

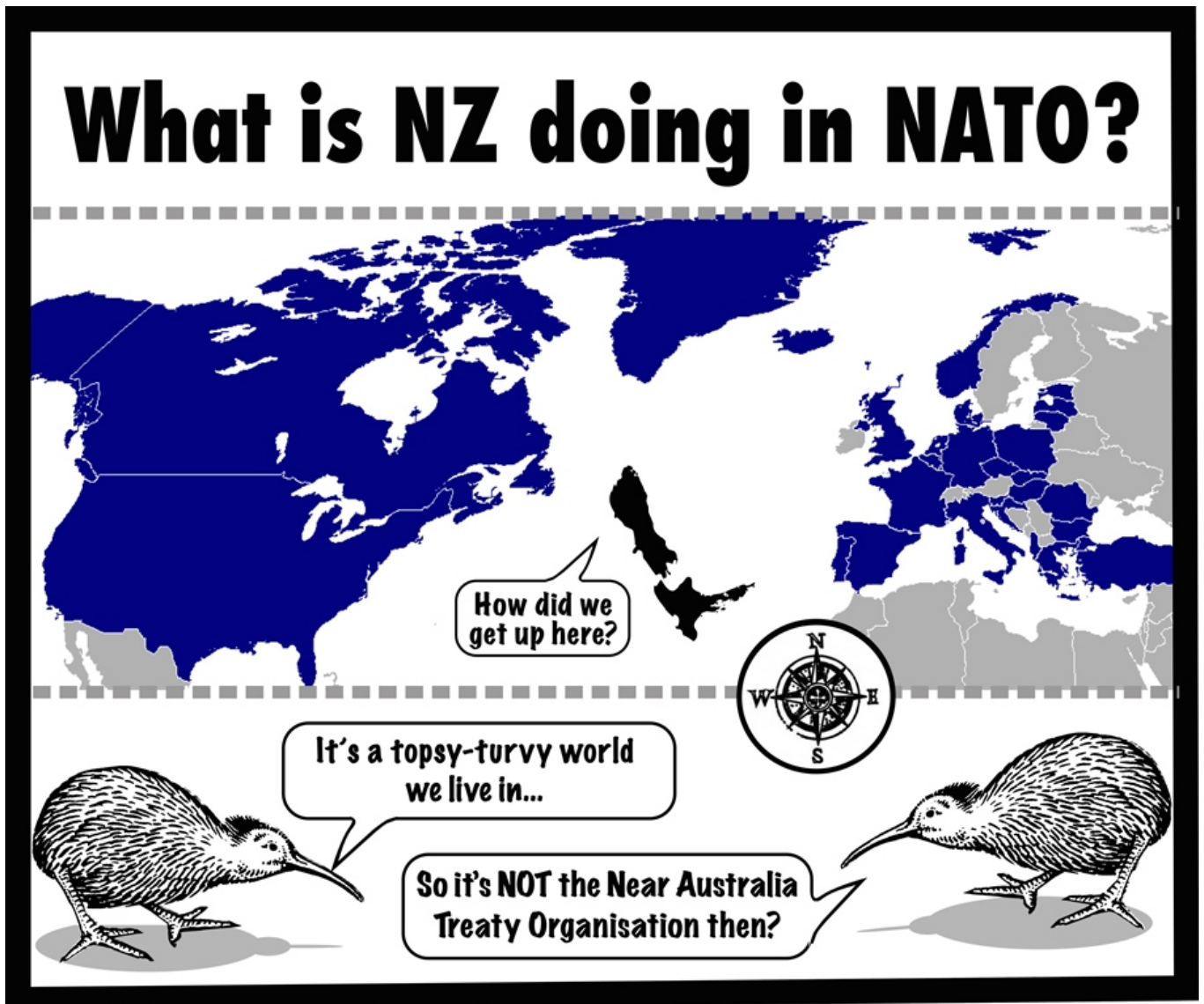
# *Journal of the Anti-Bases Campaign*

November 2023

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## **NATO & NZ**

**European War Machine Comes To Pacific**



***In this issue:***

AUKUS; Aerospace Summit Protests; War Abolisher Awards; *Spooky Bits*; Nicky Hager; Owen Wilkes; Nuclear Annihilation Dangers; "The Palestine Laboratory" & "Secret History"; Menwith Hill Campaigner Obituary

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### **Published by**

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

# NATO & NEW ZEALAND

## European War Machine Comes To Pacific

By Murray Horton

### NATO Wars In Libya, Afghanistan & Ukraine

The world watched on in horror in September 2023 at the devastation wrought in the eastern Libyan city of Derna, caused by the collapse of not one but two dams during a major storm. Thousands of people were killed, thousands more are missing, either under the rubble or swept out into the Mediterranean Sea, along with whole blocks of the city. Blame was swiftly ascribed to any number of causes: lack of maintenance of those dams; lack of maintenance in general, along with endemic corruption; a decade of civil war; and the sad fact that Libya is a failed state (well, two failed states actually, as it has two rival governments, in the east and west of the country).

One name was missing from the Western media's coverage of who is to blame for this disaster – NATO. A little background is necessary to refresh our memories. In 2011, during the abortive Arab Spring, the Libyan people rose up against the rule of Muammar Gaddafi, who had been in power since 1969. Civil war broke out and the West seized the opportunity to get rid of the Arab leader who had been a thorn in its side for all of those decades (the US had tried, and failed, to kill Gaddafi in 1986 by sending planes to bomb several Libyan targets, including his home).

A NATO-led coalition joined the civil war on the side of the anti-Gaddafi forces, providing crucial air cover. The opposition forces won, Gaddafi was captured, tortured and summarily murdered. And Libya has been a failed state (or states) ever since, which has caused immense suffering for its people. Having broken it, NATO was nowhere to be seen when any question of fixing it was raised. NATO had achieved its goals, of having a key enemy murdered and of bringing about the destruction of a political system that presented an idiosyncratic ideological model perceived to be a threat to Western interests. NATO had got what it wanted, and the people of Libya were of no further interest to it.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century NATO has got heavily involved in other people's wars a long way from the North Atlantic area that is the reason for its existence. Not only the short, sharp campaign in Libya, but grinding years of war in Afghanistan, alongside the US and numerous other countries (including NZ). That all spectacularly ended in total failure in 2021 (see my article "Afghanistan, The Longest War. And Nothing To Show For It", in *Peace Researcher* 62, November 2021, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>).

Undaunted by this major defeat in 2021, NATO went straight into a boots and all involvement in the Ukraine War in 2022, one which continues with no end in sight. It is closer to home than Afghanistan – although nowhere near the North Atlantic – and is still outside its treaty area. Ukraine is not a NATO member.

Now, this is all very interesting but what has it got to do with us? In fact, that is the central question – what does NATO have to do with NZ and vice versa? The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is what it says on the tin, and NZ is about as far away from the North Atlantic as it's possible to be. NATO was set up as a united European and North American military counter to the former Soviet Union during the Cold War of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Soviet Union collapsed and dissolved into its constituent parts; its Eastern European satellites enthusiastically signed up with the ideological victors; and its military bloc, the Warsaw Pact (remember that?), which confronted NATO, ceased to exist. But NATO didn't, and it set about finding itself reasons to continue to exist.



PM Jacinda Ardern at 2022 NATO Summit (to her right is NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg)

Not merely exist, but expand, right up to Russia's borders, as part of its policy to confront and contain Russia. NATO currently has the most member states (31) in its history. Not content with its European role, with side forays into countries such as Libya and Afghanistan, it is aggressively engaged in carving out a global role for itself. It is assuming some of the role of the US as the world's policeman.

#### IP4: That's Where NZ Comes Into The Picture

"Geographically, New Zealand cannot be a full member of NATO. But New Zealand has become a 'partner', making up an Indo-Pacific cohort that includes Australia, Japan and the Republic of (South) Korea - known as IP4. The communiqué from the (2023 NATO) summit emphasised the region's impact on Euro-Atlantic security and our shared commitment to upholding international law and the rules-based international order".

"It is important to note the IP4 shared security obligations stem from bilateral treaties and not any one collective agreement. Bilateral

relations tie the United States to Japan, South Korea and Australia. For New Zealand, we are tied to this alliance via our neighbours across the Tasman. An additional thread being woven through the group is the AUKUS\* alliance, which could ultimately include partnerships with Japan and South Korea". (\* My article "AUKUS: A Major Lurch Towards War With China", is in *Peace Researcher* 65, June 2023, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-home.html>).

"While full membership of AUKUS is ruled out by our long-standing nuclear-free policy, New Zealand has expressed interest in joining the second tier of the alliance, which would give us access to a new generation of weaponry"(RNZ, 12/7/23, Alexander Gillespie, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/493631/after-being-a-welcome-guest-at-nato-nz-now-needs-to-consider-what-our-partnership-with-the-alliance-really-means>. Originally published by the *Conversation*).

The NATO Website says: "NATO and New Zealand have been engaged in dialogue and cooperation

since 2001. Since 2012, work has been taken forward through an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme". New Zealand's role as a NATO partner has ratcheted up in the last couple of years.

In 2022 Jacinda Ardern became the first NZ Prime Minister to attend and address a NATO Summit; her successor, Chris Hipkins, did the same in 2023. The Ukraine War has led to NZ, once again, getting involved in a European war, providing money, military equipment and training. But the burgeoning NZ-NATO relationship not only involves NZ going to NATO, but also NATO coming to our part of the world.

#### Helping NATO To Confront & Contain China

"With NATO so heavily focused on Ukraine at the moment, its interest in a region half-way around the world does raise some questions. Why are these four leaders (i.e., Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand) becoming regular features at a summit for European and North American countries? First, these countries have been among the most prominent members of the international coalition supporting Ukraine and sanctioning Russia. So, their presence at a security conference where Ukraine will be discussed makes sense".

"More importantly, though, the Indo-Pacific region featured prominently in NATO's 2022 *Strategic Concept*, a key document that outlines the alliance's values, purpose and role. For the first time in 2022, the document referred to China's ambitions and policies as a major challenge to NATO's security, interests and values. It also specifically addressed the growing cooperation between China and Russia, which NATO sees as a threat to the established rules-based international order".

"As such, the *Strategic Concept* called the Indo-Pacific 'important for NATO', given that developments in 'that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security'. This makes the case quite clear for NATO to strengthen its existing partnerships in the region and develop new ones.... Indeed, if the (2022) Madrid summit served as an opportunity for the four Indo-Pacific partners to showcase their

support for Ukraine and pledge stronger commitment to future collaboration with NATO, the (2023) Vilnius summit will serve as a benchmark to assess the progress that's been made".

"This is why, in the lead-up to the summit, NATO has been working to formalise its partnerships with the four countries. Japan and Australia have been at the front of these efforts. Japanese media reported last week that Tokyo and Canberra have wrapped up negotiations with NATO on a new agreement called the Individually Tailored Partnership Program. This programme specifies the key areas of cooperation between each country and the NATO bloc. New Zealand and South Korea are working to finalise their individual agreements with the alliance, too".

### **Interoperability: The New Buzzword**

"The partnerships will largely focus on areas of global concern, such as maritime security, cybersecurity, climate change, outer space, and emerging and disruptive technologies (including artificial intelligence). And from a defence standpoint, NATO and the four partners will aim to improve the 'interoperability' of their militaries – the ability of different military forces and defence systems to effectively work together and coordinate their actions.

"This might entail deepening the knowledge of each other's military assets, improving the relationships between their soldiers and other military personnel, and expanding joint drills. The intensifying and deepening relations between NATO and its Indo-Pacific partners can be interpreted in two ways. First, these partnerships form another important link in the expanding network of diplomatic and security ties between the US, its Western allies and the Indo-Pacific region. They complement partnerships like AUKUS and the Quad" (the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, commonly known as the Quad, is a strategic security dialogue between Australia, India, Japan and the US. *Wikipedia*).

"Beyond this, we can also view these agreements in the context of NATO's evolving outreach with the rest of the world over the past couple of decades. Previously,

NATO's collaborations with Indo-Pacific countries involved pooling resources for security operations in non-NATO members, such as in the Balkans in the 1990s and Afghanistan in the 2000s".

"Nowadays, strengthening these partnerships is seen as a vital part of responding to the new challenges and threats posed by Russia and China. Of course, this does not mean we will see NATO military equipment or troops permanently stationed in the Indo-Pacific. Nor would it be realistic to expect the Indo-Pacific countries' military contributions to Ukraine to lead to a more permanent set-up in Europe. Similarly, while all of this is aimed at intensifying security cooperation among US allies in the Indo-Pacific, this is in no way a prelude to the creation of a NATO-like collective defence pact in the region".

"However, given the complexities of the current tensions with Russia and China, there is a clear need for greater coordination and cooperation among a larger group of countries. These new partnerships can be effective in addressing everything from disinformation and maritime security to cyber defence and competition in space. However, all four Indo-Pacific countries can agree on one fundamental fact – they expect to see more competition with both China and Russia in the future, not less" (*Stuff*, 11/7/23, Gorana Grgić, University of Sydney, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/asia/300925566/why-is-nato-expanding-its-reach-to-the-asiapacific-region> Originally published by the *Conversation*).

So, NATO has added confronting and containing China to its agenda of containing and confronting Russia – presumably on the basis that "my enemy's friend is, therefore, also my enemy". Of its relations with the IP4 countries, those with Japan are closest and most advanced. "Not only has Japan been a huge donor to Ukraine since the war began. It is also central to NATO's strategic confrontation with China".

"(In June 2023) NATO announced plans to open a 'liaison' office in Tokyo, and has dialled up its areas of cooperation with Japan via the so-called Individually Tailored Partnership Program.... Who knew that in 2021, Japan and NATO held the

world's largest cyber defence war game?" (*Scoop*, 12/7/23, Gordon Campbell, <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL2307/S00021/on-dancing-with-nato-on-defence.htm>).

### **NATO Insists Its Members & Partners Increase Military Spending**

"The other thread that ties NATO and the partner countries together is military spending. The original goal was that each NATO country spend 2% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on the military. At (the 2023 summit) in Lithuania, NATO emphasised the need for partners to invest 'at least 2% of GDP (gross domestic product) on defence' and 'that in many cases, expenditure beyond 2% of GDP will be needed in order to remedy existing shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security order'. This will be a challenge for New Zealand. Military spending makes up just 1.5% of our GDP. The other IP4 partners have all crossed this 2% threshold, or shall do soon" (*Stuff*, 11/7/23, Gorana Grgić, *ibid.*). Not coincidentally, in 2023 the NZ government announced a significant increase in military spending.

"BTW, that word 'interoperability' crops up a lot in the world of military spending. Evidently, it isn't merely about having the same kind of gear that can be easily integrated within joint formations. Being truly interoperable is said to involve sharing a common mindset and being agreed about the command structure as well..."

"Hmm. There's not much room for an independent foreign policy in the modern 'inter-operable' war room, is there? We not only have to think, act and obey orders in unison, but have to be sure we're not bringing a knife to a gun fight. So then... What exactly is in it for New Zealand in all of this – apart from putting our trade access to China in jeopardy? AUKUS and NATO are both holding out to New Zealand the carrot of access to the latest cyber-security technology and know-how".

"Now you'd think that being a paid-up member of Five Eyes would give us automatic access to all that top-shelf cyber stuff. But apparently not. AUKUS advocates

have promised New Zealand privileged cyber access of some sort, though it's still very unclear how – or whether – any of this could also be accessed, let alone monetised, by our own private cyber-tech sector” (Scoop, 12/7/23, Gordon Campbell, *ibid.*).

**NATO’s Nuclear Umbrella Policy A “Powerful Rebuke” To NZ**

“For New Zealand, the hardening of the ‘nuclear umbrella’ could also be a sticking point. Via the (2023 summit) communiqué, NATO said it was ‘ready and able to deter aggression and manage escalation risks in a crisis that has a nuclear dimension’. NATO also announced intentions to strengthen ‘training and exercises that simulate conventional and a nuclear dimension of a crisis or conflict’”.

“The alliance emphasised the importance of ‘the United States’ nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe’ and reaffirmed ‘the imperative to ensure the broadest possible participation by allies concerned in NATO’s nuclear burden-sharing arrangements to demonstrate alliance unity and resolve’. Although NATO remained committed to allies supporting existing disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation agreements and commitments, the exit of Russia from many agreements, and non-participation of other countries, have forced a rethink”.

“...the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ... stands in opposition to, and is inconsistent with, the alliance’s nuclear deterrence policy, is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), and does not take into account the current security environment”.

“NATO called on its partners and all other countries to ‘...reflect realistically on the ban treaty’s impact on international peace and security ... and join us in working to improve collective security through tangible and verifiable measures that can reduce strategic risks and enable lasting progress on nuclear disarmament’. For a country like New Zealand, which made conclusion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons a priority, this is a powerful rebuke” (RNZ, 12/7/23, Alexander Gillespie, *ibid.*).

**Criticism Of NATO’s “Too Much Ambition”**

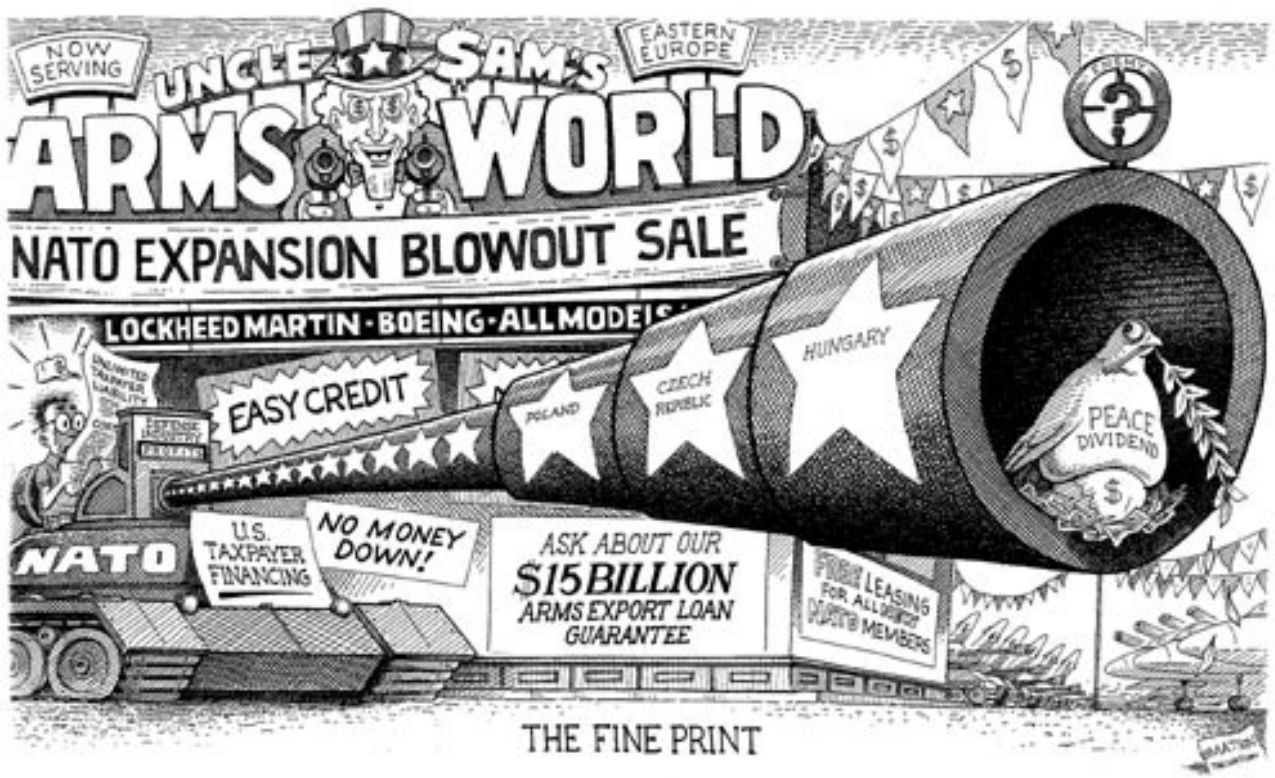
It’s worth noting that NATO’s expansion into Asia has not gone uncriticised from its own side of the geopolitical fence. “NATO’s rationale for venturing into Asian security affairs is clear enough. The US categorises China as its ‘pacing challenge’, a country that seeks to displace Washington as the world’s leading centre of gravity. There is growing concern in the

US and Europe about China’s military modernisation and propensity to coerce its neighbours”.

“Yet rhetoric aside, NATO would struggle to sustain a regular operational presence in Asia. With the exception of the US, UK, and France, the alliance doesn’t have the capacity to project power in Asia even if it wanted to - and NATO is heavily dependent on US military power, intelligence, and reconnaissance capabilities in any event”.

“The most that could be done by the defence alliance are a few freedom-of-navigation operations in contested waterways, symbolic deployments that don’t do much other than irritate the Chinese. Given these ongoing military deficiencies as well as the current security environment on the European continent, one must ask why the alliance would even consider ratcheting up its ambitions”.

“Then there’s the question of whether NATO’s diagnosis of the China threat is even accurate. In terms of nuclear weapons China possesses less than 8% of Washington’s arsenal. China’s ‘global footprint’ consists of one foreign base compared to Washington’s expansive network of 750 bases in 80 countries - including a vast network around China”.



“While US officials view China as a growing threat to the US-led international order, the gap between Washington’s capabilities and Beijing’s is regularly understated. In life, there is such a thing as too much ambition. This aptly sums up NATO’s Asia-Pacific dreams” (*Time*, 14/7/23, “Why NATO’s Growing Interest In Asia Is A Mistake”, Daniel R DePetris and Rajan Menon, <https://time.com/6294499/nato-summit-vilnius-asia/>).

## NZ Getting Into Bed With NATO, With No Public Discussion Or Debate

So, to sum up. By getting more and more deeply involved with NATO, NZ gets sucked into a fight with China (our biggest trading partner and a country with whom we have no disputes); we get arm twisted to increase military spending for no reason other than that NATO requires it; and we get told to stop all this nuclear free nonsense and come under NATO’s nuclear umbrella.

None of that sounds like a good deal but it is precisely what we are getting signed up to, with no public discussion or debate. What’s more, this getting into bed with NATO only accelerated under the 2017-23 Labour government. National, which easily won the 2023 election, has so little reason to disagree with Labour’s defence policy that National didn’t even bother to publish its own one for the election campaign. Says it all really.

# ABC WEBINAR ON AUKUS & AUSTRALIAN MILITARISATION

On July 30, 2023, the Anti-Bases Campaign hosted a Webinar on AUKUS and Australian Militarisation. You can watch the Webinar here <https://youtu.be/377GPb2JWnE?si=EX6icEldjOXtcbt0> There were two Australian speakers, both senior figures in the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN, <https://ipan.org.au/>): Bevan Ramsden, from Sydney and Shirley Winton, from Melbourne. Both their speeches are below.

Plus, Murray Horton from the Anti-Bases Campaign. He had a lengthy article about AUKUS published in Covert Action Magazine, an online American publication (29/6/23). You can read that here: <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/06/29/military-initiative-by-australia-the-united-kingdom-and-the-united-states-aukus-is-another-major-step-in-prospective-war-on-china/> Ed.

