

Manoeuvred Back Into ANZUS

Subversion Of NZ's Independence

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Warren Thomson

After nearly 30 years of independent foreign policy, a respected voice in the international community, New Zealand has sold its soul to the Devil. Ten years of intrigue and subversion by military and foreign policy leaders has returned NZ to the status of an American ally. Compliant media have played their part. Recent announcements have highlighted that the previous diplomatic impasse is “fully defrosted” and NZ exercises with US forces are “hugely symbolic” (*Press*, 12/5/12). We are to “celebrate” the 70th anniversary of the arrival of US Marines here in 1942.

The subliminal messages are blatant. Even more worrying are the signs of a concerted public relations campaign to undermine public resistance to a closer relationship with the Pentagon, and potentially, NZ's nuclear free policy. There has been a cunning manipulation of Anzac Day commemorations to infiltrate US troops into this country. The “Wolfhound” Regiment made a brief appearance at Burnham Army Camp, near Christchurch and, apparently, at Anzac Day ceremonies. Everywhere we are suddenly confronted in the media with the idea of “celebrating” the historical arrival of US Marines in Wellington in 1942. More deviously, NZ schoolchildren are being conned into identifying a long past event in a long ago war with military manipulations of today: a competition, set up by the NZ Defence Force, Archives NZ, and the American Embassy, is asking kids to compete to make the best video about the 1942 event.

In June 2012, a small number of NZ Army engineers is scheduled to take part in military exercises in California. The Kiwi Navy, and some soldiers, are to take part in the large scale Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, which is one of the world's largest international maritime exercises, hosted by the US, for the first time in almost 30 years. Sadly “military exercises with the US are now back on the agenda” (*Press*, *ibid.*). It is clear that NZ's military and foreign policy officials have, against the general public opinion, and in secretive and probably ethically unacceptable manoeuvres, managed to reorient this country's foreign policy. As far back as 2002, schemes to get NZ back in bed with Washington were in train. According to Nicky Hager in his book “Other People's Wars”: “A senior military officer who helped plan the Iraq deployment explained that it was ‘all pushed by the senior policy leaders at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)’....It was seen as a ‘low risk, high reward’ deployment to advance US relations” (p174). Furthermore “...the public was being grossly misled” (*ibid*, p182) and: “During much of the War on Terror period, officials were running a private foreign policy, often in defiance of the Government” (*ibid*, p320). Unfortunately, the media subservience described in Hager's book has not improved. A brief survey of print and other media by this writer has failed to turn up a single instance of questioning whether this re-integration of Kiwi forces into Pentagon operations is in the country's interests.



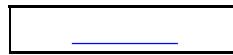
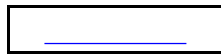
NZ warship *Te Kaha* to exercise with US ships in June 2012 – no questions asked. Picture: *Business.Scoop*

US Covert Action, With NZ Collaborators

The first real signs of success in the satanic crusade appeared when a large United States military delegation took part in Exercise Maru, an international security exercise in New Zealand in September 2008. Kiwi soldiers had been operating in Afghanistan alongside Americans for some years (mostly not in the humanitarian role the media proclaimed) and in 2010 New Zealand and the United States held military exercises together and shared intelligence on Afghanistan. These had been announced by US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific Kurt Campbell, who was launching a major new study into New Zealand-US relations. The study, backed by both countries' governments and agencies including the Pentagon and US State Department, was sponsored by the New Zealand and US Business Councils. Standard Washington covert action in full flight.

Cables released by WikiLeaks have revealed that this subversion of New Zealand independence had been going on for some time. New Zealand's collaboration with United States intelligence agencies was "fully restored" in August 2009 but both governments decided to keep the decision secret (*Sunday Star Times*, 12/12/10). The cables also made it clear that New Zealand had quietly increased its military cooperation with the US and that the then American Ambassador Charles Swindells put pressure on New Zealand to change its nuclear free policy ahead of the 2005 election.

And what have we been pressed into signing up for? Working with a military that runs courses that "America's enemy is Islam in general, not just terrorists... and the [USA] might ultimately have to obliterate the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina without regard for civilian deaths". These Pentagon courses also taught that "the Geneva Conventions which set standards for conduct of warfare were 'no longer relevant'" (*Press*, 12/5/12). While these courses have been suspended by the embarrassed US military, we have a clear indicator of the military mentality with which Kiwi soldiers are supposed to integrate. So a proud era of NZ foreign policy has come to an end. With the insidious machinations (is treachery too strong a word?) of senior defence and foreign policy personnel, with the compliant role of an incompetent media, with the silence of a defunct peace movement, this country has sunk back into the depths of Pentagon depravity; the way of lies, atrocity, and brutality, the collateral damage in support of a resource-addicted failing empire, is now official policy for New Zealand.



Waihopai Spy Base Protest 2012

Peace Researcher43 – May 2012

- Murray Horton

The Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) held our regular protest at the Waihopai spy base in January 2012 and this year's event was one of the best for some time. It had more people; some new faces; some welcome old faces making a return; and just some more oomph in general. And it certainly didn't hurt that the Marlborough weather returned to the stereotype of what it should be – in both 2010 and 11 there had been wind, rain and cold and our camp had even been rocked by its very own pre-dawn Marlborough earthquake in 2011 (just to make the Cantabrians feel at home). I'm pleased to report that our January 2012 Marlborough weekend featured neither rain, nor wind, nor cold, nor earthquakes. So we were able to concentrate on the tasks at hand.

New Features This Year

Waihopai protests have been going for so long (since the late 1980s, in fact) that there is, inevitably, a repetitive feel to them. The trick is to introduce some new elements and we did just that this year. At the suggestion of our invaluable Blenheim organisers, ABC set up a stall in the regular Saturday morning open air market held in the Railway Station car park. This was staffed for several hours by Committee members Warren Thomson, Jenny Boyd and Robyn Dann, plus Victoria Davis. The four of them set up our Waihopai display (the first time we had taken it to Blenheim since 2006, when the Marlborough District Library had refused to host it) and distributed our leaflet about the spy base to the hundreds of people who came to the market, plus other ABC material, and took the opportunity to talk to people on a one on one basis. There were no placards or banners there; we made a decision to separate out the stall from the protest activities. They concluded that it was an extremely worthwhile activity, providing the opportunity to interact with the Blenheim public in a way that we haven't tried before. The fact that the weather was good this year was also very helpful, as such a stall would not have been possible in rain or wind (the display is not really intended for outdoor use; it was a calculated risk to set it up in the open air).

There was also a change in the actual protest activities. For years we've used Seymour Square as our rallying point before marching around central Blenheim. The reasons are as much historical as anything else, dating back to the 1980s and 90s when ABC specialised in activities leading to mass arrests, with subsequent court appearances being in the District Court in Seymour Square. That still makes sense when there is an actual Waihopai court case. Most recently that was the 2008 depositions hearing for the three Ploughshares Domebusters (Adrian Leason, Peter Murnane and Sam Land; all of their subsequent court appearances, criminal and civil, have been in Wellington). But, otherwise, Seymour Square on a Saturday is not where the people of Blenheim are. Plus, one of the consequences of Christchurch's earthquake catastrophe has been the closure of old stone, unreinforced brick and masonry structures all around the country – including Blenheim's Seymour Square War Memorial clock tower, which had always been the focus of ABC's activities there. What concluded the decision for us was that we decided to no longer host a sausage sizzle for our lunch, which we had done for years in Seymour Square, at the conclusion of our rally and march through town. The logistics of having to transport our rental barbeque in and out from our camp finally became too much of a hassle. So we provided everyone with a cut lunch and transferred our base into Market Place in the central business district, which is where the people are on a Saturday. That was much more successful.

It's worth quoting the *Marlborough Express* report in full (23/1/12, "New blood in spy base protest", Simon Wong, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/6298414/New-blood-in-spy-base-protest>): "They came, they chanted, they called for the end of the Waihopai spy base. About 50 people converged on Market Place, Blenheim, on Saturday to protest against the Government spy base and its links to American military operations. Among seasoned campaigners such as John Minto, Green MP Steffan Browning and Adrian Leason – who slashed one of the domes at the spy base – were first-timers who had been inspired by previous protests. Golden Bay resident and US migrant Victoria Davis said she grew up as a 'staunch American', but had lived in New Zealand for 25 years. She had not been to the protest before. 'I'm from the US and it's sad the country has engaged in wars which are causing widespread destruction'. Earlier in the morning she had been helping at a stall at the Railway Station market, telling people about the purpose of the spy base. People did not realise the base was paid for by taxpayers, she said.

"Christchurch man Ron Currie was also at the protest for the first time, but his wife Pam Hughes had been to one before. Mr Currie said he was worried about New Zealand's involvement in the 'Western war machine'. 'You can't just stand by and let it happen. I don't want my grandchildren to be conscripted into a war'. He admired the courage of the Waihopai Three who broke into the spy base and slashed one of the inflatable domes. Mr Currie had put the finishing touches on his sign in Market Place which read: 'Waihopai, We Spy, Bombs Fly, People Die' when he

spoke to the *Express*. Ms Hughes said the couple came to the protest to voice their concerns. 'People not saying anything is like tacit approval and the reason why the US can be big bullies in the world'.

"The group gathered to hear speeches from Mr Minto, Mr Browning, Mr Leason and Murray Horton from the Anti-Bases Campaign, applauding any reference to the 2008 slashing of the inflatable dome that covered one satellite dish at the spy base. Mr Horton called the actions of the Waihopai Three 'heroic' and said the money spent on the base each year was 'criminal'. He said the turnout for the protest was pleasing, considering previous years attracted between 20 and 30 people.

"The theme of this year's protest was anti-war and highlighted the connection between the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and the United States military. The group, comprising mostly older people and some children, then marched through Blenheim chanting slogans and singing a protest song to the tune of Pink Floyd's 'Another Brick in the Wall' before going to the spy base on Waihopai Valley Rd. Mr Minto said it was important to return to the spy base every year because 'this is us speaking truth to power'. As the debate over the base continued, more people understood what it was doing, the veteran campaigner said. The protest met no opposition this year except for one man who drove past the protesters in Market Place and called them 'weirdos', and two men who were waiting for the protest at the spy base. The men had hoped to join other counter-protesters who appeared there during last year's protest, but the counter-protesters did not return this year".

Domebuster The Draw Card

Adrian Leason was definitely the draw card for the media; just as his partner in crime, Father Peter Murnane, had been at the 2011 protest (Peter is now working in the Solomon Islands). It was his first return to Blenheim and Waihopai since their acquittal in 2010 (bail conditions prevented any of the three of them setting foot in the province of Marlborough, except to attend court or meet lawyers. As their trial was transferred to Wellington they had no legal reason to go to Marlborough. But all that ended with their acquittal). Adi bought five of his seven kids, plus he was supported by a number of other people from the Catholic Worker group, who came from places ranging from Christchurch to D'Urville Island (in the Marlborough Sounds). Immediately prior to the protest he featured in the media under the headline "Spy base attacker says he's sorry" (*Press*, 20/1/12). "As a Catholic Christian and as a New Zealand State primary school teacher, damaging property is not what I do as a rule. I get no sense of pleasure and regret the inconvenience and time-wasting of the good Police officers of Blenheim and neighbours and anyone else caught in the peripheral of the event...I went through quite a lot of soul-searching and what to do when faced with a moral and ethical dilemma. I put my family, career, job and freedom on the line and if doing right means I get in trouble and lose something very precious to me, I'm prepared to stand up and do what's right". That's not the same as "saying sorry" which is what the headline would have us believe he said. He certainly said nothing about being sorry for having slashed the spy base dome in 2008.

John Key & Uncle Sam, Plus Pink Floyd

Adi was our headlining speaker and he certainly didn't disappoint. With the youngest of his kids clinging tight to Dad's hand he spoke extremely well at the band rotunda in Market Place. And as a surprise bonus he brought along a huge John Key puppet head (which he claimed to have found at his local Otaki rubbish dump - an appropriate place for our beloved Prime Minister), which he proceeded to wear through the streets of Blenheim, complete with Tory blue tie and National Party rosette, accompanying us as we marched through town. Even better, John Key joined forces with our old favourite Uncle Sam (played with great enthusiasm by ABC's Alice Leney) and they made a striking pair striding hand in hand through town ahead of our march. They definitely attracted the attention of Saturday shoppers and strollers as they strutted and taunted us protesters in the finest tradition of tag wrestling villains. Their grand finale was reached when our march arrived back at the band rotunda and we realised that the local National Party office is right there. What better visual backdrop could there be for John Key and Uncle Sam than the local Tory HQ? It was fantastic street theatre, when added to our usual props of banners, placards, crosses, white face masks and a couple of coffins (to symbolise those killed in the wars in countries such as Afghanistan where electronic intelligence-gathering plays such a key part). But it remains unknown if John Key will make an encore appearance at any future Waihopai protest - Adi told us that he fell off the trailer on the way home to Otaki (accidentally, Adi assured us) and was found in a ditch somewhat the worse for wear. How very symbolic - I have no doubt that John Key really would vow to die in a ditch for Uncle Sam.

The additional ingredient was the great new Waihopai protest song by the ABC Committee's Boyd sisters, Jenny and Lynda, set to the instantly recognisable tune of Pink Floyd's "A Brick In the Wall"*. All of us sang that with great gusto through the streets of Blenheim. Indeed it was a very musical weekend. Jim Consedine, from Christchurch Catholic Worker, closed proceedings outside the spy base gate with a previously unrevealed (to me, anyway) singing ability. He sang, beautifully, that old peace movement standard "Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream".

***Lyrics by Jenny and Lynda Boyd. Tune by Pink Floyd.**

*"We don't need your false security,
We don't want your bloody war
No more tax dollars on surveillance
We must shut the spy base now
Hey John Key, close Waihopai now
All in all it's just another USA war".*

Repeat as many times as necessary.

Greens Have Always Been Actively Involved

As well as the Catholic Workers the other group well represented was the Greens. Not only by rank and file Party members but by MPs, namely Steffan Browning and Mojo Mathers, both of whom were newly elected at the November 2011 election. ABC was particularly pleased for Steffan, because he has been one of our key organisers in Blenheim for many years, and has always spoken at our Waihopai protests on behalf of the local Greens. To quote Kermit the Frog it's not easy being Green, and certainly not in a conservative, National stronghold like Blenheim, which comes complete with one military base (RNZAF Woodbourne) and one spy base. Steffan has quite often felt the heat of local disapproval of ABC's activities in his home town. So it was great to welcome him this year as one of our speakers, appearing in his capacity as the Greens' spokesperson on security and intelligence. He has big shoes to fill – that was Keith Locke's portfolio for many years and Keith spoke at virtually every Waihopai protest dating back to the 1990s, before he became an MP, and when the Greens were still part of the Alliance. For years Keith and Green Co-Leader, the late Rod Donald, were high profile figures at all Waihopai protests (and other ABC activities). 2012 was the first time since the 90s that Keith was absent, enjoying a well earned break since retiring from Parliament at the 2011 election. But he's promised to come back again, and this issue of *Peace Researcher* includes an article by him giving his perspective as an Opposition MP on security and intelligence matters viewed from inside the political system. ABC greatly appreciates the unstinting support from the Greens since the 90s. Steffan is simply continuing a tradition that has included attendance not only by Keith and Rod, but also former Co-Leader Jeanette Fitzsimons and current Co-Leader Russel Norman.

Welcome Return By Veteran Activists

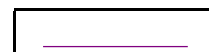
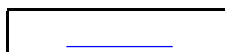
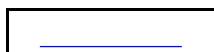
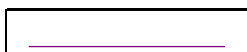
The *Marlborough Express* report quoted above mentioned "new blood". That is correct but it needs clarifying that some of that is old blood coming back. For example, Warren Thomson, who rejoined the ABC Committee in 2011 and stepped up to join me as *Peace Researcher* Co-Editor. 2012 was the first time Warren had been on a Waihopai protest since 1997, the year he moved to Bangkok where he taught English until returning to Christchurch in 2010. Warren was a founder of ABC, a vital member of the Committee in the 1980s and 90s and our main organiser of Waihopai protests in those years, often single handed. Not only did he organise those protests, he threw himself into them with such enthusiasm that he earned the nickname Waihopai Warren, and was arrested several times (including in 1997). It is great to have him back and, despite the gap of 15 years, he threw himself back into this year's protest with as much enthusiasm (although he's not so re-acclimatised yet as to actually join us in camping for the weekend – he and his wife Noi stayed in a local motel). At the protest at the outer, public, gate to the base he spoke and urged people to consider future action involving going back over the fence (he specified the outer, rather than the inner fence). I could sense the old peace warrior's non-violent direct action juices flowing again. Watch this space.

Similarly with Ron Currie, who was quoted in the *Express* article: Ron had never been on a Waihopai protest before but he was a key activist in the original anti-bases campaign of 40 years ago, long before there was an actual Anti-Bases Campaign. He produced some of the classic posters for protests at the US military transport base at Christchurch Airport (which is still there today, albeit in a much reduced capacity). His wife, Pam Hughes, came with us on a 1980s' activity at the former US Naval Observatory atop Black Birch Ridge, also in Marlborough. As Ron told me: "We retired from politics for 30 years", but now they're back and have offered to be actively involved in future Waihopai protests. Great!

Aussies Join Us In Common Struggle

The other thing that many Waihopai protests have had is international participants (in 2011 it was a Canadian couple and an American speaker at the base). In 2012 it was an Irish/Scottish couple travelling around NZ who joined us; plus my oldest and dearest Australian friend, Lindy Nolan and her husband Peter Nelson. I've known Lindy since we were fellow Sydney activists in the maelstrom of Australian politics in the mid 1970s (when the Whitlam Labor government was sacked by the Governor-General in a bloodless coup), and she has been involved in the whole spectrum of Left and union activism ever since, including a stint with the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition. It is a common struggle – for decades Kiwis, including me, have taken part in protests at US bases in Australia; and we've had several Aussies take part in previous Waihopai protests over the years (although the issues they face make ours look like child's play). For example, *Peace Researcher* 27, August 2003, includes an article co-written by Lindy and I entitled "Militant Protest At Pine Gap Warbase", <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr27-75.htm>. Lindy and Pete came to NZ in January for two reasons – to visit their Kiwi friends in both Islands; and to take part in their first Waihopai protest. Lindy made a bloody good speech outside the base gate (where ABC always offers an open megaphone for participants to speak). It was great to have them join us for the weekend and it was great to see them again, for the first time since Becky and I attended their Sydney wedding 20 years ago. The four of us had a funfilled few days together in Christchurch after the Waihopai weekend.

To conclude: there was renewed energy in the 2012 Waihopai protest, which makes ABC more determined than ever to keep up this marathon of a campaign. That spy base is a blot on the conscience of all New Zealanders (as well as a blot on the Marlborough landscape) and we won't stop until it's closed. We'll keep doing it for as long as it takes. So, we look forward to seeing you back there again next time. Spread the word and bring your friends. This affects all of us because it's being done in our name and with our money. Time to say "Enough is enough; close Waihopai now!"



Trying To Make NZ Intelligence Services More Accountable

My Efforts In Parliament

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Keith Locke

Keith Locke was a Green MP from 1999 to 2011. He has been credited with being the most respected member of the House, yet maintained his Leftist credentials with honour and humility. Prepared to ask the hard questions, and constantly issuing press releases that pinpointed what was really happening in both NZ and overseas, Anti-Bases Campaign owes Keith a tremendous debt; no other MP has ever been prepared to raise the military and intelligence questions that he demanded answers for, and no other MP has ever so persistently tried to penetrate the wall of secrecy and bullshit erected around the affairs of the Security Intelligence Service, the Government Communications Security Bureau and other related agencies. This article will concern anyone with an interest in the covert operations of our spooks. The Editors of Peace Researcher wish Keith the best of luck in retirement, and long may his energy to pursue the big issues continue. Ed.

SIS Spying On NZ's Sri Lankan Tamils

One of my missions during 12 years in Parliament was to make our intelligence services more accountable. I made less progress than I'd hoped for. I asked many questions of Prime Ministers Clark and Key – the Ministers formally responsible for the security services – but I was usually told that they didn't comment on intelligence or security matters. This isn't to say that pressure from MPs like me (and the public) has not had some impact. The Security Intelligence Service (SIS) now makes a show of being more open, but it is still mainly a show because the information in their *Annual Reports* – and on their Website – is pretty non-specific. We are hardly surprised to find out that they are chasing terrorists – but what does that mean in practice? I couldn't find out through Parliamentary channels, even though, for ten years, I was the Green Party's Parliamentary spokesperson on intelligence services. It was from my work in migrant communities that I got some idea of what the SIS was doing to "fight terrorism", and it wasn't pretty. I discovered the SIS was visiting mosques, and regularly questioning members of the Sri Lankan Tamil community.

The extensive SIS surveillance of the Sri Lankan Tamil community shows just how unaccountable the SIS actually is. In practice the SIS is often more answerable to other governments [particularly American, British and Australian] than our own. First, let me provide some factual background. Many Sri Lankan Tamils in New Zealand have supported the Tamil independence struggle in north-east Sri Lanka – a struggle that has been going on for long time, and pre-dates the Tamil Tigers. That support is based on a belief that over the centuries Tamils largely governed their own affairs, but now their interests are being largely subordinated to the Sinhalese majority. New Zealand Tamils respected the Tamil Tigers as leaders of the nationalist struggle – even if they didn't agree with the Tigers' more ruthless practices. They didn't buy the Western story that the Tamil Tigers were the "terrorists" and the Sri Lankan government the "counter-terrorists". As documented in Amnesty International reports, there were terrorist practices on both sides, with the Sri Lankan government clearly the dominant terrorist agency, in terms of the numbers of civilians it killed and "disappeared".

