

TANGIMOANA - The “Forgotten” Spybase

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

As part of the Anti-Bases Campaign’s Easter 2005 weekend of activities against spies and spybases, we will be going to the Tangimoana spybase. It has been many years since anyone protested at Tangimoana (we have to go back to the 1990 Touching The Bases Tour for the last time that ABC was there). All the attention has been on the much better known, and much more important, Waihopai spybase, in Marlborough. We thought it was time we put Tangimoana back in the spotlight. ABC demands the closure, ASAP, of Tangimoana and the abolition of the GCSB, which operates it. Here is what Tangimoana does, taken from our Website www.converge.org.nz/abc. Ed.

New Zealand’s Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) operates a radio communications interception facility called Tangimoana. The station is located 150 km north of Wellington in sand-hill country on the West Coast of the North Island. The sophisticated antennae are designed to pick up high frequency (or ‘short wave’) radio signals from ships, aircraft and land-based transmitters around the Pacific. Beyond high barbed wire-topped fences, electronic sensors, security cameras and barred windows, the neon lights in the operations building can be seen shining day and night. Here, rows of intercept officers sit at control panels with headphones, searching for, listening to and recording radio messages picked up through the different antennae.

At any time one officer may be recording Vanuatu telex messages, another monitoring military communications in New Caledonia and another tuning in to a Russian ship’s radio frequency at its usual reporting time to get a direction finding “fix” on its position. Until the discovery and expose of the station by Owen Wilkes in 1984, New Zealanders had no idea that their country was involved in spying on other countries’ communications.

Tangimoana Spies On The Pacific

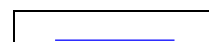
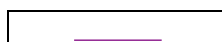
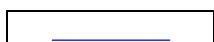
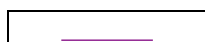
For example, the French communications targeted by Tangimoana are French military communications: radio messages between French Polynesia and Paris, between French territories including Mororoa Atoll (the former site of nuclear weapons testing) and military communications in New Caledonia. Tangimoana also monitored the French terrorists who sank the *Rainbow Warrior*. The interception occurred in mid-July 1985 as they sailed away from New Zealand on the yacht *Ouvea*. Their radio messages were translated by GCSB personnel, but this was only after the Police had already identified the yacht and it was too late to catch them.

Another major area targeted by Tangimoana is communications between and within South Pacific nations and their communications with the rest of the world. This includes a wide range of political, economic and military communications: from political telexes in Melanesia, to Fiji army communications, to Tongan patrol boats communicating with their headquarters. There is even some monitoring of private ham radio operators in the South Pacific if they are in a position to know about subjects of interest (e.g., internal conflict within a Pacific Island nation). However by the mid-1990s most of the non-military South Pacific communications had been replaced by satellite (you can read about how Waihopai spies on civilian satellite communications at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/waihopai.html>).

Since the second half of the 1980s computer technology has dramatically altered the operations at Tangimoana. The station’s Dictionary computer and the internal station computer network are now central to its work. One of the staff asked the interviewer (Nicky Hager): “...you do realise that Tangimoana and Waihopai collect for the other agencies?”.

This comment partly refers to special requests where Tangimoana may have better reception than other stations in the network or is doing special interception work for another agency. Mainly, though, it refers to the regular interception-sharing coordinated within the Echelon (see Waihopai) global intelligence system of the US National Security Agency. The Tangimoana collection schedule (i.e., schedule of whom to spy on when) optimises collection for the whole network and the Dictionary computer automatically sends raw intercept to the overseas agencies according to their keyword specifications.

This has been adapted from “Secret Power: New Zealand’s Role In The International Spy Network” by Nicky Hager, with permission. That seminal book was published in 1996. As part of ABC’s preparation for the Easter 2005 activities, we asked Nicky if he wanted to update this. He replied that, as far as he knew, this was still current and correct. Ed.



AHMED ZAOUI – New Zealand’s Very Own Political Prisoner

by David Small

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

Since this was written, Ahmed Zaoui has been released on bail, albeit with strict conditions as to where he can live, a nightly curfew and twice weekly reporting to the Police. The fact that he is now “free” in no way invalidates the title of this article. One battle – getting him out of prison – may have been won; the war still has a long way to go. Most recently, in February 2005, the Supreme Court gave the Crown leave to appeal against a 2004 Court of Appeal decision that ruled Zaoui’s deportation could only be allowed if there was credible evidence he was such a danger to New Zealand that his expulsion to face persecution back in Algeria was the only alternative. The effect of this is to further delay the long overdue review, by the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, of the Security Risk Certificate issued against him.

This issue also includes a review of a book about the Zaoui case. For the two years that Zaoui was locked up, the Government regarded him as a prisoner of war, the war in question being the “War on Terror”, of which little old New Zealand is a part, faithfully following the US. In fact, he was, and remains, New Zealand’s bona fide political prisoner.

Background

I refer you to David Small’s two excellent articles in Peace Researcher, issues 29, June 2004, and 28, December 2003. They can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-101.html> and <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr28-92.html>.

Ahmed Zaoui, an Algerian Islamic politician, was held in custody for slightly more than two years since he was arrested upon arrival, in Auckland, in December 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 New Zealand 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, blithely ignoring the fact that those same fundamentalists won a democratic election and were denied elected office by a military coup. Democracy is fine so long as it doesn’t produce the “wrong” results, apparently). 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, all contributed to Zaoui remaining in prison in Auckland, and, although now out on bail, 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). The Anti-Bases Campaign 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 Peace Researcher 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). See PR 19/20, November/December 1999, “Aziz Choudry Wins Case Against SIS: Out Of Court Settlement; Damages; Government Apology”, Murray Horton. This pre-dates our Website but the same article can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/92/3aziz.htm>.

David later won his own civil court case arising out of that (see PR 21, June 2000, “David Defeats Goliath: David Small Wins \$20,000 From Police In Second Court Case To Result From 1996 SIS Break-In”, Murray Horton. Likewise, this pre-dates our Website but can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/94/7david.htm>. David has become heavily involved in the campaign to free Ahmed Zaoui.

We consider it appalling that Zaoui was imprisoned, nearly half 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 ever there was one), 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 1985, sent its own 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.

Prospects Of A Positive Outcome

As the saga of the Algerian refugee, Ahmed Zaoui, passed its second anniversary, the prospects of a positive outcome have never looked brighter. Mr Zaoui's support base is growing steadily and his persecutors, notably the SIS and the leadership of the Labour government, are looking increasingly isolated. With more prominent people backing the Free Zaoui campaign, a critical book*, growing scepticism of the SIS, and some significant legal victories, the Government must be considering some face-saving exit from the corner into which it has painted itself.

* See Jeremy Agar's review of "I Almost Forgot About The Moon", elsewhere in this issue. Ed.

In 1981, the National government made out that it would be some travesty of democracy to deny visas to visiting South African rugby players, even though decisions about visa applications have always been the prerogative of governments. Similarly, the Minister of Immigration, Paul Swain (like his ill-fated predecessor, Lianne Dalziel) has steadfastly refused to exercise his discretion to free Mr Zaoui and welcome him into New Zealand as a refugee. It is as though this would undermine some sacrosanct process; the one that has dragged on for more than two years without sign of an imminent conclusion.

The legal process has become very complex, with overlapping cases at various stages of appeal regarding bail applications, rights of media access to interview Mr Zaoui, and judicial reviews over bias and other matters relating to Mr Zaoui's appeal against the Security Risk Certificate that has been issued against him (*this is the first such Certificate to have been issued, one of many legal and political precedents in the Zaoui case. Since this was written, Zaoui has won his bail case, and Television New Zealand won the right to hold the first media interview with him, done while he was still in prison and broadcast hours before he was released, in December 2004. Of course, since his release on bail, he has done numerous media interviews. Ed.*).

What all these cases have in common is that, far from being a neutral advocate of due process, the Government has been seeking to interpret every matter at issue in the way that would be most prejudicial to the interests of Mr Zaoui. The way this tension has played itself out in the courts is that most of the Crown arguments have been on issues of jurisdiction. Essentially, the Crown has been arguing that the matters at issue, down to and including a bail application, are beyond the powers of the courts to rule on. Fortunately, the courts, particularly the higher courts, have been unconvinced by these arguments. Ironically, in the same week, in November 2004, that the Prime Minister told the *Sunday Star-Times* to "put up or shut up" over allegations of SIS agents spying on Maori groups, the Supreme Court effectively said the same thing to the Government over its reasons for denying bail to Mr Zaoui.

Court Rules That Zaoui's Human Rights Must Be Taken Into Account

Of more significance for the ultimate success of the campaign, however, was the Court of Appeal's judgment, on whether human rights issues should be taken into account in the review of Mr Zaoui's Security Risk Certificate. This judgment, which was delivered more than four months after the May 2004 hearing, was a resounding defeat for the Crown. In effect, the Government was told that it cannot sign up to international covenants on human rights and the treatment of refugees and then simply ignore them in its own policies and practices.

In a strongly worded judgment, the Court said that "it would not be acceptable to allow the Security Risk Certificate process to be used as a back door method of challenging the Refugee Status Appeals Authority grant of refugee status to Mr Zaoui". Furthermore, it set a very high threshold for the expulsion of a refugee in Mr Zaoui's position. The test will only be met, according to the Court of Appeal:

"...if there are objectively reasonable grounds that Mr Zaoui constitutes a danger to the security of New Zealand of such seriousness that it would justify sending a person back to persecution. The threshold is high and must involve a danger of substantial threatened harm to the security of New Zealand. There must be a real connection between Mr Zaoui himself and the prospective or current danger to national security and an appreciable alleviation of that danger must be capable of being achieved through his deportation".

This goes well beyond the vague and generalised allusions to national security that have thus far been the feature of SIS statements about Mr Zaoui. The Free Zaoui campaign has got a significant boost with the bail decision and media exposure Mr Zaoui is now getting. However, the legal campaign needs to continue to be complemented by a political campaign. In particular, Labour MPs need to feel the pressure of the tide of public opinion surging against them. They need to be reminded that in ten years time, nobody will want to be associated with the reprehensible treatment of the man who will have become a valued member of our society.

Since the hard copy edition was published, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security has produced his report, and pronounced the Sunday Star Times (see below) to have been the victim of a hoax. More in the next issue. Ed.

The Anti-Bases Campaign's Intelligence agency of primary interest is the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which operates the Waihopai and Tangimoana spybases. It has the biggest budget of any NZ Intelligence agency and, in terms of New Zealand's links to the American warfighting machine and Western Intelligence, it is far and away the most important. The problem for both ABC, and the media, is that the GCSB is literally faceless. Its specialities are "sigint" (signals intelligence) and "elint" (electronic intelligence). Its public face consists of domes and aerials, not humans.

The agency that gets all the attention is the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) which, although it has a smaller budget than the GCSB, is much better known. That is because the SIS deals in "humint" (human intelligence) and also, far from incidentally, because it has a long history of spectacular cockups. Maxwell Smart, the legendary secret agent in the cult 1960s' American TV series, "Get Smart", had his famous shoe phone; the SIS simply has its foot in its mouth all the time. So, although it is of secondary interest to us, *Peace Researcher* has devoted much attention to the SIS over the 20+ years of our existence. For example, in the past couple of years, it has got itself tied up in knots over the disgraceful case of Ahmed Zaoui. I refer you to the article by David Small, and the book review by Jeremy Agar, both elsewhere in this issue. It has been extensively covered by David Small in recent issues.

Systematic Spying On Maori

But, don't worry, there's no shortage of other examples of SIS perfidy and cackhandedness. Currently, it is in the spotlight over accusations of systematic spying on Maori activists and Maori in general. These claims were made in several articles by Anthony Hubbard and Nicky Hager in the *Sunday Star Times* of November 21, 2004. There is nothing new about claims that the SIS spies on perfectly law abiding organisations – what was new this time was that the claims supposedly came from three of the spies themselves (who have not been named or otherwise identified). The articles revealed that:

- the code name for the programme was Operation Leaf,
- the SIS contracted "computer geeks" to physically plant bugs in the computers of Maori organisations or change the settings to allow remote access;
- they were told to gather intelligence on internal iwi business negotiations, finances and Treaty of Waitangi claims, and inter-tribal communications;
- they were instructed to watch for "dirt" on Maori leaders;
- and that serious divisions exist within the NZ Intelligence community, with some spies believing that the SIS is too deferential to its Big Brothers in the US, UK and Australia.

The articles provided considerable detail to back up its claims, including all sorts of insights into SIS operational methods, training and even down to the nitty gritty of how these characters got paid (one article consisted of an e-mail question and answer session with one of the anonymous spies). One of the iwi organisations targeted allowed the writers to trawl through its invoices and computer records, which established overwhelming proof that the spy who claimed to have bugged their computers had performed extensive "maintenance" work on those computers in the period that he said that he done so (posing as a repair man and technician).

Basically the spooks reckoned that their motivation for going public and exposing this politically explosive spying was because they became disgusted by what they were doing. As one said: "I met some nice people, not activists or criminals, and I just started questioning myself what it was all about" (*ibid.*, 21/11/04, "Citizens targeted by SIS").

The Minister in Charge of the SIS (and the GCSB) is always the Prime Minister. Helen Clark usually refuses all comment on "security matters", continuing the bipartisan policy of all New Zealand governments in the nearly 50 years of the SIS' existence. But, unusually, in this case she commented, indeed she came out swinging, denying the claims in their entirety, saying that she is responsible for signing all SIS bugging warrants and that she had never signed any warrants to spy on the groups specified in the articles. She described the claims as "laughable" and said she had been assured by Richard Woods, the SIS Director, that they were a "work of fiction" (*ibid.*)

“...However the operations described in Leaf appear to have used surveillance techniques that did not require formal warrants and therefore reporting to the Minister and Parliament. It is not clear that Clark would have been informed of the existence or the scale of Operation Leaf... Until October 1, 2003, SIS operatives could covertly access other people's computer systems without obtaining a SIS interception warrant. It is not clear whether warrants were obtained for the Leaf operations after that date” (ibid., “Citizens targeted by SIS”, 21/11/04). The article doesn't specify what law came into effect on that date, but our research leads us to conclude that it could only have been the Crimes Amendment Number 6 Act (more popularly known as the Swain Bill, named after Paul Swain, the Minister who introduced it, at the turn of the century). For ABC's submission on this noxious piece of legislation – one among many such Acts in recent years – go to <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/subswain.html>.

Contractors Give The SIS “Plausible Deniability”

The articles also made very clear that the likes of the “computer geeks” used to bug Maori computers would have been contractors, not actual SIS agents (this is all allowed for in the SIS legislation, going back to the original 1969 Act). Why? For all the same reasons that any employer likes using contractors rather than actual employees (they're much cheaper, and can be used only when needed). But also, for the reason unique to spy agencies – the use of such contractors provides “plausible deniability” if something goes wrong, such as the operation's cover being blown. In 1998, I sat through the one and only day of an actual court hearing of Aziz Choudry's damages claim against the Government, arising from the bungled 1996 SIS break-in at his Christchurch home – refresh your memory about this landmark case at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/choudry.htm> – and one thing that struck me was the reference to the fact that the SIS can legally use contractors (the wording is along the lines of “or any authorised persons”) to do its dirty work. Private investigators, moonlighting cops, military personnel and security guards, “computer geeks”, maybe good old-fashioned “patriots”. The SIS was so anxious to avoid having to spend any more time in court having its dirty laundry examined in public that the (National) Government settled the Choudry case out of court.

Not surprisingly the *Sunday Star Times* articles created a sensation. Other papers had a field day attacking that paper for refusing to divulge its sources (which is the golden rule of journalism, after all) and in speculating on likely candidates, giving great prominence to one fellow with a very colourful background (including having been a Labour candidate). They also suggested that the involvement of Nicky Hager - routinely disparaged as a “conspiracy theorist”, or as a “Leftwing agitator” (*Press*, 26/11/04, editorial, “SIS Inquiry welcome”) – would have particularly raised Clark's hackles. Why? Because, so the theory goes, the political fallout from Nicky's last bombshell piece of investigative journalism, his book “Seeds Of Distrust” (about the cover up of the importation of genetically engineered corn) which was released just before the 2002 election, stuffed up Labour's grand plan to be able to govern alone without having to pay any heed to minor parties.

On the contrary, Nicky Hager is a world-renowned researcher and writer on all matters military and Intelligence (what's that old saying about prophets being without honour in their own lands?). He wrote the seminal 1996 book “Secret Power: New Zealand's Role In The International Spy Network”, which comes complete with a glowing *Foreword* by David Lange, one of Clark's predecessors as a Labour Prime Minister. In it, Lange says that he learned more about the workings of NZ's Intelligence agencies from Nicky's book than when he had been Minister “in Charge” of them. Perhaps Clark should likewise do some reading of the essential Hager, rather than mouthing off about it.

Plus it is entirely plausible that the SIS would regard Maori (in the very broadest definition) to constitute a subject of interest to them, and quite likely a threat to the State (or, at least, their definition of the State). For the past several years all things Maori have constituted the hot button issues for the Labour government. It performed astonishing policy U turns to pander to the perceived Pakeha backlash evidenced by National's temporarily soaring into the opinion polls lead following Don Brash's January 2004 Orewa speech attacking “special treatment for Maori”. The foreshore and seabed issue and the resulting defection of former Cabinet Minister, Tariana Turia, from Labour and the creation of the Maori Party (which genuinely does threaten Labour's traditional monopoly of the seven Maori seats at the 2005 election) has taken an enormous amount of the Government's time and energy to try to contain and control. Maori radicalism is seen as a threat to be stamped on, as confirmed by the unprecedented December 2004 decision to lay a charge of seditious conspiracy (last used more than 80 years earlier) against a man accused of being involved in a protest against the foreshore and seabed law (the one which left an axe embedded in the window of Helen Clark's Auckland electorate office).

Chris Trotter Trots Out His Theories On The Choudry Case Again

So, the question needs to be reversed – why wouldn't the SIS be spying on Maori, with or without the explicit

instructions of its Minister? The Establishment's tame Lefty, Chris Trotter, sees it as entirely likely. Trotter brings his own particular slant to the story, using it to dredge up the Choudry case yet again (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/choudry.htm>). Back in *PR* 23, June 2001, we reported ("Trotter Trots Out Rot: The Strange Resurrection Of The SIS Break-In Case", Murray Horton) that he had written, both in the *Independent* (14/2/01, "Perhaps The SIS Was Right To Burgle Choudry's House) and in *Political Review*, which he edits, that the reason the SIS was trying to break into Aziz's Christchurch home in 1996 was because the latter's house guest was Dr Alejandro Villamar, from Mexico. You can read that 2001 *PR* article online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/trotrot.htm>.

In his regular *Independent* column (1/12/04; "True Lies"), Trotter now goes further. "...The SIS's routine surveillance of Maori radicals and Helen Clark's knowledge of it was first drawn to my attention in March 1999, not long after the anti-free trade activist, Aziz Choudry, received an unspecified, but rumoured-to-be large, sum in compensation for the SIS's unlawful entry into his Christchurch home on 13 July 1996...For it appears that Dr Villamar was not Choudry's only house guest that week. The woodsman of One Tree Hill, Mike Smith, was being billeted at the same Christchurch address (*in the 1990s, leading Maori radical, Mike Smith, became famous/notorious for his unsuccessful attempt to cut down the solitary tree on Auckland's One Tree Hill. He started a trend, which led to the tree's ultimate demise. Ed.*).

"Now, at last, the pieces of the puzzle could be put together. Villamar, whose organisation the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade, was sympathetic to the plight of indigenous peoples the world over, would, at the time of his New Zealand visit, have been extremely interested in the ongoing struggles of the Mayan Indians of Chiapas province in Southern Mexico.