## BEVAN RAMSDEN Preparing For War With China

I am Bevan Ramsden from Sydney and speaking from the unceded land of the Gadigal People of the Eurora Nation, for whose history, culture, elders and leaders I have the utmost respect. I would like to thank Murray Horton for his kind invitation to speak to you today about matters which have serious implications for our two countries.

I speak as a member of IPAN, the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network, which like the Anti-Bases Campaign in NZ, also campaigns for an end to foreign military bases on our soil and associated foreign spying activities associated with some of those bases. Before speaking about AUKUS and the US militarisation of Australia, I would like to applaud two policies of NZ which we in Australia would like to see our Government embrace.



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

I mean the signing and ratifying of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which I assume only occurred in NZ due to the pressure of the people of NZ exerted on the Government. In Australia 80% of our population want the Treaty signed. The Labor Party promised to sign when in Government. They are now in Government and show no signs of signing it and have been warned by the US Embassy that to sign it would endanger security arrangements with the United States. Public pressure is mounting, however, to have the Treaty signed.

The second NZ action which we peace activists in Australia admire, is the prevention of warships entering your ports if they will not declare whether they are carrying nuclear weapons. As the US refuses to make such a declaration, you keep their warships out of your ports. We need that policy applied to Australian ports to keep out not just foreign warships but the US and UK nuclear submarines too.

To understand the current position of Australia on AUKUS, nuclear subs, US militarisation of our continent and preparation going on for the next US war, we need to go back a bit in history. I won't go back before WW2 although subservience to imperialism, British imperialism, pervaded foreign policy decisions going back to the start of the colonial invasion of the Australian continent.

### **ANZUS**

The Australian government changed from dependence on the UK to dependence on the US for defence during the Second World War after the UK's SE Asian naval base in Singapore fell to Japanese forces. When WW2 ended, the Australian government together with the NZ government persuaded the US to form a trilateral alliance called ANZUS, primarily with the idea of providing a defence against a resurgence of Japanese militarism.

This ANZUS alliance, unlike the NATO alliance, **did not** specify that the US would automatically come to the defence of Australia and NZ if either country came under attack in the Pacific area but only required a **consultation** among the three partners should such an attack occur. However, there is a strong

belief, perhaps better called a **self-delusion** that the US would automatically come to Australia's defence and that belief or delusion has become a fundamental plank in Australia's defence thinking in Government and by **both Liberal and Labor Parties and in defence circles**.

### **Pine Gap**

The ANZUS Treaty brought with it US military bases. The first was the Pine Gap satellite receiving station in central Australia billed as a joint facility. The treaty to establish it was signed on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1966. Edward Snowden described the facility as a giant "vacuum cleaner" which allows the US to spy on everyone.

It is believed that the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's questioning of CIA involvement in Pine Gap helped stimulate US destabilisation of his Labor government, culminating in its dismissal by the Governor General using the little-known reserve powers in the Constitution, on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1975. We understand that currently there are 800 staff at Pine Gap, roughly half Australian and half American with the Commander of the facility an American. Australians are confined to cleaning, cafeteria and ground maintenance duties whilst the deciphering room is exclusive to the US.

### **North West Cape**

The ANZUS Treaty then brought a second base originally named the US Naval Communications Station North West Cape and that treaty was signed on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1967. The lease did not allow Australia any degree of control over the station or its use but did allow for Australia to use the VLF (very low frequency) radio facility to communicate with its underwater submarines; the US used it to communicate with its nuclear armed submarines and could use this radio facility to provide the trigger signal for launching nuclear missiles.

According to the governments of the time (Liberal or Labor) ANZUS was used to justify Australia's involvement with the US in the Vietnam War, the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War, although in the case of the Vietnam War it was claimed by the proponents of involvement that there was a threat

to Australia by communism called the domino theory. One SE Asian country falls to communism and one after that and finally they will be at "our doors".

Concurrent with the establishment of these bases and war involvements there has been a continual backlash of community opposition. The largest of these being the huge anti-war demonstrations of the 1970s and the huge demonstration against the Iraq War in 2003. Both were effective. The anti-war Vietnam Moratorium Campaign on the late 1960s and early 70s brought a progressive Labor government to power.

It cancelled conscription for the war, released those draft resisters in jail who had been imprisoned and completed the bringing of all Australian troops back to Australia from Vietnam. Whilst the huge anti-Iraq War demonstrations didn't prevent Australia's involvement in that war, it did force PM Howard to ensure that Australian troops were not put in any position of danger in Iraq which ensured no bodies came home in coffins.

### **Darwin**

However, coming closer to the present, a new stage of US military involvement in Australia occurred in November 2011 when President Obama announced to the Australian Parliament that up to 2,500 US Marines would be stationed in Darwin each year for six months to train with Australian military forces as part of his "Pivot to Asia" strategy.

The purpose of this strategy was to confront and contain China which was being seen as a threat to US hegemony and economic dominance in the East Asia/Pacific Region. To their shame, all the Australian Members of Parliament applauded him for this generous gesture. Of course, this new military development was seen as an appropriate development of the ANZUS alliance by the defence Establishment and Australia's subservient leaders.

This new development of a military base and the stationing of US troops in Australia sparked widespread opposition and resulted in the establishment of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) in 2012, campaigning for an

independent foreign policy, including opposition to all foreign military bases in Australia, including the US Marines in Darwin and the promotion of peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with all countries. Shirley Winton in her presentation will expand on IPAN formation and activities.

### **Talisman Sabre**

One of the outcomes of this US military presence has been regular training exercises in the Northern Territory (NT), where the largest, Talisman Sabre, occurs annually with large numbers of US and Australian troops, aircraft, warships, etc. The 2023 war exercise involved 30,000 troops mainly US and Australian but with smaller contingents from Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia and NZ. The huge war exercise is a practice, under US command, for a war with China.

Another outcome of Obama's "Pivot to Asia" and stationing of US troops in Australia is the signing in 2014 of the US-Australia Force Posture Agreement, FPA for short. It legitimises the stationing of US troops in Australia but affords the US *places and facilities under their exclusive control* for training, storage of munitions, fuel and equipment, spare parts as well as *unimpeded access to our airfields and ports*. In short, it's a sell out by our Government of our sovereignty, if we still had any. Similar FPAs have been signed with other countries in which the US has bases and is stationing personnel. One has been signed with the Philippines and now with Papua New Guinea.

Under the FPA, huge fuel storage facilities have been built for exclusive US use at East Arm Darwin. The runway at RAAF Tindal in NT has been lengthened at Australian taxpayer expense to facilitate US B52 bombers using the runways and exclusive areas for the parking and maintenance for up to six B52 bombers are being established at Tindal. One version of the B52 bombers can carry nuclear weapons. IPAN has a working group to create public awareness of this pernicious sell out of sovereignty and to initiate a campaign to have the FPA terminated.

The FPA also underpins the proposed porting of US and UK nuclear submarines at HMAS Stirling in

Western Australia. This is proposed to commence in 2027. The FPA is a prime document facilitating the US militarisation of Australia in which it seeks to base its operations in the Indo-Pacific and from which it could launch or support a war against China

### **AUKUS**

As if that was not enough the Liberal Coalition Leader and Australian PM announced on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 that Australia, the UK and the US were joining together in a trilateral security agreement called AUKUS. Whilst it lacks in written content its' clear intent is a defence pact aimed at China. Its first physical act was the promise to Australia of access to the nuclear propulsion technology of the US and UK for building or buying nuclear propelled hunter-killer submarines. These are suited particularly for an attack role in distant waters and no guesses as to where that might be.

To the surprise of some, the election of a Labor government under PM Albanese in May 2022, *did not* see a repudiation of AUKUS or the acquisition of nuclear propelled submarines. To the contrary, and to the dismay of many, PM Albanese enthusiastically embraced AUKUS and announced that a figure of \$A368 billion of taxpayers' money would be used to produce this fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. This has stimulated widespread *community outrage* as urgent social needs in public housing, rent relief, bringing our hospital and health system up to scratch and addressing the impact of climate change, are being left wanting.

Summing up, Australian political leadership has always embraced a policy of dependence on a big power for basic defence, with a very brief interval during the Whitlam Labor government when attempts were made to exert a degree of independence. They were given a whipping by the US for this and dismissed from office. Dependence was first on Britain and now on the United States. The dependence brought with it subservience to the foreign policies of these imperialist powers and provided enthusiastic support for their wars to remind them *not to forget us*.

This support for the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War and the Iraq War had *nothing* to do with defence of the Australian continent. *None* of those countries posed a military threat to Australia. All three wars were about the US pursuing its imperial interests. Take the Iraq War. Iraq had nationalised its oil reserves and blocked Western exploitation of those oil reserves. Following the Iraq War and defeat of Saddam Hussein and his forces, Shell, BP and Chevron are back again making money out of the Iraqi oil fields.

### **Message To New Zealanders**

The US militarisation of Australia, AUKUS and nuclear submarines is all part of the US preparing for a war against China, probably over Taiwan. China is a challenge to US economic and military dominance in our region, if not elsewhere, and in US eyes, China must be weakened to prevent it challenging US dominance and they believe a war will do that. Such a war would be disastrous for Australia. China is our major trading partner. So much of our everyday supplies including medical supplies and fuel would be blocked and exports to China cease, jobs lost and hardship worse than during the pandemic would prevail. Even more serious is the possibility of nuclear weapons being used.

Shirley Winton will speak of the growing opposition in Australia to AUKUS, nuclear submarines and the march to war. This movement is growing fast. Lowy Institute opinion polls show that 56% of Australians want Australia to be neutral if such a war breaks out. That is a majority but the position of favouring neutrality and keeping out of such a war is strongest among women with 73%; nearly three quarters of Australian women want neutrality and two thirds of young people support this position.

If I have a message for you, it is simply this. Watch out for an Agreement with the US such as a force posture agreement which gives them a military posture in your country and oppose it strongly. *Keep NZ out of AUKUS*. Don't allow your troops to train with our Australian Defence Force and the US military in war exercises such



as Talisman Sabre, as they have been doing in 2023, and maintain your strong anti-nuclear stance. We, the people of our two countries, must stop the US militarisation of our region, maintain the Pacific nuclear free, free our region of foreign military bases and promote peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with all countries.

## SHIRLEY WINTON AUKUS, US-Australia Alliance And The People's Movement

Thank you for this invitation and we are honoured to be asked to speak at your webinar on AUKUS and implications of this military pact for the people of Australia, and of course the people and the environment of this region. My name is Shirley Winton. I'm speaking from Naarm/Melbourne on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people, the Kulin Nation. I pay my respects to the First Nations elders past, present and emerging and their long and rich culture. I stand in solidarity with the First Nations people in their 240-year-long struggles against colonisation, for sovereignty, land rights, self-determination and genuine Treaty/ies. I apologise if my talk repeats some information in Bevan's talk.

Like you, our friends in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, opposition to foreign military bases in Australia goes back over 50 years. It is no coincidence that Australia is sometimes described as the 51<sup>st</sup> state of the USA. Bevan has spoken already about the first two US intelligence military bases in Australia, Pine Gap and North West Cape, established in mid-to late 1960s.

Since then both bases have been extensively expanded and upgraded. Pine Gap is the US's most important intelligence base outside its own country. Throughout the 1970s and 80s protests were held outside these and other US military bases in Australia. In 1974, 400 people from across the country held a Long March to North West Cape (*I was one of them. Ed.*), and in 1984 a women's protest was held outside Pine Gap.



In 2010-11 the US President Obama and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Australia to announce the new US military strategy and reorientation called the US Pivot to Asia-Pacific. 60% of US land, sea and air military forces, materiel and infrastructure spread across the world, would be relocated to Asia-Pacific, enmeshing Australia more deeply into the US military and its war machine.

The US Pivot required permanent rotation of 2,500 US Marines in Darwin, upgrading and expanding Australia's naval, air force defence/military facilities and building new bases to accommodate and permanently embed the US military into Australia's defence infrastructure and industries, ensuring Australia's defence and foreign policies are tightly locked into the US military machine and global policies.

Parallel to this was even closer political alignment to the US globally and locally. Significantly, the first public announcement in the world of the US Pivot was made in the Australian Parliament. Obama was flanked by the fawning Labor Prime Minister Gillard who gushingly welcomed US militarisation of Australia to be turned into a US base and launching pad for US wars.

### Giving Away Sovereignty

The two major Parliamentary parties enthusiastically supported the announcement without an open Parliamentary debate and public discussion of the implications for the Australian people and sovereignty. Bob Brown, the Greens Senator at the time, was the lone public voice in Parliament warning

of subservience to US. The immediate community response to the Pivot was a gathering in late 2011 to early 2012 of several organisations (eight at that time) with the aim of establishing a broad national network campaigning for an independent and peaceful Australian foreign policy and ending US Marines & bases in Australia.

Independent and Peaceful Australian Network (IPAN) was launched on 21 September 2012, on the UN Peace Day. By 2014, several academics, retired defence personnel, former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, and community groups were warning that Australia was being turned into a launching pad and a base for US wars.

IPAN continued to build the national network of peace, community and faith organisations and unions. National conferences were held in Canberra, Brisbane, Alice Spring, Melbourne, Darwin. Murray Horton spoke at the 2017 national conference in Melbourne (*you can read my speech in Peace Researcher 54, November 2017, "New Zealand: A Reality Check. But Isn't It Nuclear-Free And Out Of ANZUS?"*, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html> MH).

All the while Australia's military facilities were being upgraded and expanded and new ones built to accommodate the increasing US military in the country. Protest rallies were held outside Pine Gap during the 2015 IPAN National conference in Alice Springs. Australia's deepening integration into the US military and war machine could no longer

be hidden. People from different walks of life including academics, former Defence and Army personnel, started to publicly question and warn of the dangers of Australia's defence and military merging into the US military and under its command. The US Pivot to Asia-Pacific coincided at the same time with US-driven Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement. Our friends in Aotearoa/New Zealand are very familiar with the TPPA and your people's mass movement opposing it. The TPPA was the economic side of the US Pivot into Asia-Pacific, to contain China's economic rise and reinforce US economic hegemony.

People are probably familiar with US economist Milton Friedman, who famously declared that US investments and corporations around the world are protected by the mighty iron fist of the US military. To make Australia a US garrison, or the 51<sup>st</sup> state of the USA, it's necessary to have an uninformed and compliant population conditioned politically and ideologically by propaganda to accept Australia's subservience to the US and China's threats to our national security. US corporations dominate Australia's economy and wield power in corridors of political power.

Murdoch's media monopolies and a handful of Australia's mainstream media, relentlessly push US interests and propaganda. The US is embedded in Australia's political, academic, military and media institutions. US corporations wield power in Australia's corridors of power. A number of conservative and reactionary think tanks which have considerable influence over governments constantly roll out US propaganda: the Australian Institute of Public Affairs, the United States Centre at Sydney University, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute - the latter funded by transnational weapons corporations.

In September 2021 the Liberal Morrison government announced AUKUS, and Australia's acquisition of eight nuclear submarines from the US and UK. The announcement was framed as a national security imperative, to keep peace in the region and unimpeded freedom of navigation, claiming China's military was threatening to block international trade routes in the South China Sea.

AUKUS is a US-initiated military pact, a tool to protect US interests in the region. It is easy to understand AUKUS in the context of US global economic supremacy being challenged by the economic rise of China and the great power rivalries between the US, China, Russia and Europe. The US and EU and their military-industrial complex want to maintain their global dominance. Economic competition for resources, markets, and spheres of influence is the main driver of imperialist wars.

AUKUS is the product of the US-Australia alliance, with Australia as a subservient and compliant partner, a US deputy sheriff to maintain US control and supremacy in the region. The leadership of the two main Parliamentary parties happily embrace the US global supremacy, in spite of it not being in the interests of the Australian people and global peace. There's not even an occasional whiff of independence or sovereignty from any of our governments. They're locking the Australian people into the US war machine and enforcing the so-called US global rules-based order in our region. AUKUS is an instrument for the expansion of US military capabilities and its military-industrial complex.

### **AUKUS Is Being Shaped Into An Asia-Pacific NATO**

The US Pivot to Asia Pacific, the Force Posture Agreement and now AUKUS, are militarising Australia's economy and industrial base. Since the early 1990s, globalisation gutted Australia's value-added and manufacturing industries. There's little that Australia manufactures locally these days, but transnational and local mining corporations continue to dig up and export our minerals and natural resources from the stolen lands of the First Nations people.

You often hear people refer to Australia as a quarry, a banana republic. And now the Government is telling the people and unions that AUKUS and nuclear submarines will create jobs in the new weapons and ammunitions manufacturing industries – most are the transnational weapons corporations. AUKUS and nuclear submarines have opened the door to the push for nuclear power. Recently a British politician suggested that Australia would be a perfect place for storing

the world's nuclear waste on the lands of the First Nations People.

Since the announcement of AUKUS and nuclear submarines, the militarisation of education is accelerating. Top ten global weapons manufacturers Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman are now embedded in Australia's universities, directing and funding university research into weapons of mass destruction, war technology, cyberspace war technology, making universities dependent on funding from these warmongers. They are now collaborating with the Defence and Education departments accessing secondary and primary schools' curricula, offering scholarships and prizes to students for best designs in nuclear propelled submarines. There are Nuclear Submarine Propulsion Challenges in primary and secondary schools.

AUKUS and nuclear subs are making Australia a target in the event of war between the US and China. It's not only the subs that make Australia China's military target – it's the entire AUKUS military pact that's bringing cruise missile ships and B52 bombers equipped to carry nuclear weapons, huge fuel storage tanks in north Australia, US soldiers, and military intelligence e.g., upgrading Pine Gap and Five Eyes, cyberspace (and these are only the publicly known ones) that make Australia a Chinese target in the event of war between the US and China.

Recently, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs announced that the Government respects the US policy of ambiguity, not confirming or denying if US warships and bombers will carry nuclear weapons during their visits and stays in Australia. Behind the AUKUS military pact is the continuing integration of Australia into the US sphere of influence, locking Australia economically into the US economic dominance for US economic interests, not the interests and wellbeing of the people of Australia. In March 2023 the Labor Albanese government announced it would spend \$A368 billion of public funds over the next 30 years on eight hunter killer nuclear powered submarines. And the figure would be higher, closer to half a trillion. That's half

a trillion taken away from public health, education, welfare, and fixing the urgent climate crisis. This is at a time of housing crisis, increasing homelessness, unaffordable rent, underfunded public hospitals & schools, and little protection of the environment. That's a half trillion on wars of aggression. Many predict that Australia's expenditure on US led wars of aggression is more likely to reach one trillion within the next 30 years. The only beneficiaries are the transnational weapons manufacturers who make a killing in super profits from the death and destruction of imperialist wars.

### **Intensifying Tensions & Accelerating The March To War**

The announced \$368 billion on eight nuclear powered submarines sparked public outrage. This is the immediate and tangible consequence of AUKUS on the people and Australia's alliance with the US to go to war with China. It's against this background of escalating US militarisation of Australia, making Australia a vital US military base and following the US into another of its wars, that the movement against AUKUS and nuclear submarines, and for peace and independence is growing in Australia. In early November 2021, six weeks after the AUKUS announcement, 28 peace and community groups and organisations across Australia called a national Zoom meeting to establish a national coalition to campaign against AUKUS and nuclear submarines, and call for peace. The Zoom meeting was attended by 140 people and over 40 organisations. There was unanimous support for the formation of a broad nation-wide coalition and campaign to oppose AUKUS and Australia acquiring nuclear submarines.

The Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition (AAAC) was launched in March 2022, calling for a national united front against the AUKUS Military Pact and Nuclear Submarines and for building a broad grassroots movement for peace and a nuclear free Australia. Anti-AUKUS branches exist in all states and in some parts of regional Australia. Events are regularly held in different states with the AAAC calling for national days of action e.g., rallies outside Government Ministers' offices, public fora, rallies, lo-

cal community meetings and fora, Hiroshima Day, public statements. One of the successful nationwide activities initiated by the AAAC was a petition and statement "A Call For Peace" calling on the Government to cancel submarines and AUKUS, and not to go into a US war with China. The petition statement was signed by over 1,000 individuals and organisations and published in two main national newspapers. In a matter of six weeks \$A24,000 was raised in donations to cover the cost of placing the petition as an advertisement in the two newspapers.

The campaign to stop AUKUS and cancel nuclear submarines is also being taken up by unions. More unions are passing resolutions calling on the Government to cancel AUKUS and nuclear submarines. AUKUS and nuclear submarines are discussed at union conferences and delegates' meetings. More union leaders are speaking out at public fora and rallies. Some unions are setting up Peace is Union Business groups.

The US wants one of the ports on the east coast of Australia to be turned into a base for nuclear submarines. Port Kembla, a mining and steelmaking town in Southern NSW, is the preferred location for basing nuclear submarines for its deepwater port and an exclusion zone. Local unions and communities rose up in arms mounting a major grass roots campaign to stop the submarines. Their demand is: "Not here! Not anywhere!"

Over the past two to three years Port Kembla unions and the Wollongong community have been developing a plan to transition from fossil fuels (coal mining) to renewable energy. The stationing of nuclear submarines in their port would scuttle their programme for transitioning to a local renewables' economy and long-term secure jobs. The Wollongong community and Port Kembla unions are drawing nationwide support from, and inspiring, other unions and communities across the country. Some unions are passing resolutions pledging support for them. The opposition to AUKUS is spreading slowly but more widely in the community and amongst Australian Labor Party rank and file and branches. Rank and file members in more than 12 local ALP branches have

passed resolutions calling on the Government to cancel AUKUS and nuclear submarines and for an independent inquiry. Rank and file members have set up Labor Against War and Labor for Peace. ALP local branches are sending their resolutions to Government members and to the ALP National Conference (which was held in August 2023). Unions were planning to put up motions at the National Conference to stop nuclear subs and AUKUS.

Statements signed by academics, former politicians and Defence Department personnel are also being circulated and promoted. Even though the Labor government has abandoned even the appearance of independence there's no doubt the US is exerting strong pressure to keep Australia in its sphere of influence and one of its most reliable allies.

### **Building A Mass Movement Is Essential**

Building a broad mass movement on the ground, united to stop AUKUS and nuclear submarines and work for peace, is essential. A regional, non-aligned, peace movement of the people to push back the US imperialist war preparations, is crying out to be built. A movement not aligned with any imperialist power but which unites for an independent and nuclear free Pacific. We hope we can build that movement together with our friends in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Just to finish off my talk. At the conclusion of the annual Australian-US Ministerial talks in Brisbane in July 2023, US Defense Secretary Austin and Australian Defence Minister Marles jointly announced accelerated US militarisation of Australia – more US Marines rotating through northern Australia, more US warships and warplanes, more nuclear-powered submarines visiting Australia (HMAS Stirling naval base in Western Australia), and production of US missiles in Australia.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a quote from a former intelligence officer with the Australian Defence Force, Clinton Fernandes, in his book "Australia A Sub-Imperial Power. Australia In The International Arena" ... "You cannot have an independent foreign policy when you are a dependent economy".

