

WAIHOPAI 2004: The Protests Continue, With Some New Twists

by Bob Leonard

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

The Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) is not about to abandon the struggle to close the spy base at Waihopai, in Marlborough. So we organised and hosted yet another annual protest action the weekend of 16-18 January 2004. Despite the fact that the base is hundreds of kilometres from Christchurch, our own base of operations, the ABC is the only group that focuses on Aotearoa/New Zealand's spies. Waihopai is formally known as the Defence Satellite Communications Unit Blenheim and is run by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB).

Most of our research, education and action in recent years has centred on the GCSB because much of its highly dubious activity involves spying for foreigners – American, Brits, Aussies, and Canadians. To its credit, our Government didn't rush to join the absurdly named Coalition of the Willing in blasting Iraq. But Waihopai has never shut its two spying eyes (dishes under domes) as it continuously and fed intercepted satellite messages into the laps of George Bush and Tony Blair.

New Zealanders care about this nefarious business – if and when they find out about it. This was illustrated at 2003's Waihopai protest in Blenheim when an estimated 200 local Blenheimites joined in the protest in Seymour Square and in a march through the city centre on a Saturday midday. The theme was anti-war at a time when the invasion of Iraq was imminent.

Of course the war went ahead and the result, clearly predicted by many, was a disaster, which continues to unfold and intensify day by day. Our recent January protest went ahead as well, beginning with a Friday evening public meeting in Blenheim at a local church hall. This was a new approach to opening our weekend of activities and it was a great success. The hall was packed (including over 40 locals) to hear three speakers on the theme "New Zealand's role in the 'War on Terror'". Marlborough District Councillor John Craighead led off with a stirring, challenging and often philosophical essay on the "wars", the real motivation behind intervention in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and New Zealand's participation, however limited. Green MP Keith Locke then elaborated on our own contributions of troops, ships, aircraft and intelligence to the US-British invasions and dealing with the chaotic aftermath. Keith also highlighted the first-ever annual report of the GCSB (for the year ended 30 June 2003; total expenditure nearly \$30 million) and the fact that it makes no mention of Waihopai's international spying roles. Murray Horton of the ABC focused the discussion on the nuts and bolts of Waihopai's involvement, to the extent that we can know it given the blanket of secrecy that surrounds the activities of the GCSB.

ABCers and other activists then retired to our regular campsite at the Pleiades Vineyard just a kilometre down the road from the Waihopai base. For the second year in a row our sleep was aided by a frog concert from the nearby pond. After a hearty breakfast and brief housekeeping meeting we organised for the day's activities in Blenheim and at the base.

We arrived at Seymour Square in beautiful late morning weather to set up for a sausage sizzle, speeches, street theatre and a central city march. And of course the public was invited to join the festivities. Speakers included Mike Treen of the Alliance and Global Peace and Justice Auckland, Green Co-leader Rob Donald and Bob Leonard of ABC. A group of activists, coordinated by Claire Dann of Christchurch's Peace Action Network, did a bit of street theatre to dramatise Waihopai's role in aiding the tragedy in Iraq. Particularly stunning was Andre Prassinos of Wanaka in the role of Dubya Bush. With an impeccable American accent, Andre ordered a massive rocket attack on an innocent Iraqi village, based on faulty intelligence from Waihopai. A bit far-fetched you might say, but it got the point across. Isn't faulty intelligence, and gross distortion thereof, the basis of "modern" warfare and the slaughter of civilians? That has certainly been the case in Iraq.

The sizzle of sausages, including vegetarian ones, and onions helped feed the masses prior to the march. Although the public turnout was lower than at the 2003 protest, the numbers were sufficient for a spirited and colourful march through the central business district with plenty of chanting for peace to edify and distract the locals enjoying Blenheim's sunny sidewalk café experience. Banners and placards were plentiful.

Following our return to and cleanup of the Square, we departed for the Waihopai spy base, with a brief detour for some to see the old protest campsite beside the Wairau River. There was the site of several previous rough camps from which many and varied actions were launched against the base, some in the middle of the night, in rain and wind.

Nude Protest

Once at the base, commencing at about 2 PM, we prepared for our usual peaceful march down the several hundred metres of sealed road from the farm gate to the entrance to Fort Waihopai. We were greeted by Uncle Sam, as in several past years, and by the new officer in charge of the base, Jeff Holmes. As most informed people will know, Uncle Sam is in charge of everything American, whether at home or abroad. He took charge at the farm gate, introduced his underling, Mr Holmes, and lectured the mob on proper behaviour on the march and at the gate. Every foreigner who passed the farm gate had to have a passport to enter the Undemocratic Republic of UKUSA, which had been formally stamped outside the gate. These were inspected by Uncle Sam. Marchers proceeded down the road under police escort.

At the heavily fortified front gate to the base the protesters, including many members of the public, assembled and were once again reminded, by Murray Horton, of how the base operates in the interests of all our UKUSA partners (signatories of the 1948 UKUSA Agreement: the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ). Several others took the microphone to speak about Waihopai from their own perspectives and to ask questions. But questions and comments addressed toward the spies behind the gates were, as usual, met with silence. The weather was about as good as it gets in this very exposed part of Marlborough. It wasn't too hot or windy, but it was sunny and the asphalt was blazing hot. So the really interesting new twist to this year's "assault" on the base was a barbecue of a different sort. Several protesters stripped off their clothes and splayed themselves out on the black grill in the form of a peace symbol. It was a brave act in more ways than one. It added some new and different colours to the action, and the media loved it. Both TV and print media were present and didn't fail to use the material in their coverage of the protest, including TVNZ's *One News* that evening.

After about an hour, the peaceful mob retreated back to the main road and dispersed back to camp, or home for the locals. It was a successful action, in a recent succession of non-confrontational protests. Despite ABC's long history of protest at the base, going back to 1988 and including any number of arrestable actions, followed by court cases and convictions, ABC is regarded by some as a bunch of wusses for not cutting fences, chopping down power poles, deflating domes and blocking access roads, all with the goal of closing the base. We take those comments on board and welcome constructive criticism, but we can't fail to notice that nobody else in the country has organised a protest, peaceful or otherwise, at Waihopai in recent memory.

Back at camp we enjoyed the remainder of a beautiful afternoon, then a delicious vegetarian dinner, and a good rest in our cosy tents. No activities were planned for the evening this year. But a number of people did enjoy a dip in the nearby Waihopai River, led by the indefatigable Rod Donald who insisted on a dip before taking a long drive back to Golden Bay to rejoin his family on holiday.

Sunday morning was spent in debriefing and general discussions of future actions. We abandoned the camp around noon leaving the vineyard to its grape growing and grazing by the lone Pleiades horse. We learned a bit later that some group had deposited a sizeable load of boulders and other rubble in front of the farm gate entrance to the base during the afternoon. ABCers wonder just who that might have been.

GCSB Wins Big Brother Award **by Murray Horton**

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The Auckland Council for Civil Liberties organises the annual Big Brother Awards. The awards, for outstanding contributions to the abuse of privacy in New Zealand, are modelled on similar awards held in many other countries. ABC's Bob Leonard wrote our nomination of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which operates the Waihopai and Tangimoana spybases, in the category of "Worst public agency – an agency which has most systematically invaded the privacy of New Zealanders". *PR* readers don't need us to spell out why.

We're pleased to report that, when the winners were announced in April 2004, the GCSB won that category. To quote from the Civil Liberties release (29/4/04): "...the most frequently nominated contender in this category was the GCSB for its surveillance work, notably targeting our Pacific neighbours. The judges recognise that those who work in the GCSB are effectively only doing what others have empowered them to do. However, the enormous, and publicly unsupervised, threat to privacy that the organisation represents means that it is the clear winner of this category". And so say all of us. Obviously ABC wasn't the only one to nominate the GCSB. And we fully support the judges' choice for the overall winner.

"Person of the Year - supreme winner, for outstanding abuse or disregard of privacy and civil liberties in New Zealand . . . Joint Winners: All the Ministers and politicians responsible for recent new 'anti-terrorism' and surveillance legislation in New Zealand.

“Most nominations for this category focused on people who had been instrumental in passing New Zealand's anti-terrorism legislation, and other legislation which allows additional, secret snooping - with little or no public accountability - into the private lives, transactions and communications of New Zealanders. While falling mercifully short of the excesses of the United States Patriot Act, these various pieces of legislation result in significantly reduced privacy and civil liberties for all of us, but do little to reduce any actual terrorist threat.

“Given the number of elected representatives and others who have been involved in the process of drafting, passing and implementing the legislation, the judges felt it would be unfair to honour any one person with this ultimate award. Our award therefore goes to all those jointly responsible.

“Worst elected representative - for the elected representative who has most neglected or abused their responsibilities to protect privacy. Winner: Minister of Justice, Phil Goff.

“The judges' award in this category goes to the Minister of Justice, Phil Goff, for his part in fronting the counter-terrorism legislation. In his honour, following true Orwellian precedent, the office should perhaps be renamed Minister for Injustice. A close runner-up, and worthy of mention, was Paul Swain, who, as Minister for Telecommunications, uncritically pushed through new surveillance powers”.

ABC couldn't agree more. If you want to refresh your memory about the slew of new “counter-terrorism” legislation (some of which predates September 11), then read your back issues of *PR* or our submissions on several of the laws. Both *PR* and the submissions can be read online at our Website www.converge.org.nz/abc The best thing about these Awards was that they achieved good, national media coverage. Publicity is the sunlight needed to kill these germs. George Orwell's Big Brother would be very proud of today's New Zealand.

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In Fond Memory Of Bob's Old Van

by Murray Horton

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Bob Leonard, a founder of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) and an editor of *Peace Researcher* for nearly two decades, was the victim of a nasty (indeed, potentially fatal) crime recently. Whilst he and his wife, Barbara, were inside watching TV on a Saturday night in February, a person or persons unknown crept up to where their van was parked on their driveway, forced the door, stole a power tool inside and used the fuel container for that tool to torch the van. Bob was alerted by their dog's barking and had to run close to the flames to push their other car to safety (it incurred \$500 worth of damage). The van was parked under a tree. If that had not been wet, the house could have caught fire. The van was destroyed, nobody has been caught, and Bob and Barbara's sense of personal security has been badly damaged.

Mount John & Black Birch

That 1970s-vintage van had been the workhorse for the anti-bases movement (predating the actual ABC by several years) for all the 20+ years that Bob and Barbara have lived in Christchurch, since coming to New Zealand in the early 1980s, with their son Graham, as Reagan Refugees. For example, in 1983, it was used to transport Wellington's Vanguard Films crew of Alister Barry, Russell Campbell and Rod Prosser to the top of Mount John, overlooking Tekapo, in the Mackenzie Country. They were making "Islands Of The Empire", the definitive study of the US/NZ military relationship. Mount John had been the site of a US Air Force observatory (one of the most spectacular protests in New Zealand history had been held there in 1972) which had been turned over to a US civilian contractor. It was a memorable day – the US had announced that it was relocating Mount John's functions to a facility in the US, so the Americans were actually packing up and leaving the day we up there filming. Ironically, we had to wait for a break in the work for it to be quiet enough for filming to take place. We then followed one truckload of equipment all the way to the US base at Christchurch Airport (Harewood), where the Vanguard boys did more filming.

The other former US military facility on a South Island mountaintop was the US Naval Observatory at Black Birch, in Marlborough. Bob's van never drove up that one, which is considerably higher than Mount John. But, in 1986, it was the means of transport to the base of the hill when a group organised by the Campaign Against Foreign Control in New Zealand (CAFCINZ, now CAFCA), climbed the 1500 metres to the observatory and strung banners across it. Bob didn't climb it that day and kept the solitary policeman who turned up to investigate engaged in amiable conversation for a good long while before the cop finally looked around at the various empty vehicles and asked: "Where are the people?". Bob, who could not tell a lie, said that we were climbing the hill. The cop shot off to get reinforcements to chase us. They came up in cars but we still beat them to it. Bob still remembers the look on that cop's face.

Harewood

It was used for transport to many demos and aircraft scouting trips at Harewood over the years, some of the latter early in the morning to observe the departures of US Air Force C141 Starlifters to the Pine Gap spybase (near Alice Springs, Australia) in the days when such were predictable due to their regularity. Bob was frequently accompanied by Don Murray and Warren Thomson, who were stalwarts of Citizens for the Demilitarisation of Harewood (CDH, as we were then). The van was well known out at the airport and its prowling sometimes led to their being stopped by airport security for questioning. The van was useful as a vantage point for observations and photos on some occasions. Bob would park around the back of the US military area, near the fence, and climb on top of the van so the fence did not interfere with his view of the Channel flight Starlifters (those on the regular circuit from the US to the bases in Australia via Harewood).

Waihopai

In the late 1980s CDH morphed into ABC but the trusty old van kept on keeping on. It became the regular transport to and from our innumerable protests at the Waihopai spybase. I've lost count of the number of times I made that trip in Bob's van. Bob remembers: "One 'attack' on the base was in the middle of the night with young Graham on board. He stayed in the van while we did our silly things with ladders and the like, running around the paddocks (*diversionary tactics, from memory. Ed*). Don was also one of the passengers and when time came to disembark and attack, he broke off the back door handle in his haste to get out".

