

GCSB Public Meeting Speech Christchurch 19/8/14

- Murray Horton

I speak on behalf of the Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC). I work for both it and the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA), whose focus for 40 years has always been on transnational corporations (TNCs). But the central role of TNCs in the issues of interest to the Anti-Bases Campaign has not always been so clear. Since ABC's foundation in the late 1980s we have been dealing with covert State agencies such as the GCSB and its US Big Brother, the National Security Agency (NSA). All of the revelations in the past couple of years about the GCSB, which have come to light as a result of the spectacularly bungled Kim Dotcom case, have proven just how the NZ State, including its covert arms such as the GCSB, plays a very subordinate, even servile, role when doing the bidding of the TNCs – the Hollywood music, movie and entertainment giants in the case of Dotcom. To quote a mainstream media commentator, writing in March 2013: "Our spies' principal mission used to be the defence of the realm. Today's GCSB is about the protection of corporate property". The US makes no bones about the fact that its' State, including its covert agencies, exists to "serve America's interests". It wants to ram through the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) this year, which will greatly benefit US TNCs across the whole economic spectrum. Have no doubt that US agencies will be spying on the other governments and leaders involved in the negotiations, including Barack Obama's best friend forever and golfing buddy John Key. Rest assured that the NSA and its sub-contractors in the GCSB will be spying on opponents of the TPPA in every relevant country, including NZ. Edward Snowden's revelations from within the NSA make clear the close working relationship between the US covert State and US Internet and telecommunications TNCs. If it wasn't clear in the past, it sure as hell is now to ABC – TNCs and corporate colonisation are very much our issues now.

Five Eyes Is The Secret ANZUS

Very briefly, Five Eyes is a top secret agreement, dating back to the immediate post-World War 2 years, between the spy agencies of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to, between them, cover the globe for the purposes of systematic electronic intelligence gathering (back in the 1940s it started off as signals intelligence). The NZ member agency is the GCSB; the US NSA is the biggest of the Big Brothers. So, Five Eyes is what Waihopai is all about – and if you have a look at that place, you will see that not only does this monster have five eyes, it also has two balls. Secrecy is at the very heart of Five Eyes – for its' first 50 or so years its very existence was denied by all member countries. That has now changed but don't expect to be sent a copy of it if you write to the Prime Minister under the Official Information Act.

The seminal book on the GCSB and Waihopai is Nicky Hager's 1996 classic "Secret Power". The foreword is written by David Lange who, as Prime Minister in the 1980s, gave the go ahead for Waihopai. At the time, the spy base was justified on the grounds that it gave NZ an independent intelligence gathering ability, particularly after the US supposedly cut us off from their intelligence in punishment for our nuclear free policy. It is, of course, nothing of the kind. As Lange wrote: "But it was not until I read this book that I had any idea that we had been committed to an international integrated electronic network...it is an outrage that I and other Ministers were told so little, and this raises the question of to whom those concerned saw themselves accountable". Remember those

ruefully candid words from a former Prime Minister next time you hear John Key assuring us that he knows what the GCSB and NSA are up to and that we have nothing to be worried about.

Five Eyes is the reason for the existence of both the GCSB and Waihopai. Five Eyes is what binds New Zealand into the American empire, specifically both its intelligence and military wings. It is much more important than ANZUS ever was, it pre-dates ANZUS, it has carried on uninterrupted despite NZ being kicked out of ANZUS a generation ago, it is, in reality, the secret ANZUS to which NZ has always belonged and in which we have been a willing accomplice. Getting NZ out of Five Eyes is absolutely central to achieving a genuinely independent foreign policy. I'll go further than that and say that getting NZ out of Five Eyes would be a major step to NZ being a truly independent nation. This is in addition to closing the Waihopai and Tangimoana spy bases and abolishing the GCSB.

An Independent Foreign Policy

First question – don't we already have one? Well, we are most definitely nuclear free, and that is something to be very proud of. It puts NZ well ahead of most other countries. I recommend that you read Maire Leadbeater's excellent book "Peace Power And Politics: How New Zealand Became Nuclear Free". The lesson from that successful campaign was that it was won from the grassroots up, not from the top down – it wasn't bestowed upon us from on high by some enlightened politicians. And, as a direct consequence of that, we are out of ANZUS. But the key fact about that one is that NZ was kicked out, we didn't leave of our own accord. If things had panned out the way that 1980s' Labour government wanted, we would have had our cake and eaten it, by being both nuclear free and still in ANZUS.

