

Tucker, who is showing himself to be a considerably more pragmatic SIS Director than his predecessor, Richard Woods, claimed that although Zaoui had been a security risk when he arrived in NZ in 2002 (that is a nonsense in itself), he isn't now. Tucker attributed that to: Zaoui disclosing more information during the secret hearing than he previously had; the SIS having received fresh classified information about Zaoui's past in Algeria; and the fact that the length of time he's been in NZ, and his elevated public profile, has mitigated some of the "risks". This is called covering your arse. Tucker was admitting that the "case" against Zaoui was non-existent and the fact that the relentless persecution has made him a high profile public hero in NZ is decidedly counter-productive for the SIS and its nominal political masters.

In a further unprecedented move (but then, everything about the Zaoui case is unprecedented), the SIS required that he sign (sworn on the Koran, no less) Undertakings To the Director of Security. The (heavily censored) unclassified version of this document was then posted on the SIS Website. Basically it consisted of Zaoui agreeing to "ongoing, regular contact" with the SIS so that it can be "comfortable with its assessment that I do not present a threat to security"; to not breach the Crimes Act and/or the Terrorism Suppression Act; to not publish anything inciting violence and, if in doubt, to consult the SIS about it; to not contact any other country's Intelligence agency unless first consulting the SIS; to inform the SIS if any other country's Intelligence agency contacts him; and to advise the SIS if he is contacted by people whose identities have been censored in the unclassified version. Tucker's eight page decision (unclassified version) was also posted on the Web, and it contained a final twist of the knife – each page is subheaded: "Classified information has been deleted. Other information has been withheld at Mr Zaoui's request"). What that implies, rightly or wrongly, is that Zaoui has got something to hide in relation to his dealings with the SIS, and by inference, its counterpart agencies overseas. If Zaoui had indeed been a "terrorist" in Algeria or in the global Algerian diaspora, that simple sentence alone could be the kiss of death for him as far as his former colleagues were concerned. This is the SIS saying "OK, we've let him go but he's ours now, he has 'cooperated' with us".

But I imagine, from Zaoui's point of view, he was happy to sign this very strange "contract" with the SIS in order for the whole ghastly nightmare to end, for him to become a free man in the country which has taken him to its heart (something it has never done with the boofheads of the SIS – I don't see any likelihood of any NZ TV series about heroic SIS agents, a la "Spooks", anytime soon) and, most importantly, for him to be able to be reunited with his long suffering family and for them to be able to live a normal life in their new homeland. That's perfectly understandable. Nobody would wish to be put into the situation that this man endured for nearly five years.

The whole State apparatus, covert and overt, comes out of the Zaoui case very shabbily indeed. The exceptionally harsh treatment meted out to him stood in stark contrast to the warmhearted welcome that the same Labour government simultaneously gave to the "Tampa" refugees, Muslim fugitives from "terrorist" countries who were ruthlessly rejected by the paranoid Australian government in 2001. Obviously, the Government and the SIS felt that they had to be seen to be doing their bit in the "War on Terror" and generating a good old fashioned scaremongering about "Islamic terrorists" trying to illegally get into little old NZ was good for political business and enabled the SIS to score brownie points with its Big Brothers abroad. The only problem for them was that they fucked it up from Day One. The tragedy is that Ahmed Zaoui paid for that fuckup with nearly five years of his life. But he knows not to judge New Zealand by our politicians or our spies, he has experienced the warmth and hospitality of the New Zealand that is this nation's greatest asset. Welcome to New Zealand, mate, you're one of us now. Make yourself at home and enjoy your stay.

SIS Tries To Make Itself Useful

As for the SIS, it is frantically trying to make itself useful and relevant. In September 2007 (just before he made his Zaoui announcement), Warren Tucker gave his first interview since becoming Director. In it he said that hackers from an unidentified foreign Government had gained access to New Zealand government computer systems. When asked who was the culprit, he referred the media to comments from Canada's spy agency blaming China for similar activities there. So, by implication, we need the heroic SIS to save us from the evil Chinese. This was put into the proper context by *Listener* columnist Russell Brown who wrote: "On the other hand, New Zealand is a party to Echelon, a much larger and more sophisticated digital eavesdropping system controlled by the US (*that's what Waihopai is part of. Ed.*). We presumably benefit from that form of snooping. So it would be surprising if foreign governments weren't poking around in our stuff" (29/9/07, *Wide Area News*; "I spy: So, at least one foreign government has been poking around in our government's IT systems. Is anyone surprised?").

That same month – a very busy one for our normally very shy spies – the Government announced the demise of the Serious Fraud Office and its replacement by the Organised Crime Agency, which will be overseen by the high level Officials' Committee on Domestic and External Security Coordination. That committee includes the Directors of both the SIS and the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB, which runs Waihopai). This means the spies

will directly be doing Police work. When Tucker initially floated this idea, first reported in July (*Press*, 14/7/07; "SIS wants to tackle serious organised crime"), it was criticised by the Council for Civil Liberties on the basis of the SIS' record, its lack of accountability and the fact that it is effectively answerable only to its Minister i.e. the Prime Minister. The most useful thing the SIS could do would be to dissolve itself and have its functions turned over to the Police, who are (theoretically, at least) accountable to the public and answerable for their actions in a court of law. The Zaoui case has only reinforced just how little use the SIS is. To all the politicians screaming blue murder about tax cuts: get rid of this nohoper outfit instead, and save us all tens of millions of dollars a year. That money could definitely be put to better use.

