

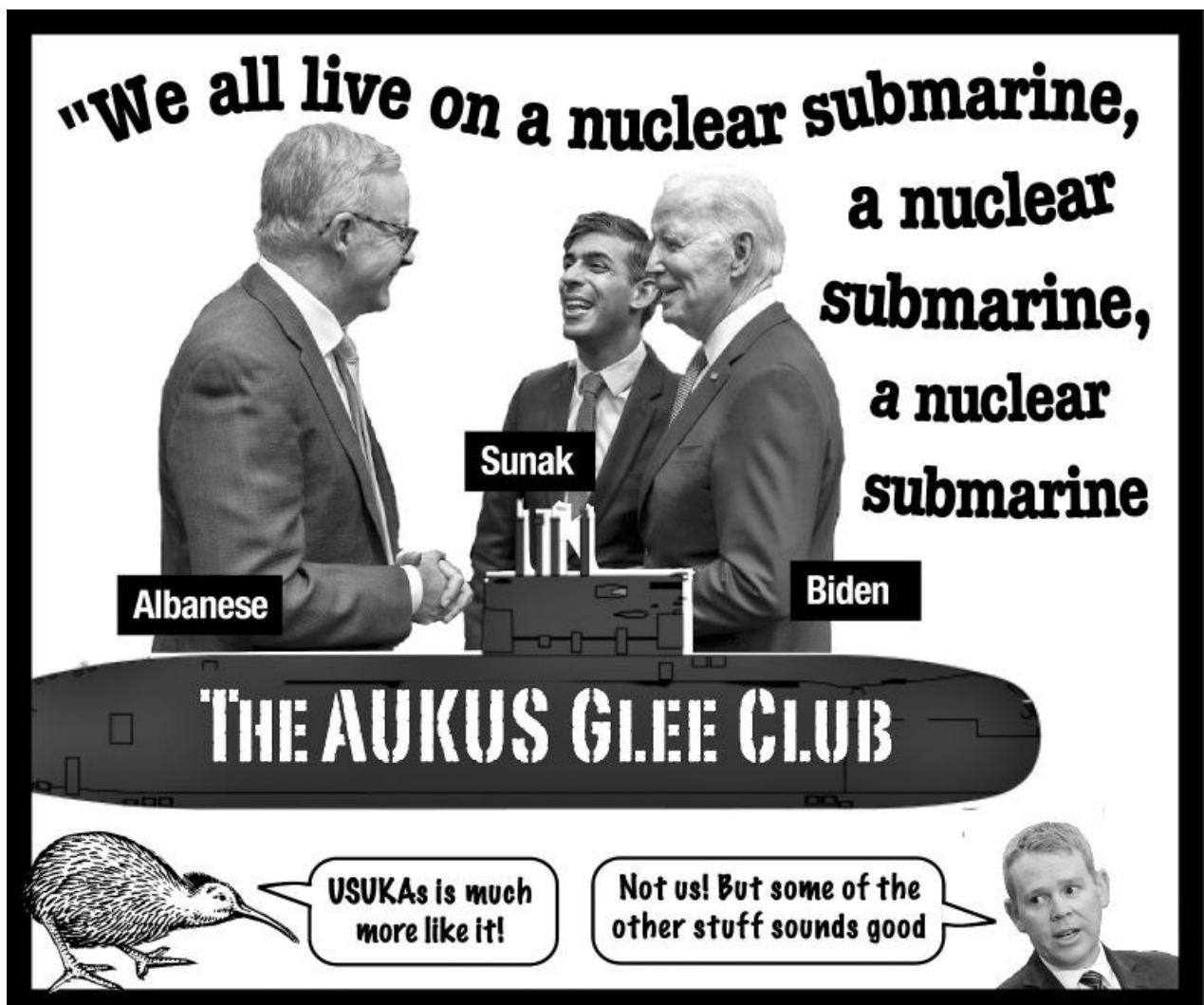
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AUKUS

LURCH TOWARDS WAR WITH CHINA



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AUKUS

A Major Lurch Towards War With China

By Murray Horton

The AUKUS pact (Australia, UK & US) came out of nowhere in 2021 when Australia broke a \$A90 billion contract to buy French submarines and, instead, signed up with the US and UK to form AUKUS, which will build eight nuclear-powered (but not nuclear-armed) submarines for Australia. The first get together of the AUKUS leaders did not go very well for Australia, when President Biden could not remember the name of its then Prime Minister, Scott Morrison.

Morrison went behind the backs of the French, in order to instead do a deal with the US and UK. It led to the most extraordinary diplomatic bust up between those countries - France recalled its Ambassadors from both Australia and the US (it is America's oldest ally, dating back to the American Revolution); President Macron called Morrison a "liar". When Morrison was voted out a few months later, France's outgoing Foreign Minister said: "I can't stop myself from saying that the defeat of Morrison suits me very well".

Nuclear free New Zealand was not invited to join AUKUS (nor was fellow Five Eyes member, Canada) but the Ardern government had a FOMO (fear of missing out) reaction and said NZ would like to get involved with other aspects of AUKUS, such as artificial intelligence. AUKUS rapidly went about proving it's about much more than a few nuclear subs - in April 2022 it announced that its three members would work together to develop hypersonic missiles to counter Russia and China, which already have them.

In May 2022 Scott Morrison's Government was resoundingly voted out of office but Anthony Albanese's Labor government wholeheartedly carried on with his Tory predecessors' foreign policy, including being committed to AUKUS. The last time that an Australian Labor government offered a markedly different foreign policy was the 1972-75 one led by Gough Whitlam - and we all know what happened to that (my obituaries of Whitlam and his Tory successor, Malcolm Fraser, are in *Peace Researcher* (PR) 49.¹

Both Whitlam and Albanese had themselves sworn in as Prime Minister immediately after their respective election wins, but the contrast could not be starker. Whitlam wanted to get stuck into his radically different foreign policy; Albanese wanted to immediately scurry off to Tokyo to meet Joe Biden and reassure him of Australia's continued loyalty as a good and obedient servant. The Australian Labor Party has never questioned the American alliance since Whitlam.

2022 came and went and two of the original three AUKUS leaders - Scott Morrison and Boris Johnson - were kicked out of office but AUKUS carried on, building up to its big launch in March 2023, which was hosted by President Biden, alongside Prime Ministers Sunak and Albanese, in front of a massive US nuclear submarine at a San Diego Navy base. Australia will build eight nuclear-powered subs in Adelaide. They will be built to a British design but have American technology.

Eyewatering Cost

The cost is truly eyewatering - anywhere between \$A268 billion and \$A368b, by 2055. Yes, that's right - those eight subs won't be ready for more than 30 years. The first of these eight subs are unlikely to be ready until the 2040s, so - to fill that gap - Australia will buy three existing US subs from the early 2030s, at a cost of up to \$A58b, with an option to buy two more. There has been zero official discussion about the multitude of things that are likely to have changed over the next 30 years, militarily, let alone in the wider global society. Think about what has changed in the last 30 years. I'd put money on these monstrosities being obsolete long before they're built.



But the politicians and military leaders who commissioned them will be long gone, leaving future taxpayers to shoulder the costs – and the highly likely adverse consequences of such a major push towards war with China. Because that's who AUKUS and its nuclear submarines, and all other following military technology developments, is aimed at. It has got nothing to do with defending Australia, and everything to do with projecting power far from home. That's the point of nuclear-powered subs – they don't need to return to home port to refuel.

“We Are Not At War, But Neither Are We At Peace”

New Zealanders may not have appreciated the degree of militarisation in Australia, much more so than here. AUKUS should jolt us out of any complacency about what is going on with our nearest neighbour – it is preparing for war. Australian media commentary at the time of the AUKUS launch made that clear. “The monumental price tag of the AUKUS pact has made it clear. We are not at war, but neither are we at peace ...”

“Almost \$A400b, even over three decades, is not peacetime spending in anyone's book – a fact Government ministers concede privately. Rather, we are navigating a dangerous and unpredictable new grey zone of superpower rivalry between China and the United States. It's a contest in which we are poised to be a central player despite our geographical isolation and relatively small population”.

“Accepting such a role will require tough spending decisions the nation

as a whole is not yet ready to confront. Already, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton is flagging his willingness to support reduced spending on the National Disability Insurance Scheme to pay for the submarine programme. Other unsettling trade-offs will need to be discussed. Even in the short term, before the big bills start arriving, difficult calls will have to be made... This is because...it will cut \$A3b from existing defence programmes...This is likely to anger other branches of the military, such as the Army, while the Navy is lavished with money”.²

Albanese tried to put a positive spin on it, saying that the “scale, complexity and economic significance of this investment is akin to the creation of the Australian automotive industry in the post-war period”.³ This is disingenuous in the extreme – there is no comparison between creating an industry to enable the much touted “Aussie battlers” to buy a Holden and creating an industry to build nuclear submarines to join the US (and its “special relationship” mate, the UK) in confronting China, trying to contain China and, quite possibly, fighting a war with China.

Criticism From Inside The Political Elite

Pleasingly, AUKUS was not unopposed among Australia's political elite (or, at least, former leading members of it). Paul Keating, who was Labor Prime Minister from 1991 to 1996, really put the boot into the good submarine AUKUS and all who sail in her. He did so in a March 2023 speech, the day after the AUKUS announcement. “Former Prime Minister Paul Keating has launched an extraordinary attack on the Al-

banese government over its adoption of the AUKUS pact, accusing it of making the worst foreign policy decision by a Labor government since the attempted introduction of conscription in World War I”.

“He said signing up to AUKUS had broken Labor's long ‘winning streak’ on foreign policy over the past century and was a ‘deeply pathetic’ moment in the Party's history. ‘Falling into a major mistake, Anthony Albanese, befuddled by his own small-target election strategy, emerges as Prime Minister with an American sword to rattle at the neighbourhood to impress upon it the United States’ esteemed view of its untrammelled destiny...”.

“Naturally, I should prefer to be singing the praises of the Government in all matters, but these issues carry deadly consequences for Australia and I believe it is incumbent on any former Prime Minister, particularly now, a Labor one, to alert the country to the dangerous and unnecessary journey on which the Government is now embarking”.

“This week, Anthony Albanese screwed into place the last shackle in the long chain the United States has laid out to contain China ... I don't think I suffer from relevance deprivation, but I do suffer concern for Australia as it most unwisely proceeds down this singular and dangerous path’, he said. Keating presented a largely benign view of China's rise, saying it was ‘not the old Soviet Union’ and was ‘not seeking to propagate some competing international ideology’ to the United States. The fact is China is not an outrider’, he said. ‘China is a world trading state – it is not about upending the international system’. Keating said”:

“Every Labor Party branch member will wince when they realise that the Party we all fight for is returning to our former colonial master, Britain, to find our security in Asia – 236 years after Europeans first grabbed the continent from its Indigenous people. That of all things, a contemporary Labor government is shunning security in Asia for security in and within the Anglosphere”.⁴

Nor was Keating alone in his criticism from within the elite. “The Australian National University's Hugh White, an Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies, unleashed a quite

extraordinary criticism of Australia's nuclear submarine plan... Professor White, a former Deputy Secretary of the Defence Department, said Australia was not only going to 'hand over some serious dollars' to the US but also pay with 'a promise' to enter any future conflict with China".

"This is a very serious transformation of the nature of our alliance with the United States', White said in an interview recorded for the ANU's politics podcast *Democracy Sausage*. 'The US don't really care about our submarine capability — they care deeply about tying Australia into their containment strategy against China'".

"White said he couldn't see why the US would sell its own submarines — of which they have fewer than they need — unless it was absolutely sure Australia's submarines would be available to it in the event of a major conflict in Asia. He said a war between America and China over Taiwan would be 'World War III' and have a 'very good chance' of being a nuclear conflict".

"Australia's experience of war is shaped by the fact that we've tended to be on the winning side, but there is no reason to expect America to win in a war with China over Taiwan', he warned. He suggested there was also a high chance the AUKUS deal could fall over under a future American Administration and a worsening strategic environment".

"White said there were cheaper, quicker, less risky and less demanding ways for Australia to get the submarines it needed, labelling the AUKUS plan a waste of money that 'doesn't make sense. There's going to be no actual net increase in the number of submarines available until well into the 2040s, even if it goes to plan — which it probably won't'", he said.⁵

Breakneck Militarisation

AUKUS is only part, albeit a very big one, of Australia's breakneck militarisation. "Flying under the radar of last week's AUKUS submarine announcement was the revelation that the United States had agreed to sell Australia up to 220 Tomahawk cruise missiles. This follows Australia's purchase in January (2023) of 'high mobility artillery rocket systems', known as HIMARS, which have been used by Ukraine on the battlefield in response to Russia's

invasion. And in 2020, the US approved the sale of up to 200 long-range anti-shiping missiles (LRASM) to Australia".

"(The Tomahawks) will be deployed on three Australian warships, known as Hobart class destroyers. These ships are primarily designed to defend the Navy from aerial threats such as aircraft and missiles, but adding Tomahawks would allow them to strike targets on land or sea. What's more, the Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines Australia is purchasing from the US under the AUKUS agreement are also capable of launching Tomahawks".

"It's safe to assume Australia's future AUKUS class nuclear-powered submarines will also be able to deploy Tomahawks. This would provide Australia with a potent deterrent. It would mean Australia could conduct long-range precision strikes against potential adversaries, using a stealthy platform that would be extremely difficult to detect".

"Australia's purchase of long-range anti-shiping missiles (LRASM) is intended to increase the strike range of two types of Australia's fighter jets. This would allow Australia to accurately strike hostile shipping at long range. They will replace Australia's ageing Harpoon anti-shiping missile. They have a range of about 560km, which is approximately four times greater than the Harpoon. This capability is highly desirable given that, in the event of a regional conflict, the greatest threat to Australia is a blockade of its key trade routes".

"In particular, the Tomahawks and

LRASM allow aircraft and warships to launch the missiles further from potential danger. This is particularly important as countries such as China are heavily investing in military systems designed to prevent access and freedom of operation in contested waters such as the South China Sea, a strategy referred to as Anti-Access/Area Denial, or 'A2AD'".

"Crucially, these missiles (within the broader context of other defence procurements) offer Australia two things. Firstly, they provide an increased deterrent in an increasingly turbulent region. If Australia can hold key targets under threat, then a potential adversary is less likely to undertake a hostile action, or at the very least think more carefully before doing so. It also facilitates what's called 'interoperability' with key allies such as the US, so Australian and US forces can operate more easily in a joint manner if need be".

"Secondly, these platforms allow Australia to have our own 'A2AD' capabilities. While an invasion of Australia is extraordinarily unlikely, it's possible an adversary may try to block shipping routes to prevent our people and/or goods from free navigation (a naval blockade). Or, they may attempt to close strategic chokepoints and navigation routes to Australia's north, such as the Malacca Strait".

"Having the ability to strike targets at long range holds those undertaking such actions under threat, increasing the difficulty in sustaining a blockade, or making it unappealing to attempt to do so due to high potential costs. Of course, these sys-



From left, Australian PM Albanese, US President Biden & UK PM Sunak at AUKUS launch, San Diego Navy base, March 2023.

tems also come with significant costs. The purchase of approximately 220 Tomahawks will cost \$A1.3 billion, while 20 HIMARS launchers and missiles attracts a bill of \$A558 million. About 200 LRASMs costs a further \$A1.47 billion”.⁶

Shortly after Albanese was elected as Prime Minister in May 2022, he initiated the Defence Strategic Review. It was classified but a redacted version was publicly released in April 2023. It was billed as Australia’s biggest defence overhaul since World War 2. “Australia has said the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, long-range strike capabilities and its northern bases will be among the country’s six priority areas after a major review of its defence strategy found the armed forces were not ‘fully fit for purpose’”.

“Albanese said the Government would adopt three other priorities recommended in the Review for immediate action: Initiatives to improve the growth and retention of a highly skilled defence workforce, improving Australia’s capacity to rapidly translate new technologies into defence, and a deepening of defence and diplomatic partnerships with ‘key partners’ in the Indo-Pacific”.

“The report stressed the need for Australia to deepen its engagement and collaboration with countries from Southeast Asia to the Pacific, as well as with India and Japan”.⁷

Former NZ PMs, Of Rival Parties, Oppose It

When AUKUS was first announced in 2021, New Zealand (which was not invited to join) simply confined itself to saying that nuclear powered submarines would not be allowed into NZ territorial waters, or ports, because of our nuclear free law dating back to the 1980s. So, the issue flew below the radar (or sailed under the water, to put it more appropriately). However, once AUKUS really kicked off in March 2023, debate and disquiet started in NZ.

Helen Clark was the Labour Prime Minister (1999-2008) who has dined out for 20 years on having refused to let NZ join the US, UK and Australia in the illegal and disastrous 2003 invasion of Iraq (in all other aspects Clark was a very loyal servant of the US). She came out quickly and said that NZ is better off outside AUKUS (the word she used was

“entanglement”).

She wasn’t alone as the only former NZ PM to criticise it. “...former National Prime Minister Jim Bolger (1990-97) participated in a forum about New Zealand’s foreign policy in Wellington, in which he is reported by the *Herald’s* Audrey Young to have criticised the Australian submarine buy up as ‘beyond comprehension’ because of the cost and the damage to peace in the Pacific region”.

“Bolger said that New Zealand certainly doesn’t want any such submarines, and challenged proponents of the AUKUS deal to defend it: ‘If you can find any Australian official who can explain why they need nuclear-powered submarines, come and tell me. I’d like to know’. And Young reported Bolger asking rhetorically, ‘How mad are we getting?’ She says ‘he spoke with despair about the near-daily threats of nuclear war, which had the potential to destroy the planet’”.⁸

NZ Opposition Right Across Political Spectrum

“As part of the AUKUS deal Western Australia will play host to US and UK nuclear submarines from 2027. With nuclear-capable American B52 bombers and thousands of American Marines rotating through the Northern Territory, Australia is lining up as a loyal lieutenant to the United States in the Pacific and would be expected to fight should war break out”.

“Would New Zealanders fight in a war between the nuclear superpowers? While we aren’t required by treaty obligations to act if America or Taiwan are attacked, we are if Australia is. It is not an exaggeration to say Australia could be a target in a future war and already the country has been threatened with missile attacks in that scenario”.

“The risks of New Zealand being dragged in are real. Unlike in Australia, the conversation in New Zealand has been much more muted with limited discussion on the likelihood of war. Why aren’t we talking about it? New Zealand is in a difficult situation contemplating conflict between our largest trading partner and traditional security partner”.

“We weren’t invited to join AUKUS and Australian nuclear submarines won’t be allowed to berth here under

our nuclear-free legislation. That same legislation sees New Zealand as only a friend and not an ally of the United States, but we are increasingly acting like we are an ally. In the years since New Zealand’s principled decision not to join the invasion of Iraq we have become more enmeshed with the United States defence apparatus”.

“Our troops fought together in Afghanistan and later served together in Iraq. Rocket Lab launches US Air Force payloads, and we remain in the intelligence inner circle as a Five Eyes nation. New Zealand Navy vessels took part in exercises off Guam and Okinawa with carrier strike groups including participating in freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea”.

“New Zealand’s military spending as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) has increased significantly under the Labour government and big new spends have been focused on interoperability. This includes the purchase of four new P-8A Poseidon aircraft to replace the decades-old P3 Orions. At \$NZ2.3b the Poseidon aircraft were much more expensive than alternatives that could have also undertaken search and rescue and fisheries patrol work because of their ability to work with partners and conduct anti-submarine warfare in a future conflict”.

“Former Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern even received an unprecedented invitation to attend a NATO Leaders Summit in Europe. Today, it’s almost as if the ANZUS split of the 1980s never happened. Just because New Zealand is more closely linked with the United States by history, culture and values doesn’t mean we have to blindly fall into line and follow whatever they do....”

“New Zealanders need to talk more about the risks, our decision-makers need to explain why New Zealand is aligning more closely with the United States military and as a sovereign country we have to ask are we acting independently or as a cog in a machine? Our role could be focused on reducing tensions, finding solutions and building trust. War is never inevitable”.⁹

Former politicians right across the spectrum have come out against AUKUS. For example, Richard Prebble, one-time Labour Cabinet

Minister and later ACT Party founder and Leader. He is currently a relentless Rightwing critic of the current Labour government. His take on AUKUS is the classic mercantilist one. "China is New Zealand's biggest trading partner. This country has joined China's Belt and Road initiative. China has signed a free trade agreement with New Zealand, something the US Senate refuses to consider".

"Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta has warned that New Zealand's exports to China could be caught up in a 'storm', saying 'it may only be a matter of time before the storm gets closer to us. The signal I'm sending to exporters is that they need to think about diversification'. New Zealand's exporters are only too aware of their dependency. There is no other obvious alternative to the New Zealand-China trade".

"New Zealand has no territorial disputes with China. When we recognised the Government of China 50 years ago, we acknowledged Taiwan is part of China. Paul Keating and Helen Clark are correct. New Zealand's strategic interest is in the peaceful resolution of conflicts with China rather than sleepwalking into anti-Chinese alliances".¹⁰

Academic Scepticism

Leading academic Robert Patman spelled it out in an article entitled "Why New Zealand Should Remain Sceptical About AUKUS".¹¹ "The basic problem facing AUKUS is that it is based on a binary assumption that the fate of the Indo-Pacific will be largely shaped by the outcome of US-China rivalry and, in particular, by the capacity of America and its closest allies to counterbalance Chinese ambitions in the region".

"Such a perspective is problematic on a number of counts. First, it exaggerates the influence of great powers in the 21st Century in a large, diverse region like the Indo-Pacific. The region contains 60% of the world's population including significant economic players like Japan, South Korea and fast-growing economies such as Vietnam and India".

"Second, AUKUS does not factor in the Indo-Pacific and European nations' quite distinctive security and economic interests in countering China. While countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam and EU

states like Germany and France are deeply worried about China's forceful diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, they remain sceptical that a security arrangement involving three English-speaking states, two of whom have baggage in the region, is an adequate response".

"Third, China's global ambitions are very real, but they should not be over-hyped. AUKUS states depict China as a 'systemic threat' and, according to US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, the 'only competitor out there with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, a power to do so'. Really?..."

"Fourth, the provision of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia has raised very real fears in the Indo-Pacific about nuclear proliferation. In 1995, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) member states signed the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). Furthermore, Singapore is now the only ASEAN state yet to sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a diplomatic initiative heavily promoted by New Zealand".

"Fifth, it is unlikely – given New Zealand's membership of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing arrangement, its status as a NATO partner, and close bilateral ties with Australia and the US – that Wellington could or would be frozen out of talks concerning new security technologies in the Indo-Pacific region. Indeed, a senior American official said as much recently".

"Overall, while the current Labour government has few illusions about China's authoritarian system and increasingly assertive foreign policy, it is not clear that exclusion from AUKUS has strategically sidelined New Zealand. New Zealand remains sceptical that China is a systemic threat to US dominance, sees a good fit between its non-nuclear security policy and the Indo-Pacific region, and views detachment from AUKUS as both consistent with the goal of diversifying New Zealand's trade ties and building a diplomatic network of like-minded states to strengthen the international rules-based order through measures like UN Security Council reform".

Madness To Support US War Against China

Mike Treen, veteran union leader and Leftwing activist, put it all very succinctly in an article in the *Daily Blog*.¹² "The US is going to war against China because it is losing the international economic competition that previously enabled its military and economic bullying to dominate the globe. The empire is in slow decline".

"China's extraordinary rise as an economic powerhouse over the past few decades means that it is now the top international trading partner for 120 countries. This has given the world the freedom to act in ways they have never before – politically and economically. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw China broker a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran. All three nations simply ignored the US. Whatever we may think of these regimes, this will help bring peace to Yemen and the region. The world is becoming a safer and freer place because of that independence".

"That is also why there is a division inside the capitalist class and their political representatives in New Zealand and Australia about being part of the US-led provocations against China. They know where their exports are going and don't want to poke that country in the eye for no apparent sensible reason. After being thrown out of the ANZUS military alliance for New Zealand's anti-nuclear position, let's not keep trying to curry favour with the US empire and its military adventures".

"New Zealand was wrong to join the war against Afghanistan. We were wrong to join the occupation of Iraq. We were wrong to become an 'observer' at NATO. And it would be foolish and dangerous to become a participant in any way with the AUKUS military provocation against China. New Zealand should be a neutral power that offers medical aid to the world, not a tiny jumped-up militarised puppet of the US empire like Australia has become".

Defence Minister Tempted By AUKUS

The AUKUS carrot is being dangled in front of NZ and Defence Minister Andrew Little is keen to take a bite. "Little met White House National Security Council Coordinator, Kurt Campbell, in March 2023, after which Campbell said the United

States thought there was potential for New Zealand to join non-nuclear aspects of the AUKUS pact. Little said New Zealand was interested in joining the second 'pillar' of AUKUS, which would involve defence technologies 'associated' with the nuclear-powered submarines, such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and advanced information technology".

"He said the Defence Force needed to maintain its technology to the standard of its Australian and American counterparts, so the militaries could communicate while working together.... He said he was 'quite satisfied' this aspect of the AUKUS arrangement would be separate from any nuclear hardware. He said he told Campbell any participation by New Zealand could not compromise 'legal obligations and our moral commitment to (being) nuclear-free'".

"We already work very closely with allies and partners who have nuclear-powered vessels and submarines and nuclear-armed missiles and submarines... It doesn't change anything that we're currently doing".¹³

But Not PM Or Minister Of Foreign Affairs

However, both the PM, Chris Hipkins, and Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Foreign Affairs, have since "dismissed suggestions the Government has shown interest in joining aspects of the pact". Mahuta made a May 2023 speech stressing that NZ's nuclear-free position is a "cornerstone of our independent stance" which is about "making our own determination about which tools of statecraft are the right fit for

our national circumstances. Independence should not be confused with isolation, neutrality, or a fixed pre-determination of how we will act on a particular issue".¹⁴

AUKUS Causing Alarm In The Pacific.

"The Pacific Islands Forum warns 'AUKUS will bring war much closer to home and goes against the Blue Pacific narrative on nuclear proliferation and the cost to climate change'. Forum Secretary-General Mark Brown said AUKUS would heighten geopolitical tensions and disturb the peace and security of the region".

"A communiqué issued by former Pacific leaders - Marshall Islands' Hilda Heine, Palau's Tommy Remengesau, Tuvalu's Enele Sopoaga, and Kiribati's Anote Tong - is calling on governments to 'do more to combat climate change first and foremost. Nuclear power carried risks, especially after the 2011 Fukushima disaster and as we discuss nuclear-powered submarines in the Pacific, we must also address concerns about increased militarisation of the region'".¹⁵

The US and Australia were caught on the hop in 2022 by China moving to aggressively court a whole range of tiny South Pacific nations – which Australia and NZ like to patronisingly call "our backyard" – scoring the greatest success in the Solomon Islands. See my article on this: "Pacific Geopolitics In The Raw. Bullying, Hysterical Hypocrisy" in *PR* 63.¹⁶

The US has since been making up for lost time in a region it has ne-

glected for decades (having subcontracted the "property management" to Australia and NZ). It has reopened its Embassy in the Solomons, having closed it in 1993. It has courted South Pacific governments – in May 2023 it signed a new security pact with Papua New Guinea (a move which led to protests by PNG students) - plus it has concluded an agreement with the Philippines to get access to four more military bases in that country, and strengthened its military presence in both Japan and South Korea.

NZ Needs To Be Aware Of War Drums Next Door

"Arden now has the practical distinction of being the most pro-US Prime Minister since Sir Robert Muldoon"¹⁷. In 2022 she became the first ever NZ PM to attend a NATO Leaders Summit. Her successor Chris Hipkins is scheduled to attend the 2023 one. NZ is actively supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia. There is an irony in our Government being so invested in a war, and its attendant geopolitics, on the other side of the world. While right next door to home, our Aussie Big Brother is making a major, major push towards war via AUKUS and accompanying militarisation.

I don't think New Zealanders have yet grasped the full implications, and sheer scale, of what is happening next door. We can't just shrug and ignore it, regardless of whether we'd like to. A significant percentage of New Zealand's population lives in Australia. In my case I have travelled all over that country and taken part in anti-bases activity on both coasts of its vast spread.

Like countless other Kiwis, I have family, friends and colleagues there. More than that, I have Australian blood (one quarter), including a fair dinkum convict ancestor in the family tree. So, it matters what happens next door. It affects us, not just in a general sense, but – for a huge number of us – in a directly personal way. Make no mistake – AUKUS is a major lurch towards war with China and it is unfolding before our very eyes.