"On 1 January 1994, the Mayans rose in revolt against the Mexican government's signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Calling themselves the Zapatistas, after the Mexican revolutionary hero Emilio Zapata, and led by the mysterious 'Commandante Marcos', the Mayans were soon at the forefront of one of the world's most sophisticated indigenous rights and anti-globalisation movements.

"In 1995 the Whanganui River iwi, backed by the wider indigenous rights movement of Aotearoa-New Zealand, had mounted its own regional rebellion by staging a highly successful occupation of Moutoa Gardens in the provincial city of Wanganui. Most of New Zealand's Maori 'radicals' - Mike Smith included - had participated in the occupation, led by Ken Mair and a hitherto unknown Maori activist, Tariana Turia.

"Free trade, indigenous rights, Mexico and New Zealand were also linked together when in 1995-96 the multinational corporate giant, International Paper, began investigating the feasibility of establishing a pulpwood industry in the strife-torn Chiapas province. Taking its lead from Americans, who had just acquired Carter Holt Harvey, Fletcher Challenge Forests decided to investigate the possibility of setting up a complementary forestry biotechnology company in Chiapas to produce and market tree seedlings genetically engineered to yield pulpwood with short growing times (*Independent*, 14/2/01).

"Clearly, Aziz Choudry, Alejandro Villamar and Mike Smith had plenty to discuss in July 1996. That the SIS was interested in those discussions would have come as no surprise to any of them. From 1 July 1996, the SIS had become legally responsible for 'making a contribution to New Zealand's international and economic well-being'..."

Our rebuttal to Trotter's farfetched conspiracy theory is in the 2001 *PR* article (see Link, above) and there's nothing new in this latest "revelation" to make us change our minds. But he goes further in his latest article, asking if the *Sunday Star Times* writers "have been misdirected into revealing a series of fantasies in order to facilitate a much more ambitious undertaking?...The Government of Helen Clark is not highly regarded by the Intelligence agencies of those two countries (US & UK)...Those in charge of the security of the English-speaking world, especially the Americans, have always been sensitive to the dangers posed to global order by such 'bad examples' (*NZ's refusal to join the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Ed.*). I can't imagine they'd be sorry to see Helen Clark replaced by Don Brash at the next election. Since the collapse of Communism, the Pakeha majority's fear of Maori nationalism has always struck me as the most obvious place for Labour's enemies to start prodding. Sufficiently provoked, radical elements within Maoridom can be relied - or even prevailed - upon to stoke that fear and drive a jittery electorate into the eager arms of the Right..." (*Independent*, 1/12/04; "True Lies").

That's a heady brew with a cast of thousands - Aziz, Zapatistas, Maori radicals, Western Intelligence, Don Brash, all apparently working, directly or indirectly, to undermine and get rid of Trotter's beloved Clark government. We stand by what we said in 2001, in rebuttal to Chris Trotter's first version of this conspiracy theory. ABC has no opinion on Maori nationalism one way or the other, and no relationship with Maori activists (but, wearing my other hat, that of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa, I do have a longstanding productive relationship with some of them). However, we have no doubt that they would be both amused and insulted at the suggestion that

they are being manipulated by foreign Intelligence agencies to get rid of the present Government. We're sure they can find plenty of motivation of their own to challenge the State, regardless of which party is in power.

ABC Joins Call For Independent Inquiry

Getting back to the here and now, and the matter at hand. As soon as the *Sunday Star Times* articles were published, there were calls for an inquiry into what the hell the SIS thought it was up to. Some of Operation Leaf's targets were bemused. "Leading Western Bay (of Plenty) Maori leader Brian Dickson, the chief executive of Ngatierangi, who was named as a target of Government spooks.... said: 'I thought the SIS must be having a very slow day at the office to be investigating me'..." (*Stuff Website*, 22/11/04; "Calls mount for inquiry into spy claims", NZ Press Association).

One Christchurch initiative saw 17 organisations (including ABC), fronted by David Small and Leigh Cookson, of GATT* Watchdog, write to the Prime Minister calling for a full independent judicial review of the SIS. "...The recent revelations about SIS surveillance of the Maori Party and Maori organisations are consistent with a long and disturbing list of incidents involving the SIS that give the distinct impression that the Service is working to a political agenda that is inconsistent with its statutory obligations and unacceptable to the vast majority of New Zealanders...We believe that nothing short of a full independent judicial inquiry into the SIS is acceptable. To restore public credibility, the inquiry cannot be conducted by the established oversight mechanisms.

"It cannot be conducted by the Intelligence and Security Committee because much of the SIS's apparently unacceptable activity has occurred under the watch of that committee. And, irrespective of the standing of the current Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, that office has proved completely ineffectual in fulfilling its statutory purpose of providing the New Zealand public with a means of holding the SIS accountable for its actions..." (letter to Prime Minister, 26/11/04. Numerous other organisations wrote to GATT Watchdog complaining that they would have been only too happy to have signed on to the letter if they had been asked. It was organised at such short notice that there was no time to widely advertise it in advance). * GATT = *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The original name for what is now the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It was in the course of a GATT Watchdog-organised activity in opposition to a 1996 Christchurch meeting of Ministers for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) that David Small caught SIS agents trying to break into Aziz Choudry's house. Both David and Aziz were leading figures in GATT Watchdog. Ed.*

MPs, right across the spectrum from Leader of the Opposition, Don Brash to the Greens' Keith Locke, called for an independent inquiry. Crucially, so did Maori Party Co-Leader, Tariana Turia, who said that she'd suspected that the phone in her Wellington Ministerial house had been bugged, while she was in the process of leaving the Cabinet and the Labour Party, earlier in 2004. She said that she'd had the house swept by a private eye, who confirmed that some sort of device had been there, but reckoned that it hadn't been put there by the SIS, as it was too crude. The question arises – was this "crude" bug aimed at Mrs Turia, or was it left over from a historic bugging operation against a previous occupant of that Ministerial house? But certainly, the Co-Leader of the newly formed Maori Party (which has proved to be such a pain in the arse to the Government) would be a tempting target for the spooks and/or their "contractors".

Mrs Turia laid an official complaint with the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, Paul Neazor. He immediately said that he would investigate it. This undercut Helen Clark, who had dismissed all such claims as "laughable" and "a work of fiction". The Inspector-General was not obliged to launch an inquiry into Turia's complaint if he believed it was without substance. Clark was never going to agree to a real inquiry into the SIS, so she opened up the broom cupboard marked "Whitewash" and hauled out the Inspector-General. Even this represented a backdown from her previous position of haughty disdain.

So, Clark had no choice but to announce (a mere few days after the publication of the *Sunday Star Times* articles) that the Inspector-General would hold an inquiry into all the claims. She gave no time frame for the inquiry, and at the time of writing, nothing more has been heard about it. Rest assured, however, that this is a story that still has a long way to run.

The Inspector-General

All of this, of course, focused attention on what laughably passes for oversight of the SIS and the other Intelligence agencies. There is the Inspector-General, the Commissioner for Security Warrants (a retired High Court judge, who has stayed completely out of the limelight), and the Intelligence and Security Committee. As already mentioned, the Inspector-General is Paul Neazor, also a former judge, whose previous highest legal office was as Solicitor-General in the 1980s (in which capacity he was responsible for downgrading from murder to manslaughter the charges

against the French Intelligence agents captured here after the fatal bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior*, in 1985. That, in turn, led to the secret deal which saw those two agents released from New Zealand prisons). Neazor has a pathological dislike for publicity. When his appointment was announced, in 2004, the media discovered that the most recent photos of him dated from that 1985 *Rainbow Warrior* trial (which showed him as a wonderfully retro chap, complete with hat, coat and pipe, the spitting image of Georges Simenon's iconic Inspector Maigret). And, furthermore, that he hadn't given an interview since before then. He was singularly unforthcoming with attempts to interview him about his current job.

Being rather too honest in a media interview led to the demise of Neazor's predecessor, the hapless Laurie Greig. To quote from David Small's article on the Zaoui case in *PR 29* (June 2004; "Ahmed Zaoui Still Imprisoned Without Charge. Government Loses Legal Battles, Inspector-General Loses Job"):

"...the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security resigned as a direct result of his handling of (the Zaoui case). In particular he was found by the Court (of Appeal) 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... 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.

"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".

Structural Flaws Exist Independently Of Who Holds The Job

"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 judgment 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 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.

“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....”.

Neazor Is Hamstrung

This current inquiry into the claims made in the *Sunday Star Times* articles marks Neazor’s first test as Inspector-General. “Neazor’s SIS inquiry was initially announced as wide-ranging and powerful. In theory, Neazor has wide powers to call evidence, witnesses, demand documents and require people to testify – including members of the SIS who would otherwise be bound by a code of silence. But despite Clark’s assertion that the Inspector-General has powers not dissimilar to a court, the reality appears somewhat different. Wellington lawyer, Stephen Price, says the Inspector-General is not really acting judicially in conducting the investigation. Neither is he technically a commission of inquiry. Price points out that the maximum fine in statute that Neazor could impose on anyone who refused to testify is \$5,000...

“Other problems beset the Inspector-General. The way his office is set up means he is largely beholden to SIS Director, Richard Woods, for much of his information about the SIS. While Clark has assured Neazor that the Director will fully cooperate, it is likely Woods will remain guarded. The office of the Inspector-General has finally been separated from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – a far too cosy association that led to the appearance that Greig was too close to both the SIS and the Prime Minister’s office.

“Neazor’s office is now nominally attached to the Department of Justice. But while Neazor has the power to co-opt anyone he likes to assist him with his inquiries, his office has an overall budget of just \$62,000 a year - \$32,000 for fees including his own part-time salary, and \$30,000 for servicing and administration. Hardly enough to start hiring QCs (*Queen’s Counsels, the most senior lawyers. Ed.*), and private investigators to check up on the SIS...” (*Press*, 4/12/04; “Head above the parapet”, Colin Espiner).

He does, however, have the legal right to initiate his own inquiries, without waiting for a complaint or instructions. And Clark has made clear that it is up to Neazor to request the resources that he may need to do his job properly. But, most crippling, the Inspector-General is expressly forbidden, by the law which created his office, from inquiring into SIS “operationally sensitive matters”. And the Prime Minister has several legal grounds under which s/he can block the Inspector-General’s access to SIS information.

So it’s no wonder, that even if he were so inclined to really investigate the SIS, he is hamstrung. David Small was quoted, in the same *Press* feature, as saying: “The Inspector-General operates in isolation from the rest of the judiciary and is beholden to the Director of the SIS, so it is no wonder he gets it wrong” (*ibid.*). Neazor works alone and part-time, with no research staff to help him. The *Listener*’s Gordon Campbell, the mainstream media’s best journalist on Intelligence matters, wrote: “If New Zealand is truly living in a new world of vigilance after 9/11, the Inspector-General patently needs to be funded and staffed along the lines of the Police Complaints Authority or the Ombudsman’s office. He also needs wider powers to investigate the SIS and its operations” (*Listener*, 4/12/04; “Intelligence test. How do we best regain control of the security services, without jeopardising their role?”).

“Oversight” Committee Averages Less Than Two Minutes Per Week

As for the Intelligence and Security Committee, there is a common misconception that it is a Parliamentary Select Committee. Gordon Campbell, who should know better, refers to it as such in his *Listener* article quoted above. As I

wrote in *PR 27* (August 2003; “Who Watches The Watchers? The Intelligence And Security Committee”): “It, very deliberately, is not one of Parliament’s Select Committees and they are prohibited from examining anything to do with Intelligence and security agencies. It is a statutory committee, a committee of Government, not of Parliament. As such, it is not governed by Select Committee procedures and can conduct its hearings in total secrecy. It is a throwback to the old First Past The Post system, and makes no pretence of representing all the parties in Parliament. Membership is determined exclusively by the Prime Minister. She is automatically a member and she can nominate two others; the Leader of the Opposition is also automatically a member and he can nominate one other...”.

In September 2004, the Greens’ Keith Locke revealed that the Committee had met just five times since the July 2002 election, for a total of 211 minutes (the longest meeting being 49 minutes – ABC meetings always take longer than that). As he said: “A Parliamentary Select Committee meets together for longer each week than this Committee has in two years. The very people who are entrusted with ‘watching the watchers’ actually spend less than two minutes a week, on average, doing their job...The time has come to review the Committee’s composition, powers and role. Its make-up isn’t representative of Parliament, it clearly does not meet often enough and it doesn’t have access to operational material” (press release, 1/9/04; “Spy-watchers neglect their duties”).

All of this, combined with the embarrassing exposure of the total lies peddled by the major Western Intelligence agencies to justify the illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq, has meant that the NZ media has felt the need to cast a critical eye over the SIS, which it does periodically (but never over the GCSB, which is far more important to those same Western Intelligence agencies and their imperial wars than the poor blundering SIS will ever be). So 2004 saw a spate of lengthy articles examining its shortcomings, both historic and current. The Choudry/Small case (which now dates back nearly a decade) was dusted off and publicised all over again. Why? Because it provides the absolute textbook example of the SIS caught in the act. As such, it has become part of New Zealand law, politics, history and cultural mythology. Everyone knows about it, it’s so obvious and easy to understand (and I must say that I derive a quiet satisfaction in the small personal role that I played in seeing that whole saga through to its far from inevitable outcome). Once again, David Small was all over the media – he does it so very well (Aziz Choudry has lived in Canada since 2002, and has not been back to New Zealand). Stumbling upon those clowns in the bushes at Aziz’s place set both David and Aziz onto the path to media stardom.

One point to clearly emerge is that the SIS, and its nominal political masters, still operates an absurd and anachronistic culture of secrecy. David pointed out that one of the previously classified pieces of SIS evidence released under court order in the Choudry case was a Christchurch map with Aziz’s street highlighted on it. “Was it a threat to national security to know the SIS were using road maps?” (*Press*, 4/12/04; “Best to say nothing?”, Warren Gamble). Nor is this confined to current “secrets” – in November 2003, Helen Clark announced a policy on public access to old SIS files. “The SIS will release no documents less than 50 years old (*the SIS itself is not yet 50 years old. Ed.*), and sensitive subjects must wait until 100 years after the death of those concerned. 99% of old personal and subject files will simply be destroyed and – very convenient when you’re the Minister signing the warrants – all information about who is bugged will be withheld indefinitely” (*Press*, 7/2/04; “Bugged by secrecy”, Nicky Hager). By contrast, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation is actively assisting a writer who is doing a book about ASIO spying on political activists in the 1960s and 70s. Plus ASIO has a Website with actual information on it, as opposed to what the SIS has on offer in cyberspace.

But Wait! The SIS Has Found Some Terrorists

All of these recent developments constitute further bad public relations for both the SIS and the Government. So what did it do? In time-honoured fashion, it came out claiming that it had uncovered “international terrorists” and was, therefore, indispensable in defending the country from the catchall post-9/11 bogeymen. Just days before Christmas 2004 it released its “startling” *Annual Report* to Parliament. Lacking only a drum roll, trumpet fanfare and creepy horror movie music, it claimed, for the first time, that it suspects that terrorists and/or their sympathisers are operating in New Zealand. The *Report* claimed that the SIS had investigated everything from people with links to terrorists, to “links in New Zealand to weapons of mass destruction development programmes overseas... and people operating in New Zealand and overseas to procure equipment or technology for foreign governments” (*Press*, 21/12/04; “SIS tails Islamic terrorist groups”, Colin Espiner). That was enough for Don Brash, who had previously called for an independent inquiry into the claims in the *Sunday Star Times* articles. The only things the *Report* lacked were any details or evidence whatsoever.

It made a great front page lead story to frighten the Christmas shoppers but the Greens’ Keith Locke put it into perspective the next day. “It seems more likely the SIS is trying to justify its existence, because if there really were several people in New Zealand linked to international terrorist organisations, we would have seen some sight of it, or someone would have been charged” (*Press*, 22/12/04; “Critics dismiss SIS suspicions”, Jarrod Booker).

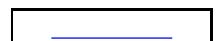
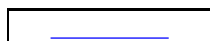
This was the second time in 2004 that the SIS publicly claimed that it was dealing with suspected terrorists in New Zealand. In March, its Director, Richard Woods, met the media in a “rare” briefing in the appropriately spooky setting of the emergency bunker under the Beehive (apparently he shares a fondness for bunkers with his fellow famous troglodytes, Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden). Woods said that the SIS vets all applications for NZ citizenship (26,000 in the previous year) and that he had personally intervened to prevent three applicants from being granted citizenship, on the grounds that they could use Kiwi passports to plan terrorism overseas. But, tellingly, the Government had done nothing to revoke the permanent residency status of these unnamed individuals, let alone deport them. When asked about that obvious contradiction, Woods could only reply: “You can make your own judgments about that. It’s an immigration matter” (*Press*, 17/3/04; “SIS vetoes bids for passports”, Leah Haines). Once again, Keith Locke put it into perspective, saying that it was a public relations campaign to assuage concerns after the dreadful train bombings in Madrid that month by Islamic terrorists (which killed nearly 200 people). Keith pointed out that the only previous case of the SIS intervening in a citizenship application had gone badly for it, with the Sikh national who had been rejected later getting citizenship (*ibid.*).

And these claims of uncovering people with “links to international terrorists” need further explanation. One example, wearing my Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA) hat: the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), its New People’s Army, and Party founder, Jose Maria Sison, have all been included (ludicrously) on various lists of “international terrorists”. I say ludicrous, because they have been fighting a civil war of national liberation for 35+ years, without the slightest “international” component to it, not even when the US military had huge bases in the Philippines. Not to mention the absurdity of lumping Maoist Communists on the same lists as the likes of fanatically anti-Communist obscurantists like bin Laden. But their inclusion on such lists has very real adverse consequences, particularly for Sison, who lives in Dutch exile, and is in legal peril (with a global support campaign being waged on his behalf, both legally and politically). PSNA routinely receives, electronically, the newsletter of the CPP and a whole stream of press releases and articles from Sison and the CPP. Does that make us a “link to international terrorists”? If so, perhaps I’d better shine a torch into our hedge before going to bed every night in case there’s any spooks hiding in it. And what about the fact that when Sison made a high profile NZ speaking tour in 1986 (after nine years of imprisonment without charge, and torture, under the Marcos dictatorship), the most high profile politician to attend his Wellington public meeting was none other than – Helen Clark. Does that make her a “sympathiser of international terrorism”?

No matter, the Clark government is sticking to the SIS through thick and thin (or should that be, thick and thicker?). In December 2004, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a threat-establishment group, to be headed by the SIS. The group would be charged with assessing “terrorist threats, crime in countries visited by New Zealanders, and other potential threats to New Zealand interests” (*Press*, 21/12/04; “SIS tails Islamic terrorist groups”, Colin Espiner). That should narrow the field down a bit.

SIS Needs To Be Cleaned Up, At The Very Least

2004 was a vintage year for the SIS. It stuffed up big time in the Zaoui case, which it had been doing since 2002, and the courts finally got sick of the whole squalid business, and released him on bail. The *Sunday Star Times* articles provided a very detailed analysis of a large scale spying operation against individuals and groups right across the spectrum of Maoridom. Throughout it all the media returned time and again to the textbook example of the 1996 Choudry/Small case, because that provides indisputable proof of the SIS’ spying on legitimate political activists. All it can do to justify its existence is to make grandiose claims that it is protecting us from terrorists, without providing any proof, of course. It finds that its’ best, and indeed, only defence, is a blanket of secrecy. That is necessary because when SIS operations see the light of day, they make a sorry sight. The temptation is always to laugh at these guys and deride them as buffoons (and I’m as guilty of that as the next person), but they hold power over people’s lives in any number of ways. We pay their wages, we are nominally their employers, yet we get no accountability and very little in the way of answers. The time has come for them to be dragged out into the daylight so we can all have a look at them and be allowed to have all the facts in order to judge their usefulness for ourselves. That’s why ABC didn’t hesitate to sign on to the call for an independent inquiry into the SIS. That should be merely the first step in the process of cleaning up, and if necessary, abolishing this most obnoxious of spy agencies.