And the van was put to good use in Christchurch. It was fitted with a big sign on top by Don and Bob on one occasion and driven to Woolston Park to a Labour Party picnic. The sign said "Well done Labour - now kick the US Navy out of our Airport". That was just after the passage of the Nuclear Free law in 1987. On the way home from the

park Bob found that he could not quite clear the railway overbridge along Clarendon Terrace beside the Heathcote River, because of the tall sign. Fortunately he had a saw in the van and was able to climb on top of the van and saw off just enough of the sign to clear the bridge and drive home. The other option would have been to let most of the air out of the tyres.

Vans were quite the thing in the ABC committee – both Don and Warren had them as well. But, first the vans went, then Don and Warren themselves moved on. There have always been vans amongst those regularly going to the Waihopai protests (such as that of Green Co-Leader, Rod Donald) but only Bob's had that impressive two decades of continuing service in the anti-bases cause. It got old and tired and Bob preferred to use his car on recent Waihopai trips. But, as recently as November 2003, it was used to transport the ABC contingent into town to take part in the protest at the Labour Party conference. It was a prestigious gathering – there were three past or present *PR* editors in the front (Bob, Dennis Small and myself). It didn't deserve such a fiery fate (the hazards of modern urban living, even in an upmarket hill suburb). The least we can do is record its passing with sadness and gratitude for many years of a job well done.



ECHELON Spies On The World: Britain Drops Charge Against GCHQ Whistleblower

by Murray Horton

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Just when the build up to the 2003 US invasion and colonisation of Iraq was at its most frenzied, in the middle of the whole showdown between the Americans and the United Nations, came the revelation that American Intelligence was spying on the UN. The British newspaper, the *Observer*, published a leaked memo from Frank Koza, the head of the Regional Targets section of the US National Security Agency (NSA), the biggest US spy agency. The NSA is the major partner in the top secret UKUSA Agreement, which brings together the electronic intelligence gathering agencies of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (the Government Communications Security Bureau in our case). Their most notorious project is codenamed Echelon, which trawls billions of intercepted electronic communications for keywords (dictated by the Americans).

Koza's memo, dated January 31, 2003, "requested a 'surge' of surveillance activity against the diplomatic communications of UN Security Council (UNSC) members, such as Angola, Cameroon and Guinea. It also requested 'attention to non-UNSC members', specifically all "UN-related and domestic communications' containing anything relating to the Security Council" (*Listener*, 22/3/03, "Spies Like Us", Nicky Hager). Nobody doubts that the US routinely spies on its allies and friends, but it is unusual to have it confirmed in writing. "Leading international law expert, Professor John Quigley, of Ohio University said that, while the bugging of foreign diplomats at the UN was permissible under the US Foreign Intelligence Services Act, it breached the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations" (*Observer*, published in the *Press*, 15/3/03, "US Administration embarrassed by UN spying revelations"). At the same time, electronic bugging devices were found in offices used by several countries, including France and Germany (which staunchly opposed the US/UK-led invasion of Iraq), in a Brussels building about to be used for a European Union summit meeting.

The revelation that the US was spying on these "swing voters" in the Security Council had very serious repercussions for its attempt to bludgeon the UN into providing a facade of international respectability for its illegal invasion. The Chilean public still holds US Intelligence responsible for the 1973-90 Pinochet dictatorship (the murderous 1973 coup that brought him and the military to power took place on September 11!). "In the days that followed the disclosure, the Chilean delegation in New York distanced itself from the draft second resolution (*to give UN approval for the invasion. Ed.*), scuppering plans to go down the UN route" (*Observer*, published in the *Press*, 21/1/04, "Stars hail Iraq war whistleblower").

The Smoking Gun

There was a court sequel to the leaking of the NSA memo. The whistleblower was Katharine Gun, an unassuming 29 year-old translator with the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Britain's electronic spying agency. Her job was to translate Chinese into English and she was part of a team spying on the Chinese delegation to the Security Council. It's not clear how she came to be in possession of the incriminating NSA memo, which could be very aptly described as a smoking gun.

"...When the Prime Minister first mooted the possibility of war, Ms Gun's reaction, and that of many of her friends, was one of incredulity. 'I felt at the time, when the Government started mentioning Iraq, 'you have to be joking', and then suddenly it snowballed into something everyone was agreeing with', she said. But the inexorable slide to war continued. It was in this atmosphere of recriminations and accusations that Ms Gun found herself with information that she felt was so worrying it must be made public...

"Ms Gun recalled: 'I was pretty horrified (*by the NSA memo. Ed.*). I felt the British Intelligence services were being asked to do something that would undermine the whole UN democratic process itself'. After days of soul searching she told a friend what she had discovered. She, in turn, passed it on to a freelance journalist, who approached *The Observer* with the information. ...'When I originally leaked it I had no idea if anybody would be interested in it. Personally, I felt very strongly about it and I hoped the press would get their teeth into it. I was hoping to pour some cold water on people's heated debate about the war. I wanted people to stop and have a logical and dispassionate discussion about why we were going to war and what it would mean. I am just baffled that in the 21st Century we as human beings are still dropping bombs on each other as a means of resolving issues' she said.

"Ms Gun had been unprepared for the furore which followed. As a hunt started for the source, she decided to confess. 'I am a pretty emotional person and I felt I just couldn't go on working there after what I had done. I went to

my line manager. I trusted her and respected her. She put her arm around me and I cried on her shoulder. She was great about it" (*Independent*, 26/2/04; "How a GCHQ translator uncovered an American dirty tricks campaign", Kim Sengupta).

The old proverbial hit the fan, in March 2003. Gun was fired (*I couldn't resist the pun. Ed.*) arrested and charged under the Official Secrets Act (Britain has no Official Information Act or any law to protect whistleblowers acting in the public interest). She was released on bail but, if convicted, she faced up to two years in prison.

"...She hoped that her actions would help save lives. She thought at the time that if the Security Council did not vote in favor of an invasion, the United States and Britain might not launch the war. In a statement last November (2003) she said she felt that leaking the memo was 'necessary to prevent an illegal war in which thousands of Iraqi civilians and British soldiers would be killed or maimed. I have only ever followed my conscience'" (*New York Times*, 19/1/04, "A Single Conscience V. the State", Bob Herbert, Op-Ed Columnist). The courts allowed her to plead an unusual "defence of necessity". She accused the US Government of seeking to subvert British Intelligence services.

Case Withdrawn

Her pending case became very high profile in the charged atmosphere following the highly controversial invasion and occupation of Iraq. She attracted celebrity supporters, ranging from Daniel Ellsberg (who leaked the seminal Pentagon papers during the Vietnam War) to several Hollywood stars and American politicians. A statement of support read: "We honour Katharine Gun as a whistleblower who bravely risked her career and her very liberty to inform the public about illegal spying in support of a war based on deception. In a democracy she should not be made a scapegoat for exposing the transgressions of others" (*Observer*, published in the *Press*, 21/1/04, "Stars hail Iraq war whistleblower").

The case was due to be heard in February 2004. "...The crux of the defence was that Ms Gun had taken the action because, she felt, the British government had acted illegally, both in taking part in the war without UN backing, and being involved in a plot to bug UN delegates. Ms Gun's legal team demanded disclosure of Government documents pertaining to the legality of the war. On Tuesday, they made a request for a full account of the advice Lord Goldsmith (the Attorney General) had given about the legal justification for war - something ministers had repeatedly refused to do.

"James Welch, the Liberty solicitor acting for Ms Gun, said: 'Our case was that any advice the Government received on the legality of war was relevant to Katharine's case and we were prepared to go before a judge and argue for it to be disclosed. We served the document at lunchtime and just before 5pm yesterday I received a phone call saying it was the intention to drop the case'. It took just 18 minutes at Court 7 of the Old Bailey yesterday for the proceedings to be formally ended after Mark Ellison, acting for the Crown, said no evidence would be offered by the prosecution.

"Ms Gun, who had pleaded not guilty, shook slightly after being discharged. 'I feel I have acted with decency and honesty throughout this whole affair and I have absolutely no regrets about what I have done. I know it's very difficult and people don't want to jeopardise their careers, or lives, but if there are things out there that should really come out, hey, why not' she said after leaving court" (*Independent*, 26/2/04; "How a GCHQ translator uncovered an American dirty tricks campaign", Kim Sengupta).

More Spying On The UN

This was a very public humiliation for the Blair government. Everything to do with the Iraq War has turned into millstone around its neck. It can't even count on the support of its own spies. What's worse, the dropping of the charge against Gun coincided exactly with further revelations, from within its own ranks, that American and British Intelligence routinely spy upon the UN, including the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. This time the whistleblower was Clare Short, a former Labour Cabinet Minister who had resigned in protest at Britain's invasion of Iraq (she remains a Labour MP). She said that, during the build up to the war, when the US and Britain were pressuring the UN to approve the invasion, Annan's office and phones were bugged and that, as a minister, she had read transcripts of his conversations. Unsurprisingly, Annan demanded that the British stop spying on him, and a furious Tony Blair refused to confirm or deny Short's claims. The pro-war British press gave her short shrift (*I couldn't resist that pun either, I'm afraid. Ed.*), but nobody denied it. Some commentators shrugged off such spying as routine. Spain's UN Ambassador said: "If your mission is not bugged, then you're really worth nothing" (*Press*, 12/3/04, "Blair's Gun affair", Colin Espiner). Unlike Gun, Short was not charged under the Official Secrets Act (or any other Act).

"...The telephones of former UN chief weapons inspectors Hans Blix and Richard Butler were also tapped while on

missions abroad... Speaking on Australia Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio, Mr Butler said he was 'well aware' that his phone calls were being monitored during his time as chief weapons inspector. Mr Butler told ABC: 'Of course I was bugged. I was well aware of it. How did I know? Because those who did it would come to me and show me the recordings that they had made on others to help me do my job disarming Iraq'...

"Mr Butler told ABC radio that he was forced to hold confidential talks with contacts on walks in New York's Central Park because of the phone tapping in his office at the UN headquarters while he was investigating Iraq's weapons programme. Mr Butler, who was chief weapons inspector in Iraq from 1997 to 1999, claimed at least four permanent members of the UN Security Council monitored his calls. He said that while he was weapons inspector he learned from unnamed sources that his office was bugged. He said: 'I was being listened to by the Americans, British, the French and the Russians and they also had people on my staff reporting what I was trying to do privately'" (*Guardian*, 27/2/04, "Weapons inspectors' phones 'bugged'. Blix, Butler 'bugged': Australia Broadcasting Corporation").

New Zealand

New Zealand hasn't got clean hands in this grubby affair, either. "...ABC investigative reporter Andrew Fowler also claimed that sources had told him that Australia's Office of National Assessments had read transcripts of telephone conversations involving Mr Blix, Mr Butler's successor in the role during the Iraq crisis last year, while he was in Iraq. Fowler said: 'That's what I'm told, specifically each time he [Blix] entered Iraq his phone was targeted and recorded and the transcripts were then made available to the United States, Australia, Canada, the UK and also **New Zealand**' (*emphasis added. Ed.*) It was reported that he was bugged whenever he was in Iraq and the information shared between the United States, Britain and their allies..." (ibid). That's the good old UKUSA Agreement in action, folks.

Green MP, Keith Locke, demanded confirmation from Prime Minister Helen Clark whether New Zealand knew about this spying operation against the UN. But Clark gave her standard reply that she doesn't comment on security matters. "...New Zealanders are owed an explanation. Was our stand against the Iraq war being compromised by involvement with US and British spying on Dr Blix? Was the Waihopai satellite communications interception station, which is part of the US-run Echelon system, involved in this spying? It could have been if Dr Blix's phone calls from Iraq passed through either of the two Pacific communications satellites that the Waihopai dishes are pointed at. The US would only need to put Dr Blix's likely phone numbers into the Echelon system for the content of his conversations to be automatically forwarded from Waihopai to the US National Security Agency.

"New Zealand also helps US espionage through its regular hosting of American military supply flights through Harewood in Christchurch to the US spy base at Pine Gap in central Australia. Yesterday the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported an intelligence source had said 'the bugging was almost certainly undertaken - at least in part - by spy satellites linked with the Pine Gap relay station outside Alice Springs'. We need to know if New Zealand is so enmeshed in an intelligence arrangement with America that we are helping it spy on the United Nations. Surely such a situation is inconsistent with our support for the UN and multilateralism in the face of attacks from the Bush administration?" (Keith Locke press release, 29/2/04; "Clark must answer questions on NZ role in spying on UN").

Canada

This flurry of revelations led the international media to once again have a look at Echelon. A very interesting article about Canada's role in it appeared in the *Toronto Star* (7/3/04, "Canada listens to world as partner in spy system", Lynda Hurst). It went over the usual ground concerning the five partners of the UKUSA Agreement (saying that it was "referred to in some circles as the 'Anglo-Saxon Mafia'") but added some new details: "The intelligence gleaned is shared among the five alliance partners and often with other participants: Germany, Norway, Denmark, and Turkey have all signed secret 'third-party' UKUSA agreements...". But it shed most light on Canada's role in Echelon, detailing its spybases. "Canadian Forces Station Alert, on Ellesmere Island in present-day Nunavut, is still an important ground station in the Canada's network of 'sigint' (signals intelligence) posts. It mainly intercepts satellite military communications. The other three are CFS Leitrim, south of Ottawa, which intercepts diplomatic traffic in and out of Canada; CFS Masset off the coast of British Columbia, and Canadian Forces Base Gander, Newfoundland, both of which primarily tap into maritime transmissions..." .