*The Australian peace movement is waging a vigorous and very active campaign against AUKUS. Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)*¹⁸.



Notes

- ¹ *Peace Researcher* 49, June 2015, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHSFY1VDA0blc1ZU0/view?pli=1&resourcekey=0-QgCDkmNSG1qPymohrMglA
- ² *Nine*, reprinted in the *Press*, 15/3/23, “Eye-Watering Truth”, Matthew Knott *ibid*.
- ³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15/3/23, Matthew Knott, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/paul-keating-calls-nuclear-submarines-worst-decision-by-labor-government-since-wwi-conscription-20230315-p5csba.html>
- ⁴ *NZ Herald*, 19/3/23, Catie McLeod, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/australias-aukus-deal-a-promise-to-follow-us-into-china-war-expert/HMA2BUQYHVBI-REVGPTJLU65IOM/>
- ⁵ *Stuff*, 22/3/23, James Dwyer, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/australia/300836713/why-is-australia-buying-hundreds-of-missiles>
- ⁶ *Al Jazeera*, 24/4/23, “Australia Unveils Biggest Defence Overhaul Since World War II” <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/24/australia-to-strengthen-long-range-capabilities-northern-bases>
- ⁷ RNZ, 25/3/23, Bryce Edwards, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/486683/nz-needs-to-distance-itself-from-australia-s-anti-china-nuclear-submarines>
- ⁸ *Stuff*, 18/3/23, Gareth Hughes, former Green MP, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/300832604/gareth-hughes-will-new-zealand-be-dragged-into-a-war-between-aukus-and-china>
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- ¹⁰ *Stuff*, 18/3/23, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/131522633/why-new-zealand-should-remain-sceptical-about-aukus>
- ¹¹ *Daily Blog*, 21/4/23, <https://thedailyblog.co.nz/2023/04/21/why-it-is-mad-for-nz-to-support-us-war-against-china/#comment-731137>
- ¹² *Stuff*, 28/3/23, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/131625701/new-zealand-interested-in-joining-second-tranche-of-aukus-deal-defence-minister-says>
- ¹³ *Press*, 4/5/23, Thomas Manch, “Mahuta Says NZ Can ‘Speak Out Alone’”
- ¹⁴ *Stuff*, 19/4/23, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/131807249/pacific-criticises-aukus-deal-keeping-america-engaged-in-the-region>
- ¹⁵ *Peace Researcher* 63, June 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>
- ¹⁶ Luke Malpass, *Stuff*, 4/7/22
- ¹⁷ <https://ipan.org.au/> ■

WAIHOPAI SPY BASE PROTEST 2023

By Murray Horton

Due to circumstances beyond our control (covid and everything arising from it), there was a two-year gap between Waihopai spy base protests by the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). We had to cancel the January 2022 one at a few days’ notice, the first such cancellation since our regular protests began, way back in 1988. But we promised to be back and, in February 2023, we were.

As we said in our publicity: “Since our last protest (2021) the look of the spy base has drastically changed, with the 2022 removal of the two giant domes and the satellite dishes they concealed. They were officially deemed obsolete. But although the domes have gone, Waihopai is still a spy base, albeit a less conspicuous one, and the spying by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) goes on. Our campaign has always been to call for the closure of the base. We started the campaign in 1988, when Waihopai was an empty paddock yet to be built on. The spying goes on, so ABC’s campaign goes on”.

When contacted by the media, we reiterated that point: “Protest organiser and ABC Secretary Murray Horton said the group’s protests had ‘never been, for example, about the domes, but the whole place... For 35 years Waihopai has been New Zealand’s most significant contribution to Washington’s global effort to manipulate world business and diplomacy. And for 35 years the Anti-Bases Campaign has protested at Waihopai, calling for its closure ...”.

“Anti-Bases Campaign has always consistently called for Waihopai to be closed down, as not serving New Zealand’s national interests and effectively being, in all but name, an American intelligence gathering establishment operating on New Zealand soil, staffed by New Zealanders, paid for by New Zealanders taxpayers, but effectively working at the bidding of the biggest of the Five Eyes,” Horton said. ‘Anti-Bases

Campaign has always said that Waihopai is New Zealand’s most important contribution to the military/intelligence alliance with the US”” (*Stuff*, 17/2/23), <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/131237116/protesters-say-spying-goes-on-at-waihopai-station>.

It’s worth pointing out that, no matter how small our numbers, we always get mainstream media coverage when we go to Waihopai. And I must pat myself on the back that the *Stuff* report came out as coherently as it did. The phone interview with the *Marlborough Express* journalist was the day before we travelled to Blenheim and coincided exactly with five arborists working all around our place (which is also the ABC office) with chainsaws and a wood chipper. I struggled to find somewhere in the house away from the noise, and where I could actually hear what the guy was asking me.

The *Marlborough Express* was our only media appearance in connection with Waihopai 2023, but that’s fine, because it means the report is up on the *Stuff* site, which has a reach far beyond the local paper. I was also contacted by a Māori radio station and, in a first, they wanted an interview in te reo. Sadly, nobody on the ABC Committee speaks it, so we had to decline. For the first time in years, no reporters were at the actual protest – which is a pity, because they missed a good story and photo opportunity (see below)

Blenheim Meeting

We decided to start our day of activities with a gathering in Blenheim called “The Changing Face Of Spying”. Over the previous two years covid had wreaked havoc with our plans to get people together at Waihopai. We were determined to try again. In 2022 we had three speakers lined up - Green MP Teanau Tuiono; Sonya Smith from Rocket Lab Monitor, Mahia (to talk about the campaign against NZ’s newest US military base); and May Bass, a leading figure in the very earliest Waihopai spy base protests in the late 80s, specifically the 1988 women’s camp.

In 2023, we invited those same three people back again, with mixed results. Teanau got there but Sonya must be jinxed. Covid stopped her from coming to Waihopai 2022 (and a planned 2021 Christchurch public meeting – although she did get to a



Waihopai 2023. No domes but still spying. Photo by Kerry Tankard

2022 Christchurch public meeting). Sonya lives in Gisborne and just days before Waihopai 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle ripped through that part of the country, obliterating any chance of her flying to Blenheim. May Bass and her partner Bill McAulay did make it, but only after a nightmarish journey on the Cook Strait ferry “service”, which saw them arrive many hours late (they also endured a similar delay on the return trip). Waihopai Domebuster Adi Leason was another scheduled speaker but he couldn’t even get a booking on any ferry run by either company.

So, our Blenheim meeting had to go ahead without two of the advertised four speakers, namely Sonya Smith and Adi Leason. Nevertheless, it did go ahead. It was a smaller than usual gathering, with 20 plus people taking part. ABC’s Warren Thomson kicked it off with a very detailed and informative analysis of the subject matter – the changing face of spying, complete with an accompanying handout. Green MP Teanau Tuiono was the one North Island speaker who did make it to Blenheim, and he gave an engaging talk about the realities of the political context for any discussion of defence, intelligence and foreign policy (specifically relating to getting them on the agenda for the 2023 general election campaign).

Teanau first came to a Waihopai protest in 2021 and I’ll repeat what I said about him then – I can’t recall any other Green MP (and ABC has had dealings with a lot of them over the decades) who talks about “American imperialism”. In the absence of Sonya Smith, I filled in with an update about Rocket Lab but I couldn’t speak about the campaign against it, because I don’t have that information. It is a great pity she couldn’t make it – covid and a cy-

clone have been our curse in recent years whilst trying to organise Waihopai protests.

And in Adi Leason’s absence, we had a free ranging discussion on campaigning and what to do next. A particularly valuable reality check was delivered by senior union leader, Paul Watson, on the subject of the involvement of the trade union movement with the peace movement. Waihopai gatherings always throw up at least one surprise person and 2023 was no exception, with the participation of Phillida Bunkle, who’d been an Alliance MP and a Minister in the Helen Clark government. I hadn’t seen or heard of her in decades.

Over The Fence

After the meeting we headed out to the base, where we held a low-key protest, with placards, banners and big posters which we attached to the base’s outer fence. I was the MC and one of the several speakers. Nobody has been allowed onto the base land since the Domebusters’ non-violent direct action dome deflation in 2008 (before that we used to have permission to protest at the inner gate). So, it was no surprise that when ABC’s Warren Thomson (Waihopai Warren, of many arrests in years long past) went over the outer fence to plant a placard – as he does at every protest – the cops told him to get out.

What was a surprise was that the cops agreed to a request from a number of the women present for them to go over the outer fence and to go to a mutually agreed point on the farmland surrounding the base. May Bass had never been back to Waihopai since the 1988 women’s camp, at which she was a leading figure (meaning that she had never seen the domes – they weren’t in place in 1988 and they were gone

by the time she next came back, in 2023). So, the women, plus one small dog, went onto the base land with police blessing. I ended up working with a cop, each of us on opposite sides of the fence, both physically lifting 80-year-old May back over that fence. I shook the cop’s hand to thank him.

2023 marks 35 years of protests at Waihopai, which must be some sort of record for a campaign against a spy base, starting from before it was built. Without the domes, it now looks dramatically different – but it is still very much a spy base. As for the GCSB, it is still busy spending taxpayers’ money. In April 2023 it was revealed that the Government has been secretly building a \$300 million data centre at Auckland’s Whenuapai Air Force Base. Once it is completed, it will be run by the GCSB on behalf of a range of Government agencies for at least 25 years. The covert State continues building its empire.

End Of Camping After More Than 30 Years

Logistically, the 2023 protest marked the end of a very long era. As I wrote in my report of the previous (2021) protest: “For decades ABC has taken responsibility for organising a three-day camp, which has served as a gathering place for those participating in the protest. It was very enjoyable, but an awful lot of work, particularly for those in charge of feeding everyone. We also used to hire a van and shuttle-type trailer, taking responsibility for transporting people between Christchurch and Marlborough and back, plus transport around Marlborough on the weekend of the protest”.

“Quite often the people doing all that driving were also heavily involved in the running of the camp and the feeding of the campers. We also

used to charge a registration fee, which meant that ABC took responsibility for paying the overnight camping fees for all those who camped with us. We also stopped doing that in 2021”.

“The numbers camping has dropped sharply in recent years, with people now preferring to make their own accommodation arrangements. That might have something to do with the ‘mature’ demographic of those attending, plus the fact that our campsite gets decidedly cold once the Sun has dropped below the ridgeline and stays that way until it climbs back above it the next morning”.

“This is regardless of how hot the place gets in the day time. In 2021 we dropped virtually all of that. The ABC Committee did camp in our usual spot - and we were virtually the only people to do so. Everyone else stayed elsewhere. We did not hire a 12-seater van and trailer, but a basic four-seater campervan, for transporting the Committee only”.

2021 was the end of all that. 2022 was going to mark the start of the new era, with the ABC Committee booking Blenheim accommodation for ourselves and a couple of our scheduled speakers. Covid put paid to that (but we did get a 100% refund). In 2023, we once again booked Blenheim accommodation for ourselves and several others (nine of us stayed together). And we did not hire a rental vehicle, travelling by private car (big thanks to CAFCA Committee member Terry

Moon who, at short notice, supplied the car and herself as driver).

Post-protest, we have made the end of the Waihopai camp era a reality. For decades most of the camping and cooking gear had been stored at ABC HQ (i.e., our garage). That has now been divvied up among the Committee. Some of it was beyond salvation and was binned (but not very much of it). More than a decade ago, we’d been gifted a great big 1988-vintage canvas tent, which took four people to erect. That had served us very well (I’d slept in it several times). It proved surprisingly easy to re-home – one of our neighbours snapped it up and I delivered it to her by wheelbarrow. At the time of writing, we still have a big gazebo which we bought new a few years ago but that will also be re-homed.

From 1988-2021 inclusive, we camped in a number of places. For years it was the Wairau River bank; occasionally a precarious site right at the base gate; a nearby farm; way up the Waihopai Valley; several years on a vineyard just walking distance from the base; and, since the turn of the century, it had been shared between two Department of Conservation camps, at Whites Bay and Onamalutu. Remarkably, Waihopai camps have spanned half my life and I have many fond memories of the good times, the great people, the camaraderie, the beautiful settings and the many adventures and stories that have arisen from them (not to mention heat, cold, wind and rain). A luta continua! But in more comfortable surroundings. ■



Protest at spy base outer gate, February 2023. Group includes Green MP Teanau Tuiono & ABC Committee members Robyn Dann & Warren Thomson. Photo by Dot Lovell-Smith

ROCKET LAB UPDATE

By Warren Thomson

RL Entrenched In America's Warfighting Operations

If anyone still doubts that a large part of Rocket Lab's activities involves direct support for military operations, the latest announcement from the company puts it beyond debate. “Rocket Lab USA, Inc., today announced it has created a US-based wholly owned subsidiary to serve the defence and intelligence community. Rocket Lab National Security will deliver reliable launch services and space systems capabilities to the US government and its allies” (*Business Wire* – Yahoo Website, 1/12/22).

The article goes on to say that since the company's first launch of the Electron rocket in 2017, Rocket Lab has conducted multiple successful launches for national security customers, including missions for the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), US Space Force, and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). Rocket Lab National Security “...will build on this proven track record to deliver new and existing space capabilities for national security applications”.

RL American Launches

The *NZ Herald* reported (25/1/23) that Rocket Lab successfully staged its first launch from American soil, on 25 January, after a number of delays. The *Herald* states: “The ‘Virginia is for Launch Lovers’ mission was the first of three launches involving 15 satellites for HawkEye 360, a maker of radio-frequency ‘geo-analytics’ tracking services for military, maritime and border security clients”, further confirming the New Zealand Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peter Beck has completely sold his soul to the Pentagon.

In an interview with *Newstalk ZB's* Rightwing presenter, Heather Du Plessis-Allan, Beck said Rocket Lab now has a majority of its 1500 staff in the US, but Launch Complex 1 at Mahia will maintain a high volume of Electron launches (ibid). The article – hidden in the *Herald's* business pages – also notes Rocket Lab



Graphic by Ron Currie

shares were up 3.3% to \$US4.98, in January, well off its year-high of \$US12.47, for a market cap of \$US2.36 billion. The *Stuff* Website (12/3/23) reports Rocket Lab had \$US38 million (\$NZ61.96m) in Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), which collapsed early in March 2023.

SVB, which was the United States' 16th-largest bank, failed after depositors rushed to withdraw money amid anxiety over the bank's health. This is the second-biggest bank failure in US history after the collapse of Washington Mutual in 2008. Silicon Valley Bank has been lending to the tech industry for four decades and is known for lending to start-ups. A spokesperson for Rocket Lab said the money was about 7.9% of the company's \$US484m total cash and cash equivalents and marketable securities as of December 31 (2022).

RL Operations In Auckland.

"For your information, I was at Mercer Airport (south of Auckland) last week. Rocket Lab have based two Sikorsky 92 helicopters there, the ones used to attempt expended rocket stage mid-air recovery. There

is also a test facility to run rocket engine tests at the southern end of the runway. The \$US38 million hole (see above) will be quickly filled by the US military funding machine and USD printing press" (email to ABC from a supporter, 13/3/23. ABC welcomes information about Rocket Lab).

Rocket Lab Operations In Australia

(This comes from a Rocket Lab media release, 28/2/23).

"Rocket Lab, a global leader in launch services and space systems, today announced it has established a new wholly-owned subsidiary, Rocket Lab Australia, to explore opportunities to support the expansion of Australia's national space capabilities. The Australian government has set a goal to triple the size of the Australian space sector from an estimated \$A4 billion in 2016 to \$A12 billion and create an additional 20,000 jobs by 2030".

"The Australian government has also committed \$A17 billion above and beyond civil space investment for the development of Defence

space capabilities as part of a 2020 strategy to maintain and upgrade existing space capabilities and develop new capabilities to service global partners" (Five Eyes is specifically mentioned).

Rocket Lab quotes founder and CEO Peter Beck: "Rocket Lab has already played a key role in supporting Australia's rapid growth in space by flying several commercially developed Australian satellites on Electron, as well as launching national security payloads developed in partnership with Australia's Department of Defence" (further confirmation of how deeply the company is embedded in military operations).

Aotearoa/NZ's Place In Star Wars?

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the Ministry of Defence hosted an annual Combined Space Operations (CSpO) Principals' Board meeting on 7-8 December 2022, in Wellington. The Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Clark and Deputy Secretary of Defence Policy and Planning, Michael Swain, hosted delegates from CSpO member nations Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. CSpO is claimed to be a military space initiative which has the purpose of sharing information about space operations and activities and co-ordinating an "... effort to ensure space remains a secure, stable, safe, peaceful and operationally sustainable domain for all".

New Zealand joined CSpO in July 2015, for the opportunity to increase knowledge of space operations, "... to bolster efforts to promote a rules-based international order in space, and to strengthen international relationships". Meetings are held on a rotating basis, with New Zealand last hosting in October 2015.

NZDF says its participation in CSpO "... reinforces New Zealand's approach to space, focused on the promotion and encouragement of the development of responsible behaviours in space" (*Peace Researcher* reserves judgement until more is known about what the attendees actually talk about. The information comes from a media report forwarded to Peace Movement Aotearoa, 5/12/22, by No Space For War). ■

AOTEAROA/ NEW ZEALAND

NZ Role Tracking "Terrorists" Extended

New Zealand has extended its presence in Operation Gallant Phoenix, an international intelligence centre focused on "collecting and sharing information about terrorist threats" based in Jordan (*Newshub*, 18/4/23). As well as extending the term of commitment, the number of personnel from this country has been increased over the last two years.

Set up in 2013, the centre was initially purposed with tracking foreign terrorist fighters in and out of Iraq and Syria. New Zealand joined in 2014. NZ's spy minister Andrew Little has revealed "little" (!) about what goes on there, but the latest announcement states the number of NZ personnel is less than ten. Reference is given to Police and NZ Defence Force (NZDF) staff, but the latter is often a blanket cover for personnel from the spy agencies.

Police Minister Ginny Andersen said the deployment provides Police and other agencies with "valuable information" and that "the public can feel reassured that this Government is prioritising their safety with the renewal of this commitment over the coming two years". It is not quite clear to *Peace Researcher* (PR) how tracking alleged terrorists in Syria and Iraq prioritises our safety. In response to media releases, I wrote a response to the *Christchurch Press* which gives some more detail about the activities of NZ personnel in the Middle East:

"A recent edition of *Air Force News* revealed that a senior NZDF officer served a six-month posting at the Al-Udeid airbase in Qatar, placing New Zealanders at the heart of the main targeting and bombing centre of that region, according to researcher Darius Shahtahmasebi (*Global Research*, 4/2/20). A 2019 *Stuff* Cir-

cuit report (<https://interactives.stuff.co.nz/2018/02/the-base/>) suggested that NZDF personnel have been secretly operating at the Combined Air Operations Center at Al-Udeid since at least 2016".

"The base was responsible for 8,713 airstrikes (or weapons released) in 2018, 39,577 strikes in 2017 and 30,743 in 2016, including both manned and unmanned aircraft (*Global Research*, *ibid.*). In the article, the NZDF confirmed that New Zealand personnel work across the region, including operations in Syria, but stated its troops are not involved in combat operations".

Note that the Al-Udeid base is not the one used by Operation Gallant Phoenix, but both relate to the tracking of alleged terrorists and operations to eliminate them.

Spies Use Backdoor To Weaken OIA

Andrea Vance writes (*Stuff*, 19/2/23) that experts say the Government is using changes to how Land Information Memorandum (LIM) reports are written as a backdoor way to weaken freedom of information laws on behalf of the country's spy agencies. Introducing the Bill, Minister Jan Tinetti claimed local councils play a key role in our democracy and are exposed to risks such as cyber-attacks and foreign interference.

According to her: "In aligning the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act with the Official Information Act, *this Bill will allow councils and the intelligence agencies to work more closely together to manage security concerns* while reducing the risk of information being disclosed that could prejudice New Zealand's national security" (*Stuff*, PR emphasis).

But the Bill also gives local authorities more powers to deny, or withhold, requests from the public for information, documents or correspondence. Local Government Minister Kieran McAnulty said it would allow intelligence agencies to share sensitive information with councils to help them manage security risks, including cyber threats and foreign interference.

However, the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties says the Bill will al-

low the Security Intelligence Service and councils to withhold information more broadly on the basis of "national security". A new law would also mean the Chief Ombudsman, who usually makes the final decision on whether information should be disclosed, can be overridden by the Prime Minister. The Chief Ombudsman said he consulted with officials on the Bill.

NZ Recruits Senior US Ex-Military Officers

Over the last six years, New Zealand intelligence agencies and the NZDF have been employing ex-military staff from the US – some for senior positions. One person employed by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) was described on a Pentagon list as becoming the GCSB's "Manager, High Assurance Manager" on \$110,000-\$165,000 a year (RNZ, 28/4/23). He was an ex-US Air Force lieutenant colonel.

A US Navy commander was approved for a civilian job for \$185,000 a year at the NZDF in 2018, and four other US personnel were given clearance by the Pentagon for jobs in this country's security forces. The most recent position, in 2022, was for a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel to join an NZDF programme run at Auckland University of Technology, notably with the Technical Cooperation Programme that *advances Five Eyes "defence science"* (RNZ, *ibid.*, PR emphasis).

Our Five Eyes entanglement is mentioned several times. Apparently, the New Zealand military has just done a deal to work more closely with Australia's Army, including to support participation in a *Five Eyes standardisation pact*. The GCSB said in a statement to RNZ: "The New Zealand intelligence agencies have a close working relationship with our Five Eyes partners, including the United States. "We have strong collaborative links and the sharing of expertise is highly valued".

Details of the Pentagon approval list, first obtained by the *Washington Post*, were officially disclosed for the first time in a letter to Elizabeth Warren and Charles Grassley, two of the more liberal US Senators. Among the 450 jobs listed were six in New Zealand, including the GCSB job. The Senators were concerned that ex-military serving other governments could leak se-

cret information, and – more interestingly - “that many of the contracts were for military advisory work in countries known for human rights abuses” (RNZ, *ibid*).

The pay rates of two other local jobs were not disclosed by the Pentagon - a 2019 deal for a senior master sergeant as a “Technical Support Boeing Controller” and the sixth job in 2017, for an Air Force lieutenant colonel to work as a strategic information communications systems officer here. Of the dozen applicants the US Department of Defense turned down, one was for a New Zealand job in 2017.

This would have seen a US Air Force lieutenant colonel work here as “*Targeting & Director, Intel, Surveillance & Recon*”. Sounds suspiciously like the tracking and targeting of “terrorists” that our Government wants to keep secret from us (see subsection above “NZ Role Tracking ‘Terrorists’ Extended”).

One of the more intriguing revelations from the Pentagon records is that the former US Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, who resigned after Donald Trump’s election as President in 2016, then in 2018 received an undisclosed sum to work with Australia’s Office of National Intelligence (ONI) in Canberra, which was formally established in December of that year (RNZ, 27/4/23). RNZ shows the Pentagon list extends back to 2012 but no jobs in New Zealand appear till 2017. Seems a sad irony if jobs for ex-US personnel began happening with the arrival of a Labour government.

Five Eyes Links To The Big Leak
New Zealand’s intelligence agencies are involved in a “process” related to the recent sensational leak of United States intelligence documents, (see my article about this elsewhere in this issue), Prime Minister Chris Hipkins says. “There’s a process that we go through when something like this happens to identify whether there are any issues that would be of concern to New Zealand, and I’ll get advice on that in due course,” he said (*Stuff*, 11/4/23). Nothing said about where the “advice” will come from!

The US Justice Department has opened a criminal investigation into the leak. Hipkins said he had not been advised of the leak having im-

plications for New Zealand “so far”. The leak, which involves nearly 100 documents which appear to have originated from the US Department of Defense and/or some spy agencies, contains classified intelligence on the war in Ukraine and confirms US spying on allies including Israel and South Korea

A 21-year-old American who did cyber systems work with the Air National Guard has been arrested; it is somewhat alarming to find out how easily Washington’s top secret material can be hacked into. BBC reports (23/4/23) a national security expert as saying: “It is fairly commonplace for individuals of his age to have access to classified information” and he may have been doing research for more senior people.

The same news item cited a UK senior lecturer on intelligence and security: “... thousands of people across the US military and intelligence establishment have a similar level of access”. How many 21-year old New Zealanders have access to Five Eyes’ secret data? Can secrets - including the sensitive data of citizens of Aotearoa/NZ - actually be kept secret? And is this country a target for hostile cyberwarfare on the basis that we might represent a soft underbelly of the spy supergroup?

Government Has Been Secretly Building A \$300m Data Centre In Auckland

The Government has been secretly building a \$300 million data centre at an Air Force base in Auckland since early 2022, to house its most important information. Defence and GCSB Minister Andrew Little said the first funding for the data centre at the Whenuapai Air Force base in west Auckland was approved in 2019 (*Stuff*, 2/4/23). This explains some of the ups and downs in GCSB budgets over the last four years.

Little said the data centre, which is due to be completed by 2025, was “an essential and long-term investment to further ensure core public service information storage well into this century”. The Government Communications Security Bureau would operate the facility on behalf of a broad range of Government agencies that would use it to store data for at least the next 25 years, according to Little. He did not say that having the keys to most confi-

dential Government data, all stored in one place, would make the job of GCSB and the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) much easier.

Little said the GCSB would not disclose the number of people who would work at the facility once it was completed “for security reasons” but it is more likely he did not want to give any indication of the scope of operations at the new facility. He also said it was a GCSB decision whether the National Party had been kept in touch with the development. It would be interesting to know how much Luxon and co watch the spies’ budgets.

Our spies have been slow to move on this one. Over the last decade, all of our Five Eyes partners have built unbelievably massive data storage facilities to hold and analyse the results of their pernicious surveillance. The US National Security Agency (NSA) completed a gigantic facility in Utah completed in May 2014 at a cost of \$US1.5 billion.

“The Australian government has been building a state-of-the art, secret data storage facility just outside Canberra to enable intelligence agencies to deal with a ‘data deluge’ siphoned from the Internet and global telecommunications networks” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/6/13) and in July 2020 Macquarie Data Centres announced a new facility to “leverage the latest physical and virtual security and compliance credentials to manage Government cloud workloads at the protected, secret and above levels”.

More recently the Cheltenham-based UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) has struck a deal - thought to be worth up to £1 billion over ten years - with Amazon Web Services (AWS), the American online tech company, to hold secret material in the cloud. The GCHQ, MI5, MI6, and also the Ministry of Defence (MoD) will now access their data in the cloud, albeit in UK-located AWS data centres (*Register*, 26/10/21).

In regard to the GCHQ deal, critics raised concerns of GCHQ using AWS’s artificial intelligence-based tools, such as translation and speech recognition technology, to analyse the vast data sources it holds: the agencies will be able “to get information from huge amounts of data in minutes, rather than in

weeks and months" (*Register*, *ibid.*).

Inspector-General Has Reservations Re Torture Policy

In the most recent report from the spooks' Inspector-General (IG), he states that his last two annual reports commented on engagement with the agencies on the test for when they may share information with a foreign partner agency if there is a risk it will contribute to human rights abuses, and that there was a revised policy issued in December 2021.

He goes on to say the latest policy is a marked improvement on the 2017 policy, "... although I continue to maintain some reservations on important details, namely the terms employed in risk thresholds; specific criteria and definitions for overseas bodies; and the handling of reports likely obtained by torture" (NZIG Report 2022 – released November 2022).

The IG also says he has proposed that for transparency the majority of the policy could be made public. *PR* believes that such transparency is a matter of urgency since there have been at least two occasions in the last two years when our spies have been given permission to employ information extracted by torture.

SIS Warns Of Increasing Foreign Interference

In its most recent annual report, the domestic spooks have warned of "increasingly aggressive activity" by people they believe are spies for foreign states. The SIS has concluded that unnamed states were making "enduring and persistent" efforts to collect intelligence against New Zealand's government, target those with access to sensitive information, and interfere in all spheres of the country's public life (*Guardian*, 7/4/23).

No particular countries were officially named, but the report says one foreign government had been cultivating relationships in a way that was suspicious; almost certainly referring to China's involvement with local citizens of Chinese origin, and various forms of political funding. Robert Patman, a Political Studies Professor at the University of Otago, says that New Zealand's international profile has grown appreciably in the last few years, with the country increasing its influence under Ardern and increasing its strategic im-

portance in the Pacific (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). *PR* notes also that our toady role in Five Eyes makes us more of a target for some countries.

The SIS stated an increase in information-sharing with domestic and foreign government agencies allowed it to identify previously unknown individuals of security concern in 2022 (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). Information was collected on a group of alleged agents from a single country that helped its decision-making in a long-running investigation. *PR* hopes that the information was more accurate than some from overseas in the past, and that it was not obtained under torture.