5 September 2007

SLEEPING WATCHDOG NO PROBLEM TO SPIES

Green Party MP Keith Locke has given the Intelligence and Security Committee the "asleep at the wheel" award for being the most slothful committee in the New Zealand Parliament. "Despite the Government acting to increase the Security Intelligence Service budget by almost 50% since 2005 in the name of the 'war on terror,' National and Labour politicians seem almost totally disinterested in whether the SIS or Government Communications Security Bureau do their job properly," Mr Locke, the Greens' Security Intelligence Spokesperson, says.

"The Committee's track record is damning. Since the 2005 election the Committee has met only four times, for a grand total of 2 hours 38 minutes. According to replies from the Prime Minister to a Written Question, the committee met on March 27 (50 minutes) and June 14 (40 minutes) in 2006, and February 14 (38 minutes) and June 27 (30 minutes) in 2007. Another sign of the lack of oomph in the Committee was that it took five weeks for staff to assemble the above information – despite seven days being the deadline under Standing Orders, for the return of Written Questions.

"This shows the need for a real Select Committee on Intelligence in our Parliament. The present Committee is simply made up of the Prime Minister and the National Party Leader, and their appointees. New Zealand must have the least active intelligence oversight committee in the world, outside of dictatorships," Mr Locke says. In countries like Britain, Australia and the US they have Parliamentary and Congressional committees that can and do conduct serious inquiries, that initiate their own subjects of inquiry and that have the power to require officials and Cabinet Ministers to testify before them. They are not content – as in New Zealand – to be supine, rubber stamp bodies.

"Since 2001, there has been legislation granting extra powers to the security services and increased reliance on classified security information at the expense of open judicial processes. Is it too much to ask that the public's Parliamentary representatives should stir themselves to play a more active role in ensuring that these new, intrusive powers are necessary, and are not being abused?" Mr Locke says.

THE PRIVATISATION OF SPYING PART 2

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Mark Eden, Wellington Animal Rights Network

Peace Researcher 34 (July 2007) covered the story of how private investigators paid spies to infiltrate activist groups in Wellington and Christchurch. The Christchurch spy, Ryan Paterson-Rouse, confessed that he had been hired by Thompson & Clark Investigations Ltd to spy on the Save Happy Valley campaign on behalf of State Owned Enterprise (SOE), Solid Energy. This led to a flurry of media interest and even Helen Clark joined in condemning the use of spies by SOEs. The Wellington spy denied everything and at the time we weren't sure who exactly was paying for information on animal rights activists so our spy scandal never received the attention it deserved.

In 2005 Wellington animal rights activists were preparing for protests against an animal researchers conference when law student Somali Young joined the group. She quickly became a trusted volunteer as she was always reliable and never missed a meeting. In fact she was the most efficient minute taker we had ever seen! After the conference she became very interested in our campaign against factory farming of pigs, even texting us for daily updates when she was on holiday in Australia. In 2006 she travelled to Australia with Wellington activists to join protests against another animal researchers' conference. She also became involved in Peace Action Wellington, specifically in a campaign against an arms industry conference organised by the NZ Defence Industry Association.

Cover Blown

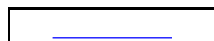
Her cover was blown when a computer glitch at Thompson & Clark caused emails addressed to her to bounce back to the sender with Thompson and Clark's address included. Unlike the Christchurch spy, Somali denied working for Thompson & Clark, but has never explained how emails addressed to her ended up in their computer system. She is still in Wellington but runs away every time her former friends in the animal rights and peace groups have approached her.

Since we couldn't persuade the spy to cooperate we decided to try and find out who was paying for information on animal rights activists by asking our opponents. We used the Official Information Act and wrote to a variety of SOEs and Government bodies that have been criticised or campaigned against by animal rights campaigners asking them if they had any contracts with Thompson and Clark.

Massey University, AgResearch (a Crown Research Institute), and the Pork Industry Board have all admitted having dealings with Thompson & Clark. Massey University said it subscribed to a monthly newsletter in which Thompson & Clark provides updates on activist groups, and the other two said Thompson & Clark provided risk management and security services. All three organisations refused to release any further details of the contracts and the Ombudsman's Office is currently investigating this refusal. Hopefully more information will be released soon.

The Pork Industry Board had been criticised for years over its factory farming practices, and both Massey University and AgResearch are major users of animals in experiments. The National Anti Vivisection Campaign, which monitors the animal research industry, is based in the Wellington Animal Rights Network office.

Unlike Solid Energy, which has aggressively debated with the Save Happy Valley Campaign through the media, the organisations involved in factory farming and animal experiments prefer to avoid the limelight and keep the issue out of the public eye. This, and the lack of solid information about the Wellington spying, has meant that the media hasn't yet paid any serious attention to the Wellington spy story. The same Government that condemned Solid Energy's behaviour as "unacceptable" had nothing to say about a Crown Research Institute and a university using private investigators against animal rights groups. Both the Wellington Animal Rights Network and Peace Action Wellington are still investigating and there is much more to come on this story.