The Canadian electronic spy agency is the Communications Security Establishment (CSE). "...After the Anti-Terrorist Act was passed in 2001, the agency's budget was boosted to about \$C300 million. Its staff - known as '291ers' after their military occupation code - was increased to 1,300, making it the country's second biggest spy force, after the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. More computer power was added to headquarters and its' other properties in Ottawa, and extra antennas were installed at some of the listening stations. Leitrim now has

six...". PR readers already have some insight into the Echelon workings of the CSE in the service of the American Big Brother because, in 2001, the Anti-Bases Campaign toured former CSE agent, Mike Frost, through New Zealand. What he had to say about his work during 34 years as a spy was fascinating in the extreme.

It's Cool To Be A Spy Again

It is sobering to realise that British Intelligence didn't do too badly out of the embarrassing Gun case, reporting that about 3,000 people had applied to join MI5 (British internal security and intelligence) "in the wake of the publicity, a recent recruitment drive, and the screening of the television programme, 'Spooks'. Apparently it's cool to be a spy again, after much of the gloss was taken off at the end of the Cold War. It certainly isn't the money that is attracting applicants, with starting salaries as low as 20,000 pounds. Intelligence chiefs credit the rush to a 'wave of patriotism' that has swept the nation. 'They seem genuinely to want to do something to help this country, instead of going for a job with a much higher salary. They're doing it out of idealism', one senior MI5 official has been quoted as saying. Either that, or the British public believes that, going on recent events, doing a better job than the current bunch of spooks wouldn't be terribly difficult" (*Press*, 12/3/04, "Blair's Gun affair", Colin Espiner). But, hopefully, the new intake will include yet more whistleblowers. To finish with one final pun, Britain and the world definitely need some more young Guns.

Menwith Hill Campaign

Fortunately we don't have to rely on the occasional British spy with a conscience (and there have been a few of them). There is a very active campaign in Britain to directly confront the multiplicity of spybases that blot the English landscape. Nowhere more so than at the huge NSA base at Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire. This is nominally a British base, but is, in fact, one of the very biggest American spybases anywhere in the world. Not only do its numerous "golfball" domes undertake electronic spying tasks, it is being turned into a key part of the proposed Missile Defense System (the current version of the Star Wars project that has obsessed the US military and politicians for more than two decades).

All sorts of groups have a go at Menwith Hill on a regular basis. These range from non-violent direction blockades by hundreds of people, as happened in March 2004, when dozens were arrested, to clandestine actions by a group calling themselves Women with Bolt Croppers who got into the base in December 2002 and caused several thousand pounds of damage by sabotaging equipment. Far and away the most persistent campaigners are the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB), in the persons of Lindis Percy and Anni Rainbow. They give a whole new meaning to the word pigheaded. Lindis has been arrested literally hundreds of times (mainly at Menwith Hill but also at other US bases in Britain), and has fought umpteen courts cases, some of which she has initiated. They are just absolutely unstoppable. Lindis' most memorable recent moment came when President Bush visited London, in October 2003, and stayed at Buckingham Palace. There was a huge security operation in place – she simply travelled to London, donned the fluorescent vest of a humble road worker, strolled straight through the security cordon and scaled the front gate of the Palace with her message for Bush and Blair. The extremely embarrassed cops had to ask her nicely to come down so that she could be arrested (again).

You can contact them at: CAMPAIGN FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF AMERICAN BASES (CAAB) 8 Park Row, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 1HQ, UK. Tel/fax no: +44 (0)1943 466405 OR +44 (0)1482 702033 email: anniandlindis@caab.org.uk or caab@btclick.com Website: <http://www.caab.org.uk>

Israeli Nuclear Whistleblower Free: Mordechai Vanunu Unbowed, Defiant

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

Mordechai Vanunu was the technician in Israel's top secret Dimona nuclear plant who, in the 1980s, blew the whistle on that country's steadily growing arsenal of nuclear weapons. He took his story and photos to a British paper and rapidly became a target of Israeli intelligence. He was kidnapped, smuggled back to Israel, charged with treason and sentenced to 18 years in prison. He remained totally defiant, serving 12 years in solitary confinement, and refusing any parole so as not to compromise his credibility or his right to speak out upon release. He served the full 18 years and had to be released, in April 2004. The Israeli government imposed further restrictions on him – for example, he is not allowed to travel (nor leave the town he lives in), have any contact with foreigners, or talk about

his work at Dimona (even though he last worked there nearly 20 years ago). For his part he wanted to revoke his Israeli citizenship and immediately leave the country (he had already renounced Judaism and converted to Christianity, which won him even more enemies in his Zionist homeland). Israel refused him permission to do either, and obviously wants to keep him under indefinite house arrest. There is an eerie similarity to the treatment that used to be meted out to Jewish dissidents in the former Soviet Union.

Vanunu is completely unrepentant and came out fighting. Before he was even out of the prison gate, he cut loose. "I've suffered a cruel and barbaric treatment from the Shabak. But I say to the Shabak, to Mossad (*respectively, Israeli internal and external security and intelligence agencies. Ed.*): you didn't succeed in breaking me. You didn't succeed in making me crazy. I'm a symbol of the will of freedom. You can't break the human spirit. To all those who are calling me traitor, I am saying I am proud, I am proud and happy to do what I did. Prepare to hear more from Vanunu Mordechai, defiant as ever... Israel doesn't need nuclear arms, especially now that the Middle East is free of nuclear weapons. My message today to all the world is to open Dimona reactor to inspections" (*Times*, published in the *Press*, 23/4/04, "Vanunu free to shout defiance", Ian MacKinnon).

That's the last thing that Israel and the US are likely to do. American support for Israeli supremacy in the region has been a key feature behind all the war and suffering throughout the Middle East since Israel was created, more than 50 years ago. And nuclear weapons are seen as the ultimate guarantee of that continued supremacy. So don't expect to see any US President demanding that weapons inspectors be unleashed on Israel anytime soon.

Which is why someone like Vanunu is so vital. He paid a terrible price, and his suffering is not yet over, but he performed an invaluable service in exposing the secret arsenal held by one of the biggest threats to world peace. He was the subject of a massive international campaign (including in New Zealand) throughout the entire 18-year duration of his sentence, which focused attention on the only nuclear power in the Middle East as never before. The world owes Mordechai Vanunu an enormous vote of thanks. We need more whistleblowers like him and Katharine Gun.



Ahmed Zaoui Still Imprisoned Without Charge: Government Loses Legal

Battles, Inspector-General Loses Job by David Small

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

Ahmed Zaoui, an Algerian Islamic politician, has been in custody since he was arrested upon arrival, in Auckland, in late 2002. He has never been charged or tried for any offence. He arrived on false papers, and claimed refugee status, which he has been granted by the appropriate official body. The Government chose to override that decision, citing the woebegotten Security Intelligence Service (SIS) as its preferred authority on the case. Zaoui is wanted by Algeria (site of a particularly murderous civil war, one where the West now backs the regime because it is fighting Islamic fundamentalists). For most of the 1990s Zaoui was shunted from exile to exile, in Europe and Africa. The Intelligence agencies of various European countries, principally France, plus the Algerians and NZ's more usual Intelligence allies, have all contributed to Zaoui remaining in prison in Auckland, and facing imminent deportation (with the very real prospect of death, should he be returned to Algeria, which has sentenced him to death in absentia).

Zaoui's plight has become a national cause celebre, and there is any number of appalling aspects to it (such as the racist and shoddy Immigration laws and procedures exposed for all to see). Peace Researcher has a longstanding interest in the SIS and the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, so we decided to concentrate on that aspect.

David Small is well known to PR readers because of his involvement in the case of Aziz Choudry (it was David who caught the SIS agents breaking into Aziz's Christchurch home, in 1996). David later won his own civil court case arising out of that. See PR 21, June 2000, "David Defeats Goliath". David has become heavily involved in the campaign to free Ahmed Zaoui.

We consider it appalling that Ahmed Zaoui has been imprisoned, most of it in solitary confinement and in maximum security, without charge or trial, and faces deportation and possible death, because of the cackhanded malice of New Zealand "Intelligence" (a contradiction in terms if there was ever one), backed up by the bumbling prejudices of the Inspector-General, and the gutlessness of a Government whose most senior Ministers put a higher premium on sucking up to our masters in the "War On Terror" and on a relationship with the Intelligence agencies from the likes of France (our "ally," which, in the 1980s, sent Intelligence agents to bomb the "Rainbow Warrior" in Auckland Harbour, killing a man in the process) than on the life and liberty of a Third World refugee. Shame on the lot of you. Ed.

Ahmed Zaoui is still where he was at the time of the last edition of PR (see PR 28, December 2003; "A Travesty Of Justice: The Case Of Ahmed Zaoui", David Small. It can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr28-92.html> Ed.). However from his cell in the Auckland Remand Centre adjacent to Mt Eden prison he has seen off two of the people most directly responsible for his continued incarceration: Immigration Minister Lianne Dalziel and Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, Laurie Greig.

At the time of writing, Zaoui is awaiting the outcome of a May 2004 Court of Appeal hearing into the High Court ruling that the Inspector-General was obliged to consider human rights issues when reviewing the Security Risk Certificate against him (*the first such Certificate ever issued in New Zealand. Ed.*). The Crown argued that Justice Williams, who made the ruling at issue, had no jurisdiction to even hear the case. It is insisting that the Inspector-General should consider only security matters and leave human rights concerns to the Minister of Immigration, who has only three days after an appeal against a Security Risk Certificate is lost, to decide about deportation.

Zaoui's legal team argued, among other things, that: a person's human rights would be compromised by such a process, because the deportation decision risked being politicised and, in making the decision, the Minister would not have either the time or the access to classified information necessary to make a proper assessment of human rights concerns.

Summary Of Allegations Released

The other decision of Justice Williams, one which was not appealed, was that Mr Zaoui was entitled to a summary of the allegations against him that formed the basis of the Security Risk Certificate. When this summary was released it revealed nothing new or substantially different from what the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) had alleged against Mr Zaoui when it tried unsuccessfully to have his application for refugee status declined by the Refugee Status Appeals Authority. One bizarre element of this released evidence was a video that Mr Zaoui brought to New Zealand featuring innocuous scenes he had filmed during his time in various parts of Asia.

The SIS decision to interpret this as a casing video for possible future terrorist targets reveals the level of SIS determination to brand Mr Zaoui as a threat to national security. The fact that this video included no film of security installations was alleged to reveal an interest by Mr Zaoui, and his terrorist associates, in soft targets. In this interpretation, it is hard to imagine how any scenes Mr Zaoui had filmed would have been interpreted in any way other than as evidence of terrorist intelligence gathering.

The Resignation of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security

While the Minister of Immigration lost her place in Cabinet through matters unrelated to the Zaoui case, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security resigned as a direct result of his handling of it. In particular he was found by the Court to have expressed views and behaved in such a way that could have given the impression of bias against Mr Zaoui and in favour of the SIS.

Two matters contributed to this finding. The first related to his comments in the infamous "outski" interview to *Listener* journalist Gordon Campbell (29/11/03; "*Who Watches The Watchers?*" Greig said in that interview that, if it was up to him, Zaoui would be "outski" on the next plane. Ed.). Of greater concern to the judges than the "outski" remark was this statement of Laurie Greig's: "We don't want lots of people coming in on false passports that they've thrown down the loo on the plane and saying 'I'm a refugee, keep me here'".

The other issue was how the Inspector-General conferred with the Director of the SIS and officials from the Prime Minister's office in constructing a damage control operation when the media learned of the existence of a secretly recorded videotape of an interview with Mr Zaoui soon after his arrival in New Zealand. Besides the scandal of the tape being made in the first place, and then being allegedly lost, there was concern expressed that the Inspector-General, who was supposed to be reviewing all the evidence that contributed to the issuing of the Security Risk Certificate, appeared to be unaware of the tape's existence.

In response to this matter Laurie Greig was found to have noted that he received a call from the SIS Director and written: "Concern that TV said I had not been told about the tape and so inference that SIS had concealed it from me" and "Reported back to ERW (SIS Director Richard Woods). Later spoke to David Lewis (Prime Minister's Press Secretary) confirming foregoing and agreed with him that advice to selected newspapers enough". Within hours of the Court ruling that, as a result of this "apparent bias", Mr Greig should stand aside from the Zaoui case, the Inspector-General tendered his resignation, in March 2004.

Laurie Greig's replacement in the position, Justice Paul Neazor, is not likely to reveal the personal views that influence how he exercises his discretion. Solicitor-General at the time of the 1985 "Rainbow Warrior" bombing, the new I-G reveals very little about himself. It appears that almost everybody who has had close dealings with the former Solicitor-General vouches for his integrity. However, the same was said about Laurie Greig when he took up the position. While the issue of "apparent bias" brought down Greig, any lack of "apparent bias" does not address the fundamental problems with the office itself.

The Office Of The I-G Is The Issue

In resigning, Laurie Greig saved the Government from further embarrassment. Had he chosen not to resign, he could not have been sacked. As a member of the judiciary the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security enjoys all the protection of a High Court Judge. He can only be removed by a vote in Parliament and only on very limited and specified grounds. Exhibiting "apparent bias" is not one of them.

This protection of the judiciary from undue political influence is an essential aspect of the separation of powers, one of the pillars of a liberal democracy. However, other members of the judiciary function within a system of sophisticated internal rules, conventions and checks and balances. These include hierarchies of courts and rights of appeal, persuasive and/or binding precedents, rules about the conduct of cases and admissibility of evidence. There are, therefore, limits to how much harm can be caused by the untoward actions of any single member of the judiciary.