(Our spooks have been given permission to use information extracted by torture on at least two occasions in the last couple of years). As of April 2023, the SIS was being led by Phil McKee as the Acting Director-General. The new Director-General, replacing Rebecca Kitteridge, is Andrew Hampton, who will move from what seems a more exalted position as head of the GCSB.

SIS Detains Govt Analyst

Yuan Zhao, a staffer at the Public Service Commission, and his family were "detained" at Wellington Airport in October 2022 by the SIS as they returned from holiday in Australia. His phone was seized, and his son's laptop was searched. He is accused of providing privileged information to the Chinese government.

Zhao, who became a New Zealand citizen in 2006, has worked as a senior analyst in a strategic information team for the Public Service Commission since 2021. The Chinese-born New Zealand citizen, who also goes by the name Jason, has said that he was accused of being an "insider threat risk" as he provided "privileged insights" to the Chinese government, and held "close personal relationships" with officials of a foreign government in New Zealand. Previously he was with the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) on a team which worked on the New Zealand-China free trade agreement (*Stuff*, 9/3/23).

He made his comments on a fundraising Website as his access to the Internet has been removed. He said he felt threatened by the SIS, compelled to participate in a voluntary

interview in another room while his wife and three children were "hostage", and told not to talk about the matter as the SIS could find him anywhere.

China's Construction In Antarctica Under Suspicion

China has recommenced building work in the Antarctic which is regarded from a Western perspective as an increasing military/intelligence presence in the polar regions that could provide the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with better surveillance capabilities (*Guardian*, 18/4/23). The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington based thinktank, used satellite images taken in January 2023 to identify new support facilities, temporary buildings, a helicopter pad and foundations for a larger main building at the 5,000 square metre station. It estimated that construction could be done by 2024.

The CSIS has concluded that Chinese equipment at the base can be used for intercepting other nations' satellite communications, and that the station is well positioned to collect signals intelligence over Australia and New Zealand and telemetry data on rockets launched from Australia's new Arnhem Space Centre, and *PR* adds, presumably Rocket Lab launches from Mahia.

Police Intelligence Unit Expands

The Police unit officially known as the Security Intelligence and Threats Group (SITG), which provides intelligence for Police on matters related to national security and potential violent extremism, has almost doubled in size. In 2018, SITG had eight staff, but by the end of 2022 the number of personnel had increased to 15, still a relatively small group. The 2023 census and election are seen as possible triggers for motivating extremists.

Dan Wildy, Police's Director of National Intelligence, said the SITG produced intelligence on people and groups of national security concern, did "horizon scanning" and assisted in investigations (*Stuff*, 27/1/23). *Stuff* asked under the Official Information Act for resourcing information on SITG, including staffing numbers, budget and what it was investigating. Police wouldn't confirm whether there had also been any budgetary increase to SITG and wouldn't confirm what groups or ideologies the group had produced in-

telligence reports on.

Paul Spoonley from Massey University commented that security officials were still in the process of responding to criticisms made in the Royal Commission report on the 2019 Christchurch Mosque shootings. He said the Police unit might cover some of the same bases as the SIS, but Police needed their own intelligence for situations like the 2022 Parliament occupation, which was largely a law and order issue. *PR* suggests the Police take over the whole domestic threat function.

Nicky Hager Compensated For SIS Persecution

In November 2022 the SIS agreed to issue a public apology and pay \$40,000 compensation and \$26,400 in legal costs to investigative journalist Nicky Hager after his phone records were unlawfully spied on. He successfully took a case against the SIS to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, who decided in 2019 the spy agency had unlawfully obtained and used two months of Nicky's phone data.

The SIS were trying to discover sources for the book "Other People's Wars" on behalf of the NZ Defence Force. The 2011 book was the first to draw attention to civilian deaths during 2010's Operation

Burnham in Tirgiran Valley, Afghanistan. Nicky's book "Hit & Run", written with co-author Jon Stephenson and published in 2017, led to a Government inquiry into the killings (*Jeremy Agar reviewed the first book in PR 42, November 2011, and the second one in PR 53, June 2017, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>. Ed.*).

Nicky's response to the compensation was reported by *Spinoff* (30/11/22): "I am pleased with this result," he said in a statement. "However, much more needs to be done to prevent unlawful actions by bodies such as the NZSIS. Our intelligence services repeatedly claim that they have become more transparent and more careful to obey the law".

"But when I requested information from the NZSIS Director Rebecca Kitteridge about the suspected NZSIS help to find my sources, she refused to confirm or deny the existence or nonexistence of the information. Ms Kitteridge went on to deny any wrongdoing before the Inspector-General. She claimed that the NZSIS was justified in using its powers as it was investigating espionage, and that my actions prejudiced national security".

The SIS, which first apologised in 2019, agreed in November 2022 to the monetary settlement and conceded it "unlawfully requested and collected two months of Mr Hager's home telephone (data), and that doing so breached Mr Hager's rights" (*Stuff*, 30/11/22). But the actions of Director-General Kitteridge are a concern; as far as she is concerned her spooks did no wrong and Nicky Hager is a threat to national security. This strongly suggests that the SIS for all its recent recruitment and modernisation, is just as incompetent at assessing real threats as ever.

Political commentator Bryce Edwards wrote: "There is a need to have investigative journalism, and the media in general, as a properly functioning mechanism to hold the powerful to account, including the defence forces. This case shows the SIS has clearly undermined that mechanism. What happened to Hager was dangerous for democracy, and should never have happened. But it's not clear that it won't happen again" (*Stuff*, 1/12/22).

The SIS is claiming that it has reformed itself and is now more careful with following the law and will be more transparent. There are already signs that it is failing to live up to this. The spy agency claims to have



Nicky Hager, with his 2011 book "Other People's Wars".

established a new policy for how it deals with the work of journalists. But Nicky Hager's lawyers point out that the SIS is refusing to release that policy. In 2018, Nicky also received "substantial" damages from the Police in compensation for a raid on his home following the 2014 publication of "Dirty Politics".

Serious Questions Over NZDF IG Bill

On 28 October 2022 the Government introduced a Bill to establish an Inspector-General for the NZ Defence Force. The Bill was put together after consultation with a variety of parties – including the authors of "Hit & Run" - the Hager/Stephenson expose of crimes against civilians in Afghanistan. But the Bill still has some harsh critics. Some very serious questions have been raised in a submission by the NZ Council of Civil Liberties, as follows (see CCL Website, published 4/2/23).

- The Council believes that this Bill, unless significantly amended, will not deliver the desired outcomes.
- While the Government claims this Bill improves transparency, it actually makes it more difficult to learn about potential or actual wrongdoing within the Defence Force. This will make it more difficult to hold the Defence Force accountable, and make it more likely that future human rights violations by the Defence Force will be kept secret instead of being exposed and corrected.

- The CCL has serious concerns, both about a number of the powers that the new Inspector-General of Defence (IGD) will have – notably the ability to issue suppression orders – and powers they will not have – for example the inability of the IGD to recommend prosecution.
- Any information provided to the IGD during an investigation cannot then be used in a subsequent prosecution (unless it is for perjury or obstruction of the IGD's investigation).
- The CCL is also deeply concerned by the exclusion of information relating to Inspector-General investigations being excluded from the definition of "official information" in the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). This will prevent people from obtaining information not only from the IGD, but also from the NZDF and Ministry of Defence. The situation is made worse by the power given to the Minister of Defence in this Bill to impose secrecy orders that override the OIA.

lock up or control 25 of their clients on the basis they might commit a terrorist offence in the future. According to the *Guardian's* Australian edition, (30/4/23), the Federal and New South Wales (NSW) governments have wielded extraordinary powers to detain or control individuals for crimes they have not yet committed. But there are serious problems with the procedure being used.

The powers are reliant on a tool used to assess an individual's likelihood of future terror offending, known as VERA-2R, which is used by lawyers for the Commonwealth and NSW to convince courts to use continuing detention orders (CDOs) or extended supervision orders (ESOs) to prevent a future crime from occurring.

But in May 2020, the then Morrison government received a report on the procedure which it had commissioned from the academic Dr Emily Corner at significant taxpayer expense. The report was damning about the use of the tool, saying the "lack of evidence" underpinning it had "serious implications for (its) validity and reliability" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). The governments sat on the report and continued to use the risk assessment tool as the basis for continuing to detain or monitor offenders after their sentence had finished.

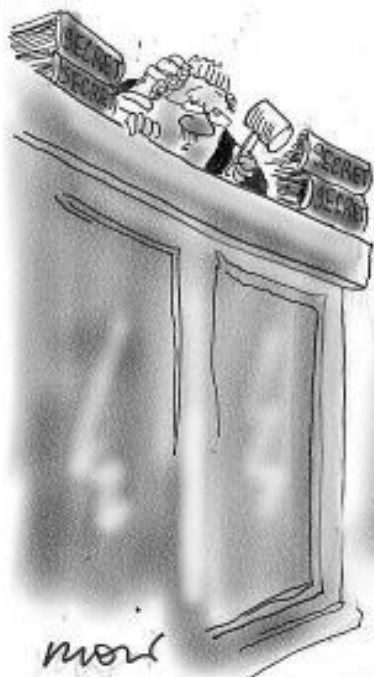
The report was not disclosed to defendants, despite its damning findings. It was also not disclosed to the

AUSTRALIA

Draconian Govt Actions To Hide Critical Data

Australian Legal Aid lawyers were kept in the dark about a damning Government-held report which cast doubt on a key tool used to try to

FREEDOM FROM INFORMATION



NSW government, which continued to rely on the tool. The report only came to light more than two-and-a-half years later during a November 2022 inquiry by the national security law watchdog, the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor (INSLM). The *Guardian* has revealed that the report was not disclosed to Legal Aid NSW at any point during 25 separate cases involving its clients. The NSW government has declined to say whether it is still using the tool.

Another Spook's Secret Trial

Public justice is an absolute bedrock for a Western democratic justice system, but this absolute is being frittered away in Australia (and in Aotearoa/NZ). In late February 2023 the public found out a former spook, Alan Johns, labelled "Witness J", spent 15 months locked up in Canberra's prison after being prosecuted and sentenced behind closed doors in the ACT Supreme Court in 2018. Even the Australian Capital Territory's Chief Justice described the secrecy as "anathema to the rule of law" (*Canberra Times*, 22/2/23).

It was an unprecedented case where the charges, hearing and sentencing remained completely secret under section 22 of the National Security Information Act. The trial only came to light when Witness J unsuccessfully tried to sue Canberra's jail over his treatment (*ABC News*, 19/4/23). A legal fight in 2019 over Johns' prison memoir alerted media to his earlier conviction, following a raid by Australian Federal Police of his cell in order to seize a memoir he was writing. The former military intelligence officer was sentenced to more than two years in jail but served only 15 months after pleading guilty to breaches related to classified information. No information about the trial was revealed. Releasing documents related to the case to the public in April 2023, Chief Justice McCallum stated: "The prospect of a person being imprisoned in this country in proceedings closed to the public on suppressed charges proved by secret evidence is inherently likely to cause consternation. Secrecy is anathema to the rule of law. The administration of justice thrives on the discipline that comes with public scrutiny. That is the premise of the principle of open justice" (*Guardian*, 18/4/23).

She also said open justice was not

"absolute". There will be occasions on which some limitation of the principle is necessary to secure the proper administration of justice. Ok, but *PR* notes the dangers of limitation whereby intelligence agencies escape necessary oversight, and/or where political bias influences court proceedings. It is imperative that the principle of oversight is paramount.

In the Witness J case a public inquiry was conducted by the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, Grant Donaldson. Donaldson was scathing in his final report saying this should never happen again, that a person be charged, sentenced and jailed in complete secrecy (*ABC News*, 19/4/23). This was an unprecedented case where the charges, hearing and sentencing remained completely secret under section 22 of the Australian National Security Information Act. As regards both Australia and Aotearoa/NZ, *PR* reiterates the words of the National Security Legislation monitor: "... *this should never happen again.*"

Former Secret Trial Drags On

When charges against Bernard Collaery were dropped in July 2022, the previous Federal government decided it would continue to have parts of the proceedings kept secret. Collaery is a prominent lawyer who defended the Australian spy who blew the whistle on Canberra's notorious 2004 espionage against the Timor-Leste Government (see previous *PRs* for details).

The Government is seeking to suppress a ruling made by the Australian Capital Territory Court of Appeal in 2022 which declared Collaery's trial should not take place in secret. The Court maintained such a move would pose a "very real risk of damage to public confidence" and cited the importance of open justice in preventing "political prosecutions".

But the Court was left unable to publish its full reasons for making the decision because of an intervention by the then Coalition government. The Government argued that publishing the decision would release sensitive information to the public and undermine Australia's national security, an argument maintained by the new Labor government.

In a speech in October 2022, Collaery said: "Instead of facing up to

(the fact) that ... there was no lawful basis for the spy mission the prosecution aided the Coalition in a cruel four-year long attempt to hide dirty linen and punish Witness K and myself for speaking up for Australian values" (*Guardian*, 8/11/22).

ASIO Given Power Over Vetting

ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) has been given control over issuing the highest-level security clearances in Australia in response to what the Government calls "the unprecedented threat from espionage and foreign interference" (*Guardian*, 29/4/23). While the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine plans were not specifically mentioned, the Government's notes to Parliament said that the measures would help "ensure the ongoing confidence of our most trusted allies", the newspaper comments.

This new vetting procedure will replace the function currently performed by a range of agencies, including the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), the Australian Federal Police and the Office of National Intelligence (ONI). Given ASIO's history of prejudice and cock-ups, *PR* thinks the looming spectre of AUKUS might explain why.

AUKUS Deal: More Secrecy

The US, UK and Australia have unveiled the details of a horrific plan to militarise the South Pacific by creating a fleet of next generation nuclear-powered submarines (see the full story in Murray Horton's article elsewhere in this issue). Under the AUKUS agreement, Australia will first receive at least three nuclear-powered submarines from the US. The "allies" will create a "new cutting-edge technology" fleet.

From 2023 Royal Australian Navy (RAN) personnel will be embedded at US and UK submarine bases to gain the necessary skills to use the submarines. From 2027, the US and UK will base a small number of nuclear subs at a RAN base in Perth. Australia will buy three American Virginia-class submarines in the early 2030s - with options to purchase two more.

After that, the plan is to design and build an entirely new nuclear-powered submarine for the UK and Australian navies, called SSN-AUKUS. The pact is aimed at coun-

tering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region (BBC, 14/3/23). This defence strategy, especially the parts involving a substantial home-based Australian part in construction of submarines and associated hardware, means a big step up in counter-espionage activity.

It has other domestic implications as well. The Australian government has rejected a Senate order to produce documents relating to nuclear safety and waste related to the submarine programme. The national Radiation Health and Safety Advisory Council *has warned against allowing a cloak of national security to "mask inadequate radiation safety protection of the Australian public, weaken regulatory authority, or inhibit transparency on matters of Australian public safety"* (Guardian, 23/3/23; PR emphasis).

Confused Messages From ASIO

ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (21/2/23) as stating: "... the nation is experiencing the highest level of foreign interference, espionage and terrorism in its history," surpassing the Cold War and post 9/11 activities. But in late November, 2022, Australia's national terrorism threat level was lowered from "probable" to "possible", although authorities warned a deadly attack could still happen in the next 12 months (ABC, 28/11/22).

The apparent contradiction probably arises from ASIO's newer emphasis on cyber threats, espionage and Chinese pressure on overseas citizens rather than domestic bomb plots or sabotage. However, ASIO claimed there had been 11 terrorist attacks on Australian soil between 2014 and 2022 and 21 significant terror plots had been "detected and disrupted" (ABC, *ibid.*). In the 2021 Federal Budget the then Government significantly increased ASIO funding, but actual budgets of the Aussie spooks are not released by the Canberra government.

UK

UK Rules On Torture "Muddied Water"

After the 9/11 attacks on the United States, and the UK intelligence agencies' embroilment in scandals relating to the "war on terror", the Government published a policy on

torture and intelligence, then known as the "consolidated guidance". This stated that the UK government does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone unlawful killing, the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or extraordinary rendition (Guardian, 11/4/23).

However, two damning reports published by the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) in 2018, found that MI5 and MI6 were involved in hundreds of torture cases and scores of rendition cases after 9/11. The reports followed the UK government's 2018 apologies to Abdel Hakim Belhaj and his wife for UK spooks' involvement in the rendition and torture of Belhaj. So, new "principles" came into effect in 2020, and state again that the UK government "does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone unlawful killing, the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or extraordinary rendition" (Guardian, *ibid.*).

The *Guardian* article says elements of the new guidance "muddy the waters" – deliberately so, according to critics – especially "a presumption not to proceed", which should apply where there are grounds for believing there is a real risk of torture, unlawful killing or extraordinary rendition. The latest report by intelligence watchdog, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), said that agencies (those overseen by IPCO include MI5 and MI6) have been failing to remind ministers of the presumption in cases where there was a "real risk of torture".

In a 2018 ISC report, two former Home Secretaries and two former Foreign Secretaries all questioned while in office as to whether they would authorise cases where there was a serious risk of torture, put forward "contrasting views (which) clearly illustrate the dangerous ambiguities in the guidance – individual ministers have entirely different understandings of what they can and cannot, and would and would not, authorise" where there was a serious risk of torture.

The *Guardian* writer says the public is left guessing as to whether permission was granted for so-called "torture tipoffs", as allegedly happened in the case of Jagtar Singh Johal, a Sikh activist and blogger, who faces a possible death sentence in India. His lawyers are suing

the UK government, saying a spook tipoff was made in the knowledge that torture might follow his 2017 arrest.

The legal action group Reprieve and the all-party Parliamentary Group on Extraordinary Rendition say this is an inevitable consequence when the law is unequivocal that torture is prohibited but Government policy contains room for manoeuvre. If the UK was true to its word on torture, the policy's requirement to consult ministers would be obsolete, as it would never be allowed.

Troubled History

The last person in the UK sentenced to hang, Belfast man Liam Holden, had signed a confession after being taken to an Army base near to the scene of the shooting of a British paratrooper in 1972 and subjected to waterboarding and death threats. His family have now been awarded £350,000 in damages. Holden was hooded and driven in a car flanked by soldiers to a location "where he thought he would be assassinated," said the judge. "A gun was put to his head and he was threatened that he would be shot dead".

As the paratroopers had wrongly and unlawfully induced him to make the admission, the Ministry of Defence was held liable for his malicious prosecution and misfeasance in public office. Thus, the court ruled the family was entitled to compensation, a year after Holden died. Holden served 17 years in prison before a court of inquiry quashed the conviction in 2012. Inquiries by the Criminal Cases Review Commission discovered evidence that the Army's practice of detaining and questioning suspects at that time was unlawful (BBC, 24/3/23).

A Very Troubled History

Jim Auld, 72, was one of 14 Irish "hooded men" subjected to British interrogation methods now ruled as torture. Auld was so mistreated by his interrogators during the Troubles that he tried to kill himself. "In a life scarred by fear, Auld's final dread is that his ordeal in 1971 ... could end up in a scientific paper that helps British and other security forces refine torture methods" (Guardian, 20/1/23). The *Guardian* goes on to say: "That may sound like paranoia but Auld and 13 other men were singled out as guinea pigs for special interrogation

techniques that were replicated by British and US interrogators in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay”.

In 2015 the *Independent* (20/2/15) reported: “More than 340 (Irish) men were rounded up on 9-10 August 1971 but a group of just 12 were chosen for ‘deep interrogation’ and subjected to hooding, prolonged stress positions, white noise, sleep deprivation and deprivation of food and drink – the torture methods developed by the British Army during the Troubles and collectively known as the ‘five techniques’”.

“Two more men suffered the same treatment later that year. Shortly afterwards the US Central Intelligence Agency was using the five techniques in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. Jim ‘Archie’ Auld, an unemployed 20-year-old dental technician, said the white noise was so bad he tried to kill himself by ramming his head onto a water pipe. Another victim also tried to kill himself”.

Auld is quoted as saying: “And I couldn’t care less if they’re forced into making an apology because that’s no reflection on what they will do next week”. What Auld wants is a howl of public outrage, however belated, over what happened to him and the other men, a howl that shames their tormenters and shames the Government into not repeating such abuse (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). *PR* reports these stories for the very same reason! And reminds readers that both the GCSB and the SIS have extensively used information extracted by torture and, in a few cases, supplied questions to be used by the torturers.

Collateral Damage Underestimated

In 2019 the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) claimed the Royal Air Force (RAF) had killed or injured 4,315 enemy fighters in Iraq and Syria since September 2014. They claimed only one civilian was killed in the airstrikes (BBC, 7/3/19). But the AOV, a research charity, said at that time it believed civilian deaths had been under-reported, as 1,000 targets were hit by RAF Typhoons and Tornado aircraft and Reaper drones.

The full coalition of American allies reported conducting a total of 33,921 strikes between August 2014 and end of January 2019, and

said at least 1,257 civilians had been unintentionally killed during this period. Another non-government organisation (NGO), Airwars, an organisation which tracks civilian deaths, believed between 7,500 and 12,077 non-combatants were likely to have died over the same period (BBC, 7/3/19).

Now, despite the MoD continuing to claim British weapons did not harm a single non-combatant, a new investigation by the *Guardian*, in collaboration with Airwars, has identified six attacks in the Iraqi city of Mosul that killed civilians and appears to have been carried out by British forces in 2016 and 2017 (*Guardian*, 21/3/23).

Victims of two suspected British strikes have described for the first time the deaths and injuries of children, parents, brothers and sisters in missile attacks that devastated their families. In total, across the six strikes in Mosul that were identified by the *Guardian* and Airwars as likely to have been British attacks, the coalition accepts killing 26 civilians.

The true number may be much higher. Statista Research, a company based in Hamburg, on 14 March 2023 stated documented war-related civilian deaths in Iraq were 740 in 2022, over 16,000 in 2016, and over 20,00 in 2014. The US-led Inherent Resolve coalition says that 1,437 civilians have been “unintentionally killed” in more than 35,000 airstrikes in a war where ground fighting has largely been conducted by the Syrian Kurds (*Guardian*, 14/3/23).

Britain’s Ministry of Defence has refused to say whether it conducted any investigation into reports of civilian casualties after revelation of an RAF drone strike conducted against a terrorist target in the north of Syria in December 2022 (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told British MPs that a Reaper drone had been used to attack an Islamic State leader in what would be essentially an extra-judicial targeted killing. Two or possibly more civilians were also reported hurt.

PR reminds readers that a number of members of the NZDF and GCSB staff are working in Middle Eastern intelligence centres whose main purpose is to track terrorists for targeting. Minister for Spooks, Andrew Little, needs to give the NZ public

much more information about this country’s involvement in such international “terrorist-hunting” operations in the Middle East. We need to know that these operations, for instance, are not linked to strikes by manned and unmanned aircraft that have killed and wounded so many civilians in Iraq, Syria, and other places in the region.

London Police Withhold Key Documents

Ninety-five pages of documents that Scotland Yard should have handed over to an official inquiry into Metropolitan Police corruption were instead left in a locked cabinet, it has been revealed (*Guardian*, 10/5/23). The Met has apologised for withholding the documents from an inquiry investigating the unsolved axe murder of private detective Daniel Morgan and the role corruption played in shielding his killers.

The Morgan Inquiry had previously censured the former Met Commissioner, Cressida Dick, in a June 2021 report. In this latest revelation, the Met said the documents were first found in January 2023, 18 months after the Morgan Inquiry report was made public. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has asked for an assessment of the newly discovered material to see if there needs to be a new inquiry.

In a further damning attack on the London Police, the head of the Police Federation of England and Wales has stated the Metropolitan Police are “... institutionally racist, misogynistic and homophobic”, based on a “devastating” report from an inquiry into the Met made public in March (*Guardian*, 19/4/23). The official report concluded: “The (London) Metropolitan Police is broken and rotten, suffering collapsing public trust and is guilty of institutional racism, misogyny and homophobia” (*Guardian*, 21/3/23).

The report by Louise Casey was commissioned by the Met after one of its officers abducted Sarah Everard, taking her from a city street in March 2021, before raping and murdering her. Also in April 2023, eight serving or former London Police officers were found guilty of gross misconduct having “... sent sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic and disablist comments in a WhatsApp group called ‘Secret Squirrel Shit’ between 2016 and 2018” (*Guardian*,

In 2020, a secretive Scotland Yard intelligence unit shredded a large number of documents to hide them from a public inquiry set up into the undercover infiltration of political groups. The Independent Office for Police Conduct found that documents had been destroyed despite an instruction that they had to be preserved. The watchdog said it was “extremely unfortunate” that a number of former managers had refused to cooperate with its inquiry. It said the investigation had uncovered serious failings within the intelligence unit (*Guardian*, 18/3/20).

The message from this tale of bent coppery is the absolutely vital necessity of effective oversight of police and security agencies – a theme that *PR* continues to hammer. While there is no evidence that NZ agencies have quite sunk to the depths of the London Police, there have been instances of our spooks failing to cooperate with official inquiries, and the theme is clear amongst Five Eyes parties generally. Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?

The Met Foils Iranian Plots

In February 2023 the under-fire London Police described a number of plots by Iran to either kidnap or kill British or UK-based individuals it considers “enemies of the regime” (*Guardian*, 18/2/23). The toll of attempted assassinations and abductions was made public hours after a London-based Iranian broadcaster announced it had moved operations to the US after mounting safety concerns against its journalists from Tehran. Matt Jukes, head of counter-terrorism policing at the Met, said the decision came against a backdrop of mounting threats from hostile states. Jukes said the forced relocation underlined the pressures facing journalism in some parts of the world.

In November 2022, armed vehicles were deployed outside the Iran International studios in Chiswick, west London, after “severe and credible” threats were made against two of its UK-based channel’s journalists. “Our overall workload in investigating threats from foreign states has quadrupled over the past two years,” he said, adding that a range of protective security measures had been put in place to mitigate threats to other UK-based targets (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

MI5 Fails To Protect

An attack by a suicide bomber could have been prevented if MI5 had acted competently on intelligence it received, according to a recent UK inquiry (*Stuff*, 3/3/23). MI5, Britain’s domestic intelligence agency, didn’t act swiftly enough on key information and missed a significant opportunity to prevent the suicide bombing that killed 22 people at an Ariana Grande concert in northwest England on May 22, 2017.

“I have found a significant missed opportunity to take action that might have prevented the attack,” concluded retired judge John Saunders, who led the inquiry into the Manchester Arena attack (*Stuff*, *ibid.*). He found MI5 officers had looked at intelligence about suicide bomber Salman Abedi, and the possible national security concern, but didn’t discuss it with colleagues quickly enough.

Abedi, 22, set off a knapsack bomb in the Arena’s foyer at the concert, and died in the explosion. Saunders said had the MI5 acted on the intelligence it received, he could have been stopped at Manchester Airport on his return from Libya just four days before the attack. “It is now very clear that there was a failure to properly assess key intelligence about Salman Abedi; a failure to put it into proper context, and – most catastrophic of all – a delay in acting on it,” Scorer said.

Russian Spy Caught

A spy at Britain’s Berlin Embassy, who sold secrets to Russia and was caught in an undercover MI5 sting, has been jailed for 13 years and two months. David Smith, 58, damaged Britain’s interests by passing on details of the Embassy and its staff for cash payments, a judge found after the spy pleaded guilty. Smith was a security guard at the Berlin Embassy who offered to sell stuff to Russia. He was caught first on video camera then entrapped by agents pretending to be looking for information. Covert video was played in court showing David Smith meeting with “Irina,” an MI5 officer posing as a member of Russia’s military intelligence service on August 9, 2021 (*BBC*, 18/2/23).

Smith had collected information from the British Embassy “by stealth” between 2018 and 2021, some of which was clearly marked as “secret.” He then sold the infor-

mation to Russia as part of an “ongoing” relationship. One of the secret documents was a sensitive report addressed to Boris Johnson, sent to him by members of his Cabinet.

Some of the documents of a lower classification revealed the names, photographs, and personal details of Embassy staff, the judge said. The prosecution contended that Smith’s actions were not just driven by money and greed, but that he had “expressed a strong dislike towards the UK and Germany and expressed sympathy with the Russian authorities” (*CNN*, 17/2/23).

UK Bans TikTok Use

The Westminster government has banned the use of TikTok, the Chinese-owned social video app, on phones used by ministers and public servants. Most of the Five Eyes partners have followed this policy because of concerns that sensitive data could be accessed by Beijing’s spies. The app has been eliminated in US and Canadian officialdom, as well as the European Parliament and various European organisations and countries. It is alleged that the social media app hands data from users to the Chinese government, although TikTok’s owner ByteDance, operating from China, has strongly denied this.

