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JOHN KEY

LOYAL SERVANT OF COVERT STATE

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IT REALLY IS AT THE END OF THE DAY

My Name's John And I'm Gone

- Murray Horton

These are extracts from a much longer article (with the same title) in Foreign Control Watchdog 144, May 2017. Ed

Why Did Key Quit When He Did?

First things first. I need to address the question of why John Key quit as Prime Minister when he did (namely, without warning, at a week's notice, in December 2016). I don't ascribe any conspiracy theory to it, I doubt that any great scandal was about to break that could only be quashed by his abruptly resigning (ponytail-pulling fetish, anyone?).

His stated reason was that he'd done as much as he felt that he could and wanted to spend more time with his family. Plenty of people will sympathise with that – being a politician, let alone a Prime Minister, is a relentlessly punishing job which is murder on relationships and family life (you watch those guys age and go grey at a much faster rate than us mere peasants. Unless you're Donald Trump, whereby you stay orange).

But there's obviously more to it than that – John Key is a consummate individualist, who personified exactly the self-centred, self-obsessed, egotistic and narcissistic spirit of the age. Being so in tune with that popular culture is a major reason why he remained so popular throughout his years in power. But, by definition, all those personality traits put yourself and your interests first and foremost in any decision to be made.

I'd always expected him to go when he got sick of it and that's exactly what he did. In his resignation speech, he stressed that he was not a "career politician", so he quit abruptly and left the career politicians to deal with the consequences. He would have seen what happened to his predecessor, Helen Clark – she fought one election too many, lost it and abruptly quit, as a loser.

Key's overriding obsession was to be a winner and he knew, from his previous career as a successful money trader, that the best move is to quit when you're ahead. He knew that when you're on top there are only two choices – to go down or to get out and let it become someone else's problem. By keeping it secret from everyone except his anointed successor, Bill English, and then quitting at a week's notice, Key showed his fundamental selfishness. "I'm no longer interested in this. So long, suckers".

Just as importantly, he could see which way the global wind is blowing – his brand of neo-liberal economics and politics have had their day. 2016 saw, first Brexit, then the Trumpocalypse – he'd be very happy to not have to deal with that (i.e. with the consequences of failed neo-liberalism). It was one thing playing golf in Hawaii with his best friend forever Barack Obama; it would be quite another to have to endure being publicly insulted and humiliated by Mad King Donald, as has already happened to Key's ideological soulmate, Australian PM, Malcolm Turnbull (whose name Trump's court jester couldn't even get right). If that's the thanks you get for donkey's years of assiduous arse licking, who needs enemies?

Others Did His Dirty Work

One of the major differences between John Key and Donald Trump is that Key made sure that he got other people to do his dirty work and that the ugly side of his personality was kept firmly out of sight (whereas the



Dominion Post, 24/10/14

flagrant brandishing of the very ugliest of personalities is Trump's signature political style, as indeed it was in this country for Muldoon, albeit on a much more reduced scale). So, Key's third, and what turned out to be his final, election – in 2014 – was the "Dirty Politics" one, where his essential ugliness was laid bare for all to see. I wrote about this at length in my analysis of that election. Here are some extracts:

"National recognises that John Key is its greatest asset and has been since he was parachuted in to replace the hapless Don Brash as Party Leader and then went on to defeat Helen Clark (who, likewise, was Labour's greatest asset during her three terms in power). A major part of that is the careful cultivation of Key's image as being a good bloke, one of the boys, someone above all the routine tawdriness of politics".

"Hence the classic 'Monty Python And The Holy Grail' quote (with which I started that article, namely 'Large Man: Who's that then? Dead Collector: I dunno. Must be a king. Large Man: Why? Dead Collector: He hasn't got shit all over him') – the king musn't be seen to have shit all over him".

"But something didn't go according to script for King John in the build-up to his 2014 coronation. The mask slipped, the curtain was pulled back, and the excremental reality of Key, National and their grubby mates

was laid bare for all to see. That, of course, was courtesy of 'Dirty Politics' by Nicky Hager, the proctologist of the body politic (which was reviewed by Jeremy Agar in *PR* 48, November 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissuespr48.pdf>). Suffice to say that 'Dirty Politics' revealed the true way that Key and National operate, and the methods they used to ensure that they stay in power".

"Nicky's book, combined with Kim Dotcom's September (2014) Moment of Truth public meeting in the Auckland Town Hall – deliberately timed to have maximum impact on the election just five days later – made for the most interesting election campaign in years. It was certainly the most unscripted. Their combined effect led to some nervous last minute handwringing by National's apologists fretting about the election. They needn't have worried – any electoral impact was, in fact, adjudged to have helped National to win with an increased majority. In short: a backlash..."

"Key had long been expecting and dreading these revelations about his Government's systematic crimes against its own people, and its wholehearted participation in the international organised crime group known as Five Eyes. As far back as his much-vaunted January 2014 Hawaii game of golf with President Obama he had said that he expected revelations about NZ in 2014 from Edward Snowden's US National Security Agency (NSA)

files. Indeed, the political and media commentariat went into a frenzy when Nicky Hager announced that he was releasing a new book the month before the election – the assumption (wrong, as it turned out) was that it would be material from the Snowden files".

"It was fascinating to see how history repeats; as John Key, badly rattled by the Moment of Truth revelations, resorted to that faithful tool of all Tory politicians wanting to deflect attention from their lies and crimes, namely to ignore the message and shoot the messenger. So, even in advance of the event, Key was heaping disgraceful insults onto Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist Glenn Greenwald*, calling him 'Dotcom's little henchman', 'a conspiracy theorist', and that favourite epithet from Key's former life as an international money trader, 'a loser'".

"He and his political and media allies were able to get great mileage out of the fact that all of the major figures at the Moment of Truth – Greenwald, Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and, most importantly, Kim Dotcom (who didn't help his case by cackling throughout like some sort of oversized German villain in a James Bond movie) are foreigners. *Jeremy Agar's review of Greenwald's "No Place To Hide: Edward Snowden, The NSA And The Surveillance State" is in *PR* 47, August 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr47.pdf>".

The New Muldoon

"And we New Zealanders don't like foreigners telling us what to do, do we. Well, only if they're good foreigners, like the President of the US or the Director of the NSA – but that's different, isn't it. And I wondered: who was the last Tory PM to shoot unwelcome foreign messengers and whip up populist resentment against foreigners from the progressive side of the argument telling us what to do in relation to a national and international disgrace in which New Zealand had been very much caught with its pants down?"

"The answer was none other than our old mate Piggy Muldoon, who used to rail against African and

other Third World politicians telling us to cut our sporting ties with apartheid South Africa (with the dog whistle message that not only were they foreigners but, worst of all, black foreigners). So, that nice Mr Key, smile and wave John, selfie John, is none other than the reincarnation of Piggy Muldoon, minus the dimple”.

“The Muldoonist parallel continues with ‘Dirty Politics’, showing how Rightwing attack blogs like Cameron Slater’s *Whale Oil* now carry out the political dirty work, smears and character assassinations that in Piggy’s day were done by old dead tree media, *Truth*. Even the relationship with the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) is the same. So, nothing changes in Torydom, it’s just that the weapons get upgraded”.

“Very specifically, Key and his spin doctors proved themselves to be true Muldoonists. Piggy’s greatest weapon was the counter-attack. He used to attack his attackers, quite often before they’d actually attacked him (the first strike school of nuclear warfare). So, Key, whilst simultaneously looking shifty, tried to dismiss ‘Dirty Politics’ as a ‘Leftwing conspiracy’. He was able to distance himself from the muck and slime exposed in it by saying that it didn’t involve him personally. He proclaimed himself to be at arms’ length from the repulsive Cameron Slater (even his name is appropriate, a slater being something that scuttles away when you lift a rock”.

“Having denounced Nicky Hager for publishing ‘stolen e-mails’ (Nicky was subjected to a lengthy Police raid on his home, and seizure of computers, etc., following a complaint from Cameron Slater – in 2016 Nicky won a court case arising from that), Key had no qualms in using a separate stolen e-mail (not one of those published in ‘Dirty Politics’) to publicly humiliate and force the resignation from Cabinet of Judith Collins, a rival and constant source of political embarrassment. Above all, as in the above quote from ‘Monty Python And The Holy Grail’, he must be the king because he hasn’t got shit all over him or, more correctly, not seen to have shit all over him”.

“There is a deeper reason why ‘Dirty

Politics’ et al didn’t tip the (2014) election. It’s called depoliticisation, whereby people are deliberately alienated from feeling that they have any stake in the running of their own country; that democracy is a theoretical concept only. One million people didn’t vote; those who did were led to believe that ‘Dirty Politics’ was only a ‘Beltway issue’. This phrase, another example of American cultural imperialism (it actually refers to the area of Washington DC within a defined set of expressways) means that it doesn’t register as a ‘real issue’ in the ‘real world”.

“President Richard Nixon, who set the gold standard for criminal politicians, used as his benchmark of any issue or policy: ‘Will it play in Peoria?’. Thirty years of dog eat dog Rogernomics’ toxin has had the effect of leaving people deeply apathetic and cynical about politics and politicians. And that’s exactly the way Key and those behind him want it. Don’t you little people take any interest in what we’re doing, all the better so that we can keep doing it to you... “

“And we, the Left, need to learn the lessons of history as well. It’s not all about John Key. I’m old enough to remember the huge amount of energy expended in getting rid of Piggy, who revelled in his role as a pantomime villain. And his replacement was – Roger Douglas, a man who had had a personality bypass, and who did far more damage to New Zealand than Muldoon ever did, damage that is still occurring today. Changing the face, or even the party in power, is nowhere near enough. What is needed is systemic change” (*Watchdog* 137, December 2014, “What’s That Terrible Smell? The 2014 Election”, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/37/01.html>).

Services Rendered To The Covert State

No analysis of Key’s legacy would be complete without mention of his services to the covert State and to the US military/intelligence empire. Undoubtedly the most high-profile rich foreigner allowed into NZ during Key’s term was Kim Dotcom, despite ample grounds for not letting him in (see *Watchdog* 130, August

2012, “Kim Dotcom And The Good Character Test: Money Versus Power”, by James Ayers, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/30/06.html>). I bet Key regretted that for the rest of his term. And the ironic thing is that, in 2017, Key is gone but Dotcom is still here, despite having been ordered extradited to the US.

The Dotcom case became an inadvertent entry point for the revelation that the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB, the agency that runs the Waihopai spy base) had been illegally spying on Dotcom. Not only him but more than 80 other New Zealanders. To quote from a 2013 *Peace Researcher* article that I wrote: “Within days of the revelation of long-term and systematic illegal GCSB spying...Key seized on it as an opportunity, not to punish the criminals but to legalise and institutionalise the crime”.

“He said that the GCSB should be able to spy on New Zealanders, even ludicrously involving ‘weapons of mass destruction’ as being among the various terrors that the GCSB is protecting us from (no wonder the Coalition of the Killing couldn’t find the elusive WMD when they illegally invaded Iraq in 2003 – that crafty old Saddam Hussein must have hidden them in New Zealand)”.

“...Retrospective legalisation of State crimes and law changes to get rid of laws that have become inconvenient to the State have been a recurring feature of this Government: the Waihopai Domebusters were acquitted by a jury, so the Government changed the law to eradicate future use of their defence; charges had to be dropped against most of the ‘Urewera terrorists’ because a court ruled that the evidence against them was illegally gathered, so the Government changed the law to legalise those methods” (*PR* 45, June 2013, “Crime Pays! Government Legalises GCSB Culture Of Impunity”, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/45/pr45-001.html>).

There were massive national protests against the GCSB Bill throughout 2013, on a par with those against the TPPA, but it squeaked through Parliament to become law. And the powers of both spy agen-

cies – the GCSB and the NZ Security Intelligence Service (SIS) - were strengthened further by the 2016 Intelligence and Security Bill, which is scheduled to become law in 2017 (see PR 52, November 2016, “Intelligence & Security Bill 2016: Giving The Spooks Yet More Powers”, by Warren Thomson, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/52/pr52-001.html>).

NZ A Doormat At “The Club”

To his credit, Key did not get NZ involved in the disastrous Iraq War in his first two terms in office, 2008-14 (although he inherited and maintained NZ’s military involvement in the endless war in Afghanistan, which persists until this day). But that had changed by the beginning of 2015, when he did a BBC interview in London: “Prime Minister

John Key says New Zealand’s likely military contribution to the fight against Islamic State ‘is the price of the club’ that New Zealand belongs to with the likes of the United States, Australia, Britain and Canada in the intelligence alliance known as Five Eyes”

“In his strongest hint yet that the Cabinet will approve a deployment of troops to train Iraqis alongside Australians, Mr Key drew heavily on New Zealand pulling its weight as a part of ‘a club’. ‘Ultimately, are we going to say we are going to be part of a club like [we] are with Five Eyes intelligence? Are we ultimately going to be able to rely on members of those clubs to support us in our moment of need? And we do know that when it comes to the United States and Canada and Australia

and Great Britain and others, that we can rely on them”.

“If New Zealand did not have the resources to fly someone out of a country or have the resources to help a citizen in another part of the world, others would. ‘Even if the contribution is small – of course, it will be proportional – there has to be some contribution. It is the price of the club” (New Zealand Herald, 21/1/15, “Military Protection ‘Price We Pay’ For Five Eyes Protection”, Audrey Young, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11389301). And, so, Key sent NZ troops to Iraq, where they remain in 2017.

“Each time a power vacuum is created in Iraq by ‘our side’ a fresh batch of even worse villain pops up to fill it. We already know the story of this ultimate disaster movie, featuring oil, lots of explosions, the theft of whole countries, murder by remote control, torture, kidnappings, police state laws, an endless supply of cartoonish villains who started off on ‘our side’, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent people. And at the end of every movie in the endless ‘War on Terror’ series we know that there will have to be a sequel involving more of all of the above. That’s the tar pit that Key has wilfully led us into”.

“Because, according to him, that’s the price of belonging to ‘The Club’ (which should more properly be referred to as a gang or, even better, The Mob). Key should have followed the advice of Groucho Marx, who was famously quoted as saying that he didn’t want to belong to any club that would have him as a member. Quite. Be careful, John, as you will be judged by the company that you keep” (PR 49, June 2015, “Good Dog, Johnny! Iraq War Is The Price Of Belonging To ‘The Club’”, Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/49/pr49-003.html>).

National, Labour: No Difference

Key remained true to form right until literally his last day in Parliament. “Hit & Run”, by Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson (reviewed elsewhere in this issue by Jeremy Agar) was publicly released on the same March 2017 day that Key made his



Follow the money! Uncle Sam lures “John Key” through Blenheim, during Waihopai spy base protest, January 2016. Photo by Dot Lovell-Smith

valedictory speech there. When asked to comment on the claims in the book about NZ Special Air Service soldiers killing Afghan civilians in 2010, Key repeated his 2014 “Dirty Politics” script. His response consisted entirely of saying now, as then: “Nicky Hager is a Left-wing conspiracy theorist”. Oh well, that’s all right then.

Don’t expect anything to change under unelected Prime Minister Bill English. New Zealand is still very much in Five Eyes, indeed the spy bosses from its member countries held a meeting in Queenstown in April 2017. NZ still has troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq (and the NZ military plans to expand its “intelligence-gathering” role in the latter country).

And don’t expect anything to change if there is a change of Government. Following ABC’s January 2017 Waihopai spy base protest, one of the participants wrote to Andrew Little, Leader of the Opposition, asking why a Labour government would remain in Five Eyes. Little replied (7/3/17): “Labour supports our remaining in the network. In this age of increased security risks, it is important we have access to the best information to keep New Zealanders safe”

“There should be a limit to what the State does, however. It is important that we strike the right balance between security and privacy, and the rights of New Zealand citizens must be respected”. Showing that Labour swallows the bullshit that Waihopai and Five Eyes have anything to do with “protecting us from terrorism”. So, Anti-Bases Campaign and other likeminded groups will not be going out of business anytime soon. ■

WAIHOPAI SPY BASE PROTEST 2017

- Murray Horton

The Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) held our regular protest at the Waihopai spy base in January 2017 and, in many respects, it was quite different from not only the 2016 protest, but all other previous protests there (you can check out the 2016 protest, and those of several other recent years, in *Peace Researcher* 51, June 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHdmwtMWhTTDBPeIE/view). Some changes were ones we made ourselves; others were forced on us, before the event, by an external factor beyond our control.

I’m talking about earthquakes – again. There is an irony in that ABC, a Christchurch-based group, ran our Waihopai protests uninterrupted by the catastrophic 2010/11 sequence of thousands of Christchurch quakes (which certainly affected the homes of all of the ABC Committee, myself included). We had even experienced a 2011 quake rippling right underneath our camp at the Waihopai protest in January of that year. But that was a strictly local event, nothing to do with Christchurch. It shook up the locals present, but we Christchurch old hands laughed it off (little did we know about the killer quake coming to our city the next month).

New Route; Back To Old Camp

But what forced change onto us (indeed threatened to derail the whole 2017 Waihopai protest) was, of course, the November 2016 Kaikoura quake (which was strongly felt in Christchurch but did no damage. Thousands of people – including some I know – were evacuated from coastal suburbs pre-dawn because of the danger of tsunamis). That quake caused two major changes in our plans. Firstly, like everyone else, we could no longer travel from Christchurch to Blenheim via Kaikoura (that remains the situation today and until the highway and

railway line are repaired and reopened). That’s the way we’d always travelled to and from Waihopai protests, with a lunch stop in Kaikoura both ways.

Meaning that we, like everyone else, had to drive the much longer inland, alpine, highway, which is a white-knuckle affair with huge trucks speeding towards you on narrow rural back roads that were never intended for the size of vehicles and volume of traffic they now have to handle. It took our rental van and trailer several hours longer than usual (taking us to parts of the South Island I hadn’t visited in 40+ years) but we all got there in one piece. And Murchison was our lunch stop this time.

Secondly, we decided it would be prudent to change the site of the camp we’d used for most of the previous decade. We’d camped at the Whites Bay Department of Conservation (DoC) site, which is a beautiful bush-clad spot, right on the beach, midway between Blenheim and Picton. But north-east Marlborough was earthquake central after that November 2016 quake.

There were big aftershocks regularly happening (although none on the weekend we were in the province), and camping right next to the sea in a quake zone, which had already experienced a tsunami caused by that quake, was too risky. As we’d already publicised that Whites Bay would again be our camp site, we had to confirm a replacement and let everyone know.

We decided to go back to the DoC camp at Onamalutu, which we’d used in 2006 and 07. This is a long way inland (as the DoC woman said to me when I rang them: “If there’s an earthquake, you’ll get all the problems associated with that. But you won’t get a tsunami there”). Onamalutu has special significance



Murray Horton speaking at Waihopai spy base protest, January 2017.

for ABC – it is where we, along with the Greens, held a gathering to commemorate both Rod Donald and Owen Wilkes* (and planted memorial trees for both of them) as part of our 2006 Waihopai protest.

But there were specific reasons why we decided to stop using it (one being that it can be extremely cold at night, even in summer. I reckon I nearly got hypothermia one night there in 2006 – and it was cold again at night in January 2017). Basically, we decided that Whites Bay was a better place to camp, and it served us very well for nearly a decade. But, needs must.

And, I have to say, Onamalutu was a perfectly fine camp site in January 2017. To our pleasant surprise, we virtually had the place to ourselves (which had definitely not been the case in 2006/07). *PR 31, *October 2005*, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr31.pdf>, is a special issue devoted solely to Owen Wilkes. My obituary of Rod Donald is in PR 32, *March 2006*, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr32.pdf>.

Key & Obama Gone

Other external factors causing us to make changes were political, not seismic. Namely, that after eight years each in power, both Barack Obama and John Key were gone. They had won elections within weeks of each other in 2008; now they were out, within weeks of each other in 2016. There was no surprise about Obama, the US Constitution prohibits Presidents running for a third term. But Key's December 2016 resignation as Prime Minister (followed by his 2017 retirement from Parliament) was a surprise to all – he quit, without warning, with a

week's notice (my analysis of his legacy, from ABC's perspective, is elsewhere in this issue).

So, after having eight years of being able to use Obama and Key to personalise this secret intelligence alliance (Five Eyes), we had to look elsewhere. Mind you, we'd got a lot of use out of Key. In 2016, we'd commissioned a giant wearable puppet head of him and used that to great effect, both through Blenheim and out at Waihopai (see PR 51, June 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHdmwtMWhT_TDBPeI/view, "Giant New Prop" subsection of the Waihopai protest article, and also "Play It Again, Uncle Sam! Street Theatre Script", in that same article).

We must be psychic – we had already decided not to take the Key head to Waihopai 2017 (apart from anything else, it's so big and awkward that it needs its own dedicated transport – a car and trailer in 2016). We only may have used it once but we sure got our money's worth out of it in terms of impact. And who needs puppet heads or street theatre when you've got Donald Trump.

Now, I come to the changes that we decided to make ourselves. We decided to have no march or rally in Blenheim and to only have a low-key protest at the base itself. 2017 was the first time in many, many years that we decided not to be graced by the presence of one of our best known "props", namely Uncle Sam (as played by, firstly, the late Bob Leonard and, in recent years by Alice Leney, who added the unique touch of Uncle Sam riding a motorbike). We decided to prioritise a day of workshops (see below).

Letterboxing Blenheim

But, firstly, there was another unique activity that we decided to undertake in 2017, in advance of ABC's actual arrival in Marlborough. We had distributed plenty of leaflets in Blenheim in previous years, but always a small number, handed out on the street on the day of our protest. This time we decided to systematically letterbox the town. ABC Committee members Warren Thomson & Dot Lovell-Smith wrote the leaflet; Dot laid it out. We contracted the Auckland company that does these deliveries for New Zealand Post, found out how many houses there are in urban Blenheim (9,000+), and paid to get that number of leaflets printed and delivered the weekend before we arrived there.

This cost us around \$2,000 (by contrast, we spent a few hundred dollars to get the John Key puppet head made for the 2016 protest). How many of these leaflets actually got delivered remains a mystery (let alone what happened to those that weren't delivered) – we belatedly discovered that the company will not deliver to letterboxes bearing "No Junk Mail" or similar signs. From my personal experience of having letterboxed my suburb for John Minto's 2016 Christchurch Mayoral campaign, lots and lots of letterboxes bear such signs.

We did a small sample survey of Blenheim people we know and/or met when we were in town, and found a split between those who had and had not received our leaflet in their letterbox. Nonetheless we considered it worthwhile to have got our message delivered directly to at least some of Blenheim's people (a few of whom came to our Blenheim screening of "The 5th Eye" documentary, as a result of having got the leaflet. You can read the leaflet online at the ABC Website at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pdf/blenheim-leaflet.pdf>).

Action At The Base

Finally, I can report on actual activities. Our press release spelled out why we were there: "2016 saw the Government change the law to remove previous restrictions on domestic spying by the NZ Govern-

ment Communications Security Bureau (GCSB, which operates Waihopai). Not only does the GCSB systematically spy on New Zealanders – but it also routinely spies on any number of other countries, on behalf of the US National Security Agency (NSA). And the NSA spies on everyone. It is essential that more pressure is put on the Government to end the anti-democratic and destructive activities of this NZ spy agency”.

“For nearly 30 years Waihopai has been NZ’s most significant contribution to Washington’s global effort to manipulate world business and diplomacy. Waihopai does not operate in the national interest of New Zealand. In all but name it is a foreign spy base on NZ soil, paid for with hundreds of millions of our tax dollars; it spies on Kiwis and foreigners; it is NZ’s key contribution to America’s global spying & war machine. Waihopai must be closed” (ABC press release, 17/1/17, “Waihopai & The GCSB Spy On Kiwis & Foreigners: NSA Spies On Everyone”).

Our actual protest at the spy base was low key but was still one of the best attended in years. Another change was that we held it in the morning, to start the day’s activities (normally we have done something else in the morning and gone to the base in the afternoon). There was a strong contingent of North Island Catholic Worker members present (including Adi Leason, the most high-profile of the Domebusters).

They were responsible for another innovation – one of their members, Ron Finlay, kicked off proceedings with a speech in both Maori and English. And another first was the extensive number of international solidarity messages read out at the base gate by our Sydney participant, Felicity Ruby (those messages follow this article). It was really heartening to receive messages from the likes of Julian Assange. Felicity loved her first Waihopai protest and wrote a glowing account of it for the Australian movement.

As with 2016, the media presence was disappointing – once again, the only journalist present was Jennifer Eder from the *Marlborough Express*. But her article and accompanying

photos not only went into the *Express* but also went online at the Stuff Website and to several other hard copy Fairfax papers around the country. Her report is worth reproducing (“New Zealand Spy Base Works For Donald Trump Now, Protesters Say”, 29/1/17):

“Protesters are calling for the closure of Marlborough’s Waihopai spy base for a new reason this year – they don’t want United States President Donald Trump getting any information out of New Zealand. The annual protest outside Waihopai Station, west of Blenheim, focused on the new American President, with protesters concerned about what Trump might do with information the base collected”.