# AEROSPACE SUMMIT DISRUPTED BY PROTESTS

## “Now Is Not The Time To Be Flaccid”

By Zak Rudin

*This was originally published in Critic Te Ārohi, the Otago University students' newspaper. Ed.*

On Monday September 11th environmental justice and peace activists gathered in Ōtautahi (Christchurch) to protest the 2023 Aerospace Summit. As the name suggests, the conference was about space. The conference was sponsored in part by Lockheed Martin, the world's largest weapons manufacturer. While the activists agreed that space is cool, militarism and the massive carbon footprint of the industry is not so cool. The conference was held over two days at Te Pae Convention Centre, with protests on both days. Being dedicated journalists, *Critic Te Ārohi* sent a reporter to Ōtautahi to cover the action.

This is the second Aerospace Summit to be held in Aotearoa. The first happened on 5th September 2022 and was also met with protestors (*from the Anti-Bases Campaign. ABC also took part in the 2023 protests. Ed.*). The 2023 focus was on “ethics, sustainability and advanced aviation” along with “networking”. This is despite aviation accounting for 3.5% of global emissions and the dubious ties between militarism and space.

### Dicking Around

Protesters congregated at around 12:30pm on Monday 11th outside Te Pae with banners, music and kai to stage an “Unwelcoming Party”. Perhaps the greatest asset of the protest was two very large penis rockets named PEN15. The artistic interpretation of space rockets certainly succeeded in giving off some big dick energy (heh) as protestors got inside them and shuffled around the entrance of the convention centre.



*Aerospace Summit protest, Christchurch, September 2023*

John\*, third-year Otago University student, was one of the brave souls inside a PEN15. “The PEN15 is a fine rocket and we’re sure to penetrate deep into this conference to show that we’ve got bigger dicks than them,” said John. From inside the PEN15, he continued: “It’s been worth it to travel all this way ‘cos it just always feels good to [come] to something.” At one point, the PEN15s made a valiant effort to storm the entrance, held back only by their extreme lack of mobility and visibility from inside the rockets. And also, the five police officers physically pushing them back. A police officer told one PEN15-suited Otago student to “not be a dick”. Good one. \*Name changed

### Aerospace Industry Part Of Climate Problem, Not Solution

The more light-hearted big dick energy of the first day transitioned into a classic protest action on Tuesday. Activists arrived bright and early to block entrance ways with banners and generally just make a bit of a racket. At one point, a group of half a dozen attempted to get through the entrance with a banner reading “No New Airports, Climate Crisis” but were promptly shoved back by police. When they went to stage a sit-in in the entrance way, they were trespassed.

Jonty, a fifth-year Masters Ecology student at University of Canterbury (UC), said that the aim of the protest was to “disrupt the Aerospace Summit as much as possible.” Jonty said it was “gutting” that UC was co-sponsoring the event alongside Lockheed Martin: “The Uni has sustainable development goals which they are breaking by

being involved in this conference”. Meanwhile, Jonty said that as of right now, the aerospace industry has no viable means of emissions reduction. Given the latest climate science, we have only between one to two years to turn things around, so “regardless of how sustainable the industry *could* be, we need emissions reductions *now*,” said Jonty.

### Rocket Lab Sponsor

United States company Rocket Lab, based in Māhia, also sponsored the Aerospace Summit. The East Coast group Rocket Lab Monitor, which is comprised of Rongomaiwahine (mana whenua of Māhia Peninsula) iwi members said in a media release: “Rocket Lab serves military clients and launches a range of weapons targeting systems for the US military and foreign companies from Māhia”. The group said that: “Peter Beck (CEO of Rocket Lab) lied when he told Māhia locals, including mana whenua, the proposed facility would not include military launches [and] launches would not include weapons”.

Rocket Lab Monitor also said: “Government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from industry are lies given the hundreds of millions spent supporting a new industry with high emissions from launches, but no information collected on the emissions produced by the sector”. The media release concluded that “if the Government won’t restrict their activities, then it is up to citizens to do so” and threatened “property destruction... to stop the militarisation of outer space”. Rocket Lab Monitor also supported the kaupapa of the protest.

# HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI COMMEMORATION 2023

Disarmament and  
Security Centre

<https://www.disarmsecure.org/>

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 Ōtautahi Christchurch gathered again at New Zealand's World Peace Bell (in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens) in remembrance of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 78 years on from the bombings in 1945, they still serve to remind us of the terrible human cost of nuclear warfare and served as a solemn plea to the nuclear weapons states of "never again".

Attendees of the event remarked on the (relatively) good weather which contrasted with the rain-drenched days the event had seen in previous years. Under the winter sky a colourful range of banners with both historical and continuing significance were raised. They contained various slogans and logos of a plethora of disarmament groups.

The Disarmament and Security Centre, World Peace Bell Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and UCDisarm all came together to organise and host the 2023 event. They were joined by Japanese Consul for Christchurch Mr Tsuguyoshi Hada and City Councillor Melanie Coker who both spoke as part of the proceedings. Christchurch MPs Hon Duncan Webb and Sarah Pallett were also in attendance. A karakia opened the ceremony before David Bollam Smith, Councillor Melanie Coker, Japanese Consul Tsuguyoshi Hada, Dr. Kate Dewes, Lucy Stewart, Susan Bouterey and Patrick Kinney all spoke about the ongoing significance of the bombings.

## Survivors' Stories

A recurring theme was the importance of remembering the stories told by hibakusha (survivors) and of the suffering they endured because of the use

of nuclear weapons against Japan. Their experiences were sharply put into focus when Susan Bouterey read from Bun Hashizume's "The Day The Sun Fell". In the extract Hashizume recounted her experiences as a child in Hiroshima witnessing the destruction of the city and the intense human cost of the bombing.

Additionally, we were lucky to hear performances by Ellie Partridge and the Natural Magic Band who sang moving renditions of "Heal The World" and "Hold The World For Peace", respectively. The ceremony ended with a closing karakia and everyone in attendance singing Te Aroha. After this, everyone had the chance to ring the Peace Bell for themselves. It was a touching finish with the bell repeatedly resounding for world peace.



*Hiroshima Day commemoration, Christchurch Peace Bell, August 2023*

# AUSTRALIANS FEATURED PROM- INENTLY IN 2023 WORLD BEYOND WAR AWARDS Winning Two Of The Four War Abolisher Awards

By Liz Remmerswaal

**Wage Peace Australia Won 2023 Organisational War Abolisher Award**

<https://www.wagepeaceau.org/>

This organisation is a leading global inspiration to many peace-related campaigns, including those working to close down giant arms fairs, and describes its approach this way: “We jump on tanks, blockade weapons factories, occupy arms dealers’ offices and reclaim military bases as well as engaging in public discourse and other more conventional campaign methods”.

Wage Peace Australia’s campaign to disrupt (https://www.wagepeaceau.org/war-criminals-need-not-apply-a-summary-of-dlf22/) the largest weapons bazaar in Australia, the Land Forces International Land Defence Exposition, has been so successful that the arms fair will no longer return to Brisbane. It will, of course, likely be held in a different city, but if people learn from the nonviolent, educational, disruptive activism used in Brisbane, then this arms fair and every other one could be chased out of every location on the planet, leaving those whom Wage Peace Australia refers to as “Harms Dealers” nowhere to do their harming.

Wage Peace Australia’s Margie Pectorius, in accepting this award, said: “We view people-powered disruptive action as being key to shifting the value base and bringing ordinary people into engage-

ment. And we recognise and commemorate the Frontier Wars which rolled out across Australia from 1800 to 1930. This involves organising and promoting people-to-people events and ceremonies (https://www.wagepeaceau.org/frontierwarsoverview/) that respond to the horrific violence inflicted by the British military with settler communities over 140 years – and we acknowledge the strong, organised resistance of First Nations peoples in this Land”.

Wage Peace is also involved with a campaign (https://www.wagepeaceau.org/noplaceinschools1/) to resist the involvement of weapons companies in Australian education. Currently underway is a Wage Peace podcast: “Get Your Armies Off Our Bodies” (https://wagepeace.podbean.com/). Written by Matt Abud with Zelda Grimshaw, the podcast offers an accessible and fresh look at the weapons industry in Australia, presenting militarism through the eyes of Wage Peace people and their friends.

Wage Peace Australia works with peace groups in West Papua (https://www.wagepeaceau.org/category/issues\_campaigns/peace-in-papua/), and has helped World BEYOND War to do the same. Wage Peace Australia created the War on West Papua Website (https://www.waronwestpapua.org/).

Wage Peace Australia is known for its selfless work in collaboration with other organisations. It needs to be known to a broader world. Wage Peace Australia’s educational and activist endeavours are explicitly aimed at abolishing war, and its members do outstanding work on demilitarising security and building a culture of peace, two pillars of World BEYOND War’s strategy for creating a global security system free of the scourge of war.

**Film Maker David Bradbury Won 2023 David Hartsough Individual Lifetime War Abolisher Award**

David Bradbury is the creator of 28 documentary films that advance our understanding of war, peace, international relations, and peace activism. Bradbury’s films have been broadcast around the world



Film maker David Bradbury

on the BBC, PBS, ZDF (Germany), and TF1-France, as well as ABC, SBS, and commercial television networks in Australia.

In Bradbury’s latest documentary “The Road To War” (2023) Australian experts deplore the Albanese government’s commitment of hundreds of billions of dollars to new weaponry, nuclear propelled submarines, stealth bombers, and missiles, all aimed at China. The film shows why it is not in Australia’s, or the world’s, interests to be dragged into another US-led war. This film draws on Bradbury’s decades of experience and footage to highlight each argument with the record from history: of each US war that Australia has joined in before, of each US ally that the US has sacrificed before, of what US bombers now being given access to Australia have done to their victims before.

While Australians were told the war on Vietnam was to prevent the Vietnamese from attacking Australia, the Vietnamese, after winning the war, have still never shown any sign of wanting to invade Australia. Neither has Australia’s top trading partner, China. And yet the push for war with China recycles familiar propaganda, and we desperately need independent films like “The Road To War” to counter it.

**The Other 2023 Award Winners**

Argentinian peace organisation Fundación Mil Milenios de Paz, recipient of the Organisational Lifetime War Abolisher Award. And Saharawi nonviolent human rights activist from Western Sahara, Sultana Khaya, recipient of the Individual War Abolisher Award. For more information see <https://worldbeyondwar.org/the-war-abolisher-awards-of-2023-and-why-theyre-needed/>

# Spooky Bits

By Warren Thomson

## AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

### Ministries Employing Own Spooks

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the Government's biggest ministry, "... has quietly embedded itself in the country's spy agency network, more than tripling the size and spending of its own powered-up intelligence-gathering arm... MI (MBIE's 'intelligence' group) has expanded in the past 12 months beyond immigration to cover the entire sprawling ministry, taking charge of intelligence and operations if there is a national security threat" (Phil Pennington, *RNZ*, 4/10/23).

It now has a staff of more than 100 and a budget of more than \$10 million dollars. Pennington raises the issue of who is responsible for oversight of this outfit, stating that there is only internal monitoring. The *RNZ* article also reports that MI has a deal with a controversial Israeli surveillance company and tried to conceal information about this deal until the Ombudsman stepped in.

The Federation of Islamic Associations' spokesperson, Abdur Razaq Khan, was shocked by the revelation. "They're actually looking at communities like us, people who are coming in ... immigrants and others, with no consultation, no accountability, by any agency apart from themselves" (*ibid.*). He was also concerned about the Israeli connection.

Further comments about MBIE are even less reassuring. Apparently, it was recently rated one out of five for usefulness in responding to a cyber-attack, the worst among eight Government agencies. On another front *Peace Researcher (PR)* is unhappy about what seems to be MBIE's blanket approval of

Rocket Lab flights from Mahia, and refusing to give any comment on the potential for the Rocket Lab base to be a military target because the information is "classified".

We also need much more information about what other ministries have set up their own "intelligence" sections. And who is responsible for their transparency. The amount of (mostly public) data now available is astronomic. Who gets to see it or use it is grossly problematic (see the *Spooky Bits* section on the US, below, re concerns about the professional spy agencies accessing vast amounts of such data).

### Spook Restructuring Proceeds Undercover

In August 2023 spy minister Andrew Little announced that "setting up an over-arching intelligence and security agency is a priority and is 'not far away'" but almost no information about this significant change has been released to the public (*RNZ*, 5/8/23). A publicly released 23-page document was released in August 2023, outlining new national security policy. It did not actually mention setting up a national intelligence and security agency (NISA), just: "Over the next two years, Government will deliver a programme of national security reform. These reforms will ensure we have the right structures and arrangements in place to deliver a more strategic approach".

Further information about the new entity was not given, despite the public outline of new policy listing a series of other major and additional initiatives from now till 2025, including setting up agencies to coordinate the 12 core issues. NISA, as described by Little, would be "over and above the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) and Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), not replacing them, but taking a higher-level view of the 'threat horizon'" (*RNZ*, *ibid.*).

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the 2019 Christchurch mosques attacks made the establishment of an overarching agency one of its top recommendations. But a more recent review into our spy agencies has urged that the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers be removed from the Government's Intelligence and Security Committee, putting more emphasis

on improving democratic oversight of the spy agencies.

This latest review made 52 recommendations, of which three major ones included overhauling the Intelligence and Security Committee, removing a distinction between warrants for spying on New Zealanders and non-New Zealanders, and defining "national security" in the law, all improvements that *PR* would wholeheartedly support.

The reviewers, former Supreme Court judge Sir Terence Arnold and lawyer Matanuku Mahuika, said the Intelligence and Security Committee, which meets infrequently to provide oversight of the two spy agencies, lacked independence from the Government, and had insufficient time and capacity to meaningfully scrutinise the activities of the spooks. Criticisms that *PR* has been making ad nauseum over the years.

Comments on the review by commentator Paul Buchanan are well worth repeating. He noted the definition of national security threat had shifted in the review. "That includes threats that undermine the democracy from within, as well as external threats". He states this is "... significant because it allows the intelligence community to look a lot closer at internal threats, and integrates them even better - so *civil libertarians are going to have cause for concern*" (*RNZ*, 31/5/23).

But he also said the other recommendations - to overhaul the Government's Intelligence and Security Committee and remove the Prime Minister - would bolster oversight. They recommend expanding the range of the powers of both the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security and the Committee on Intelligence and Security, which up until now has been toothless. This review recommends giving that Committee teeth, with adequate staffing, and more importantly, independence from the Government of the day. Nothing about this in Little's latest media promotion. Let's see what happens with the change of Government.

### New Zealand Creates A New Cyber Security Agency

"CERT NZ (Computer Emergency Response Team) today joined with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the first step in creating a

lead operational cyber security agency. The move transferred CERT NZ's operations and staff from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to the NCSC", said Lisa Fong, head of the NCSC. This is claimed to involve "... a new integrated operating model that uses our enhanced scale and capability to provide a stronger cyber security system and improved customer service for New Zealanders" (NCSC Website, posted 31/8/23).

It also creates a similar cyber security agency structure to those operated by Australia, the UK and Canada (read Five Eyes) – single agencies with a wide span of responsibilities and customers. In July 2023 the *NZ Herald* commented: "The Government is pushing ahead with a plan to fold Cert NZ - the agency that helps the public and small businesses with cyberattacks - into the GCSB (PR emphasis).

"The move overrides opposition from the security industry ..." (NZH, 26/7/23) and describes the proceedings as "controversial". Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) continues to question the dominant role of the GCSB in cyber security operations; this new organisation emphasises the need for much more transparency in the Government's cybersecurity operations.

### GCSB Has "Unique Capabilities"

In March 2023 Andrew Hampton, then Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) Director-General, appeared before the Government's Intelligence and Security Select Committee to assert that the GCSB is increasingly working with other domestic agencies in the wake of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Christchurch shootings and that its "unique capabilities" were used in three counter-terrorism operations.

Hampton said the GCSB worked with the Police and NZSIS to "develop a clear picture of the real-world threat they posed". In the third case, the GCSB was able to "provide information that supported the appropriate action to be taken by Police." The first operation involved an individual making bomb threats in 2022 "with an

implied ideological motivation". Hampton didn't specify what this ideological motivation was. The second operation involved a New Zealand-based individual who adhered to "white-identity violent extremism" who Hampton said was "displaying behaviour of increasing concern online".

"The third involved an individual claiming to be a white-identity violent extremist making threats to use firearms and explosives at a public event," he said. "In all three operations, the GCSB was able to combine lead information with our unique technical capability to help identify the individuals, who had each taken great care to anonymise themselves online" (*Newshub* 27/3/23). Hampton said the lead information in these cases came from other agencies. But the GCSB used its technical capabilities to provide information about the individuals involved who were trying to obscure who they were online.

New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) Acting Director-General, Phil McKee, told the Committee that there had been a "clear shift in the dynamics of our national security" and "many of the threats we are facing stem in some ways from increased strategic competition... domestic terrorism still gives us cause for concern, but the transnational terror is not where it has been in the last decade".

The major concern was attempts by foreign states to gain a strategic or intelligence advantage with "... more frequent attempts to disrupt

and interfere in our democracy, our economy, our information environment and our social fabric" (*Newshub*, *ibid.*). Hampton, former GCSB head, is now the NZSIS Director-General.

### Spooks' "Bleak" Report

There was a briefing for MPs of the Intelligence and Security Committee on national security issues by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Rebecca Kitteridge, (the immediate past SIS Director-General) and Foreign Affairs at the beginning of August 2023. It reported a possibly "bleak" future lies ahead for New Zealand as contests between countries and threats from "malicious actors" worsen; and warned the risk of New Zealand being harmed by spying, cyberattack, transnational crime, and terrorism is going to worsen in the coming decade.

The report also included a survey of more than 1,000 New Zealanders, 80% of who ranked a natural disaster, misinformation, epidemic, or transnational crime as a real threat in the coming year, and decade. The spies said the survey and the other engagement showed the New Zealand public *did not clearly understand national security issues* (PR emphasis) or the Government's work. The report said given changes in society, some will be particularly susceptible to extremist ideologies,

In response to a question from National Leader Christopher Luxon and Deputy Leader Nicola Willis, which asked whether the country



SIS Director-General Andrew Hampton (he was also the immediate past GCSB Director-General)



was better prepared for cyber-attacks than a year earlier, and for terror attacks, Kitteridge said she thought so. Interestingly, it was National's Gerry Brownlee who seemed most sceptical about the bleakness of the report. The report said the most significant risks to the country were: threats to the global order (one example being the Ukraine War), changes to technology, such as the development of artificial intelligence; climate change and the availability of water, food, and land; and the ongoing effects of covid-19 and any future pandemics.

### **SIS Reports Chinese Interference**

The SIS public accountability showpiece involved the release in August 2023 of a declassified threat assessment report which said there were "foreign intelligence agencies who persistently and opportunistically conduct espionage operations against New Zealand". The spooks accused China of foreign interference in our democracy, according to the *Guardian* (11/8/23), adding that Chinese intelligence workers were involved in the targeting of ethnically Chinese communities in New Zealand. Iranian targeting of expats in Aotearoa/NZ and Russian disinformation were also highlighted.

### **What Are We Afraid Of?**

The 12 core issues stated to be those which "most directly impact our national security interests" were listed in the public report as: Strategic competition and the rules-based international system. Emerging, critical, and sensitive technologies. Disinformation. Foreign interference and espionage. Terrorism and violent extremism. Transnational organised crime. Economic security. Pacific resilience and security. Maritime security. Border security. Cyber security. Space security (*RNZ*, 5/8/23).

## **What's This About? We'd Love To Know!**

### **SEEK**

#### **Satellite Operations Technician**

Lockheed Martin Australia  
Invercargill Central, Southland  
Technicians (Trades & Services)  
Full time

#### **About Us:**

The coolest jobs on this planet... or any other... are with **Lockheed Martin Space**.

At the dawn of a new space age, Lockheed Martin is a pioneer, partner, innovator and builder. Our amazing men and women are on a mission to make a difference in the world and every single day we use our unique skills, talents and experiences to build solutions for some of the world's hardest engineering problems.

#### **The Programme:**

SouthPAN (Southern Positioning Augmentation Network) aims to significantly boost the accuracy, reliability and availability of satellite-based positioning services across New Zealand and Australia. The project is a joint effort between Geoscience Australia and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information NZ (LINZ).

#### **The Opportunity**

A fantastic opportunity has now become available for a Satellite Operations Technician to join our SouthPAN team stationed at Invercargill.

As the Satellite Operations Technician you will primarily support the operation of the Southern Positioning Augmentation Network through the following activities:

- Supporting a continuous shift as a trained and certified Southern Positioning Augmentation Network Controller/Planner.
- Conduct Tier 1 maintenance on the Southern Positioning Augmentation Network as directed by the Site Supervisor
- Support Southern Positioning Augmentation Network ILS effort.
- Support and participate in systems improvements.
- Provide technical maintenance to GNSS Reference Stations as directed.
- Conduct facility maintenance as directed.

#### **About You:**

Ideally you will have experience in operating a software intensive, widely dispersed, real-time system. Work experience in a Control Room environment, Satellite Ground Station experience or repair/maintenance of communication/radar systems

#### **To Be Considered For This Opportunity You Will Need To Have:**

NZQA level 4 diploma of technology or higher qualification or equivalent industry experience in one of the following disciplines.

- radio engineering
- communications engineering
- electrical engineering
- computer science
- information technology

*Since this was written, we've done a bit more digging. The Otago Daily Times (25/3/23) shed some light on it <https://www.odt.co.nz/regions/southland/trans-tasman-partnership-develops-world-class-technology> It will be a satellite positioning service, ostensibly for the likes of search and rescue. "Two 11m antennae are being built by project contractor Lockheed Martin Australia... Space Operations New Zealand Chief Executive Officer Robin McNeill said... (it is) strictly commercial and 'didn't do spies, didn't do military'". PR doesn't buy that and says that Lockheed Martin operating satellite positioning systems stinks of weapons/military-related activity. Ed*



## The US

### Dangers Of Public-Private Data Collection

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) reports that: the "US government intelligence agencies are buying data about (American citizens). The danger to our civil liberties is so extreme that even the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said things have gone too far in a detailed report released in June (2023)". The report states that most of the US spy agencies buy a huge amount of data from private surveillance activities.

They do not require warrants because the data is "publicly available... But the report warns that when the Government buys data about us, it threatens our privacy and civil liberties". It also stated that intelligence agencies were buying up so much data that the ODNI was not able to carry out oversight of all the purchases.

The FBI carried out three and a half million warrantless searches in 2021 and while the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (the spies' oversight mechanism) imposed limits on spook searches, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is said to have engaged in "widespread violations" of these

minimal protections (EFF, *ibid.*). *PR* notes that while concern has often been expressed in this country about the amount of commercially collected information, little attention has been paid to the potential of "public-private interchanges" to obliterate formerly sacred civil rights.

As the ODNI says, commercially available data, just like data the Government collects itself, can be "misused to pry into private lives, ruin reputations, and cause emotional distress and threaten the safety of individuals". This commercially available data "can disclose, for example, the detailed movements and associations of

individuals and groups, revealing political, religious, travel, and speech activities” (EFF, 14/7/23). Something that must be a matter of concern for the defenders of privacy and human rights in Aotearoa/NZ.

## Americans Suspicious Of Spooks

The Washington security agencies face scepticism about their activities and the need to sacrifice civil liberties to maintain security. A number of surveys show that there is widespread opposition to warrantless surveillance, even of targets outside the USA. One new poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research also shows that Democrats and Republicans have similar views on surveillance tactics.