While most Western governments backed the Sri Lankan government, Norway took a more even-handed approach, trying to mediate between the two sides to peacefully resolve the disputed issues. The 1999-08 Clark government – behind the scenes - expressed some interest in helping Norway and rebuffed those New Zealand officials who wanted to follow the US/UK/Australian line and simply designate the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organisation. This didn't make any difference to the SIS which, under the influence of its foreign masters, subjected New Zealand Tamils to probably the biggest domestic spying operation New Zealand has seen in recent years.

I was caught up in this big surveillance operation. When I got my own Personal File* out of the SIS in 2008 I discovered that the SIS had been keeping an eye on my engagement with the Auckland Tamil community – and wasn't too pleased when I visited Sri Lanka in 2003 to talk to both sides about where the (then current) peace talks were headed. At that time there was a ceasefire between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers. *See Peace Researcher 38. July 2009, "SIS Spied On Peace Movement For Decades", by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-178a.htm>. Ed.

It was clear to me that the SIS was a political actor – in the wrong direction, and undermining any New Zealand effort to play a role in the Sri Lankan peace process. It was frustrating for me to see this and to see the inability and unwillingness of the Government to bring the SIS to heel. When I raised the issue as a Member of Parliament, the Government wouldn't engage in any debate. Many New Zealand families have suffered from this SIS targeting of

Tamils. Some New Zealand Tamils accused of supporting the Tigers were expelled from the country – splitting up their families in the process. Expensive court cases have ensued to try to get them back. All this in a Tamil community which is among the most law-abiding communities in our country.

Strange though it may sound, the Tamils were victims of an embarrassing reality for the New Zealand intelligence services. That is, there were not any terrorists in New Zealand – of any nationality. The SIS was beside itself because it couldn't find any terrorists. It was desperate to come up with at least some people it could call "terrorist supporters" to show the Central Intelligence Agency, MI5 and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation that it was keeping its end up in the "global war on terror". In a parallel universe this is why the Police were so keen to prosecute the Urewera 17 under the Terrorism Suppression Act – and subsequently found themselves laughed out of court by the Solicitor General for trying to do so (see Peace Researcher 42, November 2011, "The Covert State Must Not Be Severely Embarrassed! Part 2: Government Drops Charges Versus 'Terrorists' & Changes Law To Legalise Illegality", by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/42/pr42-003.htm>. Ed.).

Secret Budgets; "Oversight" Committee A Joke

One of the key roles of Parliament is to check that the Government is not wasting our money. However, the Labour-led government put the SIS and Government Communications Security Bureau's (GCSB) budgets out of bounds. MPs were given the overall sum spent by both agencies – which has gone up dramatically in recent years - but provided no breakdown into spending categories. For example, despite repeated questioning I could not find out how much of the GCSB budget is spent on the controversial Waihopai spy station.

To try and stop any such questioning from MPs, the Clark government sneaked an amendment [45E] into the Public Finance Amendment Act 2004 (which I didn't spot at the time), exempting intelligence services from having to provide Parliament with anything other than their total annual expenditure. Subsequently, whenever I asked Clark or Key how much Waihopai cost they quoted this section of the Act as their let-out. Of course, Section 45E of the Act doesn't prevent any Government from explaining – in the public interest - how much Waihopai costs each year. And it certainly is in the public interest. More information about Waihopai may have been available to the Intelligence and Security Committee, a body made up of the National and Labour leaders plus three of their appointees. But, as an MP, I could not find out what information this Committee got, because unlike other Parliamentary committees – true Select Committees – it met in complete secrecy.

In 2000 soon after I entered Parliament, my Intelligence and Security Committee Repeal Bill was pulled from the Parliamentary ballot, but didn't get past the First Reading debate because Labour and National combined to vote it down. My argument was that the SIS and GCSB should be monitored by a real select committee, not one chaired by the PM [as Minister in Charge of Intelligence Services], and not by a Committee that didn't have any open sessions at all. Quite farcically, in 2011, the media was prevented from hearing my oral submission to the Intelligence and Security Committee on the Security Intelligence Service Amendment Bill. Nothing I was advocating was in any way a State secret. Apart from holding its [secret] hearings on that Bill the Intelligence and Security Committee has been pretty dormant. I asked several written Parliamentary questions on how often and for how long it met, and discovered that it generally met for less than two hours a year.



Charles Wardle, self-confessed SIS spy, who commented on the agency: "You don't want an intelligence organisation that doesn't know where to go, where to get information from and who it needs to look at". Keith Locke's attempt to get information about spying on mosques in NZ, as claimed by Wardle, was one of his many

SIS Spying On Keith

The main myth about the SIS is that it is spying on New Zealanders who, because of their politics, might be engaged in serious crime. The opposite is likely to be true. Those on whom the SIS built up files would have been more law-abiding than the average New Zealander. Their “crime”, in the eyes of the SIS, was to disagree with the Government of the day. This was certainly true in my case. Pages and pages in my SIS file, released to me in 2008, detail my activities against the Vietnam War, apartheid and the like. The SIS had been spying on me since I was 11, up to and including the years I was in Parliament. When (in early 2009) I complained about this SIS spying on an MP, the Prime Minister, to his credit, referred the matter to the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, Paul Neazor.

Mr Neazor’s report did lead to some changes, making it more difficult for the SIS to spy on sitting MPs. However, there are severe limits on the degree to which the Inspector-General can be an overall monitor of SIS operations – not least because of the part-time nature of the position and the limited resources to hand. I do, however, commend the decision of the current SIS Director, Dr Warren Tucker, to release more SIS files under the provisions of the Privacy Act. But too many files are still being withheld from people with a legitimate right to them. Or, frustratingly, some applicants are told the SIS “can neither confirm nor deny” the existence of a file. How very Kafkaesque. A “Catch 22” for me, when I tried to document the SIS’s subordination to bigger Western intelligence services, was that the very evidence I needed was withheld under Section 4(4)(b) of the SIS Act on the grounds it might “prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by the government of any other country or any agency of such a government”.

SIS Persecution Of Ahmed Zaoui

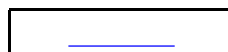
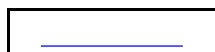
The harassment of Algerian asylum seeker Ahmed Zaoui* illustrates this difficulty. He was detained and denied residency on the basis misinformation from Western intelligence agencies. It took five years and many court hearings to get to the truth and allow Mr Zaoui to settle here with his family. My role as the Parliamentary advocate for Mr Zaoui (along with Progressive MP Matt Robson) is one I am most proud of. It did help win his freedom. *See Peace Researcher 35, December 2007, “At Long Bloody Last: A Happy Ending To Ahmed Zaoui’s Ordeal”, by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr35-153.html>. Ed.

If I hadn’t been pressing the Zaoui case in Parliament, the Labour, National and NZ First attacks on this Algerian refugee would have got more traction. My special status as an MP also helped – because under a provision in the Corrections Act I could visit Mr Zaoui in prison any time I liked. This was particularly important when, shortly after Mr Zaoui was detained (and shoved into solitary confinement in Paremoremo’s D-Block, the section of the country’s maximum security prison reserved for the worst and most dangerous criminals) I was able to visit him and warn New Zealanders of the injustice that was occurring.

What Have SIS & GCSB Actually Achieved?

The efforts of Green MPs over the last 16 years have had some impact on making the intelligence agencies a little more open and accountable. The work that began with the late Rod Donald in 1996 and continued through my term in Parliament are now in the hands of a new MP, Steffan Browning, as well as Co-Leader Russel Norman (who has been on the Intelligence and Security Committee these last three years). The presence of Green MPs at protests critical of the intelligence services – at Waihopai, in defence of the Waihopai Three, etc. - have all put pressure on the SIS and GCSB to be more accountable.

Sadly, in other important ways we have lost ground over the past decade as more money and resources pour into New Zealand’s intelligence agencies to fight America’s “War on Terror”. Some of this money has been used to hook up the SIS database with its American counterparts, making us even more a part of the American intelligence machine - something we only found out about through Wikileaks. One saving grace is that New Zealanders still have a healthy distrust of our intelligence services and what they get up to. It doesn’t help the SIS and GCSB that they can’t point to a single solid achievement over their decades of existence, apart from building up huge files on law abiding dissenters.



Windflow & General Dynamics

The Old Proverbial Hits The Turbine

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Murray Horton

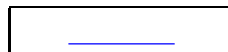
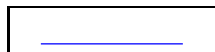
The announcement (*Press*, 9/3/12, “Wind firm has US nuclear link”, Tamlyn Stewart and Katie Chapman, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/6547250/Windflow-brushes-off-nuclear-concern>) that Christchurch wind turbine manufacturer Windflow Technology has signed a ten year licensing agreement with General Dynamics’ subsidiary SATCOM is eyebrow-raising in itself. General Dynamics is a gigantic US transnational corporation and a major manufacturer of weapons, military vehicles and military communications systems. General Dynamics SATCOM will use Windflow’s technology to manufacture turbines for use in US military bases worldwide, among other places. General Dynamics has a subsidiary that makes nuclear submarines (which remain banned from NZ under our nuclear free law).

Having signed up with such an unsavoury partner, Windflow would have been highly advised to simply hold its nose and stay silent. But, no, its Chief Executive, Geoff Henderson, felt obliged to defend the deal with some truly outlandish justifications. “We see it as, to the extent that that is the case, we see the move to windpower as being akin to 'swords to ploughshares'. The manufacture of weapons of war being converted into manufacturers' peace-time implements”. That really is an insult to the Ploughshares Aotearoa activists – Adrian Leason, Peter Murnane and Sam Land – who actually did do something about converting swords into ploughshares, namely deflating one of the domes at the top secret Waihopai spybase in 2008 (and for which they were acquitted by a Wellington jury in 2010).

But wait, there’s more. Geoff Henderson went on to say: “Asked whether the deal would sit well with green-leaning or pacifist shareholders, Henderson replied there was an argument that a strong United States in the last 60 or 70 years had ensured the longest period of peace the planet had known and helped avoid the outbreak of wars”. Yes, there is such an argument, Geoff. It’s about as convincing as the argument that fascism was good for Italy because it made the trains run on time. This really is such bullshit that gumboots are strongly recommended.

Where to start? Maybe with the Afghan villagers who had 16 of their number, including many women and children, murdered by a US soldier the same week that the Windflow deal was announced? If his US base was windpowered, Geoff, would that be OK then? Indeed the whole people of Afghanistan and Iraq or, going back a few decades, Vietnam, would have a diametrically opposite viewpoint as to whether the US military “had ensured the longest period of peace the planet had known and helped avoid the outbreak of wars”. In actual fact, the US brought war, mass destruction and misery to those countries, among many others, and still is, in the case of the first two.

Similar self-justifying nonsense was uttered by major Windflow shareholder, Wellington’s aptly named Mayor, Celia Wade-Brown (because you do need gumboots to wade through this pile of the brown stuff). “She had never asked where the energy provided by Windflow turbines was used, and her focus was on how the energy was generated, not what it was used for, she said”. The old ignorance is bliss argument, eh, Your Worship. Come on, Windflow, if you’re going to sell your soul to the Devil, make sure that not only do you get a good price but that you can come up with better justifications than these pathetic ones.



- Warren Thomson

Could GCSB Staff Be Prosecuted For War Crimes?

In the UK, human rights lawyers are beginning proceedings against employees of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) who assist the US in directing drone attacks in Pakistan. The lawyers believe such employees could be liable as "secondary parties to murder" and that any UK guidance allowing the passing of information to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for use in the strikes is unlawful (*Guardian*, 11/3/12). Presumably, staff working for the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) who provide location information for drone strikes on alleged terrorists are also liable. If Britain's GCHQ officers may be guilty of conduct "ancillary to crimes against humanity and/or war crimes, both of which are statutory offences under the International Criminal Court Act, 2001", GCSB officers could also be similarly liable. GCSB staff are unlikely to be able to plead legal immunity from prosecution as they are not combatants or subject to armed attack. However, the British High Court action relates to Pakistan and, so far, evidence of GCSB related employees providing "locational intelligence" seems to be related to Afghanistan.

Only individuals entitled to immunity from ordinary criminal law in respect of armed attacks are considered under international law as "lawful combatants" participating in an "international armed conflict", according to the legal papers. The use of US drones contravenes international humanitarian law. Hundreds of innocent civilians are thought to have been killed as a result of drone attacks. Richard Stein, the head of human rights at Leigh Day & Co, the law firm instigating the prosecution, said: "We believe that there is credible, unchallenged evidence that the Secretary of State is operating a policy of passing intelligence to officials or agents of the US government; and that he considers such a policy to be 'in strict accordance' with the law.

"If this is the case, the Secretary of State has misunderstood one or more of the principles of international law governing immunity for those involved in armed attacks on behalf of a state and/or the lawfulness of such attacks; and his policy, if implemented, involves the commission of serious criminal offences by employees of GCHQ or by other officials or agents of the UK government in the UK" (*Guardian*, *ibid.*). Lawyers want to discover if there is any UK policy or guidance dealing with the circumstances in which information possibly used in directing drone attacks in Pakistan can be shared with the US.

One Of Our Drones Is Missing

Drones might be a great way to avoid sending your troops into danger, but it turns out that, as well as being even more likely to murder friendlies or innocents ("collateral damage") they can be subject to other problems. At the beginning of December 2011, Iran's military somehow captured an American surveillance drone that was probably flying deep inside Iran to gather intelligence and real-time video footage of Iran's nuclear sites. Iran has rejected the US call for its return and demanded that the US should apologise for invading Iranian air space.

Iranian State TV reported that their military experts were in the final stages of recovering data from the drone. It was carrying an array of sophisticated sensors that will be of great interest to Iran and other countries. This is a dramatic setback for the CIA Directorate of Intelligence, which will be desperately trying to cover over the long-term damage to US intelligence gathering. Not only must they accept that some of their most successful and useful surveillance technology is now in the hands of the very people they were using it on, they will also have to consider the possibility that Iran was capable of bringing down the drone through counter-electronic warfare, in other words that it was able to electronically hijack the plane and steer it to the ground (see BBC Website: 8 & 13/12/11).



This photo from the BBC Website shows a teenager injured in a drone attack which he says killed three of his relatives. In another incident at the end of October 2011, Pakistani officials said four suspected militants were killed in a drone strike. But the family of Tariq Khan says what really happened was 16 year old Tariq Khan was hit by two missiles as he was driving near Miranshah, the main town in North Waziristan. He was decapitated in the strike and his 12 year old cousin Wahid was killed alongside him.

Almost One In Three US Warplanes Is A Robot

According to a recent Congressional report, drones now account for 31% of all military aircraft. The US military has 7,494 drones, compared with 10,700 manned aircraft (Spencer Ackerman and Noah Shachtman, 9/1/12, The Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space). The drones, however, have some unique vulnerabilities: malware infection, the workload problems for military imagery, and they are also bandwidth hogs. A single Global Hawk drone requires 500 megabytes per second's worth of bandwidth, the report finds; which is "500% of the total bandwidth the entire US military used during the 1991 Gulf War". And it also notes that a lot of future spy missions might go not to drones, but to the increasing number of giant blimps or other pilotless aircraft, some of which can carry many more sensors and cameras.



US drone in Afghanistan

Future missions, the report finds, include "stand-off jamming" of enemy electronics; "psychological operations, such as dropping leaflets" over an adversary population; and even measuring the amount of radiation in the earth's atmosphere. Peace Researcher readers should also note the increasing interest in drones from police and security agencies. Future demonstrations may well be under surveillance from robot aircraft and in the long-term crowd control may take the form of teargas or other chemical agents being dispersed from drones to break up protests or riots.

Menwith Hill: Massive Expansion And Increasingly Important To US Operations

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) Yorkshire has commissioned an in-depth report on the giant US spy base in Yorkshire. The report concludes that the base endangers the UK rather than defending it, and provides little economic benefit; certainly not the economic input that officials proclaim as a reason for not closing the base.



Some of the radomes at Menwith Hill.

At Menwith Hill, the number of specialist personnel from the US armed services and from US arms corporations increased from 400 in the 1960s to approximately 1,800 in 2011, and a new operations building has been constructed that has doubled capacity, in order to accommodate a multi-billion dollar investment programme in computing and associated satellite hardware and software. There are also now 33 radomes on site, and personnel at the base are likely to number 2,500 by 2015.

The expansion programme (called Project Phoenix) has been described as perhaps the biggest and most sophisticated high technology programme carried out anywhere in the UK over the last ten years. "Significantly, the scale of investment reflects Menwith Hill's enhanced role in 'intelligence-led warfare', whereby advances in both electronic surveillance and satellite imagery are used to support 'real-time' US military actions, including drone attacks and those carried out by special operations forces" (executive summary from CND report).

Dr Steven Schofield, the study's author, said: "It is no longer possible to think of Menwith Hill as simply carrying out traditional military, diplomatic and commercial electronic spying for the United States, but rather to recognise its role as an active provider of integrated intelligence to support new forms of warfare". The report on the base was commissioned by Yorkshire CND and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and concludes that Menwith Hill should be closed down because its activities are illegal under international law, have never been democratically accountable to the British people and because it serves a broader US power projection strategy that seriously damages international security.

Covert Action And Public Opinion: Back To The Future

Nicky Hager's recently published book "Other People's Wars" (*reviewed by Jeremy Agar in Peace Researcher 42, November 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/42/pr42-009.htm>. Ed.*) documents in detail how New Zealand soldiers in Afghanistan found themselves working alongside American soldiers whose openly machismo attitude showed no respect for local people or concern about killing them, either intentionally or unintentionally. NZ units were often tasked with supplying intelligence to such American groups. Furthermore, and what should be of grave concern to Kiwis, some NZ operations were related to the vicious covert war the CIA has been conducting in Afghanistan, one which echoes the Vietnam War-era Phoenix Program where tens of thousands of Vietnamese were targeted for assassination and/or torture and imprisonment.

The theme of Hager's book is that the NZ public, and probably even the NZ government, have been deliberately misled over the true nature of operations between 2002 and 2011. However, the deleterious results of brutal covert action do not seem to have registered with Pentagon and CIA decision-makers. Secret operations are likely to become even more the norm in future. The following excerpt from a Reuters report ("Analysis: The rise and rise of

Western covert ops”, Sara Ledwith and Simon Robinson, 18/10/11) should raise serious concerns about such American strategic thinking, and how NZ supports it.

“Admiral William McRaven, who commanded the (May 2011) operation that killed Osama bin Laden and is head of US Special Forces, argues that his shadowy, secretive warriors are increasingly central to how America and its allies fight. In the decade since September 11, 2001, US Special Operations Command personnel numbers have doubled, its budget tripled and deployments quadrupled. The Bin Laden takedown is simply the tip of an iceberg of fast growing, largely hidden action by the United States and its allies. Those with knowledge of such operations say this changing state of warfare could spark a range of unintended consequences, from jeopardising diplomatic relationships to unwanted, wider wars. Support for Islamist guerrillas fighting Russian occupation in Afghanistan helped produce Bin Laden and al Qaeda.

“The appeal of such tactics is clear. Military operations are far more politically palatable if you keep dead bodies off TV screens. A computer worm planted in Iran's nuclear programme, secret help to rebels in Libya, drone strikes to cripple Al Qaeda -- all can achieve the desired effect without massive publicity. In an era of budget cuts, they are also cheap -- particularly compared with the cost of maintaining and deploying a large conventional military force. McRaven said his 58,000 operatives cost a mere 1.6 % of the Pentagon's predicted 2012 budget.

“The CIA has long retained its own, much smaller band of paramilitary operatives, sometimes operating with military special forces. Their numbers have also risen sharply in recent years to hundreds or even thousands, security experts say. Under its new Director, General David Petraeus, the Agency is expected to further increase such deniable operations as assassination and sabotage.US Special Forces are now deployed in some 75 countries, where their missions range from training to assassinations”.

The report goes on to give examples of using technology such as drones and cyber warfare in place of traditional military forces, and explains the importance of Special Operations units, such as the New Zealand Special Air Service (SAS), in acquiring information about potential targets. It also points out how these operations escape public scrutiny. "The implications are vast," says Patricia De Gennaro, a counterinsurgency expert and professor at New York University who has worked with US forces in the Middle East. "There is no accountability. People have been basically brainwashed, with the help of the media and others in the Beltway (*Washington's political centre – Ed.*), into believing we don't have a right to know what their [sic] military is doing”.

In 2011 Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe of the *Washington Post* reported that US Special Operations forces were deployed in 75 countries, up from 60 at the end of the Bush Presidency (*Tomdespatch.com*, 4/8/11). By the end of 2011, US Special Operations Command spokesman Colonel Tim Nye told journalist Nick Turse, that number will likely reach 120 (*ibid.*). This global presence -- in about 60% of the world's nations and far larger than previously acknowledged -- provides striking new evidence of a rising clandestine Pentagon power elite waging a secret war in all corners of the world.