“Anti Bases Campaign organiser Murray Horton said whistle-blower Edward Snowden had proved the spy base collected phone and Internet data from New Zealand and South Pacific countries for the US National Security Agency. ‘Donald J Trump becoming President is an opportune time to question why, question the whole future of the United States-New Zealand relationship. These guys work for Trump now’, Horton said, gesturing toward the domes. ‘We pay their wages, the spooks and geeks that work here . . . but, for all intents and purposes, this is an outpost of American intelligence operating on New Zealand soil”.

“Outgoing Green MP Steffan Browning, who was at Saturday’s protest, said the Green Party would continue to oppose the spy base. He said the Labour Party should follow suit. ‘I’m very concerned we don’t have the Labour Party here. We’ve got good cooperation with them now . . . so will they, in an alternative Government to what we’ve got now, join with the Greens in closing this down?’ he asked”.

“Hawke’s Bay peace pilgrim, Liz Remmerswaal, who protested at Australia’s Pine Gap spy base in September (2016), said the \$178.7 million to be spent on New Zealand intelligence in the next four years was a waste of money. ‘I think we could solve the world’s problems if we just stopped investing in the military. We could be spending that on education and healthcare.

Having these alliances with the US makes us less secure, not more secure. It makes US enemies our enemies, too” (*Liz Remmerswaal’s first hand report on that Pine Gap protest is in PR 52, November 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHOW5iQWdHdHhacZQ/view. Ed.*).

“Blenheim man Stephen Webb said he had never heard of the annual spy base protest until the Our Children’s Future Hikoi passed through Blenheim on its way to Parliament last year (2016). ‘Since then I’ve learnt a bit about the issues and what had been confirmed by Snowden, and I decided to come. It’s important we make our voice heard and raise some awareness”.

“Government Communications Security Bureau Director, Andrew Hampton, said sometimes it was in the public interest to share information with the other countries in the Five Eyes partnership, which included the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. ‘For example, we may obtain information about a cyber security threat or potential for terrorist activity. Any information sharing is done in accordance with New Zealand law and our international human rights obligations’. New Zealand also benefited from information received from Five Eyes partners, he said”.

“However, he would not provide examples of when shared information was used to protect New Zealanders. ‘In terms of the GCSB’s role in helping to control specific threats, it is a long-standing practice that we do not comment on matters that may or may not be operational’. He also declined to comment on whether continuing to share information with the United States should be seen as an endorsement of Trump as President”.

“Senior Sergeant Grant Andrews, of Tasman Police, said there were no issues with the protest. ‘It was very peaceful, and they all headed back into Blenheim without any problems’. Former Green MP Keith Locke said instead of marching through the streets of Blenheim, or jumping the fence to confront the police officers guarding the domes,

the focus of this year's protest was on education. A series of free workshops was hosted on Saturday by Locke, investigative journalist Nicky Hager and Dunedin academic Kyle Matthews, before a screening of the documentary 'The 5th Eye' was held".

"Protesters received messages of support from several international organisations and WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange. 'Most people do not want to approve of a dark network of spy agencies engaged in mass surveillance, assassination and war that does not respect democratic oversight and which can result in unpredictable conflicts with other nations', Assange said. 'New Zealand's protesters can be proud'".

Workshops

The rest of the day was taken up with the main business, which was a series of extremely informative workshops run by high profile speakers. This was started by ABC's Warren Thomson and former Green MP Keith Locke (who is a veteran of many, many Waihopai protests) speaking about Five Eyes, the GCSB and Waihopai, setting the scene for the rest of the day. Keith's talk, "Answers To Some Common Myths About New Zealand Intelligence Services, The Five Eyes And The Waihopai Spy Station" was particularly informative, and is reproduced in full, following this article.

Then came Nicky Hager, talking about research skills, accompanied by a Powerpoint (the first time I've seen Nicky use a visual aid during one of his speeches). Sadly, his

speech consisted of handwritten informal notes, with most of it off the cuff, so we don't have a written version for publication (we asked him). Nicky's national, and international, fame as a peerless investigative journalist started with his 1996 book "Secret Power: New Zealand's Role In The International Spy Network" (*which I reviewed in Peace Researcher 10, September 1996, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/33726186/Peace-Researcher-Vol2-Issue10-Sept-1996>*), which fully exposed Waihopai.

So, Nicky gave us plenty of details about how he painstakingly researched that, ranging from trawling through official documents to getting into the base and photographing and filming into rooms full of computers (he showed us some of those photos). Some of it sounded like it belonged in a spy movie (albeit a decidedly unglamorous one) – he told of meeting some of the spies themselves (including one he met in a Marlborough rubbish dump. The spook drew him a detailed plan of the interior of the base).

The final workshop featured Kyle Matthews, a Dunedin academic, on the history of non-violent direct action as a tactic, including during the nearly 30 years of the Waihopai campaign (Kyle himself, as a student, was a Waihopai activist in the 1990s). He was joined by Liz Remmerswaal, who spoke about her experience of the 2016 protest at the very nasty US warfighting and spy base at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs, in Australia. She accompanied her talk with a fascinating Powerpoint of photos from that big

protest.

The other speaker at that workshop was Adi Leason, from the 2008 Waihopai Domebusters. Activists present from other campaigns were also invited to speak, so we heard from the likes of veteran activist, John Minto, and Gen de Spa, from It's Our Future which led the successful campaign against the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA; as in 2016, there was a contingent of Christchurch It's Our Future people who joined us). We finished the workshops with the Blenheim premiere (and likely only ever screening) of "The 5th Eye" by Errol Wright and Abi King-Jones (*reviewed by Jeremy Agar in PR 52, November 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHOW5iQWdHdHhaczQ/view. Details of "The 5th Eye" can be found at www.cutcutcut.com*).

The whole day of workshops was held in a Blenheim church hall (the film was projected onto a wall, using an external hard drive, laptop, data projector and stereo speakers). Special thanks to ABC Committee member, Lynda Boyd, who was in charge of all technology on the day, and handled that very complex and stressful task brilliantly (as well as being one of the drivers of our rental van and trailer for the long, nerve-racking trip to and from Marlborough).

And three cheers for ABC's Catering Corps, Pam Hughes and Ron Currie, who performed the herculean task of feeding everybody at the hall (we counted anywhere up to 90 people in attendance there), plus everybody who camped the week-



Some Blenheim workshop speakers: Liz Remmerswaal (left); Keith Locke (front, centre); Nicky Hager (back, right). ABC Committee members (front, from left): Murray Horton, Robyn Dann, Dot Lovell-Smith, Lynda Boyd .

end with us out at Onamalutu. Pam and Ron provide not just food, but gourmet food, which was another highlight of the whole extremely successful and enjoyable weekend. They've done it several times now and they just keep getting better.

30 Year Long Campaign Continues

The broader campaign doesn't hibernate between Waihopai protests. When he spoke at the Blenheim workshops, Adi Leason announced that the Catholic Worker group was going to hold activities in Wellington to focus attention on the links between murderous US drone strikes in faraway countries and the GCSB and Waihopai.

This they duly did with Drone Assassination Awareness Week (<http://takeourbloodinstead.com/>), culminating in a spectacular action by around 40 people at GCSB HQ in Wellington who poured their own blood onto the doorstep ("Blood Offering' Outside GCSB In Wellington As Group Protests Drone Strikes", Stuff, 3/3/17, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/90023103/blood-offering-as-group-protests-at-gcsb-over-drone-strikes>).

2017 marks 30 years since the then Labour government was forced to make public the plan to build the Waihopai spy base; this led to the creation of ABC and 2018 marks 30 years since our first Waihopai protest. So, this campaign is definitely a marathon, not a sprint. But we'll keep going and urge others to join us (as they have done, in ever encouraging numbers, over the years). This affects all New Zealanders, because it's being done in our name and with our money. With every passing year, the scandals involving Five Eyes, the GCSB and Waihopai become bigger and worse. Time to say: "Enough is enough! Close Waihopai now!". ■

WAIHOPAI SPY BASE PROTEST 2017

International Solidarity Messages

Julian Assange (UK): New Zealand's protesters can be proud of their astounding contribution to exposing mass surveillance. These confrontations led to Nicky Hager's book "Secret Power" in 1996, which opened the first big window on how the NSA's global spy system worked. Later in the United Kingdom, such protests at Waihopai's equivalent, Menwith Hill, led to its inner workings being revealed. There is no security reason why most of the functions of these bases cannot be revealed.

Secrecy is applied because there is a perception that the population and the courts would stop many of its activities, were they known. Most peoples do not want to approve of a dark network of spy agencies engaged in mass surveillance, assassination and war that does not respect democratic oversight and which can result in unpredictable conflicts with other nations. So, continue on, using protests to draw attention and prosecutions that can reveal internal workings and encourage dissenters to step forward.

Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (UK): I send you a message of support. We fully understand the concern about bases that conduct wholesale surveillance, facilitate military activity and warfare around the globe and have NO local accountability. Asking the local population to pay for it is adding insult to injury. Small numbers of us bear witness to our concerns outside the NSA Menwith Hill Base each Tuesday evening. May your protest prove fruitful. Martin Schweiger

Australian Anti-Bases Campaign: We wish you all the best for the demonstrations on January 28th. We admire your persistence in this campaign which has so many twists and turns that could cause you to lose heart. You keep going because it is important that we reite-



Julian Assange

rate endlessly that the solution to the world's problems is not violence or the preparation for violence but in cooperating with people of all nations. These sentiments seem wishy washy but in a Trump world where might is right and as one local cartoonist wrote "Trump will make stuff up (not make the US great)".

However, it is even more important that we gather ourselves to push against the prevailing rise of militarism and to beat it back. We did it when Reagan was around and against the two Bushes we know we can do it. New Zealand showed us the way with its anti-nuclear stance and now it is again showing us on January 28. You give heart to the anti-bases activists in Australia and around the world. On Jan 28 strike a blow for peace! We look forward to seeing the reports and see the impact. Denis Doherty

Peace Pilgrims Australia: Hello sisters and brothers in Aotearoa. We acknowledge the Maori people as custodians of your beautiful Land and acknowledge the strength and care they provide. We say kia ora to you all this day. We send a message of love, courage and commitment for your actions in the Shadow of the Waihopai spy base. We know that the evil spying and war making facilitated there, has no place in the exquisite valleys of southern Aotearoa. We stand

with you and promise to pass your social media messaging far and wide as you challenge the client state relationship between New Zealand with the US. We will tell your stories. Thank you for your actions. May there be #nomoreUS-wars.

Greens New South Wales Senator Lee Rhiannon: Your annual call for the closure of the Waihopai spy base is one of the world's inspiring protests. Your 20* years of creative actions highlights how New Zealand/Aotearoa contributes to US global spying, invasions of other nations and ongoing wars. The Waihopai base along with the US spy base in Australia, Pine Gap, and similar bases must close. The collection of private information is anti-democratic and cannot be justified. All strength to your 2017 protest and may there be many more until the people of New Zealand/Aotearoa force the closure of this spy base. **Nearly 30 years, actually. Ed.*

ICAN Australia Board: Kia ora! The Board of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia sends our solidarity to the people gathered for the meeting of the Waihopai Spy Base Protest. We wish the participants gathered in Blenheim well as they consider the implications of the ongoing Five Eyes Agreements, which we understand as being irrevocably linked to our own work to eliminate nuclear weapons across the globe. Standing together with people across our region, ICAN Australia has worked over the past ten years to raise awareness of the impacts of nuclear weapons on health, environment and human security through focussing on advocating for a ban on nuclear weapons.

This year (2017), the United Nations will begin negotiations on such a ban, starting in March and continuing in June. We remain hopeful that such a ban will serve to delegitimise nuclear weapons in the world and lead to the elimination of these ultimate weapons of mass destruction and the structures of control that support such inhumane power. We wish you well in your deliberations together and send our regards to all our friends and

colleagues in the protests.

Rebecca Johnson (UK): Solidarity from these spying islands over here to your Waihopai spy base protest over there! Together with friends from Acronym, ICAN, CND, Greens and Nukewatch, I'm beaming (in my own way) our support, strength and courage for your actions for peace and privacy. We're with you in spirit. As resisters to GCHQ, Croughton, Menwith, Waddington and all the other spies and abusers of power in our islands, thank you for your challenging work. Together we must take back our privacy Rights, Justice and Freedom.

IPAN: Dear concerned citizens of Aotearoa, gathered to protest the existence of Waihopai spy base. We, from the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network, support your expose of Waihopai's role as part of the Five Eyes spy ring. The base most directly related to it in Australia is Kojarena, on the west coast, 500 kms. north of Perth. Then of course, there's the BIG ONE – Pine Gap, which some of your stalwarts have visited with us in the past. We duly commemorated its fiftieth anniversary last year (2016), and had some very well attended meetings in Alice Springs to highlight its awfulness, particularly the enhancement which it gives to the US drones/killing machines.

So, we send our supportive greetings for your gathering, mindful of the worsening global situation, and the fact that these American spy bases in our neighbouring countries, do a great deal of harm in assisting the United States' government war-making. We commend Aotearoa citizens for having persuaded successive governments of your country to break free from the debilitating ANZUS alliance, and wish that our Government had the courage to do the same. The emerging global political situation may even cause some change to occur. With best wishes for successful meetings and protests. Towards justice and peace.

People For Nuclear Disarmament Western Australia: Best wishes to all Aotearoan friends from People for Nuclear Disarmament,

WA. Keep going!! With respect to Owen Wilkes, from many years back, and ongoing to Murray and Nicky Hager, and all others who continue the struggle to get the truth out there! Eventually, we will prevail – there is still some sanity in the universe, untapped by us mere humans..... Looking forward to some unexpected pleasant surprises in this year, despite all indications to the contrary. As our old friend, Leonard Cohen, said/wrote/sang: "There's a crack in everything – that's how the light gets in". Towards justice and peace. Jo Vallentine.

The Disarmy: The Disarmy is a group of peace activists from many walks of life in Australia. We come together to interrupt and shine a light on the global military industrial complex and its trade in death and destruction. Thanks, and solidarity to all First Nations peoples, whistle-blowers, activists, hacktivists, journalists, human rights lawyers and academics who are working to expose and oppose the Waihopai spy base. Disarmy are with you in solidarity always. We recently participated in an action on Arrente land near Alice Springs to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Pine Gap agreement.

Members of Disarmy shut down Raytheon HQ for a whole day in Alice Springs. Together with activists from all over Australia, and a few from Aotearoa, we gathered to share information, build movements, raise awareness and look back at the Five Eyes, letting them know we see what they are doing. We know more details thanks to the brave work of whistle-blowers Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden, and journalists and publishers like Julian Assange, Laura Poitras, and Glenn Greenwald and your own Nicky Hager, but we've always known enough to know that their wars, surveillance and domination must be resisted. Be brave. Be strong.

MAPW: The National Council of the Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) wishes to send a message of solidarity to those gathered to protest at the Waihopai spy base. This base, like spy bases we have in Australia, is part of the Five Eyes Agreement. This agree-

ment provides intelligence used for drone attacks, for targeting nuclear weapon strikes and for other intelligence gathering. MAPW is opposed to the use of drone strikes, given they are out-of-sight, out-of-mind remote-control warfare being prosecuted by our chief military ally without any clear public debate in the US, in Australia or in New Zealand on legality or consequences.

Drone attacks are occurring in countries such as Yemen and Pakistan with whom we are not at war. US non-government research has found they are nowhere near as discriminating towards non-combatants as has been claimed, with hundreds of civilians killed. With regard to nuclear weapons, 2017 marks the year that negotiations will be held in New York to draft a treaty banning these weapons. We hope this development will lead to the stigmatisation and eventual elimination of these weapons, and that spy bases such as Waihopai will no longer be used for targeting these appalling weapons. MAPW wishes all participants well for this significant gathering.

WILPF: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) sends solidarity and support to the activists gathering in New Zealand/Aotearoa to protest at the Waihopai electronic intelligence-gathering base. A critical node in the Five Eyes surveillance network, we appreciate your efforts in challenging its continued role in spying on citizens around the world and contributing to the US government's manipulations of business and diplomatic affairs and its wars and military interventions abroad. At this time when human rights, peace, and justice are under threat by certain corporate and government interests, those that are committed to peace and justice must work to shut down the bases that contribute to these networks of inequality, injustice, and violence as part of our pursuit for peace. ■

ANSWERS TO SOME COMMON MYTHS

NZ Intelligence Services, Five Eyes & The Waihopai Spy Base

- Keith Locke

Presented as introductory comments at a workshop hosted by the Anti-Bases Campaign, Blenheim, 28/1/17, and updated in May 2017 to reflect changes in the Intelligence and Security Bill after it passed through the Select Committee stage.

Were the SIS and GSB set up to detect terrorists?

The Security Intelligence Service (SIS), and the Police Special Branch before it, was set up to spy on and detect spying from adversary governments: Germany during World War II and the Soviet Union and China during the Cold War. Its other function was to spy on Left critics of Government policy – which is why so many activists in the progressive movement have been found to have SIS files.

Has the purpose of the SIS and GCSB now changed so that their main job is now to spy on terrorists and politically motivated criminality?

No. The Snowden papers show that the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) is still mainly engaged in spying on foreign governments, either by itself (as in some of its spying on Pacific government communications) or together with its Five Eyes partners on other governments further afield, particularly in Asia, and particularly China.

But surely the SIS and GCSB need to have some focus on politically motivated criminality? The Police aren't adequate for the job.

Why not? It is the Police who caught the (French) *Rainbow Warrior* bombers, and (Israeli) Mossad agents stealing NZ passports.

But the Police can't operate with

the same level of secrecy?

Why not? The Police operate secretly chasing criminal gangs. And they are a more publicly accountable agency than the SIS or GCSB – even though there is room for improvement in the accountability of the Police.

Whatever. But isn't it useful that the SIS has 30 or so people on a potential terrorist watch list?

If they detected a real plot that would be of some use. However, the intense SIS and GCSB surveillance of the Islamic community here has more of a downside than an upside, in the context of a law-abiding Muslim community and no terrorist incidents so far. SIS agents running around in the Muslim community tend to anger Muslims and make their cooperation with the authorities more difficult.

The Muslim community thinks the intelligence agencies are overplaying the terrorist threat. And I think so too. There is a vested interest in intelligence agencies overplaying the threat, to justify the huge increase in budget and personnel they have been given. All in the context of zero terrorist incidents.

You may be right. But being part of a larger Five Eyes network (with the US, Canada, UK and Australia) enables us to help fight international terrorism.

Actually, through electronic intelligence we pass on from Waihopai, we are contributing to the ability of the United States itself to carry out acts of terrorism, with drone bombings in Pakistan, the Yemen, Somalia, etc. Such American military action is also counter-productive, provoking more terrorist responses.

Right now, do we really want to be feeding masses of information from



Mike Moreu, 25/4/17.

Waihopai and the GCSB to Donald Trump's National Security Agency (NSA) when we know it will help Trump's Administration target and kill those whom he perceives to be his enemies, and which will help him implement his prejudicial and racist border control policies?

But surely, through being part of Five Eyes we get some useful intelligence?

Maybe. But how do we know? Can you think of any NZ government decision that may have been improved because of information from Five Eyes?

But surely the balance sheet, with the extra information from Five Eyes, would be positive for New Zealand?

The evidence is just the opposite. Since the Snowden papers Government figures in China, Brazil, Tonga and the Solomons have complained about GCSB spying on them. It taints our relations with such countries.

But surely all countries do such spying?

No, they don't. No electronic intelligence network in the world matches the Five Eyes. And no Pacific Island nation conducts electronic spying on us.

But what about China? Isn't it a big spying nation?

Is it really in New Zealand's national interest to get in a spying contest with a big nation like China, our biggest trading partner? And really, how many secrets does New Zealand itself have? We are an open society. Even details of our defence assets are generally available.

What about cybersecurity, which is vital in today's world? Isn't the GCSB essential here?

Yes, cybersecurity is important, in fact too important to be in the hands of the GCSB. The GCSB has a vested interest in creating back doors into New Zealand computer systems, thus weakening their security for any hackers. Cybersecurity should be done by an independent agency, dedicated to cybersecurity and nothing else.

Another danger is that because the GCSB is linked with the NSA through Five Eyes it will be caught up in NSA's use of an offensive cyber capability, that is cyberwarfare. Cyber-warfare is the last and worst type of activity that a small country like NZ should want to get into in today's world.

The intelligence services may not contribute much, but they probably do a bit to protect our freedom?

It's more the opposite. Historically, their political spying has been on Leftwing critics of the Government and, through the official vetting the

SIS does, it has prevented many civil servants from getting jobs or promotions because of their political views or activities. This vetting continues today. Any necessary vetting for previous criminality, that is non-political vetting, should be done by the Police, who possess the convictions database.

But wouldn't the SIS be breaking the law by politically discriminating against New Zealanders in the way you've described?

The law has been written with such a broad definition of "national security" that, in the eyes of the Government and the intelligence agencies, it can include any New Zealand critics deemed to be involved in threats to "international security that have the potential to impact adversely on New Zealand's interests" or threats to "the operations of the Government of New Zealand". These definitions could catch people critical of our Government's foreign policy, or protesters engaged in non-violent civil disobedience, like trying to block deep sea oil drilling. Additionally, if a New Zealander is working with a "foreign person" or a "foreign organisation" like Greenpeace s/he could be spied on for threatening "the international relations and well-being of New Zealand or the economic well-being of New Zealand".

Couldn't we challenge such spying on us, or the use of the information gained to discriminate against us?

Generally, you never find out you've been spied upon, or even if there is an SIS or GCSB file on you. And even if people find out that there has been a negative job vet on them, they generally give up pursuing the job, rather than challenging the vet. Algerian refugee Ahmed Zaoui spent years trying to find what the SIS had on him, stopping him from getting asylum in New Zealand.

At least we have been reassured that the GCSB is not doing mass surveillance of New Zealanders.

But surely that is what Waihopai has historically done, collecting bulk communications data from satellites. This type of collection inevitably

sweeps up communications to and from New Zealanders. Also, the raw data the GCSB collects, including NZ communications, is shared with its Five Eyes partners. It is also spying on New Zealanders, as we found in the Tony Fullman case, where a New Zealand critic of the Fijian government was spied upon by the NSA and his Auckland home raided (this NSA spying operation on Fullman was exposed in the Snowden papers).

But surely the GCSB's mass collection at Waihopai would be in violation of the system granting warrants to spy on specific targets, not everyone?

The GCSB gets around this by using what are called Director's authorisations, which are legally valid because the electronic interceptions via Waihopai take place in space, rather than involving a direct physical connection to a computer system. So, a physical phone tap on one person requires a warrant, yet Waihopai intercepting millions of phone calls, texts or emails in space, doesn't need a warrant. That is the present legislated system.

Also, when analysing the Waihopai data, the GCSB can be using very broadly defined warrants – for a “class of persons” (like anti-TPPA protesters). Or the GCSB can accidentally on purpose stumble over a piece of intelligence as it does its computer searches, and call it “incidentally obtained intelligence”, which then makes the collection legal in terms of the proposed legislation.

But don't we have a backstop, keeping the Government honest, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security?

It's better than nothing. But the Inspector-General is required to operate within the framework of the present system and the legal powers given to the intelligence agencies. There is a limit to how much the Inspector-General can constrain the inherent pro-Government political bias in the system, and the way it intrudes on our privacy. ■

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Weapons Expo 2017

- Valerie Morse

What Is The Weapons Expo?

The Weapons Expo is an annual meeting of the NZ Defence Industry Association (NZDIA), an industry lobby group that works to promote a home-grown weapons trade and war industry. The companies involved (<http://www.nzdia.co.nz/members/>) in the NZDIA include major weapons manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Thales, Serco, Cubic Defence, Sagem, Babcock and General Dynamics. The association also includes much smaller companies that supply weapons componentry or goods and services to the Defence Force.

Member companies such as Bid-Vest, Datacom and Fulton Hogan are not weapons dealers per se, but rather provide material support to the military through the provision of non-military material and services. Universities and other State sector agencies are also involved in growing the local war industry. These include the University of Canterbury Spatial Engineering Research Unit, the University of Auckland's Uniser-vices, and Callaghan Innovation (funding research & development).

The main driving force behind the development and growth of this industry association is the closer mili-

tary relations with the United States and Australia over the past 15 years, and the push for “interoperability” of militaries with each other. In 2016, the National government released its Defence White Paper (<http://defence.govt.nz/publications/publication/defence-white-paper-2016>) that outlined \$20 billion of new weapons spending including replacing the existing Navy frigates and acquiring offensive cyberweapons. Thus far, all Opposition parties have supported this expenditure.

The Weapons Expo is a two-day conference with a clear commercial sales focus. In 2016, the NZDIA indicated that the speakers and panels would be more fully integrated into the display area of the conference. The main sponsor of the expo is Lockheed Martin (<http://www.lockheedmartin.com/us/what-we-do/aerospace-defense/missiles.html>), the world's largest arms dealer & a maker of nuclear weapons.

Resistance! Blockade The Arms Trade

In Auckland in November 2016, Auckland Peace Action (<https://aucklandpeaceaction.wordpress.com/>) and allies successfully blockaded the Weapons Expo for a full day on the first day of the conference. Over



Weapons Conference blockade, Auckland, November 2016.

