

FULL SPEED AHEAD INTO THE QUICKSAND!

NZ Blindly Follows US Into Obama's War In Afghanistan

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- **Murray Horton**

There was a certain inevitability about the December 2009 announcement by President Obama that, instead of getting out of his predecessor's war in Afghanistan (which has dragged on since 2001, longer than the US involvement in World War 2), he has instead decided to copy George Bush's tactic in Iraq and mount a "surge" of 30,000 more troops. Bush's surge of tens of thousands more US troops into Iraq earlier this decade was credited with quietening down that other American war, at least temporarily (but the bombings and killings have massively intensified once again in recent months). Obama swept into office, in January 2009, riding a wave of massive grassroots activism by the American people who are desperate for an end to Bush's wars that are bleeding the country of its youth and treasure; and they wanted a President to concentrate on fixing the horrendous domestic problems that have come to roost with a vengeance – the biggest economic collapse since the 1930s' Great Depression; tens of millions losing their homes and/or jobs; and a health system that is unaffordable for nearly 50 million Americans and which is regarded as a laughing stock by the rest of the capitalist world. Obama promised change in all those areas, and was given the Nobel Peace Prize solely because of the hope engendered by his soaring rhetoric. Performance has proven to be a totally different reality, and if he had any conscience, he would decline that Prize.

Obama inherited Bush's wars, namely those in Iraq, Afghanistan and the one "on Terror". Those who voted for him did so in the belief that he would extricate the US from them all. He made a promising start, saying that the notorious Guantanamo detention camp and torture centre would be closed down within a year of his assuming office. That has proved easier said than done. He withdrew US troops from Iraqi cities and named 2011 as the date for a total withdrawal. Iraq is now sufficiently "normal" for the world's major oil companies to be venturing into the country (it is extremely ironic that US oil companies missed out completely when the Iraqi government held its first auction of oil drilling rights, in December 2009). Anyone who doubted that the 2003 invasion and occupation weren't all about oil can now see the evidence for themselves. But Afghanistan is the war that Obama has resolved to make his own. He has made a fresh commitment of US military might and persuaded his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies to also commit an extra 7,000 troops. In addition there are countries outside NATO who have troops in Afghanistan (such as Australia and New Zealand, who are known as Contact Countries) and they are have also been armtwisted into committing more troops.

Waihopai NZ's Most Important Contribution To US War

If Obama's decision to plunge America further into the Afghan morass was no surprise, neither was the August 09 decision by Prime Minister John Key to send 70 NZ Special Air Service (SAS) personnel to Afghanistan in three rotations, lasting 18 months. They join the 130 NZ troops already there, working in "safe" parts of the country on hearts and minds projects such as provincial reconstruction. No New Zealanders have been killed so far. That may be about to change. Previous SAS deployments have been in remote rural areas. This one is different – they will be used in close quarter fighting in urban areas, including Kabul, with a greatly enhanced risk of casualties. When Key announced the latest SAS deployment he said that NZ troops are likely to stay in Afghanistan for another five years, making it this country's longest war (the Malayan Emergency, in which NZ was fighting Communist guerrillas, lasted from 1948-60).

And the decision by the US and its allies, including NZ, to attempt to actually win the Afghan war (as opposed to making a dignified exit) means that the Waihopai spy base becomes even more important. Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) has always said that Waihopai is, by far, NZ's most important contribution to each and every American war. Human intelligence is very hard to come by when dealing with enemies like the Taliban and al Qaeda (where exactly is Osama bin Laden? The US has admitted that it doesn't have a clue). Electronic and signals intelligence, which is the task of the global network of satellite interception spy bases of which Waihopai is part, is crucial. Remote intelligence, such as intercepting calls from satellite phones or from eyes in the sky such as the killer drones increasingly favoured by the US in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is a central part of the US war strategy.

NZ Spies In Afghanistan

Nor is the involvement of NZ intelligence agencies confined to being from a distance. In September 2009 there was the surprising revelation that the Government has secretly been sending intelligence operatives to take part in the war in Afghanistan. The *New Zealand Herald* (9/9/09; "NZ agents join secret war in Afghanistan", Patrick Gower)

reported that: "Their presence was revealed in a review of New Zealand's commitment to Afghanistan released under the Official Information Act yesterday. The review lists intelligence as a contribution alongside the military, aid and police. It also shows New Zealand is committed to two secret 'non-military support roles', although details of the roles and how many operatives are involved have been removed because it would 'prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand'. The review also says personnel from six New Zealand Government agencies are involved in Afghanistan but lists only four: Foreign Affairs, Defence Force, police and NZAid. The other two agencies with personnel there are kept secret for the same security reasons, making it likely they are the intelligence agencies" (i.e. the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau [GCSB] and NZ Security Intelligence Service [SIS]).

"...The intelligence agencies are both focused on domestic security so it is unusual for them to provide information about a foreign war zone...It is not known whose command the intelligence operatives are under, or what role they have been playing in the war. Possibilities range from spying amid the Afghan community to high-end communications intercept...The review shows the operatives were sent under the Labour Government...The United States has called for improved intelligence for the military operations in Afghanistan, with President Barack Obama's chief intelligence adviser, Dennis Blair, saying the war effort lacks a deep understanding of the militants they are fighting. There have been concerns that Pakistan's intelligence agents have been providing intelligence to the Taliban and there a need to counter this. A suicide attack last week killed the head of the National Directorate of Security, an Afghan agency equivalent to a combined CIA and FBI". The *Herald* article is dead wrong when it says that both NZ's intelligence agencies are "focused on domestic security". Yes, in the case of the SIS, but the only publicly stated function of the GCSB is to spy on international communications satellites. It has always been adamant that it does not spy on New Zealanders (ABC says otherwise). So, on the contrary, it is not "unusual" for it to "provide information about a foreign war zone". That is a logical progression from what the GCSB is already doing via Waihopai, on behalf of the US National Security Agency, America's biggest spy agency.

Fighting For Fraudulent President, Drug Barons & Murderous Warlords

Nobody seems to be very clear now just what the war in Afghanistan is being fought for. The original reason was to punish and overthrow the medievalist Taliban regime which provided the haven from which al Qaeda organised the devastating September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US. That objective was quickly and easily achieved – the Taliban was routed and al Qaeda driven out (although bin Laden has never been killed or captured). Then the West decided that it couldn't just get out, so a cakewalk military victory has turned into years of occupation and like all previous occupations of that country by foreigners (the Russians were the most recent and equally unsuccessful), the occupiers have become bitterly resented and serve as a rallying point and target of armed resistance. "The Taliban" is now a generic term that covers a whole raft of armed groups who are shooting and bombing foreign troops with ever greater effectiveness and operating with impunity throughout more and more of the country.

It might be possible to "sell" this war to the people of the countries whose money and manpower are being expended on it if there was any evidence that Afghanistan is worth fighting for. But no, the Government of President Hamid Karzai, is made up of the same murderous warlords and opium barons who ruined the place in the recent past and whose brutal excesses led to the Taliban coming to power in the first place, in 1996. Bush was honest enough to say that the US was not there for nation building but a veneer of democracy is always essential. There is not even that in Afghanistan – the 2009 Presidential election was one of the most spectacularly corrupt and fraudulent in world history. The official United Nations election observers declared that fully one million votes were fraudulent and Obama and co pressured Karzai into reluctantly agreeing to a run off. Face was saved when his opponent withdrew, saying that the outcome would be exactly the same, so why should he bother going through such a farce again?

The Taliban are a truly horrible pack of bastards, the textbook example of why religious fundamentalists (of any creed) should never be allowed to hold political power. They are obscurantists, medievalists and appalling misogynists. In relation to the latter, Western propagandists once tried peddling the line that the US invaded Afghanistan to "liberate its women". To quote *New Zealand Herald* columnist Brian Rudman (8/4/09; "Get our troops out of that uncivilised hellhole"): "Yet what has changed? Just last week the puppet Government of President Hamid Karzai, who the Americans hand-picked to bring freedom to this land, passed a law making it legal for men to rape their wives if they refuse to consent to sex at least once every four days. The wife, says the law, 'is bound to preen for her husband as and when he desires'. This is the language and thought processes of biblical times, and that's where it should be buried. Yet here we are continuing to support barbarians who play-act the democratic process to ensure our aid money keeps flowing...Also, we're supposed to be there to stop worldwide terrorism in its nest bed. But somehow the occupation troops and the Karzai Government turn a blind eye to the opium traffic out of Afghanistan which causes more misery on the streets of every large city in the US and Europe and beyond than Osama bin Laden could ever dream of achieving". Karzai's own brother has been named as a major drugs dealer

and operates with impunity because he is on the payroll of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

“AfPak”: This Generation’s Vietnam

The parallels with America’s disastrous 1960s and 70s’ war in Vietnam are startling – a corrupt, incompetent, puppet Government; fraudulent elections; a booming drugs trade run by those in power, aided and abetted by the CIA; a war that can’t be won against a determined and ideologically committed enemy that has a safe haven across an uncontrolled border. That latter point is a major concern to the Americans – Pakistan is a vital nuclear armed ally, but one which has been seriously destabilised by this war spilling into its lawless tribal lands adjoining the Afghan border. The Afghan war has now escalated into a new war in Pakistan, greatly helped by the deaths of large numbers of Pakistani civilians killed as “collateral damage” by the frequent US missile attacks from its unmanned drones targeting al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban leaders inside Pakistan. An indigenous Pakistani Taliban has taken up arms against the pro-American Government and a fulblown civil war flared up in Pakistan in 2009. Exactly as the Americans spread the Vietnam War across its borders into Cambodia and Laos, making it one big Indochina War (and suffering military and political disaster in all three countries), so this has become one war, what the Americans now refer to as “AfPak”.

The military has always been the key player in Pakistan, and allied to that is the extremely powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) which operates as a state within a state. It was the ISI which organised and directed the (Afghan) Taliban in the first place. It has always seen India as the enemy, not its Afghan neighbours and co-religionists. The ISI continues to play a very tricky double game – on the one hand it has pocketed hundreds of millions of US dollars from the CIA as a reward for capturing and turning over al Qaeda leaders caught in Pakistan; on the other hand it is up to its eyeballs working for its own interests in Afghanistan and that means continuing to work with its old Taliban allies.

So the war goes on, as the US and NATO pours tens of thousands more troops into that benighted country (not forgetting New Zealand doing its little bit). Of course, for the politicians, generals and arms dealers, Afghanistan provides a wonderful testing ground for weapons, manpower, and military tactics. Military leaders are always keen to get a real “little” war in which to hone their deadly trade, and the various new members of NATO (the Eastern Europeans who have swapped from being Russian doormats to being American ones) are queuing to get their chance to take part in such a war with all the big boys.

If You Can’t Beat Them, Try Bribing Them

In a place like Afghanistan, all is never what it seems and nowhere more so than when it comes to war (a central feature of Afghan life for centuries). Sometimes war is not about fighting but about money. French troops learned this the hard way and ten of them paid with their lives when ambushed by the Taliban in what they’d been led to believe was a peaceful part of the country. It had previously been controlled by the Italians and their intelligence agency had bought peace by bribing the Taliban not to kill any Italian troops. When the French took over from the Italians, nobody bothered to tell them. The bribes stopped and the local Taliban restarted the war by ambushing the luckless French troops. This despite the fact that US intelligence had intercepted phone calls which proved the Italian bribery. “In Kabul a high-ranking Western intelligence source was scathing. ‘It’s an utter disgrace. NATO in Afghanistan is a fragile enough construct without this lot working behind our backs. The Italians have a hell of a lot to answer for’” (*Press*, 16/10/09; “Italy ‘paid Taliban for peace’”). American magazines such as *Time* regularly carry earnest articles saying that the best way to win the war (or, at least, pacify the Taliban) is to bribe key figures in it. It would be better to actually provide jobs and incomes for the vast majority of impoverished Afghans who are the Taliban’s foot soldiers, but the short cut route is good old fashioned bribery. Saves all that messy fighting and dying, goes the reasoning. It is a model which was used in a strategic province in Iraq which was a hotbed of resistance to the American occupiers. Millions of dollars were handed out and the resistance fighters ceased their fight.

This is the deeply shambolic mess that President Obama has decided to brand as “his” war (every US President has to have one, it’s one of the perks of empire). And this is the mess that New Zealand, along with many others, has decided to plunge further into. We have troops there (ranging from elite Special Forces to the “hearts and minds” provincial reconstruction teams); we have sent spies there; and the Waihopai spy base is working 24/7 as NZ’s central contribution to that war. Nobody has remembered the lessons of Vietnam, so it appears that we will have to learn them all over again, the hard way.

Guns For Milk

Here’s one, for starters. In November 2009 President Obama announced that the US wishes to open negotiations (in 2010), to join the existing trade and investment agreement, the grandly named Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic

Partnership – often known as the P4. The US wishes to use this as a platform for a broad Asia/Pacific free trade bloc, and several other regional countries have indicated that they want to join the current P4 members – New Zealand, Singapore, Chile and Brunei. There are already moves afoot to extend the P4 into investment and financial services. This becomes the means to open negotiations for a US/NZ Free Trade Agreement (you can find full details at the New Zealand Not For Sale Website <http://www.nznotforsale.org/>). Older New Zealanders will remember the infamous “guns for butter” phrase of Sir Keith Holyoake, Prime Minister during our involvement in the Vietnam War. It means sending our soldiers to fight in US wars in order to, theoretically, gain trade access. Nothing much seems to have changed in the ensuing 40 years (except now it is “guns for milk”, as the Government’s trade policy is driven by a single minded focus on serving Fonterra’s interests).

People who kid themselves that “we” stand to gain from a Free Trade Agreement with the US would be wise to reflect on the rueful words of Sir Christopher Meyer, Britain’s Ambassador to the US in the runup to the 2003 US/UK invasion of Iraq. Speaking to the current public Inquiry into Britain’s part in that invasion and war: “Meyer expressed frustration that Britain was unable to gain much diplomatic leverage from its position as the US’ chief ally. Britain failed to persuade the US to liberalise trans-Atlantic air travel and, almost on the day when British commandoes joined the fighting in Afghanistan, the US imposed tariffs on imports of specialised British steel” (*Press*, 28/11/09). If this is the way that the US treats its “chief ally” when it comes to protecting its own trade and economic interests, how do you think little old NZ will get on?

SIS SEEKS TO JUSTIFY ITS EXISTENCE

Asks Universities To Keep An Eye Out For “Weapons Of Mass Destruction”

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- Murray Horton

Throughout 2009 the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) was regularly in the news in association with the release of its historic files on a number of political activists (including me) and on at least one organisation – the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA). *Peace Researcher* has previously reported some of that, for example, see my article “SIS Spied On Peace Movement For Decades” (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-178a.htm>) and Maire Leadbeater’s “Activist Annals” (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-178b.htm>), both in *PR* 38, July 2009.

But rest assured that our old mates the spies are not spending all their time copying and posting old files. No, they continue to find current ways to waste taxpayers’ money and to try and justify their existence. A quite bizarre example of this emerged in November 2009 when it was revealed that the SIS was approaching universities throughout the country, in all seriousness, asking for their help in “preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” (the subtitle of a glossy multi-page SIS brochure headed “A Guide To Weapons Of Mass Destruction”).

The booklet was accompanied by a November 6th letter of the same title from SIS Director Warren Tucker. He said that he had attended an October 9th meeting of the NZ Vice-Chancellors’ Committee “to share some NZSIS security concerns with direct relevance to academic institutions. In particular foreign state acquisition of weapons of mass destruction technology and industrial espionage against New Zealand’s science and technology by foreign states... Of particular relevance to New Zealand universities is the potential application of knowledge or skills in the hard science, engineering, mathematical and medical fields to weapons programmes – many technologies currently studied at advanced level in these areas have dual-use applications relevant to WMD... We encourage you to raise awareness of the risks of WMD proliferation and illicit science and technology acquisition amongst your staff... In addition NZSIS officers are available to meet with you or your staff to provide further information on NZSIS’s counter-proliferation and science and technology roles... If you want advice on proliferation matters or on the threat from industrial espionage, or if you wish to report suspicious activities or convey concerns, please contact.... “ SIS (free phone and special e-mail address supplied).

This came to the attention of the Anti-Bases Campaign, through academic contacts, and we made sure that the Tertiary Education Union was notified, and they duly made it public. Tom Ryan, the Union President, said: “The SIS pretends that it should be considered normal for staff to report back to a spy agency. But such a practice would undermine the legislated autonomy of our institutions, including the guarantee of academic freedom. It may also lead to some members of the academic community being targeted because of their religion, nationality or ethnicity” (*New Zealand Herald*, 18/11/09: “SIS puts universities on terror alert”, Kara Segedin). Similar criticism also came from the Green Party’s Keith Locke and Rob Green, the Co-Director of the Disarmament and Security Centre. The booklet and letter were distributed at least at Auckland and Lincoln Universities. The University of Canterbury told the *Press* (18/11/09, “SIS seeks varsity help in weapon watch”, Tina Law) that the Vice-Chancellor had verbally informed his senior management team of the SIS request but did not distribute the letter or guide. Questions need to be asked about why the Vice-Chancellors were prepared to have Tucker at their Committee meeting and just why at least some of our universities were prepared to play along with this nonsense.

SIS Serving American Obsession

You would think that the ensuing brouhaha would have sent the SIS packing. But, no – in December an agent visited Lincoln University, meeting the Deans and asking that an eye be kept on students and staff from what he described as “enemy countries” of New Zealand, including “Red China” (how long since anyone has used that phrase?), Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Once again this came to ABC’s attention and once again we have raised the issue. This is an unfolding story. And what exquisite timing. Here was the SIS running around “showing signs of paranoia in order to please their United States masters” (as Rob Green told the *Press*) about WMD at the very same time that the Chilcot Inquiry in Britain into that country’s involvement in the Iraq War was hearing damning evidence from extremely senior insiders about how the purported existence of Saddam Hussein’s WMD was a complete fabrication to justify the illegal invasion and occupation. Never mind, former Prime Minister Tony Blair told the world’s media, in December 2009, that if that particular lie had not been available to be peddled as the justification for the invasion, he would have used another one, as the greater good was served by getting rid of Saddam and his regime.

The spectacle of the SIS running around like a headless chook in pursuit of what is obviously an American obsession is likely to become more common in the future. In one of those classic Wellington stories (remember the spook that left his SIS ID, a pie and *Penthouse* in his briefcase outside a journalist's home in the 1980s?), a senior public servant dropped his notebook on a Wellington footpath in September 2009. Who should pick it up but a Radio New Zealand reporter? Among many other sensitive topics covered in it was the revelation that the Government is investigating merging the SIS with its bigger and much more secret brother agency, the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB, which runs the Waihopai spy base). Green MP Keith Locke said: "One of the problems is that the GCSB's main operation at Waihopai is essentially part of the Americans' National Security Agency. To link up the SIS with the GCSB would risk intelligence services coming more under the control of the American intelligence services, which is certainly the case with the GCSB" (www.stuff.co.nz, 8/9/09, "Treasury official finds sensitive notebook"). Wouldn't it be cheaper for us to insist that the Americans pay these guys directly? After all, they're working for the US in all but name.



RESISTING TALISMAN SABRE

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- **Jessica Morrison**

New Zealand has been out of the ANZUS Treaty since our nuclear free policy gave mortal offence to the Americans and Australians in the 1980s, but ANZUS still exists and provides the excuse for regular massive US/Australian military exercises in northern Australia. There are always protests against them, by our friends in the Australian peace and anti-bases movement. In 2009, 16 people were arrested. Ed.

War Games

For the last six years the major biannual training exercises between the Australian and US militaries have been dubbed Talisman Sabre. Despite the name, there is nothing magic or sacred about these three week exercises – to build our interoperability with the largest and most aggressive military force in the world, as they continue to wage an illegal war in Afghanistan and expand into Northern Pakistan. Held from July 6-26, 2009 Talisman Sabre cost Australians an additional \$A48million to our already oversubscribed military budget. The 5,500 Australian troops were joined by 17,000 US troops who bombed our land and oceans, sunk boats just back from the offensive wars in the Middle East, and practiced manoeuvres for the wars.

