failed to find any foreign terrorists despite several years of valiant effort (Ahmed Zaoui being the best they could do and that became a public relations disaster for the security State), the powers that be decided to create a "domestic terrorism conspiracy". It failed because it was an elaborately staged show and when you go to the theatre it requires what is technically called "the willing suspension of disbelief".

Once that disbelief was no longer willingly suspended, the whole "terrorism" thing was revealed as bullshit. Now those arrested still face serious charges under the Firearms Act, which could send them to prison for years, but they are no longer in custody facing the prospect of extremely serious consequences under the now discredited terrorism laws.

### **Fight Back**

This whole saga proves that the security State can and will attack any political activists, individually or collectively, Māori and pakeha, if it thinks that it can get away with it. The progressive movement in this country, backed by a lot of public opinion, put aside any disagreements and differences, recognising

that an attack on one is an attack on all, and threw itself into an ongoing campaign against the terrorism hysteria. The lesson out of all this is that we need to redouble our efforts against the "War on Terror", globally and at home.

Of course, there are real terrorists, who have committed appalling mass murders, and they must be caught and dealt with as the murderers that they are. But the greater crime is that the securocrats, aided and abetted by compliant politicians, have seized this opportunity to launch a massive assault on the peoples of the world, all in the name of "anti-terrorist security" and to plant the boot of "anti-terrorism" firmly on the neck of their own peoples. As I've already said, the treatment has proven to be worse than the disease. And, in this country, if we don't fight back hard now against this manufactured hysteria, then who will be next? I'd better not take any chances – I'll be wearing pyjamas to bed from now on, just in case.

### **Where Are They Now?**

*Of the people named in this 2007 article, only Aziz Choudry is no longer with us. Tame Iti was one of only two defendants (both Māori) to be sent to prison. He is now routinely described as a "national taonga". Valerie Morse is still a Wellington political activist; Francie Mountier is no longer in Christchurch or on the ABC Committee, but is also a Wellington political activist.*

*As for me, I had my FOMO (fear of missing out) reaction in 2007. That was partially assuaged in August 2022 when I was unexpectedly confronted by rifle toting cops on our back doorstep while I was eating breakfast and reading the paper. But they weren't conducting a "terrorism" raid; they were looking for somebody else at the wrong address. It will have to do for when I'm asked for my war stories.*

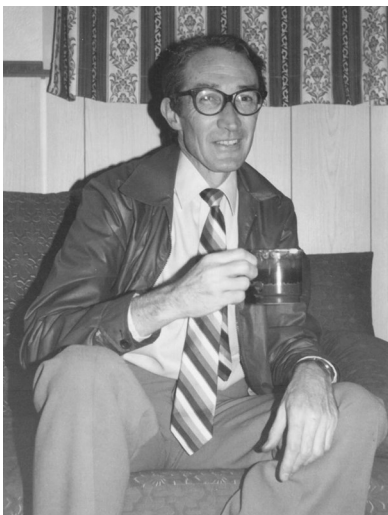


# TRIBUTES

## LUKE TRAINOR

By Murray Horton

Luke died, in Wellington, aged 85, in March 2022. He'd had a long illness and covid finished him off. I knew him in five different capacities. He was my lecturer and tutor when I was a student at the Univer-



Luke Trainor

sity of Canterbury, at the former Town Site (now the Arts Centre), in the early 1970s. He was one of a cohort of teachers who honed my love of history, one which I still practise to this day, in publications such as *Peace Researcher*.

He was a member of, and regular big donor to, the Anti-Bases Campaign from 1996 until his death. Likewise, he was a member of, and regular big donor to, the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) from 1992 until his death. As a result of his membership of both ABC and CAFCA, Luke was a regular pledger for years, nearly until his death, to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account which exists to provide my income. He was also a regular very generous donor to that account in the 1990s and 2000s. I am truly grateful for his financial support for my work over many years. And, from 1993, he was a member of the former Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa until it closed down in 2021, reflecting his keen interest in that country. He was a regular generous donor to PSNA's various appeals for things like NZ speaking tours by leading Philippine activists. Rest in peace, Luke.