WHO'S WATCHING YOU?

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- **Frances Moutier, Maddie Walker, Kieran Gallagher-Power & Hayley McLay**
www.whoswatchingyou.org

The extensive use of surveillance to gather information on people is one telling example of the Government and Police force's willingness to disregard the people of Aotearoa. It is impossible to avoid seeing an ulterior motive in the increasing surveillance used by the police, the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) and other arms of Government - the suppression of effective political activist groups and the incitement of fear and notions of insecurity in the general public that flow through into stricter policing and further involvement in America's "War of Terror".

Neither surveillance nor State incitement of fear are new phenomena. Indeed, in October 2007, Who's Watching You, a group established by students at the University of Canterbury, hosted a Christchurch public meeting to discuss these very pertinent issues. The speakers were: Keith Locke, Green Party MP and "unofficial civil liberties watchdog"; Selwyn Manning, Co-Editor of Scoop; Paul Buchanan, ex-US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) adviser in Latin America and security and intelligence academic; and David Small, a senior University of Canterbury lecturer in Education, who successfully took a case against the Police after catching the SIS in an illegal break-in of the Christchurch home of activist Aziz Choudry in 1996.

Who's Watching You has been established to examine the privatisation of security and the increased permeation of security into society. The focus is on the changing security sphere internationally, nationally and at a personal level, since the beginning of the "War of Terror". State security is broadly that which is funded and directly descended from the State. Private security, on the other hand, is that which is funded by corporations and individuals. Increasingly, police functions are carried out by private agencies, driven by "market forces" – the profit motive. For example, security guards/mercenaries are the second largest armed force in Iraq. Blackwater, the largest security guard company in the country, is under investigation for the killing of 17 innocent and unarmed Iraqis, to cite only the most recent and flagrant 2007 example of such murderous incidents.

It is not just State or mercenary murders which lead to a culture of fear. Paul Buchanan spoke of the Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile during the 1960s and 1970s where "political scientists and sociologists first noted the expansion of perceptions of threat in pursuit of specific economic, social and political objectives. The phenomenon came to be known as the culture of fear, and its agent was State terror". Consequently, people become able to be manipulated. The all-pervasive feelings of fear and uncertainty lead to individualisation and loss of control of one's life. This "disrupts collective identities and horizontal solidarity ties". In Aotearoa, similar economic, social and political changes – liberalisation – were rolled out, but the window of opportunity to "raise threat perceptions, sow generalised fear, and produce uncertainties in the public consciousness" did not arrive until after the terrorist atrocities of September 11, 2001. Since then, we have seen a number of other well reported events designated as "terrorist" – e.g. the mass murders of innocent civilians in Bali, London, and Madrid. As a result of the use of State "security", an innocent Brazilian man was shot dead while sitting on an Underground train in London – raising searching questions about the reliability of the "intelligence" held.

The level of a country's risk profile is the level of security and surveillance to which the population is subjected, and their acceptance of it. For example, the United Kingdom is a country which historically has a high level, and today there are an estimated 4.2 million closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras tracking people every day. The decades of Irish Republican Army bombings created a climate of fear which ensured the population's acceptance of this. In New Zealand, however, we have had a low level of activity by non-State players that could be seen as posing a threat to people's security, and consequently a lower level of public acceptance of State surveillance and security.

Surveillance Permeates Daily Life

Likewise, people are increasingly "watched". Surveillance permeates deeper into our daily lives through the changing legislative context around security, increased funding for State security entities, the increased use of surveillance technologies at airports and on the streets (for example, CCTV). It also includes the increased use of identity systems for electronic financial transactions, the sharing of databases between different state agencies, and the use of private investigation firms by companies (such as Thompson and Clark's Investigations Ltd who were found to have infiltrated the Save Happy Valley Coalition, Peace Action Wellington and Wellington Animal Rights Network earlier this year. See *Mark Eden's article about this elsewhere in this issue. Ed.*) There is no legislation in Aotearoa that discourages the use of surveillance of staff by employers; for example, the infamous 2007 case of

Subway firing an employee in Dunedin after she was observed sharing a drink with a friend during a lunch break clearly illustrates the current climate. Indeed it is legal for any person (except the Police who require a warrant) to track a vehicle, as a result of employer pressure on Parliament.

Who's Watching You also recently ran a survey on these issues, receiving comment from over 60 journalists, politicians, academics, security professionals, community workers/activists and the general public. Most respondents said they experience and observe fairly high levels of surveillance - and that it is considered highly normal. Many people stated they "strongly agree" with our survey questions: "The State increase in security focussed legislation (e.g. terrorism suppression, immigration, crimes) is mirrored by an increase in the acceptance level of all forms of surveillance, public and private" and: "We increasingly live in a Culture of Fear," but that they are concerned by the fact that this is the case.