The exercises are primarily focused on Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area (SWBTA) - an area the size of Belgium, in central Queensland. The base includes Ramsar*-listed wetlands, and a chunk of ocean cut out from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It includes breeding grounds and migration routes for protected marine life such as whales, dugongs and turtles. * *Ramsar is shorthand for the international Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, named after the Iranian city where it was signed, in 1971. Ed.*

Talisman Sabre's live fire component was also undertaken at remote sites of Bradshaw and Delamere Ranges in the Northern Territory, as well as the Coral and Timor Seas. High explosive munitions are a key part of the exercises, using nuclear powered ships, and in acquiescence to the USA, we do not even ask whether the US ships are carrying nuclear weapons. The Minister of Defence stated "the United States forces have been advised that the use of depleted uranium munitions in Australia is strictly prohibited" – less than an ironclad guarantee that they are not brought to our shores. Exercises include troops landing on foreign soil, dealing with local armed resistance and taking control of a makeshift village. The official referee of these exercises declared that the "insurgents" won these games – which, given the resources and force used by the militaries, might signify the lack of efficacy of their military strategies.

Resistance

Before the exercises even began, two people in opposite sides of the country were arrested for resisting the arrival of US warships. In Perth, former Senator and long time activist Jo Valentine was arrested for "disturbing the peace" by holding up a placard on the wharves, while in Cairns Terry Spackman (formerly of the Royal Navy) was arrested seeking to undertake a Citizen's Inspection of a US warship. In the same week young people from Central Queensland organised a Committed to Change Festival - showcasing the many ways people can resist the destructive aspects of our society – while also providing great music and entertainment. Committed to Change is led by Renton Bishopric who had visited Vieques – a Puerto Rican community whose resistance had evicted the US military base on their island (*which is actually part of the US. Ed.*). Leaders in Vieques had attested to the importance of building communities of resistance and positive change to their campaign – so the strategy was brought back to Australia.

In the week leading up to the exercises beginning, Native American peace activist Judith LeBlanc toured eastern Australia to promote resistance to the exercises and the US wars of aggression. In Melbourne two groups organised solidarity vigils and leafleting, including one sign which read "US stop bombing Australia". In Rockhampton Dr Sue Wareham from the Medical Association for Prevention of War spoke at a film screening of "Scarred Lands – Wounded Lives", a documentary highlighting the horrendous environmental costs of war.

The military commenced its exercises with a family fun day in the adjoining town of Rockhampton. Christian protestors held a prominent die-in – to attest to the irony of parading war as fun for any families. The Martin Luther King House of Christian Non-Violence continued its action in the first week - blockading the main road of the Rockhampton Barracks as they tried to move troops and equipment to SWBTA, then Jim Dowling and Ciaron O'Reilly were arrested as they stopped a convoy of trucks with tanks and armoured troop carriers on the road to SWBTA. Jim and Ciaron resisted bail and continued in custody until joining resistance later in the exercises.

Jim Dowling was one of the four Christian peace activists who “invaded” the top secret US spy base at Pine Gap, Northern Territory, in December 2005. They were convicted and fined but then, in a landmark decision with global significance, were acquitted of all charges upon appeal. See Peace Researcher 36, August 2008, “Pine Gap Spybase ‘Invaders’ Acquitted: Huge Defeat For the Covert State”, by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr36-167.html>. Ciaran O’Reilly, Australian by birth, peace warrior throughout the world, was a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign committee for several months in the mid 1990s and was arrested at a protest at the US military base at Christchurch Airport. He last featured in Peace Researcher 33, November 2006, “Anti-War Protestors Acquitted Of Disarming US Plane In Ireland: Former ABC Activist Among Them”, by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr33-137a.html> Ed.

The national Peace Convergence began the next weekend beginning with both visiting activists and locals. Participation in the massive NAIDOC Day (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) parade helped the protests to be grounded in respect for indigenous people and solidarity with their ongoing struggle for justice. The public meeting was honoured by a welcome by Auntie Jeanette Yow Yeh who is planning a Children of the Pacific conference in 2010 for indigenous people in the region to gather to promote a nuclear free future for all children. Judith LeBlanc spoke from a North American perspective, inviting all to continue to act with conviction. Jake Lynch from Sydney’s Peace and Conflict Centre described an escalating culture of war in the USA – which needs significant analysis. Hamish Chits, an Australian Army veteran, talked about the detestation faced by personnel in facing wars, and called on us to support the troops by demanding they come home from wars of aggression.

Putting Themselves In The Line Of Fire

The first action of the weekend was a mass hokey cokey where great-grandmother June Norman was arrested for crossing police lines on a road to the SWBTA – putting her whole self in and shaking it all about. The other main action included a blockade of the Rockhampton Barracks where Sydney chaplain Frank Vavasour was arrested climbing the fence. As well as these actions including arrestable components, there was a night time vigil at the Barracks with the Peace Bus’s lanterns providing a beautiful backdrop to the evening. Locals organised a march and peace concert on the Sunday – providing a chance for a public and creative show of resistance to war and demonstrating a positive alternative.

In the lead up to Talisman Sabre, a senior Defence official, Air Commander Meier, stated, in the Senate Estimates: "Essentially, if we know there is an unauthorised person into the Commonwealth land at Shoalwater Bay, Bradshaw or any of the other exercise areas, the exercise is stopped". Boosted by this, three groups of people made incursions into the base. The first group entered on the first day of the live fire phase of the exercises. Calling themselves the Bonhoeffer 4 (named after Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the famous German theologian who was executed by the Nazis for his role in the WW2 Resistance, and PM Kevin Rudd’s favourite person of the 20th Century) – they declared their presence by releasing helium inflated giant red balloons. The military did not stop exercises when alerted to their presence, and the group were detected by US military personnel on the second day. The group remained in custody overnight, and pleaded guilty in court the next day. All were charged with trespass, and two of the group who stayed on the road when asked to move were also charged with “assault or obstruct a police officer”. Two groups entered the base several days later. One group was the Jägerstätter 3 – named after Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian farmer who was killed because he refused to fight with the Nazis, and who is in the process of being canonised as a saint by the Catholic Church. The Grana 4 were named after a 12 year old girl who was the sole survivor in her family of a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) aerial bombing in the current war in Afghanistan. The seven people all came out voluntarily after a time - with the last two spending 11 days inside the base. Two people walked out of the base undetected and travelled home. One came out and held up traffic on a major road, holding a banner. Another stood on a rocky outcrop and spoke to troops for some time before they came and got him. All have stories of meeting and talking with troops, or witnessing parts of the games.

The Bombings Stopped

At no point did the military admit the presence of groups, avoiding publicly admitting any changes to their plans. However, in stark contrast to previous years, where the last phase of the exercises is marked by large explosions, once the Bonhoeffer 4 announced to Police that they could hear the bombings - the bombings stopped, and weren’t heard again during the exercises. Perhaps the exercises were significantly disrupted and curbed from the cumulative effect of all the actions - this is always hard to determine outside the military. What is clear, however, is that the Government cannot depend on silent compliance from Australians as long as they continue to escalate military spending and involve themselves in wars of aggression.

For footage and photos see www.peaceconvergence.com

In December 2009, just a couple of days before Christmas in fact, Jim Dowling and Ciaran O'Reilly had to appear in court in Rockhampton. Here is Jim Dowling's report, specially written for Peace Researcher, on Christmas Eve (much appreciated). Ed.

Nuremberg Principles

We started with a half hour picket outside court with the banner: "What have you done? Your Brother's blood cries out to me from the earth. Gen 4" and a picture of a child bombed in Iraq. After being informed that the magistrate was not the "nice" one we expected and that even the Police were in fear of our new Magistrate, we were a little more nervous. However, we were greeted with a smile from the Magistrate, and he certainly treated us with respect throughout. The Christmas spirit, perhaps.

Three police officers gave evidence which we accepted. I asked all three officers if they had heard of the Nuremberg Principles of International Law. I explained to each how an officer was obligated not to obey/enforce a law which facilitated a war crime. None had heard of the Nuremberg Principles, but the Magistrate certainly had! He cited a Northern Territory High Court case where the defendant had argued that he had a right to trespass at Pine Gap to stop a war crime. The issue was to get a number of mentions. Ciaran and I gave evidence about how we came to be there that day, our understanding of the war crimes being prepared for by the exercises, and our duty as Christians to offer nonviolent resistance to them. We described some of the horrors of the slaughter of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Magistrate listened patiently.

During cross-examination we largely agreed with the prosecutor's questions. Then he asked us if we agreed we were impeding the safe progress of the trucks carrying US military vehicles. I could not agree with this, and pointed out there was nothing safe about military vehicles preparing for war. Ciaran claimed trucks are only dangerous when they are moving! Ciaran also asked me how long I spent in the Police Station cells (a very important question in relation to sentencing). When I replied four days as we refused to sign for bail, the Magistrate said he was surprised we "found the accommodation so salubrious". "I've been in worse places", I replied.

In my summing up, the Magistrate and I had a little discussion about the Nuremberg Principles again. He claimed he had no jurisdiction to override the Northern Territory High Court decision which said the Nuremberg Principles could not be used in Australian Law, as they had not been written into our law books. I pointed out that the Nuremberg Principles were there to override any nation's laws, and that they were formulated for that very reason. The German judges who were sentenced to long prison terms at Nuremberg were only obeying their own laws which facilitated war crimes. I believe the idea was having an impact on him but he stuck to his line, and did so again when I brought it up one more time at the sentencing.

Sentenced To Time Already Served

We were found guilty by lunch time. The magistrate did not bother to look at our previous history, when he announced he would give us time served, and impose no further penalty. The prosecutor did not object. There was certainly no antagonism from anyone in the court, and I am sure quite a deal of sympathy. As Ciaran keeps pointing out the nation is largely disengaged from the war. When we get a chance to point out some of the horror of it, and the need to act against it, we can have an impact. Hopefully our small actions have served to do that.

US BASES IN OKINAWA

Japan's New Premier Challenges Obama

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- **Bob Leonard**

US President Obama deserves a Nobel Peace Prize – great subject for a Tui ad. First of all, he hadn't done anything but talk by the time he got the prize. And second, his militaristic stance since accepting it is unlikely to lead to global peace any time soon. Two regions in particular cast massive shadows over what many of us hoped would be a "peace" presidency. Obama's impending "surge" in Afghanistan (the surge in Iraq was a smashing success) and his business-as-usual attitude to certain strategic islands in the Pacific don't seem all that different from George W Bush's mindset. Where is the diplomacy? The new President may have all the right peace impulses in his heart, but, in the name of bipartisanship, he made two very risky Cabinet appointments: Hillary Clinton for Secretary of State and Robert Gates for Defense. Both are hawks and are well on the way to dominating critical defence initiatives in the Obama Administration ("How the hawks caged Obama" by Robert Parry, 30/11/09, *The Consortium News.com*).

The lead article in this issue of *Peace Researcher* is all about turning Afghanistan into Obama's own Vietnam, with plenty of pushing from Middle East hardliner Clinton. This note is about Okinawa, Japan and Guam, vital assets in US defence strategies in the Pacific since World War 2. Gates' background as a Republican warmonger and active dismantler of Leftwing democratic governments in Central America goes back decades and included strong advocacy of the Rightwing contras' war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua in the 1980s. As described below he has been back in action in this part of the world in recent months.

Japan Gets Stropopy With Uncle Sam

Japan held a national election in August 2009 and for the first time in 50 years a Centre Left party came to power – with a big majority. The new Japanese Premier, Yukio Hatoyama, led the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in the electoral defeat of the entrenched conservative Government (led by the Liberal Democratic Party). Determined to pursue greater independence in relations with the US, Hatoyama's DPJ didn't take long to toss a spanner into US military policy in the Pacific. Hatoyama met with Obama in November and refused to accept a 2006 agreement on a military basing issue very familiar to readers of this journal – the relocation of the contentious Futenma Marine Air Station within Okinawa. On November 13th the two leaders announced the formation of a high-level working group to deal with the problem of where to relocate the base (see my article, "Okinawa And Guam – US Military Pawns Since WW2", in *PR* 34, July 2007, online at www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr34-150.html) for our last report on the Futenma problem). But the uncompromising US position is that the existing 2006 agreement, developed with the former conservative Japanese government, must prevail unaltered. Hatoyama, however, told the media, and probably Obama himself, that moving the air base within Okinawa to Henoko Bay was not a done deal, and that, in fact, because of the concerns of local people the base should be moved off the island entirely, and perhaps even out of Japan altogether.

Obama played the diplomatic good cop during his visit and on the surface appeared to get on well with Hatoyama, despite the bit of bad news about Okinawa. The bad cop in the standoff was Defense Secretary Gates who warned in October "that if Japan backs away from the 2006 agreement and decides not to allow the relocation of the air station within the island of Okinawa, the United States would halt the transfer of 8,000 Marines to Guam and refrain from returning parcels of land to the Okinawan government" (*Washington Post Foreign Service*, 17/11/09, Blaine Harden). That sounds a lot like extortion.

A Clayton's Working Group

Japanese and American positions on the role of the working group are at opposite poles. The 2006 agreement on the relocation of Futenma Air Base provided for a new location to the north, at Camp Schwab on Henoko Bay. The White House says the agreement is not negotiable. This begs the question, what is the working group for? Hatoyama was clear enough: "If our review is merely aimed at making a decision confirming the agreement, it's meaningless. If we already have an answer, we don't need to hold talks" (*Ibid.*).

This may seem like a lot of hot air being blown about at a very high political level. Okinawa is already occupied by over a dozen American bases and thousands of military personnel and their families. But the Futenma base is a particularly difficult problem because it is in the midst of Ginowan, a city of over 90,000. Noise and danger from helicopters and jet fighter planes have made life in the city a constant trial for residents around the clock for

decades. Agreement to move the base was reached over 13 years ago, but where to move it has been a central issue ever since. So, in fact, Futenma “has become the signature issue in Japan’s recent efforts to assert its will in negotiations with its most important ally.... It is also the most serious sticking point in US-Japanese relations in many years” (Ibid.). Because both leaders want a quick decision on base relocation, the working group needs to do something, but it can’t possibly satisfy both US and Japanese conditions. There are three officials involved, the US Ambassador and the Japanese Foreign and Defence ministers. Conspicuously absent from the group is any representative of the Okinawan government and people.

Bad Cop Gates Plays The Guam Card

With the vast majority of US troops in Japan being based on Okinawa, the chance to get rid of a few thousand would be welcomed by the local people. This is a significant element of the Gates’ threat mentioned above. Part of the 2006 deal involved moving 8,000 troops and their families from Okinawa to Guam, with the entire enterprise costing some \$US26 billion. The Japanese taxpayer is expected to pay up to \$US6 billion of that cost, and according to *Time* magazine (9/11/09), the new Japanese government had only until the end of December to add relocation funds to its 2010 Defence budget. That was one of the pressures on Hatoyama to approve the whole relocation deal. And then there’s this threat from a Michael Green, senior advisor to Gates: “If the DJP can repudiate an agreement made by a previous Government [the conservatives], then so could the US side, in theory...”. That’s really rich coming from a country with a long track record of unilaterally abrogating international treaties.

Guam is a tiny island nation of about 178,000, some 2,000 km southeast of Okinawa. It has its own government but is certainly not independent. Guam became US territory during WW2 and it remains a “protectorate”; its people are US citizens but with no US voting rights and non-voting representatives in Congress. Its indigenous Chamorro people have had to cope with colonisation by the American military for decades and now face the prospect of thousands more moving in from Okinawa (from the current 15,000 to more than 39,000 by 2020 according to a report from the US Government Accountability Office). The local people, of course, have no say in this business. Nevertheless: “The Government of Guam is expected to be largely responsible for funding and constructing off-base roads and utilities and providing certain public services”. Meanwhile the Pentagon says it will keep the Guam government better informed so the locals can plan for the unwelcome influx. How is that possible while Pentagon chief Gates levels threats at Japan that the transfer may be cancelled? (*Gannett Washington Bureau and Honolulu Advertiser*, 13/11/09, John Yaukey). Barack told Yukio (first name basis now – such good buddies) soothingly that: “Our goal remains the same, and that’s to provide for the defence of Japan with minimal intrusion on the lives of the people who share this space” (Ibid.). Meanwhile the people of Okinawa and Guam continue to suffer under the burden of “sharing” with the US military – but not in silence.

Okinawa Protests Make *Time* Magazine

Relocating the Futenma Air Base within Okinawa has generated almost continuous local protest for years. In the city of Ginowan the protests have been about getting the base out of their midst. In the city of Nago, near Henoko Bay, the protests are against having the relocated base put on their doorstep and severely damaging the bay in the process. *Time* (9/11/09) covered the Nago protest just days before Obama was to meet with Hatoyama. Clearly conveying *Time*’s slant on the issue is this choice quote from the article: “The American military presence on Okinawa has been a sore spot in US-Japan relations for decades because of *its perceived negative social and economic effects on local communities*” (emphasis added). The article does go on to mention two infamous examples of “negative effects”, the rape of a 12 year old Okinawan girl by three American soldiers in 1996 and the fiery crash of a military helicopter on a university campus in Ginowan in 2004. Even *Time* couldn’t ignore these horrific examples of why the locals want the Americans out. But they are not isolated examples as we have reported in numerous articles in *Peace Researcher* over the years. And they are not just “perceived”.

A large protest was also held at the Kadena Air Base in reaction to a proposal by the Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada that the Futenma base could be merged with the Kadena base. The city of Kadena has the same problems as Ginowan and has already given up over 80% of its land to the base. Much of it was formerly productive agricultural land. During the period of the massive Okinawan protests, the island’s Governor took off for Hawaii to avoid facing the demonstrators. Governor Nakaima is pro-US bases and took the opportunity to meet in Honolulu with CINCPAC, the US Commander in Chief of the Pacific. But he did not succeed in avoiding protesters. The Hawai’i Okinawa Alliance was ready for his arrival at Honolulu International Airport and “greeted [him] with leis, signs and the message that the US bases must go. While it probably didn’t change Nakaima’s mind, the message was unavoidable” (No US Bases e-list, 9/11/09).

The many years of continual local anti-bases protests in Okinawa undoubtedly motivated the US military to try to relocate the Futenma Air Base. But ironically, protests in and around Henoko Bay and Nago have kept the

relocation from actually happening – for 13 years. With Premier Hatoyama now saying that perhaps the base needs to leave Okinawa entirely, the end result may be that at least one US base will shut entirely and both Ginowan and Nago will be the winners. The political stakes are very high in both Japan and the US. This is one to watch, and the people of Okinawa and Guam deserve our strong support.

We thank Cora Fabros and the No US Bases e-list for the steady flow of information on the topics in this article.

MERCENARIES INC.

Private Armies Profit From America's Wars

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Murray Horton

It's been several years since *Peace Researcher* last reported on the sordid world of the modern mercenaries, now sanitised as "private security contractors". I did so in detail in my articles "The Privatisation Of War" (PR 29, June 2004, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-96.html>) and "Mercenaries: A Peculiarly British Disease" (PR 30, March 2005, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr30-114.html>). It's an issue that deserves ongoing scrutiny. Let's start with the old school (and old school tie) British mercenaries that we last reported on five years ago. What happened to them?

Equatorial Guinea In The Spotlight

In March 2004, Equatorial Guinea, a completely obscure little country in the sweaty armpit of 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 President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, 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 notorious British company, Sandline International. These two firms were controversial leading players in several of Africa's interminable wars of the 1990s, most notably in Angola and Sierra Leone (and, much closer to home, Sandline and its high profile leader Tim Spicer, had been involved in a mercenary fiasco in Papua New Guinea in the late 1990s that resulted in the fall of the Government which had hired it). Zimbabwe was adamant that the arrested men would face charges under aviation, firearms and immigration laws, and that they could face the death penalty.

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.

No Honour Among Thieves

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 author, Tory politician and criminal 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 British public school that Thatcher attended; Arthur – or, more properly, Arfur – Daley was the shifty Cockney wheelerdealer in the classic 1970s and 80s' 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. He got a four year suspended prison sentence and was fined \$NZ736,300. He admitted funding a helicopter which he claimed he believed was supposed to be an air ambulance. 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 and retreat to an exclusive estate in Spain.