Interestingly, Republicans have become substantially less likely over the past decade to say it's at least sometimes necessary to sacrifice freedom in response to threats. Traditionally, Democrats and Left-leaning citizens have been the more vocal about Government surveillance on privacy and civil liberties grounds. Now Republicans, driven by Trumpist conspiracy stories, are suspicious of the FBI and the spy agencies.

The poll asked US adults whether they support several practices authorised by Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It found that 28% of adults support the Government listening to phone calls made outside of the U.S. without a warrant, while 44% oppose the practice. Views are similar about the US reading emails sent between people outside of the US without a warrant. Only 48% of those polled said they believed it necessary to sacrifice their rights and freedoms to prevent terrorism, compared with over 60% in 2011, following a decade of the “War on Terror” (*Wisconsin State Journal*, 10/6/23).

## Feinstein's Battle With The CIA

The recently deceased US Senator Dianne Feinstein was the first woman to head the Senate Committee on Intelligence and deserves recognition for her determined push to reveal the true story of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) rendition and torture. She had to fight both the Obama Ad-

ministration and a vicious spook reaction to get a full report on Bush-era torture to the public.

As has been frequently referred to in *Spooky Bits*, soon after September 11, 2001, the CIA began sweeping up supposed plotters of terror attacks and held them at secret facilities worldwide. American interrogators, and foreign partners they directed, carried out appalling treatment that the Agency called “enhanced interrogation techniques”. It was revealed that CIA officials had kept torturing detainees even after they were ready to cooperate, or after the officials assessed that the detainees lacked valuable information (see *Huffington Post*, 30/9/23).

Against the opposition of Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, and the spooks, who were caught spying on her Committee, Feinstein released an “executive summary” of her Committee’s investigation which said waterboarding and painful restraints had been more widespread than was known, shed light on the CIA’s efforts to hide its activities from other officials all the way up to the President and emphatically denied any national security benefit of deploying torture. *PR* might not approve of all of her political career, but we must acknowledge the impact she had on some of the most despicable activity Five Eyes spooks have ever engaged in.

## The Trauma Of CIA Abuse

A military judge at Guantanamo Bay has ruled a 9/11 defendant

incompetent to stand trial after a military medical panel found that the man’s sustained abuse in CIA custody years earlier had rendered him lastingly psychotic (*Guardian*, 22/9/23). Ramzi bib al-Shibh was one of five defendants accused of involvement in the al-Qaida attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001.

In September 2023 a military medical panel diagnosed al-Shibh as having post-traumatic stress disorder with secondary psychosis, and linked it to his torture and solitary confinement during four years in CIA custody after his 2002 arrest. The five 9/11 defendants were variously subjected to repeated waterboarding, beatings, violent repeated searches of their rectal cavities, sleep deprivation and other abuse while at so-called CIA black sites. Joe Biden declined to approve post-trauma care when defence lawyers presented it as a condition in plea negotiations (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

## Trump Sues Ex-MI6 Officer

It seems the conspiracy influencer who might become next President of the USA is adding more court action to the several cases he is already wallowing in. British High Court records reveal Donald Trump is suing a former MI6 officer, who alleged Trump was compromised by Putin, and the intelligence consultancy he founded.

Christopher Steele’s dossier also stated that Putin “supported and directed” a plan to “cultivate”



Trump as a Presidential candidate. It should be noted that Steele was not just any MI6 officer, but actually headed the agency's Russia desk. Steele's dossier was leaked to the Website *BuzzFeed* in 2017 and created an uproar as Trump had just been elected. Steele and his Orbis Business Intelligence group have previously been sued for libel over the publication of the dossier; however, in a judgment in October 2020, Mr Justice Warby dismissed the claim (*Guardian*, 28/9/23).

### **Chinese Access 60,000 State Dept Emails**

Chinese operatives were reported to have accessed the inboxes of senior US State Department diplomats. The officials were involved in diplomacy in the Pacific ahead of a high-stakes trip to China by Secretary of State Antony Blinken in June 2023. These new details of Beijing's spying emerged from a briefing to Senators and their staffers in September (*CNN*, 28/9/23).

The hackers raided the email accounts of nine State Department officials who were focused on East Asia and the Pacific, and another official who works on European issues. *CNN* was told the emails were unclassified, which may or may not be true (it is unlikely the State Department would admit to having classified information stolen from its accounts). How useful the captured data, and the access path, would be to Chinese analysts is unknown.

Whether any of the emails pertained to Aotearoa/NZ is also unknown. Email accounts of the US Ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, and Daniel Kritenbrink, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia were accessed. Biden Administration officials are to review the US government's reliance on Microsoft technology.

### **Chinese Malware At US Bases**

The *New York Times* has reported that the US government is searching for Chinese malware that may be hidden in the software of a number of American facilities. The malware is a "ticking timebomb" that could allow China to interrupt or hinder American military deployments by cutting off power, water

and various communication channels to American military bases, according to one congressional official speaking to the newspaper (29/7/23). The *Times* also said that more than a dozen Government officials and experts said the Government effort to track down and eliminate the malware has been "under way for some time", although the full extent of the code's presence across various networks remains unknown due to how deeply it is hidden.

### **On The Other Hand ...**

Beijing has announced that it has identified a CIA spy who worked for an unidentified Chinese military industrial group in a role which gave him access to important classified information. The man is a Chinese citizen and was allegedly offered "a huge amount" of money and immigration to the US for his family, in exchange for sensitive information about the Chinese military.

In 2021 *CNN* reported that the agency was overhauling how it trains and manages its network of spies as part of a broad transition to focus more closely on adversaries like China and Russia. This announcement about the alleged CIA spy came shortly after two US Navy sailors in California were taken into custody because they are accused of providing sensitive US military information to Chinese intelligence officers (*CNN*, 11/8/23).

### **US Air Force Leaks Key Software**

The Pentagon is investigating a "critical compromise" of communications across 17 US Air Force facilities, according to reports by *Forbes* group and others. Following a tip-off and getting a search warrant, investigators found an open computer screen with a 48-year-old engineer running Motorola radio programming software that "contained the entire Arnold Air Force Base (AAFB) communications system", *Forbes* reported (*Guardian*, 29/7/23).

The engineer had a USB stick which contained "administrative passwords and electronic system keys" for the Air Force's training command radio network. It added that a colleague had reported him

twice due to "insider threat indicators" as well as unauthorised possession of Air Force equipment, according to investigators. Witnesses and co-workers informed investigators that the engineer had allegedly "sold radios and radio equipment, worked odd hours, was arrogant, frequently lied, displayed inappropriate workplace behaviour and sexual harassment, had financial problems, and possessed (Arnold Air Force Base land mobile radio) equipment" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

### **Russian Propaganda?**

Newly declassified US intelligence claims Russia is laundering propaganda through unwitting Westerners. "Russian intelligence is operating a systematic programme to launder pro-Kremlin propaganda through private relationships between Russian operatives and unwitting US and Western targets" (*CNN*, 26/8/23).

Russian civilians are building relationships with influential US and Western individuals and then disseminating stories that support Kremlin objectives. One example is said to be a false study that claimed the humanitarian group the White Helmets – which operates in Syria – was running a black market for human organs and had faked chemical attacks by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Some stories later emerged on Rightwing media in the United States. Or could it all just be mirrors and Washington propaganda?

### **How Good Is US Tech Warfare?**

Recently North Korea has experienced a number of dramatic space launch failures. It's second attempt to launch a spy satellite into orbit in late August 2023 failed due to a malfunction in the third-stage of the rocket. The unsuccessful launch followed the first attempt in May 2023, when the new satellite vehicle rocket Chollima-1 crashed into the sea soon after liftoff (*CNN*, 23/8/23). Reuters reported (22/8/23) that Russia's first Moon mission in 47 years failed when its Luna-25 space craft spun out of control and crashed into the Moon after a problem preparing for pre-landing orbit.

Space projects frequently fail. But is it too far-fetched, especially in the case of North Korean launches,

to speculate that Washington can stuff up these operations? A number of years ago American tech experts claimed credit for destroying Iran's production of fissionable material. And not only can such intervention set back military "progress", the astronomical (pun intended) cost of these missions, when they fail, is a significant economic burden.

The *Guardian*, (28/9/23) states that the Governor of Russia's Bryansk region, claimed on *Telegram* that electronic warfare was used to down a Ukrainian drone on the approach to the city of Bryansk. Anti-missile programmes are a key element of modern warfare. There will be a number of similar attempts to crash 'hostile' operations that have yet to be revealed.

### **Nuke Powered Spacecraft**

The US has advanced plans for using nuclear powered rockets in space. And Lockheed Martin is at the forefront of the developments. NASA and the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) have contracted Colorado-based Lockheed Martin Space as the prime contractor for the design, build, and testing of a nuclear-powered rocket demonstration, in collaboration with other industry partners. The intention is to test a nuclear-powered rocket in space as soon as 2027 (*Swaraiya Website*, 29/7/23). At this time, it is not clear what Rocket Lab's part in this project might be (see other comment in *Spooky Bits*).

## **The UK**

### **SAS Killings And Coverup**

"Britain's SAS (Special Air Service) faces allegations that it shot dead nine Afghans while they were sleeping and engaged in a policy of 'executing Afghan males of fighting age' between 2010 and 2013, on the first day of a public inquiry into the killing of 80 civilians in Afghanistan" (*Guardian*, 9/10/23). The newspaper goes on to say: (The special forces) "carried out a policy of executing Afghan males of fighting age in circumstances where they posed no immediate threat or were *hors de combat* (unable to perform combat duties), in scenarios where they were vulnerable or said to have

suddenly produced a gun or grenade" (*Guardian*, *ibid*. See also, *BBC* same date).

The *Daily Mail*, a Rightwing newspaper, states that the inquiry reveals attempts to cover up the war crimes. SAS headquarters deleted digital files before military police investigating claims of unlawful killings could review them. Even though there had been an agreement with detectives investigating the killings, key evidence was deleted from the relevant server by contractors at Special Forces Headquarters (*Mail*, 11/10/23). It has also emerged that the Military Police Commander responsible decided to take no action over the deletion of data. This decision meant investigators made no attempt to recover whatever data had been deleted, and it is no longer available to the inquiry.

Specific details given at the inquiry relate to: (1) a night raid on 7 February 2011, when nine Afghan males, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed and three AK47 assault rifles recovered; (2) a night raid on 9 February 2011 where eight Afghans were killed, including four by friendly fire from their own side, the SAS said. Four AK-47s were found in a search of the site after the raid had concluded; (3) a night raid on 16 February 2011 in which four members of one family were killed, including a man called Saddam Hussein.

British intelligence said he was a Taliban military commander – but his family said he was a student in Lashkar Gah and could not have been an insurgent, while the other victims were civilians. *PR* reminds readers that in 2022 a number of Australian SAS troops were found to have murdered civilians in Afghanistan in similar circumstances.

### **American Nukes Back In UK**

The US Air Force has secured \$US50m (£39m) funding in 2024 for a project that could pave the way for American nuclear weapons to return to British soil for the first time in more than 15 years (*Guardian*, 29/8/23). At RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, the US Air Force is building a dormitory intended to "house the increase in enlisted personnel as the result of the *potential surety mission*".

According to experts in the field this is jargon typically used by the Pentagon to refer to handling of nuclear weapons. The *Guardian* reports Matt Korda, from the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), as stating: "... 'potential surety mission' .... is a term commonly used in the Defense Department and the nuclear weapons complex to refer to the positive control of nuclear weapons in a safe and secure way" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

In 2008, the Pentagon withdrew its nukes from Lakenheath, after having a stockpile in England since 1954. The B61 bombs are regarded as obsolete, but because of extensive nuclear weapons' modernisation programmes by the USA and Russia, and the Ukraine War, new variants of these bombs are being developed (*Guardian*, 12/4/22).

According to FAS, in the 2023 defence budget, the UK was added to the list of countries where infrastructure investment is under way on "special weapons" storage sites in Europe, alongside Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. The UK Ministry of Defence would neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a given location, the *Guardian* article states, adding that if such weapons are based in the UK, it is likely they would remain under US military control.

According to a Federation of American Scientists' graphic in an accompanying article, the Pentagon has one air base with nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, one each in Belgium and Germany, two in Italy and one in Turkey. The FAS estimates there are about 100 B61 gravity bombs in storage in those five countries.

### **MI5 Apology**

The failure of MI5 to prevent an attack by a suicide bomber in north west England in 2017 was noted in *Spooky Bits* in *PR* 65 (June 2023). An inquiry into the Manchester bombing, which killed 22 people at an Ariana Grande concert, concluded the spy agency had missed a significant opportunity to prevent the tragedy.

In March 2023 MI5 issued an official apology. The head of MI5 said he was "profoundly sorry" the se-

curity service did not prevent the Manchester Arena attack. "Gathering covert intelligence is difficult," he told the *BBC*. "But had we managed to seize the slim chance we had, those impacted might not have experienced such appalling loss and trauma."

A *BBC* source said that, contrary to best practice on handling intelligence, there was no joint assessment of the information with Counter Terrorism Policing North West or other counterterrorism police. A second source described it as a huge mistake and a failure of assessment by MI5 (*BBC*, 31/3/23).

### Oversight "Severely Hampered"

Spy SOP (standard operating procedure) is that when your oversight committee asks too many questions, you fudge and delay. The *Guardian* reported in December 2022 that the main UK spook agencies had been heavily criticised by the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) for "failure to meet deadlines" (13/12/22).

Parliament's watchdog complained that MI5, MI6, GCHQ and the other spy agencies that it oversees were failing to respond to its inquiries in time – meaning that some of its work could not be completed on time. It also warned that Ministers had failed to properly oversee the growing intelligence activities contained within Government departments, leading to "genuinely troubling" gaps in oversight. Committee members said they had repeatedly raised concerns but had been rebuffed by officials. 2022's annual ISC report was also held up for several months because the Prime Minister, presumably at the behest of spy officials, would not release it.

*Spooky Bits* includes this slightly older story because of the importance of oversight mechanisms being properly effective; lack of cooperation with the New Zealand intelligence Inspector-General is a recurring theme in this country and hopes that our Intelligence and Security Committee will be given some significant canines and molars in current spy reorganisation are slim.

### Chinese Spy At Westminster

The British Parliament, and the Tory Party in particular, has been thrown into uproar after a researcher at Parliament was arrested under the Official Secrets Act, amid claims he was spying for China. Two men, one in his 20s and another in his 30s, were arrested under the act in March 2023. Sources have told the *BBC* that one of them was a Parliamentary researcher involved in international affairs is-

na (*BBC*, *ibid.*) Spooks in Australia and Canada have also reported Chinese espionage or interference in politics, with the Chinese government denying any such activity.

### Russians Spying For UK

Head of MI6, Sir Richard Moore, revealed in July 2023 that MI6 had recruited a number of Russians disaffected by the Ukraine War. Moore was speaking at the British Embassy in Prague, referring to

"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

sues. He was in close contact with a number of Tory MPs, including the Minister of State for Security, Tom Tugendhat and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairwoman Alicia Kearns (*BBC*, 11&12/9/23). This man had lived in China for some time. It has not been revealed if he is Chinese

The arrests have renewed debate over the UK relationship with Beijing. As in Aotearoa/NZ and other Five Eyes countries, there has been growing concern expressed by security agencies about Chinese espionage and also clandestine meddling in political and social activities, with questions about whether more action should be taken to mitigate risks, given that all of the Five Eyes countries are heavily involved in economic relations with Beijing.

In 2022, a "Parliamentary interference alert" was issued in the UK regarding the activities of a woman called Christine Lee, because MI5 alleged that she had been carrying out political interference activities including donating funds to support the work of MPs. This was said by the spooks to be on behalf of Chi-

the Russian tanks that over-ran the city in 1968, and appealing for more exiled Russians to work with his agency. "We will handle their offers of help with the discretion and professionalism for which my service is famed. Their secrets will always be safe with us," he added (*BBC*, 19/7/23).

### GCHQ's First Female Director

In 2023 Anne Keast-Butler became the first female Director of UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ, the equivalent of NZ's GCSB). But what is she paid? The gender pay gap is 11% at GCHQ, where a third of staff are women (*Daily Mail*, 3/9/23). According to the *Mail* (a Rightwing tabloid) female spies are being paid much less to do the same frontline roles as male agents. The *Mail on Sunday* reports figures from domestic spooks MI5, where 47% of staff are women, reveal a 16% gender pay gap. A third of spies at MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service, are women, but they are paid 7.3% less.

PR notes that the gender pay gap for the spies is probably no different to most other sectors, But women are often at the centre of operations, partly because of the need for multi-language skills. They are employed as agent handlers, intelligence officers and surveillance operatives – some of the most important roles in intelligence work\*. MI5 has also had two female chiefs, but a woman has yet to be appointed as “C”, the code-name for the head of MI6.

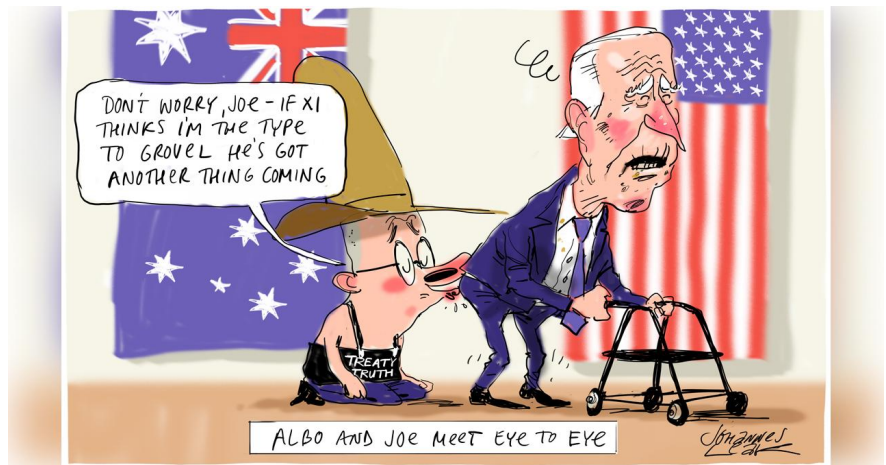
\*The work of women in GCHQ is neatly captured in the movie “Official Secrets”, the true story of how GCHQ employee Katherine Gun went public on American attempts to manipulate the UN vote on backing the 2003 invasion of Iraq. An absolutely must-see movie!

Former Army intelligence officer Colonel Phil Ingram, commenting on the data in the *Mirror* (2/9/22), said: “There shouldn’t be any pay gap between genders in any employment, never mind with Government agencies. I am shocked the agencies admit there still is and can’t understand how this couldn’t be rectified immediately”.

### Historical Dirty Tricks

A special unit in Kenya was used in the 1960s to spread disinformation and smear the leading Leftwing politician Oginga Odinga, who was at one time Kenya’s Vice-President. Both the British and Americans were extensively involved at the time using clandestine action to counter the “communist threat”. Odinga favoured radical domestic policies and was financially supported by Moscow and Beijing, and was defeated by London’s man, Jomo Kenyatta.

Declassified files reveal four “black” operations against Odinga. Sophisticated propaganda activities portrayed Odinga as a tool of Chinese communism and intending to remove all foreign influences from Africa (*Guardian*, 6/8/23). Regrettably, this manipulation continues to this day, with spooks from both countries supporting hit squads in Kenya and other countries in what is a remnant of the “War on Terror”. Odinga’s son is currently a leading Kenyan politician.



Albanese and Biden

## AUSTRALIA

An Australian-owned mobile phone operator in the Pacific Islands has likely been used by private spy firms to track people on the other side of the world and steal their data, according to an expert cyber security analysis. An analysis by the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab shows mobile phone users in Africa were targeted by private spy firms in a hack method that has been used in the past by both spy-for-hire operations and State actors (*RNZ*, 1/9/23). Among those found in earlier reporting to have been targeted using Digicel Pacific’s global titles was a Mexican journalist, Fredid Román, whose phone was pinged for location data in the 24 hours before he was shot dead in 2022 (*RNZ*, *ibid.*).

Australian telecommunications operator Telstra owns Fiji-based Digicel Pacific after taking it over in July 2022 with \$US1.33 billion in Australian government funding. While Canberra is focused on Chinese spying, “Citizen Lab’s analysis suggests that Telstra has had to contend with another security threat on the network: for-profit surveillance companies” (*ibid.*). Digicel Pacific global titles from five countries - Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu - were used to lodge over 21,000 suspicious queries in the 12 months to July 2023.

The private spooks sell their services to governments as a way to track criminals and terrorists, but

these services are frequently used to spy on journalists, activists, and political dissidents. This hack involved the use of “global titles” belonging to Digicel Pacific. Global titles are a kind of address on 3G networks, which can be used to send queries to phones connected to mobile providers anywhere on Earth. The potential for criminal activity, or dirty covert ops by official agencies, is huge. PR repeats the need to be concerned over the dangers of private companies engaged in unacceptable hacking and surveillance (see US section, above).

### US, Australia Tighten Spook Ties

“American intelligence analysts will be embedded within Defence’s spy agency in Canberra, after high-level talks binding Australia and America closer together in response to China’s growing threat to regional stability” [*Financial Review* 30/7/23]. As Canberra buys into the Pentagon’s strategic military plan for the Pacific, with major plans to extend bases and US military “assets” in Australia, the spies are also cementing Five Eyes co-operation.

The two countries will establish a Combined Intelligence Centre – Australia within Australia’s own Defence Intelligence Organisation by the end of 2024. US Defence Intelligence Agency officials will be stationed side by side with Australian counterparts at the new headquarters in Canberra. An academic who is head of the Australian National University’s National Security College said that this seems to suggest an intensification of intelligence sharing in operational and practical ways. Additionally,

the Americans will deploy a US Navy spy plane to conduct surveillance flights. Presumably this will operate alongside existing Australian flights and the horrendously expensive surveillance to be carried out by the NZ Air Force's new planes.

## OTHER SPOOKY BITS

### Your Car Spies On You

Hard to separate paranoia from reality these days! But one foundation which monitors Internet matters studied major car brands and found some collecting data on "sexual activity" and "political opinions". A study of 25 car brands found they all failed consumer privacy tests carried out by Internet-focused non-profit Mozilla Foundation. It's research found that 84% of car companies review, share or sell data collected from car owners.

Mozilla found that all the car brands it reviewed collected more personal data than necessary and personal information collected was used for reasons unrelated to the operation of a vehicle and the car brand's relationship with drivers. The research accuses Nissan and Kia of collecting data related to people's sex lives, as well as medical data and genetic information. Where you go and what you listen to is also part of the data available to the car companies (*Guardian*, 6/9/23). The data can be captured by recording all the driver's interaction with the Internet. The car brands can make big money by selling the data to related services.

### Modern Tech Warfare

Ukraine cyber-operators have explained to the *BBC* (6/9/23) how fighting the Russians means a new kind of high-tech battle where teams mix the skills of hackers and special forces; they aim to get inside Russian systems, working alongside snipers and they deploy the latest technologies. Among these is artificial intelligence (AI) visual recognition systems to analyse information gathered from aerial drones (alongside intelligence from human sources, satellites and other technical sources) to provide targets for the military. They can predict which type of military weapons the Russians are about to use and in what direction.