A recent *Washington Post* article reports US officials as saying the CIA is expected to maintain a large clandestine presence in Iraq and Afghanistan long after the departure of conventional US troops as part of a plan by the Obama Administration to rely on a combination of spies and Special Operations forces to protect US interests in the two war zones (*Washington Post*, 8/2/12). Obama wants ways to exert US power in less expensive and more covert ways. The officials stated that CIA stations in Kabul and Baghdad will probably remain the Agency's largest overseas outposts for years to come. According to the *Post*, the CIA in Afghanistan is expected to have a more aggressively operational role. US officials said the Agency's paramilitary capabilities are seen as tools for keeping the Taliban off balance, protecting the Government in Kabul and preserving access to Afghan airstrips that enable armed CIA drones to hunt al Qaeda remnants in Pakistan.

To quote Nick Turse (*Tomdespatch.com*, *ibid.*): “In 120 countries across the globe, troops from Special Operations Command carry out their secret war of high-profile assassinations, low-level targeted killings, capture/kidnap operations, kick-down-the-door night raids, joint operations with foreign forces, and training missions with indigenous partners as part of a shadowy conflict unknown to most Americans. Once ‘special’ for being small, lean, outsider outfits, today they are special for their power, access, influence, and aura”.

All of which makes “Other People's Wars” even more important to New Zealand foreign and military policy. GCSB operatives have been involved in Afghanistan operations where the aim is to target and eliminate alleged “terrorists” and families are just the collateral damage. Prime Minister Key and NZ military leaders condemned the Hager book outright (even, apparently, before they had read it!). New Zealanders need to become much more aware of the expansion of covert action and its implications as technology inexorably develops military capability. Hopefully, the public will treat Nicky Hager's allegations with much more respect than our leaders, asking harder questions and

refusing to be palmed off with military public relations whitewashes. Deployment of Kiwi soldiers needs the utmost scrutiny in the expanding world of covert warfare and CIA planned strategies. And the following stories make it clear that NZ agencies should never be working with, or close to, Washington's covert operatives.



People's Geography Website

Australian SAS: Secret Operations In Africa

The *Melbourne Age*, in an editorial entitled "What is the SAS doing in Africa?" (13/3/12) raises serious concerns about secret operations being carried out in Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The *Age* comments: "What is our military doing there? Australia is not at war with these countries. Parliament has not been consulted or even informed". The soldiers are acting as spies, out of uniform, and carrying out a role normally the responsibility of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS, the equivalent of Britain's MI6) in an "an unannounced and possibly dangerous expansion of Australia's foreign military engagement" (*Age*, 13/3/12, "Secret SAS squadron sent to spy in Africa", Rafael Epstein and Dylan Welch, <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/political-news/secret-sas-squadron-sent-to-spy-in-africa-20120312-1uwjs.html>). This article has a very interesting video snippet, called "The Quiet War", for anyone with a particular interest in these arcane matters).

The *Age* editorial links these SAS spy missions with renewed American and European interest in Africa's economic resources, particularly minerals. This potential battleground of Chinese and American rivalries is a throwback to the Cold War competition of the US and the Soviet Union for dominance in the Third World. And, of course, most of Australia's current wealth is heavily dependent on mining. According to the *Age* the secret 4 Squadron operating in Africa was set up under the Howard government in 2005. Its role was seen as providing an elite bodyguard for ASIS intelligence officers in overseas operations. Its new intelligence focus was officially authorised by Defence Minister Stephen Smith in 2010. It has been used in Afghanistan alongside ASIS officers. Its creation is based on a US model which involved joint operations between the CIA and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Areas of operation include Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan.

The US Intelligence Agencies: More Lies, Turf Wars And Failures

The BBC has run an interview with Ali Soufan, the former chief interrogator for the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the Middle East, and author of "Black Banners", described by the BBC as the fullest inside account to date of the US response to al Qaeda. The former spook says the US government lied about how information was gained through torture and described the tension between the FBI and the CIA. In the interview (see *BBC News*, 17/10/11) Soufan says:

- Poor communications and rivalry between the FBI and CIA meant information that could have mitigated, if not prevented 9/11, did not get through.
- People involved have lied about events to cover up their own actions or there has been systematic behaviour to

withhold information.

- He opposed the use of "advanced interrogation" as directed from Washington, not on moral grounds, but on the basis that it was "uneffective" (sic) "very ineffective" and they were able to get good information without using these techniques.
- Some [much?] of the information extracted under duress proved false.
- The threat from al Qaeda was exaggerated as they had only 400 "operatives" and the reaction of the UK and USA to 9/11, especially the 2003 invasion of Iraq, gave new impetus to the organisation.

Secret Prison

In December 2011 it was announced that an investigation by the Associated Press and German media found that the CIA had operated a secret prison in the Romanian capital of Bucharest, where terrorism suspects were interrogated. Former CIA operatives identified the building where, they said, detainees were held and tortured. The building belonged to a Romanian agency, Orniss, and stored classified information from the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Orniss denied hosting a CIA prison and the CIA refused to comment. The investigation, by the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper and the German TV network ARD, said those held in the secret prison included Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was held there before transfer to Guantanamo Bay (*where he is currently on trial on nearly 3,000 murder charges, as the alleged architect of the 9/11 attacks. Ed.*).



CBSNEWS.com

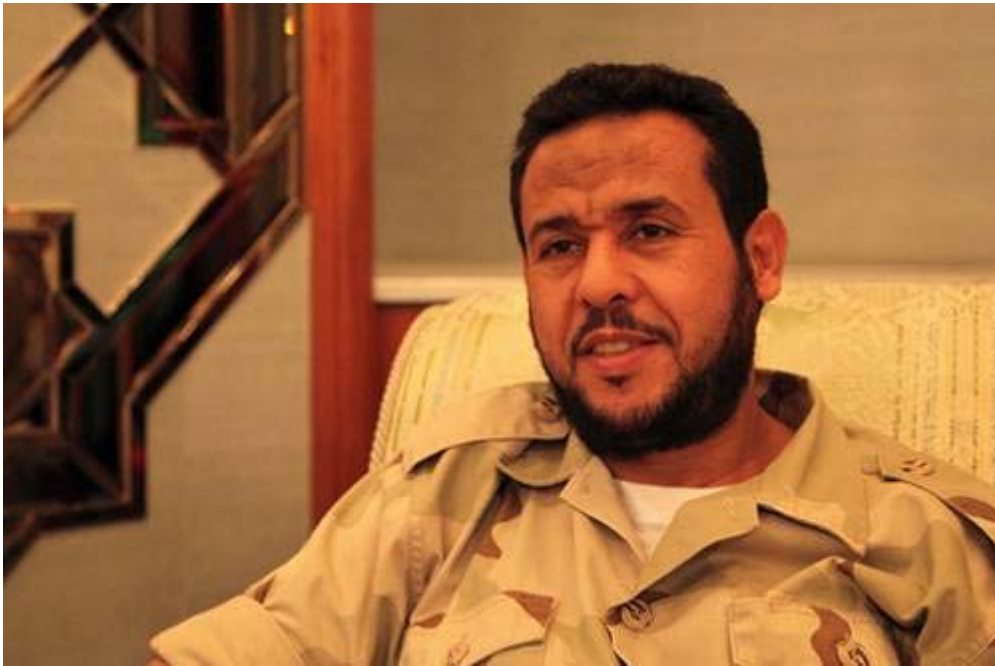
In 2007, an investigation by the Council of Europe accused Romania of operating a secret prison - accusations denied by Bucharest. The CIA called the report "biased and distorted" and said it had operated legally. A BBC investigation in 2010 alleged the CIA used a secret Polish prison where Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was subjected to simulated drowning - the practice known as waterboarding. According to CBS, the Romanian prison was part of a network of covert sites that the CIA operated and controlled overseas in Thailand, Lithuania and Poland. All the prisons were closed by May 2006, and the CIA's detention and interrogation programme ended in 2009, perhaps something that Obama can claim to his credit. During the first month of their detention, the detainees endured sleep deprivation and were doused with water, slapped or forced to stand in painful positions, several former officials said. However, waterboarding, the notorious interrogation technique that simulates drowning, was not performed in Romania, they claimed (see CBSNEWS.com and other major news sites, 8/12/11).

Links Between CIA, MI6 And Libya

Peace Researcher 42 (November 2011) made reference to secret links between the governments of Blair and Bush, and Gaddafi's regime in Libya. Documents found at the abandoned headquarters of Libya's spooks have revealed details of the close relations the Central Intelligence Agency shared with the Libyan intelligence service. The papers

showed several “terrorism suspects” were sent to Libya for interrogation. Western intelligence services began cooperating with Libya after it abandoned its programme to build unconventional weapons in 2004. The files left behind as Libya’s intelligence boss fled show that the cooperation with the CIA and the UK’s MI6 was much more extensive than previously known.

“Some documents indicate that the British agency was even willing to trace phone numbers for the Libyans, and another appears to be a proposed speech written by the Americans for Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi about renouncing unconventional weapons” (*New York Times Online*, 2/9/11). In several of the cases, the documents explicitly talked about having a friendly country arrest a suspect, and then suggested aircraft would be sent to pick the suspect up and deliver him to the Libyans for questioning. While most of the renditions referred to in the documents appear to have been CIA operations, at least one was claimed to have been carried out by MI6. According to the *New York Times*, Abdel Hakim Belhaj, now a national leader in Libya, was kidnapped in Malaysia, along with his pregnant wife, and flown to Libya via London, where he says he was tortured by two people from the CIA. It is possible (likely?) that Waihopai was involved with tracing Belhaj’s travel.



Abdul Hakim Belhadj was taken from Thailand to Tripoli where he was tortured by Gaddafi's agents. Al Jazeera Website.

Torture Inquiry

An Inquiry into the part played by British intelligence agencies in rendition and torture was announced by Prime Minister Cameron in July 2010 after claims that former Guantanamo Bay detainee Binyam Mohamed was tortured with the knowledge of the UK security services while held by the CIA in Pakistan. Since then other former detainees have brought legal action against the UK government, claiming they faced similar mistreatment with the knowledge of MI5 or MI6. But late in 2011 it was revealed that some elements of the Inquiry would be kept secret from the public. Juan Mendez, a UN expert on human rights, says the enquiry into whether the UK was involved in alleged torture must be open or it would “only serve to cover up abuses” (*BBC Website*, 13/11/11). Other human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have said the Inquiry lacked credibility because the UK government said it would decide which material would be made public.

History Repeats

We are reminded how little things change – especially US covert ops! A Chilean judge is seeking the extradition of former US military attaché in Chile, Ray Davis, who has been charged with the 1973 killing of a US journalist working in the country. Charles Horman disappeared on 17 September 1973 - days after General Augusto Pinochet seized power in a coup. His body was found more than a month later. He was investigating links between the CIA and the Chilean military. His death was the subject of the 1982 Oscar-winning film “Missing”. Judge Jorge Zepeda asked the Chilean Supreme Court to authorise an extradition request, so Davis can stand trial in Chile for the murder of Mr Horman and student Frank Teruggi. Davis was the Commander of the US military mission in Chile at the time (*BBC.com*, 29/11/11).

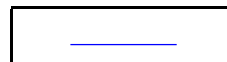
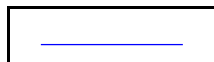
Energy Giant Spies On Greenpeace

A press release from CND Cymru (Wales), 10/11/11, reported that giant French energy corporation EDF has been spying on Greenpeace. Evidence presented to the court by the French prosecutor revealed that EDF had been hacking into the hard drives of Greenpeace computers and had placed a "Trojan Horse" in the hard drive of one computer that enabled the company to access private emails and documents being written by Greenpeace. The French judge sentenced EDF executive Pierre-Paul François to three years imprisonment, with 30 months suspended, and Pascal Durieux also to three years imprisonment, with two years suspended, and a €10,000 fine for commissioning the spying operation. The judge also handed down a guilty verdict in the case of Thierry Lorho, the head of Kargus, the company employed by EDF to hack into the computers of Greenpeace. He has been sentenced to three years in jail, with two years suspended and a €4,000 fine.

Spooks And Unions

On St Patrick's Day 2012 (March 17), while you were all drinking Guinness and wearing green hats, the French spooks at the intelligence agency responsible for security against terrorism were demonstrating at their headquarters against alleged political interference and labour relations. Strikes are common in France but apparently this was the first by a spy agency. The exact nature of the workers' complaints is not clear. Spooks and unions are a difficult mix. In this country, Anti-Bases Campaign has come up against unionism as evidenced by this extract from *Peace Researcher* 34, July 2007: "Dion Martin, veteran Palmerston North organiser for the National Distribution Union (*now First Union. Ed.*) and a key local ABC contact, invited us to send our Waihopai display to be displayed in the trade union centre, and in the foyer of the venue of the annual May Day concert which he organises and which attracts a crowd of many, many hundreds of people. We were delighted to oblige. But both we and Dion were unprepared for what happened next, ironically on May Day itself, after the display had been up in the trade union centre for only one day. He came back to find that it had been pulled down by a local organiser of the Public Service Association (PSA, and it is significant that the building is called PSA House). When Dion asked why he was told: 'Don't you realise that they are my members?' By 'they' she meant the spies at the nearby Tangimoana spybase and the Government Communications Security Bureau in general. When asked how many PSA members there were in the GCSB, she replied: 'Approximately 16 at Tangimoana, 20 at Waihopai, and many more in Wellington, and if any of them happened to come into this office to visit me they would be shocked to see the PSA advocating for closure of the base and their jobs'. Dion suggested that it was unlikely that any of the notoriously shy spies would come into the trade union centre, but was told: 'They might and we can't have it up in this office'. So that was that. Dion was also told, by a local organiser for the Engineers' Union: 'It's better to have that installation than terrorists blowing up your country'. ("Waihopai Display Creates A Stir: PSA Union Official Bans It From Trade Union Centre So As Not To Upset Her Members", Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr34-148.html>). ABC would maintain that some jobs are morally and practically not worthwhile protecting.

In the UK, union membership in the GCHQ (our GCSB's big brother) was banned by Margaret Thatcher, provoking uproar among staff. Thatcher claimed industrial action at the base, particularly during the 1981 civil service pay strike, had undermined the nation's security and justified the ban. In exchange for relinquishing union membership, staff were each paid £1,000 to resign from their union. Staff at the GCHQ were given the go-ahead to join trade unions by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook in 1997, when 14 sacked workers were offered their jobs back.



China's Military Power Threat Or Paper Dragon?

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Warren Thomson

The New (Old) Aircraft Carrier

November 2011 was notable for news items announcing first pictures of China's new threat to the world. A 300 metre long aircraft carrier was about to enter service with the Peoples Republic Navy. Most news outlets carried articles about the warship, which began its sea trials in August 2011, and many expressed concern over Beijing's "military build-up". China, it was repeatedly stated, is currently involved in several maritime territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea. The BBC reported (14/12/11): "In the past year alone, China has had maritime disputes with Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines". In another example, an *Economist* article, headed up "Modernisation in Sheep's Clothing" says Chinese leaders are still eager to avoid confrontation with other powers and focus on beefing up the economy but continues that this might not last. The magazine cites part of a recent Pentagon assessment that "hints at considerable unease about long-term trends in China's military build-up" (*Economist*, 26/8/11). Like previous US reports, this one lists forces which could cause China's self-proclaimed "peaceful development" to become less so. One of these is a growing expectation at home and abroad that China will become more involved in addressing global problems and pursuing its own international interests (read 'challenge US military power').

China says the carrier will be used mainly for experiments, training and scientific research. The ship is approximately 300 metres long, shorter than most comparable US vessels, and will probably carry a large number of helicopters. At the time of writing, this carrier was equipped with life-size model planes. It is not new, but rebuilt from the hulk of a Soviet vessel left to rust after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. It is unlikely in the foreseeable future to have the modern ship to ship missiles necessary to defend itself from serious attack. On the other hand, the USA has 11 aircraft carriers. (Italy has two, and several other nations have one each. The UK recently decommissioned its last aircraft carrier but plans to build more in future).

The conservative British paper the *Telegraph* printed an alarmist article (13/7/11) which said China is creating a network of satellites that could enable it to perfect a ballistic missile capable of sinking American aircraft carriers at long range. The *Telegraph* claimed China's military development "...deepens concerns the country is now developing a worrying array of weapons technologies The most immediate and strategically disquieting application [of reconnaissance satellites] is a targeting and tracking capability in support of the (new Dong Feng 21D) missile". Nothing about the US/UK capacity to track the Chinese aircraft carrier. (Note that Tangimoana, the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau station at Tangimoana, was tracking ships in the Pacific 20 years ago). Given serious differences over islands in the South China Sea in recent years, nobody should be too sanguine about the international relations in that region. And history tells us that about 70% of belligerents who initiated a war lost after badly overestimating their military competence, and launching into war. But, generally, media emphasis on China's military power seems unnecessarily exaggerated, and there is a certain amount of caution in China's military posturing.

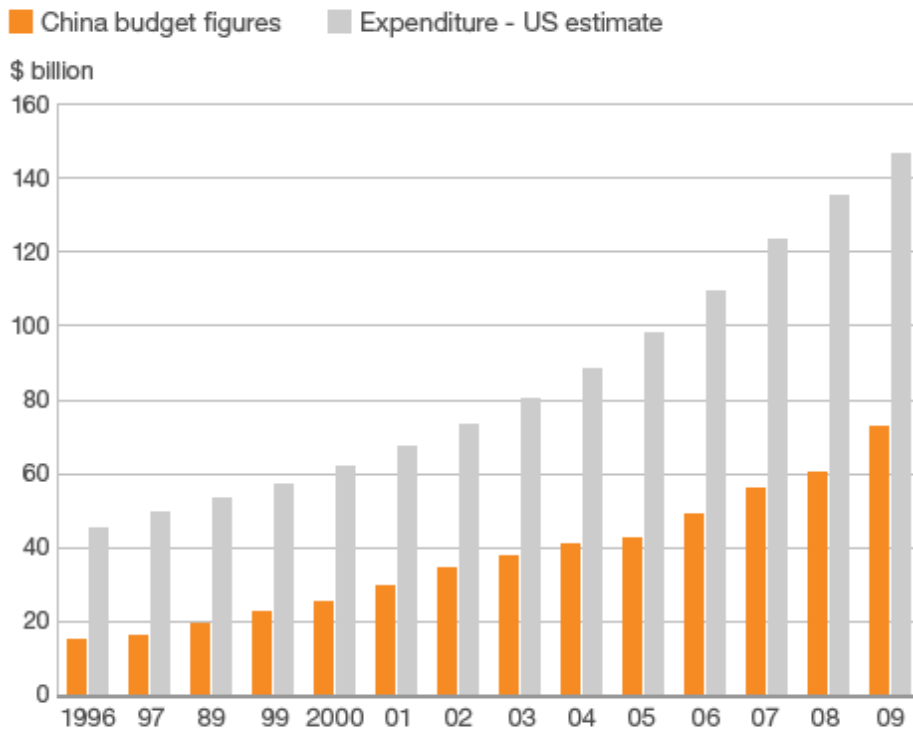


toonpool

China's Defence Spending

Recently the Chinese government announced that it is once again increasing its military spending. Military spending in China has grown about 10% annually over the last 15 years. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, in a 2011 report, argued that if spending trends continue China will achieve military equality with the United States in 15–20 years. Whether that means Beijing will be setting up military bases in Mexico and stationing large numbers of troops in Canada remains to be seen. For now, Washington's defence spending, and its capability, far outweigh those of the Peoples Republic. Even the *Telegraph*, reporting (13/7/11) that China's military budget was £56.2 billion (\$US88 billion) and had risen 12.6% since 2010, noted that Britain itself spent £37 billion (\$US58 billion) and that Beijing's expenditure was still a fraction of the £351 billion that the US had allocated for its core defence budget. However, The *Telegraph* repeated a common refrain that many US analysts believe China is actually spending £96 billion (\$US 150 billion) on defence, rather than the stated figures.

China's defence spending 1996 - 2009



Source: Pentagon report on China's military 2010

According to Wikipedia: (1) the Chinese government's published 2011 military budget was about US\$ 100 billion; (2) it was the second largest in the world and up about 12.7% from 2010; (3) this budget was still only 1/7th of the U.S.'s; (4) This figure would mean that for 2011, China's military expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) would have been 1.4%. On the other hand, depending exactly which figures you choose to utilise, the USA alone probably accounts for more than 42% of global military expenditure, and more than the next 15 largest individual expenditures put together. And, as at least one Internet commentator has pointed out, we have to believe the US figures are absolutely spot-on accurate - nothing unaccounted for, no fiddling, camouflage or anything devious like that - only the Chinese get up to that sort of malarkey.

It is clear the Chinese military capability is rapidly increasing with new weapons and high-tech advances. But China still only rates third place in the Globalfirepower.com index of military strength (see below). The US is first, Russia is second, and the UK is fifth. And the number of standing troops in the People's Liberation Army is actually decreasing as China modernises. The Army will shrink from 2.3 million soldiers to 1.8 million (still the largest standing army in the world). Analysts expect an increase in the number of Chinese submarines (currently about 55) available to patrol the Pacific, but nothing to match US naval power. The size of China's air force is approximately 2,500 planes. The US has an air force that is more than twice as large. According to the *Telegraph* report, China also has between 100 and 400 nuclear warheads. This is a handful more than Israel, and about the same number as the UK.