In May 2007 Simon Mann, who had been sentenced to four years prison in Zimbabwe, was released but immediately rearrested and held in prison pending extradition to Equatorial Guinea. This led to a fresh burst of publicity for these singularly inept former public school boys (Mann was the son of a former England cricket captain), with absurd code names such as the Cardinal, Smelly, Noshier and Scratcher (Thatcher). They spoke mockney (mock Cockney slang affected by the British upper class, popularised by Guy Ritchie movies) – Mann smuggled a message from his Zimbabwean prison demanding that his mates come up with a "large splodge of wonga" (translation: a lot of money) to get him out – they didn't.

Mann was the subject of a *Sunday Times* profile reprinted in the *Press* (16/5/07; "Simon Mann: an adventure too far"). "None of us thought that at that age, 50, with all his wealth and a family and a wife with a bun in the oven, he'd go on another bloody adventure', a friend said. The fatal lure was Equatorial Guinea, Africa's third largest oil exporter and the second most corrupt African country after Chad, according to Transparency International. South African intelligence sources believe Mann and his co-plotters planned to seize control of the country and run it as a private fiefdom, modelled on the British East India Company, after installing Severo Moto, an exiled opposition leader, as their frontman. The operation seems to have been doomed from the start. Thanks to the conspirators' lamentable security, indulging in poolside bragging about their plans, the South African government received regular updates for months before passing on the information at the last moment".

Mann was duly extradited to Equatorial Guinea, being held in a notorious prison in its capital, Malabo. He was put on trial in August 2008, when his testimony was described as "electrifying", naming Mark Thatcher as one of the five central figures in the plot and Lebanese-Nigerian tycoon, Ely Calil, as the boss of the whole operation. Thatcher "was not just an investor. He came on board completely and became part of the management team" (*Press*, 20/6/08; "Mann says Mark Thatcher was ringleader in coup bid", Martin Fletcher). Mann said the attempted coup was sanctioned by the Spanish and South African governments, with the blessing of the Pentagon, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and US oil companies who have heavily invested in the country. A patriot to the end, he denied any British government involvement and expressed amazement when told that it had known about the plot.

President Obiang's regime is one of the most corrupt and murderous in Africa (and that's saying something). He has been in power since seizing it from his uncle in 1979. Among the atrocities committed by his predecessor were having 150 people shot in a sports stadium while a band played "Those Were The Days, My Friend". Among many other crimes, Obiang himself has been accused of cannibalism. So he saw the Mann trial as golden opportunity to get some positive public relations for his revolting regime. He allowed foreign journalists into the country and made sure that the diplomatic corps attended the trial in numbers to hear Mann's unforced testimony that the operation had been an international conspiracy to seize the country's oil wealth. Obiang made sure that Mann was treated well, including having a daily lunch with the Minister of Security.

In August 2008 Mann was sentenced to 34 years prison (longer than the sentence demanded by the prosecution) and fined \$NZ312,000. This was the same term which had already been meted out to the South African and other foreign mercenaries who had been caught in Equatorial Guinea itself in 2004 and who had already stood trial. A Lebanese businessman tried with Mann got 18 years, while four locals got six years each. It was fully expected that if Mann had to serve anything like the full term then he would die in prison. But his cooperation with the regime he plotted to violently overthrow, his naming of names, earned him his freedom only 15 months into his 34 year term. In November 2009 Mann was released from prison and given 24 hours to leave Equatorial Guinea. He was flown back to Britain on a private plane paid for by unnamed "friends" (four South African mercenaries were released at the same time, just ahead of a State visit of South African President Jacob Zuma).

It Was 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. 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. It is already full of thousands of American and other foreign oil workers, who live in exclusive suburbs (Marathon Oil's is known as "Pleasantville"), which stand in stark contrast to the slums in which the vast majority of locals have to live. The Bush Administration saw this part of the world as a vital part of its strategy of securing reliable new sources of oil, and wasn'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 unofficial 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 then 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.

From Blackwater To Xe: The Very Model Of A Modern Private Army

But the hapless Poms reliving their Boys Own fantasies in Darkest Africa are merely a comic footnote to the real story of modern mercenaries, aka "private security contractors". What really focused attention on the new private armies was the March 2004 killing, incineration, mutilation and public displaying of four American "contractors" in Fallujah, the crucible of Sunni resistance to the American occupation of Iraq. It led directly to the ironfisted US military response, so reminiscent of all the other armies of invasion and occupation of the past 100 years, which, in turn, led to the massive upsurge in the Iraqi resistance that so effectively fought and demoralised the would be coloniser. The victims (who certainly weren't innocent victims, but nobody deserves to die like that, nor to be treated like that after death) were all former US soldiers, mainly from Special Forces units. The sort of units that former US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, relied on to project US military might throughout the world (and which are spectacularly unsuited for the humdrum chore of occupation, let alone nation building). The sort of men who are described as "adrenalin junkies", meaning they like the big money, the ceaseless buzz of violence, and to hold the power of life or death over thousands of people. They comprise the second biggest "army" in Iraq, behind only the US military in numbers and, even better for the propagandists, their dead and wounded aren't counted among the "official" casualties. And the media unthinkingly uses the language of "our" side. When referring to "private security contractors" in Gaza, or Lebanon or Somalia, or any of the other places where "we" have enemies, "they" are routinely referred to as gunmen. So let's call the Blackwater guys by their correct title – gunmen – because that's exactly what they are, except that they are "our" gunmen.

The four dead Americans worked for Blackwater Security Consulting, one of the largest of the private military companies and one of the leading players in the privatised war in Iraq. These guys do much more than strut around as heavily armed bodyguards: "The security contractors are already involved in full-fledged battlefield operations, increasingly so as the insurgency in Iraq escalates. A few days after the Americans were killed in Fallujah, Blackwater Security Consulting engaged in full-scale battle in Najaf, with the company flying its own helicopters amidst an intense firefight to resupply its own commandos" (*Focus on the Corporation.*, 24/4/04; Russell Mokiber and Robert Weissman: "A Corporate Military Monster Is Being Created In Iraq"). Blackwater was founded in 1996 by Erik Prince, a billionaire former US Navy Special Forces veteran. It trains military and law enforcement personnel at its 2,400 hectare facility in North Carolina. "The facility boasts several target ranges and a simulated town for urban warfare training. It is so advanced that some of the US military's active duty special ops troops have trained there" (*Time*, 12/4/04; "When Private Armies Take To The Front Lines"; Michael Duffy). It is located near the major military base at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and recruits extensively from the Special Forces units based there. Iraq is where Blackwater has hit the headlines. "...Locals often mistake the guards for Special Forces or CIA personnel, which makes active duty military troops a bit edgy. 'Those Blackwater guys', says an intelligence officer in Iraq, 'they drive around wearing Oakley sunglasses and pointing their guns out of car windows. They have pointed their guns at me, and it pissed me off. Imagine what a guy in Fallujah thinks'. Adds an Army officer, who just returned from Baghdad: 'They are a subculture' (ibid.).

Since I last wrote about Blackwater (*PR* 29, June 2004, "The Privatisation Of War", online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-96.html>), it has been in the headlines many times and all of them for the wrong reasons. For a start, the families of those four Blackwater employees so horribly killed and mutilated in Fallujah in 2004 sued the company for wrongful death, claiming that they were poorly protected, understaffed and ill equipped. Peter Singer, author of "Corporate Warriors", said: "An owner of a circus faces more regulation and inspection than a private military company" (*Time*, 26/3/07; "Outsourcing the war. Four families want to know how their men, all guns for hire, died in Iraq", Brian Bennett").

Massacre In Baghdad

The old proverbial really hit the fan in September 2007 when Blackwater gunmen on convoy duty in Baghdad opened fire and killed at least 17 civilians (more were wounded), claiming they were responding to an actual or potential attack. The Iraqi government dismissed that claim, saying that they had randomly opened fire, deliberately killing civilians. An investigation by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation agreed. The Government revoked Blackwater's licence to operate, ordering all its personnel out of the country (this was reversed after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice personally apologised to the Iraqi Prime Minister, and promised to tighten US controls on the behaviour of Blackwater staff. The Government demanded \$US8 million in compensation for the families of each of the 17 murdered civilians, a total of \$US136m). Because Blackwater had the US State Department security contract, the revocation of its licence had the temporary effect of confining all US diplomats, government officials and civilians in Baghdad inside the fortified Green Zone. It was hardly an isolated incident. Blackwater gunmen (and those of other private military companies) routinely shot at motorists and rammed cars that got too close to the convoys that they were escorting, or which simply didn't get out of the way in time. In October 2007, gunmen from an Australian private military company (one which includes New Zealanders among its staff, according to the US State Department Website) shot and killed two Iraqi civilian women in a car, also containing children, which failed to stop.

Before handing over to its puppet Iraqi government, the US occupation authority had given all private military companies immunity from Iraqi law, so they could operate with impunity. For instance: on Christmas Eve 2006, an off-duty drunk Blackwater gunman shot and killed a security guard for one of the Iraqi Vice Presidents. The company flew him out of Iraq and fired him, but he was never charged with anything. Blackwater's founder, Erik Prince, was unapologetic about the Baghdad massacre, saying that his men behaved appropriately and stressing how proud he was that, although 27 Blackwater employees had died in Iraq, not one US government employee had been killed or wounded in Iraq while under Blackwater's protection.

Iraq Contract Ended; Murder Allegations

The Baghdad massacre proved the straw that broke the camel's back. Manslaughter charges were brought in the US against six of the Blackwater gunmen. One pleaded guilty; the others went to trial. The company denied any wrongdoing but in February 2009 the State Department announced it would not renew the contract, following the Iraqi government's revocation of Blackwater's licence to operate in the country (this time the revocation was for real, and for good). In March 09 Erik Prince announced he was stepping down as Chief Executive Officer and that the company was changing its name to Xe (pronounced Zee) Services.

The news has only got worse for Prince. In August 09, as part of a lawsuit by the families of the 17 murdered Iraqi civilians, affidavits were lodged in a US court by two "John Does", former employees (whose identities were suppressed for their own protection), alleging murder, weapons smuggling and the deliberate slaughter of civilians. The claims included that Prince had either murdered or arranged the killings of former employees who were cooperating with Federal investigators. One affidavit said that Prince "views himself as a Christian crusader tasked with eliminating Muslims and the Islamic faith from the globe" and that his company "encouraged and rewarded the destruction of Iraqi life" (*Press*, 7/8/09; "Prince faces murder claims", Tim Reid).

"...Missionary zealot or not, Prince's business is booming. (The former) Blackwater's work in Iraq alone has reportedly reaped more than US\$1 billion in Government security contracts. In the first Gulf War, the ratio of soldiers to private contractors was 60-1. In Iraq, that ratio skewed to almost 1-1. Welcome to the first truly corporate war. Prince's umbrella of companies now have a Maritime Division (with Somali pirates in their sights), a Security Division (Iraq and Afghanistan), a Domestic Operations Division (Bush called them in for Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans), a Canine Division (to train dog teams) and even a burgeoning little CIA with an Intelligence Division. There's no stopping their growth - and that's the problem. Under the declaration of former US Administrator of Iraq Paul Bremer, Blackwater had full immunity in Iraq under a US\$21 million no-bid contract to keep him alive. The results weren't pretty. The two John Does, one a former US Marine, the other formerly on Blackwater's management

team, say that Prince generated substantial revenue by illegally smuggling weapons on his private plane. Staff reportedly 'hotwashed' (destroyed) incriminating videotapes, emails and documents of excessive and unjustified deadly force to cover their tracks. Today Blackwater is fighting on different fronts - investigations by the Justice Department over the Nisour Square shootings, where Blackwater staff reportedly killed 17 civilians in a traffic roundabout; the Inland Revenue Service for tax evasion, and in federal civil court in a suit by families of Iraqi civilian victims suing for war crimes and the murder of loved ones. This is the residual stench of future corporate warfare, where a court martial has no meaning. Unlike enlisted soldiers, who are Blackwater employees accountable to - Erik Prince? When war is so thoroughly outsourced, we can only audit the books - and the bodies - after the funerals..." (*New Zealand Herald*, 8/8/09; "It doesn't get any dirtier than this in the world's first corporate war", Tracey Barnett).

But the culture of impunity showed it is still as strong as ever when, in December 2009, a Federal judge dismissed all charges against the five Blackwater gunmen charged with manslaughter in the September 2007 Baghdad massacre of 17 Iraqi civilians. The judgment did not rule if the shooting was proper, only that the prosecution had improperly used evidence to build its case (using sworn statements that the defendants had made after they had been promised immunity). It is unclear what this means for the sixth accused Blackwater gunman who had pleaded guilty and turned on his former colleagues. The Iraqi government had wanted the gunmen tried in the country where the crime was committed and said it would be closely watching how the US judicial system handled the case. Well, now they know - the American killers of Iraqi civilians have walked free.

CIA's Hitmen

Nor was Iraq the only place where the company formerly known as Blackwater was profitably employed to do the US Government's dirty work with "plausible deniability". In August 2009 it was revealed that, back in 2004, the CIA had hired Blackwater as part of a secret project to kill leading members of al Qaeda. The programme was a singular failure, not resulting in the capture or killing of any such targets, and the contracts were cancelled several years ago. "I suspect that if the agreements are ever really looked into - rather than a formal contract, the CIA reportedly brokered individual deals with top company brass - we will find out that Blackwater's assassination work was more about bilking the US taxpayer than it was killing Osama bin Laden or other al Qaeda leaders. More than a few senior CIA officers retired from the CIA and went to work at Blackwater, the controversial private security shop now known as Xe Services. Not only did those officers presumably take their CIA Rolodexes with them out the door, but many probably didn't choose to leave until they had a lucrative new contract lined up. But more to the point, Blackwater stood no better chance of placing operatives in Pakistan's tribal areas, where the al Qaeda leadership was hiding in 2004, than the CIA or the US military did.

"This leads to the question of what the CIA saw in Blackwater that the public still has not. Even before the company was expelled from Iraq after a Blackwater security detail in 2007 allegedly shot and killed 17 Iraqi civilians, the contractor for unclear reasons had taken over security duties that CIA staff employees used to carry out. Last May (09) in Kabul, four Blackwater contractors reportedly shot and killed two unarmed Afghans; Blackwater whisked the four out of the country before the Afghans could investigate. The State Department has also relied heavily on Blackwater in both Iraq and Afghanistan over the years.

"There may even be a darker side to Blackwater. This month (August 09), a former, anonymous Blackwater employee filed a sworn statement in Federal court in Virginia claiming that Blackwater's founder, Erik Prince (who is no longer involved with day-to-day operations of the company), was involved in the murder of at least one informant who reported to Federal authorities on his company. The allegation, first reported by the *Nation* magazine, was part of a civil suit filed by several Iraqis for the company's alleged abuses in the country. Blackwater has denied the claims, calling them 'anonymous, unsubstantiated and offensive assertions'. Still, the CIA has maintained its various Blackwater contracts, which run from protecting CIA operatives in the field to loading Hellfire missiles on Predator drones. And none of this is to mention that as soon as CIA money lands in Blackwater's account, it is beyond accounting, as good as gone.

"If the Obama Administration ever hopes to get a handle on the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan or any of the countries around the world where the 'war on terrorism' has been fought, it's going to have to figure out what happened to the billions of dollars spent on contracts. So far the Obama White House has been happy to work with the Bush Administration's contracting mess. In Afghanistan today, the company that supervises Blackwater is a British security firm called Aegis, which is headed by a notorious British mercenary (*our old mate, Tim Spicer, formerly of Sandline fame. Ed.*) Afghans are a people that do not take well to mercenaries. Even more troubling, I think we will find out that in the unravelling of the Bush years, Blackwater was not the worst of the contractors, some of which did reportedly end up carrying out their assigned hits" (*Time*, 21/8/09, "Blackwater Hit Squads: What Was The CIA Thinking?", Robert Baer - *Time.com's* intelligence columnist and a former CIA Middle East field officer. Baer wrote a fascinating profile of Tim Spicer in *Vanity Fair*, 1/3/07; "US: Iraq's Mercenary King", online at

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/04/spicer200704>). Indeed it was revealed, in December 09, that “hundreds” of Blackwater gunmen have been taking part in US military raids on al Qaeda militants in both Iraq and Afghanistan, causing fresh scrutiny of General Stanley McChrystal, the senior North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Commander in Afghanistan, who was head of the Pentagon’s Joint Special Operations Command between 2003 to 08 when he directed covert attacks on al Qaeda’s leadership in Iraq.

No End Of Scandals

There has been no end to embarrassing incidents involving “private security contractors”. In August 09, a British gunman was arrested by Iraqi authorities and charged with shooting dead a fellow Briton and an Australian during a drinking session. But the difference this time is that, since the start of 2009, the gunmen have been subject to Iraqi law after the expiry of the United Nations mandate which had guaranteed their legal immunity. So this guy is in Iraqi custody and could face hanging, if convicted. The case offered a rare insight into the ethical jungle that these companies operate in – the accused gunman had been sacked from another security firm for severe negligence and had a long history of mental illness caused by post-traumatic stress syndrome from his time in the British Army and repeated tours with security companies in Iraq. Yet he had no trouble going back there and getting a job with another security company. “Paranoid, competitive and fuelled by guns, alcohol and steroids. That is how one senior contractor in Baghdad describes the private security industry operating in the city’s Green Zone” (*New Zealand Herald*, 5/9/09; “Security contractors fall on harder times: Former soldier’s killing of colleagues sign of troubles, say insiders”, Terri Judd, *Independent*).

Right on cue, another major scandal erupted in September 09, this time in Afghanistan where photos were posted online of some of the 450 gunmen hired to protect the US Embassy in Kabul drinking vodka whilst naked and eating potato crisps from between each other’s buttocks (not to mention goading Muslim Afghan staff into drinking alcohol). There were also revelations that the Embassy guards had left the place and its staff unprotected while they went off on unauthorised “undercover” night time military operations in Kabul, taking the Embassy’s weapons and night vision goggles with them (the US Embassy has been a target of repeated Taliban attacks). The security company was ArmorGroup and it was sued by a number of former staff, including its former Operations Director at the Embassy, James Gordon, a former New Zealand Army captain, who claimed he was forced out after blowing the whistle on what was going on. Gordon said ArmorGroup’s “goal was to maximise their profits, provide a fig leaf of security at the embassy, and pray to God that nobody got killed” (*Press*, 12/9/09; “Former NZ army captain files lawsuit”). Gordon and his fellow claimants allege that the company’s cost-cutting led to the problems. That didn’t make any difference to the State Department, which renewed its contract until July 2010.

“...One central problem, explains Doug Brooks, president of the International Peace Operations Association, a trade association, is ‘the tendency of the US government to go for the lowest bidder no matter what, and the result is that even the better companies end up cutting their contracts to the bones, and as a result these problems are more frequent than you’d like’. Although currently there is no law requiring the Government to take the lowest bidder - though there is draft legislation to make it so - bureaucrats tend to favour the low bids so as to avoid being called up to Capitol Hill to justify their decisions.

“The problems have been exacerbated by the global consolidation of the security industry. In 2008, ArmorGroup was bought by G4S, the largest security company in the world. G4S also bought ArmorGroup’s rival, Wackenhut, which now runs ArmorGroup in the new conglomerate. Before they found themselves under the same big tent, Wackenhut and ArmorGroup had competed for the US Embassy contract, which ArmorGroup won with a substantially lower bid. Now, Wackenhut has found itself managing the Kabul Embassy contract anyway. In June (09), Wackenhut Vice President Samuel Brinkley admitted to Congress: ‘We feel we can safely say that adequate guard services for the Kabul embassy cannot be provided for the contract price’. Instead of making a profit, he said, the firm was losing \$US1 million a month. ‘We would welcome any help that the [Senate] Subcommittee [on Contracting Oversight, of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs] might be able to provide to enable the Government to pay a more reasonable price for security for the Embassy”’ (*Time*, 11/9/09; “Behind the Afghan Embassy Scandal, a Cost-Cutting Security Firm”, Ken Stier). Wackenhut is a company that New Zealanders should familiarise themselves with – it is the US parent of the Australian company which has been, thus far, the only private prison operator in NZ. John Minto provided fascinating detail about Wackenhut’s appalling history in his article “Profiting From Imprisonment: Maori Party Smooths The Way For Private Prisons”, in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 121, August 2009, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/21/06.htm>.