The office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security exists in quasi-isolation from this broader legal apparatus. And the person holding that office exercises an extraordinary amount of individual discretion. Had Laurie Greig declined to give an interview with the *Listener*, as he was perfectly entitled to do, the personal views which were informing his judgement on the Zaoui case would never have been revealed and there would have been no grounds at all to have him removed from the case.

The History Of The I-G

The position of Inspector-General was introduced in 1996 at the same time as the powers of the SIS were broadened under the SIS Amendment Act. To allay public fears about this widened scope of SIS activity, the National government, supported by Labour, held up the office of I-G as a means for greater public oversight and accountability. Anyone who felt unfairly treated by the SIS, it was claimed, could raise his or her concerns with an impartial judicial watchdog.

Laurie Greig was the first person to hold the position. Calls for his resignation began with his first case, which was one familiar to readers of *Peace Researcher*. He heard complaints from Aziz Choudry and me concerning events around the 1996 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Trade Ministers' meeting in Christchurch: the SIS break-in to Mr Choudry's house; a hoax bomb that looked like a set-up; and questionable Police searches. The Inspector-General, without confirming or denying any SIS involvement, concluded that no law had been broken. Subsequent court cases found that both the SIS and Police had acted illegally. His report could not be released without the approval of the Director and the Minister in Charge of the SIS (*who is always the Prime Minister*. *The best summary of the Choudry case can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/choudry.htm> Ed.*).

Since that time, the powers of and resourcing available to the SIS have increased dramatically. However, these same structural flaws in the avenues open for appeal against the SIS remain. They exist independently of the person who occupies the position of Inspector-General.

Conclusion

As the powers of surveillance agencies like the SIS continue to be widened, nobody should be under any illusions that there is a genuine impartial process for public oversight or accountability. The office of Inspector-General has never provided that, and the replacement of the office holder does not address this underlying problem.

Ahmed Zaoui remains incarcerated. The country is indebted to him and his legal team for finally seeing off an Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. However, the Government has clearly indicated its intention to see Mr Zaoui off as well. It has recently been revealed that New Zealand is approaching other countries about whether they would take Mr Zaoui in the event of his deportation. It is important for him and for the country as a whole that all possible legal and political measures be adopted to prevent this from happening.



Equatorial Guinea

You can be forgiven if you've never heard of Equatorial Guinea. I had to make liberal use of my atlas and *Encyclopaedia Britannica* CD Rom in order to write this. It is nestled in the sweaty armpit of West Africa, bordered by Gabon and Cameroon, and is not to be confused with either Guinea or Guinea Bissau, two other countries in West Africa. Formerly called Spanish Guinea, it was Spain's only colony in sub-Saharan Africa (a 15th Century treaty had divided the world between Spain and Portugal. The latter got exclusive rights to Africa but a couple of hundred years later agreed to let Spain have its own African colony for sourcing slaves). It is an utterly obscure little country with a population not much bigger than that of Christchurch and is afflicted with one of the worst examples of the dictatorships that have benighted so much of post-colonial Africa. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasigo has been in power since 1979, having displaced another vicious dictator, and is obviously a fan of Saddam Hussein – in one 1990s' "election", he claimed to have won with 99% of the vote.

In March 2004, Equatorial Guinea was suddenly catapulted into world headlines. Zimbabwe arrested 64 alleged foreign mercenaries plus three flight crew, and seized the cargo plane that they were on, at Harare Airport. The men were South Africans, Namibians, Angolans, Congolese and a Zimbabwean. The plane, which was full of military equipment, had started from the tiny West African island state of Sao Tome and Principe and had flown to Zimbabwe to collect its passengers and weapons. Equatorial Guinea alleged that the men were mercenaries hired by exiled opposition leaders in Spain, with the backing of British, American and Spanish Intelligence services, aiming to overthrow its government. Furthermore, both Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe alleged that unnamed transnational corporations backed the plot to overthrow the government of the tiny, oil rich nation. An additional 15 foreign mercenaries, the alleged advance guard, were arrested in Equatorial Guinea itself. One of them, a South African, said that their mission had been to abduct the President, force him into Spanish exile and replace him with the leader of the opposition who has already been in Spanish exile for many years (the latter had tried to mount a coup in 1997 and was sentenced, in absentia, to 100 years prison). All of which sounds quite plausible – after all, 2004 has already witnessed the US military assist a coup in Haiti, backing former death squad leaders, and being used to directly seize the elected leader of that country and fly him away to the Central African Republic (proving that he left involuntarily. The Central African Republic does not feature on the wish list of dictators planning on enjoying their illgotten gains in exile).

The company that owned the plane said that it was all a dreadful misunderstanding and that the men were being flown to the Democratic Republic of Congo to provide security for transnational mining projects there. What has been described as Africa's first world war, with millions of Congolese deaths, and the role of mining transnationals in that, is a whole other story. But neither Zimbabwe nor Equatorial Guinea was buying that explanation. Zimbabwe identified one of those arrested as a former member of Britain's Special Air Service and a leading figure in the South African mercenary firm, Executive Outcomes. This firm has been a controversial and leading player in several of Africa's interminable wars of the 1990s, most notably in Angola and Sierra Leone.

Zimbabwe was adamant that the arrested men would face charges under aviation, firearms and immigration laws, and that they could face the death penalty. The story vanished from the media as quickly as it appeared, but it provided a rare glimpse into the murky world of the old fashioned sort of mercenaries, the soldiers of fortune who have plagued post-colonial Africa since at least the 1960s. And if you felt ignorant about Equatorial Guinea, you're in good company. The Christchurch *Press* ran two stories on it, giving two different names for the country's President. My research established that "they" were one and the same man, a man with a string of names.

But these hapless fellows are not the only mercenaries involved with Equatorial Guinea. There are other ones working with its government. It is one of the countries to have State Department-approved US private military companies train and reorganise its military. In fact, these private contractors successfully pressured the US government to lift a ban on American companies providing assistance to Equatorial Guinea. The ban had been imposed because of Equatorial Guinea's appalling human rights record.

Bougainville

Executive Outcomes is a very familiar name to *Peace Researcher* readers, for its activities much closer to this part of the world. *PR* 13, August 1997, included a lengthy article by me entitled "The Dirty Dogs Of War", which detailed the failed plan by the then government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) to hire the British mercenary company, Sandline International, to defeat the separatist guerillas on the island of Bougainville and seize back the huge

transnational-owned gold and copper mine at Panguna, which had lain idle since the start of the war, in the 1980s. Sandline was described as being intimately related to Executive Outcomes and shared the same crew of South African mercenaries led by Old Etonian ex-British Army officers. The whole thing came a spectacular gutser – the mercenaries were arrested, a military rebellion forced a major political crisis and the Government was defeated in the ensuing election. It proved a catalyst in the long running Bougainville saga – peace talks ensued, peace was attained and Bougainville now enjoys the status of autonomy within Papua New Guinea.

The good news is that Sandline has had to close down, in April 2004. It cited a lack of official gratitude as the reason, saying that it was because of "general lack of governmental support for private military companies willing to end armed conflicts in places like Africa. Without such support the ability of Sandline to make a positive difference to countries in countries where there is widespread brutality and even genocidal behaviour is irretrievably diminished" (Sandline Website, 16/4/04; quoted in *The National* [PNG], 4/5/04). Oh dear, how sad, never mind. On the negative side of the balance sheet, the repercussions of PNG's disastrous foray into the world of guns for hire, continues to haunt it to this day.

Oil

Why the interest in Equatorial Guinea? That can be answered in one word – oil. The US is looking to find an alternative to Middle East oil (the ever-stronger Iraqi resistance is undermining the whole project to steal, at gunpoint, the world's second largest oil reserves; and Saudi Arabia is no longer the sure bet that it once was). So the US has now switched attention to the Atlantic waters of the Gulf of Guinea states – Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of Congo (which is not to be confused with its much bigger neighbour, the Democratic Republic of Congo), Angola and Sao Tome and Principe. The US already imports 15% of its annual oil requirements from the Gulf of Guinea and this figure is predicted to exceed 25% by 2015. To stress the importance that the US now attaches to the region, President Bush became the first US President to visit sub-Saharan Africa in his first term, going there in July 2003. The *Press* headline (8/7/03) summed it up succinctly: "Bush on safari for oil, security". By 2004 US generals were fanning out across Africa in a hunt for new military bases and security pacts. The African Oil Policy Initiative Group, a lobbying group comprising oil executives and Pentagon officials reported to Congress that the Gulf of Guinea and its vast oil supplies made it a "vital interest in US national security calculations" (*Guardian*, 17/2/03). It suggested establishing a US military sub-command for the Gulf of Guinea and setting up bases on the islands of Sao Tome and Principe. Unless the US did more to prop up the oil industry there, commented one senior Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official, "the oil industry ran the risk of imploding as a result of the region's inherent instability" (*Guardian Weekly*, 10/7/03).

But, America's addiction to oil, and its need to create a bigger and bigger empire of military bases throughout the world, are not my topics in this article. It is the privatisation of war and it's time to look at the bigger picture than just a few hapless clowns arrested at an African airport.

Iraq

What really focused attention on the new private armies (who are a different kettle of fish to the old style mercenaries) was the March 2004 killing, incineration, mutilation and public displaying of four American "contractors" in Fallujah, the crucible of Sunni resistance to the American occupation of Iraq. It led directly to the ironfisted US military response, so reminiscent of all the other armies of invasion and occupation of the past 100 years, which, in turn, led to the massive upsurge in the Iraqi resistance that is so effectively bleeding and demoralising the would be coloniser. The victims (who certainly weren't innocent victims, but nobody deserves to die like that, nor to be treated like that after death) were all former US soldiers, mainly from Special Forces units. The sort of units that US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, relies on to project US military might throughout the world (and which are spectacularly unsuited for the humdrum chore of occupation, let alone nation building). The sort of men who are described as "adrenalin junkies", meaning they like the big money, the ceaseless buzz of violence, and to hold the power of life or death over thousands of people.

At least 15,000 of these "contractors" are currently working in Iraq (with plenty of Kiwis eager to join them, according to media reports). That makes them the second Coalition military force – there are more private soldiers in Iraq than there are British soldiers (the second biggest "official" force). 30,000 Iraqis also work for these private military companies. It is important to realise that their deaths and injuries do not feature in any US statistics for "our" side's casualties in this rapidly growing war. They represent a massive privatisation of war.

"Contractors are complicating traditional norms of military command and control, and challenging the basic norms of accountability that are supposed to govern the Government's use of violence. Human rights abuses go unpunished. Reliance on poorly monitored contractors is bleeding the public treasury. The contractors are simultaneously

creating opportunities for the Government to evade public accountability, and, in Iraq at least, are on the verge of evolving into an independent force at least somewhat beyond the control of the US military. And, as the contractors grow in numbers and political influence, their power to entrench themselves and block reform is growing.

“Whatever the limitations of the military code of justice and its in-practice application, the code does not apply to the modern-day mercenaries. Indeed, the mechanisms by which the contractors are held responsible for their behavior, and disciplined for mistreating civilians or committing human rights abuses - all too easy for men with guns in a hostile environment - are fuzzy.

“It is unclear exactly what law applies to the contractors, explains Peter W Singer, author of “Corporate Warriors” (Cornell University Press, 2003) and a leading authority on private military contracting. They do not fall under international law on mercenaries, which is defined narrowly. Nor does the national law of the United States clearly apply to the contractors in Iraq - especially because many of the contractors are not Americans.

“Relatedly, many firms do not properly screen those they hire to patrol the streets in foreign nations. ‘Lives, soldiers’ and civilians’ welfare, human rights, are all at stake’, says Singer. ‘But we have left it up to very raw market forces to figure out who can work for these firms, and who they can work for’... (*Focus On The Corporation*, 24/4/04; Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman; “A Corporate Military Monster Is Being Created In Iraq”).

The complete lack of accountability and oversight for these private soldiers was dramatically illustrated by the sordid scandal that emerged from Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib prison (which, ironically, had been notorious under Saddam Hussein as a place of torture and execution). Photos depicting the disgraceful and depraved treatment of Iraqi prisoners were published in the world’s media, in April 2004. What was not so widely known was that the interrogators responsible for these prisoners were mercenaries. They gave orders without legal accountability. And a civilian contractor accused of raping a male prisoner was not charged because US military law had no jurisdiction over him. So these sadists were, quite literally, outlaws. Two US civilian firms – Titan Corporation and CACI International Inc – were the contractors at the prison. Robert Baer, a former CIA officer who has examined the cases, described the situation as “insanity...These were rank amateurs and there is no legally binding law on these guys as far as I could tell. Why did they let them in the prison?” (*Guardian*, 30/4/04; “US Military In Torture Scandal; Use of private contractors in Iraqi jail interrogations highlighted by inquiry into abuse of prisoners”; Julian Borger).

Blackwater, The Very Model Of A Modern Private Army

The four dead Americans worked for Blackwater Security Consulting, one of the largest of the private military companies and one of the leading players in the privatised war in Iraq. These guys do much more than strut around as heavily armed bodyguards: “The security contractors are already involved in full-fledged battlefield operations, increasingly so as the insurgency in Iraq escalates. A few days after the Americans were killed in Fallujah, Blackwater Security Consulting engaged in full-scale battle in Najaf (*the centre of the separate Shi’ite uprising against the occupation. Ed.*), with the company flying its own helicopters amidst an intense firefight to resupply its own commandos.