350 delegates were kept out of the Expo. On the second day, activists disrupted the awards dinner with a wall of noise intended to jangle the nerves of the weapons dealers inside.

Against the backdrop of this hugely successful campaign, details about the location and dates of the 2017 Weapons Expo remain somewhat opaque. The Expo will take place either in October or November this year, but no announcement has been made about exactly when or where. The NZ Defence Industry has in past been very proud of their work so it is likely that they will want to make the forum public.

Campaign organising is already underway. Peace Action Wellington (<https://peaceactionwellington.wordpress.com/>) will be leading the organising of actions against the conference and have already begun a build up by targeting particular venues that may have been approached as possible locations for the conference. In the same vein, a callout to whistleblowers (<https://aucklandpeaceaction.wordpress.com/whistleblowers-needed/>) has gone out asking people for information about the weapons expo or about companies involved in war industries.

Get Involved

There is a big need for peace organising work in 2017, and the campaign against the Weapons Expo is relevant for people across the country. Most of the companies involved in the NZDIA are located across the country providing ample targets for activists. Auckland Peace Action and Peace Action Wellington can provide you support to get a group going in your local area.

Just as important is coming to the action and getting in the way of war profiteers. At the moment, we have no other option but direct action to stop the arms trade in Aotearoa. Political parties are not going to do that work for us. We are the ones who have to stand up and get in the way. Please make a plan to join in the non-violent direct action resisting the arms trade this year. ■

SPOOKY BITS

- Warren Thomson

Military Personnel Escape Full Punishment

Nearly two dozen NZ military personnel have faced charges of indecent assault and rape over the past two decades. The majority of them were eventually found guilty, but few were imprisoned and none ended up with civilian criminal records. Since 1991, according to documents on the *Stuff* website (26/2/17) there have been 144 court martials held in New Zealand. Information released under the Official Information Act showed that of those, 22 had charges that could be transferred to a civilian court. These included indecent assault, common assault and unlawful sexual connection, among a variety of other charges.

Corporal Corey Kennett was sent to a military prison for six months after being convicted of indecent assault, but managed to work at several companies, including a law firm, without anybody picking up on his criminal history. *Stuff* reports that punishments and findings varied, with one indecent assault charge in 1996 finding the offender not guilty because they were deemed to be "sleep-walking" at the time of the incident.

Many sentences were also quashed on appeal. Reduction in rank appeared to be the most common punishment. This punishment, however, doesn't come up on Police records. It would be interesting to know if these ghost convictions came up in Security Intelligence Service (SIS) vettings for sensitive positions.

GCSB Spying On Japan

Local spooks' targeting of Japan has long been revealed, but recently further evidence came to light when the *Intercept* website published National Security Agency (NSA) documents obtained from

Edward Snowden (*NZ Herald*, 26/4/17). The documents outline how the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) collected information on Japan's lobbying for whaling, and shared it with an NSA agent prior to an International Whaling Commission meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in 2007.

"New Zealand had the target access, and collected and provided insightful SIGINT (signals intelligence) that laid out the lobbying efforts of the Japanese and the response of countries whose votes were so coveted. US officials were anxious to receive the latest information," the NSA document states. An NSA operative would take a 30-minute taxi ride to the Agency's local operation centre, where hard copies of the GCSB intelligence would be collected. US, Australian and New Zealand officials then viewed the intelligence in a conference room.

Trump Advocates Torture

Donald Trump, and many members of his inner circle (including his appointed Ambassador to this country) believe torture "works" and that brutality like waterboarding is a necessary part of "anti-terrorist" operations. This is in spite of a US Senate report which found that torture supplied no useful information. According to the *Guardian* (26/1/17) the support of torture by the White House presents the UK intelligence services with a major dilemma.

The Government Communications Head Quarters (GCHQ) works so closely with its US counterpart, the National Security Agency, that the two are almost indistinguishable. Much of the intelligence collected by GCHQ, MI6, and MI5 comes from the US. Any processing of intelligence obtained through torture would put them again in breach of international law, let alone bring unwelcome attention on moral and

ethical grounds (MI6 has already been found guilty of involvement in rendition and torture cases).

The *Guardian* article quoted a former British diplomat who worked closely with UK intelligence in a number of conflict hotspots in the Middle East and Central Asia. He said the agencies would be torn between a moral and legal obligation not to be involved with torture and their heavy dependence on the US. But the Western spooks at present often rely on information from countries where torture is routine.

And one of the reasons that NZ should not be part of the Five Eyes system is that we are sucked into this archaic savagery by being part of the system. Not only is this morally repulsive, it also opens us up to the kind of potential terrorist reprisal our spooks are supposed to be saving us from. In 2009 our GCSB received an accolade from the NSA for supplying information on Bangladeshi suspects who were then tortured by the Bangladeshi State agencies.

New CIA Deputy Supports Torture

Trump has named a woman to be appointed Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. She is a long-time officer of the Agency and the first woman to become the second in charge. Gina Haspel is anonymously reported by Congressional officials to have been the boss of a secret CIA operation in Thailand where suspected members of al Qaeda were waterboarded.

Haspel was not only a participant in the torture operation but also carried out an order to destroy videotapes of the waterboarding at a time when the Senate intelligence oversight committee was carrying out an investigation into use of torture by the CIA (*Press*, 4/2/17). In previous issues of *PR* we have also reported that the CIA illegally spied on the Senate committee's investigation).

US War Crimes

Prosecutors at the International



Mike Moreu, 9/11/16.

Criminal Court in The Hague say there are grounds to believe that United States' personnel committed war crimes in Afghanistan and at secret facilities in other places during 2003 and 2004. In a report issued on 15 November, 2016, prosecutors declared there was a "reasonable basis" to believe that US forces had tortured prisoners in Afghanistan and at CIA detention centres in Poland, Lithuania and Romania (*Press*, 16/11/16).

Trump Versus The US Spooks

Trump was ridiculed when he tweeted that Obama had ordered his communications to be "wire-tapped". But while the erratic President is almost certainly wrong about Obama's part in the proceedings, it is not unlikely that Trump's communications were intercepted. After all, remember that the NSA prides itself on collecting everything, and Washington's spooks were certainly intercepting communications between some of Trump's associates and Russian officials.

Whistleblower William Binney, who worked in the NSA for many years before resigning in protest over its post-2001 activities, said Trump is "absolutely right" to claim he was wiretapped and monitored. "I think the President is absolutely right. His phone calls, everything he did elec-

tronically, was being monitored," according to Binney.

Everyone's conversations are being monitored and stored. Binney also said that the Administration risks falling victim to further leaks if it continues to run afoul of the intelligence community (*US News*, 7/3/17). Binney, who is widely recognised for his critiques of Five Eyes, has also claimed that the spying on the Democratic Party's electoral campaign (the hack into the Democrat Party National Committee's server) was not done by Russia but by a disgruntled US intelligence worker.

US Spooks Allege Russian Interference In US Election

A report from the CIA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and NSA, released at the beginning of January 2017, alleged Moscow was responsible for cyberattacks directed at the Democrats' National Committee (DNC). According to the report: "Russian efforts to influence the 2016 US Presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrated a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations" (*Huffington*

Post, 6/1/17).

The Washington spooks say that Russian President, Vladimir Putin, directed efforts to interfere in the 2016 US election with the goal of helping Donald Trump win. The authors of the report argued that Russian spies gained access to DNC networks in July 2015 and maintained access until at least June 2016.

In April 2017 three different official US committees were investigating the links between Russian activities and Trump's campaign. It remains to be seen why Moscow supported Trump, or alternatively, whether the agencies have their own reasons for wanting a spy war with Russia. However, what is clear is that the issue has not improved relations between the White House and the spooks.

Journalists On Kill List Sue Trump

Two journalists are suing President Trump and other top US officials, claiming that they are on the Government's "kill list" of individuals targeted for drone strikes, according to the website Thehill.com (31/3/17; original report from *Politico*). The journalists, former Al Jazeera Islamabad bureau chief, Ahmad Zaidan, and freelance journalist, Bilal Kareem, say in the lawsuit (<http://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000015b-2107-d4bd-a5df-bbd7ec5b0001>) that they were placed on the "kill list" by the Obama Administration, a decision maintained by the Trump White House.

Kareem claims he has nearly died in five separate airstrikes over the years, while Zaidan, who has reported extensively on al Qaeda and interviewed the terrorist group's now deceased leader, Osama bin Laden, multiple times, says he is on the "kill list" because he was improperly designated as a member of the group, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood.

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and lists Trump, Defense Secretary James Mattis, CIA

Director Mike Pompeo and Attorney-General Jeff Sessions, (<http://thehill.com/policy/jeff-sessions>) among the defendants, as well as several other high-ranking officials.

Both Zaidan, a Pakistani and Syrian citizen, and Kareem, a US citizen, deny having any affiliation with terrorist groups and say that their designations on the "kill list" are the results of "algorithms" used to identify terrorists. But those algorithms are flawed, they argue, and the designations are based on their travel, social media content and communications related to their professions.

Increasing Drone Strikes

The US drastically expanded its use of unmanned aerial drones under the Obama Administration, but human rights advocates and lawyers argue that the deadly strikes violate due process rights. Shortly after taking office in January 2017, Trump gave the CIA authority to launch drone strikes. Previously, the CIA could use drones to locate suspected terrorists, but the strikes themselves had to be carried out by the military, which is required to report most airstrikes. The move is a change from Obama's policy of limiting the CIA's paramilitary role. Trump has given the Central Intelligence Agency new authority to conduct drone attacks against suspected militants, and the results can be kept secret.

Strikes by missile-armed Predator and Reaper drones against overseas targets began under former President George W. Bush and were expanded by Obama. An article in the *Huffington Post* (14 /3/17) points out that critics of the targeted killing programme question whether the strikes create more militants than they kill. They cite the spread of jihadist organisations and militant attacks throughout the world as evidence that targeted killings may be exacerbating the problem. In July 2016, the US government accepted responsibility for inadvertently killing up to 116 civilians in strikes in countries where America is not at war.

Trump's First Military Adventure A Shambles

The father of a Navy Seal killed in a raid in Yemen in January 2017 has demanded an investigation into the planning and timing of what he called a "stupid mission". Bill Owen's son was a US fatality in the January 29th raid on a suspected al-Qaeda base in Yemen. Three US other personnel were injured and the Pentagon claimed 14 militants were killed. One US aircraft was destroyed after being damaged on landing. US military officials say Trump approved the "counter-terrorism" operation without sufficient intelligence or ground support. US military sources told the *New York Times* "everything went wrong" in the raid, which turned into an hour-long firefight.

According to accounts given by villagers to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 25 civilians died, including women and nine children under the age of 13. The toll prompted requests from Yemen for the US to rethink its counter-terrorism strategy. Among the casualties was an eight-year-old girl, the daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, a US citizen and al-Qaeda propagandist who was killed in a drone strike in Yemen in 2011.

Trump approved the operation, which was conceived under the Obama Administration, over dinner with advisers including his son-in-law, Jared Kushner; special adviser and former Breitbart executive, Steve Bannon; the then National Security Adviser Mike Flynn; CIA Director Mike Pompeo; and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. The White House has consistently portrayed the raid as a success. On 8 February, White House spokesperson Sean Spicer told reporters the raid was "absolutely a success, and I think anyone who would suggest it's not a success does disservice to the life of Chief (Petty Officer) Ryan Owens (based on an article in the *Independent*, 26/2/17).

Snowden Blasts Obama

Edward Snowden has blasted Obama for creating "unprecedented sur-

veillance power” in a new provision to an existing Executive Order, signed just before he left office. “As he hands the White House to Trump, Obama just unchained NSA from basic limits on passing raw intercepts to others,” Snowden tweeted (*New York Times*, 12/1/17). The NSA can now share private data it collects on citizens amongst all 16 agencies within the United States intelligence community.

Obama, in one of his final acts on national security, permitted US intelligence and law enforcement agencies far greater access to raw communications data warrantlessly collected on foreign targets, according to privacy advocates. Under an Executive Order, the CIA, FBI and other security agencies will be able to access unfiltered surveillance aimed at foreigners abroad, before information identifying or revealing Americans they may be in contact with gets censored out.

The *NY Times* comments that while the express purpose of Executive Order 12333 is to target foreigners and counter-intelligence, if any agency discovers information that incriminates any American citizen, that agency is then required to turn the evidence over to the Justice Department. However, the provisions for targeting American citizens have been redacted from the new document, so the extent of how this order can be used (and how far it extends surveillance of US citizens) is unknown. “Remember, Donald Trump’s Attorney-General, Senator Jeff Sessions, and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mike Pompeo, both have advocated for extensive domestic government spying”.

UK Government’s Attack On Whistleblowers

A report in the *Guardian* (13/2/17) revealed that the British Law Commission is proposing that maximum jail terms for whistleblowers should rise from two years to 14 years. Katharine Gun, the former UK spook famous for leaking details of a Five Eyes operation to bug United Nations offices before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, has condemned these

plans by the UK Government to increase prison sentences and expand the definition of espionage to account for “the digital age”. In the past, Gun has called for a public interest defence to be introduced into the Official Secrets Act (OSA) to protect whistleblowers and prevent governments from hiding politically embarrassing information.

The *Guardian* quotes Gun as saying that: “It seems to me that we are living in an increasingly unfree society. The Government and its intelligence and security apparatus have amassed ever broader and deeper powers through legislation like the Justice and Security Act 2013 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. These laws enable it to survey all private communications and online activity, carry out bulk collection and storage of data, hack private devices, detain and interrogate at whim and demand CMP (closed material procedures) in court, preventing evidence and information from being disclosed in the interest of national security” (*looking at recent law changes in this country, we should be so proud that NZ is keeping up with the big boys. Ed.*).

British Spying Illegal

Britain’s surveillance laws have been deemed illegal by the European Court of Justice in a case that throws into question the UK’s new Investigatory Powers Act. In December 2016, the ECJ ruled the main UK surveillance legislation was illegal because it allowed “general and indiscriminate” retention of electronic communications. The judgment said member states could perform targeted retention of that data solely for the purpose of fighting serious crime but not the mass and indiscriminate data collection of everyone in Britain allowed by the new UK spying regime (*Financial Times*, 21/12/16).

Although the legislation ruled on by the ECJ ended in 2016, important parts of the new Investigatory Powers Act (IPA), which significantly expands the mass data-gathering powers challenged in this case, will be also illegal. Specifically, the new law compels Internet and phone companies to keep the records of

every phone call made and every Website visited by any of their users for 12 months. Not only would telecoms companies have a list of every site visited or call made, they would also record the date, time and duration of these actions.

The ability to bulk hack citizens’ communications and force technology companies to create a backdoor into their products so that communications can be accessed under the Investigatory Powers Act might remain unaffected by the ECJ ruling. So, while much of the work of the GCHQ has been deemed illegal by Europe’s highest court, and has always been morally repugnant, not much is likely to change.

Liberty, the human rights organisation which has been a leading player in legal challenges to UK spying, commented on the ECJ decision that: “The Government is breaking the law by indiscriminately collecting the nation’s Internet activity and phone records and letting hundreds of public bodies grant themselves access to these personal details with no suspicion of serious crime and no independent sign-off (meaning significant parts of its new snoopers charter are effectively unlawful)” (*Financial Times*, op. cit.).

The ECJ finding came in response to a bipartisan legal challenge initially brought by the Brexit Secretary, David Davis, and Tom Watson, Labour’s Deputy Leader, over the legality of GCHQ’s bulk interception of call records and online messages. The *Guardian* comments that Ministers can no longer be certain that the Investigatory Powers Act can survive privacy actions in UK courts after this landmark surveillance decision (*Guardian*, 21/12/16).

Davis and Watson, who were supported by Liberty, the Law Society, the Open Rights Group and Privacy International, had already won a High Court victory on the issue, but the Government appealed and the case was referred by appeal judges to the ECJ. The case will now return to the Court of Appeal to be resolved in terms of UK legislation.

Most Terrorism Arrests Lead To No Charge Or Conviction

British Home Office data reveals fewer than two in ten people detained in England and Wales since the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 were convicted of terror offences. The overwhelming majority of people arrested for alleged terrorism offences over the past 15 years have been freed without charge or conviction, official figures show (*Guardian*, 15/12/16). 3,349 people in England and Wales were arrested under terrorism laws since the 9/11 attacks on the US. Of those arrested for terrorism and related offences, 17.8% were convicted in relation to involvement in violent jihad; for instance, plotting attacks, funding or facilitating.

According to the *Guardian*, another 10% arrested on suspicion of terrorism were convicted of offences unrelated to the terrorism charges they were originally arrested for, taking the total to 27.6%. The majority of those arrested were from British Muslim communities. Critics say that

such statistics will harden the attitudes of potential dissidents.

In Britain's counter-terrorism system, intelligence is developed by the security service MI5, and then passed to Police to take enforcement action and build a case that can convict someone to the criminal standard of beyond a reasonable doubt. One person who had worked in Police counter-terrorism said a lot of information from MI5 cannot be used as evidence; it is difficult to convert the intelligence into something that can be used in the criminal justice system.

New GCHQ Director

GCHQ now has a new boss, Jeremy Fleming. He joined GCHQ from MI5, originally coming from a business background. He worked in counter-terrorism, both in Northern Ireland and against Islamist groups, and he was heavily involved in preparations for the London Olympics in 2012. He has been heavily involved in technology, including cyber security,

and was MI5's Deputy Director. Fleming said he intended (same old, same old propaganda) to continue increasing "transparency" in terms of GCHQ's role and expanding its cyber mission through the work of the (newly opened) National Cyber Security Centre.

His appointment coincided with a spat between the Trump White House and British intelligence over allegations that GCHQ had spied on members of the Trump campaign circus. The "incidental" spying was followed up because of contacts between Russian officials and Trump's associates. Five Eyes mates have (publicly) an agreement not to spy on one another or any member of the Five Eyes alliance, but here is a clear example where GCHQ collected data on US officials and/or public figures and fed it back to the NSA. An interesting example of incidental intelligence gathering where, of course, the data intercepted is always treated with great care and never stored or assessed unless directly part of operations [!!!].

Aussie Spooks Lurch Further Towards Fascism

The *Age* (4/3/17) has revealed that Attorney-General George Brandis has authorised the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) to access the telecommunications data of a "number of journalists" in an attempt to uncover sources. As the *Age* comments, the implications for democratic accountability are disturbing.

ASIO chief Duncan Lewis, who has been noted previously in *PR* for his reactionary views, refused to disclose how many of these so-called journalist information warrants had been obtained, saying the number was small, and to give a precise figure "would only invite speculation as to the likely targets". The *Age* opinion writer says that the secrecy that surrounds these warrants is unnecessary, and the system created for oversight does not allow news organisations to scrutinise the claims.

The article says security agencies should be given sufficient powers to



protect the community, but to invoke "national security" as a blanket excuse is dangerously vague. The problem is a direct result of the creeping fascism inherent in the re-tention of metadata under laws introduced by the Abbott government in 2015. Australian security agencies are able to retain data for two years and trawl through telephone records, mobile phone locations, email receipts and other electronic foot-prints left by anyone of interest (and their families, friends, work-mates, acquaintances etc., etc.).

And The Aussie Spooks Want More Money

The Defence Department has warned that Australia's electronic spy agency (the Australian Signals Directorate, the equivalent of our GCSB) is at risk of shutdown unless a three-year programme of upgrades is approved. Ageing infrastructure has put the ASD, which counters cyber espionage, intercepts foreign communications and spies for the military, in jeopardy of systems failures risking Government security.

It warned that the nation's cyber security was put at risk when the Department of Defence was asked to help with load shedding during soaring temperatures on February 10, 2017. Dan Tehan, the Minister responsible for cyber security, said the ASD shifted to generators as a precautionary measure because it was concerned about the reliability of the grid.

The agency was also forced to rely on diesel generators during the February 2017 heatwave due to intense pressure on the nation's power supply. ... The ASD, whose mission statement is "reveal their secrets - protect our own", relies on high-tech computing, and is thought to be extremely energy intensive..... (Age, 8/3/17 – slightly edited).

Facebook's Role In Policing Partly Addressed

In March 2017, Facebook barred some software developers from

using the massive social network's data to create surveillance tools, closing off a process that had been exploited by US police departments to track protesters. Facebook (and Twitter) has been widely criticised for the intrusive ways commercial and security interests utilise its resources. Facebook came under fire in 2016 from privacy advocates after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said in a report that police were using location data and other user information to spy on protesters.

Racially charged protests broke out in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson in the aftermath of the August 2014 shooting of black teenager, Michael Brown, by a white police officer. In a 2015 email message, a Geofeedia employee touted its "great success" covering the protests, according to the ACLU report based on government records. Geofeedia was using Facebook sources for its data collection (Reuters, 14/3/17).

Senior US Naval Officers Charged With Corruption

A senior Navy intelligence officer was amongst a number of high ranking naval officers accused in March 2017 of taking bribes and defrauding the US government. Rear Admiral Bruce Loveless, a senior Navy intelligence officer who recently retired from a key job at the Pentagon, as well as four retired Navy captains and a retired Marine colonel, were charged with offences that cover a period of eight years, from 2006 through 2014.

According to the *Washington Post* (14/3/17) the Navy personnel are accused of taking bribes in the form of lavish gifts, prostitutes and luxury hotel stays courtesy of Leonard Glenn "Fat Leonard" Francis, a Singapore-based defence contractor who has pleaded guilty to defrauding the Navy of tens of millions of dollars. The indictment lists page after page of bribes allegedly provided to the defendants including \$US25,000 watches, \$US2,000 boxes of Cohiba cigars, \$US2,000 bottles of cognac and \$US600-per-night hotel rooms.

Maxwell Smart Lives

Elite members of the US military, including the head of the NSA, have started testing a super secure Boeing smartphone which can self-destruct. The Black phone is designed to connect agents and contractors around the world with the US government's top secret communications network. Lt. Gen. Alan Lynn of the Defense Information Systems Agency, who are co-developers, has revealed that NSA chief, Adm. Michael Rogers, was one of the first to test it. Boeing said that if the device is tampered with it self-destructs: "Any attempt to break open the casing of the device would trigger functions that would delete the data and software contained within the device and make the device inoperable" (*Huffington Post*, 10/11/16).

Base Forced Islanders Out: No Return

Islanders forcibly removed from the Indian Ocean's Chagos Archipelago to make way for an American military base have been refused permission to return. The inhabitants were forced to leave in the 1960s and 70s by the British government so that the US could build its large air base on Diego Garcia, the largest island in the group. Diego Garcia is also home to one of the biggest Five Eyes spy bases. In November 2016, the British government announced that the forcibly displaced residents would not be given the right to resettle their homeland (*Press*, 18/11/16). ■

WE MUST STRIKE FIRST!

Pre-Emptying Warfare Strategy And Technology From Spinning Out Of Control

- Dennis Small

"I have seen the invention of human flight; a chief desire of man's dreaming heart for ten thousand years; And men have made it the chief of the means of massacre".

"I have seen the far stars weighed and their distance measured, and the powers that make the atom put into service - For what? - To kill. To kill half a million flies - men I should say - at one slap"

(from "The World's Wonders", Robinson Jeffers).

"(British) Prime Minister Theresa May said she would launch a nuclear strike costing tens of thousands of lives if she had to defend Britain, as she won a historic vote to renew the Trident deterrent" (Press, 20/7/16). The article cited here was reprinted from Rupert Murdoch's The Times and is part of British propaganda to warn the world of its Government's crazy, evil resolve. "Rear Admiral John Gower, a retired submariner, welcomed the decision as 'the only posture which guarantees deterrence without risk', malignly misleading the British public in the usual standard fashion (ibid.). The Trident system is not primarily a "deterrent" but instead a "first strike" weapon effectively controlled by the US.

"Nuclear weapons were, and are, the gravest threat to humanity's survival. Their effect in preventing wars has been overrated and reports of the damage they cause tend to be brushed aside... to depend on nuclear deterrence indefinitely into the future, especially when other means of deterrence are available, is foolhardy" (former US Secretary of State, George Shultz, quoted in: www.defenseone.com/ideas/2016/02/sanders-nukes-op-ed/126101/). Most ironically, Reaganite Shultz was a strong opponent of NZ's nuclear

free zone.

"I believe in American exceptionalism with every fibre of my being", said (President) Obama, who expanded the US's favourite military pastime: bombing and death squads ("special operations") as no other President has done since the Cold War. According to a Council on Foreign Relations survey, in 2016 alone Obama dropped 26,171 bombs. That is 72 bombs every day. He bombed the poorest people on Earth, in Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan" (<http://www.telesur.tv/english/opinion/The-issue-is-Not-Trump-Its-U.S.-20170116-0025.html>, John Pilger, 16/1/7/17).

"A December 2014 Gallup poll showed people in 65 nations considered the US far and away the largest threat to peace in the world" ("Un-Trump the Budget" online petition: www.WorldBeyondWar.org, 6/4/17).