First Female Director Of GCHQ Appointed

Anne Keast-Butler has been announced as the new leader of the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), becoming the first woman to lead the UK’s intelligence, cyber and security agency. This means she will be a powerful player in the Five Eyes system, and probably an influence in this country as our GCSB is a close follower of this Big Brother (Big Sister?).

Keast-Butler is described as having more than 30 years’ experience in Government security organisations and has held a number of key operational roles in MI5. Most recently she has been serving as the Deputy Director of MI5. According to the *Guardian* (11/4/23), she was responsible for “... operational, investigative and protective security work, which included preparation for and the response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine”. *PR* wonders if she was responsible for these matters in May

"I am joining a world-class team of people from diverse backgrounds with a broad range of skills, who share a singular focus on making our country safer, more secure, and more prosperous.

"I can't wait to start."

Anne Keast-Butler
Incoming Director GCHQ



GCHQ Director
Anne Keast-Butler



2017 (see subsection, above, "MI5 Fails To Protect").

The usual public portrayal of leading spook personnel reassures us as to her character: she is married with three children and is said to enjoy spending time with family and friends and walking her dogs. We note that Keast-Butler grew up in Cambridge, but fortunately holds her degree in mathematics from Merton College, Oxford (fortunately, because most of the significant treasonous spooks in UK history were associated with Cambridge University, not Oxford).

US

US Spying Never Changes

Classified reports that were published in April 2023 on *Discord*, an on-line gaming platform and other social media, revealing US spying on Russia and China, also showed the Five Eyes mafia boss also spying on allies such as Israel and South Korea (see my article on the leaks, elsewhere in this issue). More notably, the documents show that Washington continues to eavesdrop on top UN officials. The UN has raised concerns with the United States over reports that it eavesdropped on the private conversations of the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, and other senior officials.

There was outrage in 2013 when Edward Snowden revealed mass US National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance of American telephone records and produced documents confirming spying on UN and other international officials as well as a

number of national leaders around the world. The Presidents of Germany and Brazil, Washington allies, were among the targets. In September 2020, seven years after the exposé, a ruling handed down by the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said the warrantless telephone dragnet that secretly collected millions of Americans' telephone records violated the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and may well have been unconstitutional.

In February 2022 the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) cited a declassified report just released by the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) which said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been collecting Americans' private data without any oversight or even the minimal legal safeguards that apply to the NSA and FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

The on-going CIA programme avoids the statutory reforms and oversight of the intelligence community which were instituted after the Snowden revelations. Because the CIA data collection programme is carried out in conjunction with an Executive Order (i.e., an order from the President) it is therefore subject to very little oversight.

Some Senators are concerned that both the NSA and the CIA use secret agreements to purchase data direct from private companies, meaning they can access information without needing a warrant. The latest intelligence leaks, which cover only a very limited number of areas, still indicate that American surveillance is likely to be business as usual – in spite of the attempts

by oversight groups and the counteractions of international groups being spied upon.

Trauma Impacts The Spooks

For too long, according to a woman who spent many years in American intelligence work, "... the intelligence community has ignored that reality (being exposed to violent and traumatising events all day) to the detriment of both its people and the country they serve (*Politico*, 30/11/22). A senior policy researcher at the Rightwing RAND Corporation, after 13 years - which included deployment to Iraq - Heather Williams has spoken out on the impact of the operatives' work in their personal lives and the impact on the agencies "which are vital to US security" (sic).

Employees suffer from depression and substance abuse, or reduced productivity and professional burn-out. Williams says this can prompt unnecessarily high staff turnover, which has higher stakes in a sector where people require costly security clearances and depart with a head full of secrets. The intelligence community doesn't have a good understanding of how prominent these problems are - particularly the impact of indirect trauma - or how to shift to a more proactive approach to addressing trauma exposure. While there are some mental health supports available for intelligence professionals, they appear underutilised and may not be equipped to meet the true scale of the need.

In their work, the spooks are party to "life and death decisions" but have little influence over the decisions made. They may have to defer to decisionmakers and bear witness to acts that violate their deeply held moral beliefs and expectations. Mistakes can bring feelings of guilt and shame. Not something James Bond has to contend with!

Williams writes that trauma can happen when *intelligence programmes overstep their authorities and violate civil freedoms*, (wow, straight from the horse's mouth! *PR* emphasis) or when those in a position of political power fail to protect secrets obtained through great risk and sacrifice (particularly apposite given the recent dump of secret documents on social media).

For the American agents – and presumably, for some of the GCSB and

SIS agents - the intensity of a job with long hours and on rotating shifts can increase the stress, and outside the "office" there are very few people you can talk to. Williams says "... *poor management and toxic work environments, which are sadly too common in the intelligence community, can exacerbate the risk*" (*Politico*, *ibid.* PR emphasis).

Apparently, there are days the work is "... adrenaline-filled and even glamorous. It is also isolating and relentless. (But) it inflicts mental and emotional costs. The consequences of ignoring those can be tragic, either individually or to the nation. Protecting the intelligence workforce can help protect us all" (*ibid.*).

White House Wipes TikTok

At the end of February 2023 Federal agencies were given 30 days to wipe the Chinese-owned social media app off all American government devices. Congress passed the "No TikTok on Government Devices Act" in December 2022 as part of a sweeping Government funding package. The legislation does allow for TikTok use in certain cases, including for national security, law enforcement and research purposes. Similar bans have now been enforced on all the Five Eyes partners. TikTok commented that these bans are "little more than political theatre" (*Huffington Post*, 28/2/23).

Tortured Guantánamo Detainee Released In Belize

The US has released Majid Khan, an al-Qaida courier turned informant who was tortured in secret CIA prisons and held in custody for nearly 20 years. He is the first of a small bunch of "high-value" detainees to

be freed from Guantánamo (*Guardian*, 2/2/23). Over three years in CIA custody, he was suspended naked from a ceiling beam for long periods and doused repeatedly with ice water to keep him awake, subjected to waterboarding (water poured over a cloth placed over the mouth and nose to give the sensation of drowning), forced "rectal feeding" when he went on hunger strike, beatings and sexual assault.

Khan pleaded guilty in 2012 and agreed to cooperate in the prosecutions of other suspects. He confessed to being an al-Qaida courier and delivering cash to the terror organisation in Indonesia, where the money was used to fund the bombing of a hotel in Jakarta in 2003. He also admitted to plotting a suicide bomb attack against Pakistan's former President, Pervez Musharraf, an attack which never took place. We may never know whether he actually did any of these things or just admitted guilt to avoid further brutal treatment. With Khan's release, there are now 34 prisoners still in Guantánamo Bay, of whom only 11 have been charged in the military tribunals set up for the purpose.

Top Spy Freed In US

A 65-year-old woman, said by one official to be among "the most damaging spies" ever caught by the US, has been released from prison after more than 20 years in custody. Ana Montes spent almost two decades spying for Cuba while employed as an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency. After her arrest in 2001, officials said she had almost entirely exposed US intelligence operations on the island (*BBC*, 8/1/23).

Unlike other high-profile spies caught during the Cold War, Montes was motivated by ideology, not personal gain. She agreed to work for Cuban intelligence in part based on her opposition to the Reagan Administration's activities in Latin America. In particular, she is believed to have been angered by US support for the Nicaraguan Contras - a Rightwing rebel group suspected of committing war crimes and other atrocities in the country. Michelle Van Cleave, who was head of counter-intelligence under President George W Bush, told Congress in 2012 that Montes had "compromised everything - virtually everything - that we knew about Cuba and how we operated in Cuba".

CIA Mishandles Women's Complaints

Allegations that the CIA has failed to properly respond to complaints of sexual assault and harassment are being investigated by the US House Intelligence Committee. Female employees have approached the Committee, telling them the Agency is discouraging women from making sexual misconduct complaints.

Attorney Kevin Carroll, who represents the first employee who talked to the Committee, said his client has told him that as many as 54 women at the CIA over the past decade have said they were been victims of sexual assault or misconduct by colleagues, and that their cases were improperly handled (*Politico*, 21/04/23).

US To Spend Billions On Pacific Military Base

Not content with its massive base on Guam, basing B-52s near Darwin,



B-21 Raider bomber

and recolonising the Philippines, the United States is going to spend billions of dollars to upgrade its military infrastructure on the island of Tinian, in the northern Marianas Islands (*PR* notes that this is more than Washington is prepared to spend to reduce the impact of climate change on the Pacific islands. The Marianas Islands are directly north of Queensland and east of the Philippines).

The US military is expected to spend as much as \$US5 billion in military and civilian infrastructure development on the island in relation to its Tinian Divert Airfield project (RNZ, 12/4/23). Some on the island welcome the development as its population of around 2,000 has been looking for any kind of economic driver since the Tinian Dynasty Casino shut down years ago. The Governor, Arnold I Palacios, said his administration is working on strengthening and further developing tourism from American allies like Japan and South Korea, and reducing the number of Chinese tourists.

US Air Force Unveils Its Latest Obscenely Expensive Aircraft

The Air Force's newest budget buster, a stealth bomber built by Northrop Grumman, and currently estimated to cost \$US700 million per aircraft, has been revealed to the American public. It is designated the B-21 Raider and proclaimed to be able to allow the Air Force to penetrate the toughest air defences to make "precision strikes" (that never seem precise enough to stop the butchery of numbers of women and children).

This is the first time a new bomber has been publicly unveiled since 1988 when the B-2 appeared. Only 12 B-2s were ever delivered because of their cost and problems. The more recent problems of the Air Force's stealth fighter – the XXXX – which has enormous cost over-runs and ongoing technical problems – should give little confidence that this latest killer money muncher will be any more successful.

The American Defense Secretary is touting the plane as "a major advance for American deterrence" and that "...America's defense will always be rooted in deterring conflict" (CNN, 2/12/22). The Secretary claimed the plane was needed because of the threat from Chi-

na and quoted a report that stated by 2035 China could have roughly 1,500 nuclear warheads (a number which the Pentagon has had for many years and could easily increase!).

OTHER SPOOKY BITS

Israeli Meddling In Elections

A team of Israeli contractors claim to have manipulated more than 30 elections around the world using hacking, sabotage and automated disinformation on social media (*Guardian*, 15/2/23). An investigation by a consortium of journalists, including reporters from 30 outlets such as *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel* and *El País*, has revealed how disinformation is being weaponised by "Team Jorge", which runs a private service offering to covertly meddle in elections without a trace. The group also works for corporate clients.

The unit is run by Tal Hanan, a 50-year-old former Israeli special forces operative who now works privately using the pseudonym "Jorge", and appears to have been working under the radar in elections in various countries for more than two decades. Hanan told the undercover reporters that his services, which others describe as "black ops", were available to intelligence agencies, political campaigns and private companies that wanted to secretly manipulate public opinion. They boasted of planting material in legitimate news outlets, which are then amplified by the Aims bot-management software. Much of their strategy appeared to revolve around disrupting or sabotaging rival campaigns.

One of Team Jorge's key services is a sophisticated software package, Advanced Impact Media Solutions, or Aims. It controls a vast army of thousands of fake social media profiles on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Telegram, Gmail, Instagram and YouTube. While it is likely that the group overstate their capabilities to impress possible clients, the revelations come from reputable journalists who spent months on the undercover investigation. They comment that this evidence of a global private market in disinformation aimed at elections should ring alarm bells for democracies around the world. And with the rapid development of artificial intelligence, those bells have to be ringing even louder! ■

WORST LEAK OF US INTELLIGENCE DOCUMENTS IN YEARS

And Revelations Of US Spying

By Warren Thomson

"In early April (2023), more than a hundred top secret US documents were unloaded onto social media in an intelligence debacle that authoritative commentators have described to BBC as the 'worst leak of US intelligence documents in years'" (BBC, 14/4/23). In particular, three of the most significant revelations were said to be that: (1) "it shows the US is spying not just on its adversaries, but on its friends"; (2) "it reveals to the Russians just how penetrated their own intelligence agencies have been"; and (3) it discloses weaknesses in Ukraine's arms reserves that represent significant military information (BBC, *ibid*).

There are maps detailing movements and figures relating to military capabilities on both sides of the conflict, including reports that Ukraine's anti-missile and air defence systems are almost out of resources and estimates of casualties on both sides (CBS, 18/4/23). There are somewhat sobering reports evaluating what the relative Russian and Ukrainian strengths are likely to be when Ukraine decides to launch its' anticipated spring offensive (BBC, 9/4/23).

The leak reveals Washington's dissatisfaction with some positions of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, and several documents describe private communications involving Mr Guterres and his Deputy. Clearly the top United Nations' officials remain targets of American surveillance. One document complained that Guterres's stance on a key grain deal was undermining attempts to hold Russia accountable for the war in Ukraine.

Many of the documents appear to be part of briefing slides for the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon.

While some of the documents that have been reviewed by CBS News appeared to originate from the Central Intelligence Agency, others seem to come from other agencies across the intelligence community, including the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Geospatial Agency (CBS, *ibid.*).

Ukraine, China, Russia

The intelligence leak confirms Western special forces are on the ground in Ukraine; the UK is among a number of countries with military special forces operating inside Ukraine. According to the document, dated 23 March, the UK has the largest contingent of special forces in Ukraine (50), followed by fellow NATO states Latvia (17), France (15), the US (14) and the Netherlands (1). Their presence is likely to be used by Moscow as evidence that it is not just confronting Ukraine, but NATO as well (BBC, 11/4/23).

Some documents contain information about China's weapons programmes, confirming the US is obtaining information about Beijing's military development. For instance, one noted that on February 25 (2023), China tested a "developmental" intermediate range ballistic missile-class multirole hypersonic glide vehicle (experts note that hypersonic weapons are hard to defend against; they travel at more than five times the speed of sound and manoeuvre while in the air, unlike traditional ballistic missiles that travel in an arc).

Another two of the documents assessed that China is "probably" developing cyberattack capabilities to "hijack" control of Western satellites, and that Defense Department supply chains remain exposed to Chinese State-owned surveillance manufacturer Hikvision which is "disguising" its products via its resellers (CBS, 18/4/23).

Other documents also suggest data from US spying; there is inside information on Russia, offering analysis of Russian infighting, for example,

arguments between Moscow's Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Russian Defence Ministry. Some documents also make reference to internal planning by the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency, and to the private military contractor the Wagner Group, which is a leading component of Russian forces in Ukraine. These leaks suggest both the GRU and the Wagner Group have been penetrated by US spying (Stuff, 12/4/23).

Another section of the leaked documents said that British Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, had asked his ministry to explore plans to deploy one of its two naval aircraft carriers to the Indo-Pacific, potentially in cooperation with Asian allies or the United States. The document weighed potential negative reactions from Beijing. It is not clear whether this material was passed on by London, or whether Washington is spying on its best mate. Other countries featured are Egypt, Iran, South Korea, Israel, Turkey, Haiti and Hungary.

British ministers, meanwhile, have worked hard to downplay the leaks. Ben Wallace, the Defence Secretary, told CNN on a visit to Washington that the papers contained "a number of inaccuracies, significant inaccuracies, or manipulation of information," although it is widely recognised in the US that they are genuine (Guardian, 21/4/23).

NZ Is Involved Via Five Eyes

The *Guardian* reports (*ibid.*) that many documents are notated TS (top secret), and two other letters repeatedly stand out throughout the leaked Pentagon files: SI. These letters stand for special intelligence; they signify that the information has been derived from signals intelligence work, i.e., the operations that the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) engages in, encompassing eavesdropping, surveillance and backdoor access to information systems. A former insider told the *Guardian* that a significant portion of this signals intelligence is derived not from the US but from the UK and the other members of the Five Eyes intelligence group – Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is also noted that 1.25 million Americans have top secret clearance!

Because of its entanglement with Five Eyes, NZ is involved in the leak post-mortem. PM Hipkins has acknowledged the potentially disastrous publication of top secret US documents has meant New Zealand's spooks being brought into a "process" related to the leak (Stuff, 11/4/23). Hipkins told the media he is waiting to see if any issues are identified that would be of concern to NZ. He would not speculate on why the leak might be of concern to this country. ■



OWEN WILKES & THE ANTI-BASES CAMPAIGN

By Murray Horton

This is my essay for “Peacemonger. Owen Wilkes: International Peace Researcher”, which was published in late 2022. The book – reviewed in this issue by Warren Thomson – is a book of essays, not a biography. I am the Organiser for both CAFCA and the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). Owen was a founder of both.

It is worth being reminded that before there was the Anti-Bases Campaign, CAFCA was an anti-bases campaign. It was founded in the mid 70s and it grew out of the anti-war, anti-bases campaigns of the late 60s and early 70s. This is ABC’s pre-history and very early history. My source for a lot of this is drawn from my 2005 obituary of Owen (Peace Researcher 31, October 2005), <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>. PR 31 was a Special Issue consisting of articles about Owen. MH.

This was Owen’s signature campaign, the one he was best known for, not only in New Zealand but globally. One thing needs to be clarified from the outset – Owen was a leading light in the anti-bases campaign long before there was an actual group called the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). He and I were among the founders of the latter (which still exists, and for which I am its Organiser). But ABC was only founded in 1987, specifically to campaign against the Waihopai spy base, and Owen quit the peace movement in its entirety in the 90s, so he was only involved in the actual Anti-Bases Campaign for a few years before retiring.

This needs to be put into the context of his being a leading light in the anti-bases campaign for more than two decades, from the late 1960s until the early 1990s. In what may well have been his last media interview, Owen told the *Christchurch Star* (17/12/04: “Where Are They Now? Peace Campaigner Owen Wilkes”, Stacey Doornenbal) that he retired from the peace movement in 1992.

Owen’s anti-bases activism did not come out of thin air. He was born in 1940, so he was in his 20s during the 60s, that most tumultuous of 20th Century decades. By the early 60s he had dropped out of the University of Canterbury. He went to university, principally because he was “too scared to face the world outside the education mill”.

He was an off and on student for several years, doing a B.Sc., majoring in Geology. He passed five units of the requisite nine but never finished it, and said that he had never been hindered by not having a degree. He was living proof that academic qualifications are not necessary to becoming a world expert in one’s field. He found his lifelong love – archaeology - and plunged into it, initially in the South Island.

Antarctica

In 1962 Owen went offshore for his first big adventure, spending the summer in Antarctica working as a field



Owen Wilkes & US warship, Wellington Harbour, 1980s. Screenshot from “Islands Of The Empire” documentary, Vanguard Films.

assistant for the Bishop Museum of Hawaii. To quote from a 1972 profile that I wrote on him for *Canta* (the University of Canterbury student paper): “He did not find Antarctica particularly harsh – in fact, he found it the easiest camping he’d ever had”.

“He lived and worked with the Americans at McMurdo Sound, getting \$US500* per month and duty-free booze. He got on very well with the Americans, but became aware of the military nature of the whole Deep Freeze** programme, with Antarctica being used as a gigantic military training ground. Owen, however, was not politicised, and not yet disturbed enough to do anything about it”.

*(*To put this figure into perspective: 12 years later, in 1974, as that year’s Editor of *Canta*, I was earning my biggest salary up until that point in my life – around \$NZ150 per month. So, \$US500 per month, with no living costs, was a huge pay packet in 1962. ** Operation Deep Freeze – the former overall name for the US presence in Antarctica. For nearly 70 years the US has had a military base at Christchurch Airport. It is still there today. Throughout that whole time, the cover story for that multi-purpose, medium level military transport base is that it exists solely to provide logistic support for peaceful scientific research in Antarctica).*

After further archaeological work in NZ and the Cook Islands: “He returned to New Zealand, was re-employed by the Bishop Museum, and went on a bug-hunting expedition to the Kermadec Islands... As soon as they landed, they were forced to leave by a volcanic eruption, and spent a week cruising around watching it”.

“They put up nets in the rigging to catch trans-oceanic bugs (making the boat look like a ‘transvestite’) – once again he discovered the military involvement in scientific research. By checking the Museum records, he discovered that the expedition was part of a US military germ warfare research project. He was still not concerned enough to do anything. He returned to New Zealand and spent the summer working on Stewart Island”.

Owen Discovers Politics, In A Rubbish Bin

“In 1965, he worked as a dustman (rubbish collector) in Christchurch, a job he enjoyed immensely – he recalls occasions such as the one when he dressed up in a white tennis dress found in a rubbish bin (*this was in the*

days before household rubbish was disposed of in wheely bins. Today Christchurch has no dustbins and no dustmen). It was this job that led to him being politicised, an occasion straight out of Gilbert and Sullivan. He pulled a newspaper out of a rubbish bin, and read that during the Wellington visit of the US Ambassador to (the then) South Vietnam, an American Secret Service agent had dropped his gun at the feet of a student protester”.

“Owen began to realise New Zealand’s involvement in America’s war in Vietnam – he pulled more papers out of rubbish bins, and read them so assiduously that he once fell off the truck. When Keith Holyoake (National Prime Minister, 1960-72) sent New Zealand troops into Vietnam, later in 1965, Owen decided to get involved in the anti-war movement”.

“He joined the Australasian branch of the former Bertrand Russell* Peace Foundation, and as he was unemployed, made a fulltime job of ‘cranking duplicator handles’. The Foundation eventually printed over one million leaflets. It was here that Owen first met Keith Duffield**, Christchurch’s veteran agitator and future partner in crime”

**Bertrand Russell, 1872-1970. One of the giants of philosophy, and a pacifist and militant peace activist for many decades. In his last years he was a high-profile opponent of the Vietnam War. In New Zealand, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was headed by Christchurch’s Larry Ross. ** My Foreign Control Watchdog 18 (March 1979) obituary of Keith Duffield can be accessed at <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Duffield-282> And my obituary of Larry Ross is in PR 44, November 2012, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>*

“He returned to Antarctica in the summer of 1965-66, employed by the Bishop Museum, but this time he was consciously looking for evidence of Operation Deep Freeze being a military operation. In 1966, he and his wife Joan were sent to the United Nations-administered part of New Guinea” (*this was a decade before the birth of the independent nation of Papua New Guinea*).

“They spent six months in the Highlands, communicating by Pidgin English, and living with the tribes they encountered...His job was collecting parasites and he discovered that it was part of a \$US500,000 US Army germ warfare project, a military project using the Bishop Museum as a front. He discovered this by, among other things, having to send his findings to US Army laboratories in Taiwan”.

“Whilst in New Guinea, he graduated from printing leaflets to writing his own material. He wrote his first article, for the (former) *New Zealand Monthly Review** on US military activities in Antarctica; he wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper complaining of its slanted coverage of the Vietnam War (the letter was published on the front page); he wrote what he describes as a ‘crank letter’ to Holyoake; and he wrote to the US Embassy in Canberra, about Vietnam”. **My obituary of the Monthly Review is in Watchdog 84, May 1997, <http://www.historicalwatchdog.blogspot.co.nz/2009/12/foreign-control-watchdog-may-1997.html>*

“The Embassy wrote back to the expedition director

about this – Owen was acting director at the time, he intercepted the letter, and fired off a reply complaining about the Embassy’s invasion of his privacy. The Embassy circumvented Owen, and contacted the expedition director, who ordered Owen to file all his letters with him, as some of them could be ‘embarrassing to his employer”.

“In September 1966, after six months in New Guinea, he was fired by the Bishop Museum for ‘unsatisfactory performance in the field’ – one wonders how much pressure the US Embassy had to apply. His departure was supervised by the local police, and on the scheduled date of his arrival, an American from Deep Freeze rang his parents to make sure that he had arrived (that was the last time he was employed by the US military)”.

“Having been fired twice, he decided not to work for a boss again – he bought a house on an acre of land at Governors Bay for himself and his wife. They lived by commercial tomato growing, supplemented by Owen working one day per week in a Sydenham bakery” (*this doesn’t quite do justice to the fact that Owen worked a nightshift of 12 or more hours continuously on the bakery ovens, a hot, exhausting and dangerous job, with multiple burns a nightly occupational hazard. This one night’s work gave him enough money for the week. He worked at the former Boons Bakery for more than ten years, quite often biking there and back from as far away as Oxford, a journey of 40-50 kms. In addition to this he worked throughout the day, on other work and peace research*).

“In the winters he worked at Temple Basin ski field. In 1967, he returned to university again, as a part-time student. He plunged deeper into the political scene – in 1967 he donated \$US1,000 (*a huge sum in those days*) to the (1968) Peace Power and Politics in Asia Conference (money earned from the US Army in New Guinea), to finance the participation of (a high-profile foreign speaker) after Robert Muldoon (the Minister of Finance) had refused to allow the release of overseas exchange for that purpose” (*those were the days when you needed official permission to purchase foreign currency*).

“Also in 1967, he became Secretary of the Citizens Vietnam Action Committee (CVAC), a body newly founded by Keith Duffield. Demonstrations weren’t much fun in those days – once, when a US warship was in Lyttelton, wharfies incited schoolkids to throw snowballs at the demonstrators. In May 1967, Operation Deep Freeze imported a US military band to march through Christchurch on the anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea” (*the WW2 sea and air battle, off New Guinea in 1942, when the Americans defeated the Japanese and stopped their southward advance*).

“CVAC was refused a permit to demonstrate in Victoria Square, on the grounds that they might damage the flowerbeds! Owen held a one-man protest, following the band down Hereford Street, past a jeering lunch hour crowd. An onlooker grabbed his placard, Owen went berserk, chased him and was in the process of flattening him when the police put them both in a car. On the way to Central, the counter-demonstrator convinced the police that he was mad and they asked Owen if he wanted to lay any charges”.

Omega Made Him A Household Name

“Owen achieved his breakthrough in June 1968 – working with Phil Howell of the University (of Canterbury) Physics Department, he wrote an article on the proposed US Navy Omega installation at Lake Pearson (near Arthurs Pass). In brief, the Omega system consists of eight transmitters around the world, using Very Low Frequency signals (VLF), which travel through water, as a navigational guide for submarines”.

“Omega would have made New Zealand a nuclear target. His article was rejected by two magazines, then printed in *Canta* (the University of Canterbury student paper), and published by its Editor, Bill Gruar, as a “special emergency edition” – this particular *Canta* eventually ran to 72,000 copies. The article sparked off the massive anti-Omega campaign – the spontaneous demonstration at Harewood (i.e., the US military base at Christchurch Airport), the massive march through Christchurch...”.

I was not involved in the Omega campaign and didn't know Owen then. It was slightly before my time. In 1968 I was in my final year of high school. I got involved in political activism in 1969, which was my first year at the University of Canterbury. So, I'll draw on the excellent work of Maire Leadbeater, in her article “Omega Campaign 1968-69: An Important And Well-Earned Victory, Flaws Aside” (*PR* 56, November 2018), <http://www.conv.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>

“The debate in New Zealand was sparked by a June 1968 article in the Christchurch *Press* stating that the US Navy planned to build an Omega transmitter in the mountains of the South Island. US naval experts favoured a mountainous site because at the time the favoured way of setting up the transmitter antenna was to string it across a valley from high points on either side. According to the *Press* report, US experts had already inspected three sites in the Lake Sumner and Lake Pearson areas and the Omarama district of North Otago”.

“A Special Emergency edition of the University of Canterbury student paper *Canta* came out less than two weeks later and it spread throughout the country with a record total sale of 72,000 copies. *Canta* told its readers that an Omega station was set to be an essential submarine navigation aid and would therefore make us a key nuclear target if war broke out. On 28 June when 4,000 people marched through Christchurch it was the largest anti-war demonstration the city had seen. In Wellington trade unions demonstrated at the opening of Parliament”.

“After a solid ten days doing preliminary research in the Library, Owen Wilkes sent away requests to obtain US Government Research and Development reports, one of which specifically described how Omega was compatible with and enhanced the performance of navigation aids already installed in missile submarines”.

To cut to the chase, the massive opposition to NZ hosting Omega led to it never being built here – it went to Australia instead. And that campaign achieved unprecedented success in the history of the anti-bases' movement in New Zealand, in that it stopped, dead in its tracks, a base from being built. Bases have been and gone, with much protest, in the decades since, but

we've never replicated that 1960s' success of stopping one before it started, unfortunately. Owen was instrumental in achieving something absolutely unique in New Zealand and very rare anywhere in the world. After Omega, Owen Wilkes was a household name, and he stayed one for the next quarter of a century.