“Now, reports the *Washington Post*, the security firms are networking formally, ‘organising what may effectively be the largest private army in the world, with its own rescue teams and pooled, sensitive intelligence’. Because many of the security contractors work for the Coalition Provisional Authority, as opposed to the US military, they are not integrated into the military’s operations. ‘Under assault by insurgents and unable to rely on US and Coalition troops for intelligence or help under duress’, according to the *Post*, the contractors are banding together. Private occupying commandos? Corporate military helicopters in a battlefield situation? An integrated occupation private intelligence network? Isn’t this just obviously a horrible idea?”... (*Focus On The Corporation*, *ibid.*).

As mentioned above, many of these private soldiers are not Americans. They include many former British Special Air Service (SAS) soldiers and veterans of some of the most vicious regimes of the 20th Century, such as General Pinochet’s Chile and apartheid South Africa. They quite accurately could be described as the scum of the Earth.

Blackwater was founded in 1996 by a former US Navy Special Forces veteran. Since then it has trained more than 50,000 military and law enforcement personnel at its 2,400 hectare facility in North Carolina. “The facility boasts several target ranges and a simulated town for urban warfare training. It is so advanced that some of the US military’s active duty special ops troops have trained there” (*Time*, 12/4/04; “When Private Armies Take To The Front Lines”; Micahel Duffy). It is located near the major military base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and recruits extensively from the Special Forces units based there. Iraq is where Blackwater has hit the headlines.

“...Locals often mistake the guards for Special Forces or CIA personnel, which makes active duty military troops a

bit edge. 'Those Blackwater guys', says an intelligence officer in Iraq, 'they drive around wearing Oakley sunglasses and pointing their guns out of car windows. They have pointed their guns at me, and it pissed me off. Imagine what a guy in Fallujah thinks'. Adds an Army officer, who just returned from Baghdad, 'They are a subculture'.

"Indeed the relationship between the private soldiers and the real ones isn't always collaborative. 'We've responded to the military at least half a dozen times but not once have they responded to our emergencies', says Scott Custer, a co-director of private military company, Custer Battles. 'We have our own quick reaction force now'. But the private firms are usually cut off from the US military's intelligence network and from information that could minimise harm to their employees. Noel Koch, who oversaw terrorism policy for the Pentagon in the 1980s and now runs TranSecur, a global information security firm, says private companies 'aren't required to have an intelligence collection or analytical capability in house. It's always assumed that the Government is going to provide intelligence about threats. That, says Koch, means 'they are flying blind, often guessing about places that they shouldn't go'... (*with fatal results in places like Fallujah. Ed.*)

"Several sources familiar with Blackwater operations told *Time* that the company has in some cases abbreviated training even for crucial missions in war zones. A former private military operator with knowledge of Blackwater's operational tactics says the firm did not give all its contract warriors in Afghanistan proper training in offensive driving tactics, although missions were to include vehicular and dignitary escort duty. 'Evasive driving and ambush tactics were not - repeat, were not - covered in training', this source said...

"At the Pentagon, which has encouraged the outsourcing of security work, there are widespread misgivings about the use of hired guns. A Pentagon official says the outsourcing of security work means the Government no longer has any real control over the training and capabilities of thousands of US and foreign contractors who are packing weapons every bit as powerful as those belonging to the average GI. 'These firms are hiring anyone they can get. Sure, some of them are Special Forces, but some of them are good, and some are not. Some are too old for this work, and some are too young. But they are not on the US payroll. And so they are not our responsibility'. But with Congress and the Bush Administration reluctant to pay for more active duty troops, the use of contractors in places like Iraq will only grow. A Pentagon official who opposes their use nonetheless detects an obvious if unsentimental virtue: 'The American public doesn't get quite as concerned when contractors are killed'" (*ibid.*).

The Rest Of The World

"...Nor is their presence limited to Iraq. In recent years, soldiers-for-profit have served in Liberia, Pakistan, Rwanda and Bosnia. They have guarded Afghanistan's President, Hamid Karzai, and built the military detention facilities holding Al Qaeda suspects in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They have been an essential part of the American war on drugs in Latin America. Peter Singer of the Brookings Institution, who wrote a book on the private military industry, says it brings in about \$US100 billion a year worldwide.

"The industry rose to prominence under (the first) President George Bush — Brown and Root, a Halliburton * subsidiary, received a \$US9 million contract to study supplementing military efforts after the 1991 Persian Gulf war. The Clinton Administration sent more work to contractors, but it is under the current President, a strong believer in government privatisation, that things started booming. Gary Jackson, the president of Blackwater, envisions a day when any country faced with peacekeeping duties will simply call him and place an order. 'I would like to have the largest, most professional private army in the world', he told me. * *Halliburton – a huge US transnational corporation, with close ties to leading figures in the Bush Administration. It is one of the main contractors for the US occupation forces in Iraq and the leading profiteer, so much so that it is embroiled in scandals about its ripping off the US military and the American taxpayer in Iraq and Kuwait. Ed.*

"This raises some obvious questions. Shouldn't war be a government function? Why rely on the private sector for our national defence, even if it is largely a supporting role? Part of the reason is practical: since the end of the Cold War, the United States military has been shrinking, from 2.1 million in 1989 to 1.4 million today. Supporters of privatisation argue that there simply aren't enough soldiers to provide a robust presence around the world, and that by drafting private contractors to fix helicopters, train recruits and cook dinner, the Government frees up bona fide soldiers to fight the enemy. (Of course, in the field, the line between combatant and noncombatant roles grows fuzzier, particularly because many of the private soldiers are armed). Private contractors are supposed to be cheaper, too, but their cost effectiveness has not been proved.

"Low manpower and cost savings aren't the only reasons these companies appeal to the Pentagon. For one, substituting contractors for soldiers offers the Government a way to avoid unpopular military forays. According to Myles Frechette, who was President Bill Clinton's Ambassador to Colombia, private companies performed jobs in Latin America that would have been politically unpalatable for the Armed Forces. After all, if the Government were

shipping home soldiers' corpses from the coca fields, the public outcry would be tremendous. However, more than 20 private contractors have been killed in Colombia alone since 1998, and their deaths have barely registered.

"This points to the biggest problem with the outsourcing of war: there is far less accountability to the American public and to international law than if real troops were performing the tasks. In the 1990's, several employees of one company, DynCorp, were implicated in a sex-trafficking scandal in Bosnia involving girls as young as 12. Had these men been soldiers, they would have faced court-martial proceedings. As private workers, they were simply put on the next plane back to America"... (*New York Times*, 2/4/04; "Need An Army? Just Pick Up The Phone"; Barry Yeoman).

More and more it is private soldiers who are doing the mundane, dirty, dangerous and politically unacceptable jobs. This trend accelerated in the 1990s. For example, Military Professional Resources Inc. helped to plan Croatia's devastating Operation Storm offensive against the Bosnian-Serb Army that turned the tide in the Balkan war. There are Congressional restraints on what the US military can do in Colombia – the private armies face no such problems, as they fight alongside the brutal Colombian military against Leftist guerillas and coca growers (the plant from which cocaine is produced). They fly armed reconnaissance planes and helicopter gunships in that country's multiple wars. "...They operate the intelligence and communications systems at the US Northern Command in Colorado, which is responsible for coordinating a response to any attack on the United States. And licensed by the State Department, they are contracting with foreign governments, training soldiers and reorganising militaries in Nigeria, Bulgaria, Taiwan, and Equatorial Guinea"... (*Mother Jones*, May 2003, "Soldiers Of Good Fortune", Barry Yeoman).

It is not only American companies that are creaming it in the privatised war and security business. For example, there are several British, South African and Israeli companies. John Davidson, managing director of British firm Rubicon, says: "We have a lot of business in the Middle East, from Saudi Arabia to Dubai. Western companies have been well established there. Since September 11 (2001) there has been a steady increase in the amount of work we are required to do" (*Observer*, "Selling Soldiers"; Oliver Morgan, reproduced in the *Press*, 3/11/03). The private armies have the express backing of Britain's Labour government. In 2002, Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, wrote in a Foreign Office Green Paper: "Today's world is a far cry from the 1960s, when private military activity usually meant mercenaries of the rather unsavoury kind involved in post-colonial or neo-colonial conflicts" (*Newsweek*, "Dogs Of Peace To The Rescue"; Eric Pape and Michael Meyer, reproduced in the *New Zealand Herald*, 23-24/8/03). By contrast, France has broadened its law outlawing mercenaries to include corporations as well as individuals.

Plausible Deniability

But it is the Bush Administration's drive to privatise war that is providing the biggest growth in this cancerous industry, which is in the US. "...Indeed, the Bush Administration's push to privatise war is swiftly turning the military-industrial complex of old into something even more far-reaching: a complex of military industries that do everything but fire weapons. For-profit military companies now enjoy an estimated \$US100 billion in business worldwide each year, with much of the money going to *Fortune* 500 firms like Halliburton, DynCorp, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon. Secretary of the Army Thomas White, a former vice chairman of Enron, 'has really put a mark on the wall for getting government employees out of certain functions in the military', says retired Colonel Tom Sweeney, professor of strategic logistics at the US Army War College. 'It allows you to focus your manpower on the battlefield kinds of missions'.

"Private military companies, for their part, are focusing much of their manpower on Capitol Hill. Many are staffed with retired military officers who are well connected at the Pentagon - putting them in a prime position to influence Government policy and drive more business to their firms... Because they operate with little oversight, using contractors also enables the military to skirt troop limits imposed by Congress and to carry out clandestine operations without committing US troops or attracting public attention. 'Private military corporations become a way to distance themselves and create what we used to call plausible deniability' says Daniel Nelson, a former professor of civil-military relations at the Defense Department's Marshall European Center for Security Studies. 'It's disastrous for democracy'" (*Mother Jones*, May 2003, "Soldiers Of Good Fortune", Barry Yeoman).

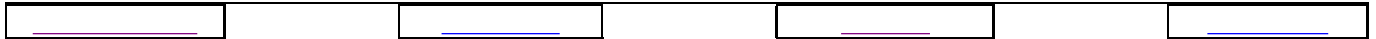
"...The larger become the military contractors, the more influence they have in Congress and the Pentagon, the more they are able to shape policy, immunise themselves from proper oversight, and expand their reach. The private military firms are led by ex-generals, the most effective possible lobbyists of their former colleagues -- and frequently former subordinates -- at the Pentagon. As they grow in size, and become integrated into the military-industrial complex (Northrop Grumman has swallowed a number of the military contractors, for example), their political leverage in Congress and among civilians in the executive branch grows.

“Over the last decade or so, the phenomenon of private military contracting has grown unchecked. We're now at a precipice, with action to constrain the contractors about to become far, far more difficult than if the madness of employing mercenaries had been averted in the first place” (*Focus On The Corporation*, 24/4/04; Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman; “A Corporate Military Monster Is Being Created In Iraq”).

Iraqi Resistance Offers Grounds For Hope

Plausible deniability has always been a favourite tactic of the military. For example, in Third World countries such as the Philippines, the military creates, trains and arms civilian militias that are simply death squads. These groups have a well deserved reputation for horrendous and unchecked human rights abuses, including torture, mass murders, abductions, disappearances, the whole ghastly repertoire. The military simply says this is nothing to do with us, talk to those “civilian self defence groups”. And when it becomes necessary for the military to actually fight the various rebel armies (Communists or Muslim separatists, in the case of the Philippines) – as opposed to terrorising and murdering unarmed civilians – they use the death squad guys as cannon fodder. Nobody is terribly upset if some of them get killed or wounded. This is exactly the model now being practised on a vast scale in Iraq, and it is the same model that will be coming to a war near you if the Bush Administration has anything to do with it. It is the logical end result of privatisation – unaccountable mercenary armies waging their own wars, for profit and territory. It's one more reason why the Iraqi resistance needs the support of the rest of the world to drive out the occupiers of their country.

And a step was taken in that direction in April 2004, when the US Marines who had been besieging and pounding Fallujah, were ordered to retreat to fallback positions around the city, to be replaced by a hastily created Iraqi military force, commanded by a former general in Saddam's Army (who rubbed salt into the wound by reporting for duty in his old uniform, complete with beret and the obligatory Saddam moustache worn by all the officer corps in the ousted regime). They were given a hero's welcome by the inhabitants. The US military had originally attacked Fallujah to capture those responsible for the death and mutilation of the four US private soldiers. They have not been captured or surrendered. Most ominously for the US, the retreat took place on April 30th, a fact which was not remarked upon at the time. No wonder – it marks the date in 1975 on which Vietnam was finally liberated, the previous crushing defeat for US imperial ambitions. Iraq is not yet Vietnam. But it is only a matter of time. All the ingredients are there. Just add a lot more blood.



Are We Seeing A Popular Revolution In Iraq?

by Joe Hendren

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

Iraq is under military occupation by a foreign power. Sunni and Shia Muslims put aside their differences and turn memorial services into political rallies, while religious leaders call on the people to throw off the bonds of imperialism. The arrest of several independence leaders leads to strikes and violent demonstrations. Administrative posts are largely held by foreigners, creating a lot of Iraqi dissent. Nationalist political activity continues to rise, and insurgents are active in Najaf and Karbala. Iraq is in a state of anarchy.

This is not 2004. The year is 1920 and Iraqis are demanding an end to Britain's post World War I mandate over Iraq, a mandate most Iraqis regard as thinly disguised colonialism. "The Great Iraqi Revolution" -as it is known to Iraqis - has been recognised as a key event in modern Iraqi history. It marks the first time Shia and Sunni, town and tribe came together in national effort, a national effort aimed at ending a foreign occupation.