Mountain Area Information Network Website

One of the most useful sites to use to compare Chinese military capability with other countries is Globalfirepower.com (GFP), where readers can make direct graphical comparisons between various nations; e.g. China and India. GFP notes the subjective nature of such assessments but claims to make an attempt to be unbiased. The GFP rankings are based on a formula taking some 45 factors into account and compiling totals for each country, applying bonuses and penalties as needed to generate their list. For example variables such as personnel, weapons logistics (rail, roads etc), resources (oil etc), geography, and financial strength are surveyed. Top five rankings are given to USA (1) Russia (2) China (3) India (4) and the UK (5). The site makes it clear that China, although undoubtedly showing rapid development in the range and level of military capability, still lags far behind the US. Taking account of US allies, and India, China has a long way to go before it can demonstrate the military hegemony that the Pentagon and its trumpeters are portraying.

Chinese Cyber Warfare: A Threat To The US?

Reuters recently carried an article which reported on a US Congressional conclusion that Chinese cyber warfare would pose a "genuine risk" to the United States military in a conflict, for instance over Taiwan or disputes in the South China Sea (Stuff Website, 8/3/12). Operations against computer networks are said to have become fundamental to Beijing's military and national development strategies over the past decade. But the assessment is based on analysis by Northrop Grumman Corporation, which obviously has a huge interest in promoting the concept of Chinese threat.

In March 2012 the Australian government rejected plans for Chinese giant communications company Huawei to get involved in Internet infrastructure developments in Australia. Presumably this shut-out is premised on the likes of the Northrop Grumman report which says that Chinese commercial firms, bolstered by foreign partners, are giving the military access to cutting edge research and technology. The Chinese military's close ties to large Chinese telecommunications firms create a path for State-sponsored penetrations of supply networks for electronics used by the West's military, government and private industry, according to this perspective. The belief is also stated that this Chinese cyber warfare has the potential to cause a "catastrophic failure of systems and networks supporting critical infrastructure for national security or public safety," according to the report.

But even the Pentagon disputes this view. A senior US defence official is quoted as stating: "No one should think that Chinese cyber capabilities can seriously impede US military operations; "We're cognisant of those capabilities, of course, and are working on ways to add to the tools we already have to respond to them if necessary," he said (Stuff, *ibid.*). Official US concern has grown over alleged Chinese espionage via computer penetrations. In October 2011, the Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive, a US intelligence arm, said in a declassified report to Congress that "Chinese actors are the world's most active and persistent perpetrators of economic espionage". They should have added, "after us, the UK, and the French".

Security experts testifying to the US Senate Armed Services Subcommittee said the penetration was likely so complete that attempts to curb it should stop. Instead, cyber defence should be about protecting data not controlling access. The experts said the US should look into ways to retaliate against nations that had access to its networks. And in a somewhat self-serving contribution to the same subcommittee, Dr Michael Wertheimer, Director of Research and Development at the National Security Agency, claimed the poor defences that the US military could muster (against cyber warfare) were made weaker by its hiring system, with low pay, delays over promotion and wage freezes making it very hard for the US government to attract and keep talented computer security staff (*Washington Post*, 8/3/12).

Footnote: Israeli Nuclear-Capable Sub

The *Christchurch Press* reported (27/2/12) that “a secret Israeli submarine capable of carrying cruise missiles is undergoing sea trials”. The newspaper said that the vessel was built in a German shipyard and will be used to provide a second strike capability against Iran in the event of war. The *Press* was quoting an Israeli newspaper which claimed the submarine has extra large torpedo tubes capable of carrying cruise missiles with nuclear warheads.



The Times

Middle East Turmoil And Beyond

Political Blowback In Action

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Dennis Small

“Access to Persian Gulf oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to US national security interests. The US remains committed to defending its vital interests in the region, if necessary through the use of military force, against any power with interests inimical to our own” (National Security Directive 54, Gulf War 1991, as quoted in “Crude World: The Violent Twilight of Oil”, Peter Maass, Penguin, 2009, p147).

“Go ahead. Send me a new generation of recruits. Your bombs will fuel their hatred of America and their desire for revenge . . . Go ahead. Destabilise the region. Maybe Pakistan will fail – we want its nuclear weapons . . . So please – Invade Iraq! Make my day” (expression of Osama bin Laden’s sentiments from a peace movement poster).

“O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name”, Madame Jeanne-Marie Roland, on the guillotine, 8 November, 1793.



Out Of The Barrel Of A Gun

Western resource imperialism has reaped turmoil in the Middle East and beyond. The deliberately calculated massive over-reaction to 9/11 – i.e. the invasions of Afghanistan in late 2001 and of Iraq in 2003 – have engendered an unfolding chain of consequences that will prove increasingly challenging in an unstable world. Power and its projection are fundamental for American hegemony; an imperative reinforced by US leadership of the Western bloc. But imperial over-reach has unleashed a cauldron of unrest throughout the Middle East and beyond. This was all predicted by majority expert assessment at the time of these earlier invasions. But, of course, for the mainstream media such warnings and predictions are well buried down the Orwellian memory hole for the most part, along with

the historical context. The only regularly remembered historical moment is the trigger of 9/11.

Currently, the US is mired in Afghanistan, committed in a tumultuous Iraq, and confronted with unsettled conditions throughout much of the Middle East, and North and West Africa. Meantime, the recent ongoing focus of the Western mainstream media has been on the travails of its enemies, i.e. firstly the successful US/NATO-backed revolt against Muammar al-Gaddafi's Libyan regime, and secondly, the continuing rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad's rule in Syria. When it sometimes suits, American Administrations love to adopt the revolutionary posture, instead of the usual counter-revolutionary elitism. True to form, the Press has been running a steady stream of prominently placed, inflammatory articles on Syria, mostly reproduced from Rupert Murdoch's *The Times*. TVNZ1 has been busily pumping out the usual official Anglo-American line on the issues of the Middle East/Central Asia.

As well, Anglo-American efforts at subversion of the Iranian government are proceeding, in lock-step with the brazenly evident Israeli State terrorism directed at that country's nuclear scientists and facilities. In turn, however, reactions during February 2012 in the form of Iranian-linked terrorist incidents against Israeli diplomatic targets around the world amounted to another demonstration as to how globalist - and potentially catastrophic - this underground war could easily become. An Israeli-US attack on Iran is seemingly imminent as posturing for war on both sides goes on, in and around the Gulf of Hormuz. It is quite extraordinary that the US and Israel, both nuclear armed, can publicly proclaim their intentions to carry out a military strike on Iran, a sovereign nation, in front of the whole world. Their joint State terrorism, hypocrisy, and blatant imperial arrogance know no bounds.

Nuclear Proliferation

France and other Western nations, like the US, cynically helped Israel, both directly and indirectly, to develop its arsenal of nuclear weapons, which of course has inevitably provoked other countries in the region like Iraq and possibly now, Iran, to try and produce their own. The chain reaction goes on. In their 1981 book (*Times Books*), "The Islamic Bomb", two New York Times journalists, Steve Weissman and Herbert Krosney, charted a myriad of financial, political, economic and technical arrangements in the spread of nuclear technology in the Middle East. Drawing especially on a windfall of "top-secret French government documents", they condemned the "flagrant irresponsibility" of the Western supplier nations, France in particular [which] has brought the Middle East to the brink of a nuclear arms race" (*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March 1983, vol, 39, no. 3, p42). France and co. had provided substantial technical assistance to Pakistan and Iraq.

But the genie was already out of the bottle. The European neo-colonisation of Palestine, culminating in a burst of Zionist terrorism and subsequent war, had by 1948 legitimated itself, at least for the West, as the new state of Israel. "This was seen not only as a direct attack by the Western powers on the Arab world but an affront to Islam" ("What is Islam? A Comprehensive Introduction", Chris Horrie & Peter Chippindale, Virgin Books, 2003 edition, p171). Chillingly, right from the establishment of Israel, its Government sought the nuclear bomb. Western help was in the wings. "As payment for Israeli participation in the Suez Crisis of 1956, France provided nuclear expertise", building the Dimona reactor complex (www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/cpc-pubs/farr.htm: "The Third Temple's Holy of Holies: Israel's Nuclear Weapons", Warner D. Farr, USAF Counterproliferation Center, September, 1999). "By the 1973 Yom Yippur war, Israel had a number of sophisticated nuclear bombs, deployed them, and considered using them" (ibid.).

The Holocaust Syndrome

The institution of Israel not only hugely angered the Muslim Middle East but its nuclear weapons programme set off efforts among countries in the region to get their own. In 1981, the same year as *The New York Times'* journals' clarion warning about the dangers of the "Islamic Bomb", Israel bombed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq to widespread Western applause. But, ironically, Iraq went on being a Western ally against newly revolutionary Iran. Israel, which owed so much of its existence to the waves of Jewish refugees from the horrors of the Holocaust, crazily embraced its own version of a future potential Holocaust for everyone from its very inception. Further, under its predominantly hardline leadership, it has persisted – with American and other Western support, whatever the rhetoric at times – in failing to properly provide for a neighbouring Palestinian state, for a viable "two-state" solution. Instead, its own state of siege is permanent, helping engender the rise of Hamas and the emergence of extreme terrorist groups like Islamic Jihad. In his book "The Longest War", Israeli citizen Jacobo Timerman movingly reflected on the implications of General Ariel Sharon's 1982 invasion of Lebanon (Pan Books, 1982). His message about the dangers of Israel's militancy rings more fervently than ever in these times.

The US has kept Israel's nuclear capability as secret as it could after learning of the programme's extent in the mid-1960s (*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, "An NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty] for Non-Members", May/June, vol. 60, no. 3, 2004, p40). Over the years, the regular practice of such discriminatory, selective morality on nuclear weaponry by the Anglo-American axis has proved to be very counter-productive (ibid.). Non-NPT nuclear-armed

members Israel, India and Pakistan are currently American allies in the so-called “War on Terror”, an Orwellian commitment for a very grim future.

The Crisis Syndrome

This Western-backed proliferation syndrome is openly expressed in the lavish help for nuclear technology that the US now bestows on India. Yet India and Pakistan, which have already fought several wars and been on the nuclear brink in the very near past, are countries that only have a few minutes’ missile-flying time between them in event of another serious crisis. Again, grossly short-sighted, self-serving US policies continue to undermine Pakistani stability. These policies are very much rooted in previous history. In the not so distant past in Pakistan, the US promoted a brand of very conservative Islam there with strong support for the military dictatorship of Zia ul-Haq from 1977 to 1988. General Zia’s Islamisation programme was opposed by the Shiite minority and other groupings. Lamentably, it sowed the seeds of the ethnic intolerance that threatens to rip Pakistan apart today, more “blowback” from the “Pandora’s Box” of American foreign policy (*Time*, 16/1/12).

In theatres related to Syria then, the sense of crisis is also accumulating. Pakistan goes on unravelling along cultural and religious lines as the US regularly conducts State terrorism with CIA/Pentagon-directed drones, delivering murderous strikes on the remote, restive, tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Many of the people in the region are deeply traumatised. US strategy is even sending radicalised refugees into southern cities and towns like Karachi (ibid.). Religious/ethnic and socio-economic tensions are spreading throughout Central Asia, ratcheting up in already conflict-ridden West African states like Nigeria, and other related countries, compounding the fallout from the international financial/economic mess. The US has planned for major wars on at least two fronts. Again, periodic missile-rattling on the Korean peninsula points up this immensely disturbing prospect.

Perils Of Imperial Reach

The Anglo-American axis has long constituted the hard core of Western imperialism. As the predatory basis of Western civilisation, the oil economy has been central to its perpetuation. Given that hegemony over the world’s oil market by the West has come increasingly into question over the past three decades or so, there have been multiple reactions, with armed force – either indirectly or directly applied – to the fore at varying stages of the process. By 1979, both big Cold War powers had failed spectacularly in their respective imperial projections, eliciting further strategic reactions at geopolitical control. The Soviet Union’s direct intervention in Afghanistan that year testified to its failure at political manipulation and so its desperate resort to force. For the US, in the 1980s, the main goals in the Middle East/Central Asia arc were to contain both the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and Shiite Iran vis-à-vis Iraq, following the collapse of the Shah’s regime as the Gulf’s regional policeman. Iraq, as well, has a Shiite majority but this was still under Sunni domination during Saddam Hussein’s rule.

But by late 1990, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq had become the main American enemy. The first Gulf War resulted in the strong reassertion of Western dominance over the region. As a consequence, the decade of the 1990s saw the harsh punishment of Iraq under United Nations’ (UN) sanctions and intermittent allied bombing raids. Next, in the wake of the atrocity of 9/11, came the orchestrated illegal invasions of first Afghanistan in late 2001, and then Iraq in 2003. The Western media, spearheaded by the Murdoch empire, constantly bayed for blood (for oil). Suicidal stupidity rules. With its overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the US has unleashed a whole problematic range of dynamic factors in the region’s Sunni-Shiite equation, among other scary prospects - including some that now may also be unfolding.

Capitalist Pathology

In Afghanistan, the former bear trap for the Soviet Union became the breeding ground for dedicated anti-Western resistance to armed foreign occupation. There is widespread opposition to the US/NATO coalition and the corrupt, largely ethnically-based Karzai regime. It was always glaringly evident that American support for the Northern Alliance with its Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaris would induce many of the Pashtun people of eastern and southern Afghanistan, backed by their compatriots in Pakistan, to fight back under the Taliban banner. The Pashtuns comprise the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and also constitute a significant minority across the border in Pakistan.



Afghanistan: No light at the end of the tunnel. Photo: Foreign Policy Website

The Pashtun-based Taliban have actually gained broader backing from the national Afghan populace. More generally, Islamist militants in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have reaffirmed their united front against North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) troops in Afghanistan (*Press*, 4/1/12). A NATO report confirms that: “The Taliban remain defiant and have wide support among the Afghan people” (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16821218). According to NATO’s own assessment, the Taliban in Afghanistan are being directly assisted by the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which was so critical in the war against the Soviets (*ibid.*) Not only have ethnic groupings been important, but Afghanistan has a history of warlordism, regional and tribal affiliations. The Haqqani Network on the Afghan-Pakistani border has become a big problem for the American presence (*Press*, *ibid.*). So much for imperial folly! In Afghanistan, and also increasingly in Pakistan, the long established US practice of exploiting ethnic and social and cultural divisions in the “Third World” has come to grief for its perpetrators as well. Unfortunately, as usual, the local peoples suffer the most.

Al Qaeda itself became a loose international network, spread among a widespread background of sympathetic jihadist sentiment, after the disruption of its principal base in Afghanistan. Nicky Hager’s excellent book, “Other Peoples’ Wars: NZ in Afghanistan, Iraq, & the War on Terror” (Craig Potton Pub, 2011; reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* 42. November 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/42/pr42-009.htm>) has plenty of revealing insights from a NZ perspective as to how aimless and counter-productive the US/NATO war on Afghanistan has got. At bottom, the conflict is a particularly nasty example of the West’s terroristic resource war on the world’s poor. “Third World” militancy is a threat to be crushed wherever it might appear. Today, this militancy can take many forms – from Taliban guerrillas, through Iranian fundamentalism and Venezuelan resource nationalism, to Argentina’s appeal for sovereignty over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands. Oil, of course, is often an underlying theme.

Forward Into The Quagmire!

The long-term pitfalls of Afghanistan were always obvious except to those blinded by the illusions, hubris and arrogance of their military power, and traditional sense of Western superiority. To open up a further front in Iraq was another step of folly that beggared any rational belief. But, this latter step actually flowed from prior American “neo-conservative (neo-con)” calculation. Overall, in simple and predictable resource war terms, American consumer dependency on oil has led it inevitably deeper into the maelstrom of the Middle East, a maelstrom which its own policies and actions have done so much to stir into life. Furthermore, its ambit of ambition has over time expanded out across Central Asia, and come to encompass much of Africa. “In Equatorial Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Angola and elsewhere, Americans have not hesitated to nuzzle and sign contracts with tyrants who reside at the top of the repulsiveness scale” (“Crude World”, *op. cit.*, p157).

In the latest version of “The Great Game” of blood and oil in Central Asia – i.e. the political and resource competition between the US, Russia, China, etc. - former US “special envoy” Peter Tomsen, who has boasted of being a key player, freely admits to American “mistakes”. These include previous support for “militant Islamists”, especially the Taliban in Afghanistan and its close links with the Pakistani ISI, and simply just using the Afghan people for strategic

ends (“The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia”, Lutz Kleveman, Atlantic Books, 2003, pp246/7). But the essence of such self-serving imperialism is that “mistakes” continue, compound and multiply.



At the same time, neo-fascist elements in the US imperial State actually feed on such “blowback”. For instance, the very Rightwing Stratfor intelligence outfit, relied on by a number of NZ governmental agencies, and recently unmasked by Wikileaks for deprecatory comments on NZ’s role within the US-NZ relationship (*Sunday Star Times*, 4/3/12), thrives on this sort of stuff. Privatisation of the national security State means a vested interest in war and repression everywhere. Stratfor is proudly touted as a “private, quasi-Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)” or “shadow CIA”. Wikileaks is going to publish more than five million confidential e-mails from Stratfor, revealing the intelligence firm’s “web of informers, payoff structure, payment-laundering techniques and psychological methods” (*Press*, 28/2/12): a brilliant payback/blowback for Stratfor’s predatory/parasitic operations!

Privatising Militarist Pillage And Plunder

George Friedman, Stratfor’s founder, exults in the notion that the US is winning the “War on Terror” because aggressive “shock and awe” strategy and tactics – as so graphically and repeatedly displayed in Iraq – has impressed the Muslim world and covered al Qaeda (see “Afterword” in “America’s Secret War: Inside the Worldwide Struggle between the US and its Enemies”, Abacus, 2004, p341). For Friedman, the invasion of Iraq by American forces has reaffirmed the alignment between Saudi Arabia and the US, effectively defining the future of the region. In addition, he thinks that the US can balance the Sunni/Shiite split and the interaction between Iraq and Iran (*ibid*, p346). At least, this was his view in 2004. Friedman acknowledges, however, that US-led globalisation has encountered “deepseated, geopolitical resistance” in certain countries (*ibid*, p55). In typically ideological fashion, he portrays this situation as one of conflict between “prosperity and stability” and its opposite (*ibid*.).

Friedman embraces the prospect that: “As the most powerful nation in the world, we will be fighting many wars” (*ibid*, p339). He worries, nevertheless, that the American “ruling class” is not contributing enough of its own children to this endless war, and so potentially undermining the legitimacy of both the war and his ruling class. Damningly, this very nasty character, so influential on the American scene and beyond (Stratfor was cited very positively by New Zealand First’s defence spokesman in Parliament on 6 March 2012) eagerly looks to ever expand the West’s terroristic resource war on the world’s poor peoples. He and his ilk actually enjoy making more bloody mayhem (and, of course, making money out of it all)! He declares that: “A war dependent on political arrangements is a war in jeopardy. It is easier to shape the battlefield than an Iraqi political consensus” (*ibid*, p336). For Friedman, echoing Clausewitz, war is politics by violent means: indeed in Clausewitz’s words, “merely the continuation of policy by other means”.



Iranian Cartoon of the Day Website

Friedman epitomises the delusions of the American power elite: of massive military projections for profit extraction and permanent foreign control of planetary resources. Above all, for Stratfor & co - as for the military-industrial complex more than ever today, given rampant privatisation - war is very big business. *And business is very good!* For Friedman and his Stratfor mates, one eminently self-serving option then is to continually open up new campaigns. In 2004, Friedman said that: "The next campaign is obvious: *Pakistan*. If Saudi Arabia was the financial foundation of al Qaeda, Pakistan and the ISI were the organisational foundation" (ibid.). So take it to America's enemies overseas everywhere and make bin Laden's day, freely bleeding taxpayer money and citizen gore. Most of the 9/11 plane hijackers came from Saudi Arabia - a hugely dramatic instance of blowback. But since Saudi Arabia itself is under imperialist control, the search for enemies to kill, torture, and pillage must go further.

The rogue American State has certainly gone on to foster further strife in Pakistan. Even the *Los Angeles Times* can acknowledge today that vigorous opposition to US foreign policy "resonates strongly with Pakistanis, most of whom are staunchly anti-American" (from an article on Pakistani politician, Imran Khan, reprinted in the *Press*, 8/3/12). Stand by, because the vicious, fundamentalist, militarist madmen are taking over Washington and extending both their global grasp and capacity for blowback! (*back in 1991, Friedman even predicted a war between Japan and the US!*). But Joanne Black of the *New Zealand Listener* is still an admirer, pushing Friedman's view that NZ needs an "international champion", i.e. good old belligerent Uncle Sam ("Heads in the Sand", *Listener*, 6-12/6/09). Black, as usual, is very nervous about China and so wants to join the countdown to nuclear showdown (get our heads out of the sand bunkers!). In capitalism, an economic downturn soon gets the war drums beating, a syndrome that can be caused - at least partly - by the outcomes of earlier wars and military spending.

Imperialism And Iraq

Unlike Afghanistan, Iraq has had a long history of systematic Western oil exploitation. But nationalist and independence beliefs and feeling have periodically asserted itself against foreign intruders. For a savage decade in the 1980s, Saddam Hussein channelled such motivation into war on Iran, with an eager, helping hand from the West. Possibly the best guide to Iraq, its regional background, and the implications of the 2003 American invasion, was written by a foremost authority on that country and the Middle East in general: William Polk, Professor of History & Founding Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago, www.williampolk.com. Even the *Economist*, that bastion of Rightwing capitalist opinion, endorsed Polk's book, "Understanding Iraq: A Whistlestop Tour from Ancient Babylon to Occupied Baghdad" (IB Tauris, 2005) for showing how "America is blundering in Iraq out of historical ignorance" (from cover quote).