MOSSAD SPIES IMPRISONED IN NEW ZEALAND – Our Passports Valued For Use By Israeli Covert Killers

by Murray

Horton

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It's not unique, but it's certainly not often that foreign spies are caught redhanded in New Zealand, let alone arrested, imprisoned and deported. We are a long way away from the world's major battlefields. As former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, so pithily put it: "New Zealand is a dagger aimed at the heart of Antarctica". It has happened before, primarily during the good old Cold War when there were various incidents involving Soviet diplomats, up to the rank of Ambassador, usually accused of being in cahoots with officials of the former pro-Soviet Socialist Unity Party. None of those diplomats was ever charged with anything; as they all held diplomatic immunity, they were simply told to leave the country. The most famous "spy scandal" involving the Russians led to the infamous 1970s' arrest, trial and acquittal of famous NZ economist and high ranking public official, the late Dr Bill Sutch. He was the only New Zealander ever prosecuted under the espionage provisions of the former Official Secrets Act, and his case represented one of the many nadirs in the half century of our glorious Security Intelligence Service (SIS).

Cases involving foreign spies from "friendly" countries are even more rare. It is a given that the US, Britain and Australia have Intelligence officers operating here, usually under diplomatic cover. But nothing has ever been done about them, even when there have been demonstrable instances of meddling in NZ's internal political affairs, most notably by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Our "friends" the French went too far with the 1985 fatal bombing, in Auckland Harbour, of the *Rainbow Warrior* by its agents. Routine Police work and the sheer nosiness of ordinary Kiwis led to two of those agents being arrested, tried and imprisoned (and released in an indecently short time, as a result of crude political pressure applied by France). But that was the only previous occasion where foreign spies (not to mention bombers and killers) have been actually prosecuted.

Until 2004. One of the sensations of last year was the unmasking of an Israeli Intelligence operation in Auckland, the arrest of two operatives of Mossad (that country's external security agency), followed by their conviction, imprisonment and deportation. The whole scandal caused major outrage right across the NZ political spectrum; a diplomatic breach with Israel that remains unresolved, at the time of writing; and attracted media and political attention right around the world because of the blatant nature of the operation and the serious implications for Israel's dealings with all other "friendly" nations.

Two Caught, Two Got Away

The mainstream media is very good at covering "humint" (human intelligence), as opposed to the much more significant electronic variety operated at the likes of the Waihopai spybase. So the facts of this Mossad case have been very extensively reported. To briefly summarise: in March 2004, Police arrested two Israelis, Eli Cara and Uriel Kelman, in the act of them collecting a fraudulently obtained New Zealand passport (it was in the name of an NZ cerebral palsy sufferer who had certainly not applied for a passport and was no position to ever travel). The passport was sought, not for either of them, but for their ringleader, Zev Barkan, who had been an Israeli diplomat in Europe for a number of years. Barkan fled the country and has not been brought to justice. There was a fourth man also involved (all classic spy rings always have a mysterious Fourth Man), whom media inquiries identified as New Zealand citizen, Tony Reznik. He is a New Zealand citizen who had lived for many years in Israel and who is believed to have been the one responsible for selecting the disabled man for the identity theft (Reznik worked as a St Johns Ambulance paramedic and would have come into contact with the unknowing victim. Barkan also lived in a street near the disabled man). Reznik, and his family, also hurriedly fled the country without being brought to justice.

The online edition of Israeli newspaper Haaretz quoted Israeli radio: "...The reports said Reznik was a religious Jew, a member of Auckland's Jewish Council. Members of the Jewish community were quoted as saying that he planned to return to live in Israel. According to the report, Reznik had lived in Israel for 13 years and had served in the Israel Defence Forces...If Reznik was indeed involved in the affair, he may have served a part that the Mossad has been known to offer to Jews living outside Israel, and which usually does not put the person providing the assistance at high risk. However, ever since Jonathan Pollard * was arrested and jailed in the United States in 1985 for being an Israeli spy, Mossad has minimised its contacts with Jews living outside the country..." (www.haaretz.com, 27/7/04; "Report: New Zealand citizen aided Israelis in passport affair", Yossi Melman). * *Jonathan Pollard was a US Navy Intelligence analyst who was convicted of selling classified information to Israel. He gave his motive as patriotism towards Israel. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, for espionage, and remains in jail, despite a vigorous*

campaign by Israel and his supporters in the US to have him pardoned.

Murder Inc.

The question remains – why would Israeli Intelligence go to such lengths to secure, fraudulently, a New Zealand passport? The answer is sinister in the extreme, because Mossad is not just any old run of the mill spy agency, which simply spies on people. It specialises in murdering them.

“Intelligence operations, by definition, are always murky, opaque and hard to pin down, but one could be forgiven for tracing a link between the July 15 (2004) conviction in New Zealand of two alleged Mossad agents for trying to illegally obtain the passport of a bed-ridden disabled man and the assassination of Hizbullah official Ghaleb Awali in Beirut's southern suburbs last Monday, allegedly by Israeli-run agents.

“Agents of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service, regularly use foreign passports to mask their identities, and New Zealand passports are prized because they are considered ‘door-openers’ due to New Zealand's reputation for neutrality, and do not arouse suspicions, particularly in the Arab world. They provide visa-free access to many countries, including the United States. A New Zealand passport is also a ticket to British residency, which could provide a European Union passport. These would be invaluable for Mossad agents hunting terrorist targets around the world.

“The Mossad agents who tried to assassinate Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal in Amman in September 1997 carried Canadian passports, as did the assassins of three Palestine Liberation Organisation colonels in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1987. Three of the six Mossad operatives who set up the assassination of senior PLO figures in Beirut by Israeli commandos on April 13, 1973, used British passports to enter Lebanon. The list is endless...One must assume two things: that the Mossad is making similar efforts to obtain genuine passports from other countries because these are more foolproof for undercover agents than forged passports, and that Lebanon, which the Israelis and Americans believe is full of bad guys, is one of the targets...The incident in New Zealand appears to be the latest in a long string of high-profile botched operations by Mossad over the last few years, indicating that (Mossad Director) General Meir Dagan, is still having to wrestle with organisational problems and poor operational performance. But what happened in Auckland should be ringing alarm bells in Lebanon and the Muslim world” (*Daily Star*, 24/7/04; “Mossad fiasco’ in New Zealand should ring alarm bells”, Ed Blanche. The article details that, of the various guerilla movements Israel is currently fighting, it gives top priority to Hizbullah, which, after many years of war, drove it out of Lebanon, in 2000, and now controls south Lebanon, confronting Israel at its northern border).

These murders are not journalistic speculation but documented fact. In some cases, they have caused major international scandals. For instance, the above mentioned 1997 attempted assassination of the Hamas political leader, in Jordan. It spectacularly backfired for Israel, because it failed to kill their target (the method used was poison) and the Mossad agents got caught in the act, leading to the furious Jordanians (one of Israel's very few friends in the Arab world) demanding that the antidote be produced and the man's life be saved, otherwise the Mossad agents would be tried on a raft of very serious charges. Israel was forced to do just that, in order to get its wouldbe murderers back. Not only that but it also had to release from prison the wheelchair-bound Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas spiritual leader (they killed him in March 2004, with a missile, in a Gaza street. Israel blithely murders its opponents openly and with impunity. But its proven expertise with poison led many Palestinians and others to suspect an Israeli hand in the November 2004 death of Yasser Arafat, a death which removed their oldest internal foe, and led to his replacement by a “nice” Palestinian whose role has been decreed by Israel and the US as being to keep the Palestinian people under control). And, directly relevant to the 2004 New Zealand case – those wouldbe murderers entered Jordan, in 1997, using Canadian passports. This led to a major diplomatic ruction with Canada, which demanded that Israel cease using its passports – the Israeli government gave its commitment to refrain from using Canadian passports for illegal purposes.

So, Israel has a track record for abusing the friendship and trust of various Western countries, using their passports for political murders. New Zealand's Foreign Minister Phil Goff “rejected Israel's explanation that the passport was intended for use in the war against terrorism. ‘I can't justify the act’, he said, ‘among other things, because the passport might have been used for an assassination in a third country. ... We don't think this was an isolated act” (*Daily Star*, *ibid.*).

The Two Stooges Take The Rap

Which brings us back to the two hapless Israelis who were actually arrested and charged in Auckland. The first point to stress is that this was not a brilliant coup by our ever vigilant Intelligence services (no more than was the 1985 capture of two of the French Intelligence agents who fatally bombed the *Rainbow Warrior*). It wasn't even sharp

eyed cops who busted this spy ring. An Internal Affairs officer became suspicious about the passport application when he got a phone call from a man saying that he was the applicant, seeking to hurry up the process. The fact that this "New Zealander" had a North American accent struck the Internal Affairs officer as curious. Suspicions were confirmed when a call to the "applicant's" father revealed that his son has cerebral palsy, and has never applied for a passport. From that moment, the Police were informed and an elaborate trap was laid to catch the ring. The applicant set up a complex collection process straight out of a spy movie, which involved couriers, taxis, cellphones and several changes of delivery address. The cops still managed to catch Cara and Kelman in the act of collecting the passport.

They each faced three charges, including one under a new law of participating in an organised crime group to secure a false passport. They were remanded on bail and very obviously kept under surveillance by both the Police and SIS agents (TV news delighted in showing the watchers trying to stay inconspicuous). It was reliably reported that their communications were bugged, most likely by the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), which is responsible for spying on international communications. This apparently provided the proof that they were Israeli agents. There were ramifications across the Tasman as well. Cara claimed to run a travel agency in Australia, which he said was the reason he had made numerous visits to NZ in recent years. Only problem was that nobody in Australia could find a trace of any such agency. Shortly before he was arrested in Auckland, Australian Police raided a Sydney house that he had used, but turned up nothing, except evidence that it had been hurriedly vacated. The pretty unconvincing cover stories by both men were further undermined by the extraordinary lengths that Kelman (the younger of the two) went to hide his identity during their several court appearances. He did a wonderful impersonation of the Invisible Man, complete with balaclava and dark glasses.

By July 2004, they had obviously been instructed by their controlling officers to take the rap and avoid the prospect of an Israeli Intelligence operation being examined in open court. They both pleaded guilty to the same single charge, the most serious one of trying to obtain an NZ passport by fraud. They were remanded in custody and duly sentenced to six months in prison (they could have got five years), plus the judge ordered them to each make a \$50,000 donation to the Cerebral Palsy Association for their callous and cynical attempt to steal the identity of the handicapped man. True to form, Kelman stood with his hand covering his face throughout the entire sentencing hearing. They offered no explanation (although, interestingly, they both appealed) and duly served the requisite three months. In September 2004, when the time came for their deportation, they were released from prison several hours earlier than the usual time, were taken by Police to a back entrance of Auckland Airport and kept out of public view until they were put on a plane, under Police escort.

Major Diplomatic Breach

Peace Researcher readers will need no telling that we are regularly strongly critical of the Government on all matters to do with Intelligence. But on this Mossad affair, we entirely support the Prime Minister, Helen Clark. When Cara and Kelman were sentenced to prison, in July 2004, she broke the official silence on the case that had been deliberately kept in place until then, and well and truly put the boot into Israel. "You do not expect your friends to do this to you...We look forward at some point to the Israeli government swallowing its pride and offering the explanation and apology we've asked for" (*Press*, 16/7/04; "Clark lambasts Israel; Diplomatic sanctions imposed after spies are sent to prison", Colin Espiner). New Zealand basically took every step short of breaking diplomatic relations. Clark suspended high-level visits to and from Israel; declined permission for Israel's President, the Head of State, to visit New Zealand; implemented visa restrictions on all Israeli government officials visiting NZ; suspended Ministry of Foreign Affairs consultations with Israel; and delayed indefinitely the appointment of a new Israeli Ambassador.

Because the case was so clearcut and the criminals had been caught in the act, the Government's measures were supported by all political parties and the media. They remain in place to the present, as Israel has not been forthcoming with any explanation or apology, which vividly illustrates its arrogance. This represents a major public relations embarrassment and diplomatic blow for Israel. Its' local supporters tried to make light of the whole incident, pointing out that New Zealand and Israel have a very limited relationship anyway, with minimal trade between the two (hence the major difference with the *Rainbow Warrior* affair, where France openly used New Zealand's vital agricultural trade with Europe as a weapon to get its spies and bombers out of prison, and back home to a heroes' welcome). It has been suggested that the Labour government's harsh measures against Israel are further proof of its alleged pro-Palestinian bias (in the recent past, Phil Goff, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited the Palestinian leader, the late Yasser Arafat, in his besieged compound in Ramallah). Local Zionists even pulled out the old canard that criticism of Israel is proof of anti-Semitism, and tried to directly link the Government's measures with the coincidental and despicable mass vandalism of Jewish graves in Wellington. More reasoned commentators correctly stated that this still unsolved crime bears all the hallmarks of the local neo-Nazi lunatic fringe and has nothing to do with the exposure and punishment of an Israeli spy ring.

Australia Secretly Expels Israeli Diplomat

The ramifications of this international incident are still being played out. It was revealed, in February 2005, that Australia had asked Israel to withdraw a diplomat from its Canberra Embassy. This had not been publicly announced and when the Australian media exposed it, several weeks after the event, the Australian government refused to comment. But the seriousness of this unusual move is underscored by the fact that Australia and Israel are good friends. The unnamed diplomat had visited Cara and Kelman when they were in prison in Auckland.

Green MP, Keith Locke, was the only one to ask the obvious question. "We need to know whether last year's attempt by a Mossad agent to fraudulently obtain New Zealand passports was run out of Israel's Embassy in Canberra. The expelled diplomat was cross-accredited to New Zealand and visited the two Mossad spies jailed here. It is bad enough that Mossad was infringing on New Zealand's sovereignty and laws. It is even worse if the Israeli diplomatic post responsible for New Zealand was involved". Keith said there was prima facie evidence the Mossad operation against New Zealand was run out of Australia. 'One of the jailed spies, Eli Cara, was based near Sydney, running a dummy tourism agency. He crossed the Tasman 24 times. In addition, the third Mossad agent, Zev Barkan, who managed to escape New Zealand, had been an Israeli diplomat in Austria and Belgium'. Keith said the New Zealand Government must not be caught up in an Australian government cover-up of the affair. 'As long as Israel's diplomats to New Zealand are based in Australia, it is our business whether Mossad is operating out of the Canberra Embassy. Phil Goff's talk about fighting terrorism will be hollow if he doesn't try to get to the bottom of this, the only terrorist-linked activity in New Zealand since the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing" (press release, quoted in *JustPeace* 73, 10/2/05).

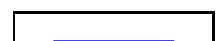
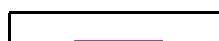
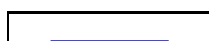
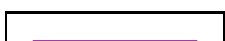
But things have obviously been happening behind the scenes. In early 2005, Cara and Kelman withdrew their appeals, which was followed, in February, by media and official speculation that Israel was preparing to apologise to New Zealand. The timing was significant, as this speculation was just before the visit of their President to Australia, indicating that Israel saw the need to restore good relations with both countries.

Contrast Spies' Treatment With That Of Vanunu and Zaoui

Israel has nothing to complain about. The hard men who run Mossad (rather incompetently, it must be said) would simply put this down as one of the costs of running an international criminal organisation which routinely commits all manner of crimes, including multiple murders, in foreign countries. Cara and Kelman were simply the expendable foot soldiers (as were Alain Mafart and Dominique Prieur in France's *Rainbow Warrior* operation). Likewise, those two have nothing to complain about. They could have got five years – they served three months. Compare that with the way Israel treats its own "spies". The most famous case is that of Mordechai Vanunu, the man who blew the whistle on Israel's nuclear arsenal. You can read about his case at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-102.html#whistle> (PR 29; June 2004; "Israeli Nuclear Whistleblower Free: Mordechai Vanunu Unbowed, Defiant", Murray Horton). He served a full 18 year prison sentence, with not a day remitted; and most of that was in solitary confinement. He was reluctantly released under stringent conditions, including not being allowed to talk to the foreign media, or go abroad. He remains under constant surveillance and harassment. In November 2004 he was re-arrested on suspicion of revealing more classified information, and of violating his terms of release, namely by defying the restrictions and doing high profile international media interviews. "I cannot shut up, I must have freedom of speech" (Press, 13/11/04; "Vanunu denies spilling new secrets", Reuters).

And Cara and Kelman have nothing to complain about compared to New Zealand's treatment of its most famous "guest" from the Arab world, namely Ahmed Zaoui (see the article and book review elsewhere in this issue). Held without charge or trial for more than two years, most of it in solitary confinement in maximum security, he is now out on bail but faces a battle, against implacable Government opposition, to be allowed to live here as a refugee (which he has been officially recognised as, by the authorised body) and not be deported as a "terrorist" back to a homeland, Algeria, which has sentenced him to death in absentia. Compared to that, our Israeli "guests" had a featherbed incarceration.

The fact remains that Israel was caught in the act of committing an international crime (most likely to facilitate the commission of a worse one elsewhere) and has deservedly been the subject of widespread disgust, and appropriate punishment. The message – if this is the way you behave in our country, then don't come again. We have no wish to be implicated, however indirectly and unwittingly, in the murderous crimes you routinely commit.



Only Empathy Will Clear The Fog Of War

by Joe Hendren

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

In mid-November 2004 the US Department of Defense confirmed the existence of a report highly critical of the Administration's efforts in the War On Terror and in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Muslims do not hate our freedom, but rather they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority [of Muslims] voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favour of Israel and against Palestinian rights, and the long-standing, even increasing, support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan and the Gulf States. Thus, when American public diplomacy talks about bringing democracy to Islamic societies, this is seen as no more than self-serving hypocrisy" (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (September 2004), "Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication" ("SC"), p40).

The report "Strategic Communication" comes from none other than a branch of the Pentagon itself, the Defense Science Advisory Board (DSB). The DSB is a US Federal Advisory Committee established to provide independent advice to the Secretary of Defense. Donald Rumsfeld received the report on September 23rd, 2004. The Bush Administration is not known for appreciating official advice challenging neo-conservative views. Oh to be a fly on the wall that day. Recently, a number of people in America, from the DSB to *Boston Globe* journalist Molly Bingham are asking a similar question. Are US difficulties in Iraq due to an inability to see American actions through Arab eyes?

The Fog Of Iraq

In the 2003 documentary "The Fog Of War" director Errol Morris interviews Robert S McNamara, most widely known for his role as Secretary of Defense for the 1960s' Kennedy and Johnson Administrations (*i.e. during the Vietnam War. Ed.*). For me, McNamara's discussion of the importance of "empathising with the enemy" was the most interesting part of the film, especially as his "lesson" has direct relevance for the US-created shambles in Iraq.

During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis President John Kennedy was lucky enough to have someone at his side that knew the Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev well, and was able to predict (accurately as it turned out) the kind of compromise that Khrushchev needed in order to defuse the crisis without the need for war. Although he may not be a household name, Tommy Thompson, the former US Ambassador to Moscow, may have saved more than a few households.

McNamara: "We must try and put ourselves inside their skin and look at us through their eyes, just to understand the thoughts that lie behind their decisions and their actions". Later in the film McNamara makes a very interesting comparison between the outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. "In the Cuban Missile Crisis, in the end I think we did put ourselves in the skin of the Soviets. In the case of Vietnam, we didn't know them well enough to empathise. And there was total misunderstanding as a result. They believed we had simply replaced the French as a colonial power and we were seeking to subject South and North Vietnam to our colonial interest, which was absolutely absurd. And we saw Vietnam as an element of the Cold War. Not what they saw it as, a civil war".