It should be a huge warning sign that the events of 1920 now seem so familiar. Fast forward to mid May 2004 to renewed fighting in Najaf and Karbala between "insurgents" and US troops. Most are members of the Mehdi Army, the organised armed resistance led by the young Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The strong anti-American stance taken by al-Sadr has won him hundreds of devoted supporters, supporters who see al-Sadr's sermons as a welcome contrast to the seemingly more tolerant approach taken towards the US occupiers by some older Shi'ite clerics. His army has also been active in Baghdad and Basra (*Press*, 6/4/04, "Maverick cleric fuels anti-US violence").

In April 2004 the Sunni city of Fallujah was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting since the US invasion. In response to the deaths of four American "security contractors" * on March 31, US Marines staged a month long siege of the city of 300,000 men, women and children. More than 600 Iraqis are estimated to have died, with civilians making up the vast majority of the casualties. There are reports of Shia militants assisting the Sunni resistance in Fallujah (*Guardian*, 10/4/04, "Sunni and Shia unite against common enemy"). Some soldiers in the new US controlled Iraqi Army refused to fight in Fallujah, and some even gave their weapons away (*Nation*, 29/4/04, "Mutiny in Iraq"). * See article elsewhere in this issue about the leading role played by thousands of "security contractors" – mercenaries, in plain English – in the occupation of Iraq. Ed.

On April 9 2004, some 200,000 Sunni and Shia Muslims joined together to denounce the American occupation of Iraq, and to show their solidarity with the people of Fallujah and the uprising led by Moqtada al-Sadr. In unity, Sunni and Shia's chanted "Long live Moqtada, long live Fallujah, long live Basra, long live Karbala" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

The split between the Shia and Sunni dates back to the 7th Century, and arose from a dispute over who had the right to lead the Islamic world. Sunni Muslims have dominated the governing class of Iraq throughout Iraqi history, often to the detriment of Shias. The former dictator, Saddam Hussein, dealt with the Shia majority harshly, and often oppressed the Shia to consolidate his own power. Following the fall of Saddam in 2003, Iraqi Shia's look forward to playing a greater role in the government, but the US raises fears the Shias ultimately want to establish an Islamic republic, similar to Iran. Many Muslims see these "fears" as US propaganda.

The main preacher speaking at the April 9th rally, Dr Harith al-Dhari dismissed American concerns of sectarian religious conflict as an excuse to extend their stay. "Here in this mosque and in this gathering we have the proof that all groups are united. We all want the coalition to leave the country". At the end of his sermon he called for a two-day general strike in government offices and a boycott of American and British goods (*Guardian*, *ibid.*).

The Great Iraqi Revolution And The Path To Republican Government

In 1920 more than 100,000 armed tribesmen joined anti-occupation forces as a popular uprising spread throughout the country (*Guardian*, 19/4/03 "Our last occupation"). It was only with great difficulty that the British bought the revolt under control, with a combination of Royal Air Force bombers, machine guns and reinforcements from India and Iran. Secretary of the War Office, Winston Churchill, fully supported the use of chemical weapons "against recalcitrant Arabs as an experiment" (US Library of Congress, "Iraq: World War I and the British Mandate", www.countryreports.org). Following the uprising the British replaced the military regime with a provisional Arab government, assisted by British advisers but with supreme authority still resting with Britain's High Commissioner to Iraq, Sir Percy Cox.

Following the Cairo Conference of 1921, the British appointed an Arabian prince, Faisal ibn Hussein al Hashem as the first King of Iraq, a leader who enjoyed some support among nationalist military officers. But his kingship was

only officially recognised once he had signed the Anglo-Iraq Treaty (1922), a treaty that placed military and economic control of Iraq in British hands ("Iraq: A report from the inside", Dilip Hiro, Granta Publications, London 2003, p22). This treaty was the cause of a great deal of controversy in Iraq and it took two years before it was grudgingly ratified an elected Constituent Assembly. Following the discovery of oil in the Kirkuk region of Iraq in 1927, Britain strengthened its "relationship" with Iraq with the signing of a 25 year peace treaty (1930). This new treaty required the Iraqi ruler to formulate a common foreign policy with Britain, retain British military bases and allow posting of British troops in the country, in exchange for a guarantee of British protection against foreign attack.

The widespread opposition to the treaty in Iraq led Iraqi governing officials to ponder the treaty for over a year. Britain made it clear that the treaty was its price for ending the British mandate of Iraq. The treaty was ratified, but only after the British High Commissioner threatened to suspend the constitution drafted by the assembly unless Iraq accepted the treaty. While Iraq became a member of the League of Nations in 1930, most Iraqis "considered their independence incomplete as long as British troops were stationed on their soil" (Hiro, p23).

On the death of Faisal I in 1933, his son Ghazi succeeded him. Widely known for his nationalist views, Ghazi I died in a car accident in 1939, with most Iraqis suspecting the British had some involvement in his death. The British role in quelling the Arab revolt in Palestine (1936-39) further inflamed anti-British feelings among military officers, and inspired the formation of the Free Officers movement to remove the monarchy.

In April 1941 Ghazi's four-year-old son Faisal II, his regent and his mother were forced to flee following a coup launched by the Prime Minister, Rashid Ali Gailani. This anti-imperialist victory has a prominent place in Iraqi history books. A bronze statue of Gailani holds a prominent place in Baghdad's Andalus Square. Gailani's coup failed following a British counteroffensive, which reinstated the pro-British Nuri al-Said as Prime Minister. One of the military officers who supported Gailani returned to his village of Auja near Tikrit, where he would act as a mentor to a young Saddam Hussein.

On the 14th of July 1958 a military coup by the Free Officers led by Brigadier Abdul Karim Qasim seized control of Iraq. Nuri al-Said and the royal family were assassinated. Most Iraqis welcomed the overthrow of the monarchy as an end to indirect British rule. The date of the coup is celebrated by a large monument in Baghdad's Liberation Square, showing an Iraqi man freeing himself by bending the bars of British subjugation. The pride in Iraqi independence and the distaste of foreign imperialism is moulded in the monuments of town squares.

Troops, Bases, Sovereignty Versus Imperialism, Old and New

In the wake of the 1958 coup, a rich Baghdad banking family were among those to flee Iraq. This family included a 13-year-old Ahmed Chalabi (Hiro, p76), now a leading member of the Iraqi Governing Council and a favourite of the neo-conservative ideologues running the US occupation. A favourite who is also a convicted fraudster. But even Chalabi says that Washington must hand Iraqis control over their country's oil revenue and security forces or the June 30, 2004 transfer of power will be meaningless (*Press*, 17/5/04, "US soldiers claim to have killed 18 of cleric's gunmen").

It appears Chalabi is no longer a favourite. On May 20th US troops and Iraqi police surrounded Chalabi's house and raided offices of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a group Mr Chalabi leads. US officials accused Chalabi of interfering with an investigation into alleged corruption of the UN oil-for-food programme. An INC official, Qaisar Wotwot linked the "provocative operation" to Chalabi's demands for full Iraqi control of oil revenues and security (*Guardian*, 20/5/04, "Chalabi house raid sparks anger").

"...My relationship with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) is now non-existent. I am America's best friend in Iraq: if the CPA finds it necessary to direct an armed attack against my home you can see the state of relations between the CPA and the Iraqi people'. Then, in a turnaround unthinkable even a couple of months ago, he told the Americans to get out. 'Let my people go. Let my people be free', he said. 'We are grateful to President Bush for liberating Iraq but it is time for the Iraqi people to run their own affairs'" (*Times*, published in the *Press*, 22&23/5/04, "Humiliated Chalabi tells America to quit", Richard Beeston).

The plans of the Bush Administration to dominate Iraq economically, politically and militarily after the so called handover of sovereignty on June 30 have remarkable similarities to some of the terms forced on a reluctant Iraq by the British in the treaties of 1922 and 1930. While the US has not imposed a formal requirement to consult on foreign policy issues, the presence of large US military bases and the largest US embassy in the world will enforce "consultation".

The US plans to build four permanent military bases in Iraq, to enhance its military presence in the region and to

ensure US domination of key strategic resources. As Jim Lobe points out, this could be the key reason the US resisted giving the United Nations control over post-war Iraq, as other members of the UN Security Council would most likely veto the bases ("Is it the bases?", 28/11/03, www.ipsnews.net). Following the handover, coalition forces will no longer be in Iraq as part of a military occupation, but at the "invitation" of the interim government. A Status of Forces Agreement will be required if the troops and the bases are to stay, much like the Anglo-Iraq treaties allowed the presence of British troops and bases more than 80 years ago. While the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, says that the US will withdraw its troops if the interim government makes such a demand, he knows that such a demand is unlikely. In my view, Powell's statement is nothing more than a White House political ploy to mask the fact that real sovereignty is being withheld.

In March 2004, the CPA passed over control of all Iraqi troops and security forces to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, but it came with a catch, an "emergency" decree ceding "operational control" to senior US military commanders in Iraq. So the Ministry of Defence can organise and develop policy for its forces, but the US will retain the sole ability to order Iraqi forces in or out of combat. The Government will run the police force, but in 'coordination' with the US Central Command (*Wall Street Journal*, 13/5/04, "Behind the scenes, US tightens grip on Iraq's future"; and *Washington Post*, 22/4/04, "Limited sovereignty planned"). If the gun battles in Najaf or Fallujah intensify and become more widespread there is a real chance of strong disagreement between the US and the interim government over how to deal with "the insurgents". Despite the "handover" of power, Powell insists that the top US military commander in Iraq will remain "free to take whatever decisions he believes are appropriate to accomplish his mission" (al-Jazeera, 15/5/04, "G8 demands real Iraqi sovereignty").

"Limited Sovereignty": Protecting US Interests From Democracy

While the US has previously promised Iraqis full sovereignty by June 30, the White House now talks of "limited" sovereignty. The interim government currently being set up by United Nations envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, will have no control over Iraq's military or security forces, and will be restricted to enforcing CPA orders and existing laws. It will have no power to write new laws or make substantial amendments. This government will also be heavily influenced by the presence of dozens of American appointees in the civil service, at all levels, a bureaucratic army to protect US interests in Iraq. Advisers placed inside the new Iraqi ministries will be exclusively American (*Wall Street Journal* {WSJ}, *ibid.*). As a point of historical interest, the 1922 treaty stated that British officials would be appointed to specified posts in eighteen departments to act as advisers and inspectors (US Library of Congress, *ibid.*).

Two new "watchdog" agencies, staffed by Iraqis, will oversee Government operations. The Office of the Inspector General will have inspectors seconded inside every Iraqi ministry on the lookout for examples of malfeasance and fraud. The CPA will appoint these inspectors for a five-year term, meaning that an Iraqi elected government will inherit these appointments. A second body, the Board of Supreme Audit, will manage a large team of inspectors with wide-ranging authority to review Government contracts and investigate any agency that uses public money. The CPA chief, Paul Bremer, will appoint a board president and two deputies to this board, appointments protected in a similar fashion to his executive orders.

If the new bodies are allowed to investigate prior contracts made by the CPA (a moot point) they could start by investigating chief war profiteer Halliburton * which, among other scandals, has been accused of overcharging Iraq for oil imports at the same time as the company is in charge of rebuilding Iraq's oil infrastructure. A clear conflict of interest. If the new agencies were able to investigate companies such as Halliburton this would send a clear signal of their political independence. But if they are prevented from such investigations an entirely different message could be sent. To some, it would demonstrate that the real agenda is to create a bureaucratic means for Bremer's political appointees to bully influence on government activities, long after a fully elected government is in place in Iraq. * *Halliburton – a huge US transnational corporation, with close ties to leading figures in the Bush Administration. It is one of the main contractors for the US occupation forces in Iraq and the leading profiteer, so much so that it is embroiled in scandals about its ripping off the US military and the American taxpayer in Iraq and Kuwait – not to mention ripping off Iraq. Ed.*

US officials claim the interim government must be restricted from changing laws and making permanent decisions in order to prevent it from making decisions that a later elected government would find difficult to undo (WSJ, *ibid.*). Yet this is exactly what the US has already done though the illegal orders issued by the CPA. Paul Bremer has issued executive orders to remove virtually all restrictions on foreign investment and banking, slash the top tax rate to 15% and to privatise many Iraqi State assets. As for obstructing a future elected government, the US forced through a proviso in the interim constitution that the CPA's laws, regulations, orders and directives would remain in force, and could only be changed by a 75% vote by the "Iraqi Transitional Government", a body that will not exist until elections are held in 2005. The claims of the "US officials" that they are protecting democracy are nothing but a cruel Orwellian joke – the real agenda is protecting US interests from Iraqi democracy.

The International Community Needs To Act

With Iraq's long history of standing up to those that would attempt to control it from afar, it is not surprising that the US occupation is now facing a wave of Iraqi nationalism. From the time Arabs in the provinces of Baghdad and Basra sought independence from the Ottoman Empire, nationalism and anti-imperialism have been popular rallying calls in Iraqi politics. The popular appeal of al-Sadr and the desire of the people of Fallujah for the American troops to leave their city are the modern examples of this.

The continued Israeli occupation of Palestine is also part of the mix, especially now that President Bush has endorsed the latest plans of Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon. Many Iraqis see the US occupation of Iraq and Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as interchangeable parts of a single anti-Arab outrage (*Nation*, *ibid.*). The ghastly abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib Prison has completely destroyed any remaining US credibility, and this scandal is likely to have further repercussions throughout the Middle East.