Both of those highly commendable achievements were won a generation ago and have become the status quo, part of the cultural furniture. But things haven't progressed from there, and the powers that be, both in NZ and the US, have been actively working to nullify those facts on the ground, to get around them, to subvert them, and to render them irrelevant. My case is that we have a half pie independent foreign policy, if that; and it will take another grassroots campaign of similar scale to achieve a full pie one. That's not to say that there haven't been some laudable instances of NZ acting independently of our imperial masters – such as, for the first time ever, we stayed out of someone else's war, namely Iraq (although we did send non-combat forces there for a less than distinguished deployment which achieved nothing); and NZ played the key role in reaching a lasting peace settlement in Bougainville.

But those are exceptions, not the rule. Despite being both nuclear free and out of ANZUS, NZ has continued to be a loyal junior partner to the US in American wars such as in Afghanistan; in the vitally important covert intelligence alliance, the secret ANZUS best illustrated by the Waihopai spy base; and in slavishly doing the bidding of both of the US government and American transnational corporations when told to do so. We're not as much of a doormat as Australia but that's not much of a benchmark, and we're getting there.

To give a current New Zealand example, which is a textbook one of its kind – the Dotcom case, where the New Zealand State, from the highest political level down to its enforcement agencies such as the Police and the spies, fell over itself to do the bidding of the US government which is working hand in glove with huge US transnationals,

namely the movie and music industries, to shut down Dotcom's operation, lock him up and deliver him to be imprisoned by those whose interests he had threatened. The Yanks said "jump", and the New Zealand government said "how high?" That case demonstrates the privatisation and corporatisation of American foreign policy. Wearing my CAFCA hat, I need to say that we don't carry a flag for Kim Dotcom – he should never have been allowed into the country. The fact that he was allowed in is a further demonstration of the gutlessness of the Overseas Investment Office, which sees its role as a doorman for foreign "investors", when what is needed in cases like this is a bouncer. CAFCA has a copy of that Office's file on Dotcom – it makes for fascinating reading. But wearing my ABC hat, I express gratitude that he has tackled head on the covert State which was illegally spying on him and that, in doing so, has forced into the open the whole shonky practices of the GCSB and their counterparts in the US. Good on him for doing so. The Dotcom case provides two different illustrations of what an independent foreign policy would mean; firstly, NZ wouldn't let in every Tom, Dick and Kim in the name of "attracting foreign investors"; but, secondly, having done so, NZ would put the interests of its own people, including non-citizen residents, ahead of the corporate and political interest of the US government and Big Business.

An independent foreign policy would involve cutting the strings that continue to bind us to the American Empire. ABC's demands are clear and easily understandable – the GCSB spy bases at Waihopai and Tangimoana (which are US National Security Agency bases in all but name) must be closed; the GCSB, which is simply a junior subcontractor for the NSA, must be abolished.

I refer you to ABC's leaflet, which is available at this meeting. It is titled: "Why the GCSB Must Be Closed Down: The GCSB Spies For Washington & There Are Few Benefits For NZ". And I invite you to join ABC's protest at the Waihopai spybase on the weekend of January 23-25 (there is also a leaflet available at this meeting giving the details). We've been holding protests there since 1988 and will continue until that blot on the Marlborough landscape, that blot on the national conscience, that bloodstain on all our hands, is closed down. And I conclude by congratulating those brave three Waihopai Domebusters – Adrian Leason, Peter Murnane and Sam Land. They defeated the covert State three times over – they made the base a laughing stock by getting right into it and deflating the dome in 2008; they were acquitted in the criminal trial in 2010; and they have walked away unscathed from the million dollar damages claim in 2014. Three strikes and you're out, covert State. And right throughout the whole six year process they succeeded in showing who the real criminals are in this story – it's not the Domebusters; it's the GCSB and its NSA overlords. The Americans venerate the patriots of the Boston Tea Party, who took non-violent direct action against their imperial overlords; New Zealand needs to recognise the bravery of our three patriots who lanced the American boil in our country. So let's hear it for these heroes.