The human capacity for self-delusion seems endless. How did a "killer ape" evolve into the dominant global species, and yet live in a state of perpetual fear of imminent self-destruction? Moreover, the same creature considers that it can maintain this perilous, fragile state indefinitely. It does so, despite making assiduous preparations for ever more grossly obscene and absurd overkill; and embraces all this, despite the environmental undermining at the same time of its industrialised lifestyle, economic growth, and the consequent increasing impetus to conflict over resources. Yet these illusions, or rather delusions, are exactly what the leaders of Western civilisation and their touted "free world" continually proclaim to their peoples, and the rest of the world.

As the Washington-based peace movement Global Zero points out: "... every day, the leaders of the

nine nuclear countries carry around the secret codes for launching their country's nuclear arsenal. At all times, this small group of people possess the ultimate power to completely destroy our planet and humanity, as we know it" (www.globalzero.org, 27/7/16). Now the looney, power-crazed President Trump is "Commander-in-Chief" of the biggest arsenal of all, primed at the ready!

Imperial Ideology

"All empires are expressions of inequality hidden behind a mask of community", comments Richard Drayton, Senior Lecturer in Imperial and Extra-European History Since 1500 at the University of Cambridge ("Why Do Empires Rise?" in "Big Questions In History", ed. Harriet Swain, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, Jonathan Cape, 2005, p59). "The idea of community is usually proclaimed by those at the surface of imperial advance: as Spain's conquistadores burned Arawak villages (in South America) they carried the cross; today, we drop cluster bombs, murder civilians, and torture prisoners of war in the name of democracy and human rights" (ibid.).

Such Anglo-American, and other Western depredations, are regularly given ideological justification by the mass media in line with the messaging of Establishment politicians and the military (for background refer to my two part article "More Media Warmongering: Sign Of Things To Come" in *Peace Researcher* 41, July 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr41.pdf> & *PR* 42, November 2011, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr42.pdf>).

Defending freedom, democracy, and human rights means in practice neo-fascism and barbarism, suitably dressed in Orwellian language. Professors Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have long been the leading analysts of American foreign policy propaganda and the reality on the ground right up to the present (ever since their classic "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy Of The Mass Media, Vintage", 1988/94 – check them out online).

Trumpism Triumphant?

To the consternation and shock of so many people in the US and worldwide, billionaire businessman/conman and political flake, Donald Trump, prevailed in the American Presidential race, winning the election for a far Right faction of the Republican Party in November 2016. With his advent to office, the current international situation, already taut and tinder dry, has swiftly become deadly perilous (e.g., <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/5-places-world-war-iii-could-start-2017-18760?page=show>).

In a series of very aggressive moves, the newly installed President Trump has angered Russia with a cruise missile attack in Syria, dropped a Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb, the biggest non-nuclear bomb ever used, in Afghanistan on an Islamic State (IS) target, and ramped up confrontation with North Korea. All this macho strutting stuff has elicited concerns about the possibility of World War Three (WWIII), as well as the usual warmongering, media-inspired political party and public support.

There is also a lot of opposition being generated to the US agenda. Trump is quickly proving that he is not only a greedy narcissist but a mad, militarist megalomaniac. There is much discussion and debate over whether Trump is a fascist, or even a new Hitler-type figure. He certainly displays some key characteristics of Hitler and his movement (“Donald Trump Using Adolf Hitler’s ‘Mein Kampf’ Play-Book, Says World Expert On Nazi Leader”, *Independent*, 8/2/17).

Reactionary Denial And Aggression

Meantime, the most important international peace-making initiative for many years has been met with concerted opposition from the major powers. In 2016 Aotearoa/NZ was most commendably one of 57 countries committing themselves to a United Nations (UN) programme to try and abolish nuclear weapons (“UN Resolution To Ban Nuclear Weapons In 2017”, ICAN: www.icanw.org > campaign-news > draft – International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 27/10/16). Our

goal should be that proudly proclaimed by the NZ branch of ICAN: **“From nuclear weapons-free Aotearoa NZ to a nuclear weapons-free world”!** (<http://www.icanw.org.nz/>).

But in the West, and wider afield, the US is leading the charge against any such moves to try and ban nuclear weapons (“US Leads Boycott Of UN Talks On Nuclear Weapons Ban”, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/leads-boycott-talks-nuclear-weapons-ban-170327191952287.html>). It is determined to scuttle any such initiatives. “The US, Britain and France are among almost 40 countries boycotting talks on a nuclear weapons ban treaty at the UN, according to Nikki Haley, the US Ambassador to the world body” (ibid.).

Haley said “that the countries skipping the talks ‘would love to have a ban on nuclear weapons, but in this day and time we can’t honestly say we can protect our people by allowing bad actors to have them, and those of us that are good trying to keep peace and safety not to have them” (ibid.). She gave North Korea as an example of a bad actor (“US Leads Fight Against Proposed UN Nuclear Weapons Ban”, in a *Washington Post* article reproduced in the *Press*, 29/3/17).

So, American Administrations continue to delude themselves that they are sane and the “good guys”, when their own documented record, and the ongoing narrative, demonstrably shows that they are so often the “bad guys”, and madly militaristic. Their eminently self-serving “exceptionalism” certainly displays a constant capacity for evil and ultimately counter-productive deeds. Moreover, they constantly project their own evil on their endless enemies.

The NZ media have once again lamentably proved true to form, giving the hugely important talks at the UN on a proposed ban of nuclear weapons very little coverage. Instead, as in the siege of East Aleppo in Syria in the latter part of 2016, we see the American Ambassador to the UN continually parading the latest US-led posturing hypocrisy on our TV screens (various relevant examples of media treatment are reviewed in “Deconstructing The Dirty,

Neoliberal Media: Politics Of The Democratic Deficit”, *Foreign Control Watchdog* 144, May 2017).

At the UN negotiations on a proposed nuclear ban, the French, in their turn, put forward another most contorted line of argument. The Deputy French UN Ambassador, Alexis Lamek, said that: “In the current perilous context, considering in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, our countries continue to rely on nuclear deterrence for security and stability” (<http://www.aljazeera.com/>, op. cit.).

My partner burst into spontaneous, almost hysterical laughter when I read this statement out to her. She could not understand how people could be so stupid and self-deluded in embracing such contradictions. It is so sadly obvious that they are making things worse all the time instead of pulling back from the brink. This has indeed long been the case, whatever the temporary pauses in this process – ever since the dawn of the nuclear age, in fact. She went on to remark at how frighteningly perverse their attitudes were, and how we need to act pre-emptively for peace more than ever, in the most positive ways possible.

Pushing For Peace

“Russia and China also sat out the opening UN General Assembly session. Russia had voted against launching the [abolition] effort last year. China abstained” (“US Leads Fight Against Proposed UN Nuclear Weapons Ban”, op. cit.). For sure: “The proposed ban, backed by Pope Francis, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, and dozens of humanitarian non-proliferation groups, sets most of the major nuclear powers against more than 100 smaller non-nuclear states, which are seeking a treaty this year” (ibid.). Malignly, US Ambassador Nikki Haley used North Korea and Iran as convenient scapegoats and excuses for doing nothing towards a ban. Of late, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, without a shadow of irony, has accused Iran of trying to destabilise the Middle East!

Again, the US has undermined and shamefully dishonoured the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) since

this Treaty came into effect in 1970. It has consistently rejected any really meaningful steps to disarmament and a nuclear free world. The Trump Administration "is (now) conducting a new nuclear posture review, which is expected to take a year or more" (ibid.). Before becoming President, Trump indicated he wanted "an up-to-date and perhaps expanded nuclear arsenal" (ibid.).

As a Presidential candidate, Donald Trump also advocated further proliferation by suggesting "that US allies Japan and South Korea could develop nuclear weapons and (thus) defend themselves, instead of relying on the US nuclear umbrella" (ibid.). As Global Zero says: "Here's one thing we know: Trump loves nukes. Trump wants to see other countries get them. He's dared Russia with a new arms race, he prods a thin-skinned North Korea, and he's made clear he wants to spend a billion dollars to fuel his nuclear obsession in 2018. On the nuclear front alone, Trump is a danger to everything we hold dear" (www.globalzero.org, 7/4/17).

Peace Versus War

Trump, for sure, heartily "suggested that nuclear weapons could be effective against Islamic State (IS) militants" ("US Leads Fight Against Proposed UN Nuclear Weapons Ban", op. cit.). In the typical style of American self-serving exceptionalism, "paleface" Trump spoke with a forked tongue, saying as well "he would like to see a nuclear free world" (ibid.). Incidentally, the ongoing paleface repression of Native Americans in the US was recently highlighted by Trump's steamrolling of the Sioux Standing Rock protest, and his implementation by military occupation of a new invasive, climate-wrecking oil exploitation pipeline.

Climate denial, racism, and militarist aggression - along with other psychological mechanisms like the projection of threatening motives on to the Other - all go hand in hand (for a detailed case study exploring the psychopathology of the paleo-conservative mind, see my "Reactionary Pakeha Politics" in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 135, April 2014, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/35/11.html>).

Again, the symbolism at Standing Rock was potent in the crushing of an indigenous people, who traditionally relied on a sustainable hunting and gathering existence, in order to push a biosphere-destroying rapacious industrialism. With other proposals like slashing corporate taxes, Trump is set to drive socio-economic inequalities and divisions even deeper.

Despite the blindly militarist resistance of the big nuclear powers, peace symbolism took centre stage at the UN in March 2017 with a prophetic reminder of the looming danger to humankind and the rest of Earth's inhabitants. "Toshiki Fujimori, who was a baby when he survived the 1945 US nuclear bomb attack on Hiroshima, Japan, addressed the General Assembly", making an emotionally moving appeal in favour of the UN abolition programme ("US Leads Fight Against Proposed UN Nuclear Weapons Ban", op. cit.). He said that his appeal was "the mission I am given as a survivor" (ibid.). The push for the ban on nuclear weapons will still proceed in 2017 in the face of any resistance ("US Leads Boycott Of Talks On UN Nuclear Weapons Ban", op. cit.).

Syrian Slaughter

Even the refugee crisis, with so many people fleeing Syria and other conflict-torn countries, has become another excuse for militarism and more bloody intervention in the Middle East, North Africa, and elsewhere ("The Media Will Never Quit Warmongering: How A Refugee Crisis Became Another Excuse For Militarism", www.salon.com, 9/9/15). "Take (Rupert Murdoch's) *Sun* newspaper in Britain, which, in a notably revolting gesture, put a picture of Aylan Kurdi - the little boy whose death shocked the world - on its front page next to a graphic urging the UK to 'bomb Syria now' - "For Aylan", the paper urged" (ibid.).

So that many more innocent children can be murdered as has already happened in Aleppo, Mosul, and so many other places in Syria, Iraq, and the rest of the Middle East and beyond! Murdoch's stupid, evil warmongering is boundless. But while Murdoch's media empire - from the *Sun* to *Fox News* - is the most powerful and worst of the

West's media, NewsCorp is also very representative of this wider propaganda machine in its continuous militarist machinations.

It has been claimed that journalist "Phillip Knightley changed our view of war and the media with his book 'The First Casualty' (subtitle: "From The Crimea To Vietnam: The War Correspondent As Hero, Propagandist, And Myth Maker", Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975). To mark its updating, "**he argues that the war correspondent has an easy choice: become part of the military's propaganda - or quit**" ("Fighting Dirty", *Guardian*, 20/3/00, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2000/mar/20/mondaymediasession.pressandpublishing>).

Knightley's superb book stands as a landmark of sanity and clarity, and I am one of those lucky to have a treasured copy. More generally, since 9/11 the mainstream media has become even more militaristic and manipulative in orientation with their cheerleading for the ultimate holocaust ("More Media Warmongering", op. cit.).

The latest momentous pretext for such hypocritical Western warmongering, and indeed for the first American Tomahawk cruise missile assault on the Assad regime, has been the Syrian regime's aerial attack on the town of Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib province, north-western Syria, in early April 2017. The Syrian attack on this unfortunate town had resulted in the dispersal of a horrible chemical gas, killing and injuring civilians, including children. The US and its allies were quick to condemn what they called a chemical weapon attack, the use of a weapon of mass destruction, and so a war crime, allegedly inflicted by Syrian Air Force and/or Russian jets.

Information/Propaganda Warfare

Again, a war of words swiftly followed the Syrian air strike on Khan Sheikhoun with the US & co. versus Russia and its allies. The American-led brigade accused both Syria and Russia of knowingly carrying out a sarin gas attack while the other side denied any such attack. The latter maintained instead that the Syrian bombers had mistakenly hit a

chemical weapons storage warehouse or manufacturing plant. Assad even suggested the tragic incident had somehow been a hoax – staged perhaps by jihadists.

Various independent commentators with relevant experience and expertise have backed the Syrian/Russian claim of an accidental hit on a chemical weapons depot. For instance, two former top American intelligence analysts, Ray McGovern and Patrick Lang, have thrown their considerable weight behind this case (“Former CIA Analyst Ray McGovern Debunks The Alleged Syria ‘Chemical Attack’”, *Intel Today*, 9/4/17, <https://gosint.wordpress.com/2017/04/07/former-dia-colonel-us-strikes-on-a-syria-based-on-a-lie/>).

Similarly, Peter Ford, the 2003-06 British Ambassador to Syria, considers that Assad would not be so foolish as to have carried out a toxic bomb raid at this stage in the civil war when he has been winning both on the ground and in the international arena (“Assad Not Mad Enough To Use Chemical Weapons, Says Former UK Ambassador”, *Middle East Eye*, 7/4/17, www.middleeasteye.net). Certainly, the timing of this particular incident seemed very suspiciously like a possible “false flag” operation, especially since the area incorporating the town of Khan Sheikhoun has been a hotbed of die-hard Islamist rebels.

But the first Western journalist to visit the area found evidence that seems to confirm the charge of chemical warfare use levelled against Assad (“The Dead Were Wherever You Looked’: Inside Syrian Town After Chemical Attack”, *Guardian*, 6/4/17, <https://www.theguardian.com>). Yet it is still possible that this horrible incident may have even been ruthlessly contrived by some extremist group. At the time of writing, the truth of this most distressing incident was still indeterminate.

The war of words went on as the US tried to justify its own precipitate actions (e.g., “Russia Accused Of Syrian Coverup”, *Washington Post* article reprinted in the *Press*, 13/4/17). Russia and Iran, with even Hezbollah joining in, have warned about negative consequences. They have explicitly warned that the US



Mike Moreu, 10/4/17.

crossed a red line, and that next time they would retaliate. In the meantime, the UN is calling for calm, moderation, and reasoned negotiation (<http://aranews.net/2017/04/us-responds-militarily-syrias-chemical-attack-un-urges-restraint-avoid-escalation/>, 8/4/17). President Trump is now horrifically blundering into one potential global nuclear flashpoint after another.

Spinning Out Of All Control?!

In cowboy fashion, the trigger-happy, unilateral President fired from the hip in rapid reaction, without waiting for the findings from a UN investigation. The American assault on Assad's Shayrat airbase launched 59 cruise missiles, computerised and satellite guided. Evidently, however, only 23 missiles actually reached this airbase while 36 missiles have mysteriously gone missing - *somehow gone awol, spun out of control, or been intercepted*. What bizarre incompetence in the conduct of such supposedly sophisticated weaponry!

Each cruise missile costs more than \$US1 million. Raytheon, the huge American “defence” firm, produces the Tomahawk missile today. The Western public, lamentably enough, seems to have been conditioned and inured to the horrendous, obscene human cost, including wasted resources, of such destructive weaponry like cruise missiles and

drones. This horrendous cost contrasts starkly with what the pitiful amount that the UN can muster for the basic human needs of a multitude of people.

Media Frenzy

In announcing Trump's Syrian attack, the mainstream media immediately jumped to another excited, warmongering peak, barbarously exulting in power and violence, and even the supposed beauty of the fireworks! Many usually more moderate commentators and opinion-leaders joined the hard Right in the exultant blood-lust, illustrating dramatically once again the glory of Western civilisation in action (“Why Are Liberals Now Cheerleading A Warmongering Trump?”, Owen Jones, *Opinion, Guardian*, 9/4/17, <https://www.theguardian.com>).

They enthusiastically proclaimed Trump's missile splurge as a purported reversal from putting “America First”, as if the attack had been a magnanimous act of human solidarity and outrage on behalf of the gas attack victims - an obvious pretence, dutifully echoed however by much of the servile NZ media (*ibid.*). Trump's crocodile tears demonstrate yet again just how naïve, gullible, or callously cynical our media are, let alone obscenely hypocritical. But, then, they and the interests they represent see their own skins and material interests

aligned, whatever the war crimes, with such American aggression. Time has hallowed this syndrome.

This act of war was in fact perpetrated by a man who is on the public record as endorsing, among other evil actions: the savage use of torture; the actual use of nuclear weapons against America's enemies, especially IS; and, of course, the militarist boosting of nuclear weaponry for the US, and even its proliferation to friendly countries like South Korea and Japan. Trump's missile attack was indeed all about putting "*America First*" as the paleo-conservative clique in the White House sees it.

Not only has President Trump put up the immigration barriers against refugee children (and "beautiful babies") fleeing America's terroristic "War on Terror", but he has said that he does not worry about the deaths of civilians anyway. To be sure: "Trump has said many things that would be worrying for anyone concerned about unnecessary civilian deaths... In one case, he even encouraged killing civilians when he called for targeting the families of suspected terrorists. (He explicitly said that): 'The other thing with the terrorists is you have to take out their families, when you get these terrorists, you have to take out their families', he told Fox News in December 2015. 'They care about their lives, don't kid yourself. When they say they don't care about their lives, you have to take out their families'" ("President Trump, Is It Important To You To Limit Civilian Deaths In US Military Operations?", *PRI*, 19/3/17, <https://www.pri.org>).

The Victimhood Of Iraq And Syria

Even in the northern province of Aleppo, which in 2016 was the subject of a hugely hypocritical propaganda campaign run by the US in denouncing Syrian/Russian "war crimes" against civilians, Trump's operations have been taking a very grim toll, as also in Yemen, in the siege of Mosul, and in so many other places ("US Admits Syria Airstrike That Killed 46 But Denies Targeting Mosque", *Guardian*, 17/3/17 <https://www.theguardian.com>). For so many racist Westerners, these are only "wog" lives anyway!

The official British Inquiry into the Iraq War, the so-called Chilcot Report released in July 2016 after seven years in the making, basically found that the Anglo-American invasion in 2003 was the outcome of a rash decision based on "flawed intelligence". It thus perpetuates the self-serving lie that the invasion was due to a tragic mistake. The Anglo-American axis is certainly not going to admit to its specific base motivation in this particular case of trying to secure, or rather grab Middle Eastern oil and gas reserves, however much such intentions have been documented in a general strategic sense (see Murray Horton's "Stop Thief! Sadly, It's A Common Story: A Desperate Addict Turns To A Life Of Crime", *Foreign Control Watchdog* 102, May 2003, <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/02/06.htm>). The decision to invade was coldly calculated, ever since the mid-1990s at least. Certainly, the neo-fascist Donald Trump is open enough here in his motivations about the need to secure Iraq's oil as part of the US's imperial project!

The corrupt self-interest inherent in the American power elite is manifest in many modes. For example, a stringent critic of how the Bush Administration handled the 2003 invasion has been Peter W. Galbraith ("The End Of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created A War Without End", Pocket Books, 2006/7). Son of leading 20th Century economist John Kenneth Galbraith, Peter Galbraith has aptly contended that the badly mismanaged invasion induced the collapse of Iraqi society and its disintegration (ibid.). Yet he himself "has argued for Iraq to be 'partitioned' into three parts", and thus its effective "Balkanisation" (Peter Galbraith, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Galbraith).

Indeed, Galbraith was involved in helping negotiate a measure of constitutional independence for the Iraqi Kurds from 2003 to 2005, right on the heels of the invading forces (ibid.). Later, however, it was revealed that he himself had had "major financial interests [in oil extraction] relevant to this role" (ibid.). Yet, ironically enough, in his book critical of the neo-con Bush Administration agenda, Peter Galbraith is actually condemnatory of the priority

it gave to oil over people ("The End Of Iraq", op. cit., e.g., p113). But he did also point out that Bush's propagandistic ploy of the so-called "Axis of Evil", comprising the trio of "rogue states" Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, backfired with the Administration's focus so overwhelmingly on Iraq. In response, the two other countries went on to develop their nuclear programmes.

Korean Blowback!

In the case of North Korea, President Bush's policy towards this country clumsily provoked it into "becoming the first country to withdraw from the NPT, which it did on December 31, 2002. It apparently then made six to eight nuclear weapons from the plutonium that had previously been under IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards" (ibid., p73).

With the advent in January 2017 of the hugely counterproductive President Trump, Russia and Iran are now closely allied; Iraq continues to be a tragic mess and a hotbed of both armed resistance and terrorism; and the US is currently eyeballing a nuclear-armed and paranoid Stalinist regime on the Korean peninsula in the most provocatively menacing fashion. The State terrorism perpetuated by the world's biggest and worst rogue nation continues to reap the whirlwind (for background, see: "Rogue State: A Guide To The World's Only Superpower", William Blum, Common Courage Press, 2005).

As the excellent non-government organisation (NGO) RootsAction Team point out in an online petition, the US has a long, very grim record of aggression against North Korea ("Tell Trump to Stop Threatening North Korea", www.RootsAction.org, 27/4/17). Nearly 70 years ago, the US inflicted systematic and "devastating bombing" on North Korea. "The US bombed dams, bridges, and villages. It dropped huge quantities of napalm. It dropped insects and feathers infected with anthrax, cholera, encephalitis, and bubonic plague" (ibid.). Indeed, it razed North Korea to the ground, killing as much life as it could, using not only conventional weapons but chemical and biological weapons in another horrible US warfare experiment. To-

day, it still practises bombing raids on North Korea.

Currently, the US has a grand total of **83** military bases in South Korea. America still maintains “wartime command of the South Korean military (technically, the Korean War is not over), and it has been building big new bases in South Korea opposed by serious popular protests. The US is building what it calls a missile defence system in South Korea that North Korea and China consider offensive and part of an offensive first-strike policy. The people of South Korea have been protesting it in huge numbers” (ibid.).

These peace protests have of course been drastically downplayed by the warmongering American media and their confreres. Sometimes the propaganda can have ironic twists. For instance, a Reuters report was headlined in the *Press* as “Protests As US Boosts S. Korea Security” (27/4/17). Yet a protest sign was visible in the photo, which accompanied the article, proclaiming: “NO THAAD! NO WAR! (ibid., see below for further comment on the THAAD anti-missile defence deployment). The protest banner also posed the question as to whether US forces were really “Occupation Troops?” in South Korea (ibid.). As well as reporting the official US/South Korean rationale, the article described the protests and political party denouncements of the THAAD deployment, along with China's opposition.

Rampant Neo-Imperialism

The George W Bush Administration agenda for war on Iraq was driven in particular by a neo-con grouping called the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), which brought together such people as billionaire publisher Steve Forbes, an assiduous promoter of capitalist greed; prime warmonger and invasion architect Paul Wolfowitz; former House Speaker, Republican Newt Gingrich; and neo-imperialist ideologue Professor Francis Fukuyama.

A number such as Wolfowitz were hangovers from the very Rightwing Reagan Administration of the 1980s, and included Elliott Abrams, Lewis Libby, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, James Woolsey, and neo-fascist “top Pen-

tagon adviser Richard (‘Black’) Perle” (“Weapons Of Mass Deception: The Uses Of Propaganda In Bush's War On Iraq”, Sheldon Rampton & John Stauber, Tarcher/Penguin, 2003, p46-48).

Along with PNAC's other notoriously realpolitik members Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld (who was once even Reagan's special envoy to Saddam Hussein in Iraq!), the organisation provided the hard core of President GW Bush's Cabinet and support team. But, evidently, the more purist “free market” neo-cons lost out to the “realists” in the Administration as to how to manage Iraq's oil, with a pretence of Iraqi State control still being maintained (“The Real Reason For The Iraq War”, *Vice*, <https://www.vice.com>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Galbraith). Anglo-American oil companies and other corporates have, of course, made a mint out of Iraq's oil (“Guess Who's Reaping Hundreds Of Billions From Iraq's Oil?”, *Truth-out*, www.truth-out.org, 17/12/15).

Meanwhile, the people of Iraq continue to suffer enormously from the costs and consequences of Anglo-American depredations. The ongoing siege of Mosul is a graphic case in point. Thousands of civilians have been killed, and many more injured (“Air Strikes On ISIS-Held Mosul 'Leave 230 Civilians Dead', Reports Local Media”, *Independent*, www.independent.co.uk, 23/3/17; “Twenty Civilians Killed, Three Wounded In Two Attacks By Iraqi Troops, Coalition: Activist”, *Iraqi News*, www.iraqinews.com, 27/4/17) 7).

About 300 civilians were killed in one American air attack alone on an apartment block in Mosul. It is certainly worth noting that: “Many of the (Iraqi Army) forces trained by (NZ) Task Group Taji had joined the assault on western Mosul” (“Fifth Rotation Of Military Personnel Await Iraq Orders”, *Press*, 29/4/17). By late April 2017 there was another virtual media blackout on Mosul, especially on the TV channels, here in Aotearoa/NZ. After all, the civilian deaths there were getting “catastrophic”. It is instead the Orwellian duty of the majority of the mainstream media to hype up the propaganda against Assad's and Russia's human rights abuses in Syria, while

covering up Western war crimes.