The essence of Professor Polk's message on Iraq is that the US has fallen into the same very predictable trap as in Afghanistan. As a former strategist for President Kennedy, Polk was actually responsible for planning American policy towards the Middle East on this Administration's behalf. In his book, Polk himself comes across as one of the unfortunately very few humane and sensitive American strategic planners. He stresses that Iraq has suffered from a long history of violence, and the US should have learnt "that warfare is brutalising" (ibid, p3). But imperial imperatives triumphed. ("Bush in Babylon: The Recolonisation of Iraq", Tariq Ali, Verso, 2003).

Cross-Cutting Allegiances And Tangled Politics

Predatory imperial intrusions in Iraq and various other countries over many years have opened up a very messy can of worms, or rather nest of vipers, given the trends to gathering violence, both on the part of the imperialists themselves, and on that of some of the peoples they purport to rule (whether directly or indirectly). Western interventions have spawned more ruthless reactions from the enemies they have made. Various types of fundamentalist extremism have multiplied, feeding on one another.

To use Iraq as an example, after the 1958 revolution the country was subject to the cross-cutting appeals of Islam, Arab sovereignty, ethnic nationalism, and country nationalism. Within the context of Islamic culture in Iraq, there have been the ongoing tensions between the Shiite majority and Sunni minority, as well as conflict over the contentious place of the Sunni Kurds (e.g. "Understanding Iraq", op. cit, pp103-7). Socialism gained a sort of foothold in the form of the Ba'ath (Arab Socialist Renaissance) Party, as also happened in Syria. But in both countries, it was expressed as a very authoritarian and attenuated ideal. Moreover, in both countries, the Ba'ath version of socialism came to serve as the vehicle for a ruling faction – a clan-based oligarchy of the Sunni minority in Iraq, and a family/clan clique within the Shiite Alawite minority sect in Syria.

In Iraq, when the Anglo-American axis perceived Communist influence gaining ground in the new revolutionary regime installed in the late 1950s, it saw fit to intervene in February 1963. A coup, "allegedly with assistance from the CIA", deposed the ruler Karim Qasim (ibid, p115). The coup-makers killed perhaps thousands from Qasim's regime. "Allegedly again, the CIA helped them identify those to be eliminated", a long-established and standard agency practice (ibid.). Interestingly, on the relevant page here, Polk includes a footnote disclaiming that he had any involvement in this murderous coup, having been left out of the decision-making loop (CIA involvement is well documented these days, even being cited in popular encyclopaedias. For instance: "1963: Joint socialist-nationalist Ba'athist-military coup headed by Colonel Salem Aref and backed by US CIA; reign of terror launched against the Left" (The Hutchinson Encyclopaedia, 2004, p485). Unfortunately extensive documentation does not necessarily mean public knowledge. The CIA-manipulated Indonesian genocide 1965-69 is a case in point: compare the same encyclopaedia on p476 – *open recognition of Western-manipulated genocide is a step too far!*).

Instigating Instability

Saddam Hussein emerged as the CIA-facilitated "godfather" of Iraq. After an internal struggle, the Ba'athists took over fully in 1968 and eventually Saddam himself came to the fore in 1979, after a bloody role in previous coups. Similarly in Syria, the Assad dynasty was founded in 1970 by a military coup under the auspices of the Ba'ath Party. But while Syria and Iraq shared a border and similar ruling parties, relations were often strained, even hostile. Syria actually contributed troops for the first Gulf War against Iraq in 1990/91. However, it signed a free trade accord with Iraq in 2001. Later, during the height of the armed resistance in Iraq, Syria seemed to be next on the American hit-list, vying for that place with Iran.



Saddam Hussein: Supported then destroyed by Washington

Increasingly, over the years, Syria, like Libya, had slowly accommodated itself to the West in various ways. A crucial incentive was the looming threat of Islamist radicalism with a proclivity to violence. With al Qaeda having its roots in an extremist, politicised version of the Sunni faith, Shia everywhere – as well as most ruling Sunni - have a wary outlook for signs of this particular ideology. Shiism itself has instead given rise to its own expressions of radical sentiment. Country-wise, its' most dramatic expression has been exemplified in Iran with the expulsion of American neo-colonialist rule in 1979, and the consequence-laden aftermath right up to the present.

Most ironically, thanks to the American invasion, Shiite Iran has gained influence in the new Shiite-dominated Iraq. This has been a major source of ongoing communitarian tensions with new factors arising. Recently there has been "acrimony between Iraq's Shiite-led government and some Sunni Gulf states" (*Press*, 25/2/12). According to a Times report, Sunni Turkey sees itself as "a regional protector of oppressed Sunnis", turning on its former Assad ally (reprinted in the *Press*, 10/2/12). "In Iraq, politicians fear that the instability could spill over and become an all-out conflict between the new, Sunni Islamist bloc emerging from the upheaval of the Arab Spring, and an Iranian-led Shiite bloc, struggling for regional dominance" (*ibid.*). Strife within Syria has spilled over into Lebanon. National boundaries in the region are more problematic than ever.

Of course, the Shiite bloc might be seen as defending its position against the threat of Sunni dominance. Obviously, the US and its agencies like Stratfor have stuffed up badly again in trying to "balance the Sunni/Shiite split". While al Qaeda is Sunni in origins, the West tends to fear the Shiite bloc as a whole. Since Shia constitute the minority branch of Islam, they represent a potential challenge to the dominant status quo, which Western forces have long shaped and manipulated to their own perceived benefit and interests. The tangled politics in the international relations of the "War on Terror" can yet get very murky. For example, Iran is alleged to have sponsored al Qaeda-linked groups (*Press*, 15/2/12). A recent ironic twist is how India has capitalised on the Western embargo on Iran. India wants to boost trade with Iran and get better access to oil (*ibid.*).

Western Worries

During February 2011, the "Arab Spring" began to flourish on a very large scale. In Libya and Syria, opposition movements to the Gaddafi and Assad regimes have drawn on a wide range of rebel activists and fighters. They span the spectrum of religious, ethnic, regional, tribal, and political affiliations. While Western diplomatic and military efforts continue to try and redraw the geopolitical map even more in their favour, Western unease regularly surfaces in media reportage, freely voicing worries about the dangers of Muslim militancy. One major underlying concern is the unsettled and uncertain situation in Libya post-Gaddafi.

Tunisia overthrew its Western-backed dictatorship and has elected a firmly yet apparently "moderate" (to use Western parlance) Islamist government. But the critically important nation of Egypt remains contested in a multitude of ways, with the Western-backed military still in real control, despite Parliamentary elections in January 2012 returning a 70% Islamist party vote. Similarly, conflict-torn Yemen and Somalia are other big Western concerns. In the case of the latter, the American-backed 2006-09 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia ousted from rule the relatively popular and stable Islamic Courts Union, and led to the more radical al Shabaab movement. This movement controls much of southern Somalia. Following the recent discovery of substantial oil deposits in bordering northern

Kenya, where Somalia's troubles have already spilled over, contending interests are already staking out another site in the global resource war. The Anglo-American axis is pulling the strings as hard as it can in such countries to ensure the suppression or at least effective (from its viewpoint) management of radical groups (see "Spooky Bits" item on the Australian SAS in Africa – Ed.).

A revealing insight into the tangled politics and agendas at work in the "Arab Spring" is reflected in a recent French-made documentary of resistance inside Syria. Shown on Australian TV, this film is entitled "Syria's Freedom Fighters" (SBS2, *Dateline*, 21/2/12). Pertinently enough, its showing followed an Insight discussion/debate on the prospects and outcomes of an Israeli and/or American military strike on Iran on account of that country's nuclear programme; and then a *Dateline* interview with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan on holding the line against the Taliban threat (ibid.). The irony of 100,000 foreign troops supposedly defending freedom in Afghanistan (in the footsteps of the Soviet forces) was obviously lost on the arrogant *Dateline* presenter, although she did mention the Taliban charge that Karzai heads a "puppet" regime. Ironically enough, Karzai has recently accused American soldiers of being "demons" (*Press*, 24/3/12). Such tensions and contradictions permeate the politics of the Middle East and surrounding regions.

Human Rights Under Siege

The documentary "Syria's Freedom Fighters" provides some further revealing insights into the very selective definitions of "freedom fighters" and "terrorists" according to Western discourse. This French film focused on the horrendous bombardment by President Assad's forces of the city of Homs, a siege that lasted for months until early March 2012. The men of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), mostly deserters from Assad's military (mainly composed of Sunni conscripts), had expressed a determination to fight to the end, but eventually made a strategic retreat. Western journalists were killed and wounded in Homs covering the siege. Intermittent fighting still goes on there.

In the film cited above on the Homs siege, a gunman and now prisoner, apparently Iranian, was paraded in front of the camera. There have been allegations of such Iranian support for the Assad regime. It was noted that the Free Syrian Army has been known to kill its hostages, as has happened with similar crimes by certain "liberationist" militias in Libya. Human Rights Watch, in fact, has condemned "serious human rights abuses" perpetrated by the Syrian rebels (*Press*, 22/3/12). This organisation has "painted a dark picture that is in stark contrast to the 'freedom fighter' image that the rebels and their political allies outside Syria have sought to project to the world" (ibid.). An earlier report by Human Rights Watch "documented widespread violations by Syrian security forces" (ibid.). At another point in the film "Syria's Freedom Fighters", the documentary makers got quite excited when they thought they had spotted some Muslim "extremists", who were also members of the Free Syrian Army (*oh dear!*). These men were supposedly dressed like radical Salafis. The other "freedom fighters", with whom they were talking, dismissed any such concerns. The great irony of Western anxiety and hypocrisy over potential or alleged enemies is continually exposed.



Syrian "freedom fighters": What and who do they really represent?

Photo: World News Australia

Roots Of Radicalisation

A Muslim intellectual leader, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), inspired the development of the Salafi movement. He was a complex thinker but emphasised the spirit of Wahhabism (source faith for the fundamentalist orientation of the Saudi kingdom), and a return to "Muhammad and the traditions of the early Medina community" ("Man's Religions", John Noss, MacMillan, 1963, p774). This resulted "in the formation of a conservative religious group called the *Salafiya*, led by his Syrian disciple Rashid Rida, the editor of a periodical that was read from one end of the Muslim

world to the other. The Salafi movement spread to India and the East Indies [Indonesia]" (ibid.). Parallel and associated with this development, there arose "the Wahhabi-motivated Muslim Brotherhood, a powerful factor in Egyptian politics, before and since the independence of Egypt" (ibid.).

The US/Israeli alliance relied on the hugely corrupt and repressive rule of dictator Hosni Mubarak to curb the Muslim Brotherhood's influence, and that of any related groups in Egypt, despite the support of Saudi Arabia for the Brotherhood. Within Egypt, the Brotherhood constituted the principal opposition to Mubarak's rule and today run the most organised political grouping, while the Salafists can perhaps command a constituency of up to 20% (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-14396488). The "country's estimated ten million Christians are feeling more vulnerable than ever amid the rise of Islamic movements to political power" *Press*, 19/3/12). There have been attacks on the Coptic Orthodox Church by the ultra-conservative Salafis (ibid). Such religious/cultural community tensions and conflict are a very worrying development for Egypt. The suicidal terrorist gunman in Toulouse, who boasted of "bringing France to her knees" in March 2012, professed allegiance to Salafism, as well as to al Qaeda (*Press*, 23/3/12). He claimed revenge for Palestinian and Afghan deaths. Terrorism in its various forms feeds on itself relentlessly.

While Western governments and the mainstream media cynically hammer away at Syria over human rights and civilian deaths, the linchpin of the Western oil empire - the absolutist, feudal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - stays locked down in totalitarian mode thanks to security enforcement imposed both directly and indirectly by the Anglo-American axis and its allies. Just to raise a questioning voice in Saudi Arabia is very dangerous ("Crude World", op, cit, ch. 8). The West collaborates in keeping this country's "appalling human rights record a secret" (ibid, p174).

Ratcheting Up Repression

Britain trains "Saudi Arabia's national guard – the elite security force" - deployed to help crush protests in Bahrain during March 2011 (*Press*, 30/5/11). Brutal Bahrain has a Shiite majority and the reactionary Saudi regime is paranoid about Iran's influence (*British companies have made large profits from selling anti-riot equipment to the Bahraini authorities – Ed.*).The Saudi Kingdom has stamped down violently on protests in its own oil-rich Eastern Province, home to many of the country's Shiites, who comprise some 10% of the total population (*Press*, 18/2/12). Currently, Saudi Arabia and other Western-backed oppressive states fiercely condemn Syria, calling for armed intervention. Saudi Arabia and Qatar "have agreed to pay the FSA rebels in a bid to lure more defectors from the Government Army" (*Press*, 5/4/12).



Protesters in Bahrain run for their lives. Photo: The Atlantic

The overwhelming impression conveyed by the Western media is that the critics of Syria and Iran have the high moral ground. Duplicity in the mainstream media on human rights in Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and elsewhere, remains systematically pervasive for the most part. There are two great conflicting, yet also complementary, dimensions to the contradictory situation of Saudi Arabia. On the one hand, there is the very repressive society, which can incite violent antagonism on the part of some Sunnis, especially because of the regime's foreign backing - hence, a fundamental cause of al Qaeda. On the other hand, Saudi Establishment support for conservative religious groupings and movements can rebound in radical backlash that appeals to even greater religious conservatism, as well as anti-Western sentiment, much to the angst of Americans peddling State terrorism (e.g. www.gulfinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70:saudi-royal-support-for-terrorists-

[continues-from-new-york&catid=21:security-a-terrorism&Itemid=16](#)).

Instability And Uncertainty

The extent of Western support for the Free Syrian Army remains unclear. Certainly, arms are being funnelled over Syria's borders with Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey, and there could well be some covert Western involvement despite denials. The Anglo-American client Gulf states want to supply heavy weapons. On the other side, Russia and Iran are accused of arming Assad's forces.

Western powers are also wary of greater involvement for a host of reasons (some already intimated), despite the increasing diplomatic and economic pressure on President Assad's ruthless rule. Assad might still be able to rightly claim majority support among the Syrian population. As a *Times* report stated: "Critics point to the logistical difficulties of supplying weapons and the lack of clarity over the composition of the rebel army. A recent declaration of support for the uprising by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al Qaeda, has triggered alarm that the struggle may begin to attract jihadist militants" (*Press*, 23/2/12). A number of bombings in Syria have seemed to bear the hallmark signature of al Qaeda. The State media have blamed "terrorists" while the rebels have labelled them a vicious propaganda ploy (i.e. a "black" operation in the style of the CIA) to try and smear their movement domestically and internationally.

Truth can often be problematic in such cases but: "US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has warned against arming rebels in Syria because it could lead to support for al Qaeda and [Gaza-based] Hamas. Leaders of both groups, which Washington classifies as terrorist organisations, are supporting the Syrian rebels who have taken up arms against the regime of embattled President Bashar al-Assad" (*Press*, 28/2/12). Republican politicians have called for armed backing for the Syrian rebels as well as for attacks on Iran. Clinton has fiercely denounced Russia and China for turning a blind eye to terrible human rights abuses in Syria. Hypocrisy reigns. Both Syria and Libya were used by the US in its "extraordinary rendition" operations and outsourcing for torture of suspected "jihadists" (for Syria, see: www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/02/14/050214fa_fact6).

Freedom fighters or terrorists?! Realpolitik calculation and its resulting propaganda can be decisive in the determination of public perception. When Hamas won the Palestinian elections in 2006, this democratic outcome was not to the liking of the US-Israeli junta, which moved to stifle the new Government's viability. A different option, of course, was to try and engage with Hamas positively and constructively instead of trying to undermine it, and further alienate Palestinians. Hamas's leadership is seen as deriving inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood. Even on the radical Islamist front, more splits have appeared since the advent of the "Arab Spring". Whereas the Lebanon-based Shiite Hizbollah is charged with aiding the Syrian dictatorship, Hamas – Hizbollah's ally against Israel – is on the other side of the fence in this particular conflict.

Instability And Islamist Insurgencies

Militant Islamism looms as a many-headed monster for the West and its rampant need for fossil fuels and other minerals. Violent Muslim radicalism, and all its associated manifestations and fallout, seem to be spreading as more societies fall apart. From the emergence of West African pirates, through alleged al-Shabaab Somali links to British street gangs, to the March 2012 military coup against the democratic Government of Mali, the backlash and blowback against imperial intrusions rolls on in a myriad ways. In the case of Mali, Tuareg tribespeople in the north are in rebellion, seeking a better deal for the uranium designated for exploitation by foreign firms. The same applies to Niger, a very important source of uranium for France for more than 40 years. This mineral has been ripped from Tuareg lands by the country's ruling elite in close collaboration with the rapacious French (e.g., "Lost Lords of the Sahara", *National Geographic*, September 2011, pp136-153). From a typically hypocritical viewpoint, the question has been posed as to whether the West can trust the Tuareg, given their "history of betrayal and infighting?" (ibid, p153). As ever, the vicious "blame the victim" syndrome holds constant for imperial rule.

Gaddafi used to back and fund the Tuareg rebels (as well as their national governments!) and used them in his militias. Apparently, these militiamen have rejoined their fellow fighters in their homelands. The coup makers in Mali claim that the Government had mishandled the latest phase of the Tuareg insurgency. While the West has demonstrated its disapproval, the question must remain as to whether the coup had external help, or at least encouragement. After all, as well as valuable minerals at stake with a number of nations now scrambling for them, there have been claims of al Qaeda links with the Tuareg rebels and increasing Islamist sentiment. One of the propaganda lies that the Bush Administration used for its 2003 war on Iraq was that Saddam Hussein's dictatorship had tried to buy uranium from Niger ("Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq", Sheldon Rampton & John Stauber, Tarcher/Penguin, 2003, pp88/9).

Lessons For State Terrorism

In 1992, the ruling Establishment in Algeria, backed by its armed forces “effectively introduced martial law and stripped the FIS [Front Islamique du Salut] of its democratic election victory by cancelling” a related poll (“The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East”, Robert Fisk, Harper, 2006, p650). The Algerian military regime’s suppression of this Islamist democratic victory was as cruelly violent as the outraged uprising that it provoked. But the West warmly supported this repression and turned a blind eye to governmental atrocities. “France was happy to avoid the nightmare of an Islamic ‘catastrophe’ on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The Americans did not want another Islamic revolution along the lines of Iran. So much for democracy” (ibid, p652).

That incomparable investigative/analytical journalist of the Middle East, Robert Fisk, brilliantly lays bare many of the compounding, interconnected relations and parallels that so blight this region, and that so repeatedly debase humanity. Algerian Army intelligence officers got aid and expertise from Mubarak’s Egypt and others in dealing with “Islamist guerrilla armies” (ibid, pp671/2). One of the others, tellingly enough, was the Assad dynasty’s Syria. “In Damascus, they learned first-hand of how Syrian special forces with artillery and tanks killed thousands of Muslims in the rebellious city of Hama in 1982, pulverising its ancient streets and mosques” (ibid, p672). Perhaps some 20,000 people were killed. The Sunni uprising in Hama had been sparked by the Muslim Brotherhood movement against Ba’ath Party officialdom. Today, the Muslim Brotherhood is helping organise support for the Syrian rebel movement in countries like Anglo-American client state Jordan. Hama, like Homs and a number of other Syrian cities, towns, and villages, has been subject again to attacks by Assad forces.

Recycling Repression

Copying the 1982 Hama assault, the Algerian military regime, after crushing the democratic election results of 1992, later “staged an identikit assault on the Muslim stronghold around Ain Defla – about the same size as Hama – with artillery and tanks, and slaughtered up to 3,000 alleged GIA [rebel Groupe Islamique Arme] men. Again, there were no prisoners” (ibid.). Again, there was, in standard fashion, no concern in the mainstream Western media for human rights. As usual, attention was focused almost exclusively on Islamist rebel atrocities, not the death squad operations and torture of the dictatorial, Western-backed authorities. The Americans later applied the lessons of Hama and Ain Defla in Iraq, in the wake of their illegal invasion in 2003 (ibid.). The fate of Fallujah was the most dramatic example of this calculatedly brutal approach.

To date, the big powers of the US and co, with lots of incentives for their Arab allies, have pressed very hard on the diplomatic front to force the Assad Syrian regime out. So far in the UN, they have run into the geopolitical commitments of both Russia and China, which have stymied sterner action, although March 2012 saw an agreement on more assertive intervention under UN auspices. In essence, the fate of a whole people still lies in the hands of the rulers of more powerful countries locked in contention over goals to try and extend or maintain political power in their own interests (“Putting Syria into some Perspective”, William Blum, *The Anti-Empire Report*, 6/4/12, www.killinghope.org).