Corporate Feudalism

The unending series of scandals have not deterred the US government from increasing its reliance on private contractors. President Obama’s surge of 30,000 extra US troops into Afghanistan could be accompanied by an

additional 26,000 to 56,000 contractors (bringing the total in that country to as many as 160,000), according to the Congressional Research Service. Now this is for all contractors, not just security personnel, but there will be a proportionate increase in their numbers, as more and more of the US military's functions are contracted out to the private sector (for example, the US Command in Afghanistan is seeking intelligence analyst services from a private contractor). The privatisation of war continues at an ever accelerating pace and that means more private armies, more mercenaries, more gunmen, lawlessness, scandals, murders, cost-cutting, ripoffs, unaccountability, immunity and impunity. What we are witnessing is corporate feudalism where private companies with private armies, motivated solely by the huge profits to be made from war, assume the most basic life and death functions of the State. It is capitalism in the raw and it is a most unedifying sight.



SYSTEMATIC PRESSURES BEHIND US MILITARY AND COVERT ACTION

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Sagar Sanyal

A military or an intelligence agency embodies a concentration of power. At times, concentrations of power and their deployment may be necessary. However, a cautionary acknowledgement is that there is a potential for concentrations of power being used for unjust purposes. I take it to be an uncontroversial precautionary principle that we should bind concentrations of power with various checks and balances to minimise the possibility of their being used for unjust purposes.

With respect to the US military and intelligence agencies, such checks and balances include strong democratic accountability. Any policy regarding use of the military should be vetted by an informed public. Another check is to neutralise as far as possible any systematic pressures to deploy the military. The public (or elected representatives) may still determine that military or covert action is appropriate in a given case. However, the absence of systematic pressures to act thus would ensure that this power is only deployed when determined to be necessary. I discuss various domestic US institutions that either reduce democratic accountability of the military and intelligence agencies or that create systematic pressures for their use. The discussion addresses the following four questions.

1. What sorts of groups are likely to benefit most from military intervention by the US government?
2. Through which institutions are these interests able to have disproportionate influence on foreign policy?
3. Are there any institutional features that increase the likelihood of a significant component of military and covert intervention in US foreign policy?
4. Are there any institutions that reduce the ability of a relatively peaceful public majority to counter the influence of the relevant special interests?

In answering these four questions, I discuss various institutions. These include: lobbying and campaign finance pressure from the defence industry and from other industries on policy makers; “revolving door” appointments in the relevant industries and the relevant policy offices; the threat of reducing jobs in a Congressional district; the maintenance of a proliferation of US military bases abroad; the secrecy of various intelligence and military activities of agencies in the US and the lack of oversight by Congress; the poor performance of mass media; and the propaganda (or psychological operations) of the Defense Department. These institutions operate in various ways, as distinguished by the various subheadings above. Some of the institutions create a pressure on foreign policymakers to intervene politically or militarily, others make certain types of intervention more attractive in comparison to alternative ways to address a given problem. Some institutions make it easier for the identified special interest groups to shape policy without the critical attention of either Congress or of a significant proportion of the voting population.

What Sorts Of Groups Are Likely To Benefit Most From Military Intervention By The US Government?

Systematic pressures to deploy the military are likely to emerge from the defence industry (which supplies the Government with weapons and various services in the event of military action) and from large industries (especially extractive industries) that might benefit from using covert or overt military action that secures access to natural resources or to markets in foreign lands. With respect to pressure from the defence industry, this idea of the military-industrial complex has occupied popular discourse at least since former US President Dwight Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell speech upon leaving office. With respect to pressure from extractive industries, this idea has been discussed popularly in the context of colonialism and empire.

Defence Industry

Traditional defence companies make the goods of war, such as weapons, ammunition, aircraft, tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery. They also provide technical services to maintain these weapons and services such as logistics, training and communications support. The major US companies in this industry include Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, and Raytheon. These five are also among the six largest defence companies worldwide (the other being the UK company BAE Systems).

More recently, private intelligence gathering companies have been contracted by Government intelligence gathering agencies. Major such companies include Science Applications International Corporation, Booz Allen Hamilton and

CACI International (see *Jeremy Agar's review of Tim Shorrock's "Spies For Hire", elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*). The services of CACI include the provision of interrogators, four of whom have been accused of being directly or indirectly responsible for torturing prisoners in Abu Ghraib (Shorrock 2008: p281).

Private military contractors or PMCs offer personnel (as opposed to equipment) for combat zones. Their services include armed combat services, retired officers to provide strategic advice and military training; logistics; intelligence; maintenance services to armed forces; and tactical combat operations. Camp Doha in Kuwait, which served as the launch pad for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, was not only built by a PMC but also operated and guarded by one. Significant use of PMCs began in the early 1990s and has boomed in the 21st Century (Singer 2005).

There are problems peculiar to the growing PMCs and to the intelligence gathering companies that are not shared by other aspects of the defence industry. For instance, while US military personnel are accountable to a system of laws defining acceptable conduct and to an institution for enforcing these laws, private contractors hired by the Pentagon may not be. While US intelligence agencies may be legally bound by laws circumscribing permissible spying and may be subject to established oversight institutions to enforce these laws, contracted intelligence gatherers may not be so easily bound by enforceable law and their activities may remain hidden from any oversight under the guise of a business secret.

These companies have significant interests tied to US foreign policy. Here are the revenues from defence activities for 2007 for some of the larger companies. Lockheed Martin received \$US38.5 billion; Boeing received \$US32b; Northrop Grumman \$US24b; Raytheon \$US19.8b. Of the intelligence gathering companies, SAIC received \$US6.5b and Booz Allen Hamilton received almost \$US3b (www.defensenews.com). These companies have significant business deals with the US Departments of Defense and State, and various US intelligence agencies. Insofar as covert or overt military or political intervention abroad by US government agencies requires the products and services of the arms, intelligence gathering and private contractor companies, the companies have an interest in the US government pursuing such foreign policies.

There are also ways for the defence industry to profit from US foreign policy other than by directly selling their products to the US military establishment. The companies can sell their products to the governments of other countries. An aspect of US foreign policy is its training of foreign militaries. The US State Department's International Military Education and Training programme offered military training to 133 countries in 2002 (for comparison, there are 189 member countries in the UN). Such close contact between US military instructors and foreign officers and familiarity (during training) with US-made weapons translates into an inside track in weapons sales to these foreign governments. The seller of weapons in these transactions might be the Defense Department or private companies licensed to sell weapons by the State Department. This is a lucrative trade. The US is the biggest seller of munitions worldwide and exported \$US44.82 billion in arms over the period 1997-2001 (Johnson 2004: pp132-3).

Non-Defence Industries

Various industries (often extractive industries) would like access to the natural resources of foreign countries. Cost minimising motives predispose such companies to use means at their disposal to ensure the cheapest possible access to these resources. A foreign political aspirant's declared intention to nationalise, say, the country's oil industry or to raise the royalties demanded for resources, would encroach on the cost minimising motive of the company. If the company C from the US competes against a company from foreign country F over access to natural resources in a third country T, C might win the access to the resources if the political regime in T is friendlier to the Government of the US than to the Government of F. These sorts of considerations create an interest in influencing the US government to pursue a certain type of foreign policy, to bring about a certain sort of regime in a foreign country. Let me mention two of the better known examples of such intervention.

The US and British backed coup deposing Prime Minister Mosaddeq of Iran in 1953 and US support of the ensuing dictatorship of the brutal Shah is an example of covert US action tied up with oil interests. Mosaddeq had nationalised the country's oil industry which at the time had a significant role for British oil interests. The United Fruit Company successfully pressured the Eisenhower government to topple democratically elected President Arbenz of Guatemala via the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1954. Arbenz's agrarian reform agenda was set to hurt the company's interests, which included large landholdings in the country.

Through Which Institutions Are These Interests Able To Have Disproportionate Influence On Foreign Policy?

This is a matter of the means by which a special interest group can influence the relevant foreign policymakers in the US government. As with any special interests, these ones are likely to seek to influence policy through lobbying

and campaign finance. This influence can target both the Executive branch (through political parties) and Congress. A “revolving door” between highly placed officers in these companies and highly placed officers in the Executive branch of Government also raises concerns about conflict of interest improprieties. An additional influence of defence companies on Congresspersons is through the threat of removing skilled defence jobs from the Congressional district. The degree of influence afforded by such mechanisms is disproportionate to the number of voters benefiting from the decision. The majority of voters may have little to gain from the policy, and may even be against military intervention. However, organised, wealthy and well-connected special interests have greater influence on policymakers through lobbying and campaign contributions than do unorganised, relatively poor and relatively poorly connected voters.

Lobbying, Campaign Contributions, Political Engineering And Front-Loading

A six year study (1998-2003) of Department of Defense contracts, found that the ten largest defence contractors all spent heavily on both campaign contributions (a combined \$US35.7 million) and lobbying (\$US414.6 million). The return on their investment was a combined \$US340 billion in contracts over that time (Center for Public Integrity, 2004). Other major lobbying industries include the energy industry. Campaign contributions and lobbying are aimed both at Congresspersons and at the Executive. To influence the Executive branch, attention might be lavished on senior members of the relevant political parties, and on the Presidential candidates.

Former Defense Department military analyst, Franklin Spinney, describes the two techniques of front-loading and political engineering used by defence companies. Political engineering involves defence contractors spreading jobs and profits over as many Congressional districts as possible. Complex weapons systems often involve sub-systems that are sub-contracted to other firms. Such sub-contracting increases the ability to spread production across Congressional districts. This maximises the number of Congresspersons who stand to lose jobs and revenue for their district's economy (and potentially stand to lose votes as a consequence) in case the defence contract is cancelled. Such pork barrel politics also allows Congresspersons to ingratiate themselves with constituents by “winning” defence contracts for their district.

Those approving a defence programme may have qualms about its cost. Front-loading is the idea of attaining this approval by quoting unrealistically low figures in order to get the seed money for the programme. Once the programme is begun, it is easier to get approval for the actual, higher, costs, since failure to approve the costs would leave nothing to show for the seed investment. The approval is also made easier by political engineering, as many Congresspersons stand to lose jobs and revenue in their district. By presenting an unrealistically low estimate of the cost, the contract is made easier to approve. By political engineering, the contract is made difficult to terminate. Individuals in the Pentagon or Department of Defense are happy with the setup as they get control over a growing volume of resources and weapons. Individuals in the Congress are happy because this funnels Government money (via Department of Defense and via defence contractors) to their districts. The contractors are happy as they ensure greater demand for their products (Spinney 1998 [originally 1990]).

Revolving Door

An example of the institution of a revolving door is in private equity firms. A growing number of private equity firms are investing in defence companies in order to win contracts from the Department of Defense and the newly created Department of Homeland Security. This growth is understandable given the size of the potential pool available to contractors in this area. Half of the Defense Department budget (approximately \$US900 billion between 1998 and 2003) has gone to contractors rather than paying for direct costs such as payrolls for the uniformed armed services (Center for Public Integrity, 2004). A 2004 report on private equity firms investing in defence companies revealed that such equity firms employ five of the past nine Defense Secretaries, two Secretaries of State, two National Security chiefs, two CIA Directors and dozens of distinguished retired military officials (Ismail, 2004b). For a discussion of the Carlyle Group, the private equity firm with some of the greatest revenue from defence contracts in recent years, see Ismail 2004a.

Here is an example of a revolving door between the Defense Department and the defence industry. In 1992 Dick Cheney held the office of Secretary of Defense. In that year, the Defense Department paid the company Brown & Root a total of \$US8.9 million to produce a classified report detailing how private companies could help provide logistics for American troops. In the same year, that company won a contract to provide logistics for American troops. Between 1992 and 1999 the Defense Department paid Brown & Root over \$US1.2 billion for its work.

Cheney left the office of Secretary of Defense in 1992 and between 1995 and 2000 he was Chief Executive Officer of Halliburton (of which Brown & Root was a subsidiary). When Cheney began his tenure at Halliburton, the latter was doing less than \$US300 million a year in business with the Defense Department. By 1999, this figure had

grown to over \$US650 million (Bryce 2000). The obvious worry is that these ex-officials will be able to gain influence with their former colleagues in Government and gain a competitive edge for their defence companies over competitor companies. Another worry is that if Government officials are promised lucrative careers in a company after retirement from office, they may be willing to pull strings to favour that company in the awarding contracts.

Are There Any Institutional Features That Increase The Likelihood Of A Significant Component Of Military And Covert Intervention In US Foreign Policy?

There are three institutional factors to discuss – the proliferation of US military bases abroad, US training of foreign militaries and pressure from the defence industry. The US maintains a large number of military bases around the world. This makes it faster and cheaper to deploy troops whether for small scale covert operations, or, if the bases are large, also for larger and overt interventions. In addition there are the pressures from defence industry lobbies which would stand to gain contracts from any intervention. If a given problem can be addressed both through military/covert intervention and through other means, these institutions serve to systematically make the former means more attractive for the relevant foreign policy makers in the US government.

The US institution of training foreign militaries creates a channel of support for the relevant militaries through arms and intelligence. Such support can be a harmful sort of intervention in itself if the foreign military is repressive of the domestic population. The institution of training sometimes also allows the US to influence a foreign military to carry out US foreign policy by proxy, bypassing any domestic US compunction about the intervention. The Defense Department reports that in September 2001, there were 725 US military installations on foreign soil (Department of Defense 2002). These are the officially disclosed numbers. In addition, there exist bases that are undisclosed or secret, either because public knowledge that an installation is American would be politically embarrassing for the host government or for other reasons [1].

Since this was written, some more up to date figures have become available. “The global reach of the US military today is unprecedented and unparalleled. Officially more than 190,000 troops and 115 civilian employees are massed in approximately 900 military facilities in 46 countries and territories (the unofficial figure is far greater). The US military owns or rents 795,000 acres of land, with 26,000 buildings and structures, valued at \$US146 billion” (New Statesman, 30/9/09; “Obama’s Empire: An Unprecedented Network of Military Bases That Is Still Expanding”, Catherine Lutz). Ed.

The presence of overseas bases in geopolitically strategic regions of the world potentially reduces the cost of at least small scale interventions abroad as personnel and equipment may not need to be moved from the US to the target region. The bases also provide personnel with an official reason for their presence in a region. This official reason can be the cover for covert operations. Thus, once a decision is made to militarily or politically interfere in a foreign country, the large number of bases stationed overseas may reduce the cost of an intervention or make a covert intervention easier to disguise. Pressure from defence industry lobbies to prefer an interventionist alternative to a more diplomatic one may make itself felt informally through the close ties between the governmental defence Establishment and the industry.

The US relies increasingly on its armed forces and intelligence agencies to deal with foreign policy issues at the expense of diplomatic resources. The general strategy has been to build close ties between the US military and the local military in a given region and thus open a channel of influence. Programmes of military training and education, security assistance and foreign military sales have formed a part of this strategy. A distinct feature of this approach (as compared to official diplomatic relations) is that Defense Department-related agencies are better able to operate covertly and to engage with unstable foreign powers without public scrutiny.

Within the US military, Unified Combatant Commands (UCCs) are joint military commands composed of forces from more than one service (such as the Army and the Air Force). There are six UCCs in charge of six broad regions of the world, carving up all inhabited continents. The commanders in charge of each region, called combatant commanders, are four star generals or admirals and report only to the Secretary of Defense and the President. They oversee such matters as arms sales, military bases, intelligence and special operations among others. These commanders have considerable impact on foreign policy in their region and often have more impact than US ambassadors operating in the region. One major type of influence is in the cultivation of close relations with local military organisations, often in the form of training missions by US Special Forces of the local military. These close relations serve as a conduit for arms sales, allow the possibility of US spying, and act as a channel of influence upon the local armies to carry out policies favoured by the US Defence Department (Johnson, 2004, p124).

The growing influence of the Defense Department in foreign policy, exhibited for instance in the significant powers available to the regional UCCs, makes it more likely that at least a part of the US foreign policy position in relation to

a country will be in the form of military intervention. At times this will be because of explicit policy decisions in the US Executive branch to deal with a perceived crisis not by diplomacy but instead by intervention in the form of arming of local military and paramilitary forces or influencing local militaries to enact US foreign policy by proxies or by other covert operations.

However, even in the ordinary course of events and in the absence of any perceived crisis, arms sales and US training of foreign militaries can be a potentially harmful form of US military and political intervention abroad. For example, such training may support (in effect, if not by intent) the military of a repressive government against the wishes of the repressed population by supplying it with arms, training and techniques to keep rebellious populations under control (Lumpe, 2002, p16). The interest of the combatant commanders or of the Defense Department in maintaining cooperative relations with the local military may trump any concern about the human rights record of the local military or the level of domestic popular support for the Government even if the latter sorts of concerns have been raised by the State Department or by Congress (Lumpe, 2002, pp24-5). For some indication of the breadth of such influence, note that US special operations forces alone (leaving aside regular military forces) train foreign troops in around 150 countries annually (Lumpe, 2002, p1).

Here is an example. In 1991, Indonesian troops trained by the US and supplied by US weapons massacred hundreds in East Timor. This led Congress to cut all funding for Indonesia under the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET). However, the Defense Department secretly continued its military relations with Indonesia by initiating a new programme – the Joint Combined Exchange Training Program (JCET). The programme purported to give US Special Forces training in foreign languages and familiarity with the local military, but in fact allowed 36 training exercises with the Indonesian Special Forces between 1992 and 1998 (Johnson, 2004, pp137-8). The US Special Forces trained their counterparts in urban guerrilla warfare, surveillance, sniper marksmanship and psychological operations (Biddle, 2002).

Are There Any Institutions That Reduce The Ability Of A Relatively Peaceful Public Majority To Counter The Influence Of The Relevant Special Interests?

I discuss three institutions here – lack of democratic accountability; the poor performance of the mass media; and Government propaganda. Some of the military and covert interventions occur with little oversight by Congress. In such cases, there is not even a *formal* democratic check on the policy through Congressional representatives. The intelligence agencies, for example, conduct projects that are not properly identified on the budgets approved by Congress. Historically, projects by US intelligence agencies have included not merely spying, but also political intervention in other countries, arms exports, supporting of coups and political assassinations.

The poor performance of the mass media means that when a decision to militarily intervene *is* publicly aired, much of the voting public does not receive a balanced account of the issue. Academic analysis of the US mass media system notes various factors that contribute to the poor performance. A factor that relates closely to mass media, but that nonetheless deserves independent mention is that of Defense Department PSYOPS (psychological operations) programmes. Even when these are theoretically aimed at an international audience rather than the domestic one, the nature of global news coverage in mass media is such that the psyops influence domestic audiences as well. US voters other than an identified group of special interest *formally* have the capacity to influence the Government policy making and to temper the influence of their fellow constituents in the identified group. However, these are institutional reasons that reduce the likelihood and efficacy of the tempering.

Secrecy

Special Access Programs or SAPs are highly classified programmes funded in a way to keep the budget secret. The budgets for such programmes can be acquired through fake labels for projects or by channelling funds from other Government agencies to the Defense Department and the intelligence agencies. The Defense Department began this practice with the Manhattan Project during World War 2, which allowed the atomic bomb to be built without Congressional knowledge.

Such Special Access Programs (also known as black projects covered under a black budget) are extensively used and can be well funded. For some indication, in 1992, a Library of Congress report noted that the GAO (Government Accountability Office) had identified 185 such programmes and that recent estimates (since authoritative indicators are unavailable) suggest secret military spending of \$US30 to \$US35 billion per year (Caldwell, 1992). Since then, the black budget is thought to have expanded. In 2003, it was reported to be at its highest since 1988 (Morgan, 2003). Much of the programme involves research and development of expensive technology and weapons such as aircraft. However, the black budget also includes the budget for covert action by the many intelligence agencies.