Neo-Con Social Darwinist “Realists” In Action

Leading neo-con leader “Robert Kagan, former Secretary of State George Shultz's speechwriter under Reagan”, was a co-founder of PNAC, the prime instigator of the 2003 illegal invasion of Iraq (“Weapons Of Mass Deception”, op. cit., p47). Some of us certainly remember Shultz well, as in his role of Secretary of State, Shultz tried to dissuade and pressure Aotearoa/NZ from its nuclear free stand. At the time, we were challenging the sanctity of the American-orchestrated ANZUS alliance. These days, the current National government and its crony media have leveraged us back into a de facto version of this alliance. So, we are still engaged in the struggle to be independent and genuinely nuclear-free.

So far as neo-con Robert Kagan is concerned, his warmongering, neo-imperialist record is clearly articulated. “Through the work of the PNAC, Kagan was an early and strong advocate of military action to 'remove Mr Hussein and his regime from power” (Robert Kagan, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Kagan). From being a cheerleader for the US's war on Iraq and regime change”, Kagan has gone on to be an advocate for WWII! (see below). He is currently “a Senior Fellow at the Washington Brookings Institution and a member (of the Establishment's) Council on Foreign Relations” (ibid.).

As well, “Kagan is married to the American diplomat Victoria Nuland, who served as Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs in the Barack Obama Administration” (ibid.). Notoriously enough, Nuland, in February 2014, coordinated the US/NATO-instigated coup against the former democratically elected Ukrainian government, after a long programme of subversion and destabilisation (“Chronology Of The Ukrainian Coup”, *Counterpunch*: www.counterpunch.org, 5/3/14; “America Started This Ukraine Crisis”, Global Research - Centre for Research on Globalization, www.globalresearch.ca, William Pfaff, 7/8/14; “It's Not Russia That's Pushed Ukraine To The Brink

Of War”, Seumas Milne, *Opinion, Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com>). With the resultant instalment of a pro-US, heavily fascist-influenced regime, a stand-off situation now prevails in a sadly divided Ukraine, fraught with the potential risk of nuclear conflagration.

Zombie War Strategy

It has been well said that: “Victoria Nuland and Robert Kagan have a great mom-and-pop business going. From the State Department, she generates wars, and from op-ed pages he demands Congress buy more weapons. There's a pay-off too, as grateful military contractors kick in money to think tanks where other Kagans work” (“A Family Business Of Perpetual War”, *Consortium-news*, <https://consortiumnews.com>, 20/3/15).

Despite the egregiously pernicious record of Robert Kagan and his conspiratorial close associates, this leading neo-con still airs his views in the US's foremost Establishment magazine, *Foreign Policy*, and similar publications. But then, of course, the American power elite is not only openly neo-imperialist in various ways but is now moving to adopt a more identifiable neo-fascist stance under the Trump Administration. Most ironically, the far Rightist Kagan has actually been highly critical of Donald Trump, even calling him a “fascist” and a “Frankenstein monster” (Robert Kagan, Wikipedia, op. cit.).

The infighting within the American power elite can be fascinating to watch, but these people certainly deserve one another, and many are effectively “neo-fascist”, or simply “fascist”, in general orientation whatever might be their specific political differences. Neo-con Kagan has himself openly endorsed a “Hobbesian” (i.e. Social Darwinist) strategy for American foreign policy, extolling force (ibid.). He, however, considers himself a “liberal interventionist”, while others consider him an adherent of the so-called “realist” school of international affairs (ibid.). Robert Kagan and his ilk are all imperialists or neo-imperialists of one sort or another!

The tribal nationalist views expounded by Kagan can certainly illustrate

the US foreign policy Establishment's commitment to empire, and the consequent increasingly dangerous brinkmanship with the US's major opponents. *Things are getting more like a Hollywood-type surreal horror story!* In a very recent article, Kagan elaborates on a well-worn theme – the “containment” of US rivals, with a spin as to how his line of aggression will supposedly prevent a world war (“Backing Into World War III”, *Foreign Policy*, www.foreignpolicy.com, 6/2/17). Kagan contends his approach is oriented at trying to prevent all-out war. In reality, his “monster” strategy would take us all into full-on confrontation and Armageddon.

While the US invades, bombs, and covertly manipulates all over the globe, including in the former territories of the former Soviet Union, Kagan would not yield an inch to both Russia and China because they will want to take a mile. His article is riddled with the contradictions of the US-imposed world order and “Pax Americana”, including the challenges of environmental limits to economic growth, resource competition, and market exploitation/repression. He calls for “defence spending commensurate with America's continuing global role”, all in the name of “liberal democracy” (ibid.). He projects American aggression on to its rivals. He explicitly rejects measures for better cooperation and accommodation, let alone paths for sustainable development.

Working To Counter War-Mongering

With the people of Syria caught in a geopolitical struggle between the West and a Russian-led coalition, yet another perilous front is taking hold along the internationally fractured conflict lines of humankind. We urgently need to step up a whole range of mediation, peace-making, and disarmament efforts and initiatives. As the NZ Green Party's global affairs spokesperson Dr Kennedy Graham has well said, of the American cruise missile strike on the Syrian regime air base: “This is not the moment for a military action by the US against a country where a Russian military presence already exists. The US President

should recognise that precautionary multilateral measures, not precipitate unilateral action, are the appropriate way to proceed in today's dangerous world” (“Green Party Criticises US Strike On Syria”, *Scoop*, www.scoop.co.nz, 7/4/17).

Meantime, Western leaders like Britain's Thatcherite Prime Minister Theresa May, who is quite prepared to press the red button to kill everyone on the planet on a wholesale, catastrophic scale, condemns the recent terrorist attacks on her country as “hate-filled” and “evil”. She has also signalled her willingness in Thatcherite style to violently “defend” Britain's military base of Gibraltar against Spain in the post-Brexit era. In response to leadership exemplified by the likes of Trump and May, we need to build on the growing momentum to counter war-mongering and war-making.

“Hit And Run” Raids – Costs And Consequences

Newly installed President Donald Trump's first murderous foray was a Special Forces attack on Yemen. It also proved to be bungling and counterproductive (“Trump's Raid Doomed From Start”, *Press*, 4/2/17). “The Trump Administration is making its first radical policy change in the Middle East by escalating American involvement in the civil war in Yemen” (“Why Trump Should Stay Out Of Yemen”, *Counterpunch*, www.counterpunch.org 13/3/17, Patrick Cockburn). It is increasing its “military support” for the bombing campaign, and related attacks by Saudi Arabia, “the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and local Yemeni allies” in a war against the Shia Houthi movement (ibid.).

Tragically, “all that Saudi intervention (functioning in an American proxy role) has achieved so far is to bring Yemen close to all out famine”, with seven million people on the brink of starvation, and many more severely affected (ibid.). It needs to be added here that it was evident enough even several years ago that US State terrorism had greatly increased hate for America and the desire for revenge (“Drone Warfare: Blowback From The New American Way Of War”, Middle East Policy Council, www.mepc.org > journal, 2011).

Death Squads Strike!

Nevertheless, in late January 2017, President Trump sent a US Navy SEAL team (Special Forces), “backed by helicopters, to attack an impoverished village called al Ghayil in al-Bayda province in southern Yemen” (“Trump’s Raid”, op. cit.). The purpose of this particular raid was purportedly “intelligence-gathering”, whereas the real aim was probably to give Trump a public boost by killing or capturing Qassim al Rimi, the head of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). But “it swiftly turned into a bloody fiasco with as many as 29 civilians in al Ghayil killed, along with one Seal” (ibid.).

“The Pentagon’s explanation of what happened sounds very much like similar attempts to explain civilians killed and wounded over the past half century in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq”, besides so many other countries (ibid.). Very recently, our own NZ Defence Force has duly echoed this Pentagonese line with regard to a similar US-facilitated helicopter transport and gunship/Special Forces raid on poor remote villages in Afghanistan (see below).

Regarding Trump’s own vicious raid: “In the event, the White House and the Pentagon have so far hidden (the truth) fairly successfully from any real examination of the destruction of this remote Yemeni village, perhaps calculating that no independent journalist could make the dangerous journey to the site of the attack. But a lengthy on-the-spot report by Iona Craig entitled ‘Death In al Ghayil’, and appearing in the online investigative magazine *The Intercept*, convincingly rebuts the official version of events, little of which appears to be true” (see: “Women And Children In Yemeni Village Recall Horror of Trump’s ‘Highly Successful’ SEAL Raid”, <https://theintercept.com>, 9/3/17).

Over the years, as already indicated, the brutal US-led assault on Yemen with drones, etc. has proved highly counter-productive (“Drone Warfare”, op. cit.). There will be further consequences and more blowback, a syndrome even flagged by a US “realist” outfit just prior to Trump’s raid (“Blowback From America’s Disastrous Policy In Yemen Will Be Profound”, *The National*

Interest, www.nationalinterest.org, 11/12/16). American analyst Michael Horton aptly remarks: “Most critically, the invasion of Iraq and the neo-conservatives’ preoccupation with Iran helped lay the foundation for the rise of Islamic State (IS) across the region”, including Syria (ibid.).

A Very Bad NZ Case Of “Hit And Run”

In Aotearoa/NZ, the release in March 2017 of “Hit And Run: The NZ SAS In Afghanistan And The Meaning Of Honour” (Potton & Burton, 2017), by investigative journalists Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson, brought home to the NZ public, and to international audiences as well, some of the realities of the so-called “War on Terror” dirty war, and the tragic, ongoing human cost. Civilians in the countries subject to Western, especially Anglo-American predation, continue to suffer horrendously. On the whole, such outrageous deprivations are constantly and routinely relayed to the Western public through a foggy camouflage of media manipulation and cover-ups.

In stark contrast, “Hit And Run” graphically exposes to the sunlight one very nasty night-time death squad raid, disclosing the truth of a vicious, bungling attack by the NZ Special Air Service and their American trigger-happy mates on two Afghan villages, killing six civilians (including a three-year old girl) and injuring 15 others (“Gordon Campbell On The ‘Hit And Run’ Book”, *Werewolf*, www.werewolf.co.nz, 2017/03; “Killing In The Name Of?”, *Pundit*, www.pundit.co.nz, Prof. Andrew Geddis, University of Otago, 25/3/17).

This was an attack driven by a motivation for revenge by the NZ SAS. Their operation was courtesy of an American Chinook-borne helicopter foray, which called in support from American Apache helicopter gunners as well (ibid., “Hit And Run”, op. cit.). The latter malevolently shot up a village hamlet. Lamentably, it was a raid that became in the words of the then NZ Defence Minister, Dr Wayne Mapp, “our biggest and most disastrous operation. **A fiasco**” (my emphasis) (ibid., p31).

Following the release of the “Hit And Run” book, much controversy ensued in a heated war of words with the NZ Ministry of Defence over just exactly where and how the “Operation Burnham” raid happened, and the number of civilians killed and injured, if any (e.g., <http://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/28-03-2017/hit-run-author-jon-stephenson-responds-to-wrong-village-riposte-from-nz-defence-force/#.WNmwlHxNOlh.twitter>). It is obvious that the book’s research and documentation generally holds up very well in the face of any criticisms by detractors of the two authors.

The Establishment hard Right and their media confreres have failed to shut down concerns about the raid. There has been a widespread call for a full inquiry to firmly establish the facts, given that possible war crimes are at issue. But PM Bill English instead malignly maintains that “Hit And Run” has many flaws, and that consequently there is no case for any inquiry (see the rebuttal of such charges by co-author Jon Stephenson, ibid.).

Propaganda’s Tangled Web

Most absurdly and transparently, English has used a minor confusion over the nomenclature of village/hamlet locations and their exact location to try and avoid accountability (e.g., his reply to Question 8 in Question Time, Parliament TV, 5/4/17). This has even been openly panned by fair-minded journalists. For example, Vernon Small has aptly remarked that: “it is clear they (both the Government and the book’s authors) are all talking about the same raid on the same villages; and that PM English and the NZ Ministry of Defence (NZMD) are spin-doctoring ‘just flam’ and ‘cute semantics’ (“English Brings Key Loss Into Sharp Relief”, *Press*, 6/4/17).

English has relied on the US-led Coalition in Afghanistan and the touted “professionalism” of the NZMD for supposed evidence about any civilian casualties (ibid.). So, there is an enormous, self-serving conflict of interest at the core of the position of the Government. English has thus, most cynically, rejected the call for an inquiry in the face of the damning testimony of the

survivors of Operation Burnham, and the well documented record of civilian deaths and injuries. So, the cover-up continues. But the victims and their families are taking legal action.

To wrap up this particular section, I want to highlight and reinforce the parallels between President Trump's raid on Yemen in January 2017 and the NZ-coordinated Operation Burnham. Both raids were obviously very much so-called "kill and capture" raids; both failed egregiously; both resulted in the deaths and injuries of innocent civilians, i.e. the usual Anglo-American "collateral damage", with US helicopters firing indiscriminately as normal "best practice"; and both raids were searingly exposed by the documentary work of intrepid journalists.

Technology Unleashed!

In Stanley Kubrick's 1968 iconic and very prophetic science fiction film "2001: A Space Odyssey", the opening short sequence finishes with arresting symbolism: a killer ape – *who is celebrating victory with the innovation of intra-species warfare!* – tosses up a bone weapon into the sky to become a space satellite. This satellite is sometimes interpreted as an orbiting nuclear space weapon, or even perhaps a super ray-gun platform ("2001: A Space Odyssey #2 Movie Clip – From Bone To Satellite" (1968) HD: YouTube, 31/5/11). So much of the development of modern technology has, of course, been driven by the pursuit of warfare, with the latest most dramatic manifestation being the spinoff economic and recreational application of domestic drones.

Meantime, the West, including allies like Israel, is now ironically confronted with the warfare use of drones even by non-State (or would-be State) actors such as IS, Lebanon-based Shia group Hezbollah, and Sunni group Hamas in Gaza, the Palestinian enclave entrapped within Israeli-controlled territory. Regularly targeted by Anglo-American drones like Predator, Reaper, and Watchkeeper, Islamic State is hitting back, as in the siege of Mosul, however crudely. The sophistication and firepower of such mainly makeshift weaponry will only inevitably increase over time.

Some such drones have already proved impressive. For example, Israel, which has specialised in drone manufacture and exports, famously failed "to shoot down a mysterious drone that crossed its northern border with Syria" during July 2016 ("Drone A Costly Embarrassment", *Press*, 20/7/16). The failed attempts, over "almost an hour", involved "two Patriot surface-to-air missiles", as well as a fighter jet missile (*ibid.*).

This particular "mysterious drone" with the charmed life was apparently a reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) belonging to Hezbollah. The militant organisation draws on Iranian technology for its UAVs. Yet, ironically: "Israel was one of the first armies to use UAVs, and it quickly became a world leader in the technology: 41% of all drones exported between 2001 and 2011 came from Israeli firms, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a think-tank" (*ibid.*).

Karma Cometh!

Israel has carved out a bloody role for itself as a major weapons merchant and middleman in the global arms industry trade. It has gloated over the gory success of its small Harop drone, which made "its combat debut in April (2016) during clashes in the break-away Caucasus republic of Nagorno-Karabakh", flying "into a bus full of Armenian soldiers, killing seven" (*ibid.*).

This Harop drone attack was made by Azerbaijani forces in their conflict with Christian Armenia. In the tangled, internecine politics of Central Asia, Israel has been a big weapons supplier to the Muslim Shia-majority former Russian republic of Azerbaijan for well over a decade. In exchange, Azerbaijan is Israel's largest oil supplier. Since 2009 Israel has also had a significant drone export outlet from co-production manufacturing plants in Azerbaijan. Moreover, Israel and the Azerbaijani Aliyev dynasty dictatorship actually engage in intelligence and military cooperation against Shia Iran.

"In Azerbaijan, torture, police abuse, and excessive use of force are rife" ("Human Rights In Azerbaijan",

Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Azerbaijan). Azerbaijan is effectively backed by the West in its geopolitical games, whatever the pretended concern on occasion about the state of human rights there ("List Of Authoritarian Regimes Supported By The United States", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_authoritarian_regimes_supported_by_the_United_States).

But Israel is now suffering some blowback karma. "In recent years, though, Israel's foes have tried to catch up and develop UAV technology for themselves", as illustrated by the Hezbollah drone incident ("Drone A Costly Embarrassment", *op. cit.*). More karma is no doubt on the way. Indeed, "Israel expects that Hezbollah will use offensive UAVs in a future war" (*ibid.*). Hamas has "its own fleet of primitive drones" (*and apparently not so primitive UAVs!*) in action against Israel for reconnaissance purposes (*ibid.*). The dangers of the increasing weaponisation and employment of ever smarter drones in various theatres of conflict is evident enough (e.g., "The New Eurasian Drone Wars", *The National Interest Blog*, www.nationalinterest.org, 12/5/16).

In more and more conflicts around the globe, the technologically contrived trip-wire is becoming increasingly fraught with the perils of dangerous escalation, especially when linked with cyber-warfare. The worsening conflict in Yemen is a glaring case in point, with Trump's Special Forces raid in January 2017 portending greater military intervention, along with the ongoing drone attacks. This new threat for Yemen comes within the context of a country whose people have suffered widespread psychological stress from continual drone attacks ever since January 2002 ("Death From Above: How American Drone Strikes Are Devastating Yemen", *Rolling Stone*, www.rollingstone.com, 14/4/14).

The Dr Strangelove Syndrome

As exemplified again and again in the history of warfare, technological innovation is proving a critical determining factor in shaping the course of conflict (for an excellent article on

drone warfare and its development see “Death From The Sky: Drones And Aerial Warfare”, by Doug Craig, *PR* 45, June 2013, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-bac-kissues/pr45.pdf>).

In the touted series of “Revolutions In Warfare”, fleets of robotic drones are seen as the wave of the future. Their operations are intended to include the death squad tracking and targeting of the Pentagon's enemies (“The Coming Swarm”, *60 Minutes*, Prime TV, 25/4/17). This new range of military hardware, controlled by automated artificial intelligence, includes the “Sea Hunter” autonomous unmanned surface vehicle (USV), specially designed to locate diesel submarines belonging to China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea (ibid.). It can be added that there is a whole spectrum of artificial intelligence application of robotic warfare hardware. Underwater fleets of drones are even being trialed to map out marine terrain for amphibious landing craft, among other ventures.

There is a very real future risk of drones delivering small nuclear or chemical/biological weapons, whether supposedly surgically targeted or not (“Russia Tests New Underwater Nuclear Drone Amid Growing Tensions With The West”, *Independent*, www.independent.co.uk, 10/2/16; “Nuclear-Armed Drones? They May Be Closer Than You Think”, *The National Interest Blog*, www.nationalinterest.org, 13/10/16). The latter article cited here is written by a couple of US-oriented militarists. Among other things, it illustrates the dangerous proclivities of the very specialised, “tunnel vision” mindset tracks followed by such abstractly theoretical strategists.

As emphasised, President Trump has endorsed nuclear weapons for certain allies. For a chilling insight into the kind of Dr Strangelove thinking at the American strategic level supporting his views, check out the reasoning (if you can call it that!) shown by Dr Christine Leah, one of the authors of the *National Interest* article on drones just cited above (Christine M Leah, Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org>).

Leah is quite happy in her eminently

muddled, vague way to promote nuclear proliferation, including nuclear armament for Japan, South Korea, and even Australia. She has even written a book justifying American nuclear weapons and strategy as a supposedly permanent form of deterrence over conventional weaponry (“The Consequences Of American Nuclear Disarmament”, 2017). *Freud's death (aggression) instinct is certainly thriving these days!!*

You can sign the online petition to stop the spread of killer drones at *RootsAction* http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6180. Ed.

Demented Delusions

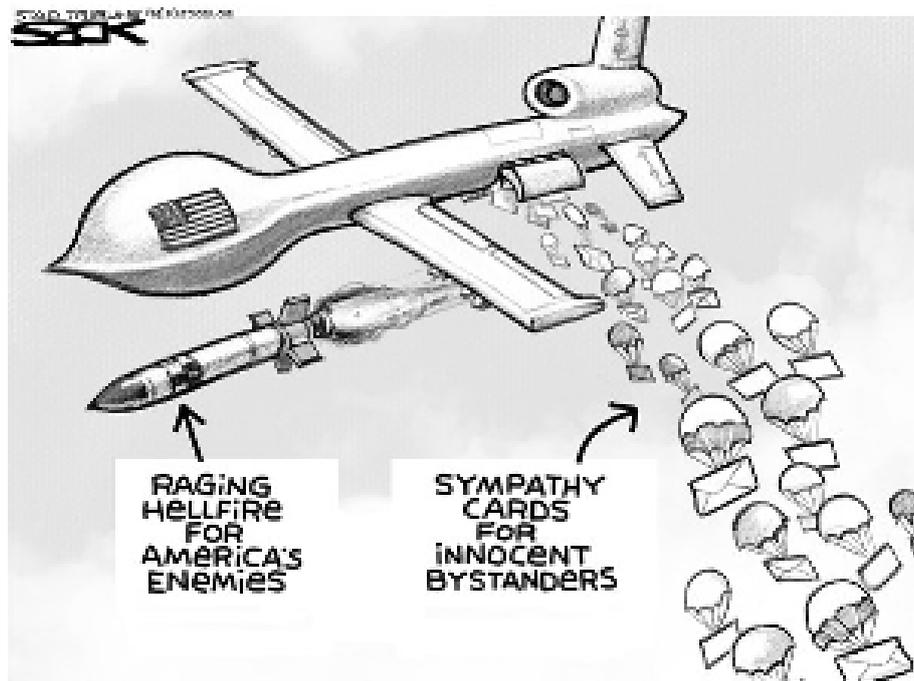
Meanwhile, Charles Finny, a former NZ diplomat, worries about international trade failing again as back in the 1930s and the consequent emergence of “an era of dictators”, ushering in another world war (“Trump's Rise An Isolationist Slide”, *Sunday Star Times (SST)*, 6/11/16). The Western version of growth has achieved its success by plundering both nature and peoples over centuries. Globalised capitalism is in direct contradiction with the Earth as the basis for human life (e.g., “The Global Environmental Crisis”, World Future Fund, www.worldfuturefund.org; “15 Current Environmental Problems That Our World Is Facing”, Conserve Energy Future, www.conserve-energy-future.com).

But, ominously, even as the Anthro-

pocene environmental crisis deepens both within Aotearoa/NZ and worldwide, the prevailing capitalist mindset is even more in denial and fantasy wish-fulfilment. It is closely coupled with both aggressive and retrogressive reactions. For deluded free trade pundits and so many others in Establishment circles like Finny & co. we can grow global capitalism interminably. Certainly, President Trump with his pursuit of fossil fuels, etc., is now set to destroy the biosphere.

In truth, the West has been engaged in resource wars for decades and this competition is leading to open confrontation with both Russia and China, with the growing risks even officially recognised now in our new defence posture. We have seen above how this is mandated by the American Establishment. The horrific threat of nuclear war is looming once again (for China, see e.g., www.chinapoliticsweekly.com, issue no. 120, 9/1/17). Yet former NZ diplomat, public servant, and Pentagon acolyte, Gerald Hensley, who exemplifies Freud's “death instinct” in action, actually eagerly embraces this prospect (*Listener*, 18/11/16, “Nuking Ourselves In The Foot”).

As an old Cold War warrior, Hensley was always deeply opposed to the institution of our nuclear free zone. If you want to understand the militarist bureaucratic mindset and its suicidal stupidity, then his opinions stand as stark testimony. He can actually refer to what he calls



the “Long Peace”, and blindly say that “even after 70 years *there is no end in sight to this happy situation*” [my emphasis] (ibid.). So much for the fate of so many people in poorer countries during this period! Yet, at the same time, he warns about a rising China as heralded by “clashes in the South China Sea”, indicating “new risks” (ibid.).

However, praise be, Hensley spies “the *first green shoots* (my emphasis) of a renewed interest in defence”, and a willingness to build up our military commitment to an ANZUS-type alliance (ibid.). The horrifying legacy of President Obama’s Administration is that he has set the US and the West up for both war with Russia and China, which President Trump might soon bring on.

His aims of driving NATO up to Russia’s borders in the Ukraine and elsewhere, coupled with the so-called “Pivot to the Pacific” against China, have created the conditions for very dangerous confrontation. Gerald Hensley wants NZ to help prime the fuse, obscenely promoting the idea (thanks to the *Listener!*) that we actually wasted 32 years in implementing our nuclear ban in 1984.

Military Madness

Gerald Hensley wants us to be fully integrated back into the American doomsday machine and so get properly and fully nuked! Look out! - the Social Darwinist madmen are not only alive and well in Washington. Hensley wants us to do our bit for nuclear weapon enthusiast President Trump – *such fun!!* Back in the days of a more public-spirited *Listener*, there was once an article by Gordon Campbell, warning of the dangers of the American enthusiasm for small, tactical nuclear weapons, as well as the super-power’s related policies undermining the theory of deterrence and the NPT (“Baby Nukes”, *Listener* 14/6/03). But then this was back in the days when the *Listener* more truly reflected its title, rather than its current status as just another foreign-owned, Rightwing magazine.