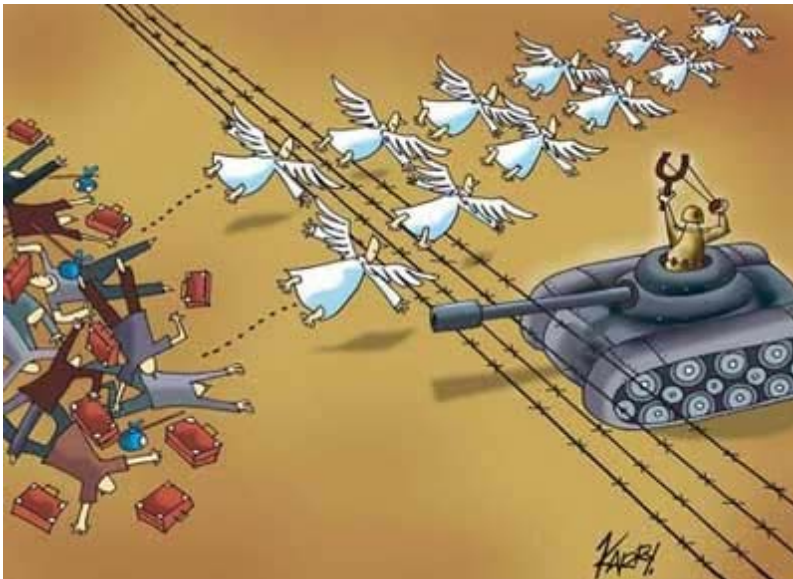
Al Qaeda’s branch in Yemen has exploited the political and security turmoil following the country’s year-long uprising, managing to take control of large swathes of land in the south and staging increasingly bold attacks on the military (*Press*, 2/4/12). In reaction, the US has stepped up its terrorist drone attacks. Even the BBC can recognise the breeding ground of poverty and hunger in Yemen as inciting al Qaeda militancy (TVNZ7, *News*, 21/2/12). In the critical Gulf state of Bahrain, the Shiite majority have protested in the face of the Western-backed Formula One car race.

Chain Reaction

In late February 2012 the tragic consequences of the US 2003 invasion of Iraq continued with more bombings throughout the country and especially in Baghdad. The Iraqi regime blames them on al Qaeda and its efforts to instigate sectarian antagonism, given that so much of the mayhem was delivered among Shiite communities. Earlier, there had even been open conflict between Sunni and Shiite Government leaders. As the American forces pull out at the conventional Army level of their occupation, they can take malign satisfaction in yet another country they have effectively ruined in their ongoing imperial depredations. Their barbarism, so widely legitimised by the morally bankrupt majority of Western media, has been breathtaking in both scope and depth. It continues on its bloody path. Waves of terrorist-type bombing roll on.

In recent years, the American killing machine has violently intruded in a whole range of Middle Eastern and contiguous countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Uganda and Iran. Destabilisation, so often provoked and/or aggravated by such external forces, keeps unravelling nation after nation.

Another example of the consequences of American philistine blundering came in late February 2012 with the burning of Korans and other religious material in Afghanistan, which triggered fierce protests and riots throughout the land against the foreign occupiers. This is one more step in a deleterious series fuelling a real “Clash of Civilisations”. Indeed, 2012 has witnessed a number of inflammatory incidents in Afghanistan, including a massacre of villagers in Kandahar province. The accumulating crisis culminated in the abandonment of peace talks during March by the Taliban, another major blow for the US.



Iranian Cartoon of the Day Website

Oil Addiction And The “Doomsday” Fix

More widely, the Western Establishment is incapable of facing up to the self-serving barbarities it has continually delivered upon the long-suffering peoples of the Middle East. This Establishment - or what can loosely be called the West's ruling class - depends on huge socio-economic inequalities, and on current levels of consumption continuing into the foreseeable future. So it must continuously try and direct social stress into hostility against foreign enemies, both to grab resources and to unify its own societies. This syndrome is dramatically demonstrated by the Tea Party Movement in the US and the transmission of its ideological sentiments into Republican Party politics. Republican Party leaders strenuously denounce their opponents for promoting “class war”, and call for war on Iran, Syria, or whoever else may come into the firing line.

Western military Keynesianism, especially that of the Anglo-American axis, has long depended on the Middle Eastern arms bazaar anyway. Most significantly, Israel operates as a very influential agent and critical middleman in the world weapons trade (“The Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade”, Andrew Feinstein, Hamish Hamilton, 2011). Currently, Israel is preparing a “submarine capable of carrying nuclear cruise missiles”, a new “doomsday weapon” targeted at Iran (*Press*, 27/2/12). In the end, Israel is dedicated to the so-called nuclear “Samson option”, named after the blinded Biblical hero who pulled the temple down on everybody, including himself (see ch. 8, “Israel's Dilemma” in “The Mess They Made: The Middle East after Iraq”, Gwynne Dyer, Scribe, 2007).

The still developing democratic movement of the “Arab Spring” erupted because of a complex of contributing factors at the time. Among these factors has been the cynically driven American propaganda about freedom and democracy, the latest transparent camouflage adopted by the Western mainstream media for imperial intrusions. With the toppling of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath dictatorship, the parallel dictatorship in neighbouring Syria came into question on grounds of its legitimacy. When the Arab Spring arose, President Assad's regime was certainly one of the dictatorships in line for full-on dissent. Western forces soon moved to adapt to the new situations where the dictatorships that they had formerly upheld like Mubarak's Egypt were now under widespread citizen attack. These Western powers had the international capacity to respond flexibly to each individual case within the scope of their influence and control. In the relatively short term, the outcomes might seem manageable. In the longer term, the prospects and options are far more problematic, with militarist solutions looming wherever the democratic process fails.

Plotting And Blowback

Russia and China are still resisting the immediate Western drive to redraw the geopolitical map across the arc of Syria/Iraq/Iran/Afghanistan/Pakistan (and beyond). Indeed, the West's resource ambitions reach deep into Russia

too. But President Vladimir Putin has resolved to safeguard Russia's extensive mineral resources from easy access and gross external exploitation. Putin may well run a state harsh on dissent but Western posturing on democracy and human rights, as he well knows, is only pretext for trying to engineer another era of corrupt "robber barons" or "oligarchs", typified by the imprisoned Mikhail Khodorkovsky. These same Russian oligarchs were celebrated by much of the Western media as exemplifying the robust new free market in action. The West hungers after such greedy capitalists who are open to neo-liberal corporatism and predatory foreign investment. Instead, Putin has been determined to keep the oligarchs who had grabbed so much of Russia's resources in tune with nationalist objectives. Vagit Alekperov of Lukoil has exemplified Putin's model oligarch ("Crude World", op. cit, see ch. 9).

Putin's mandate for corruption and Mafia-style behaviour is that it serves the State's interests as he defines it. Consequently, the "Great Game" continues on a multitude of fronts. Ominously, President Putin, embarked on his new term, is set on "unprecedented action" to massively strengthen Russia's military. A legacy of blowback against US-led blundering in Russia has helped bring the ex-KGB agent to power again, despite a vocal dissident movement. Russian expert Professor Stephen Cohen well warned in 2000 how "Russia's potential for lethal catastrophes" could be highly dangerous, a potential fostered by American-sponsored "free market capitalism" and "shock therapy" [shades of Rogernomics!] ("Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia", WW Norton & Co, pp86; 97/98 &196-202).

Subverting Societies

Middle Easterners believe that America destabilises or tries to destabilise governments it dislikes and set up regimes that suit its interests ("Understanding Iraq", op. cit, pp187/8). As with Iraq and Iran, the history of subversive and manipulative interventions by the Anglo-American axis in Syria has been a long one, even though this country was also a French League of Nations' mandate between 1920 and independence in 1946. Back in 1957 when Syria was too neutralist for the axis, US President Dwight Eisenhower and British PM Harold McMillan approved a joint CIA-MI6 plan to encourage "incidents within Syria, then stage a fake frontier battle as an excuse for invasion after which the leaders of the Syrian government would be 'eliminated'" (ibid, p188). The coup was planned by CIA Assistant Director for the Middle East, Kermit Roosevelt, who had masterminded the 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh of Iran, installing the Shah in power (see also "The CIA: A Forgotten History", William Blum, Zed Books, 1986 ch.12). The 1957 Anglo-American conspiracy was never carried out because the governments of Jordan and Iraq, asked to participate, refused to take part (see relevant documents on the plan published by the *Guardian*, 27/9/03).

Today, the call for military intervention in Syria includes the blatant warmongering of Republican Presidential candidates in the US and Murdoch's *Times* journalists. They have been doing the same vis-à-vis Iran for quite a while now. *Times* journo Philip Collins reaches new heights of hypocrisy in an appeal to fighting "the fascist that's the beast" in Syria ("Something Must be Done", reprinted in the *Press*, 25/2/12). He explicitly declares we are not the beast - "not us. We're better than that" (ibid.). But everything that Collins writes in his article reveals that he is an outstanding representative of the beastly, self-serving Western neo-fascism so graphically demonstrated at large in the 21st Century.

Beyond Propaganda And Political Posturing

From his warm endorsement for the imperialist thesis of the neo-con Francis Fukuyama, through his affirmation of the invasion of Iraq, to his transparent con trick of making out the West is committed to the cause of freedom and opposed to dictatorships everywhere, Collins proves himself a cynical, opportunistic propagandist, a typical Murdoch hack. The Western media, so responsible for the huge mounting civilian body count and other human misery in Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., give extensive attention to atrocities and torture in Syria as a crucial component of their latest bout of warmongering. For the most part, their highly selective morality has treated the civilian casualties of Western aggression as just so much "collateral damage". According to Iraq Body Count, "The American-led war in Iraq, killed about 162,000 people, most of them civilians" between 2003 and the end of 2011 (*Press*, 4/1/12). Military madness is a peculiarly horrible and catching Western capitalist disease. NATO forces could soon be actively involved in virtually every Middle Eastern country! In the upside-down world we live in, Britain - reeking with its own war crimes - is even aiding the Syrian rebels in documenting "war crimes cases against members of the regime" (*Press*, 31/3/12).

Certainly something positive needs to be done for Syria. Like so many other Avaaz members, I have been signing online petitions for greater support for the Syrian people. Avaaz* has actually been on the ground there in efforts to directly provide humanitarian aid, and some of its brave volunteers have even been murdered (*Press*, 25/2/12). From the diplomatic front to a whole range of other forms of support, the international community can step up its programme and pressure to implement better protection of human rights in Syria, safeguard women and children,

and facilitate mediation towards a more democratic, progressive future for the inhabitants of this unfortunate country. Any buffer zones, “no-fly zones”, or any such military protection measures need to be under the UN umbrella. *Avaaz uses the Internet to mobilise instant campaigns to address crises happening around the globe. Ed.

President Assad has dramatically warned that external intervention in Syria would unleash not only horrors on the Middle East, but on the world. This is not just the bravado of a very nasty dictator. Syria lies at the very heart of the Middle East. A full-scale civil war risks drawing in all sorts of combatants and political agendas. In addition, Russia and China would see any further Western military intrusions in the region as a direct assault on their own interests. Further, Shiites in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and other parts could come to see their minority status in the Islamic sphere under greater threat from Sunni domination. Current volatility spreading in this geographical arc points to dangerous times ahead. Any more manipulative Western forays would severely aggravate the situation.

The Big Picture

To recap, from a capitalist growth perspective, the increasing commitment of major Western interests in the Middle East region was highly predictable. With its industrialism rooted in fossil fuels and, above all, oil, the West will depend more and more on this prime region’s extensive yet diminishing resources. And, emerging industrial powers like China and India will similarly depend on Middle Eastern oil, however much countries in general seek oil elsewhere as well. *New York Times* journalist Peter Maass has ably surveyed the intensifying social and environmental damage caused by oil extraction around the planet in his book “Crude World” (op. cit.). In his survey, he poses what he sees as a puzzle. During the 2003 American invasion, the “diametrical fates of the Oil Ministry [in Iraq] and the National Museum” had seemed to tell us “everything we needed to know about war and oil and the priorities of an invader that appreciated cheap gasoline” (ibid, p8). The barbarian invaders had let everything else be looted except the Oil Ministry which was immediately put under armed guard upon its capture in Baghdad.

Capitalist Culture Of Death

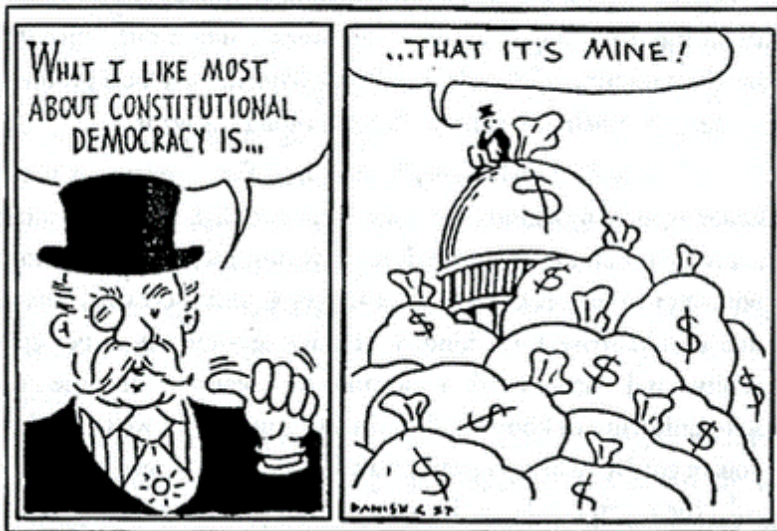
Yet Maass felt the story here was more complicated and he takes it up again in his chapter on Iraq. He was puzzled by American neglect of the Dora refinery in contrast to the instant concern in Baghdad - and indeed, obviously planned concern – about protecting the Oil Ministry. The big question later became for him, “not *whether* war is about oil but *how* it is about oil” (ibid, p159). Other reasons were often involved as well, e.g. geopolitical rivalries and concerns. Of course, this is certainly true enough. Geopolitical control of oil is arguably the paramount American foreign policy goal. But the Americans did not have to worry about the treatment of Iraqi crude in 2003 when they could conveniently ship it out for refining elsewhere. In 2006, “Iraq was also paying billions to import refined petroleum products because they lacked the equipment to refine in Iraq” (“Iraq’s Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict”, Anthony Cordesman & Emma Davies, Centre for Strategic & International Studies, 2008, p461).

American neglect of the Dora refinery went hand in hand then with their protection of the Iraqi Oil Ministry - a further demonstration of the “*how*” of their foreign policy strategy on oil. This extraordinary hypocrisy is imposed endlessly on the misery of victim peoples. Such neglect for the domestic needs of Iraqis has of course been witnessed in vital sphere after sphere – from the obscene neglect of medical facilities, equipment and training, through health generally, education, welfare, basic infrastructure and agriculture, let alone security in a shattered society. The only thing that American Administrations have proven themselves “good” in delivering is death and destruction.

The Perverse Politics of Energy And Human Rights

An episode in the revealing TV documentary series “*Secrets of the 7 Sisters*” (2011) showed how Iraqi oil is now mostly in the hands of the Americans who control its’ transport out through Basra (TVNZ7, 1/2/12: *this public TV channel is currently a fine contrast to the rest of TVNZ – no wonder the Government is going to eliminate it in the near future, and replace it with a channel screening TV One repeats!*). Today, after long neglect, the Dora refinery finally manages to provide enough fuel to nearly meet the domestic needs of Baghdad. Like a number of other countries throughout the region, Iraq is committed to expanding its national refinery capacity, including upgrading Dora, in order to capture higher value for its prime commodity export. Oil, like so many other “Third World” commodities, yields processing gains for Western industry. But Iraq’s oil infrastructure is still subject to insurgency attacks.

"Cap" Italist Celebrates the Constitution!



Freedomwriters Website

Neighbouring Iran contends that its own nuclear programme is intended to enable it to export more oil, and provide for its domestic needs when oil and gas eventually run out. US/Israeli-led pressure on Iran to surrender sovereignty over this issue on the grounds of alleged manufacture of nuclear weapons goes on. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is "seeking answers about possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme" (*Press*, 24/2/12). This is all taking place in a context of covert operations, dirty tricks, and a fog of propaganda with Iran hitting back against US/Israeli intrusions. Key figures in the American hierarchy, especially intelligence officials, acknowledge that Iran has not yet decided to build a nuclear weapon (www.nzherald.co.nz/nuclear-weapons/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501061&objectid=10782770).

In his then role as PM, Russia's "Putin said the focus on the nuclear programme was a cover for Western attempts to oust the clerical regime in Tehran" (*Sunday Star Times*, 26/2/12), a 'neo-con' pipe-dream. "Russia has been reported as massing troops on Iran's northern border in expectation of a Western (US-Israeli) attack" (http://articles.businessinsider.com/2012-04-09/news/31311454_1_russian-defense-ministry-military-action-dmitry-rogozin). In 2007, President Bush authorised a covert "black" operation to destabilise the Iranian government" (www.abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2007/05/bush_authorizes/). This covert \$US400m campaign has incorporated propaganda, help for dissidents and estranged ethnic groups, violent cross-border raids launched from west Afghanistan, and even manipulation of the Iranian currency. Top investigative reporter Seymour Hersh has revealed much of this subversive programme (e.g. *New Yorker*, 7/7/08).

History repeats itself very unpleasantly in Anglo/American-Iranian relations. This destabilisation programme peaked in the controversial election crisis of 2009 with the malevolent Western media frothing in an orchestrated barrage of artificially manufactured outrage and criticism levelled at the Iranian government, a Government certainly more democratic than a number in the region that the West has heartily supported and kept mostly silent about. Among the genuine democratic protesters, no doubt there were "CIA rent-a-crowds" as employed so effectively in the Anglo-American coup against the democratic Mossadegh government in 1953, which had been so bold as to nationalise its own oil resources (see "Crude World", op. cit, pp142-44).

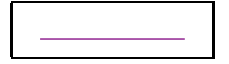
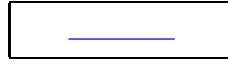
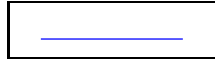
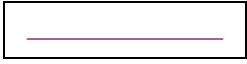
Standing Fast

We have to stand steadfast against the threat of war on Iran. In their March 2012 meeting, President Obama and PM Cameron discussed the prospects for Anglo/American coordinated attacks on both Syria and Iran at whatever convenient times in the near future. But in riposte to the war-mongering Zionist lobby in the US, a group of former high-ranking military, intelligence and State Department officials have strongly warned of the dangers of attacking Iran (<http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/330-131/10317-retired-us-generals-to-obama-no-war-of-choice-in-iran>). The US is on a very ominous neo-fascist path unless both sanity and humanity can prevail (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kumi-naidoo/israel-iran-nuclear_b_1425313.html).

Capitalist globalisation continues to create conflict between countries and within countries. In general, the democratic "Arab Spring" is proving to be another enormous case of blowback for the US, the Anglo-Saxon Axis, and indeed the West as a whole. A horrible history of power gaming in the Middle East is rebounding on us all. We who live in the West and oppose its neo-imperialism need to help build the global movement for democracy, peace

and human survival on a much greater scale. The momentum for the West's self-immolation in the Middle East on the altar of oil threatens us as never before.

Research Note: My thanks to John Gallagher who supplied much useful information sourced from the Internet.



- Jeremy Agar

**A THORN IN THEIR SIDE:
The Hilda Murrell Murder”
by Robert Green, Rata Books, Christchurch, 2011**

Robert Green was an officer in the British Navy at the time of the 1982 Falklands War. By his own account he held a set of assumptions that you'd expect from that rigid era. He was conservative and disciplined. His Aunt Hilda was a respectable spinster growing roses in a quiet country town. This is the remarkable story of what happened on and after March 1984, when Hilda Murrell's car was reported in to the local Police, abandoned and dented at the side of a rural lane. Three days after that Murrell's abused body was found in a copse some way distant. The official version became that she had been killed by an opportunistic 16 year old boy, who panicked when he feared discovery during his burglary of Murrell's house. There is no doubt that this young thief was at her house, but Green became convinced that he wasn't the killer. This thickly documented account explains why not.



Was Hilda Murrell killed by an MI5 hit team? Photo: The Mirror

Whodunit?

As articles on the case note, the whole affair might have been scripted as a formulaic British TV show. A little old lady found dead near a Shropshire village, a bumbling local constable, mysterious strangers acting suspiciously, inconsistent witnesses, arson, conflicting DNA evidence, questions raised in Parliament: it's all there. This extraordinary episode seems to have been a case of happening to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. The time was Margaret Thatcher's first term as Prime Minister, when the Tories were ramping up East-West tensions. The peace movement was resisting the introduction of new weapons systems which would increase the chance of nuclear war. As has since been established, the Government was infiltrating the protest groups both to gather information and to try to discredit them by encouraging agent provocateurs to promote violence. We now know that State spies had been checking a previous Labour PM, Harold Wilson - while he was in office. There had long been popular talk of an "Establishment", an informal coalition of the elite which existed to defend privilege and power, and during the Thatcher Conservatives' rule, it was beginning to look as if the Establishment was going to war against its critics.

Hilda Murrell had become concerned about nuclear power, not, as in NZ, as a concept, but in reaction to what was already happening. In the UK, plants were suspected of being unsafe. Murrell was asking questions of sympathetic scientists and liaising with environmental activists. In March 1984, she was talking to contacts about technology being used which in 1979 had melted down at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. The rose expert was no outsider hippie, so was she a potential threat? Did someone see her as pricking at the status quo, a thorn in the side of the Establishment?



Hilda Murrell was found dead in 1984, just days before she was due to give evidence to the public inquiry into the proposed Sizewell B nuclear reactor (above) in East Anglia. Photo: The Mirror

Domestic Politics In Britain Were Also Polarised

Thatcher had picked a fight with the coal miners, who could be demonised to the nervous and misinformed, so that the Government could seize a moment of opportunity to bash trade unions and drive down living standards. The attack signalled the end of a trend to increased opportunity and equality. Now, looking back with Green, we might see 2011's UK riots as a culmination of a 30 year trend (with interlocking interests in play, the new emphasis on nuclear power might in part have been motivated by the need to rely less on carbon fuel. It certainly wasn't to do with climate change issues).