Cyber and missile attacks have been used in tandem. The Ukrainians can hack into surveillance cameras on occupied territory to watch Russian troop movements. And they can direct kamikaze drones to take out Russian cameras spying on Ukrainian movements. This needless, tragic, devastating war has a big upside for the Pentagon; not only do they get astronomical amounts of funding for new weaponry, they also get a ready-made testing ground to experiment on.

### Israeli Spook Failure

Israel's spies are often regarded as being exceptional in their ability to carry out security operations (not a lot is said about the brutality of some of their methods!) But October 2023's major attack on the country, launched from Gaza, has badly dented the reputation of Shin Bet (the domestic spies) and Mossad (the external spooks). Israeli intelligence did not see this attack coming. Dozens of armed Palestinian gunmen were able to cross the heavily fortified border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, and thousands of rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel, with no warning.

Israel's spy system is large and extremely well-funded. As the *BBC* notes: "It has informants and agents inside Palestinian militant groups, as well as in Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere. It has, in the past, carried out precisely timed assassinations of militant leaders,

knowing all their movements intimately. Sometimes these have been done with drone strikes, after agents have placed a GPS tracker on an individual's car; sometimes in the past it has even used exploding mobile phones" (*BBC*, 7/10/23). Ah well! Like every other intelligence failure we witness, the most likely result is more money and more employees for the spooks.

### Indian Govt Using Assassination

Near the end of September 2023, Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, made a diplomatically explosive announcement in the Canadian Parliament: he stated a Sikh separatist had been murdered on Canadian soil with the involvement of the Indian government, who had targeted the man for his activism in the Sikh separatist movement.

Authorities on spycraft have expressed disbelief, with "many saying that foreign killings have not historically been part of India's intelligence playbook" (*Guardian*, 22/9/23). They say if India was behind Hardeep Singh Nijjar's death it would signal radical change in its foreign intelligence methods. *PR* notes that India's Prime Minister is a ruthless Rightwinger who has tacitly supported violence for his own ends in his own country often. And most spy agencies have no problem with assassination if they deem it necessary, and if they think they won't get caught!





# NICKY HAGER

## NZ's Most Famous Investigative Journalist Honoured By State

By Murray Horton

*This was originally written for the online US magazine, Covert Action, <https://covertactionmagazine.com/>. It was published there in September 2023, lavishly illustrated and with a different title <https://covertactionmagazine.com/2023/09/06/in-the-u-s-investigative-journalists-are-blacklisted-ostracized-and-even-jailed-in-new-zealand-they-are-honored/>*

*The two people featured in this – Nicky Hager and Owen Wilkes – have been (or, in Owen's case, were) friends and colleagues for decades. Owen was a founder of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). Nicky's first book "Secret Power" remains the definitive work on the Waihopai spy base, the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and Five Eyes. It is good to see them getting due recognition in the US, and further afield. MH*

Julian Assange has, thus far, spent years in a British prison, awaiting extradition to the US, where he faces charges under the Espionage Act, for which he could be sentenced to 175 years in prison. And his crime? Journalism. On the other side of the world the New Zealand State offers a startling contrast in its approach to the country's most famous investigative journalist, Nicky Hager.

New Zealand has an Honours List, announced twice yearly. This is very much an occasion for the Establishment to pat itself on the back – for example, the June 2023 King's Birthday Honours List featured Jacinda Ardern, the immediate past Prime Minister, being declared a Dame ("for services to the State") by her successors in Government.



Nicky Hager with his 2011 book 'Other People's Wars'

But that same list contained something very unusual, unprecedented in fact. An award was given to Nicky Hager, specifically for his investigative journalism. This has never happened before. And frankly, considering the number of senior politicians and other powerful people that he has pissed off during his nearly 30-year career, it was not something that would have been predicted.

### Exposed Waihopai

Nicky is famous globally, not just in New Zealand. He cut his teeth on NZ's successful anti-nuclear campaign of the 1970s and 80s. He burst into global recognition with his remarkable first book, "Secret Power" (1996), which was a minutely detailed description of NZ's top secret Waihopai electronic spy base and of the workings of the spy agency which runs it, the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and of the Five Eyes spy network (US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ), which provides the international framework for Waihopai and the GCSB.

"Secret Power's" Introduction was written by David Lange who, as NZ's Labour Prime Minister in the 80s, had both steered the country to the nuclear-free status that it enjoys until today, and authorised the construction of the Waihopai spy base. Lange confessed that he learned more about Waihopai from Nicky's manuscript than he ever did when he was Prime Minister, and was supposedly in charge of the intelligence agencies.

"Secret Power" was just the first of seven books (so far). "Secrets And Lies" (1999) was about the secret campaign of a former State-owned enterprise to win public support for the logging of native forests and to smear environmental groups. "Seeds Of Distrust" (2002) was about lobbying and cover ups concerning genetic modification (which remains banned in NZ). This was released just as the Labour government called a snap election, and the appearance of Nicky's book seriously pissed off the Prime Minister, Helen Clark.

### Brought Down Rightwing Leader Of Opposition

Two of Nicky's books have lifted the lid on the cesspit of politics in NZ and each had a major impact. "The Hollow Men" (2006) exposed the secret funding of the Opposition National Party's 2005 election campaign advertising by the obsessively secretive Exclusive Brethren church. The resultant uproar led to the resignation of the National Party Leader, Don Brash.

"Dirty Politics" (2014), published in an election year, examined the links between senior figures in the National Party (by now back in Government) and various unsavoury Rightwing attack trolls and bloggers. This created such a sensation that "dirty politics" entered the language to describe a particular modus operandi by behind-the-scenes political operators.

## Unearthing Truth About Special Forces

And two of Nicky's books – "Other People's Wars" (2011) and "Hit & Run" (2017) – have focussed on the activities of the NZ military in Afghanistan. The most recent of those forensically examined the activities of the Special Air Service (SAS) in a retaliatory raid on two Afghan villages that led to civilian deaths. The National government declined calls for a commission of inquiry. But the new Labour government decided to hold one (a former Labour Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Palmer, was one Commissioner).

In 2020 it released a number of findings critical of the NZ Defence Force and made a number of recommendations, including the creation of an Independent Inspector-General of Defence. When releasing the report, Attorney-General David Parker said: "Without the book, the findings of the report and its important recommendations would not have been possible. Given this, it is right to acknowledge, as does the report, that the book has performed a valuable public service".

Jeremy Agar reviewed several of Nicky's book in *Peace Researcher* over a decade: "The Hollow Men" in *PR* 34 (July 2007); "Other People's Wars" in *PR* 42 (November 2011); "Dirty Politics" in *PR* 48 (November 2014) and "Hit And Run" in *PR* 53 (June 2017). All those reviews can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>.

## Cops & Spies Have Had To Apologise To Him & Pay Damages

Nicky has never been charged with anything nor sued by anyone. But the State has gone after him – and lost every time. In June 2018, he accepted an apology and compensation for "substantial damages" from the Police for raiding his home in 2014 as part of their investigation into the hacking that led to the "Dirty Politics" book. The Police also acknowledged accessing his financial records as part of the apology settlement.

In 2019 the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) was ordered to formally apologise to Nicky for unlawfully obtaining and using two

months of his phone records to try and find his military source/s for "Other People's Wars". In 2022 the SIS was ordered to back up that apology with a payment of \$66,000 damages and costs, in return for Nicky settling the case out of court.

None of Nicky's sources – ranging from spies to SAS soldiers to political insiders - has ever been outed. He has gone from being routinely branded a "conspiracy theorist" by very senior politicians and their media mouthpieces to being recognised as a vital part of a functioning democracy. He is a true independent journalist in the best Kiwi do it yourself tradition. He has never worked for any media outlet. His previous job was as a builder (he built his own Wellington hillside home).

And he is extremely popular – after his award was announced he told TVNZ's *1 News*: "I couldn't go out on the street or to the supermarket for maybe a year or two after (publishing 'Dirty Politics') without someone coming up to congratulate me. I was blown away. Walking the dog out and about, every single time, there would be at least one person who thanked me. So, I don't feel deprived of good feedback from the public".

"But he says he's not planning on stepping back from his work any time soon. 'I want to say this very clearly - this is not an end-of-career award for me. There are many big projects, good projects coming down the line'. So, people in power should watch out? He just nods and smiles" (5/6/23, Dewi Preece) <https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/06/05/nicky-hager-awarded-onzm-for-his-investigative-journalism/>

## Standing On The Shoulders Of Giants: Owen Wilkes

Nicky deserves all the kudos he has coming to him but he didn't arrive out of thin air. He started off in the peace movement, working with New Zealand's greatest peace researcher, Owen Wilkes (1940-2005). They were an interesting mix of styles, of tradecraft. Nicky's speciality has been getting insiders and whistle blowers to spill the beans, along with an uncanny ability to research and find things out by first hand observation (he took John Campbell, a mainstream TV

reporter, inside the Waihopai spy base and they were able to film right into the place because the spies didn't close their curtains properly).

Owen had an astonishing ability to read thousands of eye-glazing pages of US government and military documents to extract the kernels of truth hidden within. Plus, he had a classic Kiwi DIY research approach. I can give you two examples from personal experience. He spent six years in Scandinavia in the 1970s and 80s, working for two prestigious peace research institutes (and getting prosecuted under Norway and Sweden's official secrets acts for finding out too much of what they were up to).

I, and my then partner, accompanied him on a research trip to northernmost mainland Norway, an area of NATO spy bases close to the Soviet Union. Owen parted company with us for a while and headed off on his own. It was only decades later (well after his death) that I learned that he had actually clandestinely entered the Soviet Union, fording an Arctic border river wearing his trademark shorts. He lived to tell the tale, although God knows what would have happened if he'd been caught, in the Cold War world of 1978.

The other example was in New Zealand, during the 80s. He drove me to the GCSB's other spy base, Tangimoana, straight up into the place in broad daylight. He was hardly inconspicuous: no driver's licence, shorts, bare feet. Oh, and he was wearing a red cap labelled "KGB Agent" that he'd bought at a Wellington jumble sale. Once we'd parked, he invited me to join him in climbing the fence and pacing out the distance between aerials to assist his calculations. I can still remember the sunlight glinting off the binoculars as the spies watched us from the main building.

## Long Overdue Recognition

For a quarter of a century (from the late 1960s until the early 90s) Owen was the global expert on US military and spy bases in New Zealand, Australia, and other countries such as the Philippines and Japan. He has been dead nearly 20 years but he is now getting the recognition he deserves. In 2022, he was the subject of "Peacemonger", a book of essays about him by writ-



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

ers from around the world. I wrote the essay on him and the anti-bases campaign (which you can read in *PR* 65, June 2023; <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>). Nicky wrote the essay on Owen's tradecraft. And the mainstream media is getting on the bandwagon. In June 2023 NZ's biggest chain of newspapers put him on the cover of its weekly lifestyle magazine, with a four page spread inside (*Press*, 10/6/23, Eugene Bingham) <https://www.thepress.co.nz/a/wellbeing/350019229/remembering-the-extraordinary-life-of-peace-activist-owen-wilkes>

It's well worth reading. And it was a major coup getting it into such a publication, not to mention downright odd. Owen would have loved the irony of him gracing the cover of a magazine devoted to fashion, music, food and "wellness". The fashionistas would have been nonplussed to open their usual read, only to find the cover photo was of some real old school bearded dude in shorts and bare feet sitting in a hut (I only have one fashion story of Owen. After high school I swore never to wear shorts again. Decades later I told Owen I'd changed my mind. He replied: "I was always a trendsetter". But I never went as far as the leather ones he favoured).

Nicky Hager and Owen Wilkes, two of New Zealand's greatest taonga - gifted to the world.

# OWEN WILKES DEAD SINCE 2005 But SIS Still Won't Release His File

By Murray Horton

*This was originally published in Foreign Control Watchdog 163 (August 2023). Owen Wilkes was a founder of both the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) and the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). MH*

## SIS Now Says He Was "Never Considered To Be A Threat To Security" WTF?

NZ's globally renowned peace researcher Owen Wilkes has been dead since 2005, but he's still very much in the news. Throughout his decades of peace research, both in NZ and overseas, Owen was the subject of intense interest by spy agencies, none more so than the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS). *Watchdog* and *Peace Researcher* have been reporting this slow-moving saga for decades. He features throughout the SIS file on CAFCA ("SIS Spied On CAFCA For A Quarter Of A Century", Murray Horton, *Watchdog* 120, May 2009) <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/20/06.htm>

CAFCA tried to get the SIS Personal File on Owen. The SIS released a tiny smidgen of it. And that was the end of it as far as CAFCA was concerned. To get that, we had to work with Owen's younger brother, his only surviving blood relative, as he was (and is) the only person with legal standing to request access to Owen's file.

Despite Owen having retired from his peace work many years before he died, the SIS still won't release his full file to family or researchers, only the odd sliver of it. The SIS admits to holding six volumes on Owen. Among the reasons given for continuing to withhold it is that releasing it "would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand".

Maire Leadbeater, the veteran and indefatigable activist and historian, took up the cudgel. She secured some more of Owen's SIS file, also with the vital cooperation of Owen's brother. Reading those documents led me, in 2019, to straight away ring Owen's ex-wife, Joan Hazlehurst (the exact 1976 date of their legal separation is recorded in the file) to inform her that she is listed in it as "Relative Of Interest" (i.e., wife) and was therefore likely to be the subject of her own SIS file. I urged Joan to apply for it.

She didn't do so until 2023, when she asked the SIS for what it has on file about her. And she duly received a small amount of material, in May 2023, which she promptly copied to me. The accompanying letter to her (15/5/23) from SIS Director, Andrew Hampton, says that she was never the subject of an SIS Personal File. Any material it held on her was in Owen's file.

There is one paragraph in Hampton's letter that cannot pass without challenge, in fact it is breathtaking. "As a high-profile peace activist during a period when the USSR sought to use the legitimate peace movement to further its own geo-political objectives, Owen Wilkes came to NZSIS attention (as did you, purely by association). Mr Wilkes was never, however, considered to be a threat to security" (my emphasis. MH). Which begs the question: If "Mr Wilkes was never considered to be a threat to security", why did the SIS spy on him for decades (and on people close to him, such as his then wife)? Why does the SIS still refuse to release the bulk of its file on him?

## Still Lying About NZ Peace Movement

Then there is the not-so-subtle smear of the "legitimate peace movement" being used by the former USSR to "further its own geo-political objectives". That was an outrageous lie then and even more so in a letter written in May 2023. What is SIS Director Hampton implying here? For example, is the suggestion that those who successfully campaigned for NZ to become nuclear free (something that is so much part of the cultural furniture that it is used in beer commercials) were puppets of the

Kremlin? The SIS needs to explain why it spied on someone for decades who was "never considered a threat to security". And release his full file forthwith. And the SIS needs to apologise to the peace movement (not just the "legitimate" one. Was there an illegitimate one?) for still spouting tired old Cold War libels.



Owen & Joan Wilkes on 1971 protest march. Owen is carrying their daughter Koa. Photo: Ron Hazlehurst

## China Friendship Society Spied On

I'm not going to detail any of what is about Owen in this latest release. It's from so long ago (Owen and Joan were married from 1964-76) and is frankly trivial. Although I was amused to see him describe his occupation on one international travel document as "subsistence farmer". SIS Director Hampton wrote to Joan: "We consider it is appropriate to explain why the NZSIS holds historical information about you from 1966 through to 1990. Briefly, you came to the attention of the NZSIS because of your membership of the NZ-China Friendship Society (NZCFS) and your marriage to Owen Wilkes".

"During the Cold War the various communist parties were deemed subversive and also their influence in front and friendship organisations, and mainstream protest movements. The NZCFS was among such friendship organisations until 1984, when the Society was assessed as no longer being of security interest" (letter, 15/5/23, *ibid.*). The SIS devoted a lot of time trying to track Joan's international

travels during the 24 years it was spying on her.

Joan Hazlehurst (or Wilkes, as she was back then) took part in CAFCA's two foundational activities. In 1974 she and Owen were among the Kiwis – I was another – who took part in the Long March, a bus trip right across Aussie, from Sydney to the US Navy's nuclear submarine communications base at North West Cape, the westernmost point of mainland Australia.

And in 1975 she and Owen (and I) were among the two busloads of people (including Aussies) who comprised the South Island Resistance Ride, which was inspired by the Long March. Out of this arose CAFGINZ, which morphed into CAFCA in the 80s. Owen was one of our founders. Joan was one of those who typed the very first versions of what was to become *Watchdog* onto stencils for printing on a Gestetner. The anti-bases campaign branched out from CAFGINZ in the early 80s, firstly as Citizens for the Demilitarisation of Harewood, and then the Anti-Bases Campaign in the late 80s.

# WHY IS AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND SILENT ON NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION DANGERS?

## When Its Voice For Sanity Is Vital Now

By Kay Weir

Kay Weir has worked for the Pacific Institute of Resource Management in Wellington since 1994. She edited the *Pacific World* magazine

*and later Pacific Ecologist, which promoted ecology, justice and sustainability concerns. In recent years she has written submissions to Government about continuing conflicts and wars which have destroyed several countries, killed millions, and prevented the world from solving ecological and sustainability problems. See [www.pirm.org.nz](http://www.pirm.org.nz) and [pacificecologist.org](http://pacificecologist.org)*

Aotearoa has been admired and respected worldwide for standing up to Western powers, America, France, and Britain for their outrageous experiments with nuclear weapons of mass destruction on pristine Pacific Islands. In 1973, under Prime Minister Kirk, we sent a frigate to Mururoa with Minister Fraser Coleman on board. In 1985, under Prime Minister Lange, we refused to have America's nuclear-capable war ships in our ports. We have nuclear-free legislation and a Minister for Disarmament.

People from other countries have appreciated our country's efforts to

protect the Earth from weapons of mass destruction. Some even left their own countries and came to live here because of this. So, why has our Government been silent on clear and present dangers of nuclear annihilation in 2023, when on January 24 the *Washington Post* reported: "The Doomsday Clock hits 90 seconds to midnight, its most dire prediction ever"?

### NATO's Biggest Exercises In Its History

In 2023 NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) proudly reported it held the biggest military exercises ever in its history. Its Air Defender Exercises from June 12-24 took place dangerously close to the theatre of war in Ukraine. During NATO's June exercises in Europe, America's dual conventional weapons and nuclear-capable F16 fighter planes took off from Germany's Ramstein Air Base. The Ukraine war pits Russia, a major nuclear weapons-possessing country, against America, the other major nuclear power, which supports

Ukraine, (currently no nuclear weapons).

America's European NATO allies in the Ukraine War, controversially, have for years stored American nuclear weapons, undermining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. All this makes the Ukraine War the most dangerous war in history with major nuclear powers facing off against each other. According to Leon Panetta, former US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director and Defense Secretary: "Intelligence analysts now believe the probability of the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine has risen from 1-5% at the start of the war to 20-25% today".

It's widely recognised in mainstream Western circles that NATO's expansion eastward to Russia's borders was a trigger for Russia's Special Military Operation on 24 February, 2022. NATO's expansion into Europe from 1996 onwards repeatedly violated a critical security agreement with the former Soviet Union in 1991 not to expand NATO's military bases eastward when the Soviet forces left East Germany to allow Germany's reunification. See "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard" (National Security Archive, [https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/4\\_1.jpg](https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/4_1.jpg)).

Russian Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev warned the West repeatedly for two decades that NATO's expansion constituted an existential threat to Russia, and senior American advisers agreed. America would certainly not allow nuclear weapons on its own borders or even on a small island off the coast – Cuba. Why do they think Russia should accept this threat to its security? Both Russian Presidents have understandably advocated for years a European security architecture taking into account the security concerns of all countries, **including** Russia.

But Russia's legitimate security concerns were irresponsibly rejected by America and NATO many times. In a last-ditch effort on 17 December, 2021, President Putin again presented security treaties as a starting point for an agreement on mutual security with the US and NATO, but was rebuffed, and the Ukraine Armed Forces



continued to shell its ethnic Russian citizens in south-east Ukraine, which borders Russia.

### **US-NATO Illegal Activities Provoke Ukraine War**

Russia's intervention in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 would not have been necessary if the Western alliance had honoured the promises made by US Secretary of State James Baker to Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989 not to expand NATO military bases beyond Germany's borders ("not one inch eastward"). Russia's intervention, as President Putin explained, was to denazify and demilitarise Ukraine. It would also not have happened if America had not grossly and illegally interfered in Ukraine's sovereignty in February 2014 supporting a violent coup over weeks with the help of far Right Ukrainian neo-Nazi extremists that killed people and succeeded in deposing a democratically elected Ukraine government.

Evidence of the interference comes from an intercepted phone call a week before the coup between then-senior US officials of the Obama Administration. It records part of a discussion among US "diplomats," Victoria Nuland and US Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt. The US "diplomats" not only selected who would be Ukraine's next President, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, but decided to exclude their EU allies from the process in this operation that undermined Ukraine's sovereignty, its legal Government and international law. "Yats is the guy," Nuland declared, before adding her now famous comment: "Fuck the EU" (see

"Ukraine Crisis: Transcript Of Leaked Nuland-Pyatt Call", 7/2/14, *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957>).

### **US-Installed Regime Bans Russian, Attacks Civilians**

Among the first actions of the US-installed regime was a ban on the Russian language. Ukrainian Russian had been one of the two official languages of the country since 1922 when Ukrainian and Russian had equal status. Ukraine's Armed Forces and neo-Nazi militias under Kyiv's direction were then deployed to suppress ethnic Russians, including the regional peoples' militias in the autonomous provinces of the Donbass region and Crimea where millions of ethnic Russians live.

They naturally were upset to find the Government they elected was illegally overthrown and replaced by a discriminatory, anti-Russia regime, employing neo-Nazi and other racist, violent Rightwing extremists in Government, the police and the military. The regime led to a long history of atrocities recorded by independent, research-based media, reporting from 2014 on the consequences of US interference in Ukraine.

Below is a short list of articles reporting on the first months of Kyiv's US-installed, anti-Russian regime. Under the early reports from 2014, there's a United Nations report from 2019, describing the deteriorating situation as Ukraine's regime continued to terrorise its own civilians. Reports on torture and atrocities have gone unreported in Western media – several follow.