Comments on the security issues raised by new Web-based networking sites such as Bebo and Facebook have been interesting - for example: "As a journalist, social networking sites make it shockingly easy to pry into people's lives!! – Journalist, female, 30-40". There are interesting shifts in the quantities of personal information that is now readily available. And so we see new phenomena like "identity theft", which leads to people now filling in 100 point identifiers where they used to only fill in ten, and thereby provide even more personal information. People are already likely to be watched in the following places: money machine, doctor's waiting room, work, buses, supermarket checkouts, lifts, alleyways, school locker rooms, shops, airports, car yards, warehouses, streets, airports, Internet cafes, your local dairy, libraries and carparks. This quote sums up daily life for most people: "If you are doing it in public expect to be seen – Public servant male, 50-60".

Surveillance should never be part of an open democracy - people should be honest and clear about their intentions, and this includes the State. In terms of safety, society self-monitors, as we saw with the capture of the French Intelligence agents (State terrorists) who fatally bombed the Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" in Auckland Harbour in the 1980s. Instead, we are seeing the increased privatisation of security – and thus a decreased accountability for the State, and an increased reliance on a culture of fear. Both allow the Government to get away with actions that people otherwise do not support.

People are led to believe what the Government tells us, through the private consumption of fear. Threats are created in a way that private security can "solve them" thus making more money. Additionally, "threats" are constructed leading to a general feeling of concern amongst the public, and for some a willingness to accept state control of others that would normally recoil at themselves. However, what is needed is a commitment to a clear analysis of what is going on, who benefits, and what can be done to resist that. In Aotearoa, it is clear that such work is of critical importance in these dark times.

MANY US MILITARY FLIGHTS NOW BYPASSING NEW ZEALAND

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Bob Leonard

Recent issues of *Peace Researcher* (Numbers 32, March 2006 and 26, October 2002, which can be read online, respectively, at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr32-126.html> and <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr26-67.htm>) have reported the decline in US military/intelligence flights passing through Christchurch International Airport Ltd (CIAL). The flight frequency in the decades preceding about 2000 was considerably higher (peaking at over 70% of annual US Air Force [USAF] visits in the early 1990s). *PR* Editor Murray Horton has revealed the very likely cause of this decline as a result of a chance encounter with a former USAF accountant (presumably he counted aircraft rather than beans) on a November 2007 airport shuttle trip to Auckland airport. Never one to sit quietly and look at the scenery while travelling, Murray struck up a conversation with the former Air Force chap while stuck in Auckland traffic and worrying about missing his flight to Christchurch (Murray initially joined a conversation about Auckland's lousy weather, as you do, and it was the other guy who brought up the whole subject of his military background and US flights to NZ).

Here are the relevant parts of the conversation as described in an email by Murray (acronyms and other bits are explained below the quote): "One of my fellow passengers on yesterday's [November 5, 2007] shuttle from Auckland to the airport was a retired USAF accountant who travels courtesy of AMC. He mentioned that there are now a lot less USAF flights from ConUS to NZ ('more go to Richmond'). He and his wife had flown AMC from the base at Dayton, Ohio to Hickam AFB but could not then continue via AMC to ChCh, as the plane was full of freight and had no room for the four would be passengers. So they had to fly on commercial planes. We had a good old chat ... about types of military aircraft, etc. "How come you've heard of AMC and MAC?" he asked at one point." Murray bit his tongue and did not introduce himself as being from the Anti-Bases Campaign but simply ascribed it to general knowledge arising from the US having had a base at Christchurch Airport for more than 50 years.

(The above requires some explanation for the general reader. AMC is the Air Mobility Command [the name was "civilianised" a few years ago from the former Military Airlift Command - MAC) of the US Air Force. ConUS [or CONUS] means Continental US [note that President Bush is the POTUS, or President of the United States]. Richmond is the location of a Royal Australian Air Force base west of Sydney through which US military/intelligence Channel flights transit on their way to and from Pine Gap, near Alice Springs, the largest US spy base outside of the continental US. Dayton, Ohio and Hickam Air Force Base (near Honolulu, Hawaii) are major staging bases for the AMC).

Christchurch Now Largely Surplus To Requirements For Channel Flights

Murray's chance encounter confirms our suspicions that the Channel flights (a USAF term for flights that have nothing to do with Antarctic logistics) that used to transit through Christchurch Airport, sometimes several a week, are now bypassing New Zealand in most cases and going directly to and from Australia. The "freight" which filled the AMC plane described by Murray (almost certainly a C-17 Globemaster) was undoubtedly destined for Alice Springs, Northern Territory, the nearest airport to the spy base at Pine Gap (about 35 km).

There are probably two main reasons for this change of routing of the major cargo flights. The first, (explained in *PR* 32, see above for the Link to read it online) was the closure of the big USAF base at Nurrungar in South Australia. That left just Pine Gap as the major US base needing to be served by air transport. The second reason may be the switch from Starlifters (C-141B) to Globemasters (C-17). The latter have a longer range, greater speed, and a larger cargo capacity than the now mothballed Starlifters. So the stop at Christchurch is no longer necessary after the long trans-Pacific flights. However, we do know that the Starlifter Channel flights used to stop in Pago Pago, American Samoa, before coming to Christchurch. Perhaps that stop is now bypassed as well unless there is special reason to stop there. According to flight data received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) since May 2005, there have been only two Channel flights through Christchurch – one in January 2006 and one in August 2006. So, according to the flight data sheets, it has been over a year since a dedicated Channel flight has come to Christchurch.