Given the aim of plausible deniability for covert action, it is often difficult to establish where the authorisation for a specific covert action was initiated (Church Committee, 1975, p10). Since the 1970s' Watergate scandal, there has been a requirement that CIA covert activity (if not covert activity carried out by other intelligence services) be authorised by a Presidential finding. Moreover, a selected group of Congresspersons receive briefings on the Special Access Programs – the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence. However, even this reporting requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense (Johnson, 2004, pp117-8; 2006, p103). These provisions have not worked as intended. Congress forbade CIA funding of the Contras – an armed guerrilla group seeking to overthrow the elected government of Nicaragua in the 1980s. The CIA got around the problem of inadequate funding for their support of the Contras by diverting funds raised through arms sales to Iran and by turning a blind eye as traffickers smuggled cocaine into the US and diverted some money to the Contras. [2]

Moreover, in the absence of Presidential findings on a specific issue, the CIA has used “worldwide findings” as authority to initiate certain types of covert action. Covert operations can also be funded by seeking funds from corporations or foreign governments either as political favours or when some interests of these agents coincide with relevant interests of the decision-makers in the US government (Johnson, 2006, pp103-4). The 2005 US covert intervention in the Iraqi elections used retired CIA agents and other non-governmental personnel and funds not necessarily appropriated by Congress in the belief that it is only necessary to brief Congressional intelligence committees if the CIA operation is an officially sanctioned one (Hersh, 2005).

Mass Media

At times, a decision to intervene abroad is debated publicly before the intervention. One possible check on a representative government's power to intervene is the action of a majority of the population exercising their democratic power over governmental policy. The majority public opinion about the justice of, or need for, a proposed intervention depends partly on the factual information available to the public, and on its consequent ability to assess the reasons advanced for the intervention by the Executive branch of the Government. The institution with primary responsibility and capacity for the dissemination of such factual information is the domestic mass media. [3]

In cases where the Government view has been captured by special interests who seek intervention, it is to be hoped that the news media would thoroughly assess the proposal to intervene to present the public with the requisite information to judge the cogency of the case for intervention. However, institutional analysis of US mass media suggests reasons that the news media's discussion of a proposed intervention may tend to be insufficiently critical of Government pronouncements. Let me outline some of the relevant analysis.

In the US mass media system, the dominant news organisations operate as profit maximisers, and thus seek to minimise cost. They earn an income largely from advertising and have costs that include paying reporters and journalists and paying for independent investigations. Profit maximisation places certain sorts of pressures. It is costly to maintain a large staff of reporters to assign to stories as they arise, and it is costly to ask them to research each story, interview relevant sources, and seek out dissenting opinions. Wealthy and well organised groups can afford to make press releases, publications, briefings, and video and audio news releases about issues that affect their interests. Such groups can disseminate the press releases free of charge to news media. The cost minimising imperative of news organisations means that they will tend to have a bias towards accepting and presenting such cheap sources of news, and if at all possible, avoid incurring the cost of researching the issue themselves.

The groups with the requisite wealth for making such free press releases are, overwhelmingly, the corporate sector and the Government. Thus, simply by the cost minimising imperative, news media have a tendency to over-represent the views of the corporate sector and the Government. The corporate sector has long pursued a strategy for influencing media coverage of corporate issues by funding think tanks that can act as a nominally independent (not explicitly representing a corporation) source for interviewees. A very substantial US government effort in this field has long been maintained by such bodies as the Department of Defense, the Air Force, and other armed forces (see the sources cited in Herman and Chomsky, 2002, p20).

All this would not be so problematic if news outlets that were credulous and uncritical due to cost minimising pressures were balanced by other news outlets that are duly sceptical and that invest resources in independent research and scrutiny. We cannot hope to design a media institution that guarantees all and only the truth relevant to each important story. The best we can do is to design a system in which the poor performance of some news outlets is not too detrimental to the level of information available to the public, thanks to the better performance of competing news outlets. Informed by the diversity of voices, citizens can then make up their own minds as to what is best supported by evidence. This public good is undercut if a small number of voices dominates the relevant media and thus drowns out smaller voices. As a systematic consideration, it is desirable that the diversity of voices be

relatively equal in power and reach in important respects, so that a more powerful competitor cannot drown out its rivals.

However, the mass media system in the US is highly concentrated. This is an important part of the explanation for the media's poor performance. Even if critical voices exist that consistently expose relevant evidence that is mostly ignored by most media, the critical voices may not reach the majority of the public. The bulk of the mass media in the US is owned by about half a dozen giant conglomerates – Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, News Corporation, General Electric and Bertelsmann (Bagdikian, 2004, p3ff). There are other large media corporations that round out the dominant companies but that do not match the overall dominance of the big six. There are also some companies with particular dominance in a given medium, such as Clear Channel in radio, or Gannett in newspapers.

The power of the major media outlets lies not only in the fact that they are the direct source of news for a massive proportion of the public, but also in the fact that they set the agenda for many minor media outlets. Small news outlets that are *not* owned by the large media conglomerates must minimise costs like their competitors. They too try to cut spending on reporters and on investigative resources. As a result, much of their international and national news and analysis is taken from the major outlets. This is one way in which, the major outlets are agenda setters. What they choose to discuss, the facts they present in the discussion and the tenor of their coverage set the agenda for smaller outlets who do not have the resources to independently investigate stories while remaining competitive against the major companies.

Propaganda Or PSYOPS

A related problem that bears distinct mention is that of Government propaganda. The over-reliance on Government sources and a failure to seek out critiques of these or to fact-check them is made even more problematic when the Government sources engage in what is (euphemistically) called psychological operations or PSYOPS. In an article (19/2/02), the *New York Times* reported that the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Influence was "developing plans to provide news items, possibly even false ones, to foreign media organisations", the goal being to "influence public sentiment and policy makers in both friendly and unfriendly countries" (Hart, 2005). Amidst public outrage, the Pentagon closed the office, but Defense Secretary Rumsfeld quietly admitted that all of its tasks would simply be carried out by other agencies.

A relatively recent development in Government news releases is the use of video and audio news releases (VNRs and ANRs). These are produced to resemble news segments on television and radio. These have long been in use by corporations to smuggle favourable coverage of their product (i.e. advertisement), into news broadcasts. The segment is intended to pass as news because it informs viewers of some technological or pharmaceutical innovation. While the public relations (PR) firms producing these releases generally take care not to make false claims, they have an imperative to avoid dissenting views, downplay criticism, include paid testimonials and exaggerate effectiveness as much as possible short of a lie. US government departments, including the Defense Department also use such releases. The releases often include reporting by former television news reporters and are in all other ways indistinguishable from news clips. Given the cost cutting imperatives of the media companies, they have an incentive to cut down on their staff of reporters or on their budget for independent news gathering, and to resort to such news releases as far as possible. Significant US government use of VNRs and ANRs has occurred at least under the Clinton and the most recent Bush Administrations.[\[4\]](#)

Often the Government-produced releases are distributed to international news organisations like Reuters and AP, from where they reach major US networks, and then feed through to local affiliates (Barstow and Stein, 2005). While the Government claims that it informs the recipient organisations about the producer of the segment, this information may get lost as it travels the chain from international news organisations, to local ones. Even if the information reaches the broadcasting agent, in the absence of a legal requirement to the contrary, the agent has an interest in neglecting to mention the source, to cast its news show in a favourable light by promoting the impression that the show's own reporters created it.

The Congressional Government Accountability Office has released at least three reports stating that the use of such releases in news may constitute "covert propaganda" on the part of the Government, despite government pronouncements that the fault lay not with them but with the news broadcasters who failed to disclose the origin of the video and audio segments. The GAO has no enforcement abilities and the Government has, for the most part, taken no note of the reports (Barstow and Stein, 2005).

Another recent revelation about Defense Department propaganda relates to retired military officials (Barstow, 2008). Retired military officials are widely used by news stations as independent military experts (not tied to either the Government or to defence companies) not merely on strategic decisions of troop movements, but also on broader

policy for the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs in President George W Bush's first term argued that in a spin-saturated news climate, opinion is swayed most by voices perceived as authoritative and independent. Retired military analysts were identified as such voices. Since news shows were increasingly using these analysts, they were targeted as particularly influential. The idea was to treat them as "message force multipliers" or "surrogates" (Defense Department terms) who could be counted on to deliver the Administration's themes and messages to the public in the form of their own opinions.

The analysts were not paid to echo the Government view. However, the analysts collectively represent about 150 military contractors either as lobbyists, senior executives, board members or consultants. Such military contractors derive an advantage from inside information about the military's needs that is unavailable to their competitors. Analysts are of greater use to the military contractors if they can boast inside access. The Defense Department offered just such insider access. The analysts received hundreds of private briefings from senior military leaders, officials from the White House, State Department and Justice Department. They were taken on tours of Iraq and given access to classified intelligence. Moreover, the Defense Department maintained a close watch over the interviews and opinion pieces delivered by these analysts. Those who were critical of the Administration's policy were not invited back, thus losing their valuable inside access.

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[1] See <http://www.motherjones.com/military-maps> for a graphical representation of global US military presence.

[2] See National Security Archives

[3] For a longer discussion of US mass media in relation to US military acts in general and the current Iraq War in particular, see http://scannerclearly.org/blog/2009/01/06/how-did-us-mass-media-perform-in-assessing-the-bush-administrations-case-for-invading-iraq_19/

[4] VNRs have been used not only by corporations and by the US government, but also by foreign agents wishing to influence the US public. A PR firm hired by the Kuwaiti Emirate upon Iraq's invasion of the country in 1990 sought to create pro-Kuwait and pro-war feelings in the American public prior to the US intervention (the 1991 Gulf War). Among other means of influence, was the use of VNRs. See Stauber and Rampton, 1995 chapter 10. The relevant section can be accessed online at <http://www.prwatch.org/books/tsigfy10.html>

ORGANISER'S REPORT

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Murray Horton

ABC: 09 Quiet, But 10 Will Be All Go

2008 was an unusually busy year for ABC, with a protest at the Waihopai spybase, a national speaking tour by Cora Fabros from the Philippines and a whole lot of things arising from the splendid deflation of one of the Waihopai spybase domes by the Ploughshares activists. By contrast, 2009 has been an unusually quiet year for ABC. We decided not to hold a protest at the Waihopai spybase last January – the media has got the idea that it's an annual event but that is not quite the case. We decided not to hold one in January 2009 for both tactical and practical reasons. The tactical reason is that we decided that our 2009 activity should be focused on solidarity with the Domebusters' trial. The practical one is that I was not available to organise any such protest, which I always do, as I was away on holiday in the Philippines for six weeks from November 2008 until January 2009. And Bob Leonard was not available to do it in my absence, as he was away at his son's wedding in January. We took this decision with some reluctance but an acceptance of its inevitability. We only received one or two negative responses from ABC members, saying we would "lose momentum" in the two decade long campaign to close Waihopai.

As it turned out, we were optimistic in thinking that the Domebusters' trial would be in 2009 – in fact, it won't be until March 2010, in Wellington. Before we knew that date and venue, we had resolved that we would hold another Waihopai spybase protest in January 2010. We are doing so and preparations are in full swing. I will report on that next year. ABC committed to both a Waihopai spybase protest in its usual January slot and a range of solidarity activities during the Domebusters' trial, regardless of when and where that would be. So now we only have six weeks between the two events but we are confident that we can do them both justice. The jury trial is set down for a week in the Wellington District Court – I plan to go to Wellington for that week and at the time of writing am fully engaged, along with people in Wellington, in organising solidarity activities. In fact, preparations for the Domebusters' trial have taken up a lot of my time and energy in the past year, but I'm afraid that I can't tell you anything about that. Not yet anyway. All that I can legally say is that a District Court judge has directed that the jury trial will take place in Wellington. You will get a full report next year. And ABC also has another project on the go, but I can't yet discuss that publicly, either, I'm sorry. All will be revealed in due course.

Peace Researcher

I edit *Peace Researcher*, so I'm biased but I reckon it's a pretty good little newsletter (my only regret is that so few people get to see it). The fact that it looks so good is down to the flair and attention to detail of my wife, Becky, who is the layout editor. There is an inevitable degree of overlap with *Watchdog* which I also edit but *PR* also carries a range of articles that don't appear in *Watchdog* or anywhere else. The July 09 issue (online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prcont38.html>) had the theme of "Spies Amongst Us" and led off with three articles by three different writers (one of them being me) about Rob Gilchrist who was exposed, in December 2008, as having been a Police spy and agent provocateur within the activist movement around the country for the previous decade. One of the articles was by Gilchrist's former partner who actually exposed him and who described in fascinating detail exactly how she did so, and how she in turn spied on him as he carried on oblivious to having been discovered. ABC was among the Christchurch-based groups that he was tasked to spy on but we smelled a rat as soon as he first came on the scene in the late 90s and he knew that we knew, so he didn't waste time trying to worm his way into our affections. Not to mention the fact that nothing that we were doing was of any possible interest to the cops, it was all very boring and above board. He had greater success with other, less suspicious, groups. And *PR* specialises in articles about US foreign policy and how little old NZ fits into the global war strategy. It includes articles about campaigns in countries such as Australia, the Philippines and Japan that don't get covered by any other NZ movement publications, let alone the mainstream media.

I commit to getting out two issues of *PR* a year and, frankly, it's a struggle to do that. I currently find myself simultaneously preparing an end of year issue of both publications (and you know what they say about men and multitasking). I was in a similar position towards the end of 2008, racing to get both done before going to the Philippines. Then I prioritised *PR*, because it was important that coverage of Cora Fabros' midyear national speaking tour, ABC's biggest international project for several years, appear in the same year it took place. The December *Watchdog* had to wait until February 09. But this year my emphasis is the reverse (not that I'm going away to the Philippines this Christmas), *Watchdog* takes priority, as it nearly always does, and *PR* has to wait its turn. I continue to work closely with Bob Leonard on *PR* (although we haven't been co-editors for years now) and special thanks are due to ABC's Webmaster, Yani Johanson, who manages to fit in uploading the online edition along with his exhausting round of duties as a Christchurch City Councillor.

ABC is in good shape. We have a small membership – it is a specialist niche subject – but plenty of active supporters who don't need to be actual members. We have \$11,000 in the bank. The committee has shrunk by one in the past year. Andre Prassinos had changed family circumstances (becoming a father) and moved back south. Lynda Boyd is still at Auckland University, but she attends ABC meetings when she's back in Christchurch. The core of the committee is myself, Bob Leonard, Robyn Dann and Dan Rae. Yani Johanson attends meetings when his Council commitments don't clash (which isn't often). It is a lively little group and we are all good friends, which makes it fun. I am the ABC media spokesperson, but the lack of a Waihopai protest or anything much else happening (not publicly anyway) means that I haven't done much in that capacity in 2009. I've put out the odd press release and done an interview or two. For instance, when the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (the spy agency which runs Waihopai) this year replaced the dome deflated by the Domebusters in 08 and persisted with the laughable bullshit that the purpose of the domes is not to prevent people from being able to work what international communications satellites the base's dishes are pointed at, but to simply protect them from the weather, I put out a release saying that Waihopai's dishes must be uniquely fragile, because how come no other satellite dishes in the country (such as the huge dishes operated by Telecom and the TV networks, let alone the hundreds of thousands of satellite TV dishes) need such "weather protection"? The media thought that was so obvious it was good for a light hearted interview.

Organiser Account In Good Shape

In my 2008 *Report* I said that the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income and has done since 1991, needed a boost as it had fallen too low. We've put in some work this year running a Special Appeal to supporters outside of our actual members and that has netted both donations and more pledgers. As a result that Account is now in a much healthier situation than it was a year ago – at the time of writing, the Westpac cheque account which is used to pay me holds \$3,500 (in round figures – it had dropped to just below \$1,000 at its lowest ebb last year). The bulk of the money - \$14,600 (in round figures) is held in a Kiwibank term deposit and unlike the 2008 situation, none of that term deposit has had to be used in 2009 to top up the cheque account. The most remarkable thing about the Organiser Account is the huge swing from one off donations to regular pledges – it used to be approximately a split of two thirds to one third in favour of pledges, now it is four to one, which is the highest proportion of pledges ever. Including those who pledge quarterly, half yearly and annually (most do so monthly or fortnightly) the number of pledgers has increased to more than 50 (up from 47 in 2008), the best it has ever been. This puts the Account on the most secure footing it has ever had, because those are regular automatic payments. Of course pledgers also stop for a variety of reasons (financial, old age, overseas travel are among the reasons for recent cancellations – not to mention death) so the donations are still vitally important. One national organisation makes an annual \$1,000 donation; some individuals have donated several hundreds of dollars at a time this year. The Account is sufficiently flush for CAFCA and ABC to have recently decided to increase my hourly rate by another \$1 (up to \$15 which, coincidentally, is the target for the union campaign for the minimum wage). As I say every year (this has lasted an amazing 18 years so far), my heartfelt thanks to all of you who keep supporting my work, and therefore that of CAFCA and ABC, by your generosity. I (quite literally) couldn't do it without you.

Catching Up With Friends From Ancient Past

Personally, 2009 was an interesting year. It's been very busy, across the full range of the three groups for whom I work (the unpaid third one being Philippines Solidarity) and, as I've said, I can't yet publicly reveal quite a bit of what I've been working on. I've remained relatively sane and fit and healthy – all three of us at home survived the Great Swineflu Panic of Winter 2009 almost unscathed. But, courtesy of our youngest member, I got a cough that lasted a fortnight and was diagnosed as bronchitis, something that I haven't had since I was a little kid. That didn't slow me down, just meant that my days and nights were filled with rather more coughing and spitting than usual. Pedestrians were well advised to duck as I hurtled past on my bike. Another instance of "age related wear and tear" sent me to a physiotherapist for the first time in my life, but she told me: "You're a bit boring, mate, there's nothing wrong with you". We spent more time talking about impending changes to the physiotherapy regime under ACC before she sent me home. I've got around the country a bit more than usual. I had a few days in Auckland when I went up there in March in my CAFCA capacity for the Roger Award event and I made a point of making a couple of flying weekend visits to Wellington at the beginning and end of winter for significant birthdays of old friends and colleagues. Of course, it was impossible to separate these splendid social occasions from politics – one of those friends has the SIS Director as his ex-brother-in-law, so I got to meet him (and his wife and one of their sons) at the party. The other party was a combined celebration of the 30th anniversary of Vanguard Films with whom I, and CAFCA and ABC, have had a very long and productive working relationship.

There was one particularly special Australian visitor to Christchurch this year. Neil Riethmuller made his first visit back here from his Queensland home since he was deported in 1975, after serving part of a four year prison

sentence for firebombing the US Consulate here (along with his then partner – she got three years). That happened during the turmoil arising from the Vietnam War protest movement. The Government gave him a visa to attend the Labour Weekend wedding of his son. I hadn't seen Neil since 1988 when I and my then partner had visited him. But we've kept in touch through all those years and he's regularly sent me a splendid selection of Australian political T shirts. Plus I have a family connection to Toowoomba, the Queensland city where he lives. I am ¼ Australian and my convict ancestor (transported to Aussie as a 16 year old) ended up there as one of its 19th Century founding landowners and a publican. One of his pubs is preserved as a historic place and was the venue, earlier in the year, for a family gathering for the launch of a biography of him. I didn't go but Neil did and got me a copy of the book. There was delicious irony in Neil's choice of accommodation for his week in Christchurch – the old Addington Prison (which is now a boutique backpackers') where he had spent six weeks on remand in 1973. He was the only inmate I had ever visited there and it was quite surreal to stroll around to the old prison (it's only a few minutes walk from home) to see him for the first time in 21 years and be given a guided tour of the cells, etc, by an ex-resident. On a dark and stormy night (it really was) I took him on a walking tour of central Christchurch, his first time in the city as a free man in 36 years. Naturally we visited the scene of the crime and both burst out laughing when we discovered that the old US Consulate building now houses a major transnational security firm. And for the first time ever he was able to look through every issue of my bound volume of the 1974 edition of *Canta*, the University of Canterbury student paper (which I edited that year and in which he, and his then partner, featured on a very regular basis). It was great to see him again.

There never seems to be any shortage of things to do, which is exactly how I like it. For full details of my CAFCA work (both in 2009 and planned for 2010), please see the much longer full version of this Report in Watchdog 122, December 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/22/08.htm>. ABC has got a busy year planned. No rest for the wicked but, at the same time, it's bloody good fun. So, full speed ahead and damn the torpedoes.