About Omega, Owen wrote: “I think the ultimate cause of the June 1968 events ... was simply that this was the first time that New Zealanders were faced with a direct, immediate, unpleasant consequence of an alliance with America” (from Owen's 1973 “Protest. Demonstrations Against The American Military Presence In New Zealand: Omega 1968, Woodbourne 1970 (sic), Mt John 1972, Harewood/Weedons 1973”). The subtitle contains an error – the Woodbourne protest was in 1971, not 1970).

That Was Not The End Of The Omega Saga

To quote Maire Leadbeater's *PR* article again: “In 1982 Owen Wilkes, key contributor to the 1968 campaign, returned home to New Zealand after working at the prestigious Stockholm Institute for Peace Research (SIPRI) and the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO). He had continued to research navigation aids, including Omega, and he said he had got it wrong – Omega was not used for ballistic missile submarine navigation”.

“In 1987 Owen and his Norwegian peace research colleague, Nils Petter Gleditsch, published a scholarly tome about radio navigation aids Loran-C and Omega, which details the uses for Omega – not for ballistic missile submarines but for a wide range of other roles in US counterforce strategy, including hunter-killer submarines. The key driver of the project seems to have been the need to coordinate anti-submarine warfare – for hunter-killer submarines to work in coordination with Orion long range aircrafts, anti-submarine helicopters and ships. This would be facilitated if all used the Omega system”.

“So, the protestors were right and wrong at the same time. Right that Omega was planned as a key element of US nuclear strategy, but wrong about the ballistic missiles' submarines. Instead, these vessels used a combination of inertial guidance and the global low frequency radio navigation aid Loran-C. The explanation for this error is complex – it is likely that Omega was considered for ballistic missile submarines until 1966 and authoritative technical literature including defence publisher Jane's supported this scenario based on Omega's underwater reception capabilities. With the benefit of hindsight, Wilkes and Gleditsch suggest there should have been a stronger research focus on the Loran-C navigation system”.

Owen was always adamant about telling the truth as he saw it. In many respects, he was too honest for his own good. When he involuntarily came home in 1982, having been expelled from Sweden, he held a well-attended press conference in Christchurch. The reporters basically ignored everything he said but headlined his throwaway line that he now thought that some of his conclusions about the 1960s' aborted Omega project had been incorrect. His name on a *Press* billboard was sufficient to explain the story: “Wilkes. I Was Wrong About Omega”.

From 1968 onwards, Owen was a central figure in the

anti-war, anti-bases movements, not only as a researcher of unrivalled ability but also as an activist. He regularly found himself in a leadership and spokesperson role, one with which he wasn't particularly comfortable. I first met him in 1970, when I was a leading light in the Christchurch Progressive Youth Movement (PYM), which became the key organisation in the first generation of anti-bases campaigns.

In 1970, Owen came to our flat to attend a meeting to plan the next year's protest against the top-secret US Air Force Project Longbank, which was located inside the Royal New Zealand Air Force base at Woodbourne (which is also Blenheim's airport. Following the closure of Christchurch's RNZAF Wigram, Woodbourne is now the only remaining Air Force base in the South Island).

For each of the first three years of the 1970s, there was an annual national protest at one of the bases, all of which were in the South Island – Woodbourne (1971), the US Air Force observatory atop Mt John in the Mackenzie Country (72) and the US Navy and Air Force transport base at Christchurch Airport (73) – the first two are long gone, the Christchurch Airport base is still with us. Owen was in the thick of all of those protests, as they grew progressively more militant.

Woodbourne (Project Longbank)

Mysterious and unexplained US military buildings and personnel were observed inside Blenheim's RNZAF Woodbourne as far back as the early 1960s. The first protest there was in 1968, by students attending the annual Curious Cove student congress in the nearby Marlborough Sounds. The major protest, of several hundred people, took place in early 1971.

The best place to view original 1971 TV news footage of this is in "Islands Of The Empire*", the definitive 1980s' Vanguard Films documentary, which was digitalised and re-released in 2020. That includes a 1980s' interview with protest leader, Tim Shadbolt, describing what happened. He remarked on one unique feature – the police handed leaflets to the protesters (not vice versa), telling us where we could and couldn't go. The whole Air Force base was sealed off. *"Islands Of The Empire" can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD0obc7LFDA>

"But there was a surprise in store. Permission had been granted for a small group to be shown over the base; by whom was obscure, but the Prime Minister was mentioned. Eight journalists went in, together with Owen Wilkes, David Cuthbert, President of the NZ University Students' Association, and Roger Cruikshank, Editor of the Victoria University student paper, *Salient*. The equipment was explained and questions answered very cautiously without giving away secrets".

"No doubt it was assumed that the visitors would lack the technical knowledge to draw any conclusions themselves; but *Truth* had sent an electronics expert and Wilkes and the students saw enough to realise that Longbank was there to detect nuclear explosions. In fact, it was one of a network of similar stations. Wilkes later obtained other data which satisfied him that the Americans were monitoring tests by France and China".

"Thus, they obtained information from atmospheric tests which they were unable to conduct themselves after

signing the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963" ("Peace People: A History Of Peace Activities In New Zealand", Elsie Locke, 1992). My obituary of Elsie is in *PR* 23, June 2001, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>

The mention of the former *Truth* is worth fleshing out. It was a weekly, stridently Rightwing, muckraking paper, with a huge circulation at that time. Boasting a string of inflammatory billboards and front-page headlines (my favourite was "Let's Hit Ratbag Students Hard"), it was an unlikely outlet for any critical analysis of the US/NZ military alliance. Indeed, it had editorially declared itself fully in support of that, but it equally declared that New Zealanders had the right to know the details of that alliance.

So, it opposed the secrecy surrounding Project Longbank. For several consecutive issues after the protest, it turned several pages over to Owen to detail what the US military was doing inside RNZAF Woodbourne. A wonderful example of strange bedfellows. That 1971 protest demanded the closure of Project Longbank – coincidentally or not, it was closed and gone within less than two years. Jeremy Agar's review of "*Truth: The Rise And Fall Of The People's Newspaper*", by Redmer Yska, is in *Watchdog* 126, May 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/26/10.htm>

Mount John

This was the US Air Force observatory atop a hill overlooking Lake Tekapo in the Mackenzie Country. It had been set up in the 1960s on land subleased from the University of Canterbury for \$1 per year. The official cover story was that it was there to "track space junk" (Project Longbank's cover story was that it was "monitoring atmospheric disturbances"). "In 1970 the Editor of *Canta*, David Young, decided it was time to find out what was going on at Mount John. He and Owen Wilkes made personal visits" (and were given the space junk explanation).

"But official US Air Force information obtained by Wilkes showed that the Mount John facility was one of four supplying data to the Aerospace Defense System headquarters beneath a mountain in Colorado. It was helping to provide targeting data for a US anti-satellite weapon system, and it was also gathering information about a particular type of Russian communication satellite" ("Peace People", Elsie Locke, *ibid.*).

Canta published its findings and the call was made for the University of Canterbury to break its ties with the US military (that particular campaign went on for several years. Both Owen and I were involved in it). The University would not budge, so a national protest was called for March 1972 (it was organised by an ad hoc committee). Several hundred people attended and on the Saturday night, some of them (including me) climbed the hill in the dark.

"At the top of the hill, (1095 metres) above sea level, with a gusty nor'wester sweeping through the snow grass, we came upon what must be the weirdest demonstration New Zealand has ever seen. The satellite tracking station was surrounded by floodlights and police, while about 50 demonstrators were gathered on a nearby rock knob. Above the noise of the wind, we could alternately hear chants of 'Go home Yanks' and

the barking of police dogs”.

“The police had ordered the demonstrators to ‘stay up there’ on the rock knob and this they were doing when a large group of police moved away from the Air Force and towards the demonstrators. An officer was heard to command the two dog handlers to ‘disperse those people with the aid of your dogs’, and police moved in on the demonstrators, many of whom were sitting down” (“Protest”, Owen Wilkes, *ibid.*).

“Policing was very aggressive and two demonstrators were seriously injured – a schoolboy suffered a fractured jaw after he was kicked in the face by a dog handler and two others were bitten by police dogs, one of them on the penis. (When the protesters went back up the hill on the Sunday) feelings were running high”.

“Somebody vented their frustration by placing a large boulder on the Mount John access road and triggered off a glorious episode of mass vandalism. At least 90% of the 300 or so people present were soon straining and sweating to move every available boulder’. The road was rendered completely impassable, littered with hundreds of tons of rocks” (“Our History As An Anti-Bases Campaign: From CAFMANZ To CAFGINZ To CAFCA [& Then To ABC]”, *Watchdog* 135, April 2014, Maire Leadbeater), <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/35/09.html>. The quote within the quote is from Owen’s “Protest”.

“Everyone arrived at the bottom of the hill smiling and satisfied, the catharsis of physical labour having dissolved away the bitterness and anger of the morning” (“Protest”, *ibid.*). This predictably led to a hysterical reaction in the media and from politicians. But our Mount John campaign gained at least one victory.



Owen Wilkes speaking at 1973 protest at US military base, Christchurch Airport. Photo by Walter Logeman

The University of Canterbury terminated its lease to the US Air Force and the land reverted to the Crown; the 1972-75 Labour government promptly leased it to a US transnational corporation, which ran the military observatory on behalf of the USAF until the whole thing became obsolete in the mid 1980s when it was closed, dismantled and flown back to the US.

That prompted me to issue the shortest press release I’ve ever done: “Good riddance to bad rubbish” (*Press*, 15/6/83). The base was actually being dismantled when the “Islands Of The Empire” film crew arrived up there in 1983 to interview me for the Mount John segment of the documentary. And another significant point worth noting is that, after Mount John, the cops have never used dogs again at a protest.

Christchurch Airport (Harewood)

The next (and last) in this original series of anti-bases protests was the 1973 one at the US military transport base at Christchurch Airport and the military communications facility located inside RNZAF Weedons, outside Christchurch. The protest called for the demilitarisation of Harewood (the US military aircraft used Christchurch Airport to service not only Antarctica but also US military and spy bases in Australia and elsewhere in the global empire of US bases).

For the first time, this protest was not organised by an ad hoc committee but an ongoing organisation – the Campaign Against Foreign Military Activities In New Zealand (CAFMANZ, the very first precursor to what became today’s CAFCA – the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa). As with the Woodbourne and Mount John protests, hundreds of people came from around the country. As with Mount John it was a militant protest, with the difference being that most of the militancy came from the hundreds of police and RNZAF personnel deployed to seal off Christchurch Airport and RNZAF Weedons for that weekend.

That 1973 demo was used by the Police as a dry run for that year’s scheduled Springboks tour (which was called off by the Kirk Labour government), and was a full-blown assault by both cops and the military (for example, RNZAF helicopters were used, both to transport cops and military from point to point around the airport perimeter, and also to intimidate protesters by hovering low overhead, utilising deafening noise and downdraft). It was the biggest Police operation against a protest until the forcible end of the Bastion Point occupation in 1978.

There were mass arrests, the police used tactics of systematic violence that weren’t seen again until the 1981 Springbok Tour protests, Owen was personally injured in the face by one of the country’s most senior policemen, and was later charged and convicted for “encouraging disorder”. Ironically, the magistrate who convicted him was Harold Evans, who later became a distinguished peace movement activist himself, achieving international fame with his drive to get the World Court to declare nuclear weapons illegal.

He gave Owen a lenient sentence of community service. Years later they met as fellow peace researchers and activists. Harold gave Owen a character reference when he was later on trial in Sweden, on much more serious charges. Harold Evans’ obituary, by both Kate

Dewes and myself, is in *Peace Researcher* 33, November 2006, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>

"Islands Of The Empire" (ibid.) includes 1973 TV news footage of the protest, and a news interview with Owen sporting his facial wound inflicted by the cop. Owen was "Islands" 1980s' interviewee for the Christchurch Airport segment and, in that interview, he says that his 1973 facial injury was inflicted by Gideon Tait, whom he describes as the Police Commissioner. That is not wholly correct. In 1973 Chief Superintendent Gideon Tait was the Christchurch District Police Commander. Later in the 70s he left Christchurch and became Assistant Commissioner (but never Commissioner).

The fact that the Christchurch cops regarded him as a bogeyman was illustrated a few months later in 1973 when two people were arrested and imprisoned for fire-bombing the city's US Consulate. When the cops grabbed the bearded male of the couple, they shouted: "We've got Wilkes!" – which is laughable, because that sort of thing was never Owen's style. As for the American military presence at Christchurch Airport, it is still there, but changed and reduced.

Tradecraft

By now, Owen was recognised as the pre-eminent peace researcher in the country. To quote, again, my 1972 *Canta* profile of him: "He is quite happy to divulge how he gets his information on the US military in NZ – he uses libraries, reading all the reports of US Defense Department research, plus trade journals of the US aerospace industry, which contain classified information. He subscribes to US technical publications, and he has a network of correspondents around the world".

"Then there is his fieldwork – his job as a dustman gave him good practice. He has searched the rubbish tins at Washdyke (*the US headquarters for the Mount John observatory, in an industrial suburb just north of Timaru*), and scoured the matagouri bushes on Mount John for blown-away documents. Occasionally there is a bit of amateur spying – such as 'mushrooming' in the fields around Woodbourne, equipped with a brass telescope".

His unparalleled researching abilities even earned grudging admiration from those spying on him. This is my favourite passage from the very small amount of Owen's file that has been released by the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS). It was written during Owen's later stint as a paid peace researcher in Scandinavia:

"In his extensive writings both here and abroad in support of his campaigns, WILKES has been variously described as an entomologist, New Zealand physicist, military strategist, and scientist. In fact, he 'dropped out' from Canterbury University after passing five units of a science degree. He does, however, have a well-developed flair for ferreting out, from obscure but unclassified sources, what would appear to constitute classified information, and it seems he has continued to exploit this special skill in Norway".

Long March, Resistance Ride

In 1974 Owen, his wife Joan and I were amongst the contingent of 11 New Zealanders who took part in the grandiosely titled Long March, which was actually a three-week bus trip right across Australia, from Sydney,

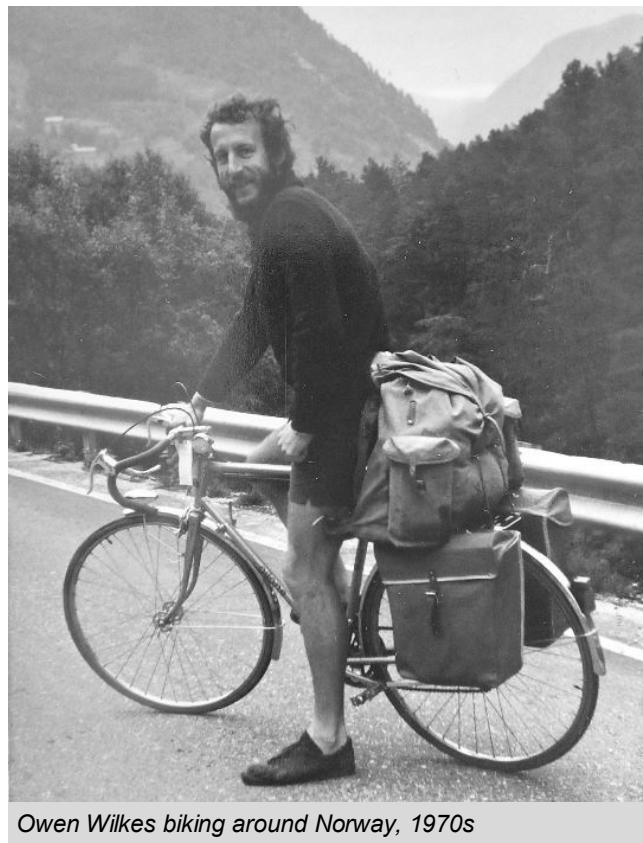
to protest at the huge US Navy nuclear submarine communications base at North West Cape, the westernmost point of Australia. My God, that was an adventure – I wrote several *Canta* articles about it (I was the Editor that year). Here's an extract from one (issue 12, 14/6/74):

"Owen Wilkes, a New Zealander, emerged as the major spokesman on any technical questions, and was the only person with any throughgoing knowledge of the topic. For instance, the Perth people didn't know that North-West Cape has its own procurement office in Perth until Owen found out by looking it up in the phone book!".

That spokesperson/technical expert role made him a marked man for the uniformed knucklemen that comprised the various Australian police forces and he was one of a number of people arrested at an "illegal" protest in Perth, and charged with "creating a disturbance". He simply did not turn up in court, so the charge was dropped. A whole book could be written about the Long March and, indeed, it is the subject of a short 1974 film (which was not actually finished and released until 40 years later). This can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/248604281>.

The actual trip, let alone the protests, was an epic in itself. For example, we crossed the Nullarbor Plain, several hundred kilometres of it, before that highway was sealed. Here's what I wrote in *Canta* 13 (24/6/74): "I developed a special affection for the Nullarbor – sitting over the axle, bumping your guts out all day and night, ploughing through sheets of water, staring through dust-caked windows at twisted scrub right down to the road's edge, and then a horizonless vista of treeless plain".

The Long March was a hugely influential trip for the NZ delegation, which decided that we would organise our own equivalent. This was the 1975 South Island Re-



Owen Wilkes biking around Norway, 1970s

sistance Ride (on which several Australians took part) and, instead of the usual ad hoc or short-lived committees that had been set up to organise our previous activities, we decided it was time for something permanent. Thus, was born the Campaign Against Foreign Control In New Zealand (CAFCINZ), which later changed its name to the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA, as it is today). Owen was a founder of this organisation and he and Joan and I were amongst those on the two-week long Resistance Ride.

“Although the purpose of this trip was for education – of themselves and for people wherever they visited – they were followed all the way by two policemen, nicknamed Tom and Jerry, who often had nothing much to do and went fishing. However, they did act as liaison, so that ten to 20 police turned up at times, plus a mobile command post which followed them everywhere. Besides revisiting Harewood and Mount John – where police, reporters and cameramen waited at the base of the hill just in case they aimed to get onto the road to the top – the Resistance Riders visited many places of environmental concern...” (“Peace People”, Elsie Locke, *ibid.*).

CAFCA finally received its Security Intelligence Service (SIS) file in 2008 – it had first asked for it in 1985 – and, as far as I’m aware, CAFCA remains the only organisation to have received the SIS file on it as an organisation, as opposed to the SIS files on individuals within it, like me and Owen. “Indeed, the very earliest batch of reports in the file, relating to the period leading up to and including our foundation activity, the 1975 South Island Resistance Ride, indicates that there may have been more than one (spy within CAFCA), as those earliest reports include features such as complete reproduction of minutes of our meetings and the full two-page list of names, addresses and phone numbers of all Resistance Ride participants (including Australians)”.

“At the bottom it reads: ‘Please note: This list has been compiled from the original addresses given to CAFCINZ for the Resistance Ride....’ The Resistance Ride was the subject of extensive State surveillance” (“SIS Spied On CAFCA For Quarter Of A Century”, Murray Horton, *Watchdog* 120, May 2009), <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/20/06.htm>

Arctic Circle Adventures

Owen lived in Scandinavia from 1976-82, most of it in Sweden, where he worked at the world-famous Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). That time also included 18 months in Norway, working at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO). This whole period has been written up by another contributor to “Peacemonger”, so I won’t go into any detail. But there were still connections with the New Zealand anti-bases campaign.

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

We met up with him for a reason, which was to accompany him on a “spy” trip through Norway’s northernmost Finnmark province, which was chokka with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) military bases and lots of Waihopai-like spy bases. Norway was then one of only two NATO members with a land border with the Soviet Union (the other was Turkey).

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

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

We duly delivered the rolls of film back to PRIO in Oslo and they were used in a book co-authored by Owen and Nils Petter Gleditsch, the PRIO Director. The book, “Uncle Sam’s Rabbits” (a pun on the rabbit ear aerials used at some of the listening post spy bases) caused such a sensation in Norway that both authors were charged, tried, convicted and fined for offences under the Official Secrets Act. A much more high-profile official secrets case followed in Sweden, which led to him being ordered expelled from Sweden for ten years.

So, in 1982, after six years of high drama in Scandinavia, he returned home in a blaze of publicity and CAFCINZ sent him around the country on an extremely successful speaking tour. Christchurch academic, Professor Bill Willmott*, nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize (funnily enough, he didn’t win it. It was never likely that the Scandinavians would ever award their home-grown prize to a peace activist who had been convicted for “spying” on them). For better or worse, Owen was home and he never lived overseas again. He was now an international legend, not merely world famous in New Zealand. *Bill Willmott’s obituary, by Kevin Clements and myself, is in *Watchdog* 159, April 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/59/11.html>

That wasn’t the end of our Scandinavian working partnership. When I made my second OE trip, all over Europe in 1984, Owen told me that if I checked out a particular university library in Denmark, I would find fascinating stuff about recent US/NZ relations because that library collected the papers of all US Presidents. I duly broke my holiday to go there and came home with material so newsworthy about how the Johnson Administration had (unsuccessfully) tried to pressure the Holy-

oake government into committing more NZ troops to the Vietnam War, in the 1960s, that the Christchurch *Press* stuck the 20-year-old story on its front page and on its billboard.

Black Birch

"In 1981, from faraway Norway, Owen Wilkes wrote for New Zealand journals about the US Navy's plan to build a 'transit circle' facility on the Black Birch mountain range near Blenheim. The new Black Birch observatory was designed to accumulate data about the exact position of thousands of Southern Hemisphere stars, Owen had already established that Black Birch was almost certainly linked to plans to improve the stellar guidance systems of long-range missiles" ("Peace, Power & Politics: How New Zealand Became Nuclear Free", Maire Leadbeater, 2013). Furthermore, it would play a key role in providing the "increased accuracy" needed for a nuclear first strike.

In those days CAFCINZ was still an active anti-bases campaign, so it organised a 1982 protest at the base of Black Birch Mountain. "For Owen, raising awareness about Black Birch was a priority: not long after his September 1982 return to New Zealand, he set out on a national speaking tour. He hoped peace groups would take up the issue as a contribution to the regional campaign against the deployment of the new Trident submarine which would rely on Black Birch data to support its stellar inertial guidance system" ("Peace, Power & Politics", *ibid.*).

The Black Birch campaign proceeded on several levels – there were our experts, including Owen, who were allowed into the observatory to ask questions of the Americans. There was publicity – I was the interviewee, on behalf of CAFCINZ, in the Black Birch section of "Islands Of The Empire", which was released in 1985. And there were protests, such as the 1986 one by CAFCA (as it had since become), which scaled the 1500 metre hill, without asking anyone's permission, beat the cops to the top and strung a big banner on the observatory. Incidentally, that was CAFCA's last ever anti-bases protest. The Anti-Bases Campaign was born in 1987 and continues today.

"Campaigning against Black Birch was damned hard work. To start with, it took years of ferreting through reams of US official documentation to find out what its real function was... Secondly, the issues were all mind-numbingly complex – how do you go about explaining to the public in simple language why a lonely astronomer staying up all night on a storm-blasted New Zealand mountain will make Trident missiles more accurate in the year 2010? Writing a snappy news release about Black Birch was a nightmare".

"Thirdly, Black Birch could hardly have been better hidden away from public and news media attention. To hold a demo outside the installation took half a day to climb up and half a day to get down again, with serious risk of hypothermia along the way. And there was no way that the news media were going to climb the mountain to report on protest activities there, so demos tended to get ignored" (*Peace Researcher* 2, October 1994, "Black Birch To Close! What's Going On? Have We Won?", Owen Wilkes), <https://www.scribd.com/document/33726160/Peace-Researcher-Vol2-Issue02-Oct-1994>

Black Birch operated from the mid 1980s until the mid-90s, then closed down, its mapping mission complete. "All along, the Anti Bases movement has conceded that Black Birch data has some legitimate scientific uses. We did not oppose these uses. We simply demanded that the US military stop funding this work, and then we would see if the scientific uses were important enough for the scientific community to continue funding them".

"My bet was that no university would step in and take over Black Birch, and none has. There is no scientific justification for Black Birch. The several hundred tons of massive concrete pedestal for the transit circle on Black Birch will eventually become an archaeological monument to the first strike nuclear madness of the late Twentieth Century".

"...We helped delay the programme several years, and we helped to generate lots of suspicion in both Wellington and Washington about Navy truthfulness. We have helped stop the US Navy wasting US taxpayers' money on science which no-one needs. We ought to be awarded a US Congressional medal for helping to prevent waste in the US Federal Budget. And we have demonstrated once again that no foreign installation with the slightest relevance to nuclear warfare is welcome in this country" (*ibid.*).

Tangimoana

"In April 1984 *Peacelink* magazine published its most sensational story ever, in which Owen Wilkes exposed New Zealand's role in electronic spying: 'Tangimoana: Our Most Important Foreign Base'...The Tangimoana radio eavesdropping station (in the Manawatu) had opened in 1982 as the site for Project Acorn, operated by the Defence Communications Unit of New Zealand for the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB)".

"The existence of the facility had been kept secret from the public and there was no mention of its establishment in Defence Ministry estimates. Its staff were forbidden to say where they worked, let alone what they did there. Now, for the first time, New Zealanders learned that we were involved in sophisticated electronic spying. Owen was emphatic that all the evidence proved that the facility was really a foreign military base, built to US specifications and run according to US instructions".

"Owen was familiar with similar electronic eavesdropping, and the antenna arrays that characterise the Tangimoana facility, from his time as a researcher with the International Peace Research Institute in Norway in the late 1970s. He was in no doubt that the spiderweb-like Tangimoana antenna array was part of a network... Owen concluded that Tangimoana was probably cooperating with similar bases in Australia...and contributing precise information about vessel movements – including Soviet ships across the Pacific - to the US Naval Ocean Surveillance Information System (NOSIS)" ("Peace, Power And Politics", *ibid.*).

"Project Acorn thus integrates us much more closely into US war fighting strategies than does mere membership in ANZUS* or our hosting of nuclear warships. Day after day we are feeding intelligence data to the US, where we have little or no control over how it is used, either in peacetime or in war ...Do we want to provide intelligence data which helps give the US the confidence

that it can start, fight and win a nuclear war?" (*Peacelink* 18, April 1984, "Tangimoana: Our Most Important Foreign Base", Owen Wilkes). **The Australia, New Zealand, US military treaty that was the foundation of all New Zealand's defence and foreign policy from its inception in 1951 until the US, under President Ronald Reagan, kicked us out in 1986. It remains in force today, but only between the US and Australia.*

"The agreement under which New Zealand played its part in collecting signals intelligence was also secret – the UKUSA agreement designed in the post-World War II years to formalise the cooperation of the US, Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Almost nobody knew about the existence of the UKUSA agreement for four decades – let alone what it was for...". *UKUSA Agreement is now universally referred to as Five Eyes.*

"The significance of the 1984 Tangimoana exposé cannot be overestimated: it was the opening salvo in the critical campaign to reveal New Zealand's secret intelligence links and raise the challenge they posed to our sovereignty. It marked the first Government admission that the GCSB existed" ("Peace, Power & Politics", *ibid.*). A campaign sprang up against Tangimoana – for example, several hundred people protested there in 1984. And it became the subject of publicity. Christine Dann, Owen's partner and peace research colleague at that time, was the interviewee in the Tangimoana section of "Islands Of The Empire".

At the end of the 80s, Owen and I made a memorable trip there, from Wellington. He was driving minus a licence (he never bothered getting one of those until the last few years of his life) and he was wearing a red cap inscribed "KGB Agent", which he'd bought at a World Peace Council jumble sale. Dressed thus, he drove up the private road to the spy base and, to the intense interest of the spies, we hopped the fence to inspect the various aerial configurations all the more closely.

Owen was a world-famous peace researcher, so he attracted acolytes from everywhere. That day our companion was a young Swedish woman who was only too aware that Owen had been convicted of "spying" in her country. Hence, she was terrified and refused to get out of the car while Owen and I wandered around the spy base (with no adverse consequences, I might add). Tangimoana is still there today, having been the subject of sporadic publicity and protests in the intervening decades. It is much less well-known than the GCSB's other spy base, Waihopai (see below).

Christchurch Airport (Harewood): An Arrest & Deep Freeze's Deep Throat*

Throughout the 80s Owen was a leading light of the anti-bases movement, both as a researcher and activist. Harewood was a hardy perennial, with regular protests in those years by Citizens for the Demilitarisation of Harewood (CDH), the immediate precursor of the Anti-Bases Campaign. Bob Leonard was the leading light in CDH. Bob was the presenter in "Base Deception" <http://historicalpeaceresearcher.blogspot.com/2013/08/base-deception.html>, a short 1994 film about Harewood by Sam Miller, which is a few years more up to date than "Islands Of The Empire".