Militarist bureaucrats like Hensley evidently never reflect on the ludicrous obscenity of it all but are

instead happy to play their part in preparations for the final Holocaust. Moreover, the *Listener*, as the vehicle for Hensley’s article, seems keen to be a zombie cheerleader for WWII, like so much of the Western media these days (“Media Warmongering 1”, op. cit.). The foreign owned/controlled mainstream media have certainly welcomed NZ back into the US nuclear warfighting fold.

Roiling The Ocean Of Peace

Especially since 9/11, the US has increasingly merged in its militarist market strategy both geopolitical economic and military objectives. It has extended its global reach into the states of the former Soviet empire and also into the coastal waters of China. The echoes and ironies of history abound. In tracing the rise of Japanese militarism prior to the attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, Edwin Hoyt remarked that: “There were differences in degree and approach in all these (Japanese government) Cabinets, but one fact stood out – no matter the Cabinet from 1937 on, the march of militarism was steady and speedy. In February 1939, the Japanese navy occupied Hainan Island off the south coast of Kwantung province of China” (“Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict 1853-1952”, Guild Publishing, 1986, p182). At the time, the French also felt threatened because their colony of Indo-China “was directly threatened by the move” (ibid.).

This Social Darwinist rivalry had its roots back in the mid-19th Century. US Commander Matthew Perry, in 1853/4, led “a naval expedition to induce Japan to establish diplomatic relations with the US. Concluding that Japan’s centuries-old policy of isolation would be ended only by a show of force, Perry... convinced the Japanese to accept his message (signalled by warships at the ports of Uraga and Odo [Tokyo]) ... and concluded the first treaty between Japan and the US, allowing US trading privileges and opening the Far East to US influence” (“Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia”, 2003, p1438). This was “free trade” imposed at gun-point, and a key step in capitalist globalisation. Such militarist coercion went hand in hand with the parallel Opium Wars inflicted by Western

nations on China.

Whether imposed by force or by so-called “soft power”, the West has driven the “progress” of free trade at the accumulating expense of both peoples and the global ecology, which necessarily underpins any human well-being. During the 1980s, we faced the completely concocted “Soviet Threat” in the Pacific, as so malignly staged by the warmongering Reagan Administration. In recent times, the stakes have been raised once more. The Obama Administration demonstrated its resolve to counter the rise of China with a show of military force. President Obama proclaimed the so-called “Pivot” to the Asia-Pacific in 2012, a move already manifest in 2011. In 2017, we have the bellicosity of the new Trump Administration.

There have been two areas of particular international concern in the northern Pacific region: the mounting tensions in the long existent standoff on the Korean Peninsula, as well as a similar trend in the dispute-ridden South/East China Seas. Disagreements and conflict in both these zones have ramped up of late, with the Korean Peninsula currently constituting the most precarious flashpoint for major conflict. By mid-April 2017 the Trump Administration had sent a naval strike force, coordinated with Japanese warships, in a purported effort to try and deter North Korea from its nuclear weapons development programme. These military threats are coupled with tightening economic sanctions.

The Challenge Of Peacemaking On The Korean Peninsula

Following up on the history of US-North Korea relations, we can note that another critical turning point for the worst had come with the entry of North Korea to membership of the nuclear weapons club in 2006. The US then stepped up pressure on North Korea to try and stifle its nuclear weapons programme. But the results so far have proved very counter-productive.

The uncertainties and possible miscalculations involved in all of this are now rapidly mounting up to the risk of a real man-made disaster. Treating North Korea as part of an

alleged “axis of evil”, and as a “rogue” or pariah state, has only reinforced the paranoia of the regime’s leadership. Regime survival is its priority, and so its stance is essentially self-defensive, however bizarre and outrageous the rhetoric at times.

After test firing a ballistic missile from a submarine in April 2016, North Korea said it would stop its nuclear weapons test if the US were to stop its “nuclear military exercises” with South Korea (“Nuclear Test Offer Unlikely To Succeed”, *Press*, 25/4/16). It claims that the US has driven it to this “self-defence” posture, warning of potentially “catastrophic results...for the whole entire world as well” (*ibid.*). Since then, however, newly installed President Trump has hugely and stupidly ratcheted up the rhetoric and tensions, along with plenty of military firepower. Of late, in turn, North Korea has even explicitly threatened to nuke Australia, which is marching proudly as usual in “lock-step” with its US puppet-master.

The sober assessment of the US intelligence community is that even North Korea would only use nuclear weapons in very extreme circumstances (“The Changing Military Balance In The Koreas And Northeast Asia”, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, www.csis.org). But the power-crazed President Trump now seems intent on provoking the paranoid, embattled regime in North Korea to feel that it is trapped in very extreme circumstances! Trump is obviously quite prepared to sacrifice millions of innocent Korean lives in the most horrible way possible - let alone any other regional “collateral damage” - with no apparent risk to the US homeland. The American power elite is absolutely dedicated to fighting wars as much as possible on other people’s lands and waters.

Peoples Of The Pacific Need To Pivot For Peace

In March 2017, the US started deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system, a new anti-ballistic missile weapon to South Korea, ostensibly to deter aggression from North Korea (“THAAD Deployment Begins Amid



THAAD protest, South Korea, 2017.

Increasing Tensions Between China and South Korea”, www.voanews.com, 7/3/17). Even a Voice of America (VOA) report concluded by highlighting the arguments against THAAD deployment mounted by the South Korean political opposition (*ibid.*).

We noted this opposition earlier above. North Korea has responded to the THAAD deployment by testing more ballistic missiles, including one landing near enough to disturb Japan (“N. Korea Missile Alarms Japan”, *Press*, 4/8/16). Most worryingly, too, China (and even Russia) sees the THAAD deployment as a destabilising threat to its national security. The partial, ongoing, piecemeal implementation of Reagan’s “Star Wars” missile defence in certain regions across the Earth is undermining nuclear deterrence, and further destabilising international relations. But, in general, the American media have been in typical warmongering mode. Their perverse disinformation and propaganda is regularly relayed via our own TV channels and other outlets.

Ever the since the US “Pivot to the Asia/Pacific” in 2011/12, tensions have been mounting in this region, with relations between the US and China, and the US and North Korea at issue. North Korea may well be a uniquely totalitarian regime but more conciliatory American moves, ideally in conjunction with China, could surely elicit greater moderation on both sides, instead of continually and dangerously aggrava-

ting this entrenched standoff. The regime’s stance is demonstrably defensive in the face of American belligerence. Along with THAAD, the US is now permanently stationing missile capable drones in South Korea.

Furthermore, the US in its blind arrogance lays down unacceptable conditions, insisting that the North give up its nuclear weapons programme first before any negotiations. I also noted earlier in this article how a critical blunder by the GW Bush Administration precipitated the North Korean nuclear weapons programme. Currently, the US is very conflicted in its relationship with China, which compromises effective cooperation on North Korea. The latter, too, is bound to China by a defence treaty.

Turning Crisis Into Opportunity?

We can apply here an American maxim, ironically stemming from a misinterpretation of the Chinese language, that enjoins action on the basis of “crisis” really representing “opportunity”. Such action is now absolutely imperative given the immediately compounding conditions for conflict on both the Korean Peninsula and the East/South China Seas. Aotearoa/NZ could make a positive contribution, e.g., in academic/student liaison and education, and agricultural expertise (“Is NZ Safe From North Korea’s Threat Of Nuclear War?”, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/91773236/is-nz-safe-from-north-koreas-threat-of->

nuclear-war, 23/4/17).

Gerry Brownlee, our former Defence Minister, and now our new Foreign Affairs Minister, slavishly echoes the US imperial line in labelling North Korea a “rogue state” with “evil intent”. Hearteningly, however, Brownlee has come in for some caustic criticism for his Trumpist sentiments (e.g., Brian Rudman, “When The Lunatics Take Over The Asylum, NZ Is A Good Place To Be”, *Opinion, NZ Herald*, 26/4/17).

An innovative, pathfinding peace activist in Aotearoa/NZ, John Gallagher, has long argued for an approach that would positively engage in mediating for peace between conflicting parties (see his “Korean Nuclear Standoff In Context Of International Rivalries: Can Nuclear-Free NZ Help Out?”, *PR 52*, November 2016, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwcB6Aysm_HHOW5iQWdHdHhaczQ/view). NZ is now oriented to China economically but committed to the US militarily. We have an ongoing challenge to try and play a more constructive role in the tangled geopolitical disputes and competing agendas of the various players in the Northern Pacific.

Reinvigorating The Peace Movement

The links with peace activism elsewhere are clear. We desperately need to help grow this global movement. Without far greater efforts at pre-emptive peace-making, conflicts will soon erupt into open warfare with Earth-shaking consequences. Only by adopting a more independent, neutralist position can NZ be taken seriously as a honest mediator. We must resist economic bondage to China, disconnect from the Pentagon's doomsday machine, and work more closely with American NGOs, and the rest of the overseas peace movement for a future worth living.

Endnote: Thanks are due to John Gallagher for some very useful information he researched off the Internet. John has an excellent international peace-making Website at: <http://www.village-connections.com/blog/> ■

REVIEWS

- Jeremy Agar

HIT & RUN Nicky Hager & Jon Stephenson Potton and Burton Nelson, 2017

Jon Stephenson is the journalist who first reported on events in Afghanistan and thus incurred the wrath of the Prime Minister. Nicky Hager is a researcher, who's also previously looked at Afghanistan, notably in his “Other People's Wars”, which I reviewed in *Peace Researcher* 42, in November 2011 (<http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr42.pdf>). He, of course, has been copping it from Governments for years. Hager & Stephenson have teamed up now to investigate an incident in 2010, when a Special Air Service (SAS) raid went badly wrong.

For years, the Government had said that no civilians had been killed. It's now admitted that they had been. Without the tenacity of Stephenson and Hager, the incident would have remained unknown to the public; the voices of witnesses and relatives would have remained mute. That much is clear.

Inevitable Official Evasion & Diversion

In the days following publication we were treated to the inevitable official evasion and diversion until Hager, who was responsible for the writing, while Stephenson covered the in situ aspects, admitted to having the wrong name for the village that was attacked. This error was insignificant in that the story of the attack is otherwise surprisingly intimate. We're provided with maps and Googled photos identifying the names of all the individuals involved in the tiny villages. One such picture is of the homes of four affected locals, all related. Another shows a second location, with all the relevant sites marked.

So an inquiry would be able to establish with confidence the accuracy or otherwise of the basic facts. Governments of whatever stripe don't want to expose themselves to the sort of charges the authors would like to bring, and the Government's unwillingness to look closely should not be taken to mean that there's nothing to be seen here, folks, move on please.

Hager and Stephenson claim that the raid was motivated by revenge, the intended targets being the insurgents who detonated a bomb that killed an NZ soldier. In a radio interview (on RNZ, 26/3/17) Stephenson opined that: “You don't go around like a hammer looking for a nail”. Whether or not the motivation was hot-headed, SAS units are by their nature inclined to wield the hammer.



Was the attack, in which 21 villagers were killed or wounded, a war crime? According to a human rights lawyer a war crime has occurred when the military has failed to distinguish between civilians and combatants, when they do not tend to the wounded, or when they destroy property for no military reason. The authors don't say so in so many words, but their narrative is shouting a guilty verdict on all these three grounds. Any ambiguity as to responsibility would likely be based on the role of the helicopters which the NZ SAS called in to carry out the raid, these being part of the American forces.

Given the seriousness of their accusation, the inevitable reaction has been that Stephenson and Hager have come up with "nothing new" (Bill English) and "a surprise" (Gerry Brownlee). Denials of this type are the default position of the Government - any Government at any time it's on the receiving end of bad news. Officialdom says either that (a) the charges are boring old news or (b) that they're outrageous. Or, as here, you throw in both (a) and (b). It doesn't matter that they're contradictory. The idea is always to shoot the messenger, to delay and divert. Only hippies and peaceniks are paying attention to the facts.

Our present Prime Minister, like the previous one, will not expect political damage from the book. He will calculate, almost certainly correctly, that his party won't lose votes in the imminent election over an event in Afghanistan. Other issues press more directly. Stuff happens, his supporters will shrug. It could even be that, as with the Kim Dotcom and Glenn Greenwald election eve meeting in Auckland last time round (in 2014), it stirs up the base.

Upholding Our Highest Values

The Government knows that media reports will back its response, especially – if paradoxically – the news is bad. In the first days after the launch of "Hit & Run", when those with a ready access to the media seek to "control the narrative", commentators rushed to blunt Stephenson and Hager's sharp message, either by appealing to the "fog of war" gambit or by pointing out that Hager isn't the sort of bloke with

whom you'd share a beer.

Hager is an investigative researcher respected internationally, which indicates to the morally lazy that he's nothing but a "peace activist". He's motivated politically. He's a master of manipulating the media. It's possible that some of the journalists who prefer to stick to recipes and "lifestyle" anecdotes do believe this sort of thing. If Hager's the only writer of his kind in the whole country, then he must be an odd sort of bloke.

But a moment's thought suggests what's wrong with this analysis. We all have preferences and interests. If conservatives and conformists don't recognise that, in this, they are no different from Hager, they should get out more. Hager's public profile has been of consistent purpose. It's the investigation that matters. The insultingly improbable implication behind the attempts to marginalise him is that – in contrast to Government people - he's willing to bend the story to suit his biases.

Those who would remind us of the daily excesses that go unremarked and unpunished should not think that one incident in Afghanistan involving the NZ military is thereby of little concern. The repeated suggestion from State leaders has been that Hager's refusal to accept their self-serving compromises makes him less than a true blue Kiwi. Let's accept the contrary: that he is upholding our highest values. ■

THE POST-SNOWDEN ERA: Mass Surveillance And Privacy In New Zealand Kathleen M Kuehn BWB Texts, Wellington, 2016

Kathleen Kuehn, an academic specialising in media studies, has provided an intriguing analysis of what's behind those once-were-deflated

balls at Waihopai. She introduces the topic of surveillance with the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Two hundred years ago he proposed that prisons be designed so that inmates could be watched without their knowing. This, he hoped, would induce good behaviour, as they would never be sure if they were being observed. The other famous example is George Orwell's dystopian '1984' (written in 1948), in which Big Brother has total control.

Big Brother still fits the autocratic regimes like North Korea or (increasingly and recently) Turkey which Donald Trump admires, but the revelations from Edward Snowden indicate that in "Five Eyes" countries "surveillance can no longer be understood as consisting of technological or institutional silos of activity but rather as the assemblage of formerly distinct technologies and practices. Its value is its convergence". Big Brother, the dictator who rules by keeping the population ignorant and deluded by mixing fear and paranoia, has left the building. Post-Snowden we do it to ourselves through our gadgets.

Metadata

The forerunner in New Zealand of what has become "Five Eyes" satellite surveillance was in 1943, when the combination of the Second World War and (what is now) primitive technology meant that spying was uncontroversial and little discussed. Now we're talking "metadata", the ability of the spies to watch and listen to virtually everyone and everything.

"Big data", Kuehn suggests, "is not fundamentally good or bad. Consider its productive uses in disaster management, early intervention programmes, stock market valuation or environmental risk assessment. Data-driven decisions are not of themselves sinister but their capacity for misuse is vast".

Kuehn gives examples of New Zealand councils' use of "big data" technologies. Wellington has a public-private partnership with Japan's NEC, to provide "solutions for society", and Christchurch has a "Sensing City" – "to measure variables such as traffic flow, footfall, cell-phone traffic, noise, luminosity, tem-

... 5 EYES IN QUEENSTOWN ...



In NZ over the last decade the GCSB, with 350 employees, has enjoyed an 150% budget increase to an annual \$90 million. Kuehn notes without comment that this is post-9/11, but should we assume that the jihadists are the sole reason for the spend up? Kuehn cites a remark John Key made about the activities at Waihopai, to the effect that if he were free to tell us the facts, “the more fanciful claims” made by critics wouldn’t be

perature, energy use, and water consumption”.

Two questions: Who knew? And are uses like these on the “productive” or “sinister” side of the ledger? Deploying computer power to assess and analyse vast amounts of information is a no-brainer. Of course. On the other hand, the relationship of powerful corporations in a “partnership” with an NZ council is going to be one where the foreign billionaires have all the expertise and influence. Decisions will be made in the interests of the corporations, no matter how unsinister their motives might be. It will be said by the vastly overpaid council Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) that the relationship is operational only, a means to efficiency, but this attitude is itself ideological.

Kuehn hints at what she might think by continuing her account by reminding us that when the central Government politician Tim Groser was lobbying to head the World Trade Organisation, the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) spied on rival candidates from Brazil, Costa Rica, Ghana, Jordan, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico and South Korea, while the US National Security Agency (NSA), spied on Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members, energy firms and government oil and finance officials in Venezuela, Mexico, Russia and Brazil. Echelon

“customers” include US Trade Representatives, the US Treasury, and the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and Energy (*Echelon is the code name for the electronic spying programme. Ed.*).

If NEC is overwhelmingly the senior partner in its relationship with a council in NZ, Echelon is the master of the universe. Four of the “Five Eyes” are junior partners to the US hegemon. NSA makes the rules; its Echelon programme seeks to “collect all”. For the masters of the universe, the “convergence” allowed by digital progress means there is no ultimate distinction between the needs of commercial interests and the needs of State agencies. Surveillance is all about the hegemon’s “security”, and that takes many forms.

Hoovering It All Up

To give some idea of what’s going on, in March 2013 the NSA collected 97 billion emails and 124 billion phone calls. In another 30 day period it collected 70 million pieces of metadata from France, 60 million from Spain, and 23 million from Denmark. Lots of the spying is contracted out, consuming up to 70% of the US intelligence budget (Edward Snowden worked for a private firm). The NSA employs 30,000 and contracts out another 60,000 jobs on an annual budget of \$US10 billion.

believed. But he would say that, wouldn’t he? Kuehn sensibly remarks that as we don’t know how many (or if) terrorist plots have been stopped, the subject can’t usefully be debated.

NZ telecoms are required by law “to assist a surveillance agency in the interception of telecommunications”. Larger firms have “to ensure that every public telecommunications network or service the operator owns, controls, operates or provides in NZ has an interception capability”. If you’re a telecom firm in NZ you have to allow spying.

“To live”. Kuehn summarises, “is to be surveyed”. She quotes Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google. In 2010, he warned that “we know where you are. We know where you’ve been. We can more or less know what you’re thinking about.” And that was pre-Facebook. How envious Big Brother would be.

“We Need To Make Surveillance Strange Again”

Kuehn discusses “social sorting”, the use of “convergence” technology to hoover up vast amounts of information, the aim being to “identify behaviour before it happens”. As an example, the NZ Ministry of Social Development looks at the risk of a baby suffering child abuse by considering 132 variables. That’s a huge number. Some of the va-

riables, selected by human beings with their own assumptions, surely have to be misleading. Kuehn points out that the line between social sorting and policies like racial profiling must be faint. Social sorting “can limit life chances when it involves racial, ethnic categories, religion, class, gender”.

A Saudi national was deported from New Zealand as he had lived and trained in the US with a 9/11 hijacker, was a member of an Islamic cultural centre, and had trained in NZ as a pilot. Is this sort of profiling justifiable? The Saudi aroused thought on three grounds. How many “profile” facts do you need to step up from coincidence to concern? How specific are the behaviours? Or are the categories too arbitrary to be more than prejudices?

Kuehn concludes by observing that, post-Dotcom and Snowden, despite widespread unease over the spying, a “cohesive social movement never formed”. Seeing surveillance as a personal privacy issue, she argues, misses the point. Post-Snowden, the big data is a threat to liberty, but as a society, she muses, “we accept surveillance as part of what enables us to be free”. She quotes another observer: “We need to make surveillance strange again”. ■

TODAY WE DROP BOMBS, TOMORROW WE BUILD BRIDGES

Peter Gill

Zed Books, London, 2016

Half a century ago, when the US was mired in one of its most unhelpful wars, the military adopted WHAM, an acronym for Winning Hearts And Minds. The war in Vietnam never worked out for the Americans, partly because the North Vietnamese employed successful guerilla tactics, merging into the local population so that the Ameri-

cans were forever veering between reward and punishment. When the Yanks arrived in a village, did it promise gifts or guns? In the bomb-ravaged villages of Vietnam WHAM would have sounded only violent, something to avoid please.

In Vietnam the effort to win over local sentiment was never going to succeed, but present conflicts are so much more complex, the allegiances so much less certain. This time round, when the stated need is to build trust and restore some sort of harmony, the Yanks would have done well to put such tin-eared language away. But WHAM is still bounding about in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in Iraq and Syria.

Peter Gill is interested in this interplay between the demands of civilian society and the logic of the military. Humanitarian work has to be seen as neutral. Aid workers volunteer because they want to help the suffering and the wounded, regardless of which side they're from. For its bravery and moral consistency Gill particularly admires Medicins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders). MSF refuses to take money from governments.

This is one of the reasons they're successful. Without a clean reputation, especially if they're from Western countries, aid organisations can expect to be treated with suspicion by local civilians and with hostility by local insurgents. It's not just that the foreigners might be spies. MSF workers are regularly killed *because* of the respect in which they're held. This is an ideological, strategic and military threat to the likes of ISIS.

Consider the example Gill gives of a Save the Children school for girls in Afghanistan. He interviews an Afghan teacher who is delighted with the progress she's seeing in the girls. That won't please the local jihadists. They don't care for education or the rights of females, and they have good reason to fear that they won't be able to count on the school's ideological support. Indeed, the teacher wants a stable, Western-backed Government so her work can continue.

Gill notes that the West contributes to “development” even as it displays “strong nerves and leadership”. He

worries that the West has a “waning interest” in staying on in Afghanistan, where his hope is that “social progress will outlast the military and institutional impact of the occupation”. This is problematic. The waning interest is in committing troops, so is Gill in favour of Western intervention?

Pristine Neutrality Not Feasible

When humanitarian groups rely on protection from the US Army and its allies – as ultimately is the inevitable fact, regardless of the motivations and intentions of individual aid workers – it is not feasible to expect a pristine neutrality. The belligerents see civilian activity in political, and hence military, terms.

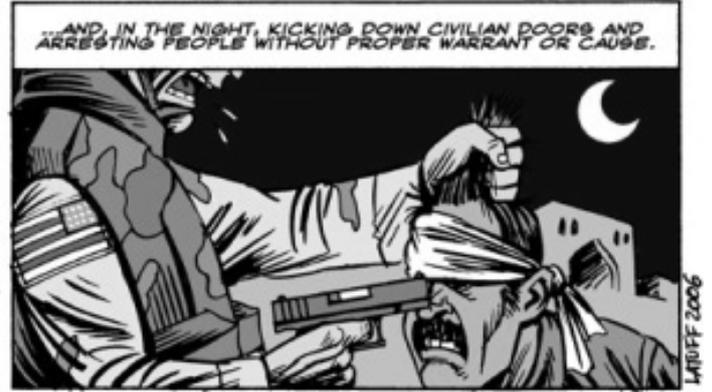
Pakistan has seen more than a fair share of nastiness and confusion. An attempt was made to find Osama bin Laden through a local doctor who doubled as a US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent by checking DNA samples from a vaccination project close to where bin Laden was thought to be in hiding (he was.) When this became known, the vaccination programme was shunned as yet another American treachery. And, as a result, polio, which should have been eradicated, still attacks children (this incident was not, in fact, part of the polio programme, which was administered through mouth drops. It was done through an anti-hepatitis initiative, through needle injection).

Another local doctor subsequently suggested to the author that Taliban opposition to public health was “method not madness”. He thought the Taliban were in effect saying, “stop the drones and we will let you vaccinate”. They can't credibly claim to be anti-West so they say it's anti-Islam. That's a possibility.

Another possibility is that opposition in all the affected places is in essence an expression of religious fundamentalism. A leader of the Somali Islamists is cited:

“People should not be misguided by those claiming that they are supporting the country. People should extend their hand to Allah... Muslim people stay away from what is called the humanitarian agencies that bring bad things...” Is this

TALES OF IRAQ WAR



<http://tales-of-iraq-war.blogspot.com>

stance religious or political? Is it naïve or crafty?

Wherever people are denied access to accurate knowledge and political agency, conspiracy theories fill the gap. In Pakistan, which was also being ravaged by an earthquake and floods, they're almost inevitable, and, if tensions and suffering is the daily fate of villagers, sinister plots will be invented even without the smoking gun of a CIA mole.

Pakistan's officialdom, its motives always opaque, likes to stir the pot by demanding that aid workers submit to applying for an NOC. An NOC is a No Objection Certificate. People are deemed objectionable on any submerged pretext.

So, clarity and charity are rare commodities throughout the warring states. There is, however, one constant. Not just in Pakistan, but also in Syria and Yemen, hospitals are regularly attacked, so the plausible interpretation might be that while various parties have various motives at various times, a constant is the logic of terror.