CAFCA/ABC ORGANISER ACCOUNT 2008/09

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Bob Leonard

Cheque account balance on 31/03/08	\$3,820.97
Balance on 30/03/09	<u>3,513.30</u>
	-307.67

Expenses

Murray's pay	29,699.37
Cash to MH (pocketed)	190.00
Other cheques	<u>158.00</u>
	30,047.87

Income

One-off donations	5,295.00
Cash to MH (pocketed)	190.00
Pledges	<u>24,255.20</u>
	29,740.20

Difference -307.67 (cheque account difference for year)

One-off donations	18.4%
Pledges	81.6%

Number of pledgers: 51 as of July 2009

Term deposit amount reinvested in KiwiBank 28/05/09 \$14,396.72 for 150 days at 3.75% (tax exempt)

Bob Leonard
Organiser Treasurer
7/9/09

REVIEW: “LOOKING FOR ANSWERS: A LIFE OF ELSIE LOCKE”

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

by Maureen Birchfield, Canterbury University Press, 2009. \$69.95

- Murray Horton

This is a first for me – the first time I have reviewed a biography of someone for whom I had earlier written an obituary (my obituary of Elsie Locke is in *Peace Researcher* 23, June 2001, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/elsobit.htm>. That issue had a photo of Elsie on the cover). In it I wrote: “To the great regret of her family, friends and colleagues, there is one book that she never wrote – her autobiography. Her fascinating life will have to be written up by somebody else”. It is now eight years since Elsie’s death, and this very handsome, lavishly illustrated, extensively detailed and completely fascinating book took five years of research, writing and editing, but it’s been well worth the wait. The writer, Maureen Birchfield, is to be congratulated on capturing the many, many aspects of Elsie’s life in 560 pages. Birchfield is no disinterested observer – her parents were comrades of Elsie’s in the former Communist Party, from the 1930s until the mid 50s and her mother, Connie Birchfield, was a lifelong close friend (and the subject of a 1998 book by her daughter).

Under State Surveillance For Half A Century

If you have been following the revelations throughout 2009 about the files kept on numerous people, such as me, by the NZ Security Intelligence Service, then you will be fascinated by this book. To quote Birchfield’s Introduction: “...the NZSIS, which confirmed, in August 2006 that it ‘holds information’ on her, including earlier security-related records of the New Zealand Police and the Security Intelligence Bureau’. The then Director of Security for the NZSIS, ER Woods, was not willing to release the records. He explained that ‘a considerable period of time needs to elapse before security concerns, such as the protection of sources of information, diminish ... information may generally be considered for release 50 years after the creation of the record or, in the case of personal files, 120 years after the birth of the subject or 50 years after the death of the subject’.

“Following the appointment of Warren Tucker as Director of Security for the NZSIS in 2007, I decided to exercise my right under the Official Information Act to seek a review of Woods’ decision. I was working on my final draft of Elsie’s story when I received a letter from the then Acting Chief Ombudsman, Beverley Wakem, who agreed to undertake a ‘formal investigation’. My complaint was successful: early in May 2008, when my manuscript was all but complete, I received copies of 220 declassified documents relating to Elsie Locke from the NZSIS, as well as a photograph of Elsie’s first husband, Fred Freeman – the first I, or the Locke family, had seen. I have inserted quotes from this new information at appropriate points in the text, as a counterpoint to the information on Elsie gleaned from the public record, and from her own accounts.

“Security records include lists of when and where Elsie attended meetings over about four decades and what she said at those meetings. The record starts in 1933 when the Police Special Branch (PSB) kept its eye on her. During the war years, from 1942 to 1945, the Security Intelligence Bureau (SIB) – part of the Ministry of Defence – also monitored her activities. In 1957 the New Zealand Security Service (NZSS) replaced the PSB and took over surveillance of Elsie and others suspected of subversive activities. In 1969 the NZSS changed its name to the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS).

“From 1962 Elsie’s security record is less detailed, after a handwritten note on an NZSS file stated: ‘She should not now be a target of our organisation except that we should continue to file info that comes our way gratuitously’. The last report about her was made in 1986, when she was reported to have attended, with (husband) Jack, the winter social of the Christchurch Branch of the Socialist Unity Party. After that Elsie’s file consists of documents, press cuttings and reports of public meetings in which she ‘is listed among the attendees’. Throughout the declassified documents are biographical details about Elsie and her family and some incisive descriptions of her character. Most of the information gathered is correct, though there are some interesting errors of fact and judgement...”

Of course, Elsie was just one member of what former Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon once described as “the most notorious Communist family in New Zealand”. Her husband, Jack Locke, was a leading member of the Communist Party for many decades and Chairman of the Christchurch Branch for as long as I knew him. He stayed loyal to the Party through all its various tortuous twists and turns (pro-Soviet, pro-China, pro-Albania, then all alone after the “collapse of Communism”. It is now Socialist Worker). He stayed loyal until his death in 1996 (uncannily, both he and Elsie died aged 88 years and seven months). My obituary of Jack is in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 84,

May 1997, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/8191/84.pdf>. Keith Locke was for years a leading figure in the former Socialist Action League, and then in the former New Labour Party and Alliance. He has been a Green MP since 1999. His sister Maire Leadbeater has been a high profile political activist for decades. Both of them have been regulars at Waihopai spybase protests for many years. The SIS kept files on them both since they were kids, starting precisely because of who their parents were and continuing for decades. There was a political scandal in early 2009 when it was revealed that the SIS had spied on Keith for seven years after he was elected to Parliament. Maire wrote about what was in her SIS Personal File - with emphasis on her years in the peace movement - in "Activist Annals" in *PR* 38, July 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-178b.htm>.

Spies & Traitors

Sticking with the theme of the State spying on the Lockes, Chapter 11 contains several fascinating pages extracted from the unpublished memoirs of the late Ken Martin. This will be of great interest to those who, like me, worked with Ken in various Christchurch committees and campaigns in the 1980s and 90s (he was a member of both the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa – CAFCA - and the Communist Party for years). In 1958 Ken, an English migrant, joined the William Morris Group (named after the famous 19th Century British socialist and artist) and its sub-group, the Rouseabouts. Elsie was a founder and driving force in both these cultural groups, plunging into popular culture work once she quit the Party in 1956 (the Soviet invasion and occupation of Hungary that year being the last straw, as it was for so many Western Communists). Ken was alarmed at the political bent of the groups and took his concerns to the cops, who directed him to the Security Service. They recruited Ken as a spy. For several years he spied on Communists and unionists in Christchurch, very specifically the Lockes, getting paid £7 per week. "So successful was Ken Martin in his undercover work that he eventually became president of the William Morris Group". According to his memoirs Ken became uncomfortable in his role as a traitor and quit (not without difficulty) and, having seen the light, genuinely joined the progressive movement. Others have a different opinion as to his subsequent role in Christchurch, considering that he simply carried on doing what he had previously confessed to doing.

Just as a record of several decades of State spying on one individual, and on the Communist Party and peace groups, etc, this book is invaluable. But Maureen Birchfield has not delved into the subject of another State, namely the US, spying on New Zealand Communists during the Cold War. *Foreign Control Watchdog* 65, October 1990, included a fascinating article entitled "Spies Amongst Us: How The US Embassy Saw New Zealand 1945-60", <http://historicalwatchdog.blogspot.com/2009/12/foreign-control-watchdog-october-1990.html>. It was an analysis of a huge collection of declassified US documents, detailing their take on Communists and unionists in NZ. The most explosive section revealed how Sid Scott, a former General Secretary of the Communist Party (he was expelled following disagreements with his comrades over the invasion of Hungary), contacted the US Embassy and offered his services to tell them everything he knew about the Party and its members in NZ. That Watchdog article devoted several pages to Scott's dealings with the Embassy. "We have quoted from this fascinating and damning document at such length, because it is so plain and self explanatory. A defector's debriefing is a very rare event to have recorded in writing. Here is a man telling all he knows about the party he used to head, eagerly offering his services to the other side in the great ideological battle of the 1950s, and suggesting other possible recruits. It is extraordinary by any standard". Sid Scott features throughout the book, he was a colleague of Elsie's throughout their two decades as Party leaders and she remained friendly with him after they both left it. But there is no mention in the book of his becoming a traitor after quitting. It finishes mention of him by saying: "His rejection of communism was all-encompassing, and he subsequently replaced his beliefs with orthodox religion. He joined the Methodist Church and, in 1960, told his own story, in "Rebel in a Wrong Cause"". That leaves quite a different conclusion to someone who couldn't wait to betray his erstwhile comrades to the ideological enemy. "Orthodox religion" has a name for such a person – Judas.

Friend & Colleague

Elsie was a greatly valued friend and colleague for 30 years. She was a foundation member of CAFGINZ (now CAFCA) in 1975 and remained a member until her death. She was a big fan of ours, writing in her 1992 book, "Peace People": "...CAFCA has retained its unique blend of research, education of itself and others, and action where appropriate, always with the aim of a truly independent New Zealand". She was involved in all its campaigns and fought some of her own with the very biggest and nastiest of the transnational corporations. I well remember her great pride, in the 1990s, when she got Telecom to drop its demand for payment, including years of arrears, for the outside bell that the former Post Office had installed, free of charge, so that the progressively deaf Elsie could hear the phone ring whilst she was in the garden (no impersonal answerphones for her). In the years that CAFGINZ was a peace group, campaigning on issues like the US military base at Christchurch Airport (which is still there and still an issue), Elsie was in the thick of it. From the 1980s onwards, as those issues were taken up, firstly by the former Citizens for the Demilitarisation of Harewood, and now by the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC), she remained

actively involved. She was an ABC member throughout the 90s. She was too old and frail to come to any of the Waihopai spybase protests, but she did things like recommend books for us to review in *Peace Researcher*. ABC was honoured to be invited by the family to contribute a couple of our banners to join those displayed during her funeral. Peace was Elsie's driving passion. Melanie Thomson of the ABC (now in London) remembers Elsie, in her 80s, biking out to the University to speak to the student peace group. Our last talk, not long before her death, was at an ABC public meeting to protest the Government's law change to allow the spies and cops to tap New Zealanders' e-mail. Elsie was 88 and frail; computers were of no personal interest to her (her trusty old manual typewriter was a central prop at her funeral – along with her bike, togs and towel), but she turned up and sat in the front row to listen to her Green MP son, Keith, speak on the issue. And she was very generous – from 1993 onwards she donated nearly \$1,000 to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income.

*I reviewed "Peace People" in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 71, November 1992, <http://historicalwatchdog.blogspot.com/2009/12/foreign-control-watchdog-november-1992.html>. It remains the only book written by Elsie that I've read and/or reviewed. Subtitled "A History Of Peace Activities In New Zealand", it ends at the election of the Muldoon National government in 1975. Elsie's daughter, Maire Leadbeater, has taken on the job of writing the next volume, bringing that history up to the present. I can't think of anyone more appropriate to continue her mother's work.

Elsie was multi-talented: a lifelong political activist, she was once a leading Communist Party figure (the book contains a photo of the Central Committee in the 1930s – Elsie is the only woman) and remained a socialist all her life. For decades she was a leader of the New Zealand peace movement, long before it achieved critical mass. She lived long enough to see her point of view become the nuclear free status quo in this country. She was an active feminist long before that word was known; a pakeha activist on Maori issues long before that became the norm. She was an indefatigable writer, of books, articles, radio talks and letters to the editor. Her children's books alone guarantee her immortality. She was a community activist, who devoted decades to improving the Avon Loop, her beloved central Christchurch home for nearly 60 years. A daily swimmer for decades, she led the fight to preserve and improve Centennial Pool, and keep it free of the curse of corporate sponsorship. She was the only living person to have a park named after her in Christchurch history. She won prizes, medals, awards, an honorary Doctorate of Literature from the University of Canterbury and a Distinguished Alumni Award from Auckland University. Since she died several plaques and one (rather controversial) bust have been erected in her honour in Christchurch. The crowd at the book launch included the former Mayor and a former Cabinet Minister.

Throughout all this, she placed her family above all else, being a devoted mother and grandmother (not to mention a grandmother figure to her broader community). For several years, in her 80s, she put everything on hold to take full care of Jack, who was stricken by a series of strokes. She was plain spoken, indeed she could be a crabby old bugger (I know). She had no pretensions – the book quotes a letter she wrote to somebody saying that he may not have heard of her but that did not surprise her because, in her opinion, Elsie was a name more commonly given to a cow! She lived simply, biking and walking everywhere, never having a car and only tolerating the intrusion of a TV set into her home because it was given to Jack as a retirement gift by his freezing works' workmates. She died alone in the tiny little riverside cottage that had been the family home since 1944. Elsie had a fierce love of all things New Zealand, and only once went overseas, preferring to tramp in her beloved Kiwi bush, until well into her 60s. The lovely cover photo of her, outside her Oxford Terrace cottage, is accompanied by a quote: "To my generation, there is only one home – New Zealand". She had a love of art and culture, and ensured that her working class family got the same cultural riches as those of the middle class and rich. Right until the very end of her long, long life, she had a razor sharp mind, and the keenest active interest in the world around her. Maureen Birchfield captures this multitude of talents by the best way possible to be able to make sense of it all – compartmentalising it, rather than trying to cover it all chronologically and simultaneously.

Elsie Farrelly was born in 1912, the youngest of six children, and grew up in the tiny south Auckland town of Waiuku. Her repugnance towards war was inculcated in her when young. She grew up in the aftermath of World War 1, and saw first hand the horrors it had wrought. Her mother, Ellen, told her that the war should never have happened and could have been avoided. Elsie left Waiuku when she was young, but never forsook it, often returning there throughout her long life, and, unusually for a pakeha of her generation, developing strong ties with the local Ngati Te Ata iwi. Her research was vital for its Treaty of Waitangi claim; she had a Maori godson, who spoke movingly of her at the funeral. The Maori Women's Welfare League made a special visit to Elsie's wake, to farewell her with songs and stories. In an age when it was common for working class kids, especially girls, to not go to high school, Elsie worked to put herself through Auckland University, graduating with an arts degree in 1933. This was, of course, in the depths of the Depression, which made a profound impact on her. A recent TV drama featured the story of Jim Edwards, the Auckland leader of the Unemployed Workers' Movement. It was his being batoned by a cop that sparked off the 1932 Queen Street riot by thousands of the unemployed. The injured Edwards went

underground for a while before giving himself up and being imprisoned. He spent time at the place where the young Elsie was staying: "He was sitting there with his head heavily bandaged and he was quite groggy actually".

Communist, Working Class Feminist

From a personal and political point of view, I found the book most interesting when describing the young Elsie and Elsie the Communist. That's because when I first met her she was about the age that I am now (late 50s) and had long since left the Party and wouldn't talk about it. She was a fearless young firebrand who joined the Party in Auckland in 1933 and then moved to Wellington (by hitch hiking, her preferred means of travel for decades) where she spent eight years, working in a whole variety of blue collar jobs and becoming a leading figure in the Party. She poured her considerable energy and talent into the Party's *Working Woman* newspaper and when that folded it was replaced by the "non-partisan" *Woman Today*. But the latter proved that class trumps gender – the non-Communist, indeed fervently anti-Communist in some cases, women involved in that went to great lengths to get rid of Elsie. And they succeeded. Elsie was also one of the 1930s' founders of what is now the Family Planning Association. She was bemused that the women's movement of the 1970s considered itself the second wave of feminism (following on from the first wave of the late 19th Century which secured women the vote). It was her view, backed by the evidence, that the women of the 1930s were actually the second wave, and the 70s' movement should be considered the third wave of NZ feminism.

It is particularly interesting to read about her first marriage (which only lasted a few years and which she never talked about after it ended) to the wonderfully named Frederick Engels Freeman. He was years older than her, a senior Party leader and one who was trained at the Communist International School in Moscow (the Russians paid his costs to get back into the country by a circuitous route when he was banned from re-entering NZ). It was as Elsie Freeman that she did her most intensive work for the Party. She had her oldest son, Don and shortly afterwards the marriage folded; Don was brought up as a Locke along with Elsie's three kids by her marriage to Jack. Before that happened she had several years as a solo mother in 1930s' Wellington, when there were no benefits for women in that position and childcare arrangements were rudimentary. Elsie and Fred had no further contact – he remained loyal to the Soviet Union and, entirely appropriately, died of a heart attack after collapsing on the gangway of a Soviet research vessel in Wellington Harbour in 1969 (as President of the local branch of the NZUSSR Society, he had just taken some of the crew on a sightseeing tour).

When World War 2 started the Communist Party opposed it as an imperialist war, which meant that they (along with pacifists and militant unions, etc) were treated as enemies of the State. In 1940 the Police smashed the printery of the *People's Voice*, the Party newspaper, and Party leaders went into hiding – Elsie went to Nelson, leaving Don in the care of trusted friends. Upon return to Wellington she was under close Police surveillance; there is a wonderful Police report of how she proved too clever for the cops following her – "Mrs Freeman is a very clever individual". In 1941 Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, so the Party swung to full support of the war effort, with the men joining up. Elsie married Jack Locke, the Party posted him to Christchurch, which was to be her home for the next 60 years. Jack promptly joined the Air Force and spent several years away from Elsie and Don. In his absence she took over his role and became acting District Secretary of the Party. Keith and Maire were born in 1944 and 45, respectively, followed by the major health crisis of Elsie's long life, where she had to spend two years (1946-48) flat on her back in hospital, which was the treatment of that time for spinal tuberculosis. Her three young children had to be farmed out to relatives and friends around the country (the fourth, Alison, was born in 1952).

Elsie was never backwards in coming forwards and freely spoke her mind, regardless of who she was addressing. So it was in 1953, after Stalin's death, when she wrote a 1500 word letter to his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, beginning by saying: "I write to you as an ordinary member of a small Communist Party in a small country, and before there has been opportunity for full collective discussion on recent world events...". Maureen Birchfield describes it as reading "like a parent admonishing her child". Telling him off for the poor quality of Soviet English language propaganda, Elsie wrote: "We shall not advance if we write only what appears to fit with our current slogans and campaigns but must adopt a truly objective approach towards places, people and events, so that everyone in our movement has sound data from which he can form his judgment and enter intelligently into discussion". There is no record that Khrushchev ever read it, let alone replied, but it did lead to her being branded "petty bourgeois" by some of her NZ comrades. It was no surprise that Elsie was among those who left the Party as a result of the brutal Soviet invasion and occupation of Hungary in 1956.

Leaving The Party

Elsie didn't like her CPNZ role to be highlighted. Whenever I mentioned it, in articles or book reviews over the years, she'd ring up and protest that she wasn't really a leading CPNZ figure for two decades; that it included time when she was raising children or was seriously ill in hospital. But she didn't downplay her CPNZ role because of shame or

anti-Communism. Not at all – the conclusion of our discussions was always that she didn't like her CPNZ past highlighted "because it upsets Jack". Having seen political differences (namely whether to vote National or Labour) cause rows between my own parents, I could only imagine the difficulty in overcoming a political difference of this magnitude. Jack remained a loyal Communist and CPNZ leader until his death; Elsie quit the Party in 1956. Birchfield's biography does shed light on those very real tensions within the marriage caused by Elsie and Jack's political differences – there is one story, possibly apocryphal, that he sawed their double bed in half (it was later rejoined). Elsie developed a stomach ulcer and her papers were found to include unpublished poems to Jack addressing their differences. Yet they remained happily married for 55 years. Elsie told his funeral that the secret was that they agreed to disagree, and because of "good old fashioned love". For several decades Elsie and Jack lived parallel lives when it came to politics but on subjects such as the environment, particularly that of their own beloved Avon Loop, they worked together very closely, very successfully and were a formidable team.

It is obvious from the extracts of her Intelligence file that the spies couldn't comprehend how she could have left the Party, yet still remain happily married to a leading Party figure. So they remained suspicious that she was secretly still a Communist and, accordingly, kept on spying on her. Her former Party membership continued to cause her problems years later. When she made her one and only overseas trip, to a 1976 writers' conference in Canada, she was treated as a major security risk during her American transit stops (despite the SIS having recommended that the US give her a visa). Elsie wrote to her family: "I am a very bad enemy of the US and their great nation is in mortal fear of me!"