In 1988, Owen and I shared another experience – we were arrested together, for the only time. The new-born

Anti Bases Campaign (ABC) had decided to focus attention on some sovereignty issues at the US base, by the simple method of several people getting arrested, and us then forcing that issue to be heard in court (that was the theory, anyway). Those of us who had decided to be arrested duly entered the base (brimming with hyped up cops who had suppressed a major Christchurch prison riot and fire the day before).

Owen was among the crowd that stayed outside, indeed he was rather the worse for a hangover (a large bottle of gin was his constant travelling companion). But suddenly there he was, holding the other end of my banner – he had rolled under the base fence. What's more, he refused to let go of the banner or go with the cops when they told us we were all under arrest. So, one testosterone overdosed cop started full force kicking his knuckles to try and break his grip, which only made Owen more pigheaded. It made compelling TV news footage that night. It was a weekend, so we were bailed after a few hours to appear later in the week.

But that didn't suit Owen, he had things to do and didn't want to be mucking around with inconvenient court appearances. So, he refused bail and opted to stay locked up for 24 hours so that the cops had to produce him at the next day's court hearing (which was more convenient for him), where he duly got bail.

He told me that he'd found some old *Readers' Digests* in the cells and had had a wonderful uninterrupted time reading their Rightwing conspiracy theories about how the KGB was behind the 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II. In the meantime I was left to deal with his then partner, who was frantic about how come he'd ended up in custody, as that hadn't been part of their South Island holiday plans. In the end, we fought the good fight in court, were convicted and got a small fine each.

In 1989, Owen scored a real coup. A most unlikely senior figure inside the base personally handed to him, in a Christchurch meeting straight out of a spy novel, five rubbish bags full of fascinating US military files. And they were originals, not copies. Apparently, the source chose Owen as the recipient because he hated my guts. It's a pity that Owen died first because I would have given him first refusal to write the obituary of Deep Freeze's Deep Throat. The contents of the rubbish bags were so newsworthy that the *Listener* devoted an entire cover story to them ("Frozen Out: The Deep Freeze Drugs And Customs Dispute", Bruce Ansley, 13/11/89).

Those files were so extensive that Owen planned to write a book based on them. But, alas, Owen was a depressive, who set very high standards for himself. When later meeting with the ABC committee, he told us that he had reached some self-imposed age by which he had vowed that he should have personally been responsible for the removal of the US military from New Zealand; that it had not happened, which he saw as his failing; that it was all a waste of time, and he planned to throw the manuscript of the book he was working on into Wellington Harbour. We took the practical step of relieving him of the manuscript but the book was never written (and never will be, because eventually we gave it back to him).

Throughout the 80s, Owen was an enthusiastic member

of The Bearded Patriarchs, as the ABC committee was known, regularly attending meetings, which were held in our lounge. He would borrow my wobbly old bike and pedal out to Harewood, spending entire days with his trusty binoculars, watching the comings and goings at the US base. He came to Christchurch to spend time in Christchurch with his aged parents (he always referred to them as “the parents”). Both of them died within a few months of each other in 1993, he never stayed at our place again (he’d been a regular house guest for many years), he stopped coming to Christchurch, and he “retired” from the peace movement.

* *Deep Throat* was the pseudonym given to the secret informant (later revealed to be Federal Bureau of Investigation Associate Director Mark Felt) who, in the early 1970s, provided information to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein (reporters for the Washington Post). Felt provided key details about the involvement of US President Richard Nixon’s Administration in what came to be known as the Watergate scandal.

Australian Adventures: Liberated Trophy & A Jandal Held Hostage

In 1988 Owen and I had another Australian adventure, making our second trip to the US Navy communications base at North West Cape (it has since been “Australianised”). This wasn’t as arduous as the 1974 epic, only involving bus travel within Western Australia, rather than crossing the entire country and back again. Mind you, WA is Australia’s biggest state and the bus was an old school one, so it was more uncomfortable than the original trip (which used proper, brand new, tour buses).

Not only were we the only Kiwis, we were the only two who had also been on the 1974 Long March, so once again, the cops, the media and the protest organisers all looked to Owen to be the resident expert, the group leader and spokesperson. And once again, we ended up camping in the extremely hostile Exmouth, the support town for the base (and a leading candidate for the keenly contested title of Arsehole of Australia).

The all-time classic Owen Wilkes story happened there. While I was being a good boy, asleep in our tent, he went to the pub (the tellingly named Potshot Inn, whose logo was a nuclear mushroom cloud). Behind the bar was a mock shield engraved: “1974. Police 1, Protesters Nil” and ditto for 1988. This was too much for Owen’s Aussie sheila (his holiday romance on that trip). She vaulted the bar, snatched the thing, hitched up her tie-dyed skirt and ran for it.

When the braying pissheads closed in on her, she chucked it to Owen who hoofed it into the bush, and passed it on to somebody else. The drunken rednecks were in uproar and rushed to form a cavalcade to come and burn down our camp. But Exmouth was swarming with cops, headed by the State’s Commissioner of Police. They stopped the “yobs” (their word) in their tracks by threatening to breath test them. But we had to promise to return the shield by the next day at the latest.

It was duly done but Owen held out for an exchange with one of his jandals, which had got lost in the mad scramble the night before. Just as we were about to board our buses to leave (to the intense relief of all sides), up drove a cop car with siren blaring, the loud-

speaker called out “Mr Wilkes”, and out stepped the Commissioner clutching the missing jandal. The cop was a good sport and agreed to put on his Commissioner’s hat to pose for a photo solemnly handing over the jandal.

To give you some of the flavour of that trip, here’s an extract from my *Foreign Control Watchdog* report (issue 60, December 1988): “The trip was definitely organised on a tight budget. We travelled in a grossly overloaded school bus, driving the 1,350 km from Perth to NWC in one unforgettable all-night, all-day epic. The Aussies loved it – they must have cast iron arses”.

“On the way back we slept on a beach. It may have been the tropics, but I needed the balaclava that I had bought in Christchurch’s record cold spell. Food was a BYO affair and Owen and I lived a week on a diet of bread, sardines and gingernuts”. Afterwards Owen did a month-long Aussie speaking tour. Our paths crossed again in Sydney, where we visited the King’s Cross bar owned by a notorious CIA figure. “Owen had to be dissuaded from stealing the Stars and Stripes” (ibid.).

Waihopai

This is the best known of the GCSB’s two spy bases and, courtesy of the huge white domes covering the two satellite interception dishes, the most conspicuous (those domes and dishes were removed in 2022, as they’d become obsolete). It was the same Lange government that made NZ nuclear free that also approved the Waihopai spy base, announcing in late 1987 that it would be built.

“It was thanks to Owen Wilkes that we learnt about Waihopai and its role. New Zealand defence officials had been working with their Australian counterparts since 1984 on ways to improve signals intelligence interception. They had two new bases in their sights: Waihopai and its ‘big brother’ station at Geraldton in Western Australia.... In November 1987 Prime Minister Lange agreed to the construction of the base. The public was only let in on the secret the following month... “.

“Owen Wilkes was soon able to put two and two together. The choice of a quiet location indicated that the base was designed to listen to signals we were not intended to hear... by a process of elimination, he concluded that the base would be targeting the international Intelsat system...which carried the world’s telephone, fax and telex systems...Owen also emphasised that New Zealand was about to acquire the capacity to spy on private communications emanating from its small Pacific neighbours” (“Peace, Power & Politics”, ibid.).

“Big brother GCSB will be working with bigger brother DSD (Australian Defence Signals Directorate) for Biggest Brother, the US National Security Agency. Its data will end up being used to undermine whatever privacy, secrecy, independence and sovereignty South Pacific microstates currently enjoy” (*Peacelink* 60, April 1988, “Big Brother Will Be Listening From The Waihopai Valley”, Owen Wilkes).

Owen wrote the definitive, seven page “Backgrounder On Waihopai Satellite Spy Base” in *Peace Researcher* 17 (first series, February 1988). “It would be nice to think that GCSB was going to eavesdrop on US military satellites or the French satellite. But it seems unlikely.

Neither the US nor France would tolerate it. The US would not sell us the computer for it if they thought there was a tiny chance we were going to spy on the US or its close ally France...”

Initially, the GCSB said that there wouldn't be a dome over the solitary satellite dish (the second one was added in the late 90s). Owen pointed out: "Once the station starts operating, anyone with a theodolite will be free to measure the dish orientation and state precisely which satellite it is pointed at" (ibid. So, Owen was the indirect "father of the domes"). He concluded his "Backgrounder" with a section titled "Do We Want Waihopai?":

"The peace movement is mostly agreed about the undesirability of Tangimoana. Tangimoana, amongst other things, is contributing to targeting of US naval weapons. There is no question of Waihopai doing this. It is not part of any nuclear war system. Yet, in some ways, Waihopai is worse. Tangimoana is, at least, eavesdropping on military operations – ships and aircraft, and maybe submarines. If there were a Soviet submarine snooping around Aotearoa, Tangimoana might detect it".

"But Waihopai doesn't even have the justification of spying on other nations' aggressive military activities. It will be spying on ordinary people, people who are trying to bring independence to their own countries, people who are campaigning for a nuclear-free Pacific. It will listen to microstates trying to negotiate with superpowers, grassroots businesses that are trying to fend off multinational takeovers. Tangimoana implicates us in nuclear war preparations. Waihopai implicates us in undermining the privacy, security, independence and sovereignty of our neighbours in the South Pacific. The short answer is NO, we don't want the Waihopai spy base" (ibid.).

Owen was a leading figure in the late 80s' campaign that protested against Waihopai, from conception to commissioning. It was that campaign that led to the birth of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC), in 1987, and he was a founder and leader. He was a fixture for the first few years of Waihopai protests. His name on a billboard right round the South Island was sufficient to explain what the story was about. "Wilkes: We'll Stop Waihopai" was one such.

We didn't, of course, but not from lack of trying. As Maire Leadbeater wrote: "...it was a remarkable achievement, unknown elsewhere in the world, for a protest campaign to be mounted against an intelligence base that was yet to be built" ("Peace, Power & Politics", ibid.). And ABC has been running that campaign since the first protest in 1988 until now, calling for the Waihopai spy base to be closed.

Touching The Bases Tour; Doris

ABC organised the Touching The Bases Tour in late 1990. "Waihopai was included (in the Tour), which also took in Tangimoana, Black Birch, Harewood and an Owen Wilkes-led day trip around 'secret' Wellington. The unique aspect of this information-cum-protest action was that a number of activists from the Asia-Pacific region took part, including several Filipinos and representatives from Bougainville and Fiji...It was also a great chance to meet with some of the very activists working for a nuclear-free and independent Pacific who could well have been targets of UKUSA spying".

"In fact, we really understood the personal determination and commitment of our colleagues when they insisted on walking with us to the 4,500-foot summit of Black Birch ridge in snow and gale conditions. Hardy Christchurch organisers Murray Horton and Warren Thomson became concerned that our guests from tropical climes might suffer hypothermia and worked hard to persuade them to keep their layers of woollen clothing in place even when they felt warm from their strenuous climbing" ("Peace, Power & Politics", ibid.).

ABC's Warren Thomson reported on the Tour in *Watchdog* 66, March 1991; "Secret Wellington. With sixty-five people crammed on a fifty-seater bus we visited the places where intelligence and security operations go on night and day, year in, year out. In honour of our visit, some buildings were temporarily declared defence areas and entry prohibited while we were there. At Defence Headquarters we deposited a bag containing some of their old rubbish. They panicked and thought it was a bomb!".

"Owen Wilkes' commentary on buildings, incidents and organisations has prompted others to think about what goes on in their own home towns, behind drawn office building curtains". In a separate Thank You section of that same report, I extended thanks: "To Owen Wilkes, who overcame illness and pain to guide us through both Military Auckland and Secret Wellington" (I don't remember what was his health problem then).

Earlier in 1990, there was a sensational revelation about a hitherto secret foreign military facility in one of the most remote parts of the country. Owen wrote it up, in his usual meticulous detail, in *Peace Researcher* 26 (first series, March 1990; "Spot-On With Doris: French Satellite Beacon Discovered In Remote Corner Of New Zealand"): "Wednesday, 10 January 1990, was Doris Day" (*you have to be of a certain age to get that joke. MH*).

"On that day TV3 broke a story about a French radio beacon transmitter which had been installed on the Chatham Islands, 800 km east of, and part of, New Zealand, without the New Zealand government becoming aware of it. The beacon was part of a system called Doris, and it provided for precise determination of the orbits of French 'Spot' photographic satellites. Because these satellites could be used for locating targets for French nuclear missiles, the installation had obvious strategic value".

"The revelation caused an immediate scandal. New Zealand is still strongly opposed to French nuclear testing, and feelings still run high about the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing. So, how had it come about that New Zealand was hosting this installation? Doris was a front-page media sensation for a couple of days, enhancing considerably the French reputation for perfidious sneakiness, and the NZ government was made to look rather silly about the whole business. Less than a month later, on 12 February, the NZ Prime Minister announced that France was being asked to remove Doris".

"...We should thank and congratulate the Government for eventually doing the right thing about Doris. The arguments for and against Doris are remarkably similar to those revolving around the US Navy's Black Birch facility; each facility contributes to increasing the accuracy of

the respective nuclear arsenal, although the means by which this becomes about in each case are quite different”.

“Doris would have made French nuclear targeting more accurate. Black Birch will make US nuclear guidance more accurate. Yet New Zealand insists that Black Birch continue to operate, although the evidence for its missile guidance role is far better documented than was the evidence for Doris. The significant difference between Doris and Black Birch is, of course, that the latter is American”.

CAFCA

People who only know of Owen from reputation associate him with the anti-bases and broader peace movement. He was never a committee person, never a joiner, but he was tickled pink to be invited to be an honorary member of Christchurch PYM (Progressive Youth Movement), particularly as he was a good decade or more older than the rest of us. He proclaimed that membership for years after PYM ceased to exist, in the early 1970s.

The Anti-Bases Campaign spun off out of CAFCA (the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa) in the late 1980s. CAFCA had started as CAFCINZ in the mid 70s; CAFCINZ had previously been CAFMANZ. Owen was a founder and key figure in all of those various iterations. As previously mentioned, he and his then wife Joan were among those on the two-week long 1975 South Island Resistance Ride, which was CAFCINZ's founding activity.

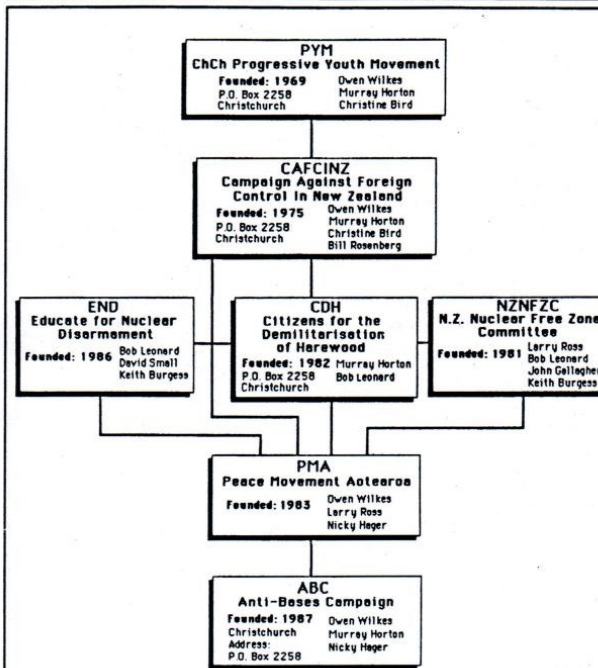
He was an active and activist member of CAFCA for decades. For example, in 1989, CAFCA organised a major protest against the meeting, in Christchurch, of the nasty international Rightwing think-tank, the Mont Pelerin Society. It was Owen who alerted us to it; it was Owen who impeccably researched the record of every delegate, all of which we gratefully published in *Watchdog*. And Owen was quite happy to be CAFCA's most trenchant internal critic. From the Minutes of our 1993 Annual General Meeting (*Watchdog* 74, December 1993): “Quote of the AGM: ‘This has got to be the most unsuccessful campaign in New Zealand's history’” (I beg to differ but perhaps I'm biased).

Security Intelligence Service (SIS)

Owen appears right throughout the SIS file on CAFCA (as distinct from the SIS file on him, of which only a small portion has been publicly released). He is portrayed as being some sort of mastermind, for example, the first SIS memo to the US Central Intelligence Agency about us (1975) says: “Owen R. WILKES is the main organiser and activist in both CAFMANZ and CAFCINZ”. When I went overseas in 1978 the SIS attached great significance to the fact that I, and my then partner, were going to visit Owen in Sweden.

The most fascinating report on Owen is a December 1985 one entitled “PROTEST ACTIVITY AGAINST THE SERVICE: ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CAMPAIGNS”. In it they recognised Owen as a formidable foe. Some extracts: “CAFCINZ and its leading personalities have had a longstanding involvement in protest against this Service. Under the direction of Murray Donald HORTON (Personal File), CAFCINZ was responsible for coordinating protest and harassment activity

Plain Talk



The progression from the revolutionary group PYM to the present day Anti-Bases Campaign. The people named are only a fraction of those involved in the New Zealand “peace” movement, but they are some of its key organisational members.

Rightwing conspiracy theory flow chart, 1980s

against Service premises in Christchurch in the mid-to-late 1970s...”.

“The Service regained prominence in CAFCINZ's interests in late 1983 with the acknowledgement by New Zealand Customs of its referral of WILKES' incoming overseas mail to the NZSIS. CAFCINZ took up the cause of one of its founding members with gusto and apparently cooperated with WILKES in the formation of the Christchurch Peace Research Institute (PRI)...”.

“For a variety of reasons, the temperature appears to be rising in anti-SIS feeling over recent months. CAFCINZ appears to be taking the lead and this may be because of WILKES' personal vendetta as much as CAFCINZ's need to find a new issue on which to focus, now that the nuclear free and anti-ANZUS issues have become more widely popular and self-sustaining”.

“WILKES brings a sophistication to anti-SIS activity that has not been much in evidence in the past. His Scandinavian experience has already been evident in CAFCINZ and PRI activity and there is, as yet, no reason to disbelieve that the type of information gathering techniques WILKES claimed were being used against Government Communications Security Bureau and Defence (irrespective of their success) were not in fact undertaken and could not be used against this Service”.

“The failure, by CAFCINZ and others, to achieve any measure of success against the Service via the Official Information Act does not appear to have dampened their enthusiasm... A campaign to expose the activities of the NZSIS is being initiated. It is possible that a degree of sophistication and perseverance not previously

seen may be employed by individuals involved. There is an apparent climate of support from the radical Left for such a campaign”.

Apparently, It Was All A Communist Plot

Owen and I were comrades in arms for several decades. So much so that some of our more fevered enemies on the Right saw it all as one big Communist conspiracy. This reached its zenith with the publication of the May 1988 issue of *Plain Talk*, the journal of the Plains Club, which was an influential Christchurch-based Rightwing, pro-US, lobby group during the 1980s’ battle to make New Zealand nuclear free.

This particular issue devoted no less than 12 pages to its cover story, which was titled: “Rent-A-Demo: New Zealand’s Longest Playing Soap Opera”, and listed the “Leading Characters” as “Horton, Murray” and “Wilkes, Owen”. In great detail, it listed all the joint activities and memberships of Owen and myself (and a “Supporting Cast” of co-conspirators, such as Bill Rosenberg and Bob Leonard*) since the 1960s. It even had a diagram to prove that CAFCA and the ABC “grew out of” PYM and so were the latest manifestation of the Communist plot (yes, shock horror revelation – the postal address of CAFCA and ABC is the same Box 2258, Christchurch, that was first used by the PYM, in 1969). *My obituary of Bob Leonard is in *Watchdog* 134, January 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/34/13.html>

I must say it is a peculiar sensation to read your own life (and that of Owen) chronicled in such detail by your enemies, and all presented through a distorting filter. The conclusion: “While Wilkes, (Nicky) Hager, (Maire) Ledbetter (sic), Horton, Rosenberg, Leonard, (Larry) Ross and the many others may not be overtly pro-Soviet, they are socialists. They are steeped in the doctrine of Marxism and have a natural affinity for that cauldron of revolutionary socialism, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Their activities pose a very real threat to the future stability, and indeed the freedom, of the countries of the South Pacific region”. Phew! To put it in text message language: lol (laughed out loud).

As for that “cauldron of revolutionary socialism” (for which I never felt the slightest affinity, and yes, I did go there), the USSR disappeared without a trace three years after this diatribe was published. The Plains Club also vanished decades ago. And as for Owen’s politics, I’ll quote my 1972 *Canta* article again: “He says he is a ‘Leftist’, but stays strictly clear of policies or ideologies”. I can’t remember ever discussing politics with Owen, I think he was allergic to any word ending in “ism” and if he ever voted, I have no idea for whom (a couple of attendees at the 2005 Christchurch memorial meeting for him told me that he voted Labour at least once and “maybe” once for the former Values Party).

Writer Of Crank Letters

Owen quit the peace movement in the 1990s. That is not my topic, therefore I won’t go into details. So, he was gone from the peace movement and the progressive movement in general, but he was determined not to be forgotten. There is no easy way to say this, but in the late 1990s his behaviour towards his old mates in Christchurch veered from the odd to the downright offensive.

He wrote a letter to the ABC addressed to the “Flat

Earth Society”. In it, he urged that we give up the campaign on bases such as Waihopai and Harewood, which he now declared to be innocuous; that we should stop publishing *Peace Researcher*, have a holiday and get a life. Basically, he was renouncing, in writing, his lifetime’s work on this subject.

And CAFCA was not spared – in classic Owen style, he wrote us a blistering seven pager (with 20 footnotes), ripping the shit out of us (and more specifically, the judges of the first [1997] Roger Award for the Worst Transnational Corporation Operating in Aotearoa/New Zealand). As an archaeologist, he took grave umbrage at the judges’ findings regarding one of that year’s placegetters, a US mining transnational, which operated a highly polluting tailings dam in the Coromandel. His letter was punctuated with outbursts such as “What utter crap!”.

Here is an extract: “I suspect that you (i.e., the four judges, rather than you, dear Murray) have been led astray by the Coromandel Corgi (*his derogatory name for the Coromandel Watchdog group*). I have spent a bit of time in the Coromandel and have met some of the people who have Coromandel Corgi bumper stickers on their shiny new Rangerovers. They are mostly selfish rich bastards and rich bastards’ selfish children (many of them ‘foreign persons’ in the eyes of the Overseas Investment Commission) who have made their wealth destroying the environment someplace else”.

“Now they want to enjoy their wealth and they don’t want the tranquillity and charm in the vicinity of their multi-million-dollar baches disturbed by mines paying wages to working class Kiwis. Old mine workings are picturesque, operational mine workings offend their tender sensibilities...” (letter to Murray Horton, 2/8/98).

So, what we were to make of these raves? It goes without saying that we didn’t agree with Owen. I’m afraid that we still haven’t got a life. We knew from personal observation that he was a depressive and we attributed these outpourings to being the products of him being affected by that condition. But we also knew, as he was so accurately described in the main eulogy at his funeral, that he could be “a grumpy old shit at times”. It was part of his unique charm. And in the same time period as he was firing these broadsides at us, he was also writing friendly personal letters to the likes of ABC’s Bob Leonard, discussing subjects like US military aircraft that he’d spotted whilst in transit at Christchurch Airport.

I only saw Owen once in the last 11 years of his life. I was in Hamilton on my 2002 national CAFCA speaking tour. Quite unexpectedly, he and his partner May Bass came to hear me (this after no personal contact for something like eight years). He listened attentively, thanked me for rekindling his interest in the subject, invited me to their house the next morning and it was just like old times between very old friends and colleagues.

His raving letters were never mentioned, and we sat for a long time discussing all manner of things. I was delighted to be once again in the presence of such an incredibly focused inquiring mind, a man of such energy. And he couldn’t help himself – he whipped out a photo he’d recently taken in Auckland Harbour of a Chinese ship bristling with domes and antennae, describing it as “a floating Waihopai”. He drove me to the bus terminal

(he assured me that, unlike our 1980s' trip to Tangimona, he now had his driver's licence) and personally loaded my luggage so he could spend longer talking to me. We shook hands on very warm terms. It was the last time that I ever saw him.

Christchurch Memorial

Owen killed himself in 2005, aged 65. On the very deliberately chosen date of July 4th, CAFCA and the Anti-Bases Campaign co-hosted a memorial meeting for him. Well over 100 people attended (quite extraordinary when you consider that he hadn't lived in Christchurch since the 1970s, or in the South Island since the early 80s). The final touch was a permanent Christchurch memorial, which has been in place since 2007. We were hoping for a statue but, with the support of Christchurch's then Mayor, Garry Moore, settled for a park bench and a plaque bearing a pictorial representation of Owen.

Beckenham Park was particularly significant to Owen, as he grew up just metres away in a riverside corner dairy (which is still there) owned by his parents, and went to Beckenham Primary School, which neighbours the Park and uses it for sports grounds. Owen was very proud of his Beckenham background.

Many years after he left Christchurch, when he was staying with me, I found him rummaging through my pretty sparse wardrobe. He said he was looking for a respectable shirt, because he was in town for the Beckenham Primary School reunion and was off that night to go dancing with his girlfriend from when he was 12 years old. He found something, put on a pair of trousers (now that was a rare sight), jumped on the wobbly old bike that I loaned him and pedalled away down memory lane. When he got back, he reckoned that he'd had a great time.

Up to 50 people attended the September 2007 Mayoral "opening" (if you can open a park bench), including family, friends and colleagues. People were there from as far as Wellington and even Sydney. The *Press* sent a photographer. As master of ceremonies, I read a variety of messages from right around the world from people and organisations sending apologies (such as Owen's partner, May Bass) and ringing endorsements of Owen's life and work from Australia, England, Norway, Denmark and NZ. Those vulgar Australians hoped that his bench might put a deserved splinter into the arses of the powerful should they choose to sit on it.

We'd done hours of speeches about Owen at his 2005 memorial meeting, so we kept this brief. I spoke for a short time about him, the significance of the setting for the bench, thanked everyone who needed to be thanked, and gently chided Mayor Garry Moore about having got nowhere with the statue idea (other messages referred to that as well). Garry, who had been known to bite like a big fish at real or imagined criticism, confined himself to suggesting that the Council might like to have me stuffed when it came to my turn (that greatly appealed to my darling wife).

Garry told us how pleased he was to have been invited to do the honours and told one Owen Wilkes story that we hadn't heard before. He said that he'd first met Owen at a 1970s' summer school at Arthurs Pass. When lunchtime arrived, Owen suggested that his class go for a walk and before they knew it, he'd got them to climb a bloody mountain!

At the conclusion of Garry's short and funny speech, he invited Owen's relatives present to perform that actual opening – thus denying the *Press* a front-page photo of the Mayor of Christchurch holding a banner calling for the US Air Force to get out of Christchurch Airport. A small group of old friends and former colleagues, some of whom hadn't seen each other for decades, stayed on to picnic in the sunshine in beautiful Beckenham Park. Stories were told and much hilarity ensued.

The next day I got an e-mail from "Gazza" once again thanking me for having invited him to do the honours, and once again repeating his preference for a memorial park bench rather than a statue. He concluded by saying "statues are so bloody passé". The *Press* ran a photo and small story on the Monday, omitting all mention of the Mayor's involvement, and including a quote from Owen's 2005 suicide note (which is bit odd, don't you think?).

We're very pleased that this seat is in place for perpetuity – having survived thousands of earthquakes unscathed - in such a beautiful setting and one which held such personal significance to Owen. The plaque reads: "In Memory Of Owen Wilkes, 1940-2005. International Peace Activist, Researcher, Archaeologist, Who Spent His Early Years In Beckenham".

Iconic Figure

Owen Wilkes was a founder of both CAFCA and ABC, he was an absolutely indispensable figure in the anti-bases campaign, the peace movement and the broader progressive movement for decades. Globally, his word was gospel in his numerous fields of expertise. In this country he was a household name and an iconic figure. The words "giant" and "legend" are sadly over used but they both apply very accurately to him. The people of New Zealand and of the wider world owe him a heartfelt vote of gratitude. I'll conclude by simply saying, Owen, on behalf of all of us, thank you.



From left: Warren Thomson, May Bass and Murray Horton, Owen Wilkes memorial park bench, Christchurch, December 2022. May was Owen's partner for the 12 years up until his 2005 death. Photo by Bill McAulay

THE STORY BEHIND “PEACEMONGER”

By Murray Horton

In late 2020 I was contacted, out of the blue, by an octogenarian Kiwi expat in Oslo, who had been a good friend of Owen's in Scandinavia in the 70s and 80s and then for most of the rest of Owen's life. In 1978, I and my then partner (Christine Bird, who went on to become a founding member of ABC) accompanied Owen on a "spy trip" through Norway's northernmost province, the one bordering the former Soviet Union. We met this expat Kiwi whilst in Oslo. In his 2020 e-mail he told me he had a collection of letters from Owen and other material, and offered them to me, which I accepted.