But is "terror" the word to use when looking at the Taliban in Afghanistan or al-Shabaab in Somalia? Terrorism is the tactic of militarily weaker interests trying to subvert the established order. That's not the Taliban or al-Shabaab. They've always been there in their countries. They didn't ask for a Western presence of any sort. Why, they would ask, use a negative term to refer to their defence of a way of life which is no-one else's business? It was not only them who caused the chaos.

As needs be, Gill presents a spectrum of responses from the trouble spots. They're not always convincing. As is often the case, Western liberals, keen to show they're not into the policies of their national governments, can strive to see virtue and reason in their opponents when no virtue and reason is on display. Gill himself presents arguments which assume both staying on (to help out) and going away (to stop fighting).

The Difficulty Is In The Nature Of The Problem

On the one hand are different branches of national governments and international agencies simultaneously fighting wars and trying to clean up the aftermaths. On the other hand are the humanitarians, who come from many of the same economically advanced and liberal countries. It's not their fault that the big NATO states have done so much to create the mess. You don't hear them WHAMing on.

Gill cares about the topic. He's urgent. He writes well and he's spent a lot of time in the conflict zones. This is a reasoned and authoritative account. ■

INDEFENSIBLE

Paul Holden et al,
Zed Books, London, 2016

Paul Holden's point in his unremitting assault on the globe's armaments industries is that there's no upside. He argues that having lots of guns and bombs around not only

makes us all less safe but it's also bad for the global economy. Unlike critics such as Noam Chomsky and John Pilger, he's not focused on the big powers and their foreign policies so much as the logic of the global arms trade in itself, his sub-title being that there are "seven myths that sustain the global arms trade", and none of them are accurate. No-one comes out of it looking good.

US Is Biggest Spender

The one really big spender on weapons of destruction, massive or otherwise, is the USA, with 38% of the world's total – with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a whole comprising 56%. Then there is China at 13%, and Saudi Arabia and Russia, both at 5%. This latter trio, along with Africa, are the places where the big increases in weapons accumulation are going on.

There are signals now from Trump's Administration and NATO that NATO will ease away from a post-Cold War trend of reduced arms spending. Trump wants the NATO countries (essentially Western Europe and Canada) to reach 2% of national gross domestic product (GDP). Defence, as it's politely termed, consumes 16% of the US Federal budget, but Trump isn't really worried about the huge bills the US has to pay. They're a basis of his power and a major source of his mates' wealth. In fact, he wants to waste even more billions on his military, spending which can't achieve any rational purpose.

During his election campaign Trump banged on about how the US military was "falling behind" and how Europe had to play its part. It's not a

new gambit of course and it's never been remotely true. American military capacity is far greater than that of any combination of likely opponents. The whingeing about Europe is meaningless, an expression of Trump's puerile personality.

That's the background. In the foreground, Holden's emphasis is on the violence that makes the news. Like terrorism. The headline grabbing capacity of terrorism guarantees that we're never far from a new atrocity, but tactically the terrorists seldom win.

Neither, in this danse macabre, do the various "wars on terror". In 2008 RAND, a conservative US think tank, reported that in the years between 1968 and 2006 the world had hosted 648 terrorist groups. Yes, that's about 640 more than the rest of us knew about, which confirms the truth that terrorism as a tactic usually gets you nowhere. RAND concluded that of these 648 outfits 43% ended by being integrated into a political process, 40% disappeared through policing, and 10% achieved their main aim. The pertinent question for us now is, how many were defeated through the various "wars on terror"? A measly 7%.

The grossest of ISIS shootings or crashing cars can "only" kill hundreds of people at a time, while outright wars are killing many thousands all the time. Both are enabled by the global arms trade. There are no surprises when we get to read about the reasons for the mayhem. It's the permanent suspects, greed and stupidity. In 2014, three years into the hellish messes in Iraq and Syria, researchers in London reckoned that ISIS was using ammunition from 21 countries, which had been manufactured over 70 years. 20% of it since 2000 had come from the US of A.

Customers Include World's Poorest Countries

South Sudan, where the chaos is somewhere between permanent terrorism and old-fashioned war, is another current horror. It became an independent state a few years back, following a civil war - seemingly based on ethnicity and religion - and its secession from Sudan. Despe-



rately poor, South Sudan's people are among the globe's most deprived, while an elite which extracts profits from oil (it's always oil) enjoys protection offered by numerous outsiders.

These include France, Germany and Italy, which sold arms to both sides. Then there's Ukraine, which sent 110 tanks, 31 of which were hijacked en route by Somali pirates but enabled to complete their journey after a "ransom was paid". Russia sold South Sudan helicopters; China sold them ammunition; neighbours Kenya and Ethiopia cashed in by helping with transportation, and - of course - the USA with military training.

It wasn't enough. No amount could be. When an elite is corrupt and unaccountable and unconcerned that its citizens are starving, the more money it is allotted, the greater its incentive to steal yet more, the greater its incentive to make sure the war doesn't end, even if the cupboard's been looted bare. So it was that when it wanted to take on Sudan it had to pay another neighbour, Uganda, to send in mercenaries.

Meanwhile, despite having sent 110 tanks to Africa, Ukraine's military found itself with no equipment or training when the Russians annexed Crimea and stirred separatist sentiment in Ukraine's east. This was mainly because in the six years between 1992 and 1998, immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the new country "lost" \$US32 billion in military assets. It's

safe to assume that all of these guns and rockets and bombs - whatever - were sold to villainous clients. Who knows? Who cares?

At the same time in Rwanda, during the three months between April and July 1994, when Hutus controlled the State, they killed 800,000 Tutsis, having expended 70% of the country's budget over the four preceding years to amass guns and rockets - many of them probably from sources in Ukraine. Holden says that supply was so great that one gun could be had for the price of two beers. Despite the inevitable chaos that followed, the genocide itself was "highly organised".

As the news from the US all too often reminds us, when lots of people carry lots of guns, bad things happen. Trump says that it emanates from hombres crossing the Rio Grande, but Holden says Mexico has just one gun shop run by the military, while north of the border 2,200 weapon manufacturers make 4.2 million handguns a year.

The various authorities have had centuries to educate themselves, should they have wished to, about what happens when social norms are extinguished. In the 17th Century the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes used the expression "a state of nature" to refer to the sort of lack of authority or legitimacy we see in "failed states (as they are now called) like South Sudan and Somalia. In the state of nature life is "poor, solitary, nasty, brutish and short". Nothing can be certain or safe. We usually talk about whether

regimes are Leftist or Rightist; we ask what bloc of mates they claim. The correct prior question is: Who makes the rules and who agrees to abide by them? Otherwise, nothing will turn out as any of the actors hope.

There's a chapter on the official world's response to the killing, what's called the Arms Trade Treaty. Holden shows that it has loopholes which render it ineffective. Hobbes would have told the big powers and the United Nations that the treaty needed to have an enforcement mechanism that superseded the rights of any sovereign state. Yes, it won't happen.

Several of the myths relate to economic matters, it being widely believed that making weapons is a job creator. In fact a dollar spent that way employs fewer people than almost any other industry would employ.

It's also generally thought that bombs and all the high tech gizmos foster technological breakthroughs that ultimately benefit everyone. In the post-war era, Holden concedes, that was true, but no longer. Now

research and development emanates overwhelmingly from civilian needs (but even if it were true, is this an argument that should be accepted as valid? Was slavery a good idea if it kept the bars in Atlanta humming?).

Waste Of Money & Corruption

Speaking of which, perhaps the biggest single waste of money was Ronald Reagan's Star Wars folly. American taxpayers forked out \$US60 billion to build a shield which would catch incoming Soviet missiles. In Ronnie's eyes this would keep America safe. In Russia they thought this would give the US the ability to nuke them with impunity so they embarked on a huge increase in their arsenal to overwhelm the shield. If Star Wars had turned out to be 100% effective, Russia could have been eliminated. If it had been less than 100% effective, both America and Russia could have been eliminated. So we can be thankful that eventually the great men saw sense and cancelled the project.

So there's the low tech madness of African machetes and there's the high tech madness of Star Wars.

And always there's corruption. Researchers have claimed that of all global corruption – and it's ubiquitous – almost half is connected to the trade in arms. The equation of enormous public funds plus secrecy plus the power of elites equals the inevitable enrichment of nasty people.

And somewhere between the prospect of annihilation by nuclear war and the "lone wolf" outrages, "conventional war", as it's disturbingly dubbed, achieves its intended purposes about as rarely as does terrorism.

Holden could have given more space to the logic of Realpolitik, the constant habit of the world's placemen to do what's expedient rather than what's right. We're given the example of Tony Blair having shut down a British inquiry into Saudi corruption as it would have embarrassed an ally. Compromises of this sort, usually invisible as they are, constitute the daily anonymous work of men and women in nice suits in orderly capital cities. But it too is corruption at work. Blair's manipulations could have filled a book on their own. ■

OBITUARIES

MIKE FROST

- Murray Horton

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) was contacted by the family of Mike Frost, in Canada, to advise of his death, from cancer, in March 2017.



Mike was the former Canadian spy (he preferred to be called an intelligence officer) turned author and speaker whom we toured through NZ in 2001 (one month after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US, as it turned out).

I organised the tour but I last had contact with Mike in 2003 and had lost all trace of him. I have no idea how old he was – he didn't supply us with a CV or bio and I can find precious little about him online (which is what you'd expect from someone in his former line of work, where the idea is to be the watcher, not the watched) - but I'd hazard a guess at him being in his late 70s or into his early 80s.

His book "Spyworld" was published in 1994 and he was an ex-spy by then, having done 34 years as one, 19 of them working for the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), the Canadian equivalent of the NZ Government Communica-

tions Security Bureau (GCSB) and Canada's agency in the Five Eyes spying alliance.

"Not One Of Us"

ABC knew from the outset that he was "not one of us". Usually we deal with fellow peace activists or those researching US military bases or spy bases. Mike came from inside that world. He was not a whistleblower turned political radical and activist like former US Central Intelligence Agency agent Philip Agee (my obituary of him is in *Peace Researcher* 36, August 2008, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/pr-backissues/pr36.pdf>).

Nor was Mike the equivalent of Edward Snowden, who worked as a contractor for the US National Security Agency. But unlike those two, Mike could live in his own country as a free man and could travel and speak unhindered (I spent several years in the 1980s unsuccessfully

trying to organise an NZ speaking tour by Agee). Mike was the ex-spy we could get, and the one who was happy to be hosted by the Anti-Bases Campaign. But we certainly had major differences with him, as you would expect.

Some of those were around the different expectations of a group (ABC) which is motivated by commitment to a cause and an individual (Frost) who had to make a living as a speaker. I only found out more than a decade later just how much I'd pissed him off. Here's the relevant quote from my obituary of my dear friend and decades-long ABC colleague, Bob Leonard (which is in *Peace Researcher* 46, December 2013, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/46/pr46-011.html>):

"It was only in 2013, when going through his papers which ABC rescued from Bob's (quake-battered Christchurch) house, that I came across the following from his file on the 2001 Mike Frost speaking tour (which I organised). Frost and I had had a disagreement about money, namely the old chestnut of who was going to pay for what. Bob e-mailed him (27/5/01) to pour oil on troubled waters:

"This is just a personal message to you. I'm sure you know by now that Murray can be very blunt...Murray is a great guy and a brilliant worker. I've worked with him for nearly 20 years. But he sure can get up people's noses. I think you need to know that. Thanks for your patience and understanding. Please keep this message to yourself. That worked. Frost replied to Bob, the same day: 'Thanks for this, Bob. It clears up a lot of unpleasant feelings...Your email to me will go no further. I'm pretty good at keeping secrets!' And, indeed, I would never have found out about this piece of interpersonal diplomacy if not for the unique situation created by the quakes".

Thrown By 9/11

But other differences were definitely political. ABC worked on organising Mike's tour for 18 months and it was hit by a real curveball just a month before it happened, namely by those September 11th terrorist

attacks on the US. Old Mike was really thrown by that – he told us that it led to him throwing away his prepared speech for his NZ tour. Indeed, when he stood up to speak at his first public meeting here (in Christchurch), he started by saying: "I'm not sure what I'm going to say". He was so conflicted that, as the tour progressed, we scaled back our attempts to get him mainstream media coverage, because we weren't sure what he was going to say.

In relation to Osama bin Laden he declared: "We'll get him within six months". Obviously, he had reverted to including himself among that "we". But he was way out with his optimism. By the time that US Special Forces murdered bin Laden and dumped his body in the sea, in 2011, it was fully a decade later, bin Laden was irrelevant, and al Qaeda had been supplanted by altogether nastier and more formidable Islamic terrorist groups. But, all things considered, ABC regarded the Frost tour as a qualified success and it remains unique in being the only time we have hosted a real live ex-spy.

Bob Leonard was the ABCer who had most to do with Mike. Bob and Barbara hosted Mike and his wife Carole in their Christchurch home (it's all rather poignant thinking about this now. They had to abandon that home immediately after the February 2011 killer quake and Bob never returned to Christchurch. He was in very poor health at the time, which just got worse and worse until he died, in Wellington, in 2013. Barbara later sold the house "as is, where is", a uniquely Christchurch post-quake real estate phenomenon. She lives in Wellington now).

Bob accompanied Mike to the Waihopai spy base in October 2001 and took the photo that accompanies this (in the pre-Domebusters' days when people such as us were allowed onto the base and up to its inner gate). He told me that Mike was "really nervous" about going onto the base, which he thought might raise the ire of his Kiwi former colleagues in Five Eyes and that something bad might happen to him there and then. It didn't. What follows is Bob's tour report, first published in *Peace Researcher* 24, December 2001, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/frost.htm>. ■

MIKE FROST

New Zealand Speaking

Tour: 14-30 October 2001

- Bob Leonard

The Anti-Bases Campaign central committee members believe the speaking tour by former Canadian signals intelligence officer Mike Frost was value for money. We brought him here to tell of spying abuses and the failures, if not impossibilities, of controls on spying. And he did just that, both in the media and to public meetings from Christchurch to Whangarei. He also very effectively conveyed the incredible weaknesses of vast intelligence systems as revealed in the September 11 disasters. In ABC's view Mike's words strongly supported our long-standing contention that most spying is worse than useless, not to mention expensive.

ABC has waged a long and frustrating struggle against the spying activities of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) and its spy base at Waihopai, near Blenheim. Our objections to this spying have been based on information provided from a variety of sources, many authoritative and reliable, but always second-hand. For example, the internationally acclaimed book "Secret Power", by our own Nicky Hager, is the Bible on Echelon (the code name for the global signals intelligence [SIGINT] programme run by American intelligence), the GCSB and its intimate links to Western SIGINT; it is based on meticulous research.

But Nicky has never worked within the spy agencies. He is an expert because he has been able to compile detailed information by using the Official Information Act and, most importantly, by talking to the spies themselves, over 20 of them from the GCSB. But not one of those spies would speak or be identified publicly.

Mike Frost Unique Whistle Blower

To our knowledge only one SIGINT spy has ever gone public and blown the whistle on the abuses of the UK-



Mike Frost, Waihopai spy base inner gate, 2001. Photo by Bob Leonard.

USA intelligence system of which Waihopai is an integral part (UKUSA refers to the intelligence agreement involving the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and NZ – it is now always referred to as Five Eyes). That man is Mike Frost who worked in Canadian intelligence for 34 years. Nineteen of those years were with the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), Canada's sibling agency to the GCSB. ABC invited Mike to speak in New Zealand because we wanted to hear from someone from inside the system.

We were aware of the risks of inviting a man we had never met, someone we knew only from video clips and from his book "Spyworld", published in 1994. And indeed, he had been a bloomin' spy - some in our circles were aghast that we would even consider bringing him here. But we decided to take a punt. After all, Mike Frost went public for some of the key reasons that we oppose global SIGINT spying – abuse of almost unlimited powers to intrude into people's most private affairs, and the ability to spy globally with virtually no accountability.

We embarked on some very successful fundraising and hey presto, the Mike Frost Tour became a reality. In addition to many private donations, large and small, a major contribution came from the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust (PADET: "Rainbow Warrior" blood money*) in the form of a grant. ABC members wish to express our deep appreciation to all of the donors of

money and time and effort who made the tour a success, and to the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC) for recommending the award of the PADET grant.

**Some of the money paid by France (several million dollars in all) to pay off New Zealand and secure the release from NZ prisons of their two captured intelligence agents who had been convicted and imprisoned for their role in the 1985 fatal bombing of the Greenpeace vessel "Rainbow Warrior", in Auckland. Ed.*

Impact Of The Tour

Was the tour in fact a success? We think so. Media planning prior to Mike's arrival had to be somewhat limited due to restrictions imposed by Mike himself. But once he got here he was quite willing to honour local interview requests, including a radio taping at the unpleasant hour of 6 a.m. Fortunately, Radio New Zealand's top rating *Kim Hill* was his first stop and this was undoubtedly the media peak of the entire tour. Kim was friendly, well informed (we had loaned her Nicky Hager's copy of Mike's book*) and asked excellent questions.

Mike was able to cover a broad range of topics in his 20 minutes or so of prime national radio time: his personal background, juicy anecdotes from his years of spying, his experiences with abuses of the system (like economic espionage and spying on politicians and diplomats),

the lack of Parliamentary oversight, and his personal motivation in speaking out against abuses. *The book is out of print and Nicky's copy is probably the only one in NZ. Mike Frost tried to send us several copies of the book directly via the publisher. But they have never arrived. Go figure.

Other newspaper and radio coverage of the tour was reasonably good, and was particularly strong in some of the smaller centres where the news is not under the thumb of the international media conglomerates. Blenheim (host city to Waihopai) and Palmerston North (neighbour to Tangimoana) gave Mike front page coverage.

Nothing appeared in the Christchurch *Press* or any of the major daily papers in Wellington and Auckland. Perhaps they felt scooped by Kim Hill. The only national paper to write about Mike Frost was the *Sunday Star-Times*. TVNZ's *60 Minutes* had negotiated, directly with Mike himself in Canada, exclusive TV coverage. But they cancelled that at the very last moment, and there was no other TV coverage of his visit.

Of course, Mike is a Canadian and he made it abundantly clear in both his media statements and his speeches that he was not speaking about New Zealand spying or politics or anything else about which he had no direct knowledge. It was up to ABC to provide speakers to give the New Zealand perspective – ABCer Bob Leonard in Christchurch and Blenheim, Green MP Keith Locke in Nelson, Takaka, Hamilton, Whangarei and Auckland, and researcher Nicky Hager in Wellington and Palmerston North.

Mike gave speeches in nine cities and towns during his visit. He arrived in Christchurch late on the evening of October 14 and departed from Auckland on October 30. He was accompanied by his wife Carole, a delightful, softly spoken woman who has stood by Mike through thick and thin, including the many years when neither she nor their three sons had a clue what he was up to during his long absences from home.

Carole attended every New Zealand

speech and was undoubtedly instrumental in keeping Mike humming along on what was a fairly gruelling speaking schedule. Fortunately, they had a few days for rest and sightseeing along the way. And their accommodation, mainly in private homes, was comfortable and enabled them to get to know a few Kiwis fairly well. It was all an important part of Mike's slow return from the cold to the real world of the civilians he spied upon for so long.

The Frost Message

What was Mike's message? The whole point of his public speaking and his book is that signals intelligence is subject to abuses and that the spy agencies lack effective oversight to control their excesses, their breaches of the law. He acknowledged that the multi-billion dollar US and allied intelligence system had failed on September 11, and probably for several years leading up to that fateful day. But despite his intimate knowledge of the spy business, including considerable direct experience and training within the fortress of the US National Security Agency (NSA), he could not explain the failure except in vague terms: "The bad guys got lucky".

He had intended to give pretty much the same prepared speech all along the way. He is after all an experienced public speaker in Canada where he has concentrated his efforts to date. But his carefully prepared speech got tossed aside in the wake of the events of September 11 in New York City and Washington.

The numbingly successful terrorist attacks represented a colossal failure of every element of the intelligence community in every Western country, and especially those of the UKUSA brotherhood. In contemplating his speaking tour in New Zealand, Mike knew he would be confronted with repeated questions about that failure. He found it so vexing that he came close to cancelling his trip altogether. Instead, he chose to incorporate September 11 in his speeches.

His first speeches, in Christchurch and Blenheim, revealed a man without clear answers as to why in-

telligence failed or what might be done to prevent it from happening again. He was obviously sincere and troubled, and in the words of a few, "muddled". But his message crystallised after the first few meetings and came down to this:

- The intelligence system will catch Osama bin Laden and his henchmen. It's just a matter of time.
- He still believes strongly that Western society needs the protection of vast intelligence systems and networks. He does not agree with ABC that Waihopai and the GCSB or any other part of the system should be dismantled.
- He is willing to give up substantial personal freedoms if that will help catch the terrorists. If we don't make this sacrifice, we'll have no freedoms left to protect.
- The spies abuse the system, break the law, and are effectively accountable to no one. On this one he is in complete agreement with ABC. He is not so clear on just what to do about it.
- No system is infallible – e.g. September 11, 2001. Perhaps what is needed is more human intelligence – spies in the field. That of course is the business of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not the high tech, eye-in-the-sky NSA.

Reaction To The Public Meetings

How did his audiences respond to these messages? There were many positive reactions, and many negative ones, perhaps more than Mike would have liked. Although many folks did not agree with Mike's views on intelligence, they appreciated his willingness to speak out for what he believes and to share his expertise with New Zealanders. From reports received by ABC from all the centres where Mike spoke, we offer the following sampler.

"People respected Mike's honesty, and his different conclusions about the usefulness of signals intelligence".

"He did give some useful overviews of the operations of Echelon...useful to have a person here who can give the 'dinkum oil'..."

"One great thing – the audience,

though polite, didn't take his stuff re justifications re limiting civil liberties lying down..."

"His arguments for keeping Echelon were not convincing and several people said so in Blenheim".

"Some said they would have liked some emphasis on 'State terrorism' (for example, by the US) and how it could be countered".

"I don't think it actually mattered in the meetings that Mike had mixed feelings after September 11 – it didn't appear that anyone agreed with that view and so it just encouraged a better discussion than if everyone had agreed with each other".

"Frost has a rather uncompromising support of spy agencies, and some weird ideas about how to stop terrorism".

"I agree with him in that while Echelon and the principles and practices associated with it are an invasion of privacy, the 'bad' people in the world cause us to lose our freedom...so we are not going to have things as we would like".

The Anti-Bases Campaign offers our sincere thanks to Mike and Carole Frost for visiting Aotearoa/New Zealand and giving us their insights: Mike, into the otherwise impenetrable and murky world of global intelligence, and Carole for sharing with some of us the trials and tribulations of life with a Canadian government employee, who turned out to be a spy – or to use the term Mike prefers, an intelligence officer. ■

SPYWORLD

Inside The Canadian And American Intelligence Establishments

By Mike Frost as told to Michel Gratton. Doubleday, Canada. 1994

- Bob Leonard

Peace Researcher 23, June 2001

Mike Frost, the primary author of "Spyworld" is coming to New

Zealand in October 2001 for a two-week speaking tour. His book is not brand new, but it's loaded with fascinating detail about electronic spying and is entertaining reading. A question often asked of ABC is why we are going to all this effort to bring an ex-spy, and an old one at that (he hasn't actively spied since about 1990), all the way from retirement in Canada. Well, he's not exactly retired – he just shifted from being a spy to telling about it, in detail, and why he chose to talk. In addition to reviewing the book, this article may clarify why we at ABC Central think a personal visit by Frost will be a unique and valuable experience for New Zealanders.

Mike Frost is not the first spy to spill the beans. McGehee, Agee, Wright, and Tomlinson are some of the more notable spies to have had pangs of conscience and gone public about their secret lives in recent years. But Frost's is the only first-hand account (to our knowledge) of the inner workings of America's National Security Agency (NSA) and its Canadian sibling agency just over the border, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE). Frost was an employee of the CSE for 19 years and spent plenty of time at NSA as well in training and liaison.

Some background is helpful: there are three other sibling agencies, Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Australia's Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) and New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). Collectively, these five clubs operate the spy establishments organised since 1948 under the UKUSA agreement. GCSB spies have talked extensively (and anonymously) to Nicky Hager, revealing the vast amount of information incorporated in Nicky's ground-breaking book "Secret Power", published in 1996. But that still makes Nicky a "second-hand" reporter.

Mike Frost is a first-hand reporter, and thus able to tell us about NSA-style spying with unique credibility. We are very fortunate he is willing to travel all this way to tell his story to New Zealanders. But it is important to recognise that he was never involved directly in the kind of

satellite signals-interception that is done at Waihopai.

Tangimoana is actually more up his alley; he is an expert on radio frequency interception. But he was directly involved in the use of some of the earliest Oratory computer systems developed by NSA for sifting through intercepted telephone calls for key words. Automated signals selection is at the heart of NSA's "Echelon" system and the "Dictionary" operating at Waihopai.

"Spyworld" is a rich and readable account of Frost's years with CSE and some of his early military-intelligence adventures with the Canadian Navy. This is an "as told to" book, not my favourite mode of storytelling. I would much rather Frost had written of his adventures and technical and moral challenges in the spy business in his own words, however awkwardly that might have been. But second author, Michel Gratton, an experienced columnist and former press secretary to a Canadian Prime Minister, was drafted to spice up the writing and make the book more marketable. This device does work well in much of the book, although some of the writing is unnecessarily melodramatic.