Will the armed uprising become as large and as widespread as it did in 1920? Let us hope another way can be found, as the 1920s revolt led to the deaths of over 9,000 Iraqis. While political solutions are fast running out, a good first step would be to attempt to understand how strongly Iraqis value their sovereignty; it is their history that is driving the forces fighting for freedom in Najaf and Fallujah.

A legitimate mediating broker is desperately required. It may be the source of some hope that despite the UN's chequered history in Iraq even al-Sadr's spokesperson, Qais al-Khazaali, says "it is in the interests of the whole world to send peacekeeping forces under the UN flag" (*Nation*, *ibid.*). The UN should not go into Iraq as a partner of the US, but should attempt to regain some of its legitimacy by standing strong. It should agree to send peacekeepers to Iraq only on condition that the coalition forces leave, making it possible for countries that did not support the war to take part in peacekeeping operations. The UN could cast out Bremer's law changes as obvious breaches of international law, and convene forums to listen to legitimate Iraqi grievances concerning the interim constitution, easing the way for elections. A good start for the UN would be to refuse to endorse a puppet interim government that will be subject to American strings. If the international community strongly defended the right of Iraqis to self-determination, Iraqis would not have to fight for their freedom with guns.

If Iraqis considered their independence incomplete in 1930 with British troops on their soil, it is likely that they will feel the same way when they see the US military base at Baghdad International Airport. Iraqis could reasonably ask "who really rules the roost?" each time they go past the gigantic new American Embassy, situated in a former palace of Saddam Hussein, a building seen by many as a symbol of Iraqi sovereignty. It is plain dangerous that Bush and the CPA do not appear to understand the meaning of such powerful symbols – or maybe they do.

Christchurch Firm Profits From US War In Iraq

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

Business South is a monthly giveaway paper delivered to every PO box at the Christchurch Postal Centre. If you get one, don't chuck it away, as it regularly contains gems of information. For example, the May issue has a spread on SteelBro, a long-established Christchurch firm. It has an eye-catching little article in it, headed "Helping The Military". I'll quote it in full.

"Steelbro NZ has sold 10 sidelifters * to an American company that will be used to supply goods to United States forces in Iraq. Steelbro's managing director, Bill Lee, says that two more units could be sold to the US military at Fort Bragg to handle military equipment. Mr Lee says the sidelifter can be easily adapted for military operations. During peacetime deployments and exercises, it can be used to load munitions and move artillery to and from exercises. However it is during conflict that the machinery really comes into its own. 'Whether working at railheads, weapons dumps or near forward positions, the sidelifter permits containerised and palletised arms and munitions to be moved quickly and safely. Its compact design also enables it to be carried aboard some military cargo aircraft'. *A sidelifter is a device to lift containers on and off trucks, without needing forklifts, etc. They cost \$250,000 each.

That's pretty clear, isn't it. If local anti-war activists are looking for a Christchurch focus for their opposition to the American occupation of Iraq, this strikes me as being a pretty good candidate. The above is from the horse's mouth, in a business paper. The company boasts about how useful their product is in combat situations and its pivotal roles in transporting and unloading arms and ammunition. And at \$250,000 each, they're a nice little earner for our local war profiteer (that figure comes from a less detailed December 2003 *Press* story, quoted in *PR* 28, "Full Speed Ahead Into The Quagmire: NZ Blunders Into Iraq", Murray Horton. It can be read online at

<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr28-91.html>).



Book Review: “Tell Me Lies: Propaganda And Media Distortion In The Attack On Iraq”

by Jeremy Agar

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

David Miller (editor), Pluto Press, London, 2004. \$47.95.

During the 1980-88 Reagan presidency, you might remember, the US had to invade the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada because it was building an airport for Russian bombers. Nicaragua, on the Central American isthmus to the west, had been taken over by evil thugs. American TV viewers were reminded that Nicaragua was only “two days” marching time from Texas. It was a toss-up whether the Nicaraguans would beat the South American killer bees in the race to destroy America. Or would bees and Nicaraguans find Texas already bombed into submission? Cubans, in league with the Russians and Grenadians, were held responsible for much of the trouble. Further afield, Libyan hitmen and Hispanic narco-terrorists plotted.

In the last contribution to “Tell Me Lies”, an analysis of the propaganda devised to sell the 2003 war on Iraq, Noam Chomsky recalls the 1980s in order to make the point that the comic strip propaganda of Reaganite America might now seem absurd, but at the time it worked well enough. There was no mass rejection of Reagan’s claims by those in “Middle America” whose allegiance matters to Washington. Chomsky thinks Americans have learned. Major wars, like that waged against Vietnam, begun two decades earlier, could not now occur without provoking domestic opposition too strong for an American government to ignore.

Let’s hope so. If so, it will be at least partly the result of the efforts of Chomsky himself. He has documented American foreign policy for decades. One of his recurring themes has been that it’s never been pretty and its purpose - to secure the maximum possible global influence - is assumed by all American administrations. But if they were presented to the scrutiny of citizens, its violent methods would not be acceptable. So the need for secrecy and deception is permanent.

In NZ, during the 1960s and 70s, we were told that navies of Vietnamese might land on the beach at any time to enslave us. A government couldn’t sell that now. Could it? We didn’t believe it then either, so then we were told that the Chinese were making them do it. Now we are told that Osama bin Laden was behind Saddam’s nastiness. Or whatever it was that was being said. None of these things can stand scrutiny after the event.

We’re about to find out how far the US will go in defiance of world opinion. President Dubya Bush doesn’t seem to mind what the rest of the world thinks. The British PM, Tony Blair, and the Little Aussie Battler, John Howard, have been Dubya’s only real mates. Both look shaky at home as a result. The tension between a more open American disdain for world opinion and an apparently sharpened international impatience with its behaviour in Iraq is giving Bush less room than he might have supposed he would have - though it’s likely he hasn’t noticed.

In this context, “Tell Me Lies” is reassuring. Even Dubya would prefer some foreign backing. He probably thinks he still needs the UK. So for the sake of the rest of us it’s good to see that critics are thick on the ground in Britain. The book analyses the way in which the Blair government prepared the country for its decision to tag along with the dumping of Saddam. The war was always unpopular, at home as well as abroad. As we now know (and the case for the prosecution has become stronger since Miller put out this book) it was too big an ask. If you lie, you have to be able to hide the truth. The bulk of “Tell Me Lies” is a detailed investigation of how British propaganda evolved.

“Information Support”

It used to be that the UK Ministry of Defence carried out “psychological operations”, or “psyops”. The Blair government calls it “information support”. “Information support” is what happens when you have a “traditional objective of influencing the perceptions of selected target audiences ... to mobilise and sustain support for a particular policy and interpretation of events”. When MPs talk like this you get nostalgic for 007 (*the fictional British spy, James Bond. Ed.*), and some good old-fashioned villainy.

As was said apparently at the time of the disastrous 1990s Big Power response to Yugoslavian chaos, you have to fix “one and a half eyes on media perceptions”. The persons entrusted with running their country’s foreign relations think their responsibility has to do with “massaging public opinion into accepting controversial foreign policy decisions”.

Notice how the emphasis is on manipulating domestic opinion elites, the politicians, journalists and academics who mediate between governments and the rest of us. For the policymaking classes, the public, as we were once called,

doesn't exist. We are assumed to be fit only to be passive consumers of the lies governments invent, and now refer to as their "products".

It's hard to talk about this stuff without littering the page with endless quotation marks. Britain's New Labour has devised a new language. One reason is that it's supposed to make its users seem deep thinkers. The more important reason is that the phrases of New Labourspeak have no meaning, so you can't reject them. They're there to baffle, to set the limits of acceptable discourse. As long as people put up with Big Brother "massaging" their minds, they won't challenge with real words.

The Blairites had to sell their "product" of an unwinnable and nasty war they must have known that few would like. British voters might call the result a pack of lies. The PM's publicists call it "the Future Strategic Context". Why Blair hitched his wagon to Dubya's is still a subject of some bemusement. Past history and present economics suggest that oil has something to do with it, an observation that the PM likes to tag a "conspiracy theory". In this well-worn conceit a rational analysis of the effects of history, geography and politics on a nation's policies is ridiculed as loony tunes. Instead Blair invites us to admire the sobriety of his take on why he had to fight Iraq. It has something to do with the agnostic Hussein's penchant for launching missiles at Britain (which would have landed in 45 minutes flat) to further the cause of some foreign religious fanatics. Or something.

Stephen Dorril, a researcher with a track record, contributes a critique of how the State is skilled at "flattering and deceiving" journalists. While the journalists are often naive and lazy, the "Intelligence agencies are not very good. The only mystery is why journalists have not treated them with the same derision and contempt they generally reserve for politicians".

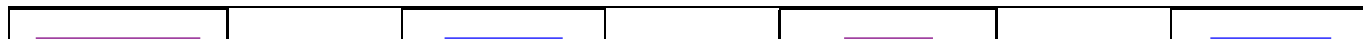
This raises interesting points about Intelligence agencies and about politicians. We tend to think that the spies are idiotic hypocrites but it's probably more accurate to say that they are idiots. In all the great crises of the 20th Century the conventional wisdom, as formed in Westminster and Washington, was wrong, and not just in hindsight. The policy experts did not listen to what informed lay opinion could have told them about Germany in the 1930s or about Vietnam in the 1960s.

Garbage In, Garbage Out

In the 30s the expertise was the random impressions of your mates from the old school. By the 60s, possibly in reaction to the amateur ethos, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sought an illusionary technological precision. But no matter how many computers print out how many spreadsheets, if it's garbage in, it's still garbage out.

The spies have been good at fostering a mystique of their own brilliance, but the record is of permanent failure to understand what's going on in the world. At first it seems incredible that Dubya's billion-dollar "intelligence" gurus thought that the US Army could install a puppet regime in Iraq, call it a democracy, assume its longevity, and proclaim success. However, the record reminds us that it's par for the course. The CIA has never thought it needed to temper the often crude prejudices of its bosses with dispassionate understanding of foreign places. It's easy to be an imperial bully when you don't want to know and you don't care. Bullies enjoy the way their ignorance has the power to anger opponents.

We accept that the "embedded" journalists in Iraq, dependent on the US and UK governments, could not be trusted to probe for themselves in print. We might also consider the dangers of embedding ourselves with the sorts of politicians who accept New Labour-style Orwellian language. Whenever words are used for the sole purpose of hiding the truth, we're in trouble. The Blair project, with its "Future Strategic Contexts", is ultimately aimed at its own citizens. Its "information support" has other "products" to sell. And if we let our governments treat our public business, any of it, as a public relations ad campaign, we too are victims of a propoganda war.



Mass Arrests In Wellington - Police Attack Anti-War Protests

by Mark Eden

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

In 2003 during the mass anti war protests around the country, there were for the most part, very few arrests. Unfortunately this was not the case in Wellington, where the anti-war movement had to deal with nearly 40 arrests. The high arrest rate in Wellington was due to two factors. Firstly, Peace Action Wellington (PAW), which organised most of the demonstrations, was willing to be noisy and disruptive to get its point across.

Secondly, the Wellington Police have a particularly aggressive and violent unit called the Strategic Response Group (SRG) which is used to police all major demonstrations. The SRG must have the lowest conviction rate of any Police unit in the country as they have made about 200 protest arrests over the last few years in Wellington but secured only half a dozen convictions. Several protesters have also received thousands of dollars in compensation and damages after being illegally assaulted by SRG members. It seems likely that a political decision was made to have a heavy Police presence at Wellington anti-war protests, as even small PAW demonstrations would attract the attention of the SRG.

In February 2003, as King Bush was preparing for war by hyping up the possibility that Saddam Hussein might have access to "weapons of mass destruction", a group of concerned citizens decided to attempt to enter the US Embassy in Wellington, looking for weapons of mass destruction. 23 people were arrested, mostly for disorderly behaviour, when they tried to climb the Embassy fence.

Burning Flags, Chalking Slogans

In March, Australian Prime Minister John Howard came to town to have lunch with Helen Clark. About 800 protesters turned up with pots and pans and other noise making devices to disrupt Johnny's lunch. As the protest ended Police waded in and arrested five people, some quite violently. In the following days one of those arrested was also charged with burning the New Zealand flag and became the first person ever to be charged with a crime under the Flags and Emblems act. Another PAW activist was arrested at his home a month later and charged in connection with the flag burning incident.

On September 13th, a day of action against the World Trade Organisation and war was held. A group of protesters were outside the electorate office of Cabinet Minister Marion Hobbs when Police started arresting people for writing slogans with chalk on the footpath. Within a few minutes eight people had been arrested for a variety of charges including one woman who was assaulted and injured by Police and ended up being charged with assaulting an officer herself.

Several people were arrested at the other big anti war protests at the US Embassy and several PAW members faced charges resulting from smaller protests throughout the year. Two activists were arrested for allegedly painting anti-war graffiti during a protest camp, but charges were later dropped. Don Franks was arrested after protesting against a NZ Defence Industry Association meeting at Te Papa Museum. He was charged with assault despite being assaulted himself by an over-zealous security guard. He later made a donation to charity in return for the charges being dropped.

Later in the year several District Court trials were held and most of the protesters were found not guilty. Of the 17 people who went to trial for the US Embassy weapons inspection, six were found guilty but let off without conviction. The John Howard protest trial ended with several convictions including one for flag burning, but these are currently being appealed. The activists arrested outside Marion Hobbs' office defended the charges. On May 27th 2004 charges against one person were dropped, and the remaining defendants were due in court in early June.