Globemaster flights to the Ice are possible in all seasons now, including mid-summer when the snow on the sea ice is too soft for use without skis. A new hard-ice runway, called the Pegasus White Ice Runway, was completed in 2002 and can accommodate wheeled aircraft. The Ski-Hercules still make heavy use of the old Williams Field on the sea ice near McMurdo in summer. Pegasus is about 30km from McMurdo, a considerable distance considering the often brutal weather in the Antarctic. Nevertheless, the high frequency of Globemaster flights in summer indicates

that the Pegasus Runway is now being heavily used.

Other US Military Aircraft At Christchurch

A few C-17 flights are listed in the logs from MFAT as "Trainer". There is no way to know whether these are military or Antarctic related, or both. Perhaps they are just very long-distance junkets for new pilots who are being shown how to find New Zealand. American VIPs visited Christchurch in January 2006. A contingent of US Senators arrived on the 4th and departed on the 12th. They travelled by C-40 Clipper, a USAF derivative of the Boeing 737. The Air Force has four. A US admiral arrived by C-40 a few days later in January, after the Senators had gone home. His visit coincided almost exactly with that of a US general who used a C-37 Gulfstream V luxury executive jet. An Internet search has not revealed the reasons for their visits to Christchurch, and the flight data does not indicate that both the Senators and the military bigwigs travelled to the Antarctic, although that is highly likely. A military Gulfstream V also landed in Christchurch on February 5th, 2007 and departed five days later. The tail number suggests it was an Air Force plane.

The C-37 Gulfstream V is the same type of aeroplane as used by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for its quasi-civilian rendition flights carrying prisoners to foreign jails for interrogation. See my review of the book "Ghost Plane" in this issue of *PR* for information on the Gulfstream operations in the Middle East. Since the CIA aircraft are operated by civilian front companies we would not expect to find evidence of such aircraft coming to Christchurch in the logs obtained from MFAT.

Conclusion

The now very low frequency of Channel flights coming through our nuclear-free country is good news. But they do still come here. So the fundamental status of our local airport as a "contingency asset" for the US Air Force has not changed. Nor has the "neither confirm nor deny" nuclear weapons status of each an every US military aircraft that enters New Zealand. The Anti-Bases Campaign will continue to monitor US military flights passing through New Zealand. Our Government gives unfettered access to these cargo planes because of the Antarctic logistics programme that is vital to both US and NZ research on the Ice. The Channel flights, however infrequent, are unwelcome here and continue to violate the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty and our nuclear-free status.

WHY DOES IRAN WANT NUCLEAR WEAPONS? The US Drops Some Hypocrisy Bombs

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Joe Hendren

Since this was written there has been a major development – in December 2007 it was announced that US intelligence agencies now believe that Iran stopped its alleged pursuit of nuclear weaponry in 2003. Furthermore, that President Bush had known this for several months, but he had continued to inflame the rhetoric about Iran's "nuclear weapons programme", saying that it could lead to World War 3. Ed.

With all the talk about Iran and the intentions of its nuclear programme it is a shame the West continues to undermine its own position with selective morality and obvious hypocrisy. It seems amazing there can be so much written about this issue, yet so little addresses the obvious question – “for what reasons could Iran want nuclear weapons?”. As Simon Jenkins points out, the answer is as simple as looking at a map. "I would sleep happier if there were no Iranian bomb but a swamp of hypocrisy separates me from overly protesting it. Iran is a proud country that sits between nuclear Pakistan and India to its east, a nuclear Russia to its north and a nuclear Israel to its west. Adjacent Afghanistan and Iraq are occupied at will by a nuclear America, which backed Saddam Hussein in his 1980 invasion of Iran. How can we say such a country has 'no right' to nuclear defence?" (Guardian (18/1/07, "The West has picked a fight with Iran it cannot win").¹

In January 2007 the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, told the BBC that the West is partly to blame for the Iran nuclear crisis for allowing Israel to develop a nuclear arsenal (BBC News, "Iran nuclear bid 'fault of West'")². He said nuclear weapons benefited no-one, and called for a nuclear-free zone in the Gulf. It would be good to see al-Faisal get some strong support for this idea, as a weapons of mass destruction (WMD)-free Middle East ought to be the goal of any sane policy. Better still, existing United Nations Security Council Resolutions go a significant way towards putting such a ban in place already, which should make it easier to put in place.

In 2003 George Bush and Tony Blair attempted to use Security Council Resolution 687 as a justification for the invasion of Iraq. While 687 provided no such authorisation, it did call for the elimination of Iraqi WMD and delivery systems as a step towards "the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and all other missiles for their delivery and the objective of a global ban on chemical weapons" (Article 14). So if 687 is really to be upheld, then pressure must be put on Israel to disarm.