I wrote up the Oslo package of material in *PR* 61 (June 2021). That turned out to be only the beginning of this whole new project. In September 2021 I was contacted, also out of the blue, by May Bass, who was Owen's partner at the time of his death (they were together for a dozen years). I'd had no contact with her since 2005, the year of Owen's death.

May said: "A friend of mine rang me to let me know there was an article about Owen in the April (2021) edition of *Watchdog*. She sent me the magazine. It reminded me that having waited all this time since Owen's death I have still not found anyone who is interested in writing a book about him. There is a huge amount of material that he left and which I arranged to be stored in Wellington Library. I am wondering whether you might have some ideas?". I told May that I wouldn't be the writer of any such book (she was not the first person to suggest it), because I don't have the time necessary to do it justice.

But I sent her a whole lot of stuff about Owen that has come out since his death (such as various *PR* articles, and the reissued 1980s' documentary "Islands Of The Empire"). Within a remarkably short period of time, the whole thing fell into place. I mentioned the book idea to a 1980s' Wellington peace activist and colleague of Owen's, with whom I'd previously lost contact for decades. He took it upon himself to contact a professional writer (Mark Derby of Wellington).

Mark accepted with alacrity. He and May Bass are the co-editors. It is a collection of essays about Owen by a number of writers, and was published in late 2022. My 2021/22 Christmas holiday project was writing the above lengthy essay on Owen and the anti-bases campaign. In his Introduction to the book, Mark Derby wrote: "I first met Owen Wilkes in 1975 on the South Island Resistance Ride". That was the activity that led to the birth of CAFGINZ, which was later renamed as CAFCA. There's the proof that CAFCA and Mark Derby, not to mention Owen Wilkes and I, go back a long, long way.

Old Photos Came In Handy

I was even able to provide the striking portrait photo of Owen that comprises the book's cover. There is a story

behind that – in 2015, out of the blue, I was sent it (a physical photo) by a Westport CAFCA/ABC member, with an accompanying handwritten note saying: "Was at local photo shop yesterday and came across this photo in a pile of old copies the shop was clearing out. Thought you might like it".

I had no immediate use for it and duly filed it. Come 2022 and the call went out for photos of Owen for the book and Mark Derby specified that one for the cover. He asked me to get a professional-quality scan of it and to claim reimbursement for the cost. I took it to *PR*'s printer and he charged me - \$3! (I didn't claim reimbursement).

When the book came out, I showed it to the printer and said: "There's your \$3 scan". His daughter, who works with him, said: "It's time we put our prices up, Dad". But we're still none the wiser about when, where or by whom and why that striking portrait photo of Owen was taken, or how it ended up in a Westport photo shop (he last lived in that part of the country in the early 1980s). That photo is proof of the old idiom - don't chuck it out, it might come in handy someday.

I also played a role in securing another of the most striking photos in the book, namely one of Owen on a megaphone at the 1973 protest at the US base at Christchurch Airport (I was an organiser of that. You know you're old when you realise you were involved in things 50 years ago). The photographer was Walter Logeman. I hadn't seen him for decades, but in recent years Becky and I started running into him at cafes all over town. Over months and years, he and I got talking about events from long ago.

He knew Owen back in the day, so I told him about this upcoming book. He'd quit photography years ago and moved into a quite different field but he undertook to locate his trove of old school photo negatives and sort through them for Owen photos. The result appears in the book and it was well worth the effort. Thank you, Walter.

Book Launch

In December 2022 ABC hosted the Christchurch launch of "Peacemonger". Owen was from Christchurch and was a founder of both CAFCA and ABC, so it was entirely appropriate that we held a launch in his hometown (it was the first launch of the book). The launch was a modest affair, attended by 10-20 people, but it was a very enjoyable occasion. I was the MC and one of the speakers.

Our guest of honour was May Bass, who was Owen's partner in both peace work and in life (they were together for 12 years, up until his death). ABC had attempted to get May to the 2022 Waihopai protest (she'd never been back there since the 1988 women's peace camp) but that had to be cancelled (in 2023 she finally did get back to Waihopai, joining ABC's protest there).

So, we were delighted to get her to the book launch (she is a Co-Editor of "Peacemonger"). We took her to Owen's memorial park bench. It was the first time I'd seen May since Owen's Hamilton funeral in 2005. "Peacemonger" went gone on to have a better-attended launch in Auckland (bad weather on the day forced the cancellation of the Wellington launch). ■

PEACEMONGER

Owen Wilkes: International Peace Researcher

Edited by May Bass and Mark Derby

**Raekaihau Press and Steele Roberts
Aotearoa, 2022. \$35.00**

Aotearoa/New Zealand has thrown up a number of remarkable people in a number of diverse fields; among them is a unique individualist who got himself arrested in escapades on opposite sides of the planet, confounded Establishment officials by showing them where they were mistaken, built an early version of an environmentally sustainable house – that got demolished by the local authority - and made significant contributions to Aotearoa/New Zealand archaeology, among many other notable achievements.

In 2005, Owen Wilkes, in an act typical of the hard-nosed rationalism he applied throughout his time on Earth, took his own life. A tragedy, rendered clearly by more than a dozen contributors to “Peacemonger”, this book of essays about him. But the boy from Christchurch had packed enough into his 65 years for three ordinary lifetimes.

Contribution To World Peace

“Peacemonger” is organised around the contributions of people who knew him in a number of contexts. Unexpectedly, given the number of people writing a chapter for the text, the result is neither dull repetition nor a disconnected mass of data. There is largely agreement about Owen’s contribution to world peace.

Roland Simbulan, a former Vice-Chancellor at the University of the Philippines, suggests that Owen “had an important role in ending the Cold War”. Several other contributors give him “a large amount of credit” for this country’s nuclear free status, and for successes of the nuclear free Pacific movement. Neville

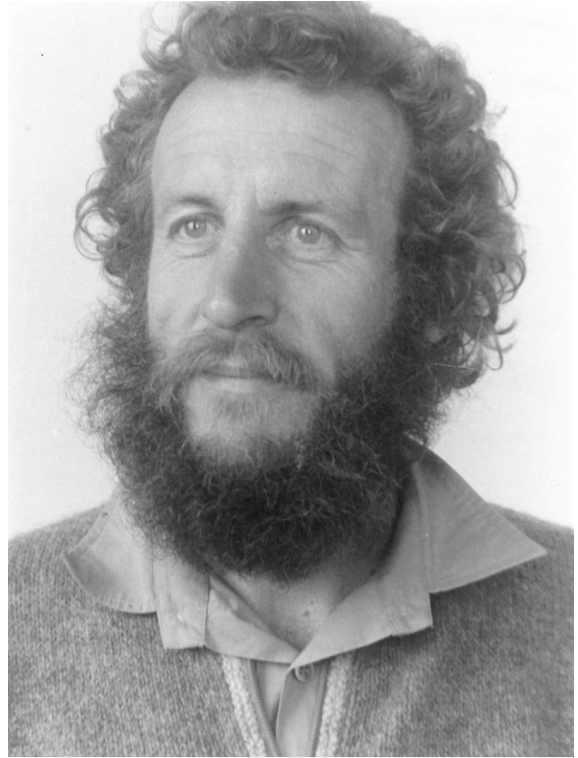
Ritchie hails his immense contribution to academic knowledge of pre-pakeha Māori history.

And there is largely agreement also over Owen’s strength of character and recurrent obduracy. Murray Horton, a man not given to superfluity of praise, describes Owen as a “giant” and a “legend”, while relating how he insisted on eating food mistakenly cooked in methylated spirits on a camping trip, and wrote letters “ripping the shit out of us” with criticisms of Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) and Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA). Ingvar Botnen’s chapter includes a splendid colour photo of the man when he insisted on wearing shorts at minus 20 degrees Celsius on a cross-country ski trip in Norway.

But the idiosyncrasies highlight a character whose insights and determination not only made an impact on the people he worked with, but an impact on the world stage. He “was one of the first people to start digging into the post-war global network of signals intelligence facilities” (Maire Leadbeater). These facilities – whose unparalleled surveillance power was marvellously publicised by Edward Snowden in 2013 – are represented in Aotearoa New Zealand by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GC SB).

One-Man Counter-Surveillance

Owen’s counter-surveillance – tramping across country with backpack and binoculars, and all-night hours digesting obscure US government documents – resulted in his startling revelation of the GCSB’s secret signals interception base at Tangimoana, near Palmerston North. His next key contribution to understanding of what is today recognised as the Five Eyes global attempt to hack into any part of the world’s communications that it wants to, was to explain what David Lange signed up for when he gave permission for a satellite spy base to be built at Waihopai near Blenheim.



Owen Wilkes

Nicky Hager was to galvanise the peace movement when he took up this work of revealing to the NZ public the secret machinations of the GCSB and its associates. His book “Secret Power” includes a foreword from Lange admitting he did not know what the Waihopai base was to be actually used for. Nicky’s contribution to “Peacemonger” concisely describes Owen’s original contribution to peace research. Aotearoa NZ’s domestic “security” agency, the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), recognised Owen by compiling copious dossiers on the man which, according to one source, amount to “six volumes” – still mostly inaccessible almost 20 years after Owen’s death.

Some areas of Owen’s life get little coverage in this collection of essays. Apart from the reflections of May Bass, partner and co-editor, on the latter part of his life, we learn little about family and relationships. But leaving this aside, this is a book that had to be written: for a true understanding of our country’s history, to inspire current and future generations of “peacemongers”, for the reading satisfaction given to those who took part in the events back-grounding this era, and to celebrate the life of a man who was one of the outstanding characters of his time. ■

Five Eyes spy bases

Five Eyes global spy bases. Ironsand is Waihopai



THE SECRET HISTORY OF FIVE EYES

The Untold Story Of The International Spy Network

Richard Kerbaj
Blink Publishing, 2022

If you want a very readable account of the West's most covert spy agencies – the Five Eyes group established in total secrecy in the Cold War years of the late 1940s and mid 50s - Kerbaj's book is for you. In coverage from the petty rivalries and arguments of the early days to recent machinations related to China and the Ukraine War, a remarkable set of spooks and politicians contributed their views. And whether you decide to accept the Five Eyes' cock-ups, misjudgements and brutalities – as the writer does in the interests of realpolitik – is over to you.

A number of events described in the text demonstrate that Five Eyes often exhibits inhumanity, failure, misjudgement and self-serving decision-making – the latter in part due to the predominance of Washington in the unequal grouping. From backing false information to enable the Iraq War, to kidnapping suspected terrorists and flying them to countries where they could be secretly tortured, to serious lapses in judgement

- such as the supply of arms to those now designated "terrorists", including some currently on Washington's most wanted list - Kerbaj describes the black holes of Five Eyes.

On Five Eyes' brutal rendition programme, the writer concludes that the continuing saga of Guantánamo Bay ultimately haunts the legacy of the Five Eyes. He notes that 17 British nationals and citizens were held at Guantánamo and the US refused to release them. Kerbaj reveals that Peter Clarke, former head of Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism command, stated: "None of the material (the Americans) provided us with would have been admissible in court". Most notably, for New Zealand readers, Kerbaj says these were American-led operations but that *all members* of Five Eyes knew it was happening.

Revelations

"The Secret History" brings up a few other specific points of interest to local readers:

- NZ "lent a hand" through Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) spying in the 1982 Falklands War
- That the US National Security Agency (NSA) wanted NZ retained as part of the group during the 1980s' nuclear warships row because "we get so much value out of this"

- "In 2015, it was revealed that New Zealand's GCSB had teamed up with the NSA to hack into the diplomatic communications of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (p305) ... 'while John Key was negotiating a trade deal with Beijing'."

Kerbaj claims some successes for Five Eyes. But how he can conclude that this supersecret group is a vital element to the safety and security of its component countries is a puzzle: "...the alliance remains vital in attempting to foresee and combat future threats" (his final sentence). As the author himself points out, there have been serious misjudgements and manipulations; for instance, the long history of dubious US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations intensified growing anti-Western sentiment in the Middle East, and Five Eyes interference has played a large part in the geopolitical destabilisation of the Middle East. And political self-interest has at times caused significant problems.

Kerbaj was the security correspondent for the *Sunday Times* from 2010 to 2020. He has written extensively about counter-terrorism and counter-espionage. He worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Times*, the *Australian*, and written and produced award-winning documentaries. He interviewed an impressive list of people for his book.

They include former UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) Director Sir Iain Lobban, who was head of GCHQ when the Snowden papers hit the news, and a number of former heads of spook agencies: CIA Director General David Petraeus, MI5 Director-General Eliza Manningham-Buller, NSA Director Admiral Mike Rogers, and British National Security Advisor Kim Darroch.

Plus, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) chief Mike Burgess, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's chief Richard Fadden. He also had personal interviews with world leaders and foreign policy makers – including former British Prime Ministers Theresa May and David Cameron. Perhaps his gratitude for access to this distinguished set of mostly conservative characters reinforced his affirmation of Five Eyes activities.

Very Readable But An Establishment Tome

Some of the non-spook contributors remind us of the role that policymakers have in the operations that the covert agencies carry out. While the political bosses don't always know what the agencies are up to – as UK Minister Jack Straw famously commented a number of years ago – undoubtedly the policymakers have a huge role in decisions about significant operations (remember the news footage of Obama and co watching the real-time assault on Osama bin Laden and his family?).

Unfortunately, in this country, Minister of Spies Andrew Little, and his predecessors, have resolutely refused to let the public know any of the details of GCSB or SIS involvement in Five Eyes activities, or even details of their domestic operations (as Kerbaj commented, transparency often only comes from court actions, civil rights campaigns, or bad press).

"The Secret History Of The Five Eyes" provides an entertaining survey of the spooks' known activities. Well worth a read. But while the book reveals a lot of reasons why the spooks should be severely reined in, it is basically an Establishment tome. As a bunch of old rockers proclaimed many years ago: "All in all, it's just another brick in the wall". ■

These Two Are For You, Jeremy

By Murray Horton

I got "Peacemonger" from the publisher for Reviews Editor Jeremy Agar, as I'd done so many times before over the course of two decades. We made an arrangement to meet and hand over the book at its December 2022 Christchurch launch. He didn't show up at that launch but I just assumed that he'd forgotten (he'd very recently turned 80 and had started making jokes about having "senior moments"). Two days later I got the shocking news that he was actually dead (my obituary of him is elsewhere in this issue).

I would have been interested to see what he wrote about this book. Jeremy never met Owen but he was an admirer. In his 2021 review of the re-released and updated 1980s' documentary "Islands Of The Empire", he wrote "... we see a lot of the late Owen Wilkes. Is it fair to suggest that he was pure activism? It was through Owen's forays around the country and indeed the world that much of our knowledge of what the warmongers were up to first emerged".

I couldn't just step in and review "Peacemonger", because I'm a major contributor to it. For me to review it would be unethical. Fortunately, my old friend and ABC/Peace Researcher colleague Warren Thomson agreed to do so. Which is entirely appropriate, because for years Warren has been saying: "Somebody should write a book about Owen Wilkes". Well, now they have and Warren got the job of reviewing it.

As for the second book reviewed here – in November 2022, exactly a month before he died, I got an email from Jeremy saying "I have bought the 'Secret History Of Five Eyes'" and I told him that his review of that would be in the June 2023 *Peace Researcher*. Obviously, he never got to do that (he did do several other reviews just before he died, but for the December 2022 *Foreign Control Watchdog*). I'm indebted to Warren Thomson, who bought the book and reviewed it. ■

OBITUARIES

By Murray Horton

JEREMY AGAR

This was published in Foreign Control Watchdog 162, April 2023, so it emphasises Jeremy's involvement with that publication and with the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA). But, as is spelled out in the obituary, Jeremy was also a long time and active Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) member – he took part in several Waihopai spy base protests, most recently in 2021 – and he was Peace Researcher's Reviews Editor from 2004 until his 2022 death. MH

I watched Guillermo del Toro's brilliant "Pinocchio" on Netflix one night in December 2022. I was struck by the final words from the voice over: "What happens, happens. And then we are gone". I thought that an admirably concise, if brutally frank, description of existence and its transience. The next morning, I got a call to tell me that Jeremy had been found dead in his Lyttelton home, aged 80. And then we are gone.

To say that Jeremy's death was unexpected and a shock is putting it very mildly indeed. It still strikes me as odd to see his name as the subject of this article, having spent decades seeing it as the writer's by-line for his countless reviews and articles. Jeremy died from internal bleeding caused by undiagnosed bowel cancer. According to his death certificate he'd been symptomatic for months but he didn't go to his doctor until two days before he died, by which time it was far too late. He didn't tell anyone about it and I know that he was allergic to doctors.

The CAFCA Committee last saw him at our November 2022 monthly meeting. He appeared to be in bit of discomfort. I asked him about it, he said he knew what it was and that he was OK. That was our only discussion about his health. He and I were in touch, by text, just two days before his death and he gave no indication that anything was amiss. Likewise, his final two *Watchdog*



Jeremy Agar (right) with, from left, Murray Horton, Paul Piesse & Warren Brewer, Roger Award event, Christchurch, 2012

contributions, in the December 2022 issue <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/61/10.html> and <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/61/12.html> give no indication that they were written by a man with only weeks to live (the issue was posted the day before we found out he had died).

For several consecutive monthly Committee meetings in 2022 he bought a full suitcase of books that he had reviewed and was now returning to the “CAFCA and ABC library” (our place, which is also the CAFCA, and ABC, office). I don’t attach any morbid significance to that – he had periodically done so throughout the years, he had finished with the books and wanted to make them available to his colleagues.

End Of An Era For *Watchdog*

Jeremy’s death is definitely the end of an era for *Watchdog* (and, to a lesser extent, for *Peace Researcher*, of which I’m also Editor and for whom Jeremy regularly wrote reviews). *Watchdog* has always had reviews, shared around among various writers, including me. Jeremy’s first review, of Naomi Klein’s “No Logo” appeared in issue 98 (December 2001) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/98/12.htm>. By issue 101, December 2002, Jeremy was doing all the reviews and that continued to be the case for the next 20 years, right up until the December 2022 issue. Other reviewers, including me, sometimes pitched in but Jeremy was very much *Watchdog*’s Reviews Editor for 20 years, which is remarkable.

Throughout that entire 20 years, Jeremy and I worked as a team. I knew that I could rely on him to provide reviews for every issue of *Watchdog*, three times a year. Some of the books I obtained from their publishers for him, including from overseas – (I had got two such books for him for the April 2023 *Watchdog* but he died before he could collect them from me). Some of them he went out and bought on my recommendation after I’d seen them reviewed elsewhere (likewise with movies

and DVDs). But an awful lot of them he bought on his own initiative.

He was constantly looking for books to review and he was always planning ahead, wanting – if possible - to review a mix of New Zealand and international books for every issue. And it must be stressed – he declined any reimbursement for the huge number of books that he personally bought over those two decades. Same for the movie tickets he bought. “It can be my donation”. When you consider that you’d be lucky to find a non-fiction book for under \$50 these days, you can see the extent of his largesse.

Both as a reader and a reviewer, he was prodigious. I’ll give one example, which was of the last book he ever reviewed for us, the Jim Anderton biography, in the December 2022 *Watchdog*. I asked the publisher for a review copy but never got a reply (which has become more and more common in recent years). Jeremy was going away on a post-80th birthday family holiday to the Cook Islands in October 2022. He contacted me to say not to worry about the publisher, he’d bought his own copy, as “I want something to read on the plane”. Which he did and got his review to me by the November deadline. When I started reading that book, in January 2023, I made the poignant discovery that he’d left a bookmark inside, with some review notes written on it.

As A Writer He Was An Editor’s Dream

He was fluent, articulate, literary and could mount a compelling argument, mixing both facts and opinions. He rarely ever included Weblinks or references and never used footnotes or endnotes He was never, ever, boring. All I had to do was think up the subheading titles. He had a distinctive style that remained constant throughout those 20 years.

The only thing of which I had to be mindful was that he had lived overseas (in Canada) from 1968-98, which was a significant chunk of NZ’s 20th Century history.

Keith Holyoake was Prime Minister when he left; Jenny Shipley when he got back (this being NZ, he saw her on his first day back in the country). He had no personal experience of Muldoon, Rogernomics, the Springbok tour, etc, etc, and sometimes that showed in his writing.

Here is one very recent example. The last book Jeremy reviewed for us was David Grant's biography of Jim Anderton (issue 161, December 2022) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/61/12.html>. After Jeremy died, I read the book. Now, CAFCA had history with Jim but you wouldn't know that from the biography. Here is an extract from my Watchdog obituary of Jim (147, April 2018) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/47/10.html>

"CAFCA had plenty to do with the Alliance in the 90s. For example, we worked with them (and New Zealand First) in the major campaign against National's Overseas Investment Amendment Bill (which became an Act). That included us hosting a 1995 Christchurch Town Hall public meeting where both Anderton and Winston Peters were among the speakers. It came just after a much talked-about merger proposal between the two parties had come to nothing and there was bad feeling between both leaders and their supporters (who attended the meeting in equal numbers)".

"I had the interesting experience, as a fellow speaker on the night, of sitting between the two of these short, immaculately coiffed and suited men, both of whom had king size egos. They didn't like each other and I could feel the animosity radiating off both of them. As it was, Peters was easily the better speaker of the two that night, having a much better grip of the subject. Jim didn't know his stuff".

The biography mentions nothing about this significant public meeting; indeed, it mentions nothing at all about National's Overseas Investment Amendment Bill (which became an Act in 1996) and the campaign against it. If I had reviewed the book, I definitely would have highlighted that omission. Jeremy didn't mention it because he was oblivious to it – he was still living in Canada when it happened.

But that was a minor quibble. After his death, lots of people responded saying how much they'd appreciated his writing and they had gone out and bought books that he had reviewed. Sadly, he didn't get that while he was alive and he was thinking of including his e-mail address with future reviews and articles, to encourage readers to contact him directly for debate and discussion. Jeremy was a bibliophile, an intellectual who was passionate about ideas. He was very much an old school practitioner of long form writing – social media was anathema to him.

I remember his absolute delight when we were in Gisborne on my 2014 national speaking tour (see below), having lunch in a café above a wonderful book shop, which he discovered sold the *New York Review of Books* (he bought it). He was very surprised that he could buy one of his favourite publications in provincial New Zealand. But he also had very clear ideas about what books he liked and disliked (he gave the odd bad review).

In one quite recent case, I secured the book for him from the overseas publisher and it wasn't until a long

time later that I realised that I'd never heard any more from him about it, let alone received the expected review. I asked him what was the story. He immediately rang me with his blunt assessment: "I hated it", but had decided that it's better to say nothing if you've got nothing good to say. I found another reviewer (whom I didn't tell about Jeremy's opinion of the book) and that person wrote a glowing review. No, I'm not going to say what book it was.

The Trump Series

He didn't only write reviews for *Watchdog*. He contributed articles on subjects such as the Productivity Commission, Christchurch local body politics and neo-liberalism. But, in the past few years, what really got him going was Donald Trump. Jeremy loathed Trump and everything he stands for, he saw Trump as dangerous, vulgar and a personal insult. He wrote a series of articles about Trump and Trumpery, starting with "The Post-Modern President" (144, December 2017) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/44/05.html> right up until "Trumpery Triumphant. Even If Trump Is Not" (161, December 2022) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/61/10.html>

I didn't ask him to write this series of *Watchdog* articles on US politics and Donald Trump, it was entirely Jeremy's own idea. It is sobering to think that if we'd done things my way, his final Trump article would never have happened. Several months in advance he told me he wanted to write about the 2022 US midterm elections. I was sceptical, telling him that they were on November 8 and the *Watchdog* deadline was November 1 (and those elections might end in deadlock, court cases, whatever).

I suggested he leave it until the next (April 2023) issue. He was insistent that he would write them up for December. The election was held and everything hinged on a December run-off in Georgia. I said "I told you so" and repeated my suggestion that he leave it until April. He repeated his insistence on doing it for December and he duly did so.

These are the last words he ever wrote for *Watchdog*, so they're worth reprinting: "The general reaction after the election was one of relief, as though the fever had broken. But it might not herald a return to some sort of normalcy, not in the era of social misinformation. An angry Trump can be expected to sink to new depths as he seeks to regain control, and with the next Presidential cycle looming, the wooing of support in the primaries will be foremost in the minds of the contenders".

"Often it seems like a permanent concentration. GOP (i.e., Republican) candidates will need to solicit support from the Party base, which will likely still be the terrain of loonies and extremists. They'll be mad as hell because the evil paedophile Democrats are still in control. Just". Jeremy gave every indication he would still be writing about American politics up until and beyond the 2024 Presidential election. He would have loved watching Trump's historic April 2023 court appearance to face numerous criminal charges.

Veteran Committee Member

Jeremy was much more than a *Watchdog* writer. He joined CAFCA in 2001 and was a Committee member from 2006 until his 2022 death. He was our Chairperson

for several years and was always an active member, both of the Committee and CAFCA. He was part of the team that did the *Watchdog* mailouts for years around our dining table. He was always available for any CAFCA driving job, such as getting those *Watchdogs* to New Zealand Post. He was a signatory to several of our bank accounts and term deposits. I've already mentioned his generosity vis a vis paying for the review books himself. It didn't stop there.

In 2019, when CAFCA first asked for members to pay the annual membership fees for other members who were struggling financially, Jeremy was the first and, by far, the most generous to contribute – he came to the CAFCA office (i.e., our home) and handed over a cheque for \$200 to pay for ten members if necessary.

By far his greatest act of generosity, both to CAFCA and to me personally, was in connection with my 2014 CAFCA/ABC national speaking tour (the most recent such tour that I've done). My report on that is in *Watchdog* 137, (December 2014, "On The Road") <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/37/03.html>. It included this subsection, with the below subheading.

Jeremy's Priceless Generosity

"This speaking tour had a number of unique features. All of my previous ones (1993, 1999, 2002 and 2011) had been done solo, using public transport. But things were very different this time – CAFCA Chairperson Jeremy Agar volunteered his car, himself as driver (I'm a non-driver) and several weeks of his time. Special thanks are due to him - Jeremy made an effective donation, worth thousands (even buying a brand new car for the trip, which led to some funny looks at some venues), paying all car related expenses himself (including inter-island ferry costs) and would not take reimbursement for any of his personal expenses, such as food".

"Without Jeremy the tour would not have been possible in the fashion that it took place (all of my previous tours had been by public transport); I could not have transported such a large volume of papers with me, let alone things like a data projector and big posters – more unique features - if not for the use of his car. That was extreme generosity of both money and time – he was on the road, driving thousands of kms, for six weeks - plus another half dozen Christchurch meetings in widely dispersed parts of town".

"Jeremy wasn't merely the driver – he was in charge of screening the Powerpoint at each meeting (using his laptop and the data projector that CAFCA bought especially for the tour). The whole experience was a very interesting one for a couple of technophobes. And, as our Chairperson, he introduced me at every meeting, which meant that he also had a speaking role on the tour. He started the tour just telling people what material we had available but, as it progressed, he also referred to relevant topical subjects in his introduction, which worked very well. It was great to have our own MC and chair".

"We spent six solid weeks in each other's company, day and night (including weekends) and were still speaking to each other at the end of it. We had many adventures but the telling of those will have to wait until the *Watchdog* obituary (depending on who outlives who)". So, sadly, now that we do know who has outlived who and who gets to write the other's *Watchdog* (and *Peace Researcher*) obituary, I am no longer constrained and will indeed recount some of those tour adventures further along in this.

Peace Researcher, ABC & KOA

Jeremy and I didn't just work together in CAFCA. I'm also the Organiser for the Anti-Bases Campaign and Editor of its publication *Peace Researcher*. Jeremy was an ABC member from 2004 until his death and he was also Reviews Editor for *PR*, starting from that year and continuing up until the most recent issue (64, November 2022) <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>

A small number of those reviews were the same as in *Watchdog* but the great majority weren't, they were unique to *PR*. Which makes his output as a reviewer even more remarkable and prodigious. As with his *Watchdog* reviews he was always planning ahead. In November 2022 – just weeks before his death – he told me that he'd already bought a book to review for the next *PR* (June 2023). Sadly, that didn't happen before he died. But all was not lost. Warren Thomson bought the book himself and his review of it is in this issue.