Could "we did not know them well enough to empathise" be a plausible explanation for the chaos and gross misunderstanding in Iraq right now? Even a cursory glance of Iraq's 20th Century history reveals a long struggle to gain and retain Iraqi independence, first from the Ottoman Turks and then from the British. The failures of previous empires left a legacy in Iraqi politics, a strong distrust of foreign rule. The ousted dictator, Saddam Hussein, knew how to turn this distrust into power, and (falsely) promoted himself with anti-imperialist rhetoric. The US has shown little understanding of this dynamic, perhaps apart from a relatively transparent attempt to include Iraqi troops in the November 2004 invasion of Fallujah, only to make the "collaborators" into prime targets. Unfortunately, other American actions have understandably reminded Iraqis of the colonial past, notably US plans for a network of military bases and US enforced law changes that open Iraq up for unrestricted foreign investment and repatriation of profits (read plunder). Seen through these eyes, it is reasonable for Iraqis to fear that the US will act like another colonial power.

I refer you to three Foreign Control Watchdog articles on the American occupation of Iraq. These are in number 107, December 2004, "Iraq's New Patent Law: A Declaration Of War Against Farmers", GRAIN and Focus on the Global South; number 106, August 2004, "War. Trade By Other Means: How The US Is Getting A Free Trade Deal With Iraq Without The Negotiations", Mary Lou Malig; and number 105, April 2004, "The Hijacking Of A Nation: Democracy And Self-Determination Are A Farce In Occupied Iraq", Joe Hendren. They can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/07/09.htm>; <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/06/13.htm> and <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/05/05.htm>. Ed.

The widespread use of embedded journalists enables us to see the war through the eyes of Coalition soldiers, as long as the military gain editorial input (read ability to censor), but no Iraqi equivalent exists to provide the old journalistic maxim of balance. Instead, the mainstream media follows the dictionary of the occupier, dismissing the Iraqi opposition as terrorists, insurgents or militants, often with a suggestion of a possible connection to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (*the Jordanian who is al Qaeda's leader in Iraq. Ed.*). These terms actually tell us very little. But the use of empty nouns does make it easier for those supporting the occupation to create the impression that any "violence" (but never US violence) is somehow without reason, or simply an attempt to "disrupt elections". Create a "fog", discourage empathy and the payoffs can be political.

Commenting on Iraq in 2004, McNamara made his views clear. "It's just wrong what we're doing. It's morally wrong, it's politically wrong, it's economically wrong" (*Canadian Globe & Mail, 25/1/04, "Its just wrong what we are doing"*). He says the US is not omniscient enough, on its own, to properly analyse the actions and ground-level conditions necessary to achieve the complex and ambiguous goals of a war, whether it is reversing the influence of Communism in Vietnam's case, or bringing democracy to the Arab world, in Iraq. In both cases the US failed to grasp the complexities of the local culture, and therefore to anticipate the extended guerrilla war it became involved in.

Still Fighting The Cold War

While the Defense Science Board report contains valuable analysis of America's relationships with the Muslim world, it also contains some worrying commentary. To call digital cameras in Abu Ghraib Prison a "strategic problem" is to stretch the bounds of tasteful euphemism too far (*presumably meaning that the problem there was not the systematic torture of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers and Intelligence agents, but the fact that the torturers photographed their handiwork, which caused huge political problems for the US in 2004. Ed.*). The DSB says the use of embedded journalists in Iraq has won broad support in Government and the media, as it "reduced the potential for Iraqi disinformation (e.g. on civilian casualties) that could have undermined political support in the US and in other countries" ("SC", p23). But on the few occasions such journalists did report civilian casualties, their figures appear implausibly low, especially when compared to more credible casualty surveys such as the *Lancet* report (*which estimated Iraqi civilian deaths at 100,000. Ed.*).

The Defense Science Board makes an insightful point when it criticises the US government for relying on Cold War responses to the new "threat" following 9/11, as if they were a reflex action, without a "thought or a care as to whether these were the best responses to a very different strategic situation" ("SC", p 34). "In stark contrast to the Cold War, the United States today is not seeking to contain a threatening state empire, but rather seeking to convert a broad movement within Islamic civilisation to accept the value structure of Western Modernity – an agenda hidden within the official rubric of a 'War on Terrorism,'" (*ibid.*, p36).

The DSB says it is a strategic mistake to compare Muslim masses to those "oppressed" under Soviet rule, as there is "no yearning-to-be-liberated-by-the-US groundswell among Muslim societies" (*ibid.*, p36). They appear to assume that all Communist countries yearned to be liberated by the US, a doubtful assumption at best). It says there is a religious revival occurring within Islam, taking form through a wide variety of movements, both moderate and militant. An overarching goal shared by these movements is the overthrow of the "apostate" regimes: the tyrannies of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan and the Gulf States. During the Cold War the US accepted such authoritarian regimes as long as they were anti-Communist. "Today, however, the perception of intimate US support of tyrannies in the Muslim World is perhaps the most critical vulnerability in the American strategy" (*op.cit.*), as US attempts to promote democracy in the region are seen as hypocritical and self-serving.

If there is a groundswell of Muslim opinion following the Iraq War, it is going against America. A June 2004 Zogby International survey shows the US is viewed unfavourably by overwhelming majorities in Egypt (98%), Saudi Arabia (94%), Morocco (88%) and Jordan (78%), representing an average 18% jump in unfavourable attitudes in these countries when compared with the 2002 survey. While Lebanon reported a tiny decrease in unfavourability, from 70% to 69%, feelings of favourability also decreased, from 26% in 2002 to 20% in 2004. Of the countries surveyed, only the United Arab Emirates showed a decrease in unfavourability ratings and an increase in favourability (from 10% to 14%), but a strong majority of 73% continue to view the US in an unfavourable way (surveys quoted in "SC", p44).

Just as the DSB question the use of Cold War routines in the War on Terrorism, a related point could be made about Iraq. A Cold War mindset may have driven the overblown attempt by Paul Bremer (*the first US viceroy of occupied Iraq. Ed.*) to wipe Saddam Hussein's former ruling Ba'ath Party from Iraqi society, as it resembled an ideological witch hunt for Communists. Under the "de-Ba'athification" policy, members from the top four ranks of the Ba'ath

Party were immediately fired from the jobs. All Iraqis working in the top three ranks of the State sector, affiliated corporations, hospitals and universities were “interviewed for possible affiliation with the Ba`ath Party, and subject to investigation for criminal conduct and risk to security”, with those found to be ordinary members fired from their jobs and banned from working in these sectors (Coalition Provisional Authority [CPA] Order 1 {16/05/03}, “De-Ba`athification of Iraqi Society”, <http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/index.html>). Similar motives were behind the disastrous decision to disband the Iraqi Army. But in a one party state like Iraq, party membership does not necessarily entail support for Saddam, as many Iraqis joined the governing party as a pragmatic way to advance their careers. Due to the “de-Ba`athification” policy thousands of Iraqi teachers, civil servants and military officers were unable to work. Thankfully, the CPA relaxed the policy a little in April 2004 allowing some former Ba`athists back into their professions (*Guardian*, 24/4/04, ‘U-turn on hiring of Ba`ath party members’). But as the Sunnis widely boycotted participation in the January 2005 elections, the US could still achieve its original goal of engineering a government largely free of former Ba`athists (by its broad definition).

Who Are The Iraqi Resistance?

In the *Boston Globe*, Molly Bingham explained [why elections won't quell Iraq resistance](#). “The composition of the Iraqi Resistance is not what the US Administration has been calling it, and the more it is oversimplified the harder it is to explain its complexity.... My objective is not to romanticise the fighters or their fight, but merely to better understand what our realistic choices are in Iraq and the Middle East” (*Boston Globe*, 15/11/04, ‘Why elections won’t quell Iraq resistance’).

Like McNamara, Molly Bingham is advocating empathy, an empathy informed by her experiences while researching the Iraqi Resistance in Baghdad from August 2003 to June 2004. In her article she countered some of the myths that have been promoted by the US Administration. Rather than a response to the disastrous US occupation or a reaction to the lack of elections, Bingham found the vast majority of the fighters joined the Resistance within days of the end of the ground war on April 9th, 2003. Bingham says it is misleading to describe the Resistance as “Ba`athist dead enders”, former regime loyalists, criminals, Islamic extremists or driven by a vast number of foreigners with contacts to al Qaeda. While she did not discount the influence of such elements, this is not who she met in Iraq. “Shia and Sunnis fighting together, women and men, young and old...people from all economic, social and educational backgrounds. The original impetus for almost all of the individuals I spoke to was a nationalistic one – the desire to defend their country from occupation, not to defend Saddam Hussein or his regime”.

Not one fighter had recently been released from prison, not one knew of any connection with al Qaeda. She met one foreign fighter. Despite US attempts to portray the Resistance as having a tightly organised structure with a leadership that can be obliterated, led by the “Jordanian militant” al-Zarqawi, Bingham says that the many levels of violence seen in Iraq after the US attack on Fallujah in November 2004 demonstrated that this is another myth.

“Of the 15 Resistance fighters who told me about their lives, most were from the same small neighbourhood of Adhamiya in Baghdad, but were not necessarily in the same cell or command structure. By the end of 2003 these cells had grown while maintaining their independence. They were no longer carrying out attacks in their own home turf but were travelling to other areas of the country”.

Since the capture of Saddam in 2003, Bingham sensed the growing power of Islam among the fighters. But in the absence of a solid government or civil structure she does not regard it as “surprising that a Muslim community would revert to Koranic law, even if only temporarily. Attacking Fallujah neither decapitated the Resistance nor eliminated its support. Rather it is a powerful recruiting poster for Iraqis not yet engaged in the struggle and for foreigners motivated to join what they view as a Jihad”.

The struggle, as seen by the Resistance, is a “fight for their homes, their nation, their honour and their faith against the imposition of a political structure by a foreign nation”. The January 2005 elections will not stop the violence, as the Resistance will not regard a political process led by the US as being legitimate. Bingham concludes: “the violence will remain until we are gone”. Despite US attempts to champion “Iraqi democracy”, the presence of the troops could act as the most significant barrier to the ballot box, and thus a barrier to the formation of a government regarded as legitimate by the Iraqi people.

The DSB reports “[I]n the eyes of Muslims, American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq has not led to democracy there, but only more chaos and suffering. US actions appear, in contrast, to be motivated by ulterior motives, and deliberately controlled in order to best serve American national interests at the expense of truly Muslim self determination” (“Strategic Communication”, p40).

I think the Left has been a little unsure of itself in deciding whether or not to support the Iraqi Resistance, largely

because many have felt unsure about exactly what they were supporting. But a first step is to give up the erroneous impression, created by the occupiers, that the “insurgents” represent a uniform group with the common goal of hating democracy. Attempting to ignore the Resistance is a more common response. More understanding and empathy is required.

Much of the Resistance sprang up immediately in response to the illegal US invasion. Given that the Resistance is a nationalist response to the invasion, it seems safe to assume that no elections will be regarded as legitimate while Americans remain in control of the political process. Empathy is something the Left usually does well. So let's have more of it.



MERCENARIES - A Peculiarly British Disease

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

A Very Bad Penny Turns Up In Baghdad

PR 29 (June 2004) contained a long and detailed article (“The Privatisation Of War”, Murray Horton) about mercenaries, concentrating on Africa and Iraq. It can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-96.html>. That article reported some rare good news on this subject, namely the April 2004 closure of Sandline International. Sandline was the British mercenary company behind the failed attempt by the Papua New Guinean government to forcibly retake the rebel island of Bougainville and reopen the enormous transnational-owned gold and copper mine at Panguna. For the full story behind that, read *PR* 13, August 1997 (“The Dirty Dogs Of War”, Murray Horton).

However you can't keep a bad man down. Almost immediately, the most notorious front man for Sandline, namely Lieutenant Colonel Tim Spicer, (who was arrested in the 1997 debacle in Papua New Guinea) turned up in Iraq. The following comes from the *Los Angeles Times*, (24/6/04, "The Coalition of the Billing", Robert Young Pelton).

“In March 2003 Secretary of State, Colin Powell, announced that the war in Iraq would be fought by ‘a Coalition of the Willing’, a group of 30 countries bound together by benevolence. That changed with the ‘handover of power’ to the Iraqi ‘government’, in June 2004. Our biggest armed ally in Iraq will not be a country, but rather a for-profit corporation run by a self-professed mercenary who will be charging us on a cost plus basis. America's efforts in Iraq can now be accurately called the ‘Coalition of the Billing’.

“On May 25, 2004 the US Army awarded Lt. Col. Tim Spicer and his company Aegis (a tiny London-based holding corporation only incorporated on September 23, 2002) contract #W911S0-04-C-0003, the largest and most important piece of Iraq security business in its history. For almost one third of a billion US dollars over three years, Aegis will be in charge of all security for our \$US18.4 billion in reconstruction projects. They will coordinate all other private security groups and hire a force protection detail of around 600 armed men. But this is just the beginning. Aegis will also coordinate the operations of the 60 other Private Military Companies (PMCs) and their 20,000 men currently in Iraq as well as take charge of new hires, intelligence, prisoners, and oilfield security. A no-risk, cost-plus arrangement of up to \$US293 million over three years. As the owner of almost 40% of Aegis, financial experts estimate that depending on tax planning, Spicer could personally pocket \$US20 million. There is nothing wrong with most of the above. This is, after all, America.

“There is however one small problem. It appears that no one in the bidding system bothered to check who Tim Spicer is, or rather was. If Spicer remains true to his historical roots, controversy is a given and the political fallout to the US government and our efforts in Iraq may be staggering.

“Pratap Chatterjee, Program Director of CorpWatch, has fired the first shot, ‘Aegis had no experience in Iraq. This is also a person that historically has done business with dodgy characters, in ventures that have contravened the law. Aegis would be the last company you would hire, not the first’.

“What wasn't on Spicer's CV that accompanied Aegis' bid document was that this is THAT Tim Spicer. The controversial British mercenary whose actions brought down the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea in 1997 after an aborted security contract that ended up with him being arrested, jailed and charged for weapons violations. He is the central figure in the Arms to Africa scandal which caused considerable embarrassment for our British allies, including Prime Minister Tony Blair, by breaking a 1998 UN arms embargo, he is the same ‘Spicer, Timothy Simon’ whose passport is flagged by Immigration and Naturalisation Service computers when entering the US, and the same soldier of fortune who accepted \$US70,000 from a fugitive financier accused of embezzlement to look into overthrowing the government of Sierra Leone.

“Spicer not only brings drama and surprise to his endeavours but also runs with an interesting crowd. His company Aegis lists two senior advisors; Sir Roger Wheeler, former UK Chief of Staff and Sir John Birch, a former UK rep to the UN. Both are on record as two staunch opponents of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The man that hired Spicer to run one of Aegis' many predecessor companies, Simon Mann, is currently languishing in jail in Zimbabwe for allegedly trying to overthrow the oil rich government of Equatorial Guinea (see the section below on Equatorial Guinea for details). The US Project Management Office head of security who wrote the proposal specifications and Spicer's direct boss is retired UK Army Brigadier Tony Hunter-Choat, a retired British officer, and you guessed it, a former mercenary. Hunter-Choat is a former French Foreign Legionnaire who fought in Algeria in the late 50's and early 60's. And that's just scratching the surface.

“Spicer's history as a businessman is also not reassuring. He has been involved in four private military corporations that have either failed financially, done poorly or have suspended business. Considered by insiders as being blackballed by the UK government for any of their PMC security work, he has looked overseas. His activities over the last few years have centred on anti-piracy and harbor port security surveys in places like Israel and Sri Lanka.

He Just Filled Out The Forms

“How did someone with this background ending up billing us millions to run the world's largest private security force protecting all 2,300 reconstruction projects? Easy. He just filled out the forms. In June 2004, in Eustice, Virginia, the Army Transportation Board reviewed six competing proposals. They chose tiny Aegis Defence Systems Limited over giants like Dyncorp, Control Risks Group, and other seasoned players. Army Spokesperson Major Gary C Tallman insists that Spicer's CV showed that he had an impeccable military career in the British Army and that Spicer had acknowledged that he had done ‘security work in Africa and SE Asia’. When asked if he knew if Spicer was a mercenary, Tallman replied, ‘My understanding is that they (Aegis) met all the requirements’. He did admit when pressed, that other than checking candidates against the official debarment list, ‘It's not part of the process to look into the backgrounds of the principals’. A baffled Tallman insists that ‘Aegis met the criteria and we don't know what else to say’.

“Spicer's latest reincarnation combined with the Army's rush to get warm bodies in place for the post-handover may mean that because of the US bidding system one privateer's ship may have finally come in, even in the deserts of Iraq. Peter Singer, a Fellow at the Brookings Institute, referring to the current controversy swirling around other Iraq contracts, says: ‘This was the most important security contract out there, the awarding of it to Aegis shows that we have learned absolutely nothing from our prior experience’. Two of the losing bidders have asked for a review and a spokesman for one losing bidder has ominously warned us to ‘Stay Tuned’. Good advice, since the Bush Administration appears to still be out of tune with what is going on in Iraq”.

The awarding of this contract caused enormous controversy, from both sides of the argument about the central role of mercenaries in Iraq. Corporate rival Dyncorp appealed it but Spicer's Aegis contract survived the review process and was upheld. Mind you, based on his track record, he could turn out to be the best secret weapon that the Iraqi Resistance has. Who needs suicide bombers when you've got Tim Spicer?

Equatorial Guinea

In March 2004, Equatorial Guinea, in West Africa, 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 (or kill him, if he resisted) 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).

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 (SAS) and a leading figure in the South African mercenary firm, Executive Outcomes, and the British company, Sandline International (see the section above on Tim Spicer for details). These two firms were controversial leading players 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. That was where *PR 29* left the story.

This tragi-comic misadventure in an utterly obscure African dictatorship became a major world news story in subsequent months. The men held by Zimbabwe underwent a trial that lasted several weeks. The court rejected their cock and bull story about the Congo. A number of the South Africans were allowed to return home, where they

were due to be arrested and charged under that country's tough anti-mercenary laws. Several others, including ringleader Simon Mann, were sentenced to several years in Zimbabwean prisons. Mann was a colleague of Tim Spicer and fitted the archetypal British mercenary mould – a public schoolboy (Old Etonian in his case), and a product of the British Army's officer corps and the SAS. Those dealt with by Zimbabwe were luckier than those captured in Equatorial Guinea itself. 19 mercenaries went on trial there, in late 2004, and the prosecution called for the death penalty for the South African ringleader and the exiled opposition leader alleged to be the figurehead.

What really caught the world's attention was the revelation of who was financing this elaborate and expensive coup attempt. The moneymen were a collection of millionaires in London and South Africa. The name of the notorious Jeffrey Archer came up (he strenuously denied it). But the most high profile financier turned out to be none other than Sir Mark Thatcher, the ne'er do well son of former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. In August 2004 he was arrested at his South African home and charged with bankrolling the debacle. This sent the British press into a frenzy. Mark Thatcher has been a well-deserved target of media scorn for decades, having traded on his mother's name and position to enrich himself. He is a singularly graceless and unlikeable individual. One lengthy profile of him was headlined with the description of him by the *Financial Times* as "A sort of Harrovian Arthur Daley with a famous mum" (*Press*, 14/1/05, Chris Moncrieff. Harrow was the public school that Thatcher attended; Arthur – or, more properly, Arfur – Daley was the shifty Cockney wheelerdealer in the classic British TV series, *Minder*).

There was no going down in a blaze of glory for Thatcher. He cut a deal and pleaded guilty to contravening South Africa's anti-mercenary laws. The January 2005 deal allowed him to avoid a prison sentence or the even less appealing prospect of extradition to Equatorial Guinea to face trial and a possible death sentence there. He agreed to cooperate fully with prosecutors in unravelling the full details of the plot, including who financed it. There was no honour among thieves – he was quite happy to rat on his partners in crime.