Peace Activist

After she left the Party, in 1956, Elsie plunged into the numerous other strands of her life, a major one of which was as a peace activist. It wasn't a new cause for her – she had been involved in peace issues all her life. Nuclear disarmament became her driving passion, and from 1957-70 she was an executive member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), of which she was a founder. She was so central to the peace movement from the 1950s to 70s that it was only appropriate that she wrote "Peace People", the definitive history of the NZ peace movement (up until 1975). She regarded nuclear weapons as constituting a worse evil than Hitler's crimes against humanity, and was immensely proud of New Zealand's nuclear free status, not to mention the decades of struggle to bring it about. But she was not a complete pacifist. "I have never said there are no circumstances in which you would not fight; for example, the Maori would have been a lot worse off if they had not resisted in the colonial wars" (*Press*, 24/12/91; "Elsie Locke: anti-nuclear arms veteran", Ken Coates). In the same article, she supported the right of people like Nicaraguans and Filipinos to wage armed struggle, for land and justice, but opposed New Zealand having been involved in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. "I don't like it when they're trained for jungle warfare. We haven't got any jungles to be warfaring in". And: "The (first) Gulf War was about oil and if it had not been there, there wouldn't have been all that action" (*ibid*). She was interested in the struggle of all peoples for freedom, peace and justice. I well remember her coming to a late 1980s' public meeting on Bougainville, despite the fact that she was awaiting a double knee replacement, needed two sticks to stand and walk, and had to crawl (fiercely unaided) into the vehicle taking her there. Peace activist Kate Dewes, in her eulogy, remembered Elsie grappling with Kate's teenage daughter to carry her favourite banner on the annual Hiroshima Day commemoration.

To the very end she was a peace activist and was honoured as such. In November 2000, both she and Maire received Peacebuilder Awards from the NZ commission of UNESCO. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s she was involved in the anti-bases campaign (long before there was an Anti-Bases Campaign). That great 1980s' documentary "Islands of the Empire" highlights a scene of Elsie, speaking from the back of a truck, asking protesters outside the US base at Harewood: "Where's your democracy?" Quite. As mentioned above, her very last public appearance (years after she'd told me she could no longer go out at night) was at an ABC public meeting in 2001, just weeks before she died. She was greeted there like our collective Nana, the veritable grand old lady of the peace movement.

Writer, Environmentalist

The other major string to Elsie's bow was as a writer, primarily (but not exclusively) of children's books. All up, she wrote 20 books and was honoured as a writer (for example, she won the Katherine Mansfield Award for non-fiction in 1958, not to mention the honorary doctorate, etc). Her first novel "The Runaway Settlers" was published in 1965 and has been in continuous print longer than any other New Zealand children's book. The then Mayor of Christchurch, Garry Moore, said in his eulogy that it was his kids' favourite book. Margaret Mahy, the doyenne of New Zealand children's writers, also spoke at the funeral and praised Elsie highly. Historian Len Richardson (who also spoke at the launch of this book), praised her writing about working class people such as shepherds and maids. Long before it was fashionable, she incorporated biculturalism as a central feature of her books. I can't comment on any of her children's books, because I've never read any of them (although I have seen a stage

production of "The Runaway Settlers"). Writing was vital to her – for more than 50 years she kept a room to herself in their tiny cottage, packing the kids off into other parts of the house.

There were so many other areas of life into which she plunged. For instance, she and Jack were central figures in the Avon Loop community for more than 50 years, running Christchurch's first recycling scheme, Avon River clean ups, and carnivals. She was a leading figure in the struggle between those wanting to "develop" the Loop and those wanting to retain its character, with some development. She won a major court case against the local hotel, which wanted to impose a major expansion on the neighbourhood. She was a founder of the Avon Loop Planning Association. As the central city became fashionable and gentrified, this neighbourhood of 19th Century workers' cottages became a model. She became intimately involved in the politics of the city – Garry Moore, in his eulogy, credited Elsie with getting him motivated into reviving his local residents' association, which led him onto the City Council and into the Mayoralty. He also described councillors who crossed Elsie as "suicidal". Moore was at the book launch and I reminded him of this quote. He stuck by it and said: "She had a presence" and demonstrated her drawing her tiny old body up upon her walking stick to eyeball the Councillors and officials. Preserving her beloved Centennial Pool was her greatest local triumph, marked by the newly created neighbouring park being named after her. She was instrumental in restoring the environment of the Avon as it flows through the Loop, getting the banks replanted in natives, which have attracted back a great variety of native and exotic birds.

In the 90s, she dropped everything for several years to look after Jack, who was incapacitated by a series of strokes. I well remember turning up unannounced one day to find her helping him with his hand exercises, encouraging him to speak, and guiding him around the cottage on his walking frame with me following behind with his wheelchair (in case he fell). It was incredibly hard work, physically gruelling on an 80+ year old tiny woman who had had her own health problems (knee replacements, etc). At times, Jack had to go into hospital or a home, just to give her a break. After he died she resumed her former life, of writing and peace activism, as much as her increasing frailty would allow. In our very last conversation I asked her if it was difficult for her living alone. She replied immediately and directly: "Not as difficult as when I was looking after Jack". That was Elsie, straight to the point, and no sentiment. She didn't take any shit. One granddaughter told her funeral a wonderful story of accompanying Elsie to the supermarket, just weeks before her death. When the checkout person asked the usual inane "How are you today?" Elsie replied: "And why do YOU want to know?" Woe betide anyone who spoke to her as, or treated her as, a "little old lady".

Maureen Birchfield is to be congratulated on capturing the essence of such a fascinating, intensely alive, person in this big, beautiful doorstep of a book (don't drop it on your foot). Maureen was a friend of Elsie's all of her life, so this was obviously a labour of love, and it shows. Elsie Locke was a hugely influential person in so many quite different aspects of New Zealand life of the 20th Century, nationally, regionally, and locally. She was years ahead of her time when it came to thinking globally and acting locally. Her influence will continue to stretch out into the 21st Century and this book will be what people will refer to when they want to find out anything about her life and work.

REVIEW: “THE SPY WHO TRIED TO STOP A WAR: Katharine Gun And The Secret Plot To Sanction The Iraq Invasion”

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

by Marcia and Thomas Mitchell. PoliPoint Press, Sausalito, CA. 2008.

- Bob Leonard

All quotes are from the book unless otherwise indicated.

Spies are people who eavesdrop on other people and who are expected by their bosses to keep their mouths shut until they die, or else. In other words, spies sell their souls to the company store. In the UK you have to sign the Official Secrets Act in order to become an intelligence agent. So what do you do when your conscience interferes with your work as a spy? That's what this book is about – it's gripping, sobering, and inspiring – very hard to put down (the Gun case was reported in detail in “Echelon Spies On The World: Britain Drops Charge Against GCHQ Whistleblower”, by Murray Horton, in *Peace Researcher* 29, June 2004. It can be read online at www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr29-102.html). This is an account of the experiences of a whistleblower who tried to stop the headlong rush to invade Iraq in 2003. It's the story of Katharine Gun. She obviously didn't stop the invasion but she was definitely a very big spanner in the personal plans of the little cowboy and his poodle to get rid of Saddam Hussein, and cop a few other benefits in the process – like oil and strategic military basing.

Why is this story relevant to the Anti-Bases Campaign and *Peace Researcher*? Because the US National Security Agency (NSA) is central to the story and it's the NSA that effectively runs the spy base at Waihopai near Blenheim, Aotearoa (see my review of James Bamford's “The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret NSA From 9/11 To The Eavesdropping On America” in *PR* 38, July 2009; <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-175a.htm>). The story of Katharine Gun's daring leak of a top secret NSA e-mail, and her subsequent aborted trial in the Old Bailey, will probably be known to informed students of the Iraq invasion. It was very big news in the UK and throughout Europe and in other countries affected by that e-mail. Not surprisingly the story barely surfaced in the US.

The Frank Koza E-Mail

This book tells Katharine Gun's story clearly, simply, and very humanely and gets right down to cases. The very first chapter is entitled “Message Sent”. The message was a simple one, written by Frank Koza in the early hours of the morning of January 31, 2003: “As you've likely heard by now, the Agency is mounting a surge particularly directed at the UN Security Council (UNSC) members...for insight as to how membership is reacting to the ongoing debate RE: Iraq”.

Koza was Deputy Chief of Staff (Regional Targets) in the NSA. Just who in the Bush Administration inspired the message is not known, but “reliable sources” have suggested it was the then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, or Vice President Dick Cheney, or even a team including Rice, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Central Intelligence Agency chief George Tenet and NSA chief Michael Hayden. Whoever caused the message to be sent, it was addressed to the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), NSA counterpart and a junior partner in global communications intelligence.

The Linguist At GCHQ

Katharine Gun was a translator employed by GCHQ. Raised in Taiwan, she is fluent in Mandarin. But the message she was about to read on the morning of January 31, 2003 was in plain American English: “On Katharine's screen was a blatant invitation to a conspiracy. The United States was mounting an illegal intelligence operation against the UN Security Council member nations – and their representatives – that would cast the deciding vote on a resolution for war against Iraq. At the moment, the undecided were resisting US pressure for an ‘aye’ on launching a pre-emptive strike”.

Unlike every other spy at GCHQ who received the Koza message, Gun could not just delete it and proceed like nothing had happened. She was tormented about what to do, but ultimately decided that there was no use going to her superiors for advice. She finally leaked a copy of the message through a trusted friend to a newspaper. In her late twenties and with only two years' experience at GCHQ Gun had made the most critical decision of her life: to violate the Official Secrets Act and to wear the consequences if she were unable to remain anonymous, her initial naïve hope. It took a month for the story to explode in the media via a story in the *Observer* published on March 2, 2003. When she saw the headline article at her local shop on a Sunday morning she said she was “gobsmacked”.

“It hit me for six, and I think that’s the point where it hit me that I was in trouble. Serious trouble”.

Her motivation was to try to stop the invasion of Iraq. Her brave step had little chance of success given Blair’s inexplicable fealty to Bush and Co. And, of course, neither the vast bulk of uninformed Americans, blindsided by a compliant media, nor Bush would have had a glimmer of Gun’s deed. She was indeed in deep trouble given the nasty and unforgiving retribution built into the Official Secrets Act to deal with whistleblowers. It remained for her to be identified, and she might never have been, but for her conscience. It was brave enough for her to steal the Koza message and sneak a copy out of GCHQ. But then ultimately to admit the leak took immense courage. Her promising career (if spying is a career) was finished, and if convicted she was likely to spend a long term in prison. She was newly married and leading a comfortable and well paid life as a spy.

What Did The Leak Accomplish?

The authors title the relevant chapter “Detour On The Secret Road To War”. The Koza leak revealed the duplicity of US and UK leadership in saying one thing publicly and pursuing a relentless “road map to war”. The facts of the attempt by the US to subvert a UN Security Council vote on the legality of an Iraq invasion are well known. The key hold-out nations were Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea and Pakistan. But permanent UNSC members France, China and Russia were also causing problems. It is anyone’s guess whether a vote on the critical second UNSC resolution giving a legal gloss to an invasion would have succeeded had Gun not done her thing. But the countries targeted by the NSA and GCHQ spying were incensed. And the vote did not succeed. Did the Americans blame Katharine Gun and GCHQ? No, they blamed France which has UNSC veto power. Revenge against the frogs started in the House of Representatives with the renaming of French fries as Freedom fries, a clever and devastating move that quickly spread around the land of the free. And in Reno (of *Reno 911* TV fame and birth place of this reviewer) a restaurant owner emptied expensive bottles of French wine into the gutters. France trembled.

But in the UK, Tony Blair was in for a rough ride. “Parliament, unaware of the full extent of Blair’s commitments to Bush, clearly would become a horrendous headache”. Rough ride or no, Blair stayed in the saddle in the face of high level resignations of Government officials who opposed the invasion, and the failure to concoct any convincing evidence of Saddam’s danger to the Middle East and the world. The unspoken Bush-Blair motive was regime change. On that subject, Blair’s own Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, stated flatly: “The desire for regime change was not a legal basis for military action”. Elizabeth Wilmshurst, a highly respected Foreign Office legal adviser, stated on her resignation: “I regret that I cannot agree that it is lawful to use force against Iraq without a second Security Council resolution...particularly since an unlawful use of force on such a scale amounts to the crime of aggression; nor can I agree with such action in circumstances which are so detrimental to the international order and the rule of law”.

As for the NSA-GCHQ spying on members of the Security Council, that can be assumed to have gone ahead despite the leak of the Koza e-mail. But the leak had done its job. The second UNSC resolution, “...instrumental in reaching a desired end, and a way of avoiding messy alternatives” was dead in the water. France or Germany or Russia might well have vetoed the resolution anyway. But Gun’s leak meant it never got that far. She was arrested on March 5, 2003, three days after publication of the leak.

“Gun’s leak, said [Daniel] Ellsberg*, was ‘more timely and potentially more important than the Pentagon Papers’.” His comments were ignored by the US media. * *Daniel Ellsberg is one of the most famous whistleblowers in world history. In 1971 he leaked, to major US newspapers, a secret official American study of the Vietnam War, which came to be known as the Pentagon Papers. It had a huge impact on public opinion. Ellsberg was arrested and potentially faced life in prison. But, when he stood trial in 1973, all charges were dismissed because of revelations of Government covert operations directed against him and his defence (illegal break-ins and phone tapping, etc) as part of the Watergate scandal, which led to the impeachment and resignation of President Richard Nixon, in 1974. Ellsberg has been a prominent peace activist ever since. Ed.*

Attention Directed Towards The NSA

Once the NSA was in the spotlight there was intense international interest in exactly how this mysterious agency does its spying. Here the authors of the book got their facts wrong: “There was speculation that the West’s super eye in the sky, Echelon, was the culprit”. As PR readers well know, Echelon is not a spy satellite in the sky; it is the overarching moniker for the system that spies on communications satellites, and a multitude of other means of communication. In the very next sentence of the book New Zealand Green MP Keith Locke is cited as linking the Waihopai spy base as a possible accomplice in the US “dirty tricks campaign”. “New Zealand could easily be helping the NSA intercept communications between UN delegates and their home countries’, Locke worried”. Keith

and the European Union, but apparently not the international media, already knew all about Echelon. In part this was due to direct testimony in the EU about Echelon by our own Nicky Hager, a world class expert on the subject and author of the book "Secret Power" (1996), the book that blew the lid off the NSA's Echelon system and the core involvement of five countries in that system: the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Legal Case Against Katharine Gun

Katharine Gun herself is a fascinating study in high risk whistleblowing. Significant chapters of this book provide valuable and moving insights into the personal history, personality, motivation and ultimately the emotional trauma of a young and inexperienced woman in a shady profession and faced with a big test of conscience. In commenting on her leak of the e-mail, she was most frequently quoted in the media as saying "I've only ever followed my conscience". After initially lying about the leak by stating, under questioning, that she had read and immediately deleted the Koza message, she couldn't sleep for days and was soon moved to incriminate herself. She would thus face trial for violation of the Official Secrets Act which she had signed to uphold as an intelligence agent. The future looked bleak – she had admitted her "crime" and faced almost certain conviction and imprisonment.

But it wasn't to be so simple for the Government and prosecution. As a defendant in a high profile test case Gun was to be defended pro bono by a human rights organisation called Liberty. In a Liberty press release about Gun being charged, there was a "Note to editors: This case is likely to put the legality of the Iraq War on trial". On the face of it, Gun's defence of "necessity and duress", about the only one available to her, appeared weak. "It has a troubled history and is rarely successful. It makes demands that are difficult to prove, a legal rationale difficult to justify" (there is an interesting distinction between necessity and duress. The former is based on "circumstances arising naturally", the latter from "an overpowering human source").

A defence based on Gun's acting in the public interest would seem a reasonable one, but it is a prohibited defence under the OSA itself as modified in 1989. No wonder convicted whistleblower David Shayler (see *PR 22*, December 2000; "Spooky Bits", by Murray Horton) slammed the 1989 Official Secrets Act as a "cancer in the body politic". However, a single move by the Liberty defence team "changed the game – and odds – entirely". They filed an Advance Notice of Defence Statement at the last minute before trial was to begin in the Old Bailey. The Statement was a fishing expedition that caught a very big fish: the Government was put in the position of having to reveal a deep deception that underlay Blair's decision that the Iraq invasion was legal. The deception was "unpublished advice on the legality of the war", an initial opinion believed to be due to Foreign Office legal adviser Wilmshurst (see her resignation statement quoted above). It was the basis for the Attorney-General's advice to Blair that an invasion would be illegal (the full, uncensored document was finally revealed in 2005). But the A-G, Lord Goldsmith, was a political appointee and you can just imagine the pressure he was under to change his tune and advise that the invasion would indeed be legal. That is precisely what he did.

But the fact of that change of advice, and requirement to reveal it in court, caused the case to collapse. In Gun's words: "The charges against me were read. I pleaded not guilty, and then the prosecutor, Mr. Ellison, told the court the case would not go ahead for evidentiary reasons. Absolute silence. The charges truly were dropped! That quickly, that simply, after all that had happened since my arrest!" *In November 2009 an official public Inquiry into Britain's involvement in the Iraq War was opened. The Attorney-General's pre-invasion advice to the Prime Minister as to its illegality is a central subject under study. This Inquiry is not scheduled to report back until late 2010. Ed.*

The NSA Flouts The Law

The collapse of the prosecution of Katharine Gun was a huge blow to the Blair government and to the spy establishment. Not that just any whistleblower or protester can now expect simply to mount her defence and win. It wasn't her defence that prevailed (although there was some chance it could have been won before a jury). The Blair government was caught in a blatant act of deception, a circumstance that is not likely to happen very often. The US National Security Agency had received most unwelcome exposure in the Gun case. Its director at the time, General Michael Hayden, had often stated that his Agency only ever operated with strict adherence to US and international law. But spying on the UN violated three relevant international laws: 1/ the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations; 2/ the 1947 Agreement between the United Nations and the US (placing obligations on US behaviour toward the UN); and 3/ the 1967 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

The NSA also engaged in a massive illegal programme of domestic spying under the Bush administration (see my review of "The Shadow Factory, cited above, and Murray Horton's report "US Spooks Exposed Massively Spying On Their Own People" in *PR 33*, November 2006. It can be read online at www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr33-135a.html). The spies are outlaws, purely and simply. Mostly they operate in total secrecy with no oversight and no accountability, and with the blessings of a blinkered and naïve political leadership. This statement is just as true in

New Zealand as it is in the UK or the US or Canada or Australia, all members of the Echelon community. Once in a while the spies get caught out. We have Katharine Gun to thank for having the guts to nail the bastards. Her case may not change a thing in the long run, but it was the only path a person of conscience could take.



REVIEW: “SPIES FOR HIRE”

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

by **Tim Shorrock, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2008**

- **Jeremy Agar**

It used to be so simple. In the crude formulations of Joe McCarthy*, spies betrayed America by hiding rolls of film in pumpkins and phone booths for Russians to deliver to Stalin, while the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and its founding Director J Edgar Hoover shadowed them. Now it's a different game. Spying is being privatised and contracted out, and so treason has been redefined as opposition to corporate America. **US Senator Joe McCarthy, with his inquisitions and deranged accusations, became synonymous with the anti-Communist witch hunts and hysteria in the 1950s. Ed.*

After an earthquake or a flood the looters come out. For corporate looters 9/11 was a perfect storm, the chance for the perfect heist. Motive: get what you can while you can. Opportunity: a moment when the world tolerated American power; and advances in computer technology. Alibi: Mix legitimate and opportunistic motives and hide behind a lexicon of soothing platitudes to do with partnership, security, innovation and intelligence; when in doubt, bang on about “terrorists”. America spends around \$US60 billion a year on intelligence gathering, \$US45 billion of which is going to private contractors. “Spies For Hire” tells the story. It's a fascinating account, detailed and scholarly. Although it's comparatively long, it never goes off topic, which is the privatisation of spying and how it came about. Shorrock, a journalist, knows his subject well.

It started with the ideological bias of the 1980s' Reagan presidency, when the President told his people that the Government he had been elected to guide was the “problem” - a languishing economy and society - that America had to solve. President Bill Clinton was more centrist, but his terms coincided with the end of the Cold War, when it became harder to justify a huge military budget and, caught short by Iraq and Afghanistan, the Government had to contract out. This misleadingly plausible explanation for the privatisation of spying has commonly been noted, but Shorrock, while he doesn't necessarily disagree, has much more to say.