Jeremy came on ABC's Waihopai spy base protests on several occasions, sometimes bringing other people with him. In 2008, when the three Domebusters were arrested for their famous deflationary action and my ABC Committee colleague Lynda Boyd wanted to get to Blenheim fast to hold a solidarity action, it was Jeremy



Waihopai spy base protest, January 2021. Jeremy Agar fourth from left (with flag to his immediate left), Marlborough Express, 31/1/21

who, at a moment's notice, drove Lynda and several other young activists up there. He was there in January 2021, which was the last Waihopai protest held in his lifetime. He planned to come to the 2023 one.

At the 2016 one he was a speaker, in his CAFCA Chairperson capacity, at the march through Blenheim which was part of the protest. As with CAFCA, he was happy to offer practical help to ABC – for example, when its Waihopai display needed transport to and from various Christchurch libraries, Jeremy was happy to do the driving and help to set it up. He was a fully active member of both CAFCA and ABC. And I used to edit a third publication, *Kapatiran (Solidarity)* – it ceased in 2009 – for the former Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa. Jeremy wrote a few unique reviews for that too.

Jeremy and I worked together in Keep Our Assets Canterbury (KOA), for most of the decade it has been in existence. He spent several years on the Committee, until he resigned in early 2022. He took part in the full range of KOA's activities, such as pickets outside Citycare when it was under threat of being sold, and inside the Christchurch City Council chamber during meetings. He took part in KOA deputations to meetings of the City Council and community boards. During John Minto's 2016 and 2019 Mayoral campaigns for KOA, Jeremy tramped up and down Lyttelton's hilly streets, delivering leaflets to letterboxes.

From Christ's College To Canadian Communist Party

Before I go any further, I'd better fill in the back story. This is all done from memory of what Jeremy told me, during our numerous extensive talks over the decades. I haven't gone to anyone else or any other sources – so I take responsibility for any errors. Jeremy was born in 1942; his father was killed in World War 2. Jeremy's mother remarried and he had several half-siblings with a different surname (I've met a couple of his siblings either of the full or half variety).

Jeremy was related to New Zealand military royalty. The clue lay in his full name – Jeremy Charles Upham Agar. He was a nephew of Charles Upham Victoria Cross and Bar, New Zealand's most decorated war hero (from World War 2). He told me that he had little in common with his uncle, beyond being related, although his name did come up in unexpected circumstances. For example, we got to talking about funerals on one occasion and he said: "Of course, my uncle had a State funeral". In the course of a big climate change protest march we passed the Bridge of Remembrance – Jeremy pointed to a pictorial plaque high up on the memorial arch and said: "That's my uncle up there".

But the distant ancestor of whom Jeremy was most proud was his great-great-great uncle William Hazlitt. Who? Hazlitt (1778-1830) was an English essayist, drama and literary critic, painter, social commentator, and philosopher. Now, I had studied, at university level, English literature of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries, and only vaguely remembered that name (so, no need to be embarrassed if you've never heard of him).

To me, that period belonged to the Romantic poets – Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats (Jeremy was scathing about all of them). It might seem strange to be such a fan of a prose writer from 200

years ago but Jeremy was a big fan – Hazlitt was quoted in his Christchurch *Press* death notice; Jeremy quoted him whilst chairing CAFCA's 40th anniversary celebrations, in 2015. A drawing of Hazlitt took pride of place on the wall of his Lyttelton home.

Jeremy went to Christ's College, which means something in the class politics of Christchurch, and which led to him being regularly ribbed by some of his CAFCA Committee colleagues. He was in the Christ's First XV in the late 1950s (he was a loose forward, being a big bloke), proving that his lifelong love of rugby wasn't just from the side line.

He took that seriously – he went to the 60th anniversary reunion of that team, and was a regular spectator at the annual game with Christchurch Boys High (known as the School versus College game). He went to the University of Canterbury, he took part in drama productions, he trained as a secondary teacher, did a bit of Christchurch teaching (at Boys High, actually). Then, in 1968, he left the country – and was gone for 30 years, nearly half his life.

I know very little about his decades in Canada. He was an English teacher in Toronto, he got married, he was immersed in Canadian life. And he joined the Communist Party of Canada, which was a pro-Soviet party. I don't know anything about what he did as a Party member, although he told me that he was active in the anti-nuclear peace movement of the 1980s. In the late 90s his wife suddenly died and Jeremy decided it was time to come home. He took early retirement from teaching, and returned to Christchurch, buying his Lyttelton home.

So, his CAFCA colleagues never knew him when he was working or married (he lived alone for the rest of his life). Ironically, he got a pension from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, one of the biggest pension funds in the world and a regular foreign investor in NZ (for example, in September 2022 the Overseas Investment Office approved it buying the physical infrastructure - mainly the towers - of Spark's mobile phone business) <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/cafca22/fi-2022-09.html>

Very Active Conservationist

Having quit work in his 50s, Jeremy had a very active retirement. I have already detailed his life and work with CAFCA. He was elected to the former Banks Peninsula District Council, as part of Bob Parker's team which had the expressed – and successful – goal of having Banks Peninsula being absorbed into the much larger Christchurch City Council (Parker became a two-term Mayor of Christchurch). Once inside Christchurch, Jeremy was elected onto one of the Banks Peninsula Community Boards. All up, he served several terms in local government.

Jeremy was a very proud and very active conservationist. Upon learning of his death, Marie Gray, the Secretary of the Summit Road Society, wrote: "Jeremy was involved in the Summit Road Society for nearly 20 years. He joined the Board in 2004 as the Banks Peninsula District Council representative. He became Vice President of the Society in 2009 and has ably filled that role for 13 years".

"Jeremy was also a member of the Eastenders and

Omahu work parties as well as trustee on the Harry Ell Summit Road Memorial Trust. He was the driving force behind our community and backyard trapping programme, Predator Free Port Hills. Jeremy was a dear friend to many in the Society and he will be missed”.

“Jeremy was passionate about creating safe habitat for our native birds, not only in the bush areas but also across our neighbourhoods, schools, farm areas and everywhere in-between. For many years, Jeremy advocated for BirdSafe, a community-based trapping programme around Lyttelton Harbour. In 2016, the Board of the Summit Road Society agreed to take on the challenge and Predator Free Port Hills was born. Over 1400 households have now joined the programme. Jeremy was so proud of how far we had come with Predator Free Port Hills and the wider Pest Free Banks Peninsula project” (e-mail, 14/12/22).

All of this might make Jeremy sound worthy but dull. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was an old man but never acted it, he was extremely energetic. He was a restless spirit who liked always being on the move, which is why he so generously offered his services to drive me all over the country on the 2014 speaking tour.

He absolutely loved that trip and, for years afterwards, told me that he would never have otherwise met the extraordinary range of people that were our organisers and hosts. It was a highlight of his life. He loved exercising freedom of movement i.e., getting in his car and going somewhere. He had a crib (what the rest of the country calls a bach) built in The Catlins and spent as much time there as possible.

Sports Fan & Adventurer

Jeremy loved words. Geoffrey Palmer was one of his favourite pompous asses and when I told him that Sir Geoffrey had baffled reporters by saying New Zealand is “an irreducibly pluvial nation”, Jeremy ensured he used that word every time it rained. But he wasn’t only interested in politics, books and ideas. He was a big

sports fan and an absolute cricket tragic.

For his 80th birthday, just two months before he died, he was given a book about Don Bradman (hopefully he died before the news came out that Bradman was a rabid Tory bastard who supported the bloodless coup that overthrew Australia’s Labor government in 1975). I rang him during 2020’s covid lockdown to see how he was doing and he was despondent. Why? No sport on TV!

Jeremy and I had many, many conversations about sport, ranging from rugby and cricket, to the ones he followed during his 30 years in Canada (ice hockey, baseball, even curling). We didn’t just talk about it; we went out on cold Christchurch winter nights and went to the rugby. We went to several games together during the Crusaders’ extraordinary purple patch of recent years, including one Super Rugby victorious final. The city’s rickety “temporary” stadium is walking distance from our Addington home, so he’d park outside our place and we’d walk to and from the games.

Jeremy was an adventurer and, more often than not, those adventures were of the unintentional variety. Like everyone in Christchurch, he had his earthquake story. His home was high on a Lyttelton hillside, very close to the epicentre of the February 2011 killer quake. He was just about to sit down for lunch in his lounge when it struck – behind him, a window pane came out, aiming at his neck; in front of him, his grandfather clock fell face down towards him across the floor.

He was equidistant between the two, and unharmed (but his grandfather clock was never fully repaired, despite several attempts). He told me that when he looked outside, “all the neighbourhood cats were running down the street”. His house was damaged but repaired. CAFCA, including Jeremy, carried on throughout that whole quakes’ saga. A week after the killer one, the Committee met at our place and at the exact time that it had struck we stood out on the footpath to join everyone else in a minute’s silence to commemorate the dead. Then we got back to work.



Jeremy Agar & Murray Horton dressed in tribal colours and off to the rugby, ABC HQ, 2013. Photo by Becky Horton

Cars, Cops & Soldiers

I certainly don’t profess to know all of Jeremy’s adventures; he was wary about telling me what he was doing and where he was going, because he was concerned about that ending up right here (and now it has). A lot of his adventures involved his car, because Jeremy fell into the literary tradition of other notable motorists like Toad of Toad Hall and Homer Simpson. There was a certain style to Jeremy’s driving adventures.

He drove high performance German cars – we toured the country in 2014 in a brand new Audi. I asked him if he got a

good trade-in price on his previous Audi. He told me that as he was driving it to the trade-in place, he got engrossed in listening to a radio programme about the origins of World War 1, so he decided to drive it around the block one more time, during the course of which he had an accident, which drastically reduced the price he got for it.

We parted company very briefly in Auckland on that tour – he rang me to say that he'd blown a tyre on his brand new car. Just how he managed to do so in central Auckland in broad daylight was never explained (the mechanic's report said it had been "shredded"). We drove to Kaitaia and back on one of those emergency tyres with no problems. Sometimes his car adventures involved an inanimate object. My 2014 Gisborne public meeting ended abruptly because we had to vacate the venue by a certain time or incur additional expense. Jeremy did not react well to sudden upheaval; he would get flustered.

So, we found ourselves loading his car in the dark. To add to the problem, it was also a dark car (he never did work out some of the features of his brand new Audi, one of them being how to turn on the interior light – which made for an interesting six weeks of packing up after night meetings). As the car started to move, it ran over something with a sickening bump. Yep, it was CAFCA's brand new data projector, worth hundreds and bought specifically for the tour. That was bugged, meaning we either had to bludge other people's data projectors for the rest of the tour or go without.

As we drove out of town the next day, he said: "There's no need to tell anyone about this, Murray". And I have dutifully kept my mouth shut until now. He undertook to get it sorted and he did. When we got back to Christchurch, he took the damaged item back to where it was bought (not by either of us) and managed to persuade the retailer to replace it with a new one, under warranty. That new one is sitting next to me in the CAFCA (and ABC) office as I write this.

He had a wonderfully devil may care attitude to authority figures when it involved his car. For years after that 2014 tour he would regularly and cheerfully report to me that debt collectors were still trying to get him to pay a parking ticket incurred in Dunedin at the very start of it – I remember us driving back north over the Kilmog with that ticket flapping under his windscreen wiper.

Coming into Wellington on that tour, we were driving down the Ngauranga Gorge cheerily discussing something suitably esoteric (the origins of World War 1?) and I noticed us speeding past a large sign telling us that the speed limit was well below what we were doing. By the time we hit the Hutt Motorway down by the harbour, there was a siren behind us from a cop on a motorbike and a command to pull over. Jeremy was genuinely mystified and asked me what he had done.

This cop was like Robocop and he leaned in my passenger side window. In very short order, I had two angry men shouting at each other across my face. I said something, the cop told me to shut up. Jeremy shouted: "Just give me the ticket". The cop told him to stay where he was while he went back to chat on his bike radio. I had a vision of Jeremy being cuffed and carted away, leaving me, the non-driver, in the Audi on the motorway.

But, no, the cop came back and only gave Jeremy a warning. This being Wellington, with only one motorway into the city, Jeremy and the cop drove alongside each other for some distance. As soon as the cop peeled off left, Jeremy leaned across me and vigorously gave him the fingers (fortunately Robocop didn't see it).

Jeremy didn't just tangle with the Police; he took on the Army as well. This incident didn't happen on the national tour but at home in Christchurch. We were showing someone around the quake-bugged central city during that period when great chunks of it were fenced off and guarded by soldiers. We drove past the fenced off Cathedral Square but the gate was open and before you could say "elderly delinquent", Jeremy had driven in.

This immediately attracted military attention and a young woman soldier came over to politely tell us to get out. Jeremy backed the car, her facial expression registered immediate pain as she gasped: "You're on my foot". Whereupon Jeremy stopped – on her foot. I could see that things could rapidly escalate from there, so I suggested that we get out fast, otherwise it might be construed that we were attacking the military during what was still a state of emergency. We duly beat a hasty retreat and carried on with our sightseeing tour. I have no idea what happened to the soldier with the run over foot (a literal foot soldier?).

Cats, Rats & Shopping Centres

Not all of Jeremy's adventures involved his car. When I said he lived alone, he did have one constant companion, his hyper-active, nutty black cat Moon (who survived him). Jeremy completely doted on Moon the loon (he would take him to his Catlins crib with him). Moon livened up many a CAFCA Committee meeting at Jeremy's place – he was prone to rush around, sitting on people's heads, which was rather distracting. One "Moon" meeting in particular sticks in my memory – I was droning away, reading the minutes of the previous meeting when Jeremy suddenly exclaimed "Christ" and hurled his Chairperson's book to the floor.

I didn't realise that my reading out the minutes could have such a galvanising impact. But Jeremy was staring fixedly at where I was sitting, saying "there it is again". I looked down to my left and there was a cheeky rat peeking out into the meeting (his presence was not recorded among those present). Post-quakes, Christchurch had a rat problem (they were literally shaken out of their rat holes) and nowhere more so than Lyttelton. Jeremy had been plagued by this particular rat all day and now here was the bastard rodent gatecrashing a CAFCA meeting.

As I said, Jeremy got flustered under pressure. I suggested he get Moon the cat to deal with the rat. Jeremy duly plonked Moon next to the rat and – they just stared at each other. Then decided to play chasing around the lounge, with humans in hot pursuit. It was like the Keystone Kops combined with an animal act. Jeremy got highly flustered and I suggested we relocate the meeting to the Lyttelton home of another Committee member. We duly did so, and after half an hour, Jeremy joined us, having calmed down. I can't remember what happened to the rat.

The all-time "Jeremy story" happened just a few years ago, and involved his car, his cat and his health. He

took his Audi to get a warrant and he went for a walk in the Botanic Gardens whilst waiting. He told me that, during that walk, one leg went funny on him. That was a warning sign. Whilst driving home to Lyttelton he had business at the Ferrymead shopping centre. When he went to back away, his leg went funny on him again, he hit the accelerator and took out the wall of the business he was parked outside.

His newly warranted and repaired Audi (the one we'd toured the country in) was a write off but nobody got hurt, including Jeremy. The cops took him home, and friends persuaded him to see his doctor, who asked him if he'd hit his head recently. He said that six weeks previously he had done so, by walking into his bedroom door (he'd started shutting it at night because Moon kept bringing his daily rodent catch into Jeremy's bedroom and taking them under the bed).

The doctor ordered Jeremy to hospital immediately, where scans revealed that he had a brain bleed. He then had to spend more than a week flat on his back in a hospital bed. He got out but the cops came to his home and confiscated his driver's licence, on medical grounds. That would have been the end of it for most people but Jeremy was determined to drive again. He sat the necessary cognitive test and passed it with flying colours – the hospital specialist told him that his was the highest score the specialist had ever seen.

He got his licence back, bought another new car (a VW, he loved German cars) and drove for the rest of his life without taking out any more shop walls. To this day, whenever my wife Becky drives past that particular shopping centre, she mentions "the Jeremy memorial wall". When I heard that he'd unexpectedly died, I thought it might have been another brain bleed, but no, it was our old nemesis, cancer.

It Was All Fun And Games Until It Wasn't

I've thought long and hard about whether to include the following material and decided to do so, because this is a warts and all obituary and because the behaviour and incidents described happened in front of his CAFCA colleagues and in public. They had repercussions for CAFCA. Jeremy had a problematic relationship with alcohol (I'm using very diplomatic language here).

Now, before I go any further, I should hasten to explain that I'm not approaching this from a holier than thou position. I'm a New Zealand male – booze is in the genes. My personal contribution to the teenage binge drinking culture occurred at my first student party, when I woke up on a stretcher in the hospital emergency department, covered in vomit and with a mysterious line of nail holes down each leg. I had no memory of what happened or how I got there (until I got the ambulance bill).

I worked for many years in, first, the Post Office and then the Railways, two Government institutions that made truly heroic contributions to NZ's total alcohol consumption. When I arrived at the Railways on my first day on the job, I was handed a beer. Nuff said. In a previous life, my hard case Sydney in-laws introduced me to Aussie working class culture (booze and pokies). So, I have had plenty of first-hand experience with drinking and drunks.

Jeremy was different. He was not what my Railways

workmates would have called a pisshead; he drank only what they called top shelf – whisky. I've seen him bowl a bottle of it in a day (and that's just what I saw). Unlike the Railways boys, he wasn't a gregarious pub drinker but a solitary one. Not that he kept it secret – when CAFCA meetings were held at his home, he had a whisky decanter and glass to hand.

When he came to meetings at the homes of other Committee members, it was obvious that he'd been drinking. Sometimes, for reasons that were unclear to me, he would start speaking French (I've seen him do so to somebody's bemused cat on one occasion). One of the funniest exchanges I witnessed was when he was decrying the recent insistence on putting the macrons into Māori words. He was left speechless when confronted with his love of French, which is knee deep in a bewildering variety of accents (not to mention having a President named Macron).

He had a powerful thirst which had to be slaked. To the end of his life, he identified one host from our 2014 national tour by the fact that she had a brand of whisky he'd never heard of before. On that same tour, his top priority in one town was to find a bottle store to replace the whisky he'd accidentally left at our last stop.

Did any of this affect his ability to write high quality reviews for every issue of *Watchdog* (and *Peace Researcher*) for 20 years? No, not in the slightest. Was he a drunk driver? All I can say is that I was in the car with him on more than one occasion when he was subject to random breath testing by the cops and he passed each time. I never had the slightest apprehension about being a passenger in a car driven by him.

But booze did adversely affect his behaviour at times. He could be a volatile drunk, prone to outbursts as a result of real or imagined disagreements. To put it in old school Kiwi vernacular, he was a scondoer. We learned to read the signs that he was building up a head of steam and was about to let rip. It happened sometimes at Committee meetings and we shrugged it off.

But on a couple of occasions, both in 2017, it was more serious and couldn't just be shrugged off. The worst incident happened at that year's Annual General Meeting where Jeremy took umbrage and just erupted, screaming and shouting at the top of his voice. Worse, he came within centimetres of punching two of his Committee colleagues (it is noteworthy that both of them attended his February 2023 Lyttelton memorial gathering, and that one of them spoke on behalf of CAFCA).

This had repercussions for the Committee, which has always been a harmonious unit. I suggested he should apologise; he was having none of that and insisted that others should apologise to him. So, I recommended that he stay away from meetings for several months until things calmed down. We all took the standard Pakeha way of dealing with issues like this i.e., saying and doing nothing. It worked, Jeremy got his act together, came back to meetings and was once more happily working with people that he'd wanted to punch. But that was the end of his being our Chairperson and we never held another meeting at his home.

Good Friend, True Original, Greatly Missed

He never behaved towards me in that way. He and I

were very good friends for the 20+ years that we knew each other. I could wind him up about some of his favourite subjects of outrage and it would all end with a laugh. I would conclude the discussion with: "What is it, Jeremy?" And he would reply: "It's political correctness gone mad, Murray". And we would both laugh. I'm delighted to report that Jeremy's life story did not end on the negative note of those 2017 outbursts.

In the following five years until his death, he was back as a highly valued member of the CAFCA family. He, presumably, cut back on his drinking and he never behaved like that again around us. We saw hints of it in 2022 when he would get excited about the war in Ukraine (he hated Putin as much as he hated Trump) but he kept it within bounds. More than once I invited him to write a *Watchdog* article putting his point of view about Ukraine, but he never did.

He last attended a Committee meeting in November 2022, just weeks before he died (not that we knew that was imminent, or even on the cards). Terry Moon is the most recent member to join the Committee, and she and Jeremy became good friends. She joined us at that fateful 2017 AGM, leaving it just before Jeremy erupted. She knew nothing about that until I told her at the Com-

mittee meeting immediately after his death. She had never seen any of that kind of behaviour from Jeremy in the years that she knew him.

Jeremy Agar was a unique individual. Whatever your stereotype might be of a passionate and committed CAFCA (and ABC) activist, he was not it. An adventurer and enthusiast, a writer par excellence, a formidable intelligence, a hands-on activist, environmentalist, a lover of books, movies, art, ideas, sport and the open road, extremely funny, exasperatingly impractical, emotional and volatile, a high functioning drunk who didn't let that define him, the youngest 80-year-old I've ever met. His death was a great shock to me, as it was for so many other people.

I miss his company, I miss the unforgettable adventures we had together, I miss his sense of life and fun, I miss our discussions about politics, ideas, books, grammar, apostrophes, movies, rugby, cricket, Donald Trump and Homer Simpson (he was an aficionado of buffoons), all of life itself. I hope that if there is an afterlife, it comes complete with German cars, cricket always on TV, good books, and a whisky decanter that is always full. Enjoy your last trip along that highway, old friend. ■

NOELINE GANNAWAY

Noeline actually died in June 2020, aged 86, but the Wellington movement did not become aware of this until late 2022. I thank Valerie Morse for drawing it to my attention and supplying the material from which this is drawn, plus a large selection of photos. Noeline was an active member of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) from 1992 until 2019.

She was a regular donor to ABC's campaign to close down the Waihopai spy base. She went further than giving money – she regularly attended Waihopai protests, despite her age, camping out in a tent with the rest of us. For example, she was there at the 2013 protest when a group of us went over the fence onto base land and the cops started shoving old ladies around.

Noeline was a CAFCA member from 1994 until 2019, and one who regularly included a donation with her subscription. For a chunk of that time, she was a pledger to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my pay. She was also a generous donor to that, her biggest donation being \$500. To complete the trifecta, Noeline was also a very supportive member of the former Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA) from 1993. She was very generous in her support - she donated hundreds of dollars at a time to PSNA to bring Philippine movement speakers to NZ, to support political prisoners, and for various natural disaster appeals.

Noeline spent the first 17 years of her life on Great Barrier Island, "surrounded by birds, animals, numerous



cousins and a loving family". She then went over to Auckland to attend university, gaining an MA. Ironically, for one who was a lifelong peace activist, one of her holiday jobs whilst a student was in a munitions factory. After graduating, she became a teacher, which was her lifelong career. She spent 50 years as a teacher with the Correspondence School. She travelled overseas, then got. That led to a major change in her life.

"We married in 1972. Health challenges had to be faced as John had been diagnosed with osteoporosis and ankylosing spondylitis (*osteoporosis is a disease of bone that leads to an increased risk of fracture. Ankylosing spondylitis is inflammatory arthritis of the spine. It causes pain and stiffness in the back, along with bent posture. In most cases, the disease is characterised by acute painful episodes and remissions. Ed.*)".

DENNIS SMALL RETIRES AS WRITER

By Murray Horton

In 2022 Dennis informed us that he would be retiring as a writer for Peace Researcher and Foreign Control Watchdog as of the end of that year. I invited him to write his own retirement notice. So, here it is, in his own words. And I have to say, this must be the shortest piece I've ever received from Dennis. MH.

"I would basically make four points on my retirement".

"My age (75) and underlying health condition and the need for less stress regarding research and writing on so many important issues account for one of these points".

"Second, I want to spend more time with my partner Rosalie and family".

Noeline worked from home for 37 years whilst looking after John, until he died in 2009. "John was not by any means a pacifist, but he believed in fair play, sympathised with the underdog and was scrupulously honest. He had a wry sense of humour. John always voted Labour and, while I moved to New Labour, the Alliance, and finally the Greens, he remained staunch" (these quotes about John come from Noeline's tribute to him in The Death In The Family section of *Watchdog* 122, December 2009) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/22/10.htm>

One Of Those Indispensable People

By the time John died, Noeline had been a member of CAFCA, ABC and PSNA for at least 15 years but we'd never actually met or seen her. That changed once she was a widow. Once she was no longer housebound, she made up for lost time, for example attending my meetings when I was in Wellington. "For many years she attended the meetings of the Quaker Society (in Wellington) She truly was a Greta Thunberg some 70 years before her time. As she was a passionate sup-

porter of many and various causes including Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, the Friends of Tibet, the Forest and Bird Protection Society".

"Third, I feel that I have said all I can say about the state of the world and the role of our own country".

"Fourthly, my old computer has said – 'enough is enough' and crashed!" "In solidarity and best wishes to Murray and the team!"

I want to take this opportunity to profusely thank Dennis for his decades of writing for PR. Dennis exemplified long-form journalism to the nth degree. And nobody ever died wondering what Dennis thought about an issue (or an individual, for that matter). The earliest PR in which Dennis wrote for us was issue 3, February 1984. For the next nearly 40 years there was hardly an issue without an article, or sometimes a review, by Dennis, right up until issue 64, November 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>

He Alerted Us To Issues Years Before We Realised Their Significance

"But all this enthusiasm for a space industry in Aotearoa/NZ not only violates sound environmental principles, it displays a stunning naivety and ignorance about the global reach of the US military machine. Not only is Rocket Lab now an American TNC, it is also a fast track for integrating NZ deeper into the US military-industrial

"And the Zealandia Sanctuary formerly known as the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and numerous others. Also, the Anti-Fluoride Association Wellington and the Vivisection Society of New Zealand. To name just a few. And made many written submissions on environmental and human rights bills to Parliament" (thanks to Stephen Moorcroft, Noeline's nephew, who supplied material on her life).

Noeline was one of those indispensable people who provide the glue that holds a progressive movement together. I thank her unreservedly for her years of highly supportive membership of all three of the groups with which I am, or was, involved – CAFCA, ABC and PSNA. And, additionally, her very generous regular financial support for my work. Noeline was a living example of the better side of human nature. ■

PEACE RESEARCHER WELCOMES YOUR FEEDBACK

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

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complex". Dennis wrote that in Watchdog 145, August 2017, long before the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) and the progressive movement, let alone NZ society at large, had woken up to the threat posed by Rocket Lab.

And in his long discourses on geopolitics, Dennis returned again and again to certain themes and events. I thank him (in my capacity as Editor of both Watchdog and Peace Researcher) for never letting us forget about the monstrous unpunished 20th Century crime committed by "our" side, namely the Indonesian genocide of the 1960s. Mass murder is mass murder, whether committed by the Khmer Rouge or Suharto, actively egged on by the West, but hypocrisy and "real politik" dictated that only one of those criminals was denounced by the West. He wrote a whole Special Issue of PR on the subject (number 25, March 2002).

To quote from Dennis' final article, in Watchdog 161 (December 2022): "Ironies can yet run deep. A Press headline for a brief column item proclaims that 'Bali Wounds Still Raw' (13/10/22). Yes, this is yet another example of the hugely 'politically correct' syndrome of Western hypocrisy in action. The report was about the commemoration on Bali '20 years since a twin bombing

killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians and two New Zealanders' (ibid.) ... The bombings were indeed a horrible terrorist act. But the victims about whom the Bali wounds are still raw amounted to just over 200 people dead. At least some 80,000 or so people died in the slaughter on Bali in the mid-1960s, i.e., 5% of the island's population".

Dennis was heavily involved with Peace Researcher years before I was. We were colleagues on the CAFCA Committee for a decade, a role that only ended when he permanently left Christchurch for Reefton more than 20 years ago and we see each other far too infrequently – he and Rosalie came to Christchurch in 2022, and that was the first time we'd seen each other since 2013.

Becky and I and mutual friend and ABC colleague Warren Thomson spent a very pleasant midwinter day with the two of them. Thank you, Dennis, for your tireless research and writing for us for more than three decades. Enjoy your retirement with Rosalie. But I have to say that, with Dennis Small gone from Peace Researcher (along with the late Jeremy Agar, our long serving Reviews Editor), it truly is the end of an era. MH. ■

Dennis Small, (second from right) with, from left: Murray Horton, Warren & Noi Thomson, Rosalie Newcombe & Becky Horton, ABC HQ



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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 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. ■