# MARIE HILAO-ENRIQUEZ

By Murray Horton

Marie Hilao-Enriquez, who died in Los Angeles in April 2022, aged 68, was a well-known public figure in the Philippines, as the former head of a major human rights group. Marie and her family suffered grievously under the 1970s' and 80s' martial law dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. She was a political prisoner and torture victim (one of a huge number of political prisoners held for years without charge or trial. Her oldest daughter was born in prison). One sister and her only brother were also political prisoners.

Another sister became the highest profile female political murder victim of the Marcos regime, being raped, tortured and murdered whilst in detention. Marie's parents became the lead plaintiffs in the landmark class action suit filed in the US against the Marcoses on behalf of thousands of human rights victims and their families. Despite being awarded \$US1 billion in damages, precious little has been recovered from the billions that the Marcoses stole from the Philippine people. Marie went on to become a national leader of the human rights movement, one known around the world.

### NZ Speaking Tour

In 2004, the former Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA) organised a two-weeks long NZ speaking tour by Marie. I accompanied her for the whole thing and we had a great time. Her topic was of great interest to the Anti-Bases Campaign – "The Philippines In The Firing Line. America's 'Second Front In The War On Terror' And The Impact On Human Rights". You can read her speech at <http://www.converge.org.nz/psna/Kapatiran/KapNo25n26/Kap25n26Art/art114.htm> ABC put money into the tour and I used my two weeks on the road with Marie to speak at her public meetings and connect with people (many of them ABC members) throughout the country.

A highlight of her tour was when she went into Auckland Central Remand Prison to visit Ahmed

Zaoui, who was then nearing the end of his disgraceful two years' imprisonment without charge or trial. This was the first time that Marie had been into a prison other than in the Philippines, and she found it a fascinating experience. She was eager to make the point that nice, white, liberal First World countries like New Zealand also hold political prisoners. She was delighted to be later informed that Zaoui had been released and was able to live a normal life in NZ (see my article "At Long Bloody Last: A Happy Ending To Ahmed Zaoui's Ordeal", in *Peace Researcher* 35, December 2007, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr35.pdf>).

The best mainstream media coverage she got (an absolute coup) was getting a 30-minutes live and nationwide interview with Linda Clark on the latter's top rating Radio New Zealand national programme, *Nine To Noon With Linda Clark*. The producer told me that it was listened to by 250,000 people throughout the country, a respectable percentage of the total population. Clark was both interested and informed about the Philippines. Marie went on 15 minutes late, so I assumed that they would cut her slot to 15 minutes. But, no, Clark kept her talking for the full promised 30 minutes.

She was fascinated by Marie's account of what it was like to actually conceive, give birth to, and look after her oldest daughter whilst she was in prison as a political prisoner. As I listened to this, I thought this is fascinating personal stuff, the kind of individual story that Kiwis relate so very well to, but that it was old, Marcos-era stuff. But Clark didn't let us down, concluding by bringing Marie right back to the present to talk about the impact of the American-led "War On Terror" on the Philippines. Nor was media coverage confined to NZ – she got a page in the excellent UK-based *New Internationalist* magazine <https://newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2004/09/01/marie-hilao-enriquez>

And the absolute highlight for her was very much a case of leaving the best until last. Her Whangarei meeting was unforgettable - a big turnout from many nationalities and the only place in the country where Filipinos turned out in numbers

Marie Hilao-Enriquez with Murray Horton (and 2 Congressmen), Manila, 2008



(primarily women married to Kiwi men, several of whom accompanied their wives). A meeting with a sizeable Filipino contingent has a completely different dynamic to one entirely made up of good stolid Kiwis. Marie's Whangarei meeting fizzed and sparkled.

For the only time on the tour, she was able to (partially) address the audience in Filipino, and she excelled in answering the no holds barred questions that some of her countrywomen tossed at her (which got the audience debating and discussing among themselves). She was buzzing about it all the way back down to Christchurch (where she got to spend a few days' holiday with Becky and I before going home). You can read my full article on her NZ tour at <http://www.converge.org.nz/psna/Kapatiran/KapNo25n26/Kap25n26Art/art115.htm>

### **Aunty Marie: Death In The Family**

I last saw Marie in 2008, on my last visit to the Philippines. Becky and I attended a glitzy fundraising dinner for the major human rights organisation headed by Marie. While I was in Manila a newspaper devoted a whole column to attacking her as a "communist". Human rights work is a very risky occupation – the evening paid tribute to the 34 murdered members of the organisation.