On September 20th, 2007 the Minister of Defence, Phil Goff "abstained" on behalf of New Zealand while voting on an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution that aimed to create a nuclear free Middle East. This act of cowardice was no doubt influenced by the fact the resolution included an implicit criticism of Israel. Nevertheless, the resolution was adopted, with 53 countries in favour, 2 voting no, and 47 abstentions.

How can Israel be disarmed? A good start would be for the US and the UK to publicly recognise Israel's possession of nuclear weapons (as far as I know they have never officially recognised this) and ask Israel to agree to arms reduction talks. This would have the advantage of greatly increasing the diplomatic pressure on Iran to abandon its nuclear programme, as it would be much more difficult for Tehran to claim they need nukes for defensive purposes, although it must be noted that Iran is yet to make this claim. Many Arab states feel threatened by Israel's nuclear status, especially as Israeli nuclear armed submarines have been known to patrol the coasts of Iran and Pakistan.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claims Iran "does not need nuclear arms" and that his country is only asserting its right to peaceful nuclear technology, as allowed under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Unfortunately, countries such as Israel made similar denials in the mid-1960s when they were developing nuclear weapons, so any such denials ought to be taken with a grain of salt, unless said country is happy for the IAEA to make unhindered inspection visits.

Iran's Nuclear Programme Began With US Assistance

The history of Iran's nuclear programme began in the 1960s when Iran was a client state of the US. American corporations associated with the nuclear industry saw Iran as a potential market for expansion. In 1967 the Shah built the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC), based on a five megawatt (MW) research reactor - supplied by the US. The TNRC was run by the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI). In 1974 a West German company, Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens, of West Germany) began construction of two 1,200 MW reactors at Bushehr, and a French company gained a contract to build two smaller 900 MW reactors. In 1975 the Shah made a

nuclear cooperation treaty with India. The AEOI also signed an agreement with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), so that the first generation of Iranian nuclear engineers could have the benefit of education and training from a leading US university. On July 10th, 1978, the US-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement was signed, providing Iran with more access to American technology and help in sourcing uranium. A mere seven months later, Ayatollah Khomeini launched the 1979 revolution that would overthrow the government of the Shah.

The first President of the AEOI, Dr Akbar Etemad, revealed that between 1974 and 1978 the TNRC carried out experiments to extract plutonium from spent fuel using chemical agents. According to Mohammad Sahimi, a lecturer in Chemical and Petroleum Engineering at the University of Southern California (Los Angeles), the only use for plutonium is for a nuclear bomb. In June 1974 the Shah declared that Iran would have nuclear weapons, "without a doubt and sooner than one would think". If we are concerned about Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb, there was actually more evidence this was happening in the 1970s than there is now.

Ironically, the man who prevented the development of an Iranian bomb at this point was Ayatollah Khomeini. Following the downfall of the Shah, the new Prime Minister, Mehdi Bazargan, decided Iran did not need nuclear energy, even though, at this point, the first reactor at Bushehr was 90% complete. The installations were later bombed during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Following the end of the war Iran expressed greater interest in nuclear energy, and approached Kraftwerk Union to complete the Bushehr project. Under strong US pressure, Kraftwerk refused, as did others approached by Iran. In refusing to participate in the completion of the Bushehr installations, Sahimi believes the West lost an opportunity to significantly influence the development of the Iranian nuclear programme, and to contribute to greater ongoing safety of the plants, and hence, influence over their operations. Attempts by the US and other Western powers to drum up fears about the Iranian nuclear programme are not just about nuclear weapons and nuclear power. To many of the people living in the Middle East, this debate can only be seen in the context of nearly a century of efforts by the Western powers to maintain their interests and influence over the oil-rich region.

Following a coup in February 1921, a Cossack Army officer named Reza Khan was appointed as Iran's new monarch, taking the name Reza Shah Pahlavi. The Shah sought to balance the influence of Britain and Russia by developing links with other European powers, but his links with Germany alarmed Britain and the former Soviet Union, who feared the Shah would align with Germany during World War II, despite Iran adopting a neutral stance in the conflict. In August 1941 an Anglo-Soviet force occupied Iran and forced the Shah to abdicate in favour of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

In 1951 the elected Parliament of Iran voted unanimously to nationalise the oil industry, led by the nationalist movement of Dr Mohammad Mossadegh, who was soon proclaimed Iran's Prime Minister. Nationalisation was a threat to the immensely profitable Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), the mantle of British economic and political influence over Iran. In 1953, egged on by anti-Communist jingoism, the American President, Dwight Eisenhower, gave the go ahead to Operation Ajax, a covert plot of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and British Intelligence to remove Mossadegh.

It worked. The first and only government of Iran to be democratically elected was removed, and Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi came back to rule as a trained despot. The AIOC came back in 1954, under the guise of the British Petroleum Company (BP) and operated as part of an international consortium, of which 40% was owned by BP, and another 40% held by the five major American oil companies. For its backers, the Anglo-American coup paid handsomely, but the people of Iran paid a heavy price. Iran's democracy was broken, and the Shah's secret police became infamous throughout the world for their widespread use of torture and detention of political prisoners. If Iran still had a Government sympathetic to US interests it is doubtful the Bush Administration would be making so much noise about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Why Does Iran Need Nuclear Power?