“Coming To Ukraine: The Hypocrisy Of The American Understanding Of The International Law”, *JURIST*, Curtis Doebbler 11/3/14, <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2014/03/curtis-doebbler-ukraine-hypocrisy/>

Lionel Reynolds, 17/3/14, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/crimea-rejects-the-us-nato-sponsored-neoliberal-neo-nazi-ukrainian-regime/5373738>

Lionel Reynolds, 16/4/14, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/cia-directs-Kyiv-proxy-regime-to-launch-military-assault-against-eastern-ukraine-rebels/5378037>

<https://freeukrainenow.org/2015/02/21/the-korsun-massacre-january-20-2014-what-really-pushed-crimea-away-from-ukraine-videos/>

*RT World News*, 24/4/14, <https://www.rt.com/news/154544-slavyansk-fighting-east-ukraine/>  
*Indicter*, 9/5/23, <https://theindicter.com/today-is-nine-years-since-the-ukraine-armys-slaughter-of-mariupol-civilians-9-may-2014-unarmed-civilians-shot-killed-at-close-range/>

Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, 13/5/14, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/eastern-ukraines-referendums-are-not-democratic-but-the-coup-imposed-regime-in-Kyiv-is/5382025>

*Global Research*, 17/5/14, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/“The Popular Uprising In East Ukraine: Rebellion Against The First Neo-Fascist Regime In Post-War Europe”>

The Ukraine Junta’s Air Force massacre of unarmed civilians in Luhansk, 2/6/14, *Indicter*, 2/6/23, <https://theindicter.com/from-odessa-to-lugansk-the-massacres-starting-the-donbass-uprising-in-2014-inna-kukuruza-has-not-been-forgotten/>

Julie Hyland, 4/8/14, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/eastern-ukraine-faces-humanitarian-crisis-as-Kyiv-steps-up-attack/5394736>

*UN News*, 15/8/14, “UN, Humanitarian Partners Launch Health Plan In Crisis-Torn Eastern Ukraine”, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/08/475282>

*Activist Post*, 5/9/14, <https://www.activistpost.com/2014/09/russia-negotiates-ceasefire-in-ukraine.html>

*Tasnim News Agency*, 17/11/14, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2014/11/17/560491/russia-fears-ethnic-cleansing-in-ukraine-amid-rise-of-neo-nazism-putin>

In December 2019 the United Nations reported that Eastern Ukraine had become one of the most mine-contaminated places on Earth since 2014, despite recent developments aimed to protect the rights of girls and boys affected by more than the five-year-long conflict. 172 children had been injured or killed due to mines or other explosive remnants of war (ERW). They went to school to learn in bullet-riddled classrooms. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/12/1052.521> “Political Solution ‘Long Overdue’ To Protect The Children of Eastern Ukraine@ UNICEF report 2/12/19

### Other Deadly Consequences Of Ukraine’s War On Russian Civilians

- 36 attacks on schools were reported in 2019, including one school hit 15 times.
- Over 750 educational facilities have either been damaged or destroyed since the conflict began in 2014. (i.e., from 2014 to December 2019).
- Vital water and sanitation infrastructure came under attack 80 times in 2019 and more than 300 times over the preceding three years.
- 430,000 children live with psychological wounds and need ongoing emotional trauma support.
- two million children, women and men are at risk of death and injury from landmines and other ERW.

War Crimes of the Armed Forces and Security Forces of Ukraine: Torture and Inhumane Treatment. P.CSHDM.NGO/17/16 (osce.org) April 2016

“Ukrainian News Anchor Quotes Adolf Eichmann, Calls For Genocide Against Russians”, World Socialist Web Site (wsws.org) 16/3/22, Jason Melanovski

James Murphy, 17/3/22, “Ukrainian News Anchor Quotes Adolf Eichmann, Calls For Genocide Against Russians”  
Will Stewart for *Mailonline*, 21/3/22, “Ukrainian Doctors ‘Told To Castrate Captured Russians Because They Are Cockroaches’”, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/ukrainian-doctors-told-castrate-captured-26523466>

Christelle Neant, 26/3/22, <https://www.donbass-insider.com/2022/03/26/the->

[battle-for-mariupol-is-coming-to-an-end-and-civilian-testimonies-on-the-crimes-of-azov-are-multiplying/](https://www.donbass-insider.com/2022/04/30/curfew-for-anniversary-of-odessa-massacre-that-sparked-rebellion/)

“200 Buried Alive: Azov Brigade’s Reign Of Terror In Ukrainian Civilian Hostages In Mariupol”, JW Dean & Gordon Duff, 5/3/22

Joe Lauria, 30/4/22, <https://consortiumnews.com/2022/04/30/curfew-for-anniversary-of-odessa-massacre-that-sparked-rebellion/>

Drago Bosnic, 1/6/22, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/Kyiv-junta-shelling-donbass-residential-areas-results-24-casualties-single-day/5782056>

Jeffrey D Sachs, 3/3/23, <https://johnmenadue.com/the-ninth-anniversary-of-the-ukraine-war/>

<https://www.donbass-insider.com/2023/03/13/bloody-weekend-in-donbass-ukrainian-army-kills-five-civilians-and-wounds-18/> 13/3/23

<https://www.rt.com/russia/574300-ukraine-crimea-russian-culture-eradication-plans/6/4/23>

Anatol Lieven, 11/4/23, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/04/11/crimea-has-become-a-frankensteins-monster/>

Faina Savenkova, 12/4/23, *Donbass Insider*, <https://www.donbass-insider.com/2023/04/12/myrotvorets-is-a-tool-that-helps-prepare-assassinations/>

Faina Savenkova, 7/5/23, *Donbass Insider*, <https://www.donbass-insider.com/2023/05/07/faina-savenkova-we-are-being-killed-because-we-do-not-want-to-live-by-their-rules/>

A courageous Canadian journalist, Eva Bartlett, compiled live reports on Ukraine shelling Donetsk civilians in 2022 and 2023. Here’s an example from her 12 May, 2023, report: “on April 28 Ukraine shelling of central Donetsk killed nine civilians, including an eight-year-old girl and her grandmother, and at least 16 more were injured. Some were burned alive when their minibus was hit by a shell. An attack on 11 May targeted a major hospital, apartment buildings, houses, parks, streets, and sidewalks. All civilian areas – not military targets” (Eva Bartlett, 12/5/23, <https://ingaza.wordpress.com/2023/05/12/as-donetsk-civilians-live-in-constant-fear-of-ukrainian-shelling-from-on-the-ground-i-detail-the-terror/>).

## West Incites Hatred Of Russia With War Propaganda

The killing and torture of Russians in Ukraine has continued for nine years. It can't be reported fully in this article, which must focus on nuclear concerns. But it's hard to understand how the US and its NATO allies get away with blatant crimes and wars with impunity, interfering in sovereign countries, when they claim to be law-abiding, human rights-respecting countries.

The appalling events that led to the war in Ukraine are denied as "Russian disinformation" by Western governments, and their managed mainstream media talk of Russia's "unprovoked, illegal invasion of Ukraine". This divorce from reality in Western countries creates a huge risk to global security with the deployment of nuclear weapons and military exercises close to Russia's borders.

International law Professor Alfred de Zayas, a former UN human rights rapporteur, reported in January 2022, shortly before Russia intervened on February 24, 2022: "There would be no conflict in Ukraine today if America politicians, Barack Obama, Victoria Nuland and several European leaders had not destabilised the democratically elected government of Viktor Yanukovich and organised a vulgar coup d'état to install Western puppets. Bottom line: Western interference in the internal affairs of other states can backfire, and the culture of cheating and deceit we continue to practice renders it impossible to reach sustainable solutions".

"The UN Charter, the only existing "rules-based international order," has the necessary mechanisms to resolve our differences on the basis of principles of sovereign equality of States and self-determination of peoples...Until the deliberately anti-Russian coup d'état of February 2014, Ukrainians and Russian-Ukrainians lived side by side in relative harmony. The Maidan 2014 coup brought with it Russophobic elements, exacerbated by systematic war propaganda and incitement to hatred against Russians, both prohibited by article 20 of the IC-CPR" (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/01/28/a-culture-of-cheating-on-the-origins-of-the-crisis-in-ukraine/>

Swiss military intelligence expert, Jacques Baud, who has worked in Ukraine and in Africa for the UN and NATO over two decades, presents historically accurate facts about the war. In January 2023 Baud reported: "Since 2014 our media have never condemned the attacks on the centre of Donetsk and the civilian population, the use of landmines in populated areas, the torture and massacres, but on the contrary have, without fail, tried to deny or play them down. If our media, diplomats and politicians had reacted at the time, Russia would most likely not have attacked in February, 2022. Their connivance with Ukraine's disregard for international humanitarian law between 2014 and 2022, provided Russia with a legitimate reason to intervene, allowed under article 51 of the UN Charter".

Jacques Baud, 19/1/23, <https://azradale.substack.com/p/ukraine-the-search-for-peace-by-jacques>  
Also by Jacques Baud: 1/4/22, <https://www.thepostil.com/the-military-situation-in-the-ukraine/>  
1/8/22, <https://www.thepostil.com/the-hidden-truth-about-the-war-in-ukraine/1/9/22>, <https://www.thepostil.com/our-latest-interview-with-jacques-baud/>

## Russia's Forced Intervention On 24 February 2022

It was because Ukraine's military massed a large army in the Donbass region in February 2022 to attack and kill as many Russian civilians as possible, that Russia intervened to stop a genocide. The Donbass region requested Russia's help, realising they could not defend their people from such a large army. Award-winning Italian journalist Manlio Dinucci reported on 1 February, 2022: "The Blackwater Is In Donbass With The Azov Battalion", <https://www.globalresearch.ca/blackwater-donbass-azov-battalion/5768869> See video: <https://www.globalresearch.ca/video-powder-keg-donbass/5769487> 8/2/2022

Dinucci reported: "According to reports from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, obscured by Western mainstream media, Ukrainian Army and National Guard units, amounting to about 150,000 men, are positioned in Donbass. They are armed, trained,

and effectively commanded, by US -NATO military advisers and instructors".

"In the front line, ready to slaughter Russians in the Donbass, is the Azov Battalion, promoted to a special forces regiment, trained and armed by the US and NATO, distinguished for its ferocity in attacks on Russian populations of Ukraine. The Azov, which recruits neo-Nazis from all over Europe under its flag traced from that of SS Das Reich, is commanded by its founder Andrey Biletsky, promoted to colonel. It is not only a military unit, but an ideological, political movement, with Biletsky the charismatic leader, especially for the youth organisation that is educated to hate Russians with his book 'The Words Of The White Führer'".

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) Daily Report 42/2022, issued 23 February 2022, showed increasing numbers of attacks by Ukraine's military on civilians in the Donbass region where millions of ethnic Russians live. <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/512872> These were key factors in Russia intervening in Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

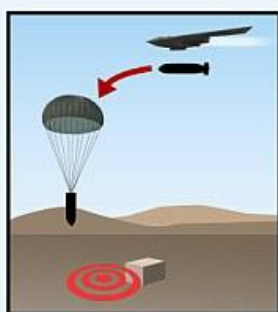
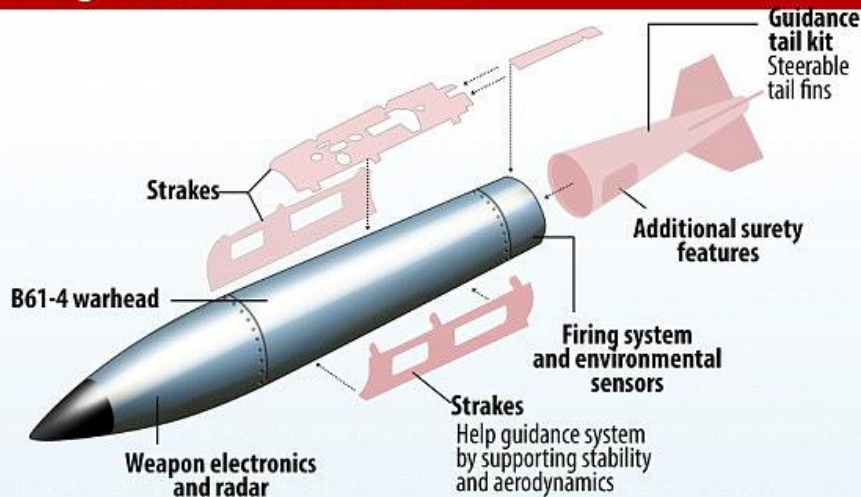
## Preparing For Nuclear War With Nuclear-Capable Fighters

The divorce from reality in Western countries about what's happened in Ukraine is a threat for global security, especially considering nuclear weapons. Award-winning Italian author, Manlio Dinucci reported (3/6/23): "Nuclear war is on the Pentagon's drawing board; it's deploying conventional dual-capable and nuclear fighters. The United States has begun a training programme for Ukraine's Air Force to use F16 fighters. Several European NATO countries participate: Denmark, Holland, Poland, Norway, Belgium, and Portugal".

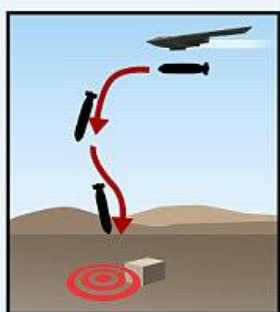
"Other countries have offered to help with training. The same countries will supply Ukraine with F16 fighters. They are conventional dual-capable and nuclear fighters. An F16 aircraft was used in the new B61-12 nuclear bomb test firing, which the US already deploys in Italy, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. Probably, the B61-12 bombs are also

# B61-12

## Precision-guided thermonuclear bomb



Previous B61 bomb had a fixed tail section and a parachute



B61-12 uses GPS, laser guidance and steerable tail fins to accurately fly to its target



Aircraft Monitoring and Control (AMAC) Systems enable detonation magnitudes of 5, 10 or 50Kt

Fighters To Ukraine”, *Global Research*, Centre for Research on Globalization, Manlio Dinucci, 3/6/23.

One of the dangers of the nuclear-capable fighters is that because the F16s can arm with tactical nuclear weapons as well as conventional weapons, Russia will be unable to determine what kind of munitions the “Ukrainian” F16s will actually deliver to the war zone. Russia must assume the worst and plan for attacking NATO air bases from which such planes are launched.

Cause for more concern comes in a recent NATO report in September 2023: “Four U.S. Air Force F16 fighter jets arrived at Fetesti Air Base in Romania on September 22, to further enhance NATO air policing in the Black Sea region” (“US F16 Jets Arrive In Romania For NATO Air Policing” 22/9/23, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_218691.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_218691.htm) NATO explains: “Air policing is a peacetime mission that aims to preserve the security of Alliance airspace. It is a collective task and involves the continuous presence, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, of fighter aircraft and crews, which are ready to react quickly to possible airspace violations.” But how can nuclear-capable aircraft bring security?

supplied by the USA to Poland. **Polish F16 fighters have been participating in NATO nuclear attack exercises since 2014** (all text in bold is my emphasis. KW).

“Vladimir Kozin, chief expert of Moscow Political-Military Studies Centre, said in an interview on *Grandangolo* TV programme, there is a deep suspicion based on precise facts, that US nuclear weapons have also been deployed in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, or could be rapidly sent to their territories and also to Poland. These countries participate in the ‘Baltic air patrol’, close to Russian territory, with **dual conventional and nuclear capability aircraft**”.

“Also, US strategic bombers, certified to carry nuclear weapons, are engaged in exercises over the Baltic Sea and other areas adjacent to Russian territory. After having unsuccessfully proposed negotiations with the USA and NATO to reduce risks of a nuclear conflict in Europe, **Moscow is now deploying**

**tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus close to the US-NATO nuclear bases in Europe in agreement with Minsk**”.

Answering the question: “Do the tactical nuclear weapons deployed by Russia in Belarus have a range beyond Poland and therefore constitute a deterrent to US nuclear weapons deployed in Italy and other European countries?” Vladimir Kozin replies: “Yes, Russian tactical nuclear weapons that will be deployed in Belarus and possibly in the Kaliningrad region and the Crimean Peninsula can achieve various military objectives in Poland, Italy and other European NATO member countries”.

**“US-NATO escalation against Russia is bringing Europe ever closer to the threshold of nuclear war. A curtain of silence on all this falls on the political-media complex, so as not to alarm European public opinion and prevent it from reacting”** – “Preparing To Wage A Nuclear War? Nuclear Attack F16

### Nuclear War Is Terminal

For NATO to deploy nuclear capable F16 fighters to Ukraine is extremely dangerous for the entire world’s security, especially when Ukraine is struggling in its “counter-offensive” against Russia. This war could have ended months ago, but the US has refused to allow negotiations, instead flooding Ukraine with weapons, ensuring it continues. The war is killing thousands of Ukrainians every month, unable to overcome Russia’s defence lines.

The combination of NATO’s threatening military exercises, which include naval and land forces, alongside the war in Ukraine against Russia, make this an especially dangerous time for global security. With NATO military exercises oc-



curring frequently close to the war in Ukraine in the middle of events, an error or miscalculation can bring nuclear war to the world.

Dr Paul Craig Roberts, former US Treasury Secretary, says: "Remember nuclear war is a terminal war. The expressed willingness of Finland, Sweden, Poland, and Romania to accept US nuclear weapons in their countries, together with the ability of the US to launch against Russia from the Black and Baltic Seas, greatly heightens anxiety in Russia".

"Unlike the Cold War period, in the 21st Century Washington has worked overtime to destroy all trust. Consequently, one more false warning is all it takes to exterminate mankind. We are on the brink of nuclear war, and do not have a John F Kennedy in the White House to stop it. Instead, we have insane neoconservatives committed to US hegemony at all cost" <https://www.paulcraigroberts.org/2022/12/12/a-hair-trigger-on-endgame/>

### **Russia's Concerns About Rising Escalation Risks**

Russia's Foreign Ministry on 21/9/23 raised concerns about NATO manoeuvres near Russia's border risking unintentional incidents. Chances of aggravating the situation are liable to multiply, the Ministry reported. "We would like to emphasise that as a result of the alliance's manoeuvres in close proximity to our state borders, airspace and maritime space, the risk of unintended incidents and aggravation of the situation multiplies. The danger of such cases unwittingly escalating into an armed conflict is extremely high given current conditions of unremitting escalation of tensions by NATO" (<https://sputnikglobe.com/20230921/risk-of-escalation-multiplies-due-to-nato-drills-near-russian-borders---moscow-1113548659.html>, 21/9/23).

### **NATO's Steadfast Defender Drills Goals Spring 2024**

"NATO is not hiding the fact that it is practicing actions to repel Russia's 'attacks' in the course of their military drills, the Russian Foreign Ministry told *Sputnik*. "NATO's Steadfast Defender exercise scheduled for spring 2024, accord-

ing to available data, will cover the territory of several European countries. Plans are that it will involve more than 40,000 troops," the Ministry said.

The exercise, like all other manoeuvres of the Defender series, involves deployment of US troops and equipment to Europe and working out logistics for such actions, the Ministry said. "NATO has been continuously increasing the scale of its exercises over past decades. They have become more provocative and aggressive in nature and are intentionally held mostly near borders of Russia".

The Ministry's data says the number of military personnel and equipment involved has increased every year, "systematically practicing actions under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on collective defence. At the same time, if earlier the legends about such manoeuvres by the alliance were about some 'imaginary' enemy in the east, now NATO members do not hide - they are practicing actions to repel an attack from Russia," the Ministry said, adding that NATO talks about 'realistic scenarios' for the use of NATO forces".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalled that Russia has repeatedly offered the bloc various initiatives to de-escalate and abandon provocative steps, and has voluntarily moved its exercises inland. "In response, the NATO members, while paying lip service to the fact they are not looking for confrontation with our country, continue their 'demonstration of force' literally at our doorstep" (<https://sputnikglobe.com/20230921/risk-of-escalation-multiplies-due-to-nato-drills-near-russian-borders---moscow-1113548659.html>, 21/9/23).

### **Other Risks: US "Mini-Nukes" In Europe For Nuclear "First Strike" Promote The Idea Of "Limited Nuclear War"**

New nuclear dangers arise in America deploying its new B61-12 "mini-nukes", replacing its previously deployed B61 nuclear bombs deployed to Europe in a "nuclear-sharing" agreement, which violates the Nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty. Dr Manlio Dinucci explains this new type of weapon "has a

nuclear warhead with four power options, selectable depending on the target to be destroyed. It is not dropped vertically, but at a distance from the target on which it is directed, guided by a satellite system. It can penetrate underground, exploding deep to destroy command center bunkers in a nuclear first strike".

"34 of the B61-12s are classified as 'non-strategic nuclear weapons', but are deployed in Europe, in Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Britain at distances close enough to strike Russia. They thus have offensive capabilities similar to those of strategic weapons" <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-b61-12-mini-nukes-made-in-america-to-be-used-in-a-nuclear-first-strike-coming-soon-to-italy-belgium-germany-netherlands/5786> 21/8/22.

### **Are US Mini-Nukes In EU More "Useable", "Low Yield", "Harmless"?**

Professor Chossudovsky's article "Pre-emptive Nuclear War & The Historic Battle For Peace & Democracy", reports that the B61-12 mini-nukes are aimed at Russia and the Middle East. These bombs are portrayed by America as a "more usable", "low yield" bomb, "harmless to civilians". "The reality is Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD). The new B61-12 has a maximum yield of 50 kilotons, more than three times that of the Hiroshima bomb (15 kilotons), which resulted in over 100,000 deaths in a matter of minutes. If a preemptive attack using a so-called mini-nuke were to succeed, targeted against Russia or Iran, this could potentially lead humanity into a WW III scenario".

"When the characteristics of this 'harmless' low-yield nuclear bomb are inserted into military manuals, 'humanitarian warfare' goes live: It's 'low yield and safe for civilians,' let's use it' (paraphrase). The US arsenal of B61 nuclear bombs directed against Russia and the Middle East are currently located in military bases of five non-nuclear states (Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey). Command structure pertaining to the B61-12 is yet to be confirmed and the situation with regard to Turkey's Incirlik base is unclear". "Preemptive Nuclear War: The Historic Battle For

Peace And Democracy. A Third World War Threatens The Future Of Humanity”, *Global Research* 31/1/23.

In 2019, David Swanson, an American author working with World Beyond War, published an article which explained: “This week, 74 years ago, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were each hit with a single nuclear bomb that had the power of a third to a half of what America’s Nuclear Posture Review calls a low-yield or ‘usable’ nuclear weapon. These so called ‘usable’ nukes are for firing from submarines based nearby to here”.

“They are two to three times the size of what destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the US military’s plans involve using multiple nukes at once. But they really are tiny compared to other nuclear weapons the United States and other nations have ready just in case some unfortunate scenario makes completely annihilating our, and other, species the wisest course of action”.

“Some US nukes are 1,000 times what was used to vapourise Japanese populations. Each submarine can launch 5,000 times what was dropped on Hiroshima. But the claim has been that the submarines are for so-called deterrence. Putting so-called small nukes on them and calling those ‘usable’, drops the pretence of deterrence in favour of openly embracing the madness of initiating an exchange of nukes likely to kill us all directly or through creation of a nuclear winter” <https://davidswanson.org/the-myths-the-silence-and-the-propaganda-that-keep-nuclear-weapons-in-existence/> 4/8/19.

These are increasingly alarming violations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with several non-nuclear states, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, holding America’s B61 nuclear bombs, soon to be replaced by the new B61-12 “mini-nuke” bombs. **The “mini-nukes” also go to Poland and Romania on Russia’s border.** Shouldn’t Aotearoa condemn America and NATO countries’ violations of the NPT, and especially the insane idea that “mini-nukes” are “useable.”

## **US Nuclear Missiles In Romania & Poland & Warships In Black Sea**

Dr Dinucci reports on yet another nuclear threat to Russia: “Another nuclear weapon system, which the United States is preparing to install in Europe against Russia, is ground-based intermediate-range missiles. They can also be launched from ‘anti-missile shield’ installations, deployed by the US at bases in Deveselu in Romania and Redzikowo in Poland, **and aboard five warships cruising in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Baltic Sea, close to Russia**”.