The Price Of A Spy's Morally Dubious Life

The intense and morally dubious life of a spy takes its toll on the personal lives of many in the business. Frost paid the price with alcoholism and the near destruction of his marriage. One way to recover, as this book clearly shows, is to regain control of your life and to question your actions as a spy – not an easy task when you've devoted your professional life to secrecy, including total exclusion of your family from the realities of your work.

The key may have been Frost's wife Carole, who stood by him through it all, and played a major role in his recovery. Mike Frost did believe in his work, and he still believes spying is an essential role of Government in protecting a sovereign nation from the bad guys. But spying leads to excesses and it is here that Frost's revelations are revealing and alarming.

Frost's earliest spying was with the

Canadian Navy doing radio signals interception in the remote reaches of the Canadian Arctic. The Soviets were the target and a spy in the 1960s could certainly believe fervently in his job, hate the Russians, and survive months of isolation from family and civilisation. Frost's technical competence led to a rapid rise in responsibility and challenge. His first training session at the NSA in Fort Meade, Maryland, was in 1971, shortly after he moved from the Navy to employment in the CSE.

The Canadian spy agency had existed since 1948 but was about to greatly expand its activities: NSA's intimate paternal relationship with CSE was central to this expansion by providing CSE staff with training, advice and counsel, and high-tech equipment (on loan for indefinite periods). NSA ran the show and still does. And Mike Frost was a key player in the earliest days of CSE's developing competency and global reach in spying. A big part of his work was "embassy-collection". The US had long been involved in embassy-collection by the time the fledgling CSE and Mike Frost were recruited by NSA to become involved.

Pangs Of Conscience

It was in the development and testing of signals interception equipment that Frost developed pangs of conscience about what he and his mates were doing. "It was one thing to be fooling the 'enemy'. It was quite an eerie feeling, though, to be listening in on so many conversations between fellow Canadians. Being rabidly patriotic, he felt it was wrong. He saw the incredible potential for abuse in the power they held, and he didn't like it". This was "domestic" spying and Frost was uncomfortable with it.

The CSE expanded its international embassy-collection into several countries including some in Africa. The operation was code-named Pilgrim, after Frost's sailboat. The Oratory system, developed at NSA's technical development centre in College Park, Maryland, was incorporated into CSE's embassy-collection capabilities. "Mike Frost couldn't say enough about 'Oratory' or the (NSA) engineers who created it. Because for CSE, it was truly a

godsend”.

Frost reports that “Oratory captured many communications between France and Ottawa relating to the question of separation.... When it comes to the CSE, the ultimate authority is the Prime Minister. In this case it was Pierre Trudeau, the separatists’ nemesis”. A CSE station in West Africa was very likely used to make the Ottawa-France intercepts.

CSE was asked to spy for GCHQ at the behest of Margaret Thatcher. “...it seems as if Margaret Thatcher (then British Prime Minister) thinks two of the ministers in her Cabinet are not ‘on-side’... She wants to find out if they are”. CSE carried out the intercepts: “We never stopped to question the morality of doing what amounted to dirty tricks for a partisan politician, for her very personal reasons, in a foreign land. After all, we weren’t spying on Canadians... that time anyway”.

Another quote from Frost is highly relevant to ABC’s repeated allegations that our GCSB engages in domestic spying on New Zealanders: “The moral issue was raised, says Frost. We listened so routinely to private conversations we were not supposed to hear that I guess we had become immune to that kind of soul-searching. The other prime reason for going ahead eagerly was the total lack of danger. Who was going to catch us? The guys who did the catching were the ones asking us to do it”.

Embassy-collection even involves the Americans spying on the Canadians. In his many trips to College Park for NSA briefings, Frost learned of techniques for disguising antennas on the roofs of embassies. He and his colleagues quickly concluded that Canada was not immune to NSA spying. “The Americans don’t care who they commit espionage against, on the principle that they may get something that’s useful to their country. They routinely collect foreign intelligence against everybody”.

Spying from embassies on host countries does have one security advantage for the spying country that Echelon-type spying does not: “...they (Ottawa) would never send

Pilgrim material directly to NSA without analysing it first”. The intelligence gathered in a foreign embassy does not go down an automated “pipeline” to NSA as does the satellite interception intelligence gathered at Waihopai and its sibling stations.

“Spyworld” Reveals Much

But Mike Frost seems to have got away with it relatively unscathed in comparison to some of his counterparts like Philip Agee and Richard Tomlinson. He says he is harassed in various subtle and not-so-subtle ways – reminders that CSE and NSA would rather he would keep his mouth shut. But over ten years after his “retirement” he will travel to NZ for the first time to tell New Zealanders what our UKUSA partners have been up to for decades. Waihopai and our very own GCSB are an integral part of an international spy network, now extensively automated and beyond local control, and with the same operational freedom to spy on “everybody” as described by Frost.

Our Government’s recent glossy publication, “Securing our Nation’s Safety”, admits “...it does not answer the operational, or ‘how’, questions”. Frost answers many of those questions in his book and tells how feeble and ineffectual is the so-called oversight of spying. The potential for abuse is immense and uncontrollable. Mike Frost will not be here to tell us to close Waihopai. But maybe we’ll learn enough from him about how the spies operate to make that decision for ourselves.

And here’s one final Mike Frost piece from the Peace Researcher archives, from the same issue (23, June 2001) in which Bob Leonard reviewed Frost’s “Spyworld” (above). The difference is that this piece is by Frost himself, and he wrote it for a New Zealand audience, nearly a year before his October 2001 NZ speaking tour. The Bill in question was popularly known as the Swain Bill, after its protagonist, Paul Swain, the Minister of Information Technology and Associate Minister of Justice in the then Labour government.

Its actual title was the Crimes Amendment (No.6) Bill, and it gave

the GCSB, Security Intelligence Service and Police more electronic spying powers. Bob Leonard’s submission on it, on behalf of ABC, can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/subswain.html>. This extract was a subsection of an article by Murray Horton, titled: “Swain Bill: New Powers For Electronic Spying”. Ed. ■

MIKE FROST, FORMER CANADIAN SPY, OPPOSES THE BILL “It Scares The Hell Out Of Me”

Opposition also came from overseas, from a man who used to spy for a living, spending over 30 years in Canadian intelligence. As readers will know, ABC is bringing Mike Frost to New Zealand on a national speaking tour later this year. So, we had been in touch with him, but not about domestic details such as the Swain Bill. He found out about that all by himself, and contacted us, unsolicited, to express his great alarm about it. “It scares the hell out of me” (e-mail to ABC; 27/11/00). We asked him to commit his thoughts to paper, and he duly obliged:

“As a Canadian who earned a living for 34 years in the world of electronic espionage and intelligence gathering I have a number of concerns regarding the ‘spook’ legislation proposed by Communications Minister Paul Swain. Without wishing to interfere with New Zealand’s domestic affairs I will try and explain how this legislation has the potential to impact on me as a Canadian citizen who just happens to be a retired spook”.

“We all know that the Internet has no borders and does not discriminate between the bad guys and the good guys. Consequently, Canadian international communications, using the Internet and satellites as the

methods of transmission, are just as easily intercepted by, for example, the New Zealand Defence Satellite Communications Unit, Blenheim (Waihopai for short), as are the international communications of New Zealand or any other country for that matter. Therefore, any new legislation in your country concerning the Internet has the potential to impact not only New Zealand but other countries as well”.

“The Canadian government has a database that contains ‘personal information’ concerning its citizens. It is my opinion that the Government of New Zealand probably has a similar database, I mean, why wouldn’t they? The Government of Canada will not acknowledge the existence of this database but I know it does exist because I used to provide input to it”.

“By definition ‘personal information’ includes such things as: name, address, telephone number, age, family status, sex, sexual preference, occupation, medical and health records, dental records, assets, liabilities, income, payment records, driving records, credit card information and history, bank records, criminal records and so on. I think you get the point”.

“Most American eavesdropping sites world-wide are equipped with sophisticated listening devices which make the interception of radio and satellite signals a rather simple task. The Waihopai site has been firmly entrenched in your country for years and it’s a safe bet that they have an extensive database containing ‘personal information’ concerning many, many citizens of New Zealand. This database would probably be available in whole or in part to the Government of New Zealand”.

Priorities Have Changed

“The Cold War is over and priorities have changed. No longer do we have to worry about an arms race with the former Soviet Union. The emphasis has switched to the gathering of economic and industrial intelligence (apart from terrorist targets which always have been and always will be at the top of the priority list). The old method of collecting only what was needed has

been replaced with a ‘collect it all now and sort later’ technology”.

“With antennas now pointed inwards at ourselves, so to speak, it is inevitable that domestic, private and personal information can and will be intercepted, if not by design then at least by error. By collecting this type of information is our right to privacy being violated? Are Governments such as yours and mine guilty of breaking the law? From the spy base at Waihopai is the US guilty of breaking New Zealand law? I don’t know, but if not they are at least guilty of breaking the spirit of the law”.

“Are the citizens of New Zealand comfortable with that? Are they aware that the US, as the controlling authority of the five country (UKUSA - United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) Echelon espionage system, can and does routinely collect, on New Zealand soil no less, numerous New Zealand targets of which personal information is only one of many priorities?”

“What should concern New Zealanders is that it is only after evaluating, assessing and in some cases editing, would the US make some, never all, of this information available to the Government of New Zealand. Do we, and by we, I mean the member nations of the Echelon system, want to make it easier and legal for Governments to invade our privacy at will?”

Pure Hogwash

“It has been claimed that the interception of personal information is necessary in order to assist law enforcement agencies in their quest to catch the bad guys. That may be so, but the scary part is that there are no safety nets in place to protect the innocent people that can and will inevitably fall through the cracks. The question begs to be asked - Is it OK for Government agencies to routinely invade the privacy of innocent people in order to catch lawbreakers? This thorny question must be answered by the people, not by a handful of politicians”.

“Clearly legislation has not been able to keep up with the rapid growth of wireless communications

and electronic technology. Something must be done, but is giving Governments and law enforcement agencies an unprecedented increase in invasive and intrusive powers the answer? I don’t think so. What Governments must be made to do is legislate strict guidelines as to what can and cannot be intercepted. We, the citizens of the free world, must be convinced that there is appropriate legislation in place to prevent innocent people from getting caught in the huge trawling net of electronic eavesdropping”.

“To date that protective legislation does not exist. Indeed, the Canadian Minister of National Defence (responsible for our spy agency, the Communications Security Establishment) said some six years ago that we must just ‘trust’ our Government when they say they would never, ever invade the privacy of innocent Canadians by intercepting their communications. Well, I have worked at the coalface of intelligence and I know that such a statement is pure hogwash”.

“I know for a fact that spy agencies in the US, the UK, and Canada (and possibly New Zealand and Australia) have either spied on, or have been given material resulting from spying on, the late Princess Diana, Prince Charles, the Pope, the late Mother Teresa, at least two Cabinet Ministers of the Thatcher Government and a former Canadian Prime Minister’s wife just to name a few. If people such as these are not immune from being spied on where does that leave common folk such as you and me? A scary thought indeed” (ABC press release; 23/1/01; “Former Canadian Spy Criticises Swain Bill; New Electronic Spying Powers Ripe For Abuse”). ■

JOHN MILLER

- Murray Horton

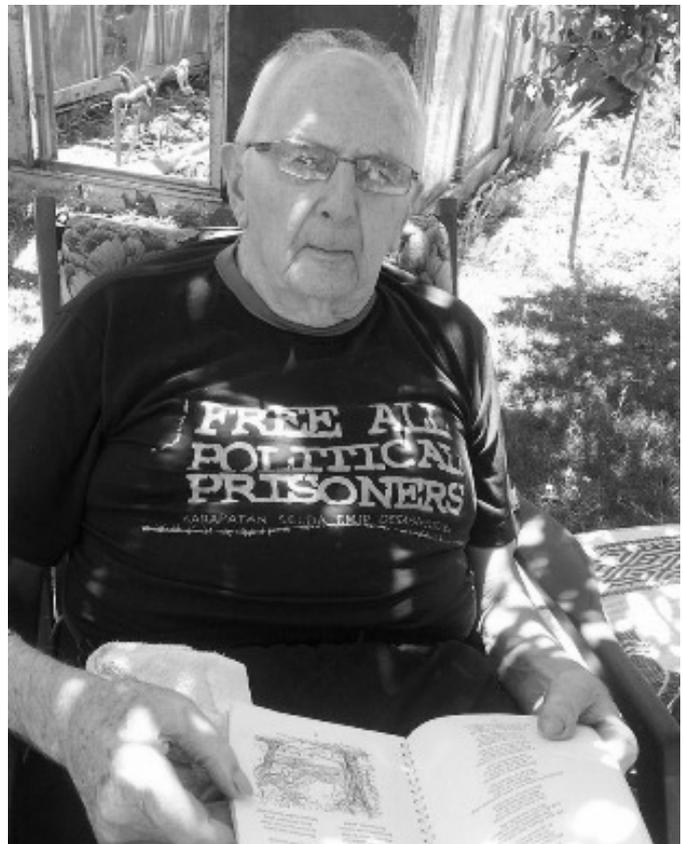
John Miller died in November 2016, aged 87, in Christchurch. Although he was never a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign, he came on ABC's Waihopai spy base protests more than once. He came with the Christchurch Catholic Worker contingent. ABC, although an avowedly secular group, has had a long and productive working relationship with Catholic Worker. Of course, three of its North Island members – Adrian Leason, Peter Murnane and Sam Land – were the famous Domebusters, who deflated one of the spy base's domes in 2008 and were acquitted of all charges by a Wellington jury. They are the stars of the 2016 documentary "The 5th Eye" (www.cutcutcut.com).

John was already an old man when he came on the Waihopai protests but he burned with youthful passion whenever he spoke there and even more so when he recited one of his own poems (Jim Consedine, who co-presided at John's ecumenical funeral, jokingly said: "John had 400,000 poems"). His whole demeanour and tone of voice changed when he launched forth – he became an orator, with a declamatory tone.

Philippines Solidarity Network Of Aotearoa

John and his Filipina wife Leony had been members of the Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA) since 1994 (PSNA hasn't published a newsletter or charged an annual sub since 2009, so we count anyone who was a member as of 2009 as being a current member). As Jim Consedine explains in his below obituary, John visited the Philippines in 1983, when it was being ground under the heel of the Marcos martial law dictatorship. He married Leony, returned to New Zealand and their daughter Cory was named after Cory Aquino, who became President when the world-famous People Power swept the Marcos regime out of power and out of the country in 1986.

John remained passionately interested in the Philippines for the rest of his life and he always attended Christchurch public meetings addressed by the Filipino speakers that PSNA has toured through NZ on a regular basis. Have a look at the photo of John that accompanies this, it was on his funeral programme. He is wearing a "Free All Political Prisoners" T-shirt and it bears the names of the major human rights group, Karapatan and of SELDA, the group representing the victims and families of the Marcos martial law dictatorship.



I suspect he probably got that T-shirt during PSNA's 2004 NZ speaking tour by Marie Hilao-Enriquez, a leader of both Karapatan and SELDA and herself a martial law detainee. Unfortunately, neither political prisoners nor the vile Marcos family are consigned to the past in today's Philippines. They are both very much front and centre under the current President, Rodrigo Duterte. This stuff is still very current in the Philippines – it has never been resolved.

Christianity Was Central To His Being

To mention John without mentioning Christianity is like mentioning Christchurch without mentioning earthquakes. It was central to his being. His funeral was a Catholic/Methodist joint production (definitely a first for Becky and me and, I suspect, for a lot of the others attending). In her eulogy, Cory said she asked him once: "Dad, what do you do for fun? Dad replied 'I go to church'. But what do you do for fun, Dad? Dad replied: 'I pray'". At that point, Cory said, she gave up. John was a passionate Christian pacifist and a man with great evangelical enthusiasm.

He was a neighbour of ours, living in the next street, and would regularly turn up unannounced (his record was five times in one day) to tell me about something he'd just read in the radical Christian press or to generally share The Good News. As a friend said: "John doesn't do small talk". He regularly tried, and failed, to get me along to one of the various churches he attended (I'm a long lapsed Anglican and Presbyterian, married to a long lapsed Catholic).

At times he could be a bloody nuisance (it is not an easy road being an unapologetically public religious practitioner in a heavily secular society), but his motives and commitment to peace and a truly radical Christianity could never be doubted. I've met plenty of other Biblebashers, too many of them on my own doorstep, but John was one with a difference, he was a progressive Biblebasher, albeit one with a striking resemblance to an Old Testament prophet. He and I were on the same side.

Rest in peace, you zealot for peace. My deepest condolences to Leony and Cory (whom I've known since she was a little kid, and who is now carving out a career as a *New Zealand Herald* journalist. Just weeks after her father's death, she scored the only interview of the self-same President Duterte by a New Zealand journalist, during his brief Auckland stopover). ■

JOHN MILLER (1929 – 2016)

- Jim Consedine

This appeared in The Common Good 79, Advent 2016 (the Catholic Worker publication). Ed.

One of the Catholic Worker's most committed members, John Miller, died on All Saints Day (November 1st) 2016, aged 87. John had been in declining health for some years. He died peacefully with his wife Leony and daughter Corazon at his side. John was a lifelong pacifist formed in the tradition of the Methodist Church of his youth, which, until WWII, held to the strongly pacifist tradition of the early Church. In his late teens, he had met with Les Clemens and Arch Barrington at Riverside Community in Motueka, which he joined. Though he only stayed one year, he never wavered from his pacifist position and his love of the poor.

A joiner by trade, John later became a lay missionary in

the Solomon Islands for three years, rebuilding churches and learning the skills of lay preaching. In 1957, he cadged a ride on a scrap metal ship to Japan and while there found himself in Hiroshima on the 12th anniversary of the first nuclear holocaust. There he addressed the 3rd World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs and for Disarmament.

In 1983, John travelled through the Philippines then under martial law. The trip had a huge impact on him as he saw the poverty of millions sitting cheek-by-jowl with the opulence of the rich, "all of them claiming to be Christian". He also married his second wife, Leonida (Leony), and returned to Invercargill, where their daughter Corazon (Cory) was born (he had two sons, Richard and Mark, by an earlier marriage).

A family trip by van to visit the only racially integrated community in Georgia, the Koinonia Community in Americus, founded by the famous Clarence Jordan of Cottonpatch Gospels fame, and to the Open Door Catholic Worker (CW) in Atlanta City, the only Protestant CW, left a lifelong impression on John. Upon their return, the Millers shifted to Auckland where they were regulars at the Pitt Street Methodist and St Benedict's Catholic churches. In 1997, the family came south to join the Catholic Worker in Christchurch, where he was a core group member for some years.

His Heart Raged Against Injustice

John always remained a staunch Methodist, "and a catholic with a small c, meaning universal", he'd say with a smile. Totally ecumenical, throughout their entire marriage, he and Leony would attend services at both Methodist and Catholic churches every Sunday. If one characteristic stands out from John's life of commitment to Christ and to social justice, it was his consistency. His heart raged against injustice. He never let up. As Cory said in her beautiful eulogy: "Perhaps if there were more like him prepared to challenge the status quo, who believed in peace at all costs, and were more compassionate to people from all religions and races, the world would be a better place". ■

WHAT DOES "MOTHER OF ALL BOMBS", DROPPED ON AFGHANISTAN, HAVE TO DO WITH CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT?

- Murray Horton

Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) has been saying for decades that the Waihopai spy base is NZ's key contributor to the US-led Five Eyes intelligence network (the covert ANZUS) and US wars. And, so it is. But it is also important to be reminded that there is another US base in NZ. A real old school military one, and it's been here for more than 60 years, quietly doing its bit as part

of the global chain of US bases. Where? Christchurch Airport.

But isn't that just a logistics base for peaceful Antarctic scientific research, which just happens to use US military transport planes? That's only part of the story. ABC decided to do some research on the current US military usage of Christchurch Airport. We asked the NZ

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade how many US military aircraft used Christchurch Airport in a specified period (1/10/15-30/9/16) and of those, how many did not fly to and from Antarctica (and we asked MFAT to specify where they arrived from and flew to).

The answers were: 26 US military aircraft used Christchurch Airport in that period. Of those 26, five did not fly to or from Antarctica. Two arrived from and flew to the continental US. One arrived from American Samoa and flew to Australia. One arrived from and flew to Hawaii. One arrived from and flew to Richmond RAAF base, near Sydney.

One Fifth Of US Military Flights Had Nothing To Do With Antarctica

They were flying in and out of Christchurch Airport in its role as just one link in the global chain of US military and spy bases. For example, Richmond RAAF base, near Sydney, is a key link for US military flights to and from US bases in Australia, particularly the major spying and warfighting base at Pine Gap, near Alice Springs. This reinforces ABC's long standing point that Christchurch Airport is a US military base.

OK, but it is not and never has been a combat base or anything like that, has it? It is best described as a contingency asset. It's just used by US military transport planes, isn't it? So, what's the problem? Here's where the connection between Christchurch Airport and the "Mother Of All Bombs", dropped by the US on

Afghanistan in April 2017, becomes a lot clearer. How?

"Mother Of All Bombs" Dropped By USAF C130 Hercules Transport Plane

The type of plane that routinely comes and goes from Christchurch Airport without anyone taking any notice or raising any questions (a C-130 was used in Afghanistan because that bomb, the biggest non-nuclear weapon ever used by the US, is too big and heavy to be carried by an actual bomber). Proving that there is no such thing as a "harmless" aircraft in the US military arsenal. And raising the question again, why does NZ keep hosting a US military transport base at Christchurch Airport? One which - no matter how "harmless and innocuous" it appears - ties us into the US war machine and leaves us with some of the blood on our hands from the wars it is fighting in other people's countries.

As ABC has said all along, Christchurch Airport needs to be demilitarised. We fully support the city's logistical support role in peaceful scientific Antarctic research. We do not support that providing cover for a US military base and all that entails. And it reinforces why ABC fully endorses the recently announced **Aotearoa Independence Movement campaign** (see <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/aotearoaindependence-movement.html> for further information), which will be actively pushing for a national dialogue on NZ's relationship to the rest of the world, particularly our continued role as a junior member of the American Empire, in the age of Donald "Bombs Away" Trump. ■



PEACE ACTIVISTS WIN COURT CASE

From 2015 Weapons Conference Protests

- Emma Cullen

In February 2017, over the course of seven days in court, 15 Wellington peace activists who had been facing charges of obstruction, trespass and disorderly behaviour, had their charges dismissed or were found not guilty due to lack of evidence. The charges remained from the 2015 protest at the Weapons Conference in Wellington organised by Peace Action Wellington. The protest blocked and disrupted the New Zealand Defence Industry Association's (NZDIA) annual weapons conference, hindering the business of war. In response the police were violent, heavy-handed and arrested 27 people across the two days.

Many of those arrested at the protest were unable to fight the charges because of study, work, and travel and were forced to take diversion or plead guilty. Those of us who could, chose to fight these charges because we believed we were within our legal rights to protest and were arrested at random to shut down the protest.

The court's decision, plus the fact that they granted us the refund of some legal costs, vindicated our fight. However, after 15 months of charges hanging over us, plus a lengthy court case, we feel the Police used the process as punishment and as a means to deter people from protesting in the future.

The Police sought a pre-emptive trespass order days before the protest began which was found to be without legal merit on the first day of the trial, because the

protest took place on public land. Their priority from the start was not to uphold public order or respect our right to protest, but instead assist business people who profit from war. The real criminals were the companies inside the building busy making deals in weapons.

We'll Be Back

Challenging the arms trade is more important now than ever and this court case, though taxing, will not deter us from continuing to take a stand against the arms trade here in Aotearoa. The Weapons Expo is coming back to Wellington in 2017 and once again we will be working to shut it down, once and for all. Thanks to everyone who supported us during the arrests and court process. Whether it was a message of support, your presence at court, food or financial help, every bit of support we have received has helped us fight these charges and win! Thank you!

For coverage of the 2015 Wellington Weapons Conference protests, see Valerie Morse's article, "Weapons Conference Moves To Auckland", in Peace Researcher 51, June 2016, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr/51/pr51-004.html>. Anti-Bases Campaign made a modest donation towards the court costs of those arrested. Valerie's article on the 2016 protests against the Weapons Conference in Auckland appears elsewhere in this issue. Ed. ■

ABOUT PEACE RESEARCHER

Peace Researcher is published by the Anti-Bases Campaign. The Co-Editors are Murray Horton and Warren Thomson; the Layout Editor is Becky Horton. Our journal covers a range of peace issues with emphasis on foreign military bases and intelligence topics. Contributed articles will be considered for publication based on subject matter and space requirements. We are particularly interested in reports of original research on peace topics in Aotearoa and the wider region of Australasia and the Pacific.

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You can read *Peace Researcher* online at our website, www.converge.org.nz/abc ■



Peace Action Wellington and friends outside Parliament, after handing in a petition for the Weapons Conference to be blocked from Aotearoa, February 2017. Photo by Peace Action Wellington (see story on page 49).

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