In Iran's case, Ahmadinejad needs to be asked why it is so essential for Iran to gain nuclear power stations when the country is sitting on one of the most plentiful gas supplies in the world. The US is fond of this line of argument. These claims are disputed by Mohammad Sahimi. While he acknowledges that Iran has vast oil and gas reserves Sahimi argues there are strong economic, social and environmental reasons for Iran to develop alternative energy sources. All oil exporting countries, perhaps with the exception of Norway, rely heavily on oil revenue. Sahimi says that developing countries such as Iran may face "social instability or even revolution" if the "oil price stays too low for too long".

Sahimi also asks what would happen to the West's huge chemical industry, an importance source of jobs, if the world's oil and gas reserves were depleted too quickly. As Western governments look to develop alternative energy

sources in order to allow the remaining world oil and gas supplies to be used for more useful things, “why can Iran not use this argument?”. Even for those who are adamantly opposed to nuclear power and the risks it entails, Sahimi raises a question that ought to be considered. “Why is it that the US and her allies believed, in the 1970s, that Iran needed nuclear reactors and nuclear energy, when Iran's population was less than half of the present and her oil production was much more than now, but they argue that Iran does not need nuclear energy?”.

While the US may claim its refusal to allow Iran to develop a nuclear industry is to stop the ayatollahs from getting a nuclear bomb, it is also consistent with the aim of weakening the long term political and economic development of the country. Iran is currently sitting on gas reserves that will last for at least 200 years. As gas replaces oil as the major source of energy over the next 40 to 50 years, Iran will be in an excellent position to be the major supplier to Asia and Europe. America may have geopolitical reasons to prevent this. As we saw above, the US encouraged Iran to expand its non-oil energy base in the 1970s, and suggested to the Shah that he needed not one but several nuclear reactors to acquire the electricity that Iran would require in the future. This is based on confidential US Government documents that have now been declassified (Sahimi).

A look at the electricity generation profile of Iran also demonstrates there is little room for burning more gas and oil. As of 2004, 75% of Iran's electricity generation came from natural gas, 18% from oil and 7% from hydroelectric power. Iran opened its first wind and geothermal plants in 2004, with a solar thermal plant due to come on line in 2009. Demand for electricity is growing at the same time the dilapidated state of Iran's distribution network is causing a lot of power wastage. With annual growth in demand for electricity around 5 to 8% a year, Sahimi says Iran will not be able to produce enough electricity using its oil and gas reserves, even under the best possible circumstances, including among other things, the end of the economic embargoes currently imposed on the country. More recent estimates of the annual growth of electricity use in Iran put the figure at 10%.

There are also serious environmental reasons why Iran should not be encouraged to depend on oil and gas for its electricity needs. Many of the costs of consumption of oil and gas are not reflected in the price. To give one example, the American Lung Association estimated the “hidden” costs of air pollution to be around \$50 million a year, including health costs and lost potential income. Levels of air pollution in Tehran and other major Iranian cities has been described as being “catastrophic”, with elementary schools having to close on some days as a result. In Tehran, the long term health effects of air pollution are cited as the cause of death for 17,000 citizens in the capital city alone. Overall carbon emissions have risen from 33 million metric tonnes in 1980 to more than 85 million metric tonnes in 2003.

On January 24th, 2007, Ahmadinejad appeared on Iranian TV (IRNA) to once again argue for the right of his country to develop nuclear power plants. In this same interview he also stressed the importance of privatisation in achieving the country's energy goals. There are plans to sell seven power plants to the private sector, with 22 agreements reached with the private sector to construct power plants. “If peaceful nuclear energy is good it must be good for everybody and if it is bad why do certain powers enjoy it?”.

Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), making it subject to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) while Israel is a rogue state outside of the NPT. Under the NPT Iran is allowed to enrich uranium for civilian fuel programmes. Iran claims to be able to produce uranium to a 3.5% level of enrichment, whereas a bomb or a warhead requires around 90%. Once Iran perfects the enrichment process, a significantly greater number of centrifuges would be required to make a weapon, many more than the 164 it claims now to have in operation.

Many other oil-exporting countries, such as Britain and Russia, rely on nuclear power for a significant portion of their energy needs. Unlike these two countries, Iran claims it does not need nuclear weapons. The best way for Iran to demonstrate that its intentions in this regard are honourable would be to offer the IAEA full disclosure and access to its nuclear facilities, above and beyond what it is required to do under international law. If inspectors find nothing, this could provide a strong rebuke to US claims about the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), a sequel to the findings of the UN weapons inspectors who failed to find evidence to support US claims about Iraqi WMDs in 2003.

Why Might Iran Want Nuclear Weapons?

In a January 2005 article “Iran's nuclear posture and the scars of war”, Joost R Hiltermann raises some relevant background to the current debate surrounding Iran. In going to war with Iraq, Hiltermann says the Bush Administration sought to prove that President Clinton's policy of dual containment – a decade of sanctions, threats, military action, and UN-led disarmament had failed to stop Iraq from developing WMD. But Iraq, it turned out, had no WMD in March 2003, and probably did not have any for most of the preceding decade. Hiltermann points out: “Iraq,

of course, was not the only target of dual containment. So was neighbouring Iran, which likewise was suspected of having secret programmes for building weapons of mass destruction and was seen as a destabilising force hostile to US interests”.