But it was primarily an evening of celebration, of music, song and dance, featuring some of the country's top progressive musicians.

We caught up with many old friends and Marie looked after us very well – she made sure that I was seated next to two of the country's most high-profile Leftwing Congressmen, neither of whom I'd met before.

She retired from the human rights movement several years

ago and moved to LA to be closer to her two daughters. She'd had serious health problems for years and died of complications from Parkinson's, far too young, at only 68. But she had not been forgotten. She had a funeral in LA & a memorial in Manila, was the subject of several Filipino mainstream media obituaries, and tributes at her memorial came from entities as diverse as the European Union and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Marie's death was very much a maternal aunt of my wife Becky. So, the political prisoners, torture victims, murder victim, class action suit plaintiffs – these are all Becky's aunts, uncle and grandparents. To Becky and I, and our colleagues on the PSNA Committee, she was simply Aunty Marie (I had to train myself not to introduce her as that during her 2004 NZ speaking tour).

### **Marcos: The Great Leap Backwards**

Marie died just two weeks before the Philippines' 2022 Presidential election, which was won by Ferdinand Marcos Junior, universally known as Bongbong. Considering the appalling death, pain and suffering inflicted on Marie and her family during the dictatorship of Bongbong's father, she got out at the right time. I've had a universal WTF reaction from friends in relation to this election result. So, what accounts for it?

Bongbong could teach Trump how to run a sustained Big Lie campaign. He avoided most conventional campaigning, debates and media interviews, concentrating on a blitzkrieg social media offensive carried out by armies of trolls. Their message? That he has nothing to apologise for in relation to his murderous father's long dictatorship; that, in fact, it was a "golden age", and that the only people who suffered were communists who got what they deserved.

How could Filipinos believe this crap? Simple – Filipinos are the biggest users of social media in the world, that's where they get their news and opinions. But an explanation is necessary – for Filipinos "the Internet" means Facebook. That's where Marcos peddled his lies. There's more to it than that. The Filipino population is overwhelmingly young, the median age is mid-20s (in NZ it is mid to late 30s).

Meaning that the great majority of Filipinos have no personal experience of the Marcos dictatorship, which was ended by the 1986 People Power peaceful revolution. More importantly, they have no knowledge of it, as that history is not taught in schools (this is a very good negative example of why teaching history in schools is so important).

And succeeding governments have not undertaken any deMarcosfication. Marcos died in American exile, but his family was allowed back into the country in the 1990s with no legal consequences (Bongbong and his mother Imelda have both been found guilty in both criminal and civil cases, with Imelda actually sentenced to prison – nothing has been done to enforce any of that). Of the, at least, \$US10 billions of State money stolen by Marcos Senior – one of the worst examples of kleptocracy in world history – very little has been recovered. The same goes for the \$US1 billion in damages awarded to Marcos' victims and their families by a US court.

Most importantly, none of the Presidents who have succeeded Marcos (all from the tiny handful of dynastic families who own all the land and control the politics) has done anything to address, let alone fix, any of the huge systemic problems

that dog the Philippines: huge inequality, poverty, concentration of land ownership and wealth, staggering corruption, relentless political violence and war (warlords are still very much a thing there), and a culture of total impunity.

Many Filipinos would have thought that if this is “democracy”, we’ll look for an alternative. After all, the last President, Rodrigo Duterte, was elected in 2016 by promoting himself as a tough guy populist, who waged a brutal “war on drugs” that murdered tens of thousands. His daughter is now Bongbong’s Vice President. So, the thieves and murderers are back in power. At 93, Imelda Marcos has lived long enough to be able to make a triumphant and consequences-free return to the scene of the crime. Those who fail to learn the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them. As for the Philippine progressive movement, the struggle continues unabated.