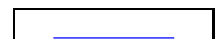
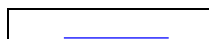
It's All About Oil, As Usual

So what's the attraction of Equatorial Guinea? The mercenaries would have us believe that they were foot soldiers in a glorious crusade to bring democracy to a particularly benighted part of Africa. The President, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, is a nasty piece of work who has ruled with an iron fist since 1979, and who counts cannibalism among the various atrocities of which he has been accused by his numerous opponents. It is a spectacularly corrupt regime, and in May 2004 featured in a US scandal where the Riggs Bank was fined \$US25 million for money laundering violations related to the Equatorial Guinea and Saudi Arabian governments (former Chilean dictator, Augusto Pinochet, was the bank's most high profile illicit customer).

But the reality is not quite as noble. Equatorial Guinea is knee deep in oil, being one of West Africa's smallest counties but a significant player in the region that the US is cultivating as the acceptable replacement for Middle Eastern oil. The Bush Administration sees this part of the world as a vital part of its strategy of securing reliable new sources of oil, and isn't bothered about the fleabag dictators that control it. "Official" US mercenaries, in the form of security advisers, are helping the Equatorial Guinea regime. And the hapless mercenaries and their financiers simply wanted part of that action, in the form of highly lucrative new oil concessions, which would be granted by a new government, to be installed at gunpoint.

Fleas Scratched

We shouldn't really be surprised. They were simply following the example of Bush, Blair and Howard who illegally invaded Iraq in 2003 for exactly the same reason – to steal its oil, at gunpoint. Big fleas have little fleas, but, in this case, the little fleas got scratched, in both senses of the word (in the horse racing sense, they were scratched from the race before it had begun). How appropriate that Mark Thatcher's nickname among his criminal mates was "Scratcher". But, have no doubt, there will be another bunch of murderous clowns, with plummy accents, trying something similar in the future. The age old temptation to plunder other people's countries, be it in Iraq or Africa, is just too strong for these upper class Pommy twits. They will always be eager to try and disprove the old maxim that crime doesn't pay. Which is why it is important to demonstrate, each time one of these mercenary adventures happens, that there is a very high price to pay for those both greedy and stupid enough to try their luck.



OKINAWA - It Is Not Only In Iraq That US Military Occupation Faces Massive Resistance

by Bob Leonard

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

Public resistance to the presence of US military bases on Okinawa is increasing once again. The islands of Okinawa are part of the Ryukyu archipelago southwest of the main islands of Japan. It has a long and turbulent history and its people yearn to regain some measure of real control over their land and sea resources. Okinawa was invaded by American troops during World War 2 and they are still there in a big way because of its strategic location in the western Pacific. That is the crux of the problem for Okinawans. Most readers will be well aware that Japan has been under the thumb of the United States since WW2, and that there is a heavy US military presence there in the form of bases. What may be surprising is that 75% of those bases are on Okinawa, occupying 18% of the area of the main island (see map). *For previous articles on Okinawa, and its people's heroic resistance to the US military, see PRs 24 (December 2001), 22 (December 2000), 15 (June 1998), 12 (March 1997), 11 (December 1996), 9 (June 1996), and 7 (December 1995). Ed.*

Recent developments have revived local resistance to the massive US presence on Okinawa. The issues are intertwined and they are not new; in fact they have been rooted in the occupation for decades. The first issue received sharp focus when a US Marine helicopter crashed on the campus of a university in the city of Ginowan, unwilling host to the Marine Air Base of Futenma. The second has to do with proposed base relocations, in part seemingly to address vigorous and long-standing objections to particular bases on Okinawan land, but ultimately almost certainly to do with "rationalising and strengthening" US military occupation. This is hardly surprising under the current American Administration policy of expanding its global military reach by establishing new bases. It isn't about to give up old ones without a net gain elsewhere, and certainly not in response to local protests. The US simply hides its true motivation under the umbrella of serving at the wish of the Japanese government.

The Helicopter Crash In Ginowan

The island of Okinawa is densely populated. So it is inevitable that any military base will impact heavily on the local people. Air bases strike fear into the hearts of people nearby for very real reasons. They are incredibly noisy, 24 hours a day, and accidents happen. Futenma Air Base surrounds the city of Ginowan (population 90,000) and it has heavy air traffic, much of it big Marine cargo helicopters. One crashed in August 2004 and hit a campus building of the Okinawa International University. No one was killed, by some miracle. Even the injured US crew survived.

What angered the local citizens more than the crash itself was the fact that the US military immediately took charge of every aspect of the crash site. Japanese police and other personnel, including politicians, were totally excluded. Particularly galling was the fact that only pizza delivery motorcycles were waved through cordons to deliver vital sustenance to hungry US Marines. Big protests followed with as many as 30,000 people turning out on a "Sunday for the biggest anti-base protest in Okinawa since those a decade ago protesting the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl by three American servicemen" (*Ginowan Journal* "A crash, and the scent of pizzatocracy, anger Okinawa", James Brooke, www.nytimes.com/2004/09/13/international/asia/13japan.html). *The biggest of those 1995 protests involved 85,000 people, or nearly 8% of Okinawa's total population. The New Zealand equivalent would be a crowd of around 350,000. Ed.*

Imagine the impact of such a protest at Christchurch Airport, site of an emergency landing by a US Air Force C141 Starlifter cargo plane in the late 1970s. New Zealanders got their own taste of US military arrogance when the airport, including the terminal building, was effectively taken over by American security for many hours until the crippled military cargo plane had been dealt with. The event made the Christchurch newspapers of course. But thousands did not turn out to protest the American occupation of our airport. Nobody did. Okinawans are different, perhaps because the magnitude of the US occupation and arrogant disregard of the welfare of the local people is so massive. There is no escaping it if you are unlucky enough to live near a base or an outlying area being used for military exercises.

Futenma Air Base has been scheduled for closure for nearly ten years but the process seems to be contingent on development of an alternative site in Okinawa (nobody ever really knows exactly what the US military intends to do). Herein lies the link to the second major issue that is stirring up the protest movement – the alternative site off Henoko Beach, some distance up the island to the northeast, is not on land but off-shore.

An Unacceptable Trade-Off

Moving the Marine heliport from Futenma to the Henoko Sea just off the coast of Henoko village is meeting with stiff local protest, including a lawsuit against the US Department of Defense, filed in a US District Court. Just moving bases around Okinawa is not what Okinawans have in mind in pressing for the closure of Futenma. And destroying some of the richest coastal ecosystem in the world would be the inevitable result of construction at Henoko. Just why a heliport must have a runway over a mile long isn't clear but that is what is proposed. It will require the blasting of coral reefs. And the US military routinely ducks responsibility by saying the project belongs to the Japanese government. "It's not our problem", say the Marines.

Okinawa has been called the "Galapagos* of the East" because of the rich biodiversity on land and in the sea. Sea creatures that would be seriously damaged or even destroyed by the base include the endangered dugong (sea cows), sea turtles, coral reefs (which are already suffering globally because of rising water temperatures and coastal pollution), and over 1,000 species of fish and a similar number of molluscs. Marine diversity here rivals that of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. * *Galapagos – remote Pacific islands, with unique wildlife. It was there that Charles Darwin, the 19th Century father of the theory of evolution, found much of the inspiration for his historic book, "The Origin Of Species". Ed.*

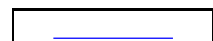
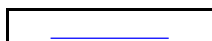
Two Okinawan members of Japan's parliament, the Diet, travelled to the US, in early 2005, to meet with US Government officials and press their case for closure of Futenma, cancellation of the Henoko base and the total removal of all US Marines from their islands. They were joined by five members of the local Prefectural Assembly. The timing is important since the US is having bilateral talks with Japan about their military relationship, and a major report on US overseas basing is due to be presented to President Bush in August 2005.

Sounds promising, but the chances of success in moving any US bases off Okinawa are probably nil. And it certainly ain't going to happen just because the local people are protesting, and have been for decades. The US is indeed closing some of its overseas bases (in Germany and South Korea) and withdrawing troops and their families. But some large bases with "permanently stationed" US troops will remain key elements of America's global military reach. The US air base at Kadena in Okinawa is one of those bases, along with Ramstein in Germany and Camp Humphries in South Korea. The US may close some bases but only for its own purposes. The Pentagon, greatly strengthened under President Bush and the Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, wants more flexibility at what are called "forward operating sites". Okinawa is much more than that – it's one of the remaining "Little Americas", remnants of the Cold War which are viewed as indispensable.

This is not to say that local opposition to US bases is a fruitless exercise. There is considerable hope that the potentially disastrous Henoko base can be stopped, especially with extensive international support from highly organised environmental groups from Okinawa, Japan and the United States. The spotted owl stopped the logging of its virgin forest habitat in the Pacific Northwest of the US. Perhaps the dugong will stop a military base in the Henoko Sea.

The Fightback Continues

This just in from the Internet: Protests on land and sea continue at the Henoko site and there are signs that the Japanese government may be reconsidering whether the off-shore site will be used as a replacement for the Futenma Marine Air Base. Protests have been continuous on land, with an encampment at the fishing port of Henoko now in its ninth year. Thousands of Okinawans have been involved. This effective blockade has delayed the start of a "research" drilling survey that would see the coral reef damaged at 63 sites by deep drilling. When drilling ships gained access to the reef from another port they encountered intense opposition by fishing boats, motor boats, sea kayaks and even swimmers. Some local women have vowed to give their lives to stop the construction of the base. Another serious obstacle for the base is the deliberate exclusion of the contentious drilling survey from the project's environmental impact assessment process. Both the US and Japanese governments agreed to this exclusion and it could be the final blow to the Henoko base.



DUBYA STEALS TWO IN A ROW – WELL DONE AMERICA

by Bob Leonard

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

"As democracy is perfected, the office of the President represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron". HL Mencken, 1920.

George Dubya Bush has extended his reign for another four years. Not bad for a moron. How did this happen? To put it bluntly the 2004 "election" was stolen, as was the 2000 one. Because no country, no person, is immune to the ravages of the American corporate and military machines, the continued reign of Bush matters deeply. *Peace Researcher* thinks it's important that our readers have some insight into just how this election was stolen. You won't have read about it in the mainstream media. The Internet is the place to look (see Website addresses at the end). This article describes the major tactics that help to explain how "they did it and got away with it", at least so far. Whatever you might think about American politicians (and there are plenty of problems with the defeated Democrat candidate, John Kerry), this article is not about them. It's about how the Bush cabal is close to delivering the death knell to American democracy and its Constitution while justifying unlimited pre-emptive war in order to jam the American concept of "democracy" down the throats of sovereign nations.

The amount of information on the November 2, 2004 US election and its aftermath is huge, and it keeps coming. Our purpose here is to cover a few of major topics that reveal and help explain the extent of corruption of the US voting system, both before and after election day 2004.

Voting System? What Voting System?

Unless you are an American, and perhaps even if you are, you might wonder just how a Presidential election could end up in such a mess as the Kerry-Bush one did, and indeed the 2000 one between Bush and Al Gore. The answer is that there is no federal or other central guidance of national elections – no federal law, no agency to codify and coordinate the voting process. It is left entirely to the states to conduct an election as they see fit. As a consequence there are as many "systems" as there are states in the Union. Everything from the method of voting to the method of counting, tabulating and reporting the results is a matter for state decision, and in many cases individual county decision. And there are thousands of counties in the US. Elected state officials, such as secretaries of state, are vested under state laws with considerable powers to influence election procedures as shown in the key Ohio recount fiasco described below.

Exit Polls: Something Smells Fishy

Exit polls are used in the US and in other countries as predictive tools on the day of polling. They are conducted by interviewing voters as they leave the polling places. They have been used in many elections and have been shown to have high predictive accuracy, usually better than $\pm 2\%$ of the actual vote tally. Exit polling is refined by careful statistical procedures and is widely accepted as a good way of monitoring the credibility of an election. However, not everyone accepts the accuracy and validity of exit polling. There is currently a vigorous exit poll debate underway in the US and it has become mind-numbingly complex and mired in detailed analysis. But it is probably safe to conclude that while the polls cannot provide hard evidence of election fraud, they are useful as indicators of possible fraud.

The US government actually likes exits polls when they are used in somebody else's country, for example in the 2004 election in Ukraine. A new election had to be conducted there because of the big discrepancies between exit poll predictions and the reported results. The Bush government had the gall to cry foul based on the exit polls in Ukraine. Public protest was enormous and the election result was reversed in the new election.

All this happened practically on top of the November election in the US. Early exit polls showed Kerry winning handily in several battleground states, including Florida and Ohio whose electoral votes were crucial to the final result. But we all know what happened. A meticulous statistical analysis of exit poll predictions compared with reported vote tallies in eleven key states showed impossible shifts for Bush in ten of the eleven states (the shift for Bush in New Hampshire was a whopping 9.5%). Not one state shifted to Kerry. Dr Steven Freeman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Arts and Sciences, conducted the analysis and compiled a detailed report. He concluded that the large shifts in favour of Bush were statistically impossible, compelling evidence of fraud. There was plenty of other evidence of fraud on and before election day.

Suppressing The Minority Vote

A huge effort was made by Kerry supporters both before and on election day to get out the liberal vote. Did the Republicans do the same for the conservative vote? The evidence indicates that their chosen tactic in a number of states was to prevent likely Kerry voters, most of them poor or from minority groups such as blacks and Latinos, from ever casting a vote. This tactic was used systematically and on a large scale in Florida in the 2000 election when the infamous Katherine Harris (now a member of Congress) was Secretary of State under Bush-brother, Governor Jeb Bush.

Here is a sampling of ways to frustrate voting by minorities and the poor:

- Severely restrict the number of voting machines in urban, minority and Democratic (party) areas. Provide plenty of machines in predominantly white, Republican and rural areas. Would you wait in lines for over eight hours to vote – in winter?
- Direct liberal voters to the wrong polling places using deceptive phone calls and flyers. If they show up at the wrong polling place, give them provisional ballots and then don't count them, based on technicalities.
- Reject all voter registration forms not printed on white, uncoated paper of not less than 80 pound text weight (by order by the Ohio Secretary of State who was Bush's state campaign manager).
- Shift voting stations from large to small facilities so voters have to wait in queues outside in the cold.
- At normal poll closing time tell voters in queues that they cannot vote, even though this is illegal if they were in the queues before closing time.
- Harass voters while they wait in queues. Intimidation was common in Ohio and included demanding excessive and unfair forms of identification by minorities.

The list of tactics goes on and on. And the tactics were used well beyond Ohio and Florida. Thousands of examples of vote suppression have been documented in all of the key battleground states.

Vote Counting – Sending Votes Down The Gurgler

If Kerry had won the popular vote in Ohio, that state's electoral votes would have tipped the balance for him and Bush would be out of office. But the official count in Ohio gave Bush a winning margin of 118,775 votes. The entire election in Ohio has been challenged in State Court as a fraud in a legal move identical to the recent successful one in Ukraine. Detailed analysis led to the conclusion, stated in the Ohio complaint, that Kerry actually won Ohio by 149,326 votes. Stated with stark simplicity, 130,656 Kerry votes were given to Bush through a myriad of counting errors, screw-ups and downright fraudulent actions. Here are just a few examples of what happened in Ohio.

Electronic voting machines lie at the heart of the problems in Ohio and probably most other American states. Some machine designs leave paper trails that are susceptible to recounts, others do not. The main reason a recount was deemed feasible in Ohio but not in Florida (where fraud was equally likely under Jeb Bush) was that a large majority of counties used punch-card/optical scan machines that leave a paper trail, i.e. the infamous hanging-chad * cards. Touch-screen machines predominate in Florida and leave no recountable trail. * *The textbook case of electoral incompetence and corruption that was the 2000 US Presidential election, specifically in Florida, gave the disbelieving world a whole new vocabulary. Voting machines were supposed to punch holes to indicate the voter's choice. Chads were the minuscule bits of paper left when the holes were not fully punched. The fate of a nation and, arguably, the world, hung on a dizzying variety of "dangling, dimpled and pregnant" chads. Ed.*

The gist of the fraud allegations is that machines are notoriously susceptible to various kinds of tampering to influence the vote count. Evidence for deliberate tampering includes numerous affidavits testifying to touch-screens that automatically showed a vote for Bush even when the voter pushed the Kerry button. This is called vote hopping and occurred in at least 36 of Ohio's 88 counties. Another glitch was lower-level candidates on ballots receiving Democrat votes but with no vote registered for President. This happened in thousands of cases. And how do you account for many voting precincts registering more votes than people who were documented as having voted? In one county alone this amounted to a surplus of over 90,000 votes, most of them for Bush, not Kerry. Electronic ballot "boxes" were stuffed in some precincts as evidenced by unbelievable voting percentages, some as high as 99%. It appears that fraudsters were able to register votes for people who did not actually show up to vote. Again, the "stuffing" favoured Bush by an overwhelming amount.

Perhaps the most outrageous indictment of machine voting in Ohio was a statement by the Chief Executive Officer of the Diebold company, which produces electronic voting machines, that he would do everything he could to assure a Bush victory in Ohio. He appears to have delivered.

The Ohio Recount

With evidence of fraud mounting by the minute, two candidates for president from minor parties in Ohio, the Greens and the Libertarians, filed for a recount in all 88 Ohio counties. Republican election officials predictably were not about to facilitate a recount. "Supervised by Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell, co-chair of the Bush-Cheney re-election campaign, Ohio simply ignored all challenges to the vote count and all requests for a recount. ...while every legal remedy to determine who won Ohio's Presidential election was being pursued, the state's Republican political machine blocked the rights of those seeking to verify the vote" (Fitrakis et al. 2004, cited by Aldridge; see reference at the end of this article). It took a variety of legal manoeuvres, including a court injunction against Secretary Blackwell, to force the state to initiate a recount. The key to making this happen was Kerry finally joining the case as a plaintiff. The story of the resulting recount is long and involved. Suffice it to say that it was a farce, distorted at every turn by Blackwell and his minions and a Republican-dominated court system, and did not prevent Ohio's 20 electors from casting their votes for Bush (*it is necessary to remind readers here that American Presidential elections are not a direct ballot. Voters vote for electors to the Electoral College, and the candidate who wins the state in the First Past the Post ballot wins all its electors. Each state has its number of electors determined according to its population - Ohio has 20. It is the Electoral College, not the American voters directly, which elects the President. Ed.*).

This recount farce has led to the legal challenge to the overall Ohio election as mentioned above. That challenge is now mired in a legal quagmire that only the litigious American people could appreciate. In the meantime the national electoral vote, including the crucial 20 Ohio votes, was certified on January 6th, 2005, by both Houses of the US Congress. A historic challenge to the validity of the Ohio votes was mounted by two courageous legislators, only the second such challenge since 1877. Senator Barbara Boxer of California and Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones of Ohio filed the challenge and forced both the House and Senate to debate the merits of the fraud case for two hours. Surprise, surprise – Bush was certified.

A further consequence of the January 6th certification of Bush was the dropping of the legal challenge in Ohio since it had become legally moot. Secretary of State Blackwell had succeeded in stalling the challenge until its' fate was sealed. Blackwell himself now faces lawsuits charging criminality in his blatantly illegal and anti-democratic actions during the Ohio recount. These lawsuits could get some traction.

Election Reform In America?

Don't hold your breath. Although the state of Ohio was the focus of allegations of vote fraud and election stealing in 2004, fraud is systemic within the massive, confusing and totally uncoordinated election system that underpins American democracy. We can take some heart from the fact that a lot of Americans are now fighting mad over this stolen election. Unfortunately, that anger and desire for reform does not extend to the seats of power. The challenge to Ohio's electoral vote certification was backed by an impressively detailed and comprehensive report filed by Michigan Representative John Conyers. But it became available only a day or so before the certification on January 6, 2005. It is doubtful that any of the hundreds of Representatives and 100 Senators had even cracked the cover of the report, let alone read it. Over 30 Representatives, many of them black, voted against the certification along with a lone Senator, Barbara Boxer.