PAW has a legal defence fund and any donations will be greatly appreciated. They can be sent to: Peace Action Wellington, PO Box 9314, Wellington.

Charge Dropped Against Bruce Hubbard

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

PR 28 (December 2003, "US Embassy Complains, NZ Police Jump", by Bob Leonard) reported the alarming 2003 case of Auckland activist Bruce Hubbard who, on the basis of an e-mail sent to the US Embassy in protest at the US-led invasion of Iraq, was the subject of a complaint by the Embassy and, many months later, arrested and

charged under the Telecommunications Act. You can read the article online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr28-88.html> At the time we speculated as to whether the more recent and much nastier Counter-Terrorism Act could be used in cases such as this.

We're pleased to report that the State backed off. To quote from Global Peace and Justice Auckland (*Newsletter 52, 22/1/04*): "It's great to announce a victory to start the new year the Police decision to drop all charges against GPJA activist Bruce Hubbard for allegedly sending an 'offensive' e-mail to the US Embassy. The Police conceded they lacked the standard of proof required for a conviction. Bruce's lawyer, Rodney Harrison QC, pointed out that that should have been obvious much earlier, that Bruce was appalled at the continuing prosecution and that Bruce will be seeking costs. Despite this victory the very fact the prosecution was started and the harassment of Bruce continued for some months was a warning to all Peace and Justice activists as to the lengths the rulers will go to silence its critics. Democratic rights need to be defended continually to be effective". Exactly.

As of May 2004, the question of costs was not resolved. The court awarded costs but the Police contested them. The cops agreed to accept the word "reckless" in relation to their prosecution of Bruce but objected to it being described as "politically motivated". So no sum has yet been agreed on, let alone paid out.

US Strives To Sabotage International Criminal Court

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

The US occupation of Iraq is being fatally undermined by the relentless evidence of systematic torture in its prisons, a regime paralleled in the other secretive detention camps where it is holding those swept up in its “War On Terror” dragnet (such as at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba). Like the torturers and murderers of all previous terrorist regimes (such as the Nazis and the Khmer Rouge) these criminals just love to record their handiwork – which proves their undoing. Reflecting the sexualised nature of US culture, they have added one unique ingredient to their sadistic practices – staging them as if making their own pornographic home movies. The Bush Administration has fixed the blame at the lowest possible level in the military command (“a few bad apples”) and some of these patsies are starting to squeal that they were simply following orders from the highest levels. Where have we heard that before?

So what will happen to these lowly privates who get to take the rap for the criminality of the US occupation? Leaving aside the “private contractors” (*see article elsewhere in this issue*) who are not answerable to military law and thus go scotfree, the GIs will face a US court martial. One thing that you can be sure of – they won’t face trial in any international court. There is just such a court, established expressly to prosecute and punish those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is the permanent International Criminal Court, which has been in existence since July 2002. Every step along the way was marked by strong American protests and President Clinton only reluctantly signed the treaty (in December 2000, after the Democrats had lost the election but during the period of transition from Clinton to Bush).

At the earliest possible opportunity, President Bush revoked the United States’ signature to the treaty and set about a systematic campaign to sabotage the Court. The US campaign has been monomaniacal in its purpose, which has been expressly spelled out as being to protect not so much the GIs and grunts at the bottom of the heap but the generals and politicians at the top of it. One recent event seems to have searingly burned itself into the brain of the US ruling class and filled it with fear – the arrest and lengthy (but very comfortable) detention of the former Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, who was held in Britain on a Spanish warrant for crimes against humanity. As we know, he was let go, for reasons of political expediency. But that, and the widespread call for historical US war criminals such as Henry Kissinger to be brought to justice, has put the fear of God into the warmongers who run every US Administration, be it Democrat or Republican. Hence the ferocious campaign to eradicate any possibility of Americans ever facing international justice (the hypocrisy of this is, of course, quite breathtaking. The US led a campaign to force what is left of Yugoslavia to turn over its former leader Slobodan Milosevic and numerous others from his regime to face international justice at the ad hoc tribunal at The Hague).

The US played hardball from the outset in 2002, vetoing continuation of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Bosnia and withdrawing its military observers from East Timor. The UN Security Council gave in to this US pressure and passed a Resolution, which granted a one-year ban on the Court investigating or prosecuting any current or former US officials involved in any UN operation. In June 2003, the US won a further one-year extension of this Resolution.

A Campaign For Global Impunity

At the same time, the US announced that it would seek an impunity exemption for its personnel from every country that signed the treaty establishing the Court (meaning that those countries agree never to turn over American officials or employees to the Court). And it backed that up by threatening to cut off military aid to those that didn’t agree to the American exemption. In July 2003, the US followed through by cutting military aid to 35 countries (including 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries). These included major American military clients such as Colombia.

The US has not been so successful in bullying countries to sign the exemption for Americans, managing to get only some of the weakest and most vulnerable nations on Earth (including several US clients) to sign up. One of the most despicable examples is East Timor which, more than most, knows all about crimes against humanity. It had only been independent for three months, in 2002, before it agreed to sign the exemption. That required Parliamentary ratification. But, in October 2003, the Council of Ministers quietly decided at a closed meeting to pass it without needing ratification. The US had extended its deadline for cutting off military aid to November 2003 – as that deadline approached, three US warships were heading towards East Timor for a courtesy call and US Special Forces were training East Timor’s military. No official announcement or press release was made and nothing appeared about it in the East Timorese media.

The unilateralism that has marked the Bush Administration was first invoked against this Court, as soon as Bush took office. The US campaign of sabotage has been waged against the rest of the world, including countries that have served as US allies in the war on Iraq. It is obvious that the US will go to any lengths to avoid international justice for its actions. And as the daily revelations from within the American hellholes in Iraq show, international justice is exactly what is needed to clean up this rogue State of torturers and murderers.

Those daily revelations from the Iraqi hellholes provide the compelling motivation for the Americans and their British accomplices to make sure that every single one of their troops in Iraq are immune from any legal action in the courts of the newly "sovereign" Iraq that was due to emerge on June 30, 2004. Those occupying forces are only subject to the domestic laws of their own countries, making a mockery of the "sovereignty" of colonised Iraq. As one British MP asked: "How is anyone in Iraq expected to bring a case in the British courts? It is taking the idea of diplomatic immunity and applying it to 130,000 troops. There is a danger that you are actually going from immunity to being able to act with impunity" (*Observer*, 23/5/04, "Iraqis lose right to sue troops over war crimes", Kamal Ahmed). Exactly. And that's just the way the US wants it.



Obituary: Briar Campbell Maaroufi

by Anne FitzSimon

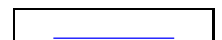
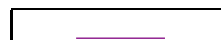
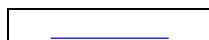
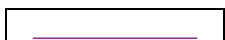
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Briar Maaroufi (as she was known to us) was a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign for a couple of years prior to her death and had attended Waihopai spybase protests. We only found out about her death several months after the event and knew next to nothing about her life. We are indebted to Anne FitzSimon, of the Nelson Peace Group, for this obituary. Ed.

A campaigner for peace and justice, Briar Margaret Campbell-Maaroufi died in September 2003, from cancer, on her 60th birthday. Several Nelson community groups benefited from her drive and organisational skills, including the Nelson Multi Ethnic Council, Women in Nelson, the Angel Loan Trust, the Nelson Aged Trust, the Association of Non-Government Organisations of Aotearoa (ANGOA) and the Nelson Community Whanau, as well as the Nelson Peace Group. National and international groups also benefited from Briar's energy and she highlighted the current injustices in Palestine. The Kiwi Enuresis and Encopresis Association (*a support group for children with bedwetting problems. Ed.*) called on her ability to organise, lobby and to help them link with international organisations. A tenacious campaigner, Ms Campbell-Maaroufi had the ability to recognise a community need, such as in her support to establish a programme for the unemployed to learn to drive. Despite failing health she was a force behind the proposed Victory Community Health Centre to improve access to health services for low income people, and in February 2000 organised a public meeting to raise support for the centre. "It was sort of the start of the community starting to feel good about itself", said fellow coordinator Leanne Curtis. Although frustrated at the centre's lack of progress Ms Campbell-Maaroufi was still leading and advising even from her hospital bed. "She never lost the energy for it".

Born in Te Kopuru, near Dargaville, in 1943 her family moved to Stoke, in Nelson, and she became a foundation pupil at Waimea College. The friendships forged there lasted a lifetime. A dedicated teacher by profession, Briar loved children and books and was known in education circles for her commitment to improving libraries and providing the literacy skills needed by young people. Although she started her teacher training in Christchurch she graduated from Auckland Teachers' College and her first teaching appointment was in Lumsden, Southland. She later taught in Mt Maunganui and at Otautau, in Southland, and recalled the anguish of seeing a carefully established library swept away in a flash flood. In later years she was a teacher at Broadgreen Intermediate, Nelson.

International travel brought her into contact with Amnesty International and the peace movement, and worked for the aims of those organisations all her life. "She was interested in overcoming instances of injustice and unfairness and she was willing to work the political system in order to achieve results," said her sister Helen Campbell. Briar's energy, enthusiasm and encouragement will be sorely missed by the members of Nelson Peace Group. She organised the production of a Peace Mural with Golden Bay artist, Chris Findlayson and local schools, which is now located on Tahunanui Drive, Tahunanui, Nelson as a constant reminder of our nuclear free status in New Zealand.



Dennis Small Moves On

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

ABC is sad to announce that Dennis Small has told us that he will not be able to do any more writing for *Peace Researcher* until further notice. I hasten to add that there is nothing wrong with Dennis, nor has there been any falling out. After a decade of unemployment, under-employment and semi-employment, Dennis has got a fulltime job, which involved moving from Christchurch. It all happened very fast (and also involved him resigning from the committee of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa – CAFCA – of which he had been a valued member since 1991. He has also had to stop writing for *Foreign Control Watchdog*, which he has been doing since the beginning of the 1990s).

Dennis is a former co-editor of *Peace Researcher* and continued writing for us for many years after he ceased hands-on involvement. He had the patience and expertise to follow some subjects in great detail for many years. The most recent example of that was *PR* 25, the March 2002 Special Issue, which consisted entirely of Dennis' article: "Ghosts Of A Genocide; The CIA, Suharto And Terrorist Culture", detailing the involvement of Western Intelligence agencies in one of the worst crimes of the 20th Century, namely the mid 1960s genocide of "Communists" in Indonesia.

Personally, I hope that we haven't seen the last of Dennis' wonderful book reviews (which always threatened the actual book for length), his polemics against the American Empire, and his erudite articles on all manner of domestic and international topics. I always had to have my dictionary, atlas and *Encyclopaedia Britannica* CD ROM close at hand when editing his articles. As firstly co-editor and then editor, I can report that Dennis never took directions about what he should write but always contributed what he felt should be covered in *PR*. He had his own fan club of highly appreciative readers.

ABC and all *Peace Researcher* readers, wish him all the best in his new career, out there in "the real world".

Magnificent Response To Special Appeal For Organisers Pay

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 29 – June 2004

ABC doesn't make a habit of sending out begging letters, things have to be fairly dire for that to happen. Rest assured that things did become sufficiently dire with the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account (the account, independent of both the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa and ABC, which provides my income) for the two groups to take the unique decision to make a direct mail appeal, in February 2004, to the members of both, for donations and new pledgers to the account. Things were so dire that the account had fallen to half the amount that we had previously agreed would trigger urgent action. Usually the Organiser Account is completely self-financing, but this time CAFCA and ABC paid all the costs.

I'm delighted to report that your response has been magnificent. More than \$10,000 was received in donations and, in the case of one supportive organisation, another \$1,000 has been promised for later in the year. The number of pledgers to the account have jumped from less than 30 to more than 40 and some established pledgers have increased the amount they pay. All I can say is that I am humbled by your outpouring of generosity and repeat that it is a remarkable achievement that donations and pledgers have kept the Organiser Account going since 1991.

April 1st marked a milestone in my career as the CAFCA/ABC Organiser. From that date the minimum wage went up to \$9 per hour gross, which means that I am now getting paid the same rate as I was when made redundant as a Railways labourer back in 1991. At that time, I said that I would take on the Organiser job if I got the same pay. It's only taken 13 years but all good things come to those who wait. And by the way, there was no connection between the Organiser Account Special Appeal and the increase in the minimum wage. The timing was purely coincidental. In fact, I had especially rung the Department of Labour and been told that it had not been notified of any increase in the minimum wage. Usually the Government announces any increase in the previous year. This one was done at very short notice and has been ascribed by the experts to Labour's panicking because of its falling behind National in the polls and belatedly remembering "hang on, we are called the Labour Party, we'd better do something to ensure that workers will still vote for us". I'm afraid that's a lost cause in my case, Helen, but thanks for the pay rise anyway.

And, I'm afraid, what the people giveth with one hand, the taxman taketh away with the other. I am self-employed

and have always paid my tax retrospectively in one annual lump sum. In May my accountant gave me the cheery news that my income tax bill has doubled, at least for the next year. Why? Because I have crossed a fatal threshold in the amount of tax that I owe and now have to pay provisional tax (i.e. in advance, estimated on my previous earnings). In the first year of provisional tax, that means that I have to pay for the 2003/04 year, as usual, plus for 2004/05. Hence, double. It should return to normal after that but, for the next year, I will be basically working for Inland Revenue. If you're superstitious, it's worth knowing that this is my 13th year in the job.