The Establishment has always been there (and here) in some form - witness the admission in March 2012 by the current PM, David Cameron, that the latter-day elite, hedge fund speculators and the like (including those bailed out with mega-millions of public money) have paid millions to have dinner with him. They were looking after business as usual. In the 1980s the elites had seen a chance to concentrate their efforts and (to pick one of the many clichéd metaphors that have since evolved to describe what happened) move the goal posts to their advantage. Preparing the ground for the likes of Cameron, Thatcher became very unpopular, so when the government of Argentina - luckily for her, they were a bunch of military fascists ready made to wear black hats - invaded a tiny South Atlantic outpost that remained part of Britain's old empire, she could put it all together. She had her chance to assume the mantle of Britannia and Rule - and win the upcoming election in a flare of old style patriotic fervour.

Green is telling his personal story, which leaves little room to do more than hint about this background. A generation away, on the other side of the globe, we do well to take it into account. Britain was a fraught place. It so happened that Commander Green was a leading member of the Naval Intelligence team in the Northwood bunker in the UK where the war was run from. One day he reported for duty to find that overnight his mates had sunk an Argentine cruiser, with the loss of over 300 people. For two modern countries to go to war is not something that's supposed to happen. At most, it might have been thought, the Brits would take a few prisoners and then concoct a mutually face-saving end to the nonsense. But this was serious for more than the number of wasted lives. The *General Belgrano* had been sailing away from the Falklands and was outside the "exclusion zone" that the UK had announced.

Green had taken voluntary redundancy as part of Thatcher's 1981 defence cuts to pay for replacing UK Polaris with Trident, and when he was released soon after the war he trained as a roof Thatcher (small 't'). Coincidentally, some highly sensitive signals intelligence about the *Belgrano* had gone missing; Green was among only about 30 people with access to it, and Labour MP Tam Dalyell was embarrassing Thatcher with questions about the controversial sinking. Also, Green had previously written a critique of Thatcher's insistence on including the Falklands guardship HMS *Endurance* in the cuts. He was informed and he wasn't afraid. The authorities might have asked themselves if he had hidden stuff at his anti-nuke auntie's place. Had a previously reliable chap made common cause with the peaceniks and tree huggers?

Green's questions: Why had Hilda's latest research disappeared from her house? Had two sets of burglars

surprised each other in her house? That was the most plausible way of explaining the mess of contradictory facts around the murder. To clean up, the Government's agents could have found it had to silence the woman and frame the boy. So much of the evidence could be taken two ways. Some of the episodes that Green describes suggest an incompetence that might not point to the Police or intelligence services - unless the jobs were contracted out. Some almost comical red herrings could have been to create false leads and diversions. They could have been intended to make Green look ridiculous. An average citizen might be expected to ask, "why would Her Majesty's Government behave like clowns when they have the resources to disappear troublesome civilians in a way that no-one notices?" But not if they want to confuse and intimidate. Like criminal gangs, they might need potential enemies to fear them.

Lots Of Unanswered Questions

Ten years later Murrell was said to have been kidnapped and tortured. Twenty years later the burglar was charged with murder, DNA having placed him at the scene. Green was still unconvinced and pressed for a retrial. Thirty years later, he can find no more stones to turn over, and at the end of his account he lists almost 50 questions which he thinks need answers. Green now lives in Christchurch, having met Kate Dewes, the well-known peace campaigner. They became partners in life and detection. Back in NZ, where the couple might have expected respite, strange things have kept happening. Men in cars outside their house; burglaries inside it. Green and Dewes told PM Clark, whom Dewes knew through her anti-nuclear advocacy, and the Director of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), but neither could help. As Green notes, it's not likely that any NZ agency would be involved in the harassment - or that we'll ever know who has been.

Perhaps the story is more action thriller than *Miss Marple* or *Midsomer Murders*. A favourite of this genre is the isolated hero who's being framed. The closer he comes to revealing the baddies, the less he is believed and the more endangered he becomes. Apart from us, the viewers, no-one is on his side. The evidence that should incriminate the villain looks far-fetched. Our guy looks guilty or mad. And in the movies the worst villains are the most powerful villains, like the corporation or the State.

Green has been taking on the British government, its Police force and intelligence services and he must have spent the long years suppressing the thought that he couldn't win. You can't beat City Hall, and he was up against the UK State. Whatever the truth, his courage and perseverance, and his loyalty to the memory of his aunt, have been remarkable. Conspiracy theory or fact? It would be nice to hope for a happy ending so that the theatre lights go up on an agreed version of events, with the Government vindicating Green. Nice, but we know it won't happen. The one constant about the way States behave is that if they lie or behave badly they have to deny it. The worse the behaviour or the more stark the lie, the greater the need to dissemble. That's the logic of the thriller. Given what we know about Thatcherite Britain and its military and intelligence services, Green's assertions about their morality and tactics are credible. You feel it could have been as bad as he says.

More information and copies of the book are available from www.hildamurrell.org.Ed.

"J. EDGAR"

A Film By Clint Eastwood, 2011

J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for 48 years, would have seen himself as being guided by a detached rationality, and as we see him in Clint Eastwood's biopic, he's never as happy as when he's showing off his filing system. Hoover's admirers, who do exist, see him as the man who brought efficiency to American crime fighting, as though without him the Federal government over half a century would not have managed it. Eastwood wants to be fair to his man. The trouble is that he's more than fair. Hoover was much nastier, and achieved much less, than what Leonardo DiCaprio can show us.

Hoover was 24 when he was made boss of the new Federal police force, having impressed the right people as a keen young man anxious to please by an unquestioning commitment to repression. Hoover was lucky in his timing. In the years after 1918 US robber barons needed to put down the sort of progressive impulses that a shock like World War 1 might be expected to loosen up. Mindful of what had happened just the year before in Russia, the elites had found their agent. Hoover was not going to think for himself. He never had and never would.

The film starts with Hoover worrying about the hordes of anarchists, Communists and Bolsheviks who were about to destroy America. J. Edgar and his hero, Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, arrested 10,000 and deported many, including the inspiring anarchist, Emma Goldman. The Palmer Raids set a tone that still pollutes public life. The Red Scare might have been aimed at Leftwingers but - deliberately - no distinction was made between legitimate and illegitimate dissent, let alone between the various factions or those who belonged to no group at all. This didn't matter. The idea was to enforce conformity.

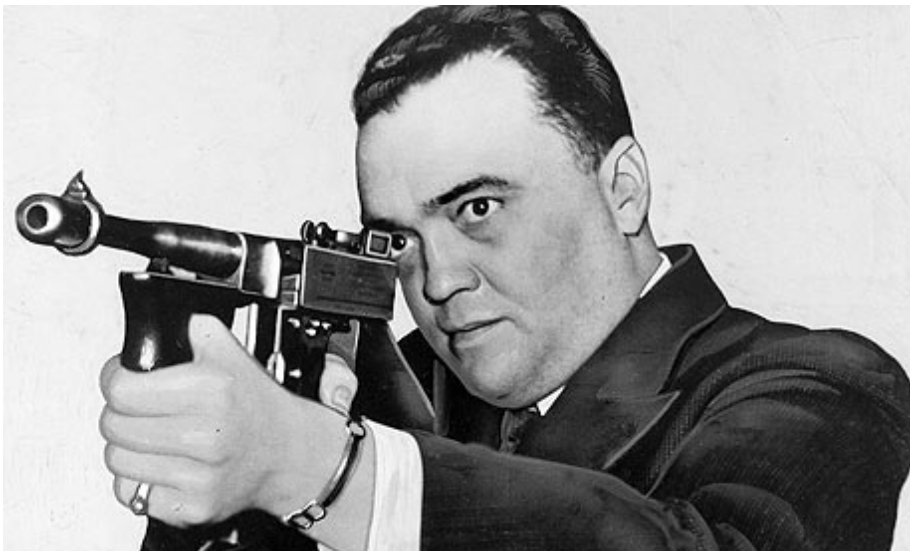
No plot was ever found - though the film passes quickly on, so that the audience can't assess the cancer that had invaded the FBI from its birth. Hoover then had to find another way to make the FBI indispensable. More good luck: the 20s, the era of Prohibition, Bonny and Clyde, Al Capone and all the hoodlums, again opened opportunity wide. We're shown the death mask of John Dillinger, a notorious gangster whose demise enabled the myth of the G Men*, celebrated from Washington to Hollywood. Hoover used to turn up with photographers after big name arrests so that he could invent a persona as the fearless crime fighter. In reality he was always at his desk or his favourite restaurant. * *The G stood for Government. Ed.*

Yet the Mafia are not so much as mentioned. In real life Hoover said that the Mafia did not exist, though he socialised in public with leading Mafioso. If Eastwood was guided by this denial, he shouldn't have been. He might have asked: Why would the Director of the FBI say that the Mafia did not exist when everyone knew that it did? A biographer has provided one plausible explanation: Hoover was being blackmailed by the Mafia, who had a photo of him and his lover behaving inappropriately (as we might now express the matter).

Closeted Homophobe, Racist, Hater & Blackmailer

The lover was his long-serving Deputy. Apart from showing J. Edgar and Clyde Tolson holding hands (which was already on the public record) Eastwood leaves the matter of Hoover's sexuality in some doubt. Given his subject and his main audience, we can see why he might, but it's more than a prurient curiosity that's involved. Though this is another omission in the film, the historical J. Edgar tormented gays as nastily as he tormented progressives. A boss of the FBI in 20th Century America would need to lock himself in the closet. That much is inarguable. But, by taking the easy way, the nice way, Eastwood isn't doing his film or his hero a favour. He's not allowing his audience to understand J. Edgar, and he's tacitly endorsing homophobia.

Eastwood might have wanted to be even-handed, but by evading essential truths, he divests "J. Edgar" of any complexity or subtlety. Compounding this impression, the overly long film is too evenly paced. Eastwood could not entirely avoid the use to which Hoover's extensive personal files were kept. He had damaging material on most of the power brokers. J. Edgar served eight Presidents, every one of whom was scared of him. Some thought about firing him. The movie highlights Bobby Kennedy, his brother Jack's Attorney General, who tried unsuccessfully to get the FBI to prosecute the Mafia. Bobby never knew why it was so hard, but he did know why he had to accept Hoover's reluctance. Hoover had the goods on Jack, who had been less than Presidential with Marilyn Monroe (among others, including the girlfriend of a leading Mafia boss).



The Guardian

Another target, against whom Hoover invested his most intense spite - and here Eastwood's take accords with other accounts - was Martin Luther King. King was not just a progressive. He was black, and he enjoyed life, so Hoover sent him "anonymous" hate letters. But the film makes no mention of Eleanor Roosevelt, whom Hoover detested at least as much as he detested King. The First Lady had nothing going for her. She was a Democrat, female, intelligent, liberal, opinionated, socially confident, and thought to be lesbian. As an opportunity lost, this could be the least excusable of the film's many evasions. As a deeply insecure man with unaccountable power, Hoover could give vent to his neurotic repressions. We see him as he's setting up the FBI rejecting an applicant for having "facial hair", but what ticked off Hoover even more than the moustache was the man's assumption that he and the young Edgar were mates.

Film Too Fair To Fundamentally Nasty Man

In fact Hoover was not just vindictive; he was a deeply ignorant man. For example, while he couldn't cope with women, he selected redheads for special condemnation, as he just knew they were more likely to be criminals. Eastwood spares us any such detail. "J. Edgar" has plenty to say about its times but, given the wide sweep of its many well known characters, this was inevitable. Otherwise Eastwood avoided as much controversial material as possible. He places the main character in old age, looking back. He attempts neutrality, but "J. Edgar" achieves it only by being misleadingly bland, and while DiCaprio gives a good performance he can't altogether rid himself of a certain roguish charm which Hoover could not have had.

The final statement from J. Edgar (just before he dies) is noble, platitudinous and entirely false, along the lines of "love [being] the greatest force on Earth", something "far more natural than the ... divisions of mankind". What was Clintwood intending? If it was to cloak his hero with a Shakespearean aura, he should have known better. Hoover was not a good man who went wrong. He was a creep. Apart from his blackmail files and Clyde, he never loved anything or anyone. He's not a tragic hero. And he's not interesting enough to make a good villain. He's a timeless type of sycophant. J. Edgar knew nothing and believed in nothing but repression and hatred.

"CRISIS IN KOREA: America, China And The Risk Of War"

by Tim Beal, Pluto Press, London, 2011 http://www.timbeal.net.nz/Crisis_in_Korea/

Tim Beal, a retired Victoria University academic, has been looking at north-east Asia for some time. This is his second book to discuss North Korea and how it relates to other countries. As a China expert and business lecturer, Beal has thought about this most unfashionable of topics as seriously as any Westerner. North Korea was a founding member of George Bush's "axis of evil", along with Iraq and Iran, but most of us know even less about the place than we know of Iraq and Iran. We think we know why Saddam Hussein and the ayatollahs were added to the American hit parade - we hear about South Asia and the Middle East all the time. But North Korea? No-one goes there.

For that reason alone, Beal's interest is valuable. When a regime is demonised by the likes of Bush, a default reaction might be that they're misunderstood good guys who deserve their day in court. Just why is North Korea so despised? As his title suggests, Beal's focus is on foreign rather than domestic policy. The Korean peninsula has long been an uneasy area. After World War 2, Korea, between Russia, China, Japan and the Pacific (which some Stateside were in the habit of calling an American lake), was in the wrong place at the wrong time. China had just become Communist, and Korea was asserting its independence from a Japan that had been bashed into unconditional surrender. An almost inevitable war broke out in 1950, with the North and China arrayed against the South and US military (though officially the US side, with its mates, including NZ, was called a United Nations force.) It ended in a stalemate, with Korea cut in half along an arbitrary line. It's still there. Koreans talk of peace and unification, but technically, the war has never ended, and North and South armies still stare at each other over a wall. Where the Cold War first got hot, the combatants are still frozen.



The border of North and South Korea. The Telegraph 23/9/11

That sequence anticipates the rape of Vietnam. In both cases the legitimate interest of national liberation was denied power because the Americans didn't care for the idea of freedom. Both Vietnam and Korea had emerged from the brutality of Japanese rule. In Vietnam, the undisputed leader, Ho Chi Minh, was restricted to the north of his country and the Vietnamese people were then subjected to 30 more years of war. The overt violence in Korea might have ended a long time ago, but Kim Il Sung, the founder of North Korea, never saw his country whole.

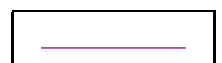
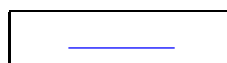
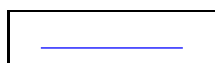
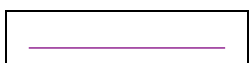
Looking from here, the chance of a thaw seems remote. South Korea is becoming a liberal, capitalist democracy. What we see of the North is of a regimented society with mass parades and icons of the Leader hanging everywhere. On our TV screens the rallies in the capital resemble the photographs we see in histories of Europe in the 1930's and '40's, when the big squares of Moscow and Berlin and Rome were filled with massed arrays of gymnasts or tanks. The totalitarian style was never pretty, but it needs to be considered in the context of its neurotic era. Why, alone in the 21st Century, is the Kim family still doing it?

Unresolved Cold War Tensions

Beal's linking of unresolved Cold War tensions to the similarly anachronistic style of the Kim regimes helps understanding. North Korea is dominated and distorted by its neighbours to an extent that could well be unique in the world. The bulk of the book considers what China, Japan, South Korea and the US are up to, and how these policies might have shaped North Korea. China has always been the Kims' best friend, but not really because they share a nominal attachment to an ideology. If, as seems likely, China sees North Korea as a bulwark against US influence, then it won't be keen to see a unified peninsula, as that would certainly resemble the South rather than the North. America's motive, Beal argues, is a mirror image of this. It has an interest in maintaining tension as this keeps South Korea and Japan nervous and dependent.

Beal has set himself up as counsel for the defence, the one person in court who doesn't see the man in the dock as a villain. His exposition of the crises over the years is thoughtful and thorough, and, while he sometimes seems tempted to back his team regardless, his conclusions are fair. Exhibit A is a chapter on the sinking of a South Korean ship, allegedly by North Korea. Beal isn't so sure. He's probably right that elements of the South's elites are dodgy. Those who invite readers to consider an unpopular or unconventional view can come across as propagandists or conspiracists. That's not Beal, though he does spend some time wondering whether the US and the South might invade the North. He points out that such a war would be disastrous, though improbable. Here Beal is stretching. We don't need to be told that any such war would be a very bad thing and even the Americans now know this. If they could convince the North of this, the North might back off its threat to arm itself with nukes. Although Beal has been to North Korea a few times, there's little here about what goes on inside the country. He doesn't try to explain away the impression of a country whose crisis might not be entirely the fault of outsiders, but until the regime loosens up it won't be possible to know enough to be too confident about making definitive judgements.

One obvious reason why North Korea has a bad press is that the new leader is the son of the last leader and grandson of the first leader. This looks bad. Healthy societies don't do things that way. Writing in the last days of Kim Jong Il, the middle one, Beal anticipated the outcome, and almost criticises it. He might say that when the whole world condemns a regime, there's little point in repeating their criticisms. In fact it's the norm for post-revolutionary governments to continue an association with their first charismatic leader. Two examples: it was decades before an American President did not have a link to George Washington; and in contemporary India it is only now that a descendant of the first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, might not expect to be born to rule. Considering that Japanese meddling in Korea began in 1876, North Korea has never been allowed to exist, so the jury might eventually return a sympathetic verdict. When people are denied their rights they can't always be expected to act as outsiders might prefer. Being locked up in isolation does things to you and North Korea has never enjoyed the benefits of a calm modernity. It needs space and time. But it mightn't get it unless the big players want it.



- Maire Leadbeater

LARRY ROSS

Larry Ross was the true father of Nuclear Free New Zealand and a veteran peace activist from his arrival in this country (from Canada) in the 1960s right through until just a few years ago (although he was never a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign and never came on a Waihopai spy base protest, he took part in plenty of protests at the US military base at Christchurch Airport over many decades). Among those who worked very closely with him in the NZ Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Committee in Christchurch in the 1980s were Bob Leonard, Dennis Small and Keith Burgess. All three went on to become Editors of Peace Researcher (Bob did it for two decades); Dennis remains a regular PR writer today, with two articles in this issue. Bob, of course, was a founder of ABC and the driving force behind it until the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake forced him and Barbara to permanently move to Wellington.

Larry died in April 2012, aged 84, having been adversely affected by a series of mini-strokes in the past decade, which put him into the rest home where he spent his final few years. It was a severe stroke which killed him. How ironically coincidental that Larry should die in the same month when US combat troops were holding joint exercises in New Zealand for the first time since 1986 – the year in which NZ was expelled from the ANZUS Treaty because of our nuclear free policy. That was the product of a hard fought mass campaign over many years, with Larry as one of its leading lights. There will be full obituary in the next Peace Researcher (he died just as we were putting the finishing touches to this one). Maire Leadbeater sent this tribute to Larry's funeral, in Christchurch. Ed.

I have been researching old peace files with the hope of publishing a book* and I have spent time delving into the vast Larry Ross collection at the McMillan Brown Library at Canterbury University. So I can testify to Larry's incredible hard work and absolute commitment to peace work. I think he might be best remembered for the work he put into the Nuclear Free Zone campaign – the campaign to get local boroughs, district and city councils to make a nuclear free zone declaration. This campaign was an intrinsic and vital part of the campaign to get our Government to pass legislation establishing New Zealand as a Nuclear Free Zone.

Tireless Campaigner For Nuclear Free NZ

Here is how the progress went: the NZ Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Committee was formed in 1981. By mid 1983 Larry for the NZNFZC told the media that there were 23 nuclear free zones representing more than three quarters of a million people. By the time of the snap election in 1984 60% of the population lived in a local nuclear free zone. But the Labour victory did not signal the end of the campaign – in October 1989 72% of the NZ population lived in nuclear free zones. Larry played a particularly important role in encouraging these campaigns in the rural areas and smaller centres and he personally travelled all round the country to ensure that the groups and peace-minded individuals in these places had all the encouragement and resources they needed to mount a successful campaign. Activists from this time will well remember the succession of wall maps of NZ which marked each nuclear free zone and recorded the population figures.

Some of that work was not so apparent in the larger centres and probably at times Larry did not get his due credit. But Larry was never discouraged by setbacks or failure to get media coverage, the NZNWFZ continued to host a wide range of speakers, participate in demonstrations, distribute resources and lobby politicians. The NZNWFZ Committee was renamed the NZ Nuclear Free Peacemaking Committee in 1988 (after the NZ legislation was passed) and it was very active at the time of the 1991 Gulf War and subsequently as peace activists confronted the so-called "War on Terror". I believe the group went into recess only in 2007. Larry leaves behind a great legacy and his work lives on. My condolences and sympathy to his daughter Laurie Ross who has kept the peace candle burning so diligently, and to all Larry's family and friends

**Maire is updating "Peace People" by her late mother Elsie Locke. Elsie's book covered peace movement history up until 1975. Maire aims to update it up until 2001 (the start of the "War On Terror"). Ed.*

COLIN ILES

Born in Nottingham, England on February 10, 1938. Died in Christchurch, March 3, 2012.