Every other Senator who attended the joint session, Democrats and Republicans, voted to seat Bush on his throne for a second term. John Kerry wasn't even there. He was in the Middle East, presumably doing something far more important than fighting for the Presidency that would have been his, if the election had been fair.

A comment on Bush's January 20th, 2005, inaugural speech: "*So the President had no need for place names, not just to avoid his well known penchant for mangling them, but because his intention in his inaugural address was to take possession of the whole planet in the name of 'freedom' (whose essence, like 'torture', turns out to be all in the definition). After all, as the speech made clear, he wasn't addressing just Americans or Iraqis or Pakistanis or North Koreans or Israelis; he was, in near-revolutionary fashion, issuing a warning to 'every ruler and every nation' (you know who you are); he was addressing 'anew' all 'the peoples of the world', no exclusions or exceptions. It was the all-embracing inaugural equivalent of those frequent smaller moments when our President simply states that other countries, peoples, movements must do this or that. This time, in an excess of retro-triumphalism, he laid his giant "must" like a footprint on the planet itself!*" -Tom Engelhardt, tomdispatch.com, January 2005.

A Note On Sources

Much of the material for this article was summarised from a very recent paper by Bob Aldridge (Pacific Life Research Center in California) entitled: "Understanding the 'War on Terrorism': Manipulating Elections, Part 3:

Stealing Ohio in 2004". To read this excellent paper, go to the first Website listed below. The rather harsh tone of this article is my own and should not be attributed to Bob Aldridge.

If you want to read more about this subject, here are some excellent Websites:

<http://www.plrc.org/docs/050108.pdf>

<http://www.tomdispatch.com>

<http://www.flcv.com/ussumall.html>

<http://www.freepress.org/>

<http://www.cannonfire.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.buzzflash.com>



**“I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THE MOON:
The Disinformation Campaign Against Ahmed Zaoui”
Selwyn Manning, Yasmine Ryan and Katie Small, Multimedia Investments, 2004**

See David Small's article on the Zaoui case elsewhere in this issue. Since this was written, Ahmed Zaoui has been released on bail. Ed.

Right from the start of this sad affair it was hard to believe that Ahmed Zaoui could be a security threat. He entered the country in late 2002 as a refugee and the NZ authority whose job it is to assess such things confirmed that Zaoui's claim was legitimate. There was no known reason to think he endangered us, and plenty of reason to suppose he faced death if he was returned to his native Algeria. Since then, no one in authority has challenged the finding of the Refugee Status Appeal Authority (*and yet he remained in prison for more than two years, never having been charged with anything or brought to trial. Nearly half of that time was spent in solitary confinement, in maximum security. Ed.*).

The few available facts, as presented in this important monograph, suggest that Zaoui's situation is unusual. The authors cite three direct parallels, the examples of colleagues of Zaoui's, leaders like him of an Algerian political party overthrown by a coup. One arrived in the US in 1992, spent the years from 1996 to 2000 in jail, but was then released by an immigration tribunal, as there was no evidence against him. He has continued to live privately in America since. A second Algerian went to Australia in 1993 without exciting the State. In 1995 a third man was refused asylum in Switzerland, but allowed to stay.

As it happens, all three of these countries are connected to the Zaoui case. Switzerland, along with Belgium and France, is said to be an origin of the complaint against Zaoui. Australia is the most likely candidate for any foreign pressure to have been applied on Wellington on security grounds. And then there's America. If they can live with an Algerian democrat, why can't Godzone?

The authors make it clear that Zaoui's political grouping, the Islamic Salvation Front (known by its French acronym, FIS), was a moderate and popular influence in Algeria, which threatened the military. At the time our media portrayed FIS as a bunch of crazed zealots. Since then of course we've become accustomed to linking Islam with expressions like the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but, like most systems of thought, Islam contains a range of viewpoints, from fundamentalist to agnostic.

FIS was out of favour well before 9/11. The French government didn't like it because it was Algerian populist (Vietnam and Algeria, in the 1950s and 60s, had proved to be significant defeats for French imperialism). The French would have passed the word on to their neighbours, Switzerland and Belgium, for whom giving a hard time to a few individuals from FIS wouldn't have been a big deal.

Zaoui Is The Pawn By Which NZ Keeps Onside With Our “Mates”

The NZ government has said that imprisoning a refugee who trusted our values was necessary to keep onside with our mates. In that milieu it seems this is an OK justification. Noted researcher and writer, Nicky Hager, has suggested that the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, is anxious to get back in the good books of the US (*Sunday Star Times*, 21/11/04), which certainly makes sense. The eagerness of our leadership to abrogate national policy to France has been odd. We think of France as the country which sank the *Rainbow Warrior* and now upsets Washington for its cheese-eating-surrender-monkey cowardice. They're not even Echelon partners (*Echelon is the code name for the programme operated by the five-nation spy network that systematically listens in to civilian telecommunications sent by satellite. Echelon involves searching for keywords in the oceans of electronic chatter. New Zealand is the junior partner in the super-secret UKUSA Agreement, whereby the electronic spy agencies of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand {the Anglo-Saxon countries} divide up the world for electronic spying purposes. The biggest Big Brother is the US National Security Agency. There is a global network of electronic spybases. The one in New Zealand – effectively a US spybase, albeit one manned by and paid for by New Zealanders - is at Waihopai, in Marlborough, and is operated by the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau, which is NZ's biggest spy agency. Ed.*).

“I Almost Forgot About The Moon” is the only full account of the tawdry story of what is publicly known. Zaoui was

detained on arrival at Auckland Airport because an inexperienced official did not understand Zaoui's French and supposed him to have said that he had come here at the bidding of the outfit he was fleeing. From then on, in the more than two years that followed those few "Pink Panther"* minutes, Zaoui has not been permitted a hearing. That's how petty bureaucracy likes to work. **Afficionados of the classic "Pink Panther" series of movies know that Inspector Clouseau is the archetypal bumbling policeman. Ed.*

As a related story emerged that "our" spies had targeted a whole range of Maori organisations in general, Clark said that it's "laughable" to imagine that the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) would do so. No, it's not. Why would our snoops be different from their role models? What else would they do with their working days? (*see my article elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*)

The PM, who is also the Minister in Charge of the SIS (a portfolio always held by the PM), would not personally know. From what we hear of the tactics of dirty tricksters in places where these things are better known, like the US and UK, they prefer what they call "plausible deniability". If the head person doesn't know, then that person doesn't have to lie.

The Americans always say they will "neither confirm nor deny" serious allegations. Of course they won't. And when our head spies are asked if they've lied to the PM or broken rules, the one thing we can be sure of is that they're not going to admit that they have. So how are we supposed to know what's being done in our name and with our taxes? We don't imagine that the politicians supposed to watch this stuff would be told anything the SIS doesn't want them to know. The MPs might be subversives too.

Updating The Stereotypes: Commos, Hippies, Now Muslims

Modern NZ spying came to public notice in the 1960-72 Holyoake National government era. An agent in a political science class at Victoria University, in Wellington, was identified through his habit of taking notes when students asked questions when everyone else was writing down the lecturer's answers. It's the background of such Inspector Clouseau antics, here and overseas, that have led to the common view that the Zaoui affair is more cock-up than conspiracy.

Nothing essential has changed since the spooks targeted students in the disciplines that the conventional wisdom deemed radical, and therefore subversive. At the time they were in the grip of a Cold War hysteria which encouraged lazy stereotypes. This was reinforced by a crude behaviourism that has never really gone away. The Zaoui affair has shown us fleeting glimpses of the spymasters at work. It hasn't been much, but it's enough to see that the key people are there because they share the prejudices and assumptions about the world held by many older, conservative, well-connected conformists. Zaoui, the bearded mad Muslim, is the child of the Vic longhaired hippie.

Echelon's practice of intercepting certain key phrases as a means of locating the baddies is ultra high-tech, but the thinking behind it is as primitive as sending an adolescent into a university class to spy on "troublemakers". It's like asking a recruit who is innocent of the French language, Algerian history, global politics or the ability to read character to decide in a noisy airport interview if a tired Ahmed Zaoui came to NZ to embarrass us in front of our nice friends

Zaoui's Imprisonment Lessened Us All

Something else that hasn't changed is the Intelligence service's reliance on foreigners. Given the source of their information, and the purpose for which it is gathered, this had always been inevitable. But, unless we credit the SIS with a dispassionate wisdom - which the evidence tells us would be unwise - this serves only to reinforce cultural biases. Intelligence services are the last strong bastion of colonial cringe. Unfortunately there is a theme in recent NZ history of the State refusing to admit it has done wrong when available evidence says that it has. Several guilty verdicts in criminal trials come leaping to mind. The Zaoui scandal fits this pattern too.

We still aren't allowed to know why Zaoui languished in jail, so the injustice mounts. It is most likely that there is no case against him, and if so, the longer the affair goes on, the deeper will be the Government's embarrassment. Shame would be a more fitting emotion. The Government made the rules that it now hides behind. It was their idea to suspend habeas corpus to accommodate foreign governments, so, even in the event that Zaoui once knew someone who knew someone bad in Algeria, he's not being allowed the basic rights that we all expect in a civilised democracy. He may have been just released on bail, but the fact remains, that his imprisonment has lessened us all.

**“GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE:
The World’s Secret Services Today”
Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch, Global Issues, London and New York, 2003**

In 1990 US National Security Advisor, John Poindexter, was convicted on five charges resulting from the 1980s’ Reagan Presidency Iran-Contra scandal (*whereby the US illegally and covertly sold weapons to its Islamic fundamentalist Iranian enemies. Ironically, one of the reasons why it was illegal to arm Iran was because of US support for Saddam Hussein in the murderous 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. Some of the profits were used to arm the terrorist contras who waged Ronald Reagan’s proxy war against the Leftwing Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Ed.*). In 2002, having stayed out of prison on a technicality, Poindexter returned to public life as boss of a new Information Awareness Office (IAO). IAO seeks “an electronic footprint for virtually every US resident...by data-mining the totality of an individual’s recorded lifetime activities. These range from ATM receipts (*i.e cash machines. Ed.*), Web use, insurance/medical/financial records and parking tickets to movement data recorded on closed-circuit television and police speed cameras, accessed through emerging facial recognition software” (p212).

The IAO, a division of the Defense Department’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), boasted a “quasi-Masonic, eye-and-pyramid logo and a motto declaring ‘Scienta est Potentia’ (‘Knowledge is Power’)”. What’s going on? You might have assumed that such overtly totalitarian imagery belongs to the 1930s and 1940s, that no one who grew up after the time of the writers Franz Kafka and George Orwell would be quite so crude. The notion of the Panopticon, surveillance by the State, was advocated in the 1830s by the British philosopher, Jeremy Bentham. Since then, State tyranny has had a bad reputation. Now, in the 21st Century, DARPA wants to make it happen.

The US Spies On The World

The wellknown American writer, Joan Didion, points out in a recent essay (*New York Review of Books, 21/10/04, “Politics in the ‘New Normal’ America”*) that IAO seeks to combine all information, commercial and governmental. For the first time in world history, one state, Dubya’s America, has the power, which is both political and technological, to try to pull it off. Bentham wanted a more efficient way for guards to supervise convicts in London’s Newgate Prison. Poindexter and Bush want to spy on the world.

Bush makes it easy to forget that America started life as a model democracy dedicated to protecting the rights of its citizens. In the wake of Iran-Contra, the most overt challenge to legality and due process in living American memory, the US pioneered Congressional oversight legislation so that it could keep a close watch on the Executive’s conduct of foreign policy. Poindexter directed Reagan’s abuse of power, which is why his return shocked Didion.

It has become commonplace to observe that in the last decade the US has emerged as the world’s undisputed superpower. Todd and Bloch argue that American technological mastery of information systems coincided with the end of the Soviet threat. The global hegemony of (mainly) US corporations also became undeniable in the 1990s. These three forces have made Bush’s America hugely strong.

To what is the power directed? This is where, as joint hosts of the US spy machine, we come in. The authors refer to the corporate American State’s “need to emphasise economic intelligence apparent in the growth of Echelon - the US/UK/Australia/Canada/New Zealand eavesdropping network alleged to gather commercial intelligence for US corporations” (p4).

Since the September 11, 2001, atrocities in the US, terrorism has been invoked as almost the sole justification for American spying. The Bushmen like to say that 9/11 “changed everything”, but from the evidence that Todd and Bloch offer, that’s not quite true. They reckon that in the 1970s US neo-conservatives wanted something to counterbalance President Jimmy Carter’s wimpy human rights talk. Neo-conservatives pushed for nuclear war winning strategies, including a first strike capacity, to replace deterrence theory. A key man was George Bush’s dad, George H Bush. In 1985 Vice-President Bush, ex-boss of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), chaired a Task Force on Combatting Terrorism. The targets were “terrorist aliens” - and domestic dissidents.

The nuclear aspect of American global power having become unnecessary (although Bush the Younger casts around for excuses to keep the option alive), “terrorism” is now front and centre. It’s said often enough that Bush’s “counter-terrorism” acts as a recruiting agent for Osama bin Laden. It’s equally true that the World Trade Center and Pentagon outrages brought the neo- con hawks, mates of Reagan and Bush the Older, out of the closet and into the White House. They haven’t had things all their own way. In the 1990s “cash was refused for a new generation of

billion-dollar satellites designed to be 'survivable' under nuclear wartime conditions. This was deemed inappropriate with the retreat of the Soviet threat" (p40).

Sigint (signals intelligence) has been a constant since the Cold War days of the immediate post-World War 2 period. It's known to us, as two of the places it operates from are the "New Zealand" spybases at Waihopai and Tangimoana. The authors talk about the UKUSA Agreement, a formulation which assumes the irrelevance of the junior "partners" - New Zealand, Canada and Australia. Much of this concise and knowledgeable survey is a history of Sigint and Echelon, so it's especially relevant and not just because successive NZ governments have implicated us. Echelon snoops on e-mail, fax and phone messages. It "has become a generic term for eavesdropping on commercial communication" (p44).

Perhaps the current triumphalist mood that reeks out from Washington dates from 1993, when the CIA's mandate evolved "from *whether* a certain development is likely to how it could come about". From that date, in other words, a US ability to know anything it needed to know in order to project its influence around the world, and the ability to do something about it, have been assumed.

Or we could date the new imperial phase to 1992, when the direct stress on economic intelligence brought into being the National Economic Council. The authors suggest that the NEC should be seen as a close relative of the agency that is specifically associated with spying, the earlier and better known National Security Council.

So is the US fighting terrorism or is it seeking corporate advantage? The authors at different times suggest both and either. They're not confused or inconsistent. It's more that the US State itself doesn't make distinctions. Military or economic, foreign or domestic - it asks, what's the difference? We can keep tabs on everything and everyone, so we will.

Britain Willingly Suspends Civil Liberties

Britain, America's main ally, has never been as picky when it comes to individual liberty. This is relevant to NZ readers in that both our Parliamentary system and now our Intelligence services are based on a British model. New rules reverse democratic and legal norms. It used to be that you're innocent until proven guilty. But when it comes to what the State defines as "security", you can be guilty until proven innocent. Accused people have no access to evidence, and complaints against the State's prosecution of cases can lead to an investigation of the complainant. That's pure Kafka. Of 81 complaints lodged in the first two years of the new UK rules, none was upheld. "Dozens of foreign people" who would not previously have attracted attention as risks have been detained.

950 public authorities are "designated" to spy on people as robotic agents of the UK central Government. In 2002, when the Home Secretary wanted to extend the number to 1,039, Labour backbenchers successfully rebelled against the "snoopers" charter. The "UK/US States" meet regularly to exchange news and views. They probably don't swap gossip on each others' citizens gleaned by local spies because it's most unlikely any person could be trusted with information. That will have passed from citizens' phones and computers into cyberspace and Central Command. Perhaps we can derive some thin comfort (see *Jeremy's review of "I Almost Forgot About The Moon", the book about the Ahmed Zaoui case, to see where this has led in the New Zealand context. Ed.*).

In 2001, Britain, the home of democratic freedoms, had to withdraw from European conventions to do with the right to liberty and detention without trial so that it could keep spying. One reason, as admitted by a US official, is that Echelon targets European companies on behalf of American and British business. This fact returns us to the contradiction at the core of Sigint. One function is industrial espionage so that a UK firm, for example, might outbid a French one for a contract in the Middle East. But if that host country were (say) harbouring mad bombers, Sigint would be having a look on behalf of the British - and French - governments. There would be no necessary connection between these activities.

It seems that sigint and Echelon have vast and unaccountable powers. The more the rules they work by are vague and opaque, the greater the chance for arbitrary abuses. In one apparently not unusual case, MI5, the agency entrusted to safeguard Britain from foreign subversion, spied on the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on behalf of Tesco, a supermarket chain, on the grounds that the charity's "'political' campaigning was posing a threat to the 'economic wellbeing' of British companies", and that there was concern that the campaigns were 'aided by foreign agents'" (p108). Those dangerous greenies were at it again.

It seems, then, that intelligence gathering is all about "economic wellbeing", which is the wellbeing of big corporations. These, as we know too well, are as often as not American. Can anyone doubt that the fact of the supermarket being British-owned was not relevant? In sigint's formulation, Tesco, MI5, and the British government

are called upon to maximise supermarket profits, thus being motivated by a desire for “economic wellbeing”. Unlike the Government, which would never stoop to anything so dirty, citizens’ concerns over animal cruelty are “political”.

Not even the spies really think that demonstrators over Tesco’s chickens are allied to bin Laden’s suicide bombers. So it’s not surprising to read that despite the day that “changed everything” having been September 11, 2001, Big Brother’s new powers were enacted in 1989 and 1994. The original impetus was not bin Laden’s al Qaeda at all. We’re left with the impression that it’s unwise to take the protestations of the Big Power governments at face value.

Funny Sort Of “Values”

Bush is likely to interpret his 2004 re-election as a mandate for the “values” and “beliefs” that informed his campaign. In this context it is not comforting that DARPA’s Website tells us its role is to develop technologies such as “story telling, change detection, truth maintenance [and] biologically inspired algorithms for agent control”. Whatever these might be. Kafka would have guessed.

Dubya will use the PATRIOT Act, through which he can subpoena university library records and medical records. Things like that. But don’t worry. You know you can trust him because he’s in favour of prayer in schools and he’s against gay marriage. He watches over you like a guardian angel only because he loves freedom and he has to hunt down Osama bin Laden.

In 2003 the Information Awareness Office was abolished, perhaps because it didn’t look good that Poindexter was seen to be back in favour. It might have been that a scheme of Poindexter’s, to use IAO as an on-line futures market for betting on world events, like terrorist outrages, was a folly too far for the public relations lads. Whatever the reason for cancelling IAO, it doesn’t mean that the search for total surveillance is being canned. Far from it. IAO is being privatised. Then the spooks will hire smoother image consultants so we get to know even less about them.

“FAHRENHEIT 9/11”, A Film By Michael Moore

Michael Moore’s title is derived from Ray Bradbury’s book “Fahrenheit 451”, a 1950s satire about book censorship which refers to the temperature at which paper catches alight. “Fahrenheit 9/11” is the temperature at which freedom burns. The fires that raged in New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001, Moore is saying, ignited George Bush’s campaign to whittle away at his own people’s rights.

This tenet has been much discussed and the case against it has been hard to mount, which might be why “Fahrenheit 9/11” has been so popular. Moore is in step with liberal opinion, which despises Dubya. Moore seems to hate him. The film even has a prologue to do with the 2000 Florida vote-counting nonsense, which tipped the Presidency to Bush. This is problematic as it implies that the topic is to be the Bush Presidency rather than the US “war on terror”.