**“That such installations have offensive capabilities is confirmed by Lockheed Martin itself. Outlining the characteristics of the Mk 41 vertical launch system, used in both land and naval installations, it specifies that it’s capable of launching ‘missiles for all missions, both defence and long-range attack, including Tomahawk cruise missiles’. These can be armed with nuclear warheads. Europe is thus being turned by the US into the front line of a nuclear confrontation with Russia, even more dangerous than that of the Cold War”.**

## **US Missile Systems In Poland & Romania Threaten Russia**

Distinguished Swiss geopolitical analyst and former intelligence officer, Jacques Baud, reports: “The AEGIS missile systems installed by the US in Poland and Romania use Mk41 launchers. They can be used to launch either anti-ballistic missiles or nuclear missiles. The Radzikowo site in Poland, is 800 km from the Russian border and 1,300 km from Moscow”. In his discussion Baud says: “Their presence in the immediate vicinity of Russia’s national territory can indeed lead to nuclear conflict”.

“For, in the event of a conflict, it would not be possible to know precisely the nature of the missiles loaded in the systems, should the Russians therefore wait for explosions before reacting? Having no early-warning time, the Russians would have practically no time to determine the nature of a fired missile and would thus be forced to respond pre-emptively with a nuclear strike. Not only does Vladimir

Putin see this as a risk to Russia’s security, he also notes the United States is increasingly disregarding international law in order to pursue a unilateral policy”, “The Hidden Truth About The War In Ukraine”, 1/8/22, Jacques Baud.

## **NATO’s Death Wish Will Destroy Not Only Europe But Entire World**

“It is difficult to understand why Western politicians and mainstream media fail to perceive the existential danger they have imposed on Russia and recklessly on the rest of us,” says Alfred de Zayas, Professor at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and former UN Independent Expert on Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order.

“NATO’s insistence on its so-called ‘open door’ policy blithely ignores Russia’s legitimate security interests. No country would put up with that kind of expansion. Certainly not the US if, by comparison, Mexico would be tempted to join a Chinese-led alliance. NATO has displayed what I would call culpable intransigence and its refusal to negotiate a Europe-wide or even worldwide security agreement constituted a form of provocation, directly triggering the current war in Ukraine. **Moreover, it is easy to grasp that this war could very easily escalate to mutual nuclear annihilation**”.

“The important question not being posed by mainstream media is: ‘Why are we provoking a nuclear power? Have we lost our sense for proportions? Are we playing a kind of ‘Russian roulette’ with the fate of future generations of humans on the planet? Our leaders surely do not have the right to endanger the lives of all Americans. This is highly undemocratic behaviour and should be condemned by the American people. Alas, the mainstream media has been disseminating anti-Russian propaganda for decades”.

“Why is NATO playing this highly risky ‘va banque’ game? Can we also endanger the lives of all Europeans, Asians, Africans and Latin Americans? Just because we are ‘exceptionalists’ and want to be intransigent about our ‘right’ to expand NATO? **Anyone who is prolonging the war is committing a crime against peace and a crime**

**against humanity... humanity should stand up and demand Peace NOW** - Alfred de Zayas 14/9/22 <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/09/14/natos-death-wish-will-destroy-not-only-europe-but-the-rest-of-the-world-as-well/>

### **NATO Lacks Moral Authority: Violates Law - Professor Alfred de Zayas**

While NATO is generally perceived in Western countries as a positive force, in reality it has violated international law, repeatedly, attacking several countries, over decades, killing huge numbers of people with impunity, without a mandate from the United Nations. Professor of International Law in Geneva, former UN Rapporteur on Human Rights, Alfred de Zayas explains: "NATO countries have committed crimes of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria".

"Not only does NATO lack moral authority, it also lacks credibility, as it has disseminated 'fake news' and false narratives in preparation for all its wars of aggression. As such it would be interesting to examine the possible application of the Nuremberg principles and the Nuremberg judgment to NATO. Article 9 of the London Agreement of 8 August 1945 laid down the statute of the Nuremberg Tribunal and established the legal concept of a 'criminal organisation'" <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/12/05/the-united-nations-promise-of-peace-also-in-ukraine/>

"To the extent that land, navy and air forces of NATO countries have engaged in activities contrary to the Statute of Rome, the International Court of Justice may have to investigate whether these countries and NATO have breached Articles 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Statute. Article 2 (4) of the Charter prohibits both the actual use of force, and the threat of its use. NATO's strategy of encircling Russia, the parallel attempt by the US to encircle China, the 800 US military bases worldwide, these constitute a further menace to international peace and security for purposes of article 39 of the UN Charter".

"Hence, Russia and China undoubtedly have a legitimate security con-

cern articulated repeatedly in the UN Security Council. Hitherto without success". NATO countries arrogantly dismiss legitimate security concerns of Russia and China, which bring us to the present crisis in Ukraine. Instead of abiding by international law and the United Nations Charter, Professor de Zayas says, the US has devised an undemocratic strategy called the "rules-based order" which drives it to attack countries with impunity. Lack of respect for human rights, the sovereignty of countries and international law puts the whole world in danger.

### **Neo-Nazis & Other Ukraine Extremists Want Nuclear Weapons. How Safe Would This Be?**

On 6 January, 2023, Olga Sukharvskaya, former Ukrainian diplomat, wrote a comprehensive article: "Amid 'Concerns' Over The Alleged Russian Threat, The World Overlooks The Real Danger". It was published in Russia <https://www.rt.com/russia/569292-one-step-from-nuclear-armageddon/> Below is a slightly abridged version of the article.

Sukharvskaya points out that while Western media and politicians discuss the possibility of nuclear war, and of Russia using nuclear weapons in Ukraine, the risk is probably higher on the other side of the barricades. Kyiv is capable of building an atomic device and its leaders have expressed desire for this.

However, there are serious problems with safety issues in Ukraine's nuclear industry and in Ukraine's leadership. A striking statement in 2021 by Ukrainian politician, David Arakhamia, head of Ukraine's Parliament's ruling Parliamentary faction, Servant of the People, illustrates the problem. "We could blackmail the whole world, if we had nuclear weapons," he said.

Radical Ukrainian nationalists were especially dissatisfied with abandonment of the country's nuclear status. An example is the Patriots of Ukraine, created in 2014 by the notorious Andrey Biletsky, who formed the Patriots based on the ideology of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, which dreamed of Ukraine possessing nuclear weapons as far back as 2007. The return of nuclear weapons is specifically cited as a goal in paragraph 2 of the Military Doctrine section in the statement of the Patriots of Ukraine, while paragraph 7 of its Foreign Policy section reads: "The ultimate goal of Ukrainian foreign policy is world domination".

### **Ukraine's Atomic History**

Ukraine was a nuclear state after the collapse of the USSR, when 1,700 active atomic warheads remained in the country. Its politicians of that time had the prudence to abandon this status. The weapons were taken to Russia under international control, and their means of delivery destroyed.



*Ukraine's Azov Battalion. Note similarity of their symbol to swastika*

Ukraine's missile silos, with the exception of one, now a museum near Kyiv, were blown up, while its strategic bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons were either transferred to Russia or destroyed. Despite this, there were still many nuclear specialists in Ukraine, as research into nuclear fission has been conducted in Kharkov since the 1930s. In addition, five nuclear power plants were built in Ukraine during Soviet years: Zaporizhzhia, Rovno, Khmelnytsky, and South-Ukrainian, as well as the infamous Chernobyl, where a 1980s' accident involving a power unit led to an explosion that spewed radioactive fallout throughout Europe.

In addition, uranium is extracted at a deposit in Ukraine's Kirovograd Region and enriched at a plant in the city of Zhovti Vody. In the 2010s, there were plans with Russia's Rosatom to build a plant in Ukraine that would produce fuel for nuclear power stations. These plans were abandoned after the Maidan coup in 2014, when Ukraine adopted an adversarial stance towards Russia. At present, three of Ukraine's five original nuclear power plants remain under its control.

Chernobyl, which continued to generate electricity even after the 1986 accident, was finally decommissioned in 2020, while Zaporizhzhia, the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, has been guarded by Russian troops since 2022. It is currently run by Rosatom but does not produce electricity, largely for safety reasons, due to regular rocket and artillery attacks by Ukrainian troops, which have damaged numerous pieces of auxiliary equipment.

### **Push To Reobtain Nuclear Weapons**

Not everyone in Ukraine was happy when the country gave up its nuclear weapons. Ukrainian politicians often failed to hide the fact that their dream of reobtaining nuclear weapons is not so much connected with their country's security, as the desire to dictate their will to the rest of the world. Radical Ukrainian nationalists were particularly dissatisfied with abandonment of the country's nuclear status. In 2009, the Ternopil Regional Council, which was then dominated by Oleg Tianibok's neo-Nazi Svoboda

Party (called the Social-National Party until 2004), demanded that Ukraine's President, Prime Minister, and head of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) "terminate the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and restore Ukraine's nuclear status".

Ukraine's longing for an atomic bomb especially increased after February 2014. In an interview with *USA Today* in March 2014, Ukrainian MP Pavel Rizanenko called Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons a "big mistake". A few days later, representatives of the Batkivshchyna Party, headed by ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and UDAR, headed by Kyiv's current Mayor, Vitaly Klitschko, including the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Defence, Sergey Kaplin, submitted a bill on withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Kaplin claimed Ukraine could create nuclear weapons in just two years because it already had almost everything necessary: The fissile materials, equipment (except centrifuges), technology, specialists, and even means of delivery. In September 2014, Ukraine's Minister of Defence, Valery Geletey, also expressed the desire to develop nuclear weapons.

In December 2018, the former representative of the Ukrainian mission to NATO, Major General Pyotr Garashchuk, announced the real possibility of Ukraine creating its own nuclear weapons. In 2019 Aleksandr Turchinov, who usurped power in Ukraine in February of 2014, called Ukraine's renunciation of nuclear weapons a "historic mistake".

Following him, in April 2021, Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany, Andrey Melnik, stated that if the West did not help Ukraine in its confrontation with Russia, the country would launch a nuclear programme and create an atomic bomb. And on February 19, 2022, before the start of Russia's Special Military Operation, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced at the Munich Security Conference that Ukraine has the right to abandon the Budapest Memorandum, which proclaimed the country's nuclear-free status.

### **Range Of Possibilities**

Is Ukraine technically capable of creating an atomic bomb? Absolutely. Yes, enriching uranium-235 to the purity necessary to set off a chain reaction would cost a lot, primarily to create centrifuges for separating isotopes. However, though this may be the most effective way to separate isotopes, it's not the only one. The first American bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were created without this technology. Ukraine has the technical capability to create a nuclear weapon based on uranium-233, rather than uranium-235, which is usually used.

A similar bomb was tested by the US in 1955 during Operation Teapot, and its power was comparable to that of the Fat Man bomb that destroyed the Japanese city of Nagasaki. To obtain uranium-233, it is enough to replace one of the fuel assemblies of a conventional nuclear power plant reactor with a thorium-232 cassette, a supply of which is located near Mariupol, a city that was fiercely defended by Ukrainian nationalists from the Azov Regiment in 2023.

There's another indirect sign that both uranium and plutonium versions of nuclear weapons have been secretly developed directed by authorities after the 2014-Maidan coup. At the beginning of 2021, Ukraine completely banned export of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) to Russia, as required by an agreement on its supply by Rosatom. SNF, among other things, is a source of weapons-grade plutonium, which can be isolated from fuel cells that have been in a nuclear power plant reactor.

### **Nuclear Power On Brink Of Disaster**

Just as dangerous is the nuclear power policy pursued by Ukraine's government. Ukraine inherited five nuclear power plants (NPPs) with 18 active reactors from the USSR. Three of them located at the Chernobyl NPP were decommissioned by 2000. Five of the six reactors at the Zaporizhzhia NPP, three of the four reactors at the Rovno NPP, one of the two reactors at the Khmelnytsky NPP, and all three reactors at the South Ukraine NPP have exceeded their original lifespans and received extensions of their operating lives for another 10 to 15 years.

The licence extensions have sometimes been granted with violations of existing regulations since, after 2015, Ukraine's State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate stopped cooperating with Russian vendors and has not overhauled reactor vessels, which become brittle after prolonged exposure to neutron radiation. Back in 2015, independent experts noted the critical condition of Reactor 1 of the South Ukraine NPP, which, nevertheless, has had its service life extended until 2025.

Ukraine's Union of Veterans of Nuclear Energy and Industry sent a warning letter to the Government in April 2020 arguing that the country's nuclear energy sector was faced with a "threatening situation", which, according to the authors of the letter, could well result in "a new Chernobyl". Lack of accountability, which led to the 1986 disaster, does not stop at neglecting the technical condition of the reactors that are not being properly monitored and maintained by their developers. During President Viktor Yushchenko's administration, the decision was made to replace some standard fuel rods in Ukrainian reactors with unlicensed fuel assemblies supplied by Westinghouse Electric Company.

In 2012, that experiment led to an emergency shutdown of Reactor 3 of the South Ukraine NPP, after Westinghouse fuel assemblies were damaged due to the specific design features of the American counterfeits. That fuel assemblies fabricated by Westinghouse tend to malfunction in Soviet-designed reactors was not a revelation. They have repeatedly caused emergencies at NPPs in Finland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, but that did not deter the Ukrainian leadership. Not even losses of around \$US175 million caused by using non-standard assemblies persuaded Ukraine against conducting risky experiments with its nuclear assets.

The new "revolutionary" Government, which came to power in 2014, was quick to plunge into its own experiments with nuclear power together with Westinghouse, which was suffering from financial distress. For the company, which filed for bankruptcy in 2017, the Ukrainian market could have been

a much-needed lifeline. However, it wasn't to be, because it once again emerged that the counterfeit fuel assemblies were dangerous for VVER-type reactors. Emergencies at Ukrainian NPPs became a routine event, yet Westinghouse assemblies accounted for 46% of all nuclear fuel used in Ukraine by the end of 2018.

**These risky experiments went beyond using non-standard fuel assemblies. In the fall of 2014, Kyiv sent direct orders to boost electricity production at the South Ukraine NPP by 5 to 7%. To achieve this, three VVER-1000 reactors were supposed to operate in "controlled runaway mode", and a whole algorithm was developed by Ukrainian and British engineers. It was this type of experiment that resulted in the explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986.**

A potential disaster was only averted by an "Italian strike" organised by the NPP personnel, who refused to fulfil outsiders' orders. This might have been what former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen meant when he said: "We have, upon Ukrainian request, sent a small team of civilian experts to Ukraine to assist the Ukrainians in improving security of their civilian nuclear plants".

"Revolutionary expedience" was used as a pretext for a mass exodus of experienced nuclear engineers from Ukrainian NPPs. As Ukrainian MP Viktoria Voytsitska said in 2018, literally all categories of workers were thinking of leaving Ukrainian NPPs, from steam engine drivers and riggers to engineers who controlled reactors and other high-tech equipment.

After Russian forces assumed control of the Zaporizhzhia NPP, it became a target for incessant Ukrainian shelling, sometimes using Western-made multiple launch rocket systems, heavy artillery, and attack drones. The plant sustained significant damage and was forced to stop generating electricity due to destruction of auxiliary equipment and the threat to the reactors themselves. At the same time, an International Atomic Energy Agency mission "was unable" to establish who was firing on the nuclear site, where Russian soldiers were present.

As Western media was busy whipping up hysteria over potential use of tactical nuclear weapons by Russia in Ukraine, Ukraine was allegedly plotting a provocation of exactly that nature. According to Russian intelligence services, in October 2022, the Eastern Mining and Enrichment Combine in the town of Zhovti Vody and the Kyiv Institute for Nuclear Research were in the final stages of developing a dirty bomb on orders from Ukraine's government. A missile plant in Dnepropetrovsk built a mock-up of the Russian Iskander missile, which was supposed to carry a radioactive charge and be "shot down" over the Chernobyl exclusion zone. The goal was to accuse Russia of using nuclear weapons and push NATO to retaliate in kind, that is, to start a nuclear war in Europe.

All these facts mean that present-day Ukraine is arguably a real threat to nuclear security not just in Europe, but on a global scale. It has everything it would take, from irresponsible people in charge of safety and security at nuclear sites, to the technical capabilities. - Olga Sukharevskaya, former Ukrainian diplomat. "Amid 'Concerns' Over The Alleged Russian Threat, The World Overlooks The Real Danger". It was published by RT, 6/1/23.

### **How The West Ended Up In This Dreadful Situation**

Highly regarded Professor John Mearsheimer, Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, reported in June 2023: "The Ukraine War is an enormous disaster...Conventional wisdom about the war's origins is that Putin launched an unprovoked attack on 24 February 2022, motivated by his grand plan to create a greater Russia. Ukraine, it is said, was the first country he intended to conquer and annex, but not the last. As I have said on numerous occasions, there is no evidence to support this".

"While there is no question Russia invaded Ukraine, the ultimate cause of the war was the West's decision, and here we are talking mainly about the United States, to make Ukraine a Western bulwark on Russia's border. The key element in that strategy was bringing

Ukraine into NATO, a move that not only Putin, but the entire Russian foreign policy Establishment, saw as an existential threat that had to be eliminated. It is often forgotten that numerous American and European policymakers and strategists opposed NATO expansion from the start because they understood the Russians would see it as a threat, and that the policy would eventually lead to disaster”.

“The list of opponents includes George Kennan, both President Clinton’s Secretary of Defense, William Perry, and his Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, Paul Nitze, Robert Gates, Robert McNamara, Richard Pipes, and Jack Matlock, just to name a few. At the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, both French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel opposed President George W Bush’s plan to bring Ukraine into the alliance. Merkel later said her opposition was based on her belief Putin would interpret it as a ‘declaration of war”.

“Of course, opponents of NATO expansion were correct, but they lost the fight and NATO marched eastward, which eventually provoked the Russians to launch a preventative war. Had the United States and its allies not moved to bring Ukraine into NATO in April 2008, or had they been willing to accommodate Moscow’s security concerns after the Ukraine crisis broke out in February 2014, there probably would be no war in Ukraine today and its borders would look like they did when it gained its independence in 1991. The West made a colossal blunder, which it and many others are not done paying for” (The Darkness Ahead: Where The Ukraine War Is Headed”, Professor John Mearsheimer, <https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/the-darkness-ahead-where-the-ukraine> 24/6/23).

### Consequences Of Even “Limited” Nuclear War

In August 2022, Australian scientist Tilman Ruff, published an article, pointing out that even a “limited” nuclear war would lead to Ice Age conditions that would starve billions <https://johnmenadue.com/ice-age-conditions-after-even-limited->

nuclear-war-would-starve-billions/ Excerpt: “Even a nuclear war in which less than 3% of the world’s 12,705 nuclear weapons were exploded would decimate crop production and result in widespread starvation. For the first time, the study provides detailed estimates of impacts from various feasible scenarios for nuclear war on major food sources in every country...”

“In a nuclear war, bombs targeted on cities and industrial areas would start firestorms, injecting large amounts of soot into the upper atmosphere, which would spread globally and rapidly cool the planet”, the researchers explain. The cooling even for a ‘limited’ nuclear war in one region would abruptly plummet global temperatures to those last seen during the coldest period of the last Ice Age 20,000 years ago. The resultant cooling, drying and darkening persist for over a decade”.

“The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that in 2021, up to 828 million people were undernourished, 150 million more than two years earlier before the covid-19 pandemic. FAO also assesses that 2.3 billion people were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021, 350 million more than pre-covid. Global grain reserves usually hold three-four months’ worth of consumption. We are not well positioned to endure large declines in food production over multiple years”.

“Xia and colleagues examine the effects of the climate disruption on major crops, and take into account all or some livestock being killed for food, crops that normally feed livestock being eaten by people instead, differing degrees of reduction in current levels of household food waste (20% globally), whether trade in food continues or more likely based on historic experience stops, and how equitably food is distributed (with the current high level of inequity expected to worsen)”.

“There are many factors the researchers don’t take into account that would make the situation worse. They don’t include deaths from the immediate blast, burns and radiation. They do not model the effect of the dramatic increase in ultraviolet (UV) radiation that

would follow the ozone depletion in a smoky upper atmosphere heated by the smoke. This UV increase would be toxic to plant and animal growth and development both on land and in the water. They do not model the profound effects likely on availability of fuel, fertiliser, seed, pesticides, farm machinery supply and parts, food storage and transport infrastructure from the profound worldwide social, economic and trade disruption that would follow a nuclear war”.

### NATO, Unsuitable Suitor Courts Aotearoa

Considering Aotearoa//New Zealand’s nuclear-free policy and history it’s vital for the survival of our country and the entire world’s security, to speak out publicly on the clear and present dangers of nuclear annihilation today. Our country has earned respect and admiration worldwide for speaking out against the dangers of our allies’ nuclear weapons experiments in the Pacific region, and against US nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ships in our ports.

US-led NATO opposes the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which Aotearoa/NZ has ratified. NATO’s many wars of aggression, detailed by Professor de Zayas and others above, have been a growing threat for global security. Nuclear disaster now threatens with the orchestrated war against Russia using Ukraine. To remain silent and collaborate with NATO surely betrays the historic legacy of our 1987 Nuclear Free Zone Arms Control and Disarmament Act.

NATO has invited our Government to attend its meetings in 2022 and 23 to enhance its low credibility with our presence as a nuclear-free country. We must urge our Government to accept any further invitations to NATO meetings **ONLY** if it can speak to a change in American and NATO’s globicidal policies and become signatories to the Treaty on Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons.

# Reviews

By Greg Waite

## THE PALESTINE LABORATORY How Israel Exports The Technology Of Occupation Around the World

by Antony Loewenstein  
Scribe, Victoria, 2023

“The Palestine Laboratory” is an overdue eye-opener, revealing Israel’s global role selling tools for secretive monitoring of citizens and other weapons used by authoritarian governments. Loewenstein sheds light on both the tools, and just as important, the State and private companies which create, promote and sell them.

Israel’s privatised security industry is so immoral it was sanctioned even by Trump – for selling weapons to both sides in Sudan. Loewenstein’s book details that immorality, from supplying weapons to Chile’s former dictator Pinochet right up to population-surveillance software to Saudi Arabia, the state which murdered, then chopped up Jamal Khashoggi in its Istanbul embassy. Anything for a buck, anything to buy votes from autocracies to limit criticism of their ever-expanding occupation and apartheid in Palestine.

### Occupation Connected To Global Autocracy

Thinking globally, this book also highlights the connection between Israel’s occupation and growing autocracy around the world. In secret dealings with corrupt regimes, shadowy Israeli companies sell the tools of their occupation as a success story, an example of how governments can spy on their populations, bomb them with drones, control their movements and limit their lives to subdue opposition. This is a very scary future, and one which is also starting to make inroads into countries which are less authoritarian, pushing them further down that path.

For example, in the United States the pro-Israel Anti-Defamation League sends US police delegations to Israel. American law enforcement has a long history of

arbitrary harassment, arrest, and killing African Americans and other minorities. If you haven’t already subscribed to the *Intercept*, which has documented the racism and militarisation of American policing, I’d recommend it for a year. After that, you’ll have the picture, and may wish to unsubscribe. America’s real reality show can be pretty distressing.

There is no evidence to directly connect Israeli training to the death of George Floyd in 2020, but the knee-on-the-neck move used in that police murder is widely used by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). What is clear after you’ve read this book is that Israel’s occupation is a laboratory for methods of separating and socially controlling a population, while dehumanising them so that daily harassment without evidence and remote drone killings which don’t discriminate between political and military targets and civilians are normalised. This vision of the world is a nightmare; it should not be an export opportunity.