Although he was never a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign, Colin took part in at least one recent (2007) ABC protest at the Waihopai spy base. He came with a contingent of people from Riverside Community in Motueka, where he was living (Riverside has actively supported ABC and our Waihopai campaign for decades). Colin was both a national and international peace activist, achieving particular prominence in the long, bitter solidarity campaign with the people of East Timor (now Timor-Leste). Ed.

Campaigner For East Timor Since 1970s

Colin Iles richly deserved the two honours he received for his work in solidarity with the East Timorese under Indonesian occupation. On May 20, 2010, the eighth anniversary of Timor-Leste's independence, Colin Iles was among a select company of international activists to receive the "Princess Grace of Monaco" medal. Colin travelled to attend the ceremony held in the Parliament in Dili, and he told me that he was thrilled at this recognition. Colin Iles was one of the very first people to take up this cause when he and fellow Values Party activists set up a group organised in Whangarei in 1976. A couple of years later when he had moved to Wellington Colin took on a leadership role, effectively taking the place of Peter Hopkins who was killed in a deer shooting accident.

Colin set about working to arrange for Jose Ramos-Horta, East Timor's exiled "Foreign Minister" to tour. But he first he had to negotiate a road block – the Muldoon government which refused to give Ramos-Horta a visa. Muldoon, of course, loved to intimidate and vilify activists but Colin was not going to take "no" for answer. I described it in my book (1) as the "tour that never was", because in the end the delays prevented Horta from making the trip, but Colin won his point, and along the way gave the cause a tremendous boost. Colin said at the height of this 1978 campaign to allow Horta to visit New Zealand "there were stickers all over the place - car stickers everywhere – 'Let Horta Speak' - up and down the country!"

The "free speech" campaign fired up journalists, the Council for Civil Liberties, and many other progressive organisations. An issue that was not high on the radar even became a front page *Evening Post* news story. Colin did not want to have Horta's visit subject to any restrictions, telling the media: "How can a person who is the ambassador for a country recognised by 15 member nations of the United Nations, over 100,000 of whose fellow countrymen have died fighting Indonesia's attempted annexation of East Timor, and whose 17-year-old sister was reported killed last January when the school she was in was bombed by Indonesian aircraft, possibly come to New Zealand and not talk about the war that prevents him from returning to his homeland?"

He also had to persuade Jose Ramos-Horta from accepting any compromise or restrictions on what he could say while in New Zealand. The two forged an amiable bond and Ramos-Horta* gave Colin the nickname "the guru chief". In the 1980s the Lange Labour government chose to back Indonesia and Labour Party Conference resolutions in support of self-determination were ignored. Colin was incensed. He wrote to Labour MP Philip Woollaston: "How is it that this Government's appeasement of Indonesian aggression amounts to complicity in what is being recognised as one of the most brutal acts of aggression in human history? Although we find it hard to believe, we now see the Labour government as no more than a mouthpiece for the Indonesian military". *Jose Ramos-Horta went on to become Prime Minister and, more recently, President of Timor-Leste. He was defeated in the 2012 Presidential election. Ed.

Refused To Shake Minister's Hand; Climbed Onto A Skyhawk

I got to know Colin well in the 1990s, the decade when I was personally most active on the East Timor issue. It was good to collaborate with him; he was always available to help with the all-important task of lobbying and ensuring that visiting Timorese leaders had meetings with the politicians, journalists and supporters. He stood true like the East Timorese themselves and he certainly never minced words. When National Prime Minister Jim Bolger went to Jakarta he and his wife had their photos up on prominent billboards. Colin said Bolger should have asked to meet with East Timor's jailed leader Xanana Gusmao (*who went on to become the independent country's first President. Ed.*). Instead he had become "an accessory after the fact" by talking to the murderous regime.

In the movement we often told the story of Colin's participation in a 1992 delegation that went to meet with Foreign Minister Don McKinnon in the wake of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. Nadiah Bamadhaj, sister of Kamal who was killed in the massacre was also present. Everyone was disturbed at the Government's willingness to accept the Indonesian "explanation" for the massacre. As he took his leave at the end of the less than satisfactory meeting, Colin refused to shake hands with Mr McKinnon – telling him that he had blood on his hands.

In 1999 as militia violence began to engulf East Timor we demonstrated in Blenheim at Safeair (Air New Zealand subsidiary at the time) because of its role in refurbishing Indonesian Skyhawks. A spontaneous occupation of the tarmac took place and Colin briefly clambered onto the fuselage of an Air New Zealand plane – placard held aloft.

There were some Police inquiries but fortunately no charges. When East Timor achieved its liberation that year, Colin retained his interest in the development of the new nation. He kept in touch with people like Jorge da Conceicao Teme who had been a student studying here in the late 90s and who went on to become an MP and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs. Colin attended the 2002 ceremony when the new nation of Timor-Leste was born. Later he went to see if he could help by passing on the business and beekeeping skills he had learnt from his time in Golden Bay. Unfortunately, he found that the bureaucracy was geared to larger projects and it was difficult to get a small scale initiative off the ground.

Love Of Adventure, Sense Of Justice

Colin was the author of "Out of Control: Stories of men who are leaving violence and partner abuse behind", a book written to affirm that men can change. "Out of Control" is a moving compilation of stories written mostly in the voices of formerly violent men and their partners. An obituary in the *Christchurch Press* (17/3/12, "Peace activist lobbied on behalf of East Timor", Mike Crean) records that he immigrated to New Zealand by sail boat: "He and a friend went to Marseilles in the south of France and bought an old wooden, gaff-rigged fishing boat, *Clarinda* plus a sextant and book on navigation and, with only coastal sailing experience, sailed for New Zealand. He landed in Whangarei and became an 'instant Kiwi'.

"Soon after he married Rahui Makit from Manuhiki in the Cook Islands. After sailing in the Pacific, Iles and Rahui returned to the United Kingdom where he wrote Rahui the story of his voyage to New Zealand. His marriage ended and he returned to New Zealand via the East, where his interest in politics intensified by what was happening in Vietnam". Colin later lived in Golden Bay where he was a beekeeper, and for around two decades he lived with Jo Lynch and her son Thomas in Wellington. Colin lived at Riverside Community in the last five years of his life. Jo and Colin remained good friends and Thomas, now 27, mourns the man who was his "Dad" for so long.

Jo told the *Press* that "It was evident listening to Colin talk about his childhood that his love for adventure, his independence of spirit and his sense of justice were with him from the beginning". Jo reminded me about Colin's love for paragliding and told me that he went paragliding only weeks before his death. He even went paragliding in Nepal – where you can fly with the eagles. Apparently Indian TV got hold of that story – paragliders in their 70s are not that usual in places like India and Nepal.

Helen Yensen was handed the "East Timor" portfolio by Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific and Greenpeace activist Elaine Shaw in 1981. She writes of Colin: "As I started to re-activate support for the East Timorese struggle in Auckland, Colin became a key contact, source of information, inspiration, and shared action. He did not just believe in non-violence, but lived it too. This did not prevent him from accepting that resistance movements sometimes find it impossible to avoid using violence in order to survive when great violence is directed against you and your people. But it also meant he could not really shake hands with then Foreign Minister, Don McKinnon, in 1992...

"Colin was in East Timor not long before the Indonesian attack and occupation. He brought passion and knowledge to starting what eventually became a successful Free East Timor Movement here. The recognition he received from the Timor-Leste government after independence was more than deserved. I stayed a couple of times with Colin, Jo Lynch and Thomas. So much that was good between them, but it was also clear that suburban domestic arrangements were not really Colin's thing. I spoke with him at length not all that long ago. He spoke of the importance to him of being able to join the Riverside Community and how he was still searching to make a truly useful contribution there and elsewhere. There will be many – like me – who regret hearing of Colin's illness and death too late to say goodbye. He leaves a lasting legacy towards peace and justice and will be remembered!" With condolences to all Colin's whanau and friends.

MY MEMORIES OF COLIN ILES

- Jorge da Conceicao Teme

East Timorese former New Zealand Overseas Development Agency (NZODA) scholarship holder, who became an MP and Minister in independent Timor-Leste and who was a good friend of Colin.

Colin was introduced to me by Maire Leadbeater when she accompanied me to meet with former Foreign Minister Don McKinnon in his office in Wellington in 1998. At that time I had just arrived in Palmerston North as a winner of an NZODA Scholarship. I was very impressed by Colin's words: "Your country and people deserve self-determination". After the meeting, I had very frequent contacts with Colin by e-mail and most of the topics of our discussions were about East Timor (now Timor-Leste). Colin was a very brave activist for Timor-Leste, as I recorded

his climbing up onto the Skyhawk in Blenheim when the activists and I took part in a demonstration against the refurbishment of the Skyhawk to be sent to Indonesia.

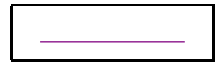
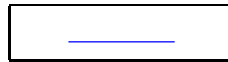
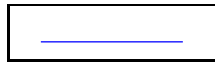
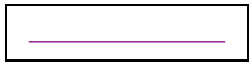
Solidarity With Politically Oppressed People

Colin, as I knew, had a very high sense of humanism, solidarity and love for people who are politically oppressed. He had shown his solidarity with Timorese students at that time by making various efforts to raise funds to assist our families who escaped the Indonesian militias, some to the forest while others were forcibly driven to Indonesian West Timor. I will never forget his generosity to me and my family. When my family and I returned to Timor-Leste, our house was burned to ashes. As a graduate student I did not bring much money back except for the savings I had from my student's monthly allowance. Colin contacted me and asked me if he could offer any assistance. I had to be honest to him that I needed to fix one room of the house in order to stay with my wife and kids. Colin promptly replied that he would help.

My wife cannot forget the day when Colin visited East Timor while staying at our house. He found out that we had no washing machine and my wife Tina had to wash so many clothes by hand. Without saying anything to me or my wife he went to the local supermarket and brought home a car carrying a washing machine. My wife was so touched because Colin bought it in order to be used by my family. I met Colin for the last time in Dili, in 2010 when he came there to receive the Princess Grace Award. He appeared to be in good shape and as always only wished me and my family a successful life. When I received the email message from Maire that Colin had passed away, I was stunned and in tears as I lost a very good friend who had shown his very high and strong determination as an activist for Free East Timor together with the NZ East Timor Solidarity Group.

Endnote

1. "Negligent Neighbour: New Zealand's Complicity In The Invasion And Occupation Of Timor-Leste", by Maire Leadbeater, published by Craig Potton, 2006, reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *Peace Researcher* 34, July 2007, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr34-141b.html>.



Organiser's Report

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Murray Horton

This covers my Anti-Bases Campaign activities in 2011. It is extracted from my full Report, all 24 pages of it, which is online in Foreign Control Watchdog 129, April 2012, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/29/12.htm>. This does not include coverage of the January 2011 Waihopai spy base protest, because that has already been reported by Doug Craig in Peace Researcher 41, July 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/41/pr41-004.htm>.

Earthquakes' Effect On ABC Office

For very detailed coverage of this, see my full Report in *Watchdog*. As for the effect on our house, which includes the ABC office – both were damaged. Lots of superficial cracks to interior plaster walls and ceilings, lots of cracks to our exterior roughcast walls. As a result of the February 22nd killer quake everything fell off the walls, some of which broke. A number of light fittings, including in the office, were ripped from the ceilings and smashed, leaving just bare electric wires dangling down, as a result of the whole house being thrust violently upwards and then smashed down again – which is what happened to the whole city. So it was maybe a good thing that we had no power on for five days, which gave us a chance to get those made safe and fixed in the interim (we also had no water or toilet for those five days). The only structural job that had to be done was the removal and replacement of one interior wall, necessitated by the removal of the brick chimney and back to back fireplaces. That meant we lost our logburner, which was replaced by a free heat pump. We were told, unofficially, that the damage to our place totalled \$30,000 (which is defined as moderate and therefore fell into the range which is the responsibility of Fletchers to fix, as contractor to the Earthquake Commission).

Has the house and office been fixed? Yes, in June and July 2011. We had to empty the front of the house of everything (from curtains to furniture and all office contents), store all that in the garage, and live in our dining room for two months of winter (sleeping on makeshift mattresses on the floor) while the repairs were done. I moved my computer and a minimum of office equipment and files into there so that I could continue working. Two of us even managed to do a *Peace Researcher* mailout in that room during that period. As Becky and I had, voluntarily, spent three months in 1998 also living in a construction site while the back of the house was renovated – meaning that we had no kitchen, bathroom, toilet or laundry – we had had experience of what to expect. We have no idea why our place was among the first to be fixed. We had not been nagging the Commission about it; the place was perfectly liveable and weathertight, with only superficial damage. We had expected to wait years for it to be repaired, as tens of thousands of others have to. Has there been any further damage in later quakes? No, the repairs have stood up well, the guys did a very good job and we have no complaints about the workmanship. The house looks much better and is stronger now than before (for instance, the repairs included painting the exterior roughcast, something I'd never done). We have a handful of cracks remaining to be fixed, which are the subject of a separate claim (unresolved at the time of writing).

Colleagues Much More Badly Affected

ABC Committee colleagues fared much worse than us. Bob Leonard, who was the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account Treasurer (and thus my paymaster) from 1993-2010, and my Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) colleague and close friend since the early 80s, fared the worst – he and Barbara had to flee their badly damaged hillside home on February 22nd and they've been earthquake refugees in Wellington ever since (they won't be back. Warren Brewer of the CAFCA Committee has replaced Bob as the person in charge of the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account). The ABC Committee also lost Doug Craig, who had to get out of his eastern suburbs flat when the landlord decided to cut his losses, evict the tenants and sell the place a few months after the quake. Doug moved back to his hometown of Nelson but remains a distance member of the ABC Committee (unlike Bob).

Robyn Dann, the ABC Treasurer, owns a 1850s' Woolston cottage across the street from the Heathcote River. The place has a lot of old bricks in it and those parts of the house have taken a pummelling. She and her daughter are allowed to live in it, pending a decision on repair or rebuild, but the bedrooms are too dangerous to sleep in, meaning that they've been living in the lounge and dining room for more than a year. That means Robyn can no longer host ABC meetings, which she had done for the past decade (our place is now the ABC meeting venue, until further notice). Warren Thomson, of the ABC Committee and *Peace Researcher* Co-Editor, worked in the central city at an English language school. That whole industry was virtually wiped out in seconds by the February quake (fortunately, Warren did not work in the language school in the CTV Building, whose students and staff comprised the biggest number of the 115 people killed in that building's collapse – a building I left two hours before the fatal

quake. The 25 year old reporter who had interviewed me was among those killed). Warren had months of unemployment, followed by a few months of highly erratic part-time work as his school struggled to survive with a drastically reduced number of foreign students (that work has now dried up). At the time of writing his hillside house is being repaired. As Becky and I did, Warren and Noi are living in it while the repairs are done. Lynda Boyd lives in Auckland but was in Christchurch on February 22nd on business for the union for which she then worked. She was in a central city hotel when it happened and got mildly injured by falling debris. She and her mother Cass Daley (ABC's Webperson) were both caught up in the central city chaos that day, as constant aftershocks tore open the street around them, immersing them kneedeep in liquefaction and sewerage as they tried to walk through town. On December 23rd, when the swarm of destructive big quakes struck, they were upstairs in a mall and Lynda hit the deck again.

But the news was not all bad in 2011. I've mentioned Warren Thomson, one of ABC's founders and the driving force of our Waihopai campaign in the 80s and 90s. He returned to Christchurch in 2010 after 13 years teaching English in Bangkok, bringing with him his lovely wife, Noi. Good old Doug Craig's cunning plan to save ABC was to get Warren back on board and that is exactly what he succeeded in doing. I'm delighted to report that not only did Warren rejoin the Committee in 2011, and come with us to Waihopai in January 2012 (although he is not yet reacclimatised enough to join us in camping) but he also stepped up and resumed his previous life as Co-Editor of *Peace Researcher* (a role which he shared with Bob in the 90s).

Peace Researcher

I mentioned in my 2010 Report that I was struggling as *PR* Editor. It was not part of my job description when I started as CAFCA/ABC Organiser in 1991. I stepped in as Co-Editor with Bob when Warren went to Thailand in 1997, and then proceeded to become Editor when Bob stepped down in 2002 (having been Editor or Co-Editor since 1983). Because of the pressure of my other, primarily CAFCA, work, there was a real danger that *PR* would cease to function if it was left up to me alone as Editor. As it was, it ground to a halt and there was a year between issues (from July 2010 until July 2011). Once again, good old Doug not only twisted Warren's ear to get stuck in again but he (Doug) took responsibility, with Warren, to get out that July 2011 issue (my role in that could be loosely described as Executive Editor). By the time of the November 2011 issue I was fully hands on again, and Warren and I are full speed ahead. After 14 years away from ABC and the whole issue, Warren was raring to go. It's great to be working with him again. Although it's our first time as Co-Editors, we've been colleagues and very close friends for 30 years (our adventures include having been arrested together; and him being my best man when I got married in Manila). I'm not exaggerating when I say that his coming back to *PR* has saved it, which is great, because *PR* is a damn good little newsletter. Actually it's not so little any more – the November 2011 issue was the biggest ever, at 58 pages and this current issue is also a big bugger.

I enjoy writing for *PR* (when I can make the time to do so) because it enables me to write about topics that I don't write about in *Watchdog* (such as the cases of the Domebusters and the so-called Urewera terrorists), the sort of stuff that I cut my teeth on when I first started as a political activist, long before I could bring myself to take an interest in boring old economics. Warren is a prolific writer and, in marked contrast to me, he writes short, snappy articles. Dennis Small, himself a former *PR* Editor, regularly writes long and as fascinating articles (including in this issue). Doug Craig, Maire Leadbeater and Kate Dewes were *PR*'s other writers in 2011; Jeremy Agar is Reviews Editor. The whole thing looks a million bucks, due to the meticulous work of our Layout Editor, my wife Becky, who has done it for a decade and who will go to exhaustive lengths to get it just right.

Fighting Fit & Raring To Go

See the article elsewhere in this issue thanking Yani Johanson for his decade as ABC's Webmaster. He has also resigned from the Committee, because of the ceaseless pressure of his job as a high profile Christchurch City Councillor. So the Committee has lost Bob and Yani and Doug (at least, in person) but it has regained Warren, and also we were delighted to accept Jenny Boyd's offer to join. Jenny, who is the older sister of the Committee's other distance member Lynda Boyd (and they're the daughters of our new Webperson Cass Daley), has been a Waihopai activist for years. So she brings both experience and enthusiasm to the Committee. Despite 2011 having been such a dire year for ABC, we came out of it in much better shape than we could have believed possible. ABC is basically a single issue campaign, with a specialist publication, so it always has been, and probably always will be, small. But it punches way above its weight and always generates media coverage disproportionate to its size. The Committee is small but we are all very good friends, not just colleagues, which means that our activities are always fun. That makes a big difference when you're fighting some of the biggest, meanest, most secretive and murderous forces running the world. We enjoy our work.

Thanks, Yani

ABC Webmaster Steps Down After A Decade

Peace Researcher 43 – May 2012

- Murray Horton

There was one change in the Anti-Bases Campaign's family in 2011 - Yani Johanson stepped down as our Webmaster. ABC's Website was created (but not actually uploaded) by our former Committee member Melanie Thomson, just before she rushed off to London at the end of 2000 (where she has remained ever since, working as a primary teacher, getting married and having a daughter. The family are permanently shifting to New Zealand later in 2012). Joe Davies, who played a crucial role in getting it up and running, did it for a while, but for the next decade Yani was our Webmaster.

Yani is a very high profile Christchurch City Councillor (I reckon he'd make a bloody good Mayor in years to come – he's still only in his 30s) and with the whole earthquakes crisis, he is just insanely busy and will be for the indefinite future. With the best will in the world it was taking him longer and longer to get issues of *Peace Researcher* uploaded (particularly in election years). Yani also faced facts and stepped down from the Committee, which he'd been on since he came back to NZ in the late 90s (having spent his formative years in the US) and promptly got himself arrested at ABC's 1997 Waihopai spy base protest. He is so busy that we've hardly seen him at Committee meetings for years. But Yani is still one of us and he is not only a colleague but a good friend. I was privileged to be invited to his wedding in early 2012 (I was the only ABC representative there) and that was a night to remember – one half of his family is American; his wife is Russian. It was a very multicultural kneesup. Interestingly, the only mention of Waihopai came in the highly entertaining speech by his American father (who recounted how he'd received a letter and newspaper clipping from Yani about his 1997 arrest, telling Dad how proud he was of what he'd done).

Yani has been replaced by Cass Daley, (who just happens to be the mother of Jenny and Lynda Boyd, who are both on the ABC Committee). Cass had already put in an enormous amount of voluntary work two to three years previously setting up ABC's new membership database - plus the ones for the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) and the Philippines Solidarity Network – and she still maintains those if any problems arise. She is also in charge of the *Foreign Control Watchdog* Website. She accepted our invitation to take over the ABC Website for the indefinite future, as of late 2011. One immediate issue was what title should she have? For obvious reasons she didn't want to be called the Webmaster, and definitely not the Webmistress. We settled on Web Content Organiser. So, welcome aboard Cass and many thanks for taking it on. Already she has made changes and improvements, plus suggestions for what else can be done better. Which is just as well, because our online presence has become a more and more important part of our work.