Were the pregnant chads* in Dade County and West Palm Beach that big a deal? Moore hints at the convenience that Bush’ brother Jeb is Governor of Florida and that a key judge whose rulings helped Dubya’s cause was a Republican mate. But the evidence is less than an inferno; it’s more a damp squib. Sure, there were friends in high places, but it’s not as though Dubya was overthrowing the Constitution. There’s no reason to suppose that other politicians would not have exploited whatever petty opportunities came their way. * *The textbook case of electoral incompetence and corruption that was the 2000 US Presidential election, specifically in Florida, gave the disbelieving world a whole new vocabulary. Voting machines were supposed to punch holes to indicate the voter’s choice. Chads were the minuscule bits of paper left when the holes were not fully punched. The fate of a nation and, arguably, the world, hung on a dizzying variety of “dangling, dimpled and pregnant” chads. See Bob Leonard’s article on the 2004 election elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*

The world is not going to rally against the US because the Democrat candidate, Al Gore, was robbed. Moore subsequently endorsed retired General Wesley Clark in the 2004 Democratic primaries, so he invited scepticism. If he is saying that the Democrats would not have abused September 11 the way Bush has, he might be right - and it’s hard to imagine that Gore or Clark would have been as inept as Bush - but his film doesn’t make that case.

We are shown a series of women protesting the Florida fiasco, all of them black, being stonewalled by a series of

Congressmen, all of them white and male. Yes, of course, US history is a series of such relationships, but in this context, the information is confusing. It implies that the power elite is united in its racist, sexist intransigence. That includes Democrats. From this perspective the hanging and pregnant chads were inconsequential.

Is Moore hinting that Bush is notably racist or sexist? We are offered no evidence. Is he saying that as an imperial power, the US is always governed by such values? Not that either. Moore is not given to systemic analysis. So just what is burning? Well, the film is impressionistic and random, the typically quirky Moore stew. In many ways Moore's method is a strength. He throws up information, some well known, some not, letting us sort it out for ourselves.

The Bush family's links with the bin Laden family, sketched here, have generated comment. The friendship between rich Saudis and Texan oil interests should surprise no one. The rush to leave the States by swarms of Osama's rellies as the dust swirled through Manhattan doesn't look good, but neither does it surprise. The one vital theme that Moore nails is the class solidarity that informs all Dubya's actions.

Seven Long, Blank Minutes

A prolonged sequence in the Florida school is great film. We see Dubya's face in close-up as he hears the news at story time on September 11. For seven minutes he was blank. Bush's defenders would prefer to spin his reaction to render it calm or contemplative, but we just know he didn't have a clue. He still didn't when he finished story time and let his advisers fly him in panic around the country.

Bush wasn't the only lost soul that morning. On hearing news of the Twin Towers events, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, with his persona of a no-nonsense bully, went back to routine work. Vice President Dick Cheney, who was in charge at the White House, issued orders to shoot down the planes without trying to contact Bush. Yet Bush was able to campaign for re-election as a man for a crisis ("Pinning the Blame: The 9/11 Commission Report", Elizabeth Drew, *New York Review of Books*, 23/9/04).

Moore Lets Them Off Lightly

He makes the case that Dubya is a jerk, with few of the skills that the average person uses to get by in life, but not the case that the Administration as a whole seem to be fools and cowards as well as knaves. We get an indication of Cheney's Halliburton* connections, a pertinent detail to pick in as much as the company that Cheney headed went on to guzzle at the trough of Iraq "rebuilding" contracts, but again the information is not tied to a wider critique. * *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.*

The emotional core of the film is Moore's return to his hometown of Flint, Michigan, scene of his first feature, "Roger and Me" (made in the 1980s), where youths destined for permanent unemployment are targeted by Marine recruiters. A military family loses a son and their faith in the system that they had respected. These scenes work well.

Moore's personal stuff is his trademark, as is his down home manner. His ambushing gimmick is more appropriate here than his confrontation with a dimmed Charlton Heston in his previous movie "Bowling for Columbine". *That movie is about America's psychopathic gun culture. It features an "ambush" interview with the legendary actor, in his capacity as head of the immensely powerful National Rifle Association. Heston shows all the signs of his age and the impending Alzheimers from which he now suffers. He walks away from Moore, who pursues him. It is not an interview which reflects well on Moore, regardless of what one thinks of the gun lobby, and adds nothing to what is an exceptionally good movie. Ed.*

"Why not send your sons to serve in Iraq?", a breezy Moore asks a Congressman on a Washington street. Until he found the necessary evasive phrases, the man looked terrified. Moore's working stiff humour does not always charm. He ridicules the "Coalition of the Willing" by a series of "jokes" about how inconsequential they are. We get the point he wanted to make, but it comes across as just more American arrogance (*outright racism, actually. Ed.*)

"CONTROL ROOM"
A Film By Jehane Noujaim

Jehane Noujaim, who directed this discussion of the Arab TV channel Al Jazeera, is an Egyptian-American, so she is possibly well placed to give her impressions of Arab-American relations. We know of Qatar-based Al Jazeera as an alternative news voice to the “embedded” US networks covering Iraq, and as the outlet for announcements from Osama bin Laden and his mates.

It's not surprising that American officials hate Al Jazeera, and when we hear of the channel, we do so in the context of our media's coverage of the “war on terror”. At a distance it might seem that Al Jazeera broadcasts anti-American propaganda. But as US leaders would oppose any voice that was not part of the chorus they want to conduct, it's hard to know.

The main impression from this effectively relaxed production is that Al Jazeera is a middle-of-the road outfit staffed by people with little in common with either the fundamentalist Christians in the US or the fundamentalist Islamists in the Middle East. They're much more like the sort of people you meet in multicultural places like New York or London than the inhabitants of the Texan and Arabian heartlands.

One man talks of his “absolute confidence in the American Constitution and ... the American people”. Cynics will suppose he's playing to the camera and beyond it to American opinion, but there's likely to be at least residual sincerity in the remark. America is many things to many people. One of them, the great American myth, is its existence as the hope for immigrants from most other places.

Secular, Liberal & Internationalist

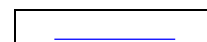
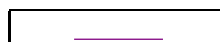
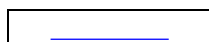
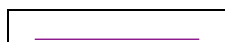
This is confirmed when he says that he wants to send his children to school in the States. The tone is secular and liberal, the expression of an internationalist ideology that the bulk of the film's worldwide audience probably shares. The result is to demystify the whole topic of Iraq, the “war on terror” and the rest of it. There are no cartoon heroes and villains on display, except for some impressions of Sheriff Dubya Bush and his sidekick, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, who always pastiche themselves.

A more representative American was the young man responsible for passing on official statements on events in Iraq. When we first hear him, he is repeating the Bush-Rumsfeld line with no apparent discomfort. We assume he is a Republican and a cynic. Later, however, in the weeks after Saddam's defeat, he confesses to doubt. Perhaps the TV networks, Fox and CNN, are as biased as Iraqis say they are. Maybe Iraqis don't like being occupied. When he chats off the record with an Arab, both of them less than slick, they resemble the sort of people you see in a cafe discussion anywhere in Europe or North America, so recognisable are the personalities (*a member has since informed us that this US spokesperson has been hounded out of the military and subjected to a nasty interview on the Rupert Murdoch-owned US propaganda network, Fox “News”, where he was accused of being sympathetic to the enemy. Ed*).

The official spokesman becomes doubtful about his job, and we sense that his interviewers, too, are starting to distinguish between their political dislike for the power he represents and their sympathy for him as a person trapped by his role. This is balanced by the way the Arab characters drop their studied objectivity as commentators as they watch TV images of Saddam Hussein's statue toppling. It's not that they held any brief for the man; more that they were disappointed that the locals didn't put up a better fight.

This is a subtle film, more a look at our common humanity than an indictment of official malfeasance. It ends with a shrug. Whatever our sometimes contradictory emotions might have been, Noujaim is saying that the bullies won and that they might get away with it. As she puts it in the film's last shot, “People like victory. Once you're victorious, that's it”.

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ORGANISER'S REPORT

by Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

These are the relevant extracts from Murray Horton's annual CAFCA/ABC Organiser's Report, presented at the September 2004 Annual General Meeting of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa. The much longer full report can be read in Foreign Control Watchdog 107, December 200, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/07/12.htm>.

Waihopai Spybase Protest

I am co-employed by the Anti-Bases Campaign, which takes up less of my time than CAFCA. The busiest part of my ABC work occurred in January 2004 when ABC held its annual Waihopai spybase protest. We hired a van and trailer and drove up on the Friday. We camp out in a private vineyard, which is walking distance from the base. The owner was so relaxed that he went away for a week and left us in charge. We had about 30 camping out and for the first time in years we had a Wellington contingent in attendance. These are young people who got active during the 2003 Iraq War protests. People came from all over, from Auckland to Dunedin.

We got good media beforehand – I did four radio interviews in 24 hours. For the first time ever we had a Friday night activity in Blenheim – a public meeting, attended by up to 70 people, of whom about half were locals. The speakers were a Marlborough District Councillor (our first ever local speaker); Green MP Keith Locke, and me. In the blazing heat of Saturday morning we held a rally in Blenheim's central Seymour Square, with the speakers being ABC's Bob Leonard, Green Co-Leader Rod Donald and Mike Treen of the Alliance. Plus some street theatre. In 2003, a combination of the impending Iraq War, the District Councillor's organising work among locals, and free front page publicity in the *Marlborough Express*, led to it being described as the biggest protest in Blenheim since the 1981 Springbok Tour. No such factors applied in 2004 and we were down to our usual numbers of 50-60. Following our ever popular vegetarian sausage sizzle (we hire a barbecue), we held a noisy and colourful march through Blenheim.

In the afternoon, about 50 or so people convened at the base and were allowed to march to the inner gate, after Uncle Sam (aka Bob Leonard) had checked and stamped our Undemocratic Republic of UKUSA* passports (they remain very popular, real collectors' items). I MCed both events on the Saturday and there were more speakers at the base. Some of the Wellington contingent stripped off and formed a naked peace sign on the boiling hot asphalt. That got the media's attention (but as I was on the phone to a reporter at exactly that moment, I couldn't see or describe to her what was happening). There must be something in the tropical climate of Wellington – some of those same people held a naked anti-genetic engineering action in Parliament grounds in 2003. We had a national strategy session on Sunday morning (which agreed to incorporate Waihopai into the national anti-war movement). After we were on our way home, some of the younger folk drove up to the outer gate and dumped off a symbolic trailer load of rocks and logs, to blockade it. I did newspaper, radio and private TV interviews during the weekend and continued to do media interviews after I got home. * *The 1940s' UKUSA Agreement is New Zealand's most important, and secret, international intelligence agreement. It divides the world up for signals and electronic intelligence gathering purposes, between the relevant agencies of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ.*

Wellington And Tangimoana

My Waihopai work is primarily organisational, handling all aspects (right down to booking the Portaloos) and ensuring that it happens. Plus I did extensive media work before, during and after. For several years now, Waihopai protests have run to a formula (one which works very well) but, for 2005, we decided to take a break from the same old same old and try something different. We will hold two days of action in Wellington, over Easter. A seminar on the bases, a field trip to Tangimoana (the neglected spybase), a protest at the Government Communications Security Bureau's HQ, and Nicky Hager has agreed to train somebody to run one of his famous Tours of Secret Wellington. As a first step we got a Wellington organising committee set up. Kane O'Connell, who spent a year on the ABC committee, has permanently moved up there and is our local coordinator. *This duly took place, at Easter 2005. Report in next issue.*

Wearing my ABC hat, I made my first visit to the North Island for more than a year. It was my shortest ever visit to Wellington, I was away from home for less than 12 hours, up and back on a Sunday. I spoke at an anti-war forum, along with Nicky Hager, on American Independence Day, in July. In 2004, I also produced a new ABC generic leaflet, pulling together material from various other one off leaflets and our Website (I had done the same for CAFCA in 2003). We have distributed that extensively with publications such as *Red and Green*, and *The Big Picture*, plus to the Alliance. We have a mailout booked in with the March 2005 issue of *New Internationalist* (indeed that issue of *NI* will include both the generic ABC leaflet, and the one advertising the Easter activities in Wellington and at Tangimoana). I am responsible for our international links, such as with anti-bases groups. And I do the ABC's regular media work, such as it is (there is a bit, in addition to the Waihopai coverage).

As the Iraqi war of national liberation drags on (with increasingly disastrous consequences for the Americans and their local

collaborators – I get no great pleasure from saying, “I told you so”), the huge 2003 anti-war protests have dwindled away. But there was one, in March 2004, through central Christchurch. ABC was there with banner and leaflets and Bob Leonard was one of the speakers. Plus ABC was on the streets again during the November 2003 militant protest against the Labour Party Conference. I spoke on that occasion. We had the peculiar experience of one of our committee colleagues, Yani Johanson, being inside as a delegate while we were outside protesting. And ABC has taken part in various marches and pickets protesting the shameful imprisonment without trial of Ahmed Zaoui (I also met with his lawyer when she visited Christchurch). We continue to work with the local anti-war movement – we came up with the idea of them campaigning against a Christchurch company, which is profiting from supplying the US military in Iraq – and we have picked up young committee members from that movement, firstly Kane O’Connell and now Claire Dann. ABC transcends political differences – of our three sub-30 committee members, Yani is an activist for Labour, Kane for the Alliance and Claire for the Greens.

My regular ABC work is as editor of *Peace Researcher*. I can only commit to get out two issues a year (a far cry from *PR*’s original frequency) and even that is a struggle (as evidenced by the fact that this issue should have been published before the end of 2004). It’s a job that involves me doing much more actual writing than for *Watchdog*. *PR* is a much smaller undertaking than *Watchdog*, with a smaller mailing list. The two publications used to have different emphases but there is much more overlap now, what with the Iraq War and the “War on Terror”. *PR* has come to specialise in intelligence matters and we have the luxury of time to follow a story for years. We followed the Choudry/SIS & Small/Police cases right through their many twists and turns. Now we have one of the protagonists, David Small, writing up the Zaoui case for us as it weaves its tortuous way through the courts and the Intelligence “oversight” system. *PR* is online and Yani Johanson does an excellent job as ABC’s Webmaster. Check out www.converge.org.nz/abc. Unlike the CAFCA/*Watchdog* sites, it has lots of photos and he has added more attractive features to it in the past year....

Astonishing Response To Organiser Account Appeal

Usually the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income, rates a brief mention in my annual *Report*. Not this time. It had been noticeably declining for several years and hit crisis point at the beginning of 2004. Some time ago CAFCA had decided that once that account (which is independent of both CAFCA and ABC) dropped below \$2,000, we would have to do something about it. It actually dipped below \$1,000, which meant that, if left unchecked, it would very soon have run dry. Faced with the terrifying prospect of my having to get a real job, both groups sprang into action. We had run a narrowly targeted direct mail appeal a couple of years earlier, when the Organiser Account had last run into trouble, but in 2004, for the first time ever, we sent an appeal letter and a partly pre-filled in automatic payment form (which was the idea of my wife, Becky, and she created the form) to all members of both organisations. In the past, all costs incurred by the Organiser Account, such as printing, copying, etc, have been paid by that Account. This time, the crisis was deemed so serious that CAFCA and ABC paid the costs of that mailout.

The response was astonishing. Donations poured in from members all around the country and even overseas. They totalled more than \$10,000 (which was double the highest amount which the Account had previously held, and that was years ago). They were still coming in months later – one supportive organisation sent two \$1,000 cheques; another organisation donated \$1,000. More importantly, for the long-term sustainability of the Account, people responded to having the automatic payment forms placed in front of them. The number of regular pledgers increased from the 20s to the 40s, with some existing pledgers increasing their payments. For example, there are now four payments per month of \$100 or more. What was deeply encouraging was the outpouring of support from members and supporters, who wanted to say just how much they support the work done by myself and the two organisations for which I work. This special appeal was actually an important campaign in its own right. For several months at the beginning of 2004 it took up a lot of my time, but it put our support to the test and we came through with flying colours.

That astonishing response has transformed the Organiser Account, putting it onto a very sound footing. At the time of the appeal, my hourly rate was the \$8.50 minimum wage. We were able to match the minimum wage increase to \$9, and then, for the first time ever, pay me more than the minimum wage. I now get \$10 per hour, which (believe it or not) is the highest pay rate I’ve ever had (in my last “real” job, as a Railways labourer, in 1991, I got \$9 per hour). The Account has been able to break some of its ties to Westpac and put the bulk of the money into a term deposit with Kiwibank, thus earning interest, which it wasn’t previously doing (true to form, Kiwibank initially stuffed us around. You need the patience of a saint to deal with them). I hasten to add that the Organiser Account still needs donations and welcomes new pledgers.

There was a downside to this (isn’t there always?). I’ve crossed a fatal earnings threshold and now have to pay provisional tax (in advance, estimated on previous earnings). This means that, in the first year, my tax bill doubles. I have to pay for the previous year, as usual, plus for the year to come, at the same time. Hence, I need to pay around \$5,500, in regular installments, by March 2005. And if you’re superstitious, it’s worth knowing that this is my 13th year in the job.

CAFCA/ABC ORGANISER ACCOUNT 2003/04

Balance on 31/3/03 \$3,581.29

Balance on 31/3/04 7,659.50
Net change +4,078.21

Expenses

Murray's pay 18,224.10
Cash to Murray 1,450.25
Other cheques 214.00

TOTAL 19,888.35

Income

One-off donations 10,245.17 Donations 49%
Cash to Murray 1,450.25
Pledges 12,269.88 Pledges 51%
Interest 1.26

TOTAL 23, 966.56

43 pledgers as of August 2nd 2004 bank statement

FUCK RONALD REAGAN

by Bill Weinberg

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

The June 2004 death of former US President Ronald Reagan (1980-88) produced an outpouring of quite extraordinary rosetinted nostalgia for an apparent "Golden Age" (the 80s, for God's sake), when America, and the world, were led by "The Great Communicator". A prime example of this is the Commemorative Issue of Time (14/6/04) devoted entirely to this myth. New Zealanders have plenty of reasons to not look back fondly on Reagan – his was the intransigent US Administration that tried to bully us out of our nuclear free policy, and didn't say a word when French State terrorists bombed the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbour in 1985, killing Fernando Pereira in the process. The peoples of America and the world have also got no shortage of reasons to not mythologise this most reactionary of US Presidents. There was a flood of critical material following his death. This one (World War 3 Report; 10/6/04; WW3Report.com) was my favourite. I couldn't have put it better myself. Ed.