## RITA BAUA

By David Robie

Peace Researcher 63 (June 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/PR63.pdf>) included tributes to leading Filipina activist Rita Baua – who died of pancreatic cancer in Manila, in February 2022, aged 79 – by Murray Horton, Maire Leadbeater and Keith Locke. Those tributes were subtitled “Champion Of International Solidarity”. Rita led the group of Filipinos who took part in the Anti-Bases Campaign’s 1990 Touching The Bases Tour (David Robie and his wife Del Abcede also took part in that). The following is extracted from a letter that David Robie wrote to Rita in January 2022, when she was dying. Ed.

You have campaigned staunchly and with inspiration over decades for human rights and justice, not only in the Philippines but here in New Zealand too. We remember with fondness your visit here to Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau in November 1990 when you stayed at our Lone Kauri home at the time of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) conference at Ohaki marae, Pawarenga, on the beautiful Hokianga...

It was inspirational having you with us in New Zealand and for us both personally, we think of your role in organising the (1988/89) International Peace Bri-

gade that gave such a critical exposure to the Philippine solidarity struggles, especially in Mindanao where we sought to report on the Lumad indigenous and land struggles in an effort to have a controversial New Zealand aid project public examined and to force reforms. This Mindanao journey eventually led to Del and I meeting on that solidarity assignment, and this in turn resulted in us marrying and sharing an incredible life together. Thank you so much for that.

I also remember how you organised the launch of the Filipino edition of my book “Blood On Their Banner: Nationalist Struggles In The South Pacific” (Malaya Books) at the National Press Club in Manila on 2 February 1991, a welcome contribution to beating the dictatorial wheels of censorship and self-censorship. At the launch, I talked about the harassment and intimidation I had faced writing the book. Thanks to you, this book of Asia-Pacific self-determination and human rights was able to reach an activist audience in the Philippines

Now we wish the Pacific Ocean was not as vast as it is and covid-19 was not as rampant as it is and that we could easily visit you and wish you well. Even though we haven’t seen you for many years, we feel that you are with us. Know that our thoughts, prayers and solidarity are with you and we wish you all the best in your struggle.

### PEACE RESEARCHER WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

*Peace Researcher* is published by the Anti-Bases Campaign. The Editor is Murray Horton; the Layout Editor (for this issue) is Leigh Cookson. 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***

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

# CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account

## Financial Report for year ended 31st March 2022

By James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer

### Presented to Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa Annual General Meeting, 26/9/22

Income	2022	2021
Pledges	\$22,462.50	\$20,821.20
Donations members	\$10,550.00	\$12,834.02
Interest (incl. CAFCA Term Deposit)	\$ 303.47	\$ 1,259.12
Other	\$ <u>500.00</u>	\$ <u>0.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$33,815.97</b>	<b>\$34,914.34</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Contractor	\$42,497.00	\$45,132.00
Internet/Phone	\$ 61.00	\$ 131.71
Printer	\$ 23.98	\$ 39.00
Other	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$42,581.98</b>	<b>\$45,302.71</b>
<b>Cash surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$8,766.01</b>	<b>-\$10,388.37</b>
<b>Summary</b>		
<b>Opening Funds</b>	<b>\$8,289.42</b>	<b>\$ 3,677.79</b>
Add surplus (deficit)	-\$8766.01	-\$10,388.37
Add CAFCA Donation	\$5,000.00	\$15,000.00
<b>Closing Total Funds</b>	<b>\$4,523.41</b>	<b>\$8,289.42</b>
<i>Represented by</i>		
<b>Term Deposit Kiwibank</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>00 Account Westpac</b>	<b><u>\$4,523.41</u></b>	<b><u>\$8,289.42</u></b>
<b>Total Organiser Account Funds</b>	<b>\$4,523.41</b>	<b>\$8,289.42</b>

#### Notes

*Other income is ABC donation*

*Contract expenses reduced mid-year, expected to be \$35,000 in current year (2022)*

## JOIN ABC AND GET PEACE RESEARCHER

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

**Membership is \$20 per year** (ABC is not registered for GST). **Donations welcome.**

Our bank account details are:

**ABC Kiwibank 389000 0619007 00**

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

You can also personally deposit cash into ABC's account at any Kiwibank branch. If you do that, make sure that you include your name as the reference.

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