GIG, Netcentricity, C3I, TIA

Something called The Global Information Grid (GIG) was the brainchild of Donald Rumsfeld (*President George Bush's first Secretary of Defense. Ed.*), “the man who forced the armed services to embrace the revolutionary, information technology-driven concept of network centric warfare. The road to military domination, he believed, was to create a global, network-based communications system for all information and intelligence on military operations; transformation and ‘netcentricity’ were the keys to future American power”.

Eccentricity we understand, but just what is “netcentricity”? Shorrock quotes one official sounding definition, which explains that it's to do with “communications infrastructure that supports intelligence missions, and enhances information sharing ... from military bases in the United States to tactical mobile platforms”. Still confused? Shorrock couldn't make sense of it either so he asked an intelligence expert. He too was “having a little difficulty figuring out whether the GIG is a piece of hardware, a programme or a slogan”. The expert thought GIG was an aspect of C3I. And C3I is command, control, communications, and intelligence. So that's cleared that up. The vagueness helps the power elites, who are themselves all about C3I. Money for the military and the spies has always sloshed about in budgets hidden from public view and the new dispensation allows for even less accountability. For potential watchdogs GIG creates a shifting and often invisible target.

It might sound as new as tomorrow, but the hope of total knowledge in order to exercise total power has been around a long time, and not just in science fiction. Way back in President Eisenhower's day, in the 1950s, the US military worked on a Single Integrated Operational Plan. More recently Reaganites hatched a Total Information Awareness scheme (TIA), a misnomer in that Congress was kept in the dark. After Congress found out about it, TIA was scrapped. The politicians aren't too happy about “netcentricity” either, perhaps seeing that once outsourcing is added to secrecy, their shelf life might be short (for another discussion of TIA see my review of “Spies, Lies And The War On Terror”, in *Peace Researcher* 38, July 2009, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-175d.htm>).

Intelligence Industrial Complex

Shorrock has come up with his own acronym. He calls this new world order the “Intelligence Industrial Complex”. He's alluding to Eisenhower's warning of an emerging “military industrial complex”. Nearly 50 years ago, as he left office, the popular Ike, who had been Commander of the Allied Forces in World War 2, was emboldened to point out

what he felt unable to express as President: that the combined interests of the military and the corporations who served them were effectively running the country. Progressive, democratic opinion had long been making this point, but Eisenhower's conservative credentials and his mana within Washington circles gave the phrase authority in polite circles - even if it did nothing to curb the growth of corporate power - and the existence of the military-industrial complex is the day before yesterday's news.

Shorrock is updating the story. The power elites change in degree, he's implying, but not in kind. He has interesting things to say about 9/11, a day which George Bush immediately exploited to project American power around the place. Shorrock doesn't pause here either to belabour the obvious. His focus is always sharply on the business of spying. 9/11 was in 2001. The next year, Bush announced a public and private "partnership" which would defeat the terrorist enemy. An influential commentator, one of the legions of academics and journalists who grow rich and famous by telling America that the needs of the "Intelligence Industrial Complex" are the needs of Americans, noted that private corporations controlled 90% of US communications, energy and transport, so citizens should butt out. The business of spying, which depended on corporate expertise, was "too important to be left to the Government alone". A spokesman from Booz Allen Hamilton, one of the fattest of the all the pigs at the public trough, elaborated: "All of our critical infrastructure we're depending on", was privately owned, he explained, so "our moral responsibility is to understand the change and have firms engaged in a public-private partnership to protect their businesses and the citizens of this country".

Corporate intellectuals can always be relied on to stitch the package together and wrap it with bright ribbons. A 2003 offering from the Roundtable summed up the new netcentricity, the world of The Global Information Grid: "Many old paradigms that dominated the American psyche before 9/11 have been set aside since the events of that tragic day, [to allow an] anti-terror joint venture" between corporate America and its junior partner, the US government. "So also must the historic Government-business relationships of the past be redefined in a new era of cooperation and collaborationHistorical suspicions and adversarial relationships between Government-as-regulator and business-as-regulated have traditionally made cooperation difficult. In the current security climate, this could prove disastrous to the common objective of enhancing homeland security".

Perhaps junior partner is misleadingly overstating the planned role for the Federal government. Procurer would be closer. Roundtable has an NZ branch, where one of the jolly rogues has long lectured us about the perils of public policy being "captured" by the self-interested. Roundtable's NZ flunkey, Roger Kerr, has spent decades lecturing us about "moral hazard". The inconsistency is blatant. If there's one solution for what ails us that you can rely on hearing about from the Complexes and their mates around the Roundtable it's that governments and taxes need to shrink. How has the American version of "Government-as-regulator and business-as-regulated" gone? Bush's immediate 9/11 response was to set up a Department of Homeland Security to coordinate intelligence, so this is an agency that closely reflects the new ideology. Shorrock says that within three years the new spy bureaucracy was spending an annual \$US16 billion on goods and services tendered to private interests.

Dubya was following a lead from Booz Allen, whose advice was that governments needed to create "new types" of partnerships and "new types of market incentives". The Chief Executive Officer attempted to spin a claim of a public service motivation. "Business leaders", he managed, "cannot opt out of geopolitics and leave the job of security solely to Government and the military". As Booz Allen's Global Security Unit head sees it, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) exist "to reduce risk and help ensure resilience in corporations, government agencies and critical infrastructures". They ensure resilience in corporations all right, but that's because the risk that's being reduced is private risk.

Where are all the conspiracy theorists now that we need them? Instead of inventing silly stories about moon landings or 9/11 they could look at the real conspiracies hatched in the weeks after 9/12. They're called "partnerships". According to Roundtable scripture, about the worst thing governments can do is to grant subsidies. Never mind that the entire new Complex is nothing but a subsidy to private corporations. The old-style (public) intelligence arm of the Government, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), has joined in. It now has a venture capital firm that provides information technology for the PPPs. Shorrock argues that this is really a Government subsidy that allows companies to hire lobbyists to expand their market share.

As the definition of "terror" gets vaguer, the gap between public and private responsibility narrows and the web of corporate power widens. Shorrock took notes at a 2004 conference when a Booz Allen executive was criticising the US Freedom of Information Act because it let public interest groups obtain environmental information about corporations. America, the suit worried, needed PPPs "that work together so that industry can feel confident that when it discloses something it's not disclosing something in such a way it can be used in litigation against it or more disasters that terrorists could find out about". Parts of that sound close to the definition of terrorism that we've been told about in New Zealand.

Echelon

NZ gets a mention here. That's because of Echelon and its listening posts. Shorrock reminds us that this Clinton-era eavesdropping was revealed by a UK engineer in 1997. Harried by European politicians, CIA chief George Tenet went into denial mode. "The notion that we collect intelligence to promote American business interests is simply wrong", he told Congress. Yet he did concede that signals intelligence (SIGINT) "has provided information about the intentions of foreign businesses, some operated by governments, to violate US laws or sanctions or to deny US businesses a level playing field". *Nicky Hager's 1996 book "Secret Power" is the definitive work on Echelon and NZ's role in it, namely the Waihopai spybase. Ed.*

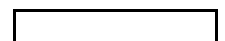
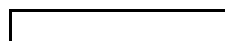
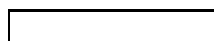
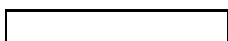
A former CIA chief felt freer to write accurately about Echelon. Because he is always disciplined, his topic being the spy industry's presence within the US political economy, Shorrock relegates to a footnote one of the most revealing of all his citations. For a general interest readership in NZ, home of the twin domes at Waihopai, the ex-spook's opinion about Europe merits space: "Yes, my Continental friends, we have spied on you. We have spied on you because you bribe. Your companies' products are often more costly, less technically advanced or both, than your American competitors'. As a result, you bribe a lot. Your governments largely still dominate your economies, so you have much greater difficulty than we in innovating, encouraging labour mobility, reducing costs, attracting capital to fast moving young businesses and adapting quickly to changing economic circumstances.... Get serious, Europeans. Stop blaming us and reform your own statist economic policies.... Then we won't need to spy on you".

This series of slogans reads as though the spook has gone to a Roundtable seminar and scribbled cribnotes on his sleeve for the test. But in doing so, he's shuffled his notes, and forgotten that, to appease domestic wimps and liberals, Arabs and the terrorists shouldn't be publicly whipped in the same speech in which you bash North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) European allies. Was this clown, a person known as a "subject-matter expert" on terrorism, the one who first complained about France being the land of "cheese-eating surrender monkeys"? Jim Woolsey once directed the CIA. A mate of Dick Cheney, Bush's Vice President, Woolsey "retired" to the boards of some big defence contractors, and chaired a federal think tank, the decisions of which direct the course of millions of public dollars. Woolsey was an adviser on US Iraq policy, one of the usually anonymous members of the private government, where he called for war contracts in Iraq to go only to US firms.* Inevitably, shamefully, two years after he penned his piece for the *Wall Street Journal*, as Shorrock reports, Woolsey co-founded the "first private equity fund to invest solely in homeland security and intelligence markets". He soon raised \$US500 million to splurge, largely from union pension funds. They've now got close to \$US1 billion. As their latest Website message points out, "Federal Spending Presents Big Opportunities For Paladin Portfolio". You could say it's not rocket science. That's the pedigree of one of the more forthright builders of Echelon. As a justification for NZ taxpayers to support American spies, it's as flat as a dome at Waihopai (*referring to the aftermath of the 2008 deflation of one of the spybase's domes by Ploughshares activists. The dome has been replaced, in 2009. Ed.*). *For an account of US "rebuilding" of Iraq, see my review of "The Bush Agenda: Invading The World, One Economy At A Time" by Antonia Juhasz, *Peace Researcher* 33, November 2006, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr33-131d.html>.

"Partnership" Subverted

Shorrock's book is a major publishing event in that it has provided as thorough and informed a review of US policy that we're likely to see. It's especially valuable in showing how the "Intelligence Industrial Complex" came about. The relevance goes well beyond US policy or defence contracting. In fact, the machinations of the "Intelligence Industrial Complex" look very like the blueprint for how to run a Roundtable government. The Key government might like Woolsey-like "partnerships", but they're weaselly things. Shorrock concludes: "Once reserved for partial privatisations in which private capital was mobilised to support public utilities such as subways and roads, that term has been subverted in post-9/11 America to mean something very specific to national security: defence, homeland security, and intelligence contracts and practically any Government decision that favours business interests. In reality 'partnerships' are a convenient cover for the perpetuation of private interests".

In November 2009, Tim Shorrock, in partnership with the US-based group, CorpWatch, set up a new Website, Spies For Hire <http://www.crocodyl.org/spiesforhire>, which enables journalists, activists, researchers and the public to track America's most important intelligence contractors. Ed.



OBITUARY: RAY SCOTT

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Murray Horton

Ray Scott was never an ABC member but he was actively involved in three Christchurch-based groups with whom ABC had, and continues to have, a close working relationship, namely the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA); Ploughshares; and Catholic Worker. These two obituaries were originally published in Foreign Control Watchdog 121, August 2009. Ed.

Ray Scott was a CAFCA committee member from 1998-2002 and in that period played a full part in the whole spectrum of CAFCA activities. Ray had a great sense of humour, that innate Irish wit, which made him good fun at meetings and mailouts, etc. I have fond memories of the committee meetings that he regularly hosted in his New Brighton flat, particularly the one where we all turned up only to find that the place was empty. His landlady obligingly rang his favourite haunt, the local club, but he wasn't there either, so we admitted defeat and hastily relocated the meeting. He shamefacedly told me the next day that he'd forgotten all about it.

We only ever knew Ray in a wholly secular context, as a superannuitant who was very active in the Alliance, but he had previously been a Catholic priest for decades. Ray was actually the second current or former priest to serve on the CAFCA committee (first time around, decades ago, we used to hold meetings in the presbytery, complete with a housekeeper who made us supper. Every time I watch "Father Ted" on TV I remember that). Ray was on the committee at the same time as the late Reg Duder, who was a devout Anglican of the same vintage, so they made a couple of hard case old bookends to the rest of us heathens (my obituary of Reg is in *Peace Researcher* 36, August 2008, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr36-164b.html>).

Ray was unique in that he invited himself onto the committee; we usually have to chase reluctant recruits. Indeed he joined CAFCA, in his late 60s, at the same time as he joined the committee. His stay with us wasn't a long one, only four years, and after he left the committee, his membership also lapsed, he didn't keep us up to date with his address, and we lost all contact with him. The last time I saw Ray was when Becky and I briefly bumped into him in town back in 2004. That was it. The next time I saw him was in his coffin.

I attended his memorial meeting in my neighbourhood Catholic church (the first time I've ever been to anything there, in my 27 years of living in Addington). Speaker after speaker spoke of his great spirituality; of his poetry (he's the only person who's ever written me a poem for my birthday); of his active commitment to social justice; of his love of life and specifically of golf and rugby (he died on the stroke of the Eden Park fulltime siren on a Saturday night, having seen the Crusaders safely through to the Super 14 semi-finals – which they lost, so he got out at the right time).

And several speakers, including family members, spoke of his truly heroic snoring. One Catholic Worker activist brought the house down when he reported how he cured Ray of that, at least temporarily. Condemned to sharing a room with Ray overnight, he got out of bed, kissed Ray goodnight smack on the lips and had a sound night's sleep, while Ray stayed awake all night. If only I'd known of that handy tip before I spent two sleepless nights with Ray in a very small hotel room when we went to Blackball for May Day 2000! See you later Ray (but only if you're right and I'm wrong).

RAY SCOTT

- Jim Consedine

Ray Scott, who died of cancer in May 2009 in Christchurch aged 79, was known to many activists for his commitment to social justice. A trained teacher who grew up in Temuka, Ray travelled the world in the 1950s and taught in several countries including England (where he taught in the East End of London), Canada and Australia before returning home and entering a Catholic seminary, at the age of 38, to study for the priesthood. He made an immediate impact with his wide experience and his lively wit. Many a dull lecture was lit up with a Scott witticism to relieve the boredom!

After ordination, Ray spent his first appointment as assistant at Sacred Heart parish, Addington, which three decades later hosted his Christchurch funeral. Here, among many other things, he distinguished himself by giving away all the parish money to the poor while the parish priest was on overseas leave for a few months. The latter was not amused! Appointments to other working class parishes included Woolston and Aranui, where he is

remembered with great affection even after all these years.

A Heart For Social Justice

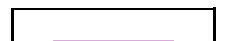
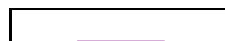
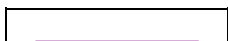
Ray always had a heart for social justice. Sadly, not everyone does. But he certainly did. He was busier than most in 1981 when the Springboks toured. He certainly looked a sight to behold when his five feet nothing tubby frame, dressed in helmet, shorts and sandals, took on the might of the pro-tour forces – week after week. Marching with Ray was always a treat as he joked his way along the roads and footpaths, always with a quick comment and a wide smile. He saw this commitment simply as an act of solidarity with deprived people in South Africa.

Like many others, Ray was unsettled after the stresses and social upheaval of 1981. He took time out from the official ministry in 1982 and worked for some time with the Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society as a field officer. About this time he teamed up with Marie Venning, who had also been very involved with the anti-tour movement and had also been working in the social justice area for some years. They later married and became an easily recognised couple when they appeared together at protest meetings and social gatherings.

About this time, he and Marie joined the Ploughshares Solidarity movement which picketed the US military base at Harewood (Christchurch Airport) each Friday night for some years during the 1980s. This group also conducted a campaign to close down Addington Remand Prison, and pictures of Ray on the picket line show his choice of fashion had remained constant – shorts and sandals were still standard garb for him.

A deeply spiritual person, Ray linked up in 1990 with the Catholic Worker (CW) movement which had established "houses of hospitality" in Addington and which provided him not just with a spiritual framework which made sense to him but also a loose knit community with similar ideals. Ray's pacifist stance and belief in simple lifestyle also fitted well with the CW. For some years, he was a regular attendee at the CW's Wednesday night liturgies held in their houses in Addington. He also conducted a scripture study group he called "Ray's Ramblings" every Friday morning at the CW Cardijn House, which attracted a small but faithful following. He joined the Alliance Party when it hit its hobbles in the 1990s and put in good work with them.

Unfortunately his marriage ended in December 1997, after they had briefly moved to Whangarei and returned to Christchurch, and Ray was once again looking at his options. So he decided after some years to return to the official priesthood of the Catholic Church. In this he was encouraged by many of his activist friends, myself included, who sensed in him qualities which could best be expressed by him resuming such a vocation. His questioning mind remained as active as ever, but it was in this resumed role as a pastoral minister from 2001 in the North Island that he felt the best of his talents could be exercised for the benefit of others. A man deeply versed in history, poetry, scripture, theology and literature, he never regretted this decision and found in his last years a sense of fulfilment and peace through this pastoral work, finishing up in Napier (it was his wish to be brought back to Christchurch when he was dying, as he was a Cantabrian). His funeral services at Addington and later in Temuka, where he was buried, were each attended by several hundred people from all walks of life who recognised in him a quality of goodness not always evident in others. This cheerful character will be missed by many. May he rest in peace.



DEATH IN THE FAMILY: JOHN GANNAWAY

Peace Researcher 39 – January 2010

- Murray Horton

*ABC expresses our condolences to Noeline Gannaway for the death of her husband, **John Gannaway**, who died in Wellington in May 2009, aged 82. Noeline is a long time and generous member who has also been a very generous supporter of the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides Murray Horton's income. Throughout all those years she was looking after a seriously ill husband. This is her tribute to him. Ed.*

His early life was affected by his mother's post-natal breakdown, and from infancy John was raised by his grandmother in the family home at 23 McDonald Crescent. John attended Wellesley College on The Terrace and at Day's Bay. He enjoyed art and chemistry, and gained a prize for writing and drawing. Peter Harcourt's history of Wellesley College recalls an incident from 1935: "The prizes were to be presented that year by Canon James. At the appointed time he embarked on the discourse expected of the Distinguished Guest in such a situation. Unfortunately, he took no account of his audience's limited patience. As he meandered on, with no end in sight, it all became too much for little John Gannaway, sitting down in front. 'It's too long, sir!' he cried out fervently, giving voice to the general opinion. While the parents laughed in relief and sympathy, blessing the innocence which allowed a child to speak while they could not, Canon James acknowledged his fault and sat down".

With an interest in wireless, John had hoped for work in this field, but it was wartime and choices were limited. His first job was with Kodak in Victoria Street where his wage was meagre, but he gained a knowledge of photography, and the boss of his department was to become a firm friend. Next came radio work with the firm HW Clark in Cable Street and later with HMV in Wakefield Street, where he helped make experimental recordings of church and secondary school choirs, the Salvation Army Band and the Embassy Theatre organ. Then for some years he had his own business, servicing record changers.

Music of all kinds - from classical to jazz - was an abiding interest. He made friends with members of the (then) National Orchestra and, for a time served on the committee of the Wellington Recorded Music Society, looking after the equipment. Collecting and researching 78 rpm records was an absorbing hobby. He enjoyed cricket at the Basin Reserve in summer. John was not by any means a pacifist, but he believed in fair play, sympathised with the underdog and was scrupulously honest. He had a wry sense of humour. John always voted Labour and, while I moved to New Labour, the Alliance, and finally the Greens, he remained staunch.

The advent of the motorway meant the demolition of number 23 and adjoining houses in McDonald Crescent and in 1969 John moved to Wright Street. We married in 1972. Health challenges had to be faced as John had been diagnosed with osteoporosis and ankylosing spondylitis (*osteoporosis is a disease of bone that leads to an increased risk of fracture. Ankylosing spondylitis is inflammatory arthritis of the spine. It causes pain and stiffness in the back, along with bent posture. In most cases, the disease is characterised by acute painful episodes and remissions. Ed.*). He was deeply disappointed when failing health prevented him from attending orchestral concerts, but there was a large collection of 78s, LPs, tapes and later CDs to draw on, and the Concert Programme was well patronised. He may or may not have heard his favourite Brahms' Fourth Symphony being played the evening he died. In any case, he knew the work by heart.