What a tsunami of bullshit has been unleashed by the demise of Ronald Wilson Reagan, architect of the conservative revolution we still suffer under today. The media blitz occasioned by the near-simultaneous presidential passing (June 5, 2004) and the 60th anniversary of D-Day* (June 6) has been a boon to the sitting President, himself the spawn of a dynasty that rode the Reagan revolution to power. America gets a time-out from the Iraq horror show to feel good about itself and celebrate past militaristic glories. It almost makes you wonder if news of the death wasn't withheld awhile to coordinate the spectacle. * June 6, 1944. *The date when the Allies landed in Normandy, starting the liberation of Western Europe from the Nazis. Ed.*

The hideous irony of the implicit media linking of Reagan and D-Day is that Reagan's "revolution" was undoing the legacy of President Franklin Roosevelt (1932-45) - the "Welfare State" was dismantled in favor of "Reaganomics": radical corporate deregulation, with the hallucinatory sugar-coating that wealth would spontaneously "trickle down." It didn't, and as the ranks of the urban homeless swelled dramatically under his rule, '30s-style Hoovervilles* popped up all over the inner cities. Playing to nostalgia for an America that never really was, Reagan plunged the country back into horrors that had been all too real. * *Hoovervilles. The ironic name for settlements of the countless ranks of the homeless, dispossessed by the policies of the former President Herbert Hoover, who took the US into the Great Depression of the 1930s. Ed.*

Making The World Safe For Fascism

Simultaneously, the Reagan White House backed fascism abroad. The massively US-funded-and-directed bloodbath in El Salvador in the Reagan years claimed some 50,000 lives by the UN Truth Commission's estimate - and double that by many rights observers. The genocide of Maya Indians in neighbouring Guatemala, with the US aid more covert and the Israelis serving as proxies, claimed similar numbers - while Reagan advocated restoring overt aid to the military dictatorship, claiming it had received a "bum rap." Reagan called Guatemalan dictator Rios Montt, author of the genocide, "a man of great personal integrity and commitment... I know he wants to improve the quality of life for all Guatemalans and to promote social justice." The (1976-80) Carter-era notion of "human rights" was replaced by "national security" as the cornerstone of US foreign policy. Reagan's UN Ambassador, Jeane Kirkpatrick, theorised on the distinction between the mere "authoritarianism" of anti-Communist regimes such as Augusto Pinochet's in Chile (at least 3,000 killed or "disappeared") and the intolerable "totalitarianism" of those such as Cuba's Fidel Castro. Reagan's Victory in Europe (VE) Day 1985 visit to (the former) West Germany's Bitburg cemetery, where officers of Hitler's SS are buried, illustrated the historical and ideological shift.

"No Pasaran!" – "they shall not pass!" - the slogan of the Spanish Loyalists who resisted the Nazi-backed fascist forces of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in the (1930s') Spanish Civil War prelude to World War 2, was resurrected by Nicaraguan loyalists who similarly defended an elected government against the Reagan-backed "contra" guerillas. In 1984, the World Court ruled in favour of little Nicaragua, finding US support for the contras - "terrorists" by any single-standard definition, openly seeking to destabilise Nicaragua's first freely elected government by attacking its civilian supporters - was illegal. Reagan refused to recognise the Court's ruling. And when Congress cut off funds to the contras following reports of rights abuses, Reagan turned to a private spy network and kickbacks from secret arms deals with Iran to keep the insurgency alive. In an October 25, 1984, Scripps-Howard interview, Reagan justified US mercenaries fighting for the contras by pointing out that "nothing was done legally about the formation of a brigade of Americans in the Spanish Civil War" - a reference to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, that fought against Franco - and added that they had been "in the opinions of most Americans, fighting on the wrong side." If anyone doubts that Reagan was really pro-fascist, the Great Communicator's own words speak eloquently for themselves.

Of course Reagan did all this in the name of "protecting democracy," and few today seem to grasp the irony, as he is now portrayed as the saviour of the Free World. The vastly cynical Reagan slogan "Government off the backs of the American people" - really a euphemism for unleashing corporate power from public oversight - has similarly been accepted uncritically. Even the *New York Times* headline on his death hailed him as an icon of "limited government." This of the man who oversaw a hypertrophy of the prison system, the federal-led expansion and militarisation of police forces, the reign of urine-tests in the workplace, saturation propaganda against illegal drugs, a thrust to put prayer in public schools and to ban abortion. The mind boggles! A further irony is that the slashing of social programmes was carried out in the name of "fiscal responsibility," while Reaganomics combined with the unprecedented post-Vietnam War bloating of Pentagon budgets opened huge deficits. And the man who made much of his support for the Solidarity union in Communist Poland was a union-buster at home: when 11,000 air-traffic controllers went on strike for a better contract in 1981, Reagan fired every last one of them. Wrote Juan Gonzalez in the June 8, 2004, *New York Daily News* (one of the few commentators out there who doesn't have his head down an Orwellian Memory Hole): "It was the signal to every corporate chief in America that it was open season on unions".

Insane Nuclear Arms Race

The saviour-of-the-Free-World jazz is based in the notion that Reagan precipitated the Soviet collapse, and there is some truth to that - but the way the grim, amoral struggle of contending military-industrial empires is being glorified now is sickening. In the current atmosphere of official amnesia I guess we aren't supposed to talk about how everybody was scared shitless of nuclear holocaust back in the early '80s. At an August 11, 1984, press conference, Reagan quipped during the microphone check: "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes". It wasn't just a joke. The hypertrophy of nuclear weapons production reached such a breakneck pace that safety corner-cutting resulted in a wave of cancers near the Energy Department's plutonium plant at Hanford, Washington. Despite massive protests, the Cruise and Pershing missiles were installed in Europe, as the Soviets placed their own SS-20 missiles in the former East Germany and Czechoslovakia - bringing the interval between launch time and Einstein's feared "unparalleled catastrophe" to a mere ten minutes. The "Star Wars" programme was launched, with the US abandoning its' commitment to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty--although sheer technical hubris has kept the scheme an empty dream, even in its current down-sized version. Nobody has even pointed out how the title of the recent Hollywood climate-destabilisation thriller "The Day After Tomorrow" recalls that of the 1983 TV movie "The Day After," depicting nuclear war. The pic was sanitised and mediocre, but the fact that it was made (and received much hoopla) indicates the apocalyptic zeitgeist of the Reagan era. In 1984, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* moved the hands of its symbolic "Doomsday Clock" to three minutes of midnight - the closest since 1953, when the Soviets developed the hydrogen bomb.

We are also apparently not supposed to talk about what an objective disaster the restoration of capitalism in the post-Communist world has been in simple human terms. The bloodlettings in the Balkans and the Caucasus lend credence to Cornelius Castoriadis' juxtaposition of "socialism or barbarism." Even where ethnic warfare and neo-fascism have not followed the Communist collapse, the results have been horrific--the plummeting of Russian life expectancy, the implosion of agriculture, the virtual abandonment of controls on toxic industries, the plunder of Siberia's forests, the sinister black market in Soviet nuclear materials. And the pro-democracy dissidents aided by Reagan's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the Communist world (along with unsavoury fascism-nostalgists) would be radically sidelined by Bush pere in favor of Western-trained technocrats once the collapse arrived and they had outlived their usefulness--assuring that the vision of socialism with a human face (long opposed by both superpowers) would not be realised. Today it has been nearly erased from historical memory. If the Stalin-nostalgia now inevitably emerging in Russia is perverse, equally so is the American consensus that celebrates the Soviet collapse as an unequivocal victory for human freedom.

The Reagan-era nuclear arms race was one leg of a strategic gambit to force the Soviet Union into collapse - through morally and even legally criminal methods. The other leg was the Mujahedeen insurgency against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. The Reagan era was the high noon of covert proxy wars. Nicaragua and Afghanistan were the most celebrated cases, but there was also CIA aid and direction of the brutal Jonas Savimbi insurgency in Angola, and (via South African proxies) the even more brutal Renamo guerillas in Mozambique (again in the name of the anti-Communist crusade, Reagan helped shore up white supremacy in South Africa, opposing sanctions against the apartheid state in favour of "constructive engagement").

US streets were flooded with crack cocaine and heroin as a direct "blowback" from the secret wars in Central America and Afghanistan; the contras merged the CIA arms pipeline with cocaine smuggling networks to augment their war chest, and the Mujahedeen similarly turned to the "Golden Crescent" heroin trade. Paradoxically (and not coincidentally) this CIA-greased profusion in the availability of deadly street drugs came just as the Drug War

orthodoxy was reaching a fever pitch.

Reagan's Pals: Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein

But the even more disastrous blowback became dramatically evident on the morning of September 11, 2001. It was under Reagan's watch that the US began training, arming and funding Osama bin Laden. In Reagan's Cold War end-game, Islamist extremism was cultivated as a pawn against the rival superpower-- despite the obvious reality that the jihadis saw in godless Communism an enemy second only to godless capitalism, and would inevitably turn their new-found prowess against their erstwhile underwriters. So the end of the Cold War only presaged a new, in many ways even more terrifying dualistic global conflict - this time, the West against "Islamic terrorism". And while the Soviet "Evil Empire" (as Reagan dubbed it, characteristically taking a cue from Hollywood) was at least a centralised monolith, the new enemy is hydra-headed, molecularised, everywhere and nowhere. The stage is set for a war that could last generations, centuries. This is Reagan's grimmest legacy.

For good measure, it was also under Reagan that the US began supporting Saddam Hussein with military sales and intelligence in his 1980-88 war with Iran. In March 1988, Reagan's final year in office, Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own populace, instantly killing 5,000 in the gassing of the Kurdish city of Halabja. A Bill to impose sanctions against Iraq in response to the attack was opposed by the White House and never got out of Congress.

Then there were Reagan's actual direct military interventions - most notably the 1983 expedition to Lebanon and invasion of Grenada - which tested public tolerance for post-Vietnam Syndrome adventures, again paving the way for the current paroxysm of ultra-imperialism. Libya's Colonel Moammar Qaddafi reacted to Reagan's passing by expressing his "deep regret" that Ronnie had died before being brought to a war crimes tribunal for the 1986 US airstrikes on Tripoli that killed Qaddafi's adopted daughter and 36 others (in retaliation for an anonymous Berlin disco bombing that killed three, including two US soldiers. Associated Press, 7/6/04). One hates to agree with so unsavoury a character, but I am with the colonel on this one.

Ronald Reagan did more to move America and the world in the wrong direction than just about anyone else in the second half of the 20th Century. The current official hagiography is historical revisionism of the lowest order. Do not eat this vomit. Fuck Ronald Reagan.



REAGAN & MARCOS – The Gruesome Twosome

by Murray

Horton

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

This Philippine Daily Inquirer editorial (“Mixed Legacy”, 9/6/04) is a vital reality check for those wading through the bullshit following Reagan’s death. It’s startlingly different from those of mainstream media in other countries, including New Zealand and provides the true Third World perspective. Filipinos have no reason to mourn Reagan. His Presidency coincided with the final years of the vicious Marcos martial law dictatorship, which Reagan supported to the hilt. When People Power 1 had Ferdinand Marcos surrounded in the Malacanang Palace, in 1986, it was the US military that flew him out, and he went into exile in Reagan’s America. At least Reagan got a State funeral and was promptly buried. Ferdinand Marcos has had neither. He died, in Hawaiian exile, in 1989, and remains, unburied and on public display, in a refrigerated crypt in his political stronghold in the far north of Luzon, the main island. His widow, the repulsive Imelda, is holding out for him to be buried with other former Presidents, in Metro Manila. She’d also like him to have a State funeral. These remain political hot potatoes for Filipino governments, no matter how kindly disposed they might be towards the Marcoses, so he’s not likely to be buried anytime soon. Ed.

The “Palace in the Sky” *, the hilltop mansion the Ferdinand Marcos had built in Tagaytay City, outside Manila, is Ronald Wilson Reagan’s monument in the Philippines. It is a monument to the cynicism and extravagance his leadership inspired in Filipino politicians. A manipulative and mendicant reaction to Reagan that, in the end, resulted in the betrayal of a traditional relationship that is Reagan’s true legacy to Filipinos. **The Palace in the Sky, overlooking the beautiful Lake Taal, is a blot on the landscape, and another illustration of the fact that, although the Marcoses were guilty of many heinous crimes, nobody ever accused them of having good taste. Ed.*

His relation with the Philippines began as a special guest in the inauguration of the Cultural Center of the Philippines in the early 1970s. It blossomed into a personal relationship with the Marcoses. A relationship the Marcoses used to personify the larger, sentimental, relationship an older generation of Filipinos felt for America and Americans. It ended in bitterness, disbelief and betrayal.

Reagan and Ferdinand Marcos belonged to what the Americans call their “greatest generation”, and which we remember as the generation of Filipinos and Americans bound together by ties of loyalty and sentiment due to the shared sacrifices of World War 2. It was a relationship characterised by a sense of brotherhood filled with gratitude on the part of Filipinos. Reagan and Marcos, for a time, stood tall together. Their countrymen took pride in that shared sense of partnership.

For all his sense of vision, his devotion to the American brand of democracy, and his conservatism that changed the political landscape of America, Reagan’s influence on the Philippines and Latin America represented nothing new, and in fact, represented a darker, more sinister permutation of American policy. Democracy was something to be insisted upon in Europe, but was something unnecessary, and even inconvenient, in Asia and Latin America.

Democracy Inconvenient And Unnecessary

Democracy in the Philippines was inconvenient and unnecessary in Ronald Reagan’s worldview. Having a loyal lackey in Manila was, however, essential. The Philippines cannot forget the friendship he shared with the Marcoses because it was that friendship that destroyed a larger friendship. His trust in Marcos’ capacity to be a bulwark against Communism fostered the growing strength of Communism in this country. His esteem for Marcos shown in messages and State visits resulted in the erosion of Filipino esteem for the America that Reagan presided over. His ambivalence in the face of a furious and brave effort by Filipinos to redeem their freedoms resulted in a redemption achieved despite of, and not because of, the efforts of Reagan’s America.

We can never forget Reagan sending his Vice President, George Bush, to proclaim their “love” for Marcos’ “devotion to the democratic process”. We can never forget, nor forgive, Reagan’s public statements than in a country where Filipinos were chaining themselves to ballot boxes and dying at the hands of Marcos’ goons, “there was cheating on both sides”. We can neither gloss over nor understand, then, as now, Reagan’s last-ditch efforts to try to form a government composed of Marcos and the opposition.

America’s Interests Are Not The Philippines’

When Reagan began to suffer from Alzheimer’s disease, he engineered a bowing out from the public eye, all the

better to preserve his image and his legacy. Undeniably, he was and remains a beloved American president. We are not, however, America, and we are not Americans. At the bier of Reagan must be laid, posthumously, the eradication of a bond of trust nurtured by World War 2, and dissipated by martial law. We cannot be kind to him in death, because every day of our lives, our country continues to suffer from the manner in which Reagan confused his friendship with the Marcoses with the broader interests of his country and ours.

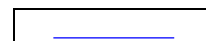
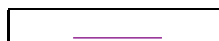
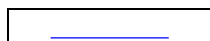
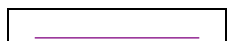
It may be that everything Reagan did was less due to affection for the Marcoses, and more along the lines of American interests in our region. This only goes to show how those interests are so widely divergent from the interests of our own country. The billions of pesos stolen; the thousands of people dead and maimed; the lives crushed and wasted; the ideals ground in the dust: all these are factors in the delicate democracy we are still so hard pressed to sustain. Ronald Wilson Reagan turned a blind eye to all these sufferings. As he rests in peace, this country must remember its uneasiness will long outlive the man. That he is a great man by American standards only goes to show how different American ideals can be from what should be our own.

Marcos' Devastating Effect On Just One Family

I'll confine myself to the impact of the Marcos dictatorship on just one family, the Hilaos – two of my wife's aunts and her only uncle were among the hundreds of thousands held without charge or trial for several years, when Marcos declared martial law. Another aunt, a student newspaper editor in her early 20s, was raped, tortured (enduring things such as cigarettes being stubbed out on her lips) and beaten to death. Drain cleaning acid was poured down her throat and the official cause of death was listed as "suicide". She was the first female political prisoner to be murdered during the 14 years of martial law and her case remains a cause celebre to this day, more than 30 years later. Her mother, Becky's maternal grandmother (who died in 2003), was the lead plaintiff in the class action suit taken against the Marcos estate by human right victims and their families. This historic case was heard in Hawaii, under US law, because it was to Reagan's US that the Marcoses fled, so they came under the jurisdiction of US civil law. The plaintiffs were awarded \$NZ2 billion. They haven't received a cent yet. Imelda Marcos has never been convicted of anything; she, and two of her children, hold political office in the Philippines today. I recommend that you watch the fascinating documentary "Imelda", (its subject succeeded in getting it banned in the Philippines, at least temporarily).

One of the imprisoned aunts of my wife is Marie Hilao-Enriquez (she gave birth to her oldest daughter in prison). She is the Philippines' best-known human rights leader and heads the organisation of former Marcos political prisoners. She toured New Zealand, in October 2004 (I accompanied her, in my Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa capacity). For those of you who heard Marie speak, reflect on Ronald Reagan and his faithful servant, Ferdinand Marcos.

But the Anti-Bases Campaign has got one thing to thank old Ronnie for. If it weren't for him and his lunatic nuclear arms buildup, we wouldn't have Bob Leonard. The Leonards – Bob, Barbara and their infant son, Graham – were among the American diaspora of Reagan Refugees who poured out of the US in the early 1980s. They threw themselves into the ferment of the nuclear free movement of 1980s New Zealand and Bob became one of the founders of what evolved into today's ABC. Others like them also came to New Zealand. So, thank you, Ronnie, America's loss is our gain. Ed.



Why Are NZ Military Exercises Simulating Iraq?

By Murray Horton

Peace Researcher 30 – March 2005

Most commendably, New Zealand stayed out of the illegal invasion of Iraq. The Government blotted its copybook by sending a token force of engineers to the southern city of Basra (in the British zone of occupation) on a hearts and minds exercise to rebuild schools etc. The Shi'ite south was supposed to be more accommodating to foreign troops. The reality proved otherwise, and in 2004, a significant faction of the Shi'tes rose in armed resistance. The result, embarrassingly for the PR spin doctors of the NZ military, was that our engineers ended up hunkered down inside the British base, unable to venture out, let alone complete their various reconstruction projects. Those troops were duly withdrawn in 2004 and the Government said that they would not be replaced (unlike the NZ military presence in that other American war zone, Afghanistan. There, NZ troops are regularly rotated in and out). There is now no NZ military presence in Iraq.

Which begs the question – why did an annual military exercise in Canterbury simulate conditions in Iraq? There is no apparent resemblance between the rolling green South Canterbury hills that surround Waimate and the physical and political inferno that is Iraq today. But that's exactly the scenario that was used in Operation San Donata, in January and February 2005 (it was named after an Italian village where a Waimate soldier won a medal during WW2). 150 soldiers, including 115 Territorials, did things such as “defending a polling booth, hunting rebels in the hills, and protecting election officials” (*Press*, 1/2/05, “Troops descend on Waimate in annual exercise”). Why? Is New Zealand preparing its military to take part in the shonky election process that the US occupiers are forcing on Iraq (in the hope of securing an acceptable puppet government)? Who are these “rebels” that our brave troops are hunting? After all, the Iraqi Resistance are only doing what the Maori forebears of so many of our present soldiers did when their lands were invaded by foreign troops and what any New Zealander would be expected to do if it was our country that was being occupied today. So, come clean, Helen and tell us what's going on. Why is the NZ military conducting exercises that simulate Iraq?

Of course, there is no shortage of New Zealand volunteers eager to join the armies of mercenaries in Iraq. There have been official admissions that serving military personnel and cops have been, in some cases, working in Iraq while on paid leave from their jobs. The attraction obviously is the big money. I had this confirmed to me, in person by a most unexpected source – one of my next door neighbours. He told me that he was a serving soldier, based at Burnham (the South Island's Army base, south of Christchurch), living off-base. He was about to finish up, after several years of service that included stints in East Timor and Afghanistan, and didn't feel that he had the necessary skills to cut it in civilian life (“I can do a reconnaissance”, he told me). When I asked him what he planned to do, he immediately replied “I'm going to go to Iraq, you can get \$12,000 a fortnight there”. When I suggested that he might also get his head cut off, he snorted that that would never happen to a Kiwi, as “we're always armed at all times”. Yeah, right. I thought that this was an extremely unusual conversation to be having on my own driveway on a sunny Christchurch Sunday afternoon (mind you the circumstances of his being on our driveway were even more unusual. He was there to clean up the eggs with which our house had been bombarded the previous night during one of the innumerable rowdy parties held by him and his fellow tenants – but that's a whole other story. Suffice to say that having suffered through six months of living next door to armed forces personnel socialising, I don't think the Iraqi Resistance has got anything to fear from those particular soldier boys. Although I suppose, if they were really in a tight spot, they could always chuck eggs at them).