“The Palestine Laboratory” starts with the US Central Intelligence Agency-supported Pinochet junta’s torture and murder of opponents. The US Congress passed an arms embargo on Chile in 1976 but Israel continued to supply weapons to the regime; missiles, tanks and aircraft, water cannons. Daniel Silverman, descendant of a mine manager kidnapped from prison and murdered by the Chilean secret services after a Government investigation confirmed his trial was illegal, tried for justice through Israel’s courts. Long court proceedings to release more documentation followed Israel’s now-standard playbook – hearings to provide a pretence of democracy, with no substantive disclosure and much waste of activists’ time and funds.

Daniel now prefers to speak to Jewish and Arab school students about Israel’s role in the world. He says: “You’re making deals with the bullies of the world. The marketing advantage that Israeli firms use is that we’re selling battle-tested equipment from the occupied (Palestinian) territories. The driving force of this industry is that they want the conflict with the Palestinians to go forever. Moral considerations are never considered where Israel aids dictatorships. It’s

about money and being a powerful nation”.

The first chapter, “Selling Weapons To Anyone Who Wants Them”, documents a very long list of dictatorships and autocracies propped up by documented Israeli weapons sales, beginning with Uzi submachineguns and grenades to the brutal Hutu regime in Rwanda, both before and during the 1990s’ genocide. Afterwards, they sent a medical aid team to assist survivors led by their Minister of Environmental Protection.

As Loewenstein points out: “Israel has worked closely with Washington for decades, often operating in places where the US preferred covert support rather than public backing. For example, Israel supported the police forces of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Costa Rica during the Cold War when the US Congress had blocked US agencies from officially doing so”. For example, both Israel and the US trained and armed death squads in Colombia well into the 2000s.

The Israeli arms industry was an integral part of the Israeli economy from Israel’s foundation, but grew rapidly after 1952 when massive reparations from West Germany and aid from France and the US were covertly diverted into weapons development, including nuclear bombs. Since then, export clients have included Burma/Myanmar, South Africa, Iran under the Shah, Indonesia, Romania, Haiti, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Panama, Guatemala, Colombia, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Equatorial Guinea, Bahrain, Belarus, the Philippines, Uganda, Morocco, Nigeria, Syria, Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia... The Israeli Ministry of Defence admitted selling weapons to about 130 countries in 2021.

Ethnonationalist regimes, states that target one ethnic group over another, are over-represented in this list because that is the approach and expertise Israel has developed in Palestine. Readers of “How Civil Wars Start” (which I reviewed in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 163, August 2023, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/63/16.html>) will recall these are the states most likely to descend into civil war. Like many

governments, Israel shifted to privatise many Government-owned weapons companies from the 1980s. Privatisation now includes most of the 600-odd checkpoints and roadblocks across the West Bank, right up to the international companies trading in weapons and population control systems.

Hard facts are kept hidden but the *New York Times* Bureau Chief in Jerusalem published a major story in 1986 quoting figures indicating 10% of the nation's workforce were involved in the arms trade back then. Today Israel, with just nine million people, is the tenth largest exporter of major weapons in the world (Statista). In 2021 "defence" exports reached an all-time high of \$US11.3 billion, rising 55% over the previous two years. And in 2021, Israeli cyber companies also took in 40% of the world's funding for this sector, to develop new tools of surveillance and social manipulation.

### New Weapons For Political Suppression

Dictators, autocrats and generals around the world are not just looking to Israel for specific weapons or software. They admire and want to emulate Israel's comprehensive and systematic suppression of opposition based on physical separation and/or forced emigration. Gaza is the most effective example of this separatism, with a 65-kilometre \$US1.1 billion wall around the entire border, supported by constant drone surveillance.

After Operation Cast Lead in 2008/09 resulted in 1,400 Gazan deaths, the IDF updated its social media strategy with coordinated live-tweet military operations and infographics, encouraging Israel's supporters to post and tweet to show their support. War was recast as a spectacle, with the IDF funding 70 officers and 2,000 soldiers to design, process and disseminate Army propaganda. More recently they have co-opted coverage of breast cancer campaigns and gender diversity on their military social media.

Ultimately, this is a military campaign to weaponise Jewish trauma and deny Palestinian oppression while legitimatising perpetual occupation – and it is effective. People around the world read the news they are fed by the media machine

with the most money to spend. The Internet may have made it easier to post real-life clips of settler and Army abuse, but funded campaigns overwhelm alternatives with automated content, while algorithms ensure the relatively amateur Palestinian content is rarely seen. This messaging strategy is now being copied by despots around the world.

Every subsequent conflict has seen new weapons tested, profiled/advertised around the world, then marketed. The 2014 Gaza war brought the Elbit Hermes surveillance and target identification drone, the peaceful 2018 Great March of Return protest along the Gazan wall with Israel saw the introduction of drones dropping tear gas, and State justification for snipers shooting fenced-in civilians who might represent some hypothetical threat. From 2022 armed drones were formally approved for targeted killings, which inevitably kill civilians. This is not war; this is brutal political oppression based on dehumanising your opposition.

### Spying, Hacking And Surveillance

The intelligence unit of the IDF, Unit 8200, carries out mass moni-

toring of Palestinians as well as intercepting communications from allies and foes across the world at its Urim base in the Negev Desert. The US and its Five Eyes allies also share information with Israel, although the US National Intelligence Estimate also notes that Israel is "the third most aggressive intelligence service against the US."

Unit 8200 employs a constant stream of smart young recruits to develop new systems of control, including integrated local camera monitoring, "worm" software to access phones and computers like the spyware Pegasus, and efficiently identifying information of interest in vast volumes of intercepted communications.

Recruits to Unit 8200 are paid 20% above the industry average, with prospects for much more lucrative employment in tech startups later. Dissent is rare, but in a 2014 open letter to the Prime Minister, 43 reserve soldiers who refused to serve in the occupied territories explained that this intelligence was routinely used to blackmail and recruit collaborators.

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*Unit 8200, intelligence unit of Israel Defence Force*



One of the signatories explained further in an interview: "Any Palestinian may be targeted and may suffer sanctions such as denial of permits, harassment, extortion, or even direct physical injury. Such instances might occur if the individuals are of any interest to the system for any reason. Any information that might enable extortion of an individual is considered relevant information. Whether said individual is of a certain sexual orientation, cheating on his wife, or in need of (medical) treatment in Israel or the West Bank – he is a target for blackmail".

In his 2018 book "Rise And Kill First: The Secret History Of Israel's Targeted Assassinations", Israeli reporter Ronen Bergman interviewed "Amir," a Unit 8200 veteran who had refused to carry out a random bombing of an office in Gaza in response to a Palestinian suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. Bergman was clear about the role of Unit 8200: "Unofficially they were deciding who Israel killed".

### **Selling Israeli Occupation To The World**

The purchase of Israeli drones by Frontex, the European Union (EU) border agency, is a telling story of how the dehumanising agenda which specified these tools can travel with them into a new setting. The Heron drone, which can stay in the air for 24 hours, includes thermal-imaging cameras, artificial intelligence to detect moving targets, and a device to locate mobile phones.

In the Mediterranean, money spent on drones is displacing naval patrol boats which could save lives. From 2016 the EU started sending migrant boat coordinates to the Libyan Coast Guard, who mostly do not have speed boats or carry life vests, and took migrants to detention centres in Libya. Frontex claims it is legally obliged to alert "all the national rescue centres" in the central Mediterranean - including in Libya - whenever one of its planes or vessels spots a boat in distress.

What is clear is that the new drone system has resulted in many more interceptions by Libya and there are many docu-

mented cases of unsafe interceptions by the Libyan Coast Guard. And while global migration grew by 80% between 2000 and 2020, largely driven by arms-fuelled conflicts, Frontex's budget went from €6 million in 2006 to €543 million in 2021.

The EU has also spent at least \$US3.7 billion since 2015 on high tech research to digitally and physically target migrants, including training in Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans in sophisticated surveillance techniques. The EU is now Israel's biggest trading partner with 29% of its trade in goods in 2020.

Israeli phone-hacking tools like the NSO Group's Pegasus software have been widely sold, and abused, around the world. In Mexico, for years NSO's most profitable market, drug cartels collaborated with corrupt officials to eliminate mutual enemies; journalists critical of the Government had their phones hacked and were killed; and over 50 people linked to Mexico's President were on a leaked monitoring list. Privatised cyber-surveillance is completely unregulated, so the potential to drive a whole nation into a downward spiral of violence and distrust is clear.

### **Ban Commercial Sale Of Cyber-Hacking Tools**

US National Security Agency (NSA) whistle-blower Edward Snowden put it bluntly: "The entirety of this industry's business involves cooking up new kinds of infections that will bypass the very latest security updates and then selling them to countries that occupy the red-hot intersection of a Venn Diagram between 'desperately craves the tools of oppression' and 'sorely lacks the sophistication to produce them domestically'. An industry like this, whose sole purpose is the production of vulnerability, should be dismantled".

In practical terms, that means an outright ban on the commercial sale of cyber-hacking tools. That's a clear and simple response - the hard part is creating the global movement capable of rebuilding the necessary social support for effective national and global regulation in an era where neoliberalism dominates rich countries and autocracy is on the rise in poorer

countries. In his conclusion, Loewenstein says: "This book is written as a warning of the frightening world that could be born if Israeli-style ethnonationalism continues its ascent in a century already dominated by the unaccountable State power from Russia and Israel to China and the United States".

*This book and review were written before the October 2023 surprise major attack by Hamas out of Gaza into Israel demonstrated the most spectacular failure ever of Israeli intelligence and surveillance of Palestinians. Ed.*

## **SECRET HISTORY**

### **State Surveillance In New Zealand 1900 – 1956 Volume 1**

by Richard S Hill & Steven Loveridge, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2023

This is a short preview to highlight this newly released New Zealand book. I couldn't do justice to its 385 pages before the *Peace Researcher* deadline, so will provide a full review in the next issue (June 2024). My impression so far is that New Zealand had a simpler approach to early political surveillance than Europe in the first half of the 20th Century, assigning designated officers from within the Police force.

This lack of specialisation is a product of organisational models learned from UK policing, New Zealand's small size and budget, and our relatively limited wars. As the authors note, the State's efforts to control opposition increase exponentially in wartime. Remember the BBC ban on Tim Finn's relationship song "Six Months In A Leaky Boat" during the 1982 Falklands War?

The book tells the story of both the surveillers and the surveilled, so it opens up interesting new windows on our social history. The first chapter too-briefly covers pre-1900 colonial New Zealand, when intelligence gathering on tribal alliances and openness to trade was a priority, lest conflict impede profit for the Empire.

The authors conclude: "By the time the decision was made in London to formally acquire the territory,

sufficient information existed to avoid bloodshed in the process of acquisition. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed with many chiefs in 1840, bought time to build British might and authority before the adverse ramifications of settlement for indigenous authority and resources became apparent and produced armed Māori resistance”.

### Police Run On Paramilitary Lines

On the culture of the surveillers, here's a long but telling quote: “At this time (pre-1900) almost all of the colony's police were of working-class, especially rural, backgrounds and were poorly educated. This social stratum was the preferred recruiting pool because of its general disposition to reflect the conservative values of the countryside; its acceptance of low wages was another advantage to the authorities. Police recruiters sought young men with the unquestioning attitude towards authority that was crucial for a disciplined force run on paramilitary organisational lines. They needed, however, to be capable of internalising long-developed Police perspectives on how to view society and control it”.

“Recruits who did not fully live up to such requirements, especially those from urban areas, needed in essence to be ‘reprogrammed’ into appropriate perspectives and behaviour before they could go out onto the beat. One policeman recalled of his training experience in 1911 that the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) would seek to ‘break you down’ so that they could start with an empty slate upon which to inscribe ‘police knowledge’. He learnt to divide the populace into the reliable versus the radical, the compliant versus the criminal, the respectable versus the disreputable”.

The chapters are chronological, moving from pre-war pursuit of spies and seditionists to suppression of opposition during the 1914-18 war, searching for and undermining subversives through the Depression, then a return to more open coercion during the 1939-45 war and finally Cold War surveillance. Underneath these big themes we also hear the stories of workers and their organisations,



*Unemployed workers' march, Wellington, 1930s' Depression*

Government and dissidents, as seen through the eyes of the spies.

Their brief summary of the 1930s' Depression is worth remembering today: “Best estimates indicate that some 28% of the male workforce and 46% of the female workforce found itself out of work. Over the period 1929-35, successive Governments' approaches to the Depression focused on retrenchment and relief schemes, operating on a no-work, no-pay philosophy”. Grim times, radicalising times for labour, busy times for surveillers.

The book concludes: “During the history covered by this book, accountability for the operation of the secret world rested, in theory, with the political Executive, but Ministers were told little – and asked little. The answer to Juvenal's question of ‘who watches the watchers?’ inside the New Zealand Police Force and its surveilling partners between 1900 and 1956 was, essentially, no one”.

### Cold War: Agents & Informers

Volume 1 ends at 1956 as we move into the modern era. To end on a serious point but a humorous memory: “The practices of the secret world both fed on the Cold War atmosphere and stoked it... This ideological tone characterised many political detectives' assessments in which words and deeds were inherently treated as suspicious... The use of informants and agents represented a particular challenge for analysis”.

“The veracity of their reports was always open to question, with sources potentially liable to exaggerate, or even fabricate, details. Reasons for doing so included a desire to please handlers – and possibly thereby get more money or ongoing work from the Police – or out of a zealous or scornful wish to punish targets”. But in relation to surveilling student groups, George Fraser (a Special Branch - and later Security Service - agent employed to infiltrate Left organisations and movements) recalled “with a bellyful of booze and the camaraderie of the occasion, who was to remember?”

That risk of ideology corrupting State surveillance is particularly relevant to the stories coming out of the United States today, where penetration by the extreme Right went far enough to allow a near-coup. Other, darker forms of political interference are also spreading across the globe. Eccentric super-rich tech titans fund high profiles for ideas and policies which suit unregulated capitalism, while shadowy private corporations hack phones and computers, manipulate online and public debates, and kill opponents in autocracies with impunity. Lately we've been moving towards a more complex and ugly world, and New Zealand will be better off if it can stay clear of American and Israeli models of surveillance. Meantime, we can look forward to Volume 2 to open up more of our national secrets.

# Obituary

## ANNI RAINBOW

By Melanie Ndzinga



*Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) has had a working relationship for decades with what is now called the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign <https://www.themhac.uk/> That started off in 1992 as the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, which lasted until 2016. Menwith Hill is a huge US spying and warfighting base in the northern UK. This obituary appeared in the Guardian, 22/8/22. Ed*

My friend Anni Rainbow, who has died in June 2022, aged 73, was a Quaker, peace campaigner and passionate activist. Anni was born in Kensington, London, and grew up in Tolworth, Surrey, where her adoptive father nurtured her love of books, poetry and Shakespeare. She was a gifted artist, potter and sculptor with an eclectic taste in music. A strong swimmer, Anni belonged to Kingston Ladies' swimming club, representing Surrey in her teens. Then, on a Guide camp as a teenager, a van accident caused back and hip injuries; the initial cause of lifelong disability. She was further devastated when her father died suddenly in 1982.

Becoming increasingly concerned about militarism during the Vietnam

War, in 1968 Anni was on the anti-war march during which mounted police charged protesters in Grosvenor Square, central London. A stalwart of the Crawley night watch group, set up to enable the women at Greenham Common women's peace camp to get some sleep, others appreciated her calm, dependable nature and ironic wit.

### Menwith Hill Campaign Co-Founder

Anni had two sons, Matthew and Simon, with Robin Cornish, whom she married in 1977. The marriage ended in divorce in 1985. She later moved to Otley, West Yorkshire, supported the Quaker body Northern Friends Peace Board and joined Otley Peace Action Group. In 1992 she co-founded, with the peace campaigner Lindis Percy, the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, organising protests at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire and other places, and holding Quaker meetings and raising Parliamentary questions about the secrecy of all American military activities in Britain.

Despite significant health issues she campaigned in all weathers – horizontal blizzards never dulled her sense of humour nor infectious chuckle. Quakers are urged to “live adventurously”. Anni certainly did. Her son Matthew, a corporal in the 1st Light Infantry, was killed in Basra (Iraq) in 2006. Shortly after, Anni suffered a stroke, which aggravated her disabilities, and she moved to Alne Hall residential home near York where she continued to speak truth to power in her inimitable fashion, with irreverent humour and wicked laugh. Anni is survived by Simon, her grandchildren, Ethan and Libby, and a brother, Chris.

## DEATH IN THE FAMILY LIGAYA ROQUE

By Murray Horton

Ligaya Roque, who died in Manila in July 2023, aged 89, was the mother of *Peace Researcher* Layout Editor, Becky Horton and thus my mother-in-law. The reason that Becky is not laying out this issue (it's being done by Leigh Cookson) is because she's spending several months with family in the Philippines to sort out “matters arising” from her Mum's death.

Including a tribute to Ligaya is not a case of editorial indulgence. She came to a Waihopai spy base protest in 1997 (one which featured the last, and biggest number of arrests – 20 people - at a Waihopai protest). Not only that, when a US flag was run up at the base gate, she was the only person who knew the words of the American national anthem (the result of her having grown up when the Philippines was a US colony. English is an official language in the Philippines and she was fluent enough to be able to read the *Press* from cover to cover every day and watch *Coronation Street* when she stayed with us).

Born in 1933, Ligaya was a kid during World War 2 (the Japanese attacked the Philippines the day after they bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941. Why? Because the US had major military bases there). She experienced the years of Japanese occupation and some of the heaviest fighting of the Pacific War when the US liberated the country and briefly reoccupied it as their colony, before it became independent in 1946.

### Suffered Grievously Under Marcos Dictatorship

Ligaya and her family suffered grievously under the 1970s' and 80s' martial law dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Two younger sisters and her only brother were po-



Ligaya Roque 2022

litical prisoners (some of the huge number of political prisoners held for years without charge or trial). One of those younger sisters, Marie Hilao-Enriquez, who died in Los Angeles in April 2022, aged 68, went on to become a well-known public figure in the Philippines, as the former head of a major human rights group.

Marie was known around the world. In 2004, wearing my Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa hat, I accompanied her on a New Zealand speaking tour, one organised by PSNA. You can read my obituary of Marie in *Peace Researcher* 64, November 2022, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/peace-researcher-previous-issues.html>

Another of Ligaya's younger sisters, Lilosia Hilao, became the highest profile female political murder victim of the Marcos regime, being raped, tortured and murdered whilst in detention. Ligaya's parents became the lead plaintiffs in the landmark class action suit filed in the US against the Marcoses on behalf of thousands of human rights victims and their families.

Despite being awarded \$US1 billion in damages, precious little has been recovered from the billions that the Marcoses stole from the Philippine people. Ligaya was not one of the political

activists among the Hilao siblings. But it is noteworthy that her ashes were buried in 2023 alongside those of Marie and Lilosia, the two most high-profile activists in the family.

It is a cruel irony that Ligaya lived long enough to see the 2022 election of Ferdinand Marcos Junior (universally known as Bongbong) as President, with the accompanying return to centre stage of his repulsive nonagenarian mother, Imelda Marcos. For my explanation of how this happened, read my obituary of Ligaya's sister, Marie Hilao-Enriquez (see Web link above).

### Family & Catholicism

Ligaya concentrated on being a much-loved mother to her five kids (all daughters), which is a hard scrabble job for tens of millions of ordinary Filipinos. She did more than one stint of working overseas for years on end when her kids were young, in order to make the money to look after them. Family was central for her, even more so after Rogelio Roque died in 2006. There is zero welfare state in the Philippines, including for the old, so family support is vital to survival. Philippine society is like that of Māori – family means the extended family or whanau, not just the nuclear family.

The other thing that was central to her life was her unshakeable faith. She was a devout and very active Catholic, of both the orthodox and evangelical variety (she was responsible for the only evangelical service I've ever attended, and it was quite something, I can tell you). When she stayed with Becky and I in Christchurch (she made several visits, between 1997 and 2010) she regularly attended Mass at the local Addington Catholic church and got involved in Catholic activities based either there or at the former Catholic Cathedral (a victim of the 2010/11 earthquakes).

She wasn't a po-faced Catholic – she absolutely loved *Father Ted* on TV here. Needless to say, it presented a view of the Catholic clergy that was definitely not that held by the faithful in the Philippines.

She was very easy going, never trying to impose either her religion, or anything else, on her immediate family or her in-laws (even heathens such as me). I grew up in an age which was steeped in casual sexism, with mother-in-law jokes being a staple among men. To that, I say "bullshit". Ligaya was a great mother-in-law, we got on fine, we had a lot of fun together, both in the Philippines and NZ. She even got on fine with my crusty old father who, before he met Becky, had decidedly non-PC views on both Asians and Catholics (he went on to completely dote on Becky).

Actually, I've been very lucky to have got on fine with both the mothers-in-law in my life. Despite the major differences in their circumstances and lifestyles (let's just say that my first one had a polar opposite view of the Catholic Church to that of Ligaya) they actually had things in common: they both lived overseas (the first one in Sydney); they both had five kids, with both families being nearly all girls (the first one had four daughters and one son). And I had a lot of fun with both of them, over many decades.

Ligaya was a very dignified woman, who was the absolute centre of her family. I express my deepest condolences to her five daughters – Tes, Becky, Cecil, Tang and Pia – and to her seven grandkids. Rest in peace, Mama.

# CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account

## Financial Report For Year Ended 31 March 2023

Prepared by James Ayers, Organiser Account Treasurer

	2023	2022
<b>Income</b>		
Pledges	\$25,192.72	\$22,462.50
Donations members	\$11,308.00	\$10,550.00
Interest (inc CAFCA TD)	\$ 518.71	\$ 303.47
Other	\$ 1,176.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$38,195.43</b>	<b>\$33,815.97</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Contractor	\$36,300.00	\$42,497.00
Internet/Phone	\$ 1,187.02	\$ 61.00
Printer	\$ 132.50	\$ 23.98
Other	—	—
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$37,619.52</b>	<b>\$42,581.98</b>
<b>Cash Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 575.91</b>	<b>-\$ 8,766.01</b>
<b>Summary</b>		
<b>Opening Funds</b>	<b>\$ 4,523.41</b>	<b>\$ 8,289.42</b>
Add Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 575.91	-\$ 8,766.01
Add CAFCA Donation		\$ 5,000.00
<b>Closing Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 5,099.32</b>	<b>\$ 4,523.41</b>
<b>Represented by</b>		
Term Deposit Kiwibank	—	—
00 Account Westpac	\$ 5,099.32	\$ 4,523.41
<b>Total Organiser Account Funds</b>	<b>\$ 5,099.32</b>	<b>\$ 4,523.41</b>

### Notes

*Other income includes internet refunds from CAFCA/ABC  
Contractor expenses are now 30 hours per week*

Financial report presented to, and accepted by the Annual General Meeting of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa, 25/9/23.

# *Peace Researcher* Welcomes Your Feedback

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

Our address is -

***Peace Researcher***  
**P O Box 2258**  
**Christchurch 8140**  
**Aotearoa/New Zealand**  
**Email: [abc@chch.planet.org.nz](mailto:abc@chch.planet.org.nz)**

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

## **JOIN ABC AND GET *PEACE RESEARCHER***

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

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

Our bank account details are:

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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. ■