As the Bush Administration failed to find their proof of the failure of dual containment in Iraq, will they force a similar method of “proof” onto neighbouring Iran? According to Hilterman, Iran sued for peace from the 1980-88 Iran/Iraq War at the end of the 1980s because Iraq’s escalating use of chemical weapons made Iranian “human wave” assaults ineffective. Following Iraq’s use of chemical weapons in 1983 Iran asked the international community for assistance.

“...Tehran’s repeated remonstrations with the United Nations fell virtually on deaf ears. For six years, Iranian diplomats wrought ever more sophisticated legal arguments to persuade the UN that it should have an institutional interest in upholding the relevant precepts of international humanitarian law. In particular, the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibits ‘the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices’, was directly on point. The UN’s failure to uphold such precepts, the Iranians said, would undermine its credibility and impartiality, while giving rise to a regional arms race” (Hilterman).

Yet the US continued to offer Iraq significant support in its war with Iran. A steady stream of unofficial US “advisers” visited Iraq from the first days of the war, and the US supplied Iraq with satellite imagery of the Iranian battle lines, which must have been very useful when deciding where to deploy the chemical weapons. Donald Rumsfeld, (who went on to, as George Bush’s Secretary of Defense, mastermind the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq) acting as Special Envoy for President Ronald Reagan, visited Iraq in December 1983 and late March 1984, seeking ways to improve US-Iraq relations. In between these visits by Rumsfeld, the Iraqi military issued a statement declaring that “the invaders should know for every harmful insect there is an insecticide capable of annihilating it whatever their number and Iraq possesses this annihilation insecticide”⁸.

According to Iranian records Iraq first used chemical weapons on January 13th, 1981. From December 21st 1980 to March 20th 1984 Iranians suffered 63 separate gas attacks⁹. It took until March 1984 for the US to acknowledge and condemn Iraq’s use of chemical weapons, and even then this statement also implied Iran held greater responsibility for ending a war it did not start. And where did Iraq get these weapons come from? From West Germany, and as it turned out, the US, as was revealed in a 1994 US Senate committee report: “United States Chemical and Biological Warfare Dual-use exports to Iraq and their possible impact on the Health consequences of the Persian Gulf War”¹⁰ .

This report detailed Government approved shipments of biological agents from American companies to Iraq from 1985 or earlier. It stated:

“The United States provided the Government of Iraq with 'dual use' licensed materials which assisted in the development of Iraqi chemical, biological, and missile-system programmes, including...chemical warfare agent production facility plant and technical drawings (provided as pesticide production facility plans), chemical weapon filling equipment...” (p260).

During the Iran-Iraq war, Washington conducted a disinformation campaign that sought to equally blame Iran and Iraq for the use of chemical weapons, a campaign that helpfully took the pressure off Iraq, then a US ally. Faced with journalists asking questions about Iraq’s use of chemical weapons the US slapped on a ban on the export of chemical precursors to both Iran and Iraq in the spring of 1984, despite internal documents showing US officials had been aware of Iraq’s conduct for at least six months.

Hiltermann: “It is generally accepted that toward the end of the war Iran had gained the capability to field its own chemical weapons. Parliamentary Speaker (and future President) Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani declared two months after war’s end that “chemical bombs and biological weapons are poor man’s atomic bombs and can easily be produced. We should at least consider them for our defence.... Although the use of such weapons is inhuman, the war taught us that international laws are only drops of ink on paper”. Hiltermann concludes: “[T]he world’s ability to challenge Iran on any programmes it may have today is reduced dramatically by the Iranian perception that it has nothing to protect it from WMD in the hands of a regional power, such as Israel, but its own WMD deterrent. The current standoff over Iran’s alleged nuclear weapons programme is a graphic illustration of the problem”.

US attempts to dissuade Iran from developing nuclear weapons would have far more force and credibility if they applied the same standards to Israel. In the case of the Middle East it was ‘I’ who cast the first stone. If calls for Iran to stop developing nuclear weapons were combined with a genuine call for a nuclear free Middle East and an unequivocal call on Israel to disarm, the US message would have far more moral force and credibility. Otherwise, it

just looks like more US hypocrisy.

If Iran is successful in developing nuclear arms - this will be yet another dismal failure for the foreign policy of Bush. North Korea, is named in Bush's "axis of evil" speech, continues its nuclear weapons programme and withdraws from the NPT. Iran is named in the "axis of evil" speech, and "breaks the seals" on its three nuclear facilities. It worried UN Chief Inspector, Hans Blix, that in invading Iraq, Bush may have sent precisely the wrong message - the US only attacks countries that cannot defend themselves¹¹.

And like most policy questions - it all comes down to who we want to help. Simon Jenkins again: "All the following statements about Iran are true. There are powerful Iranians who want to build a nuclear bomb. There are powerful ones who do not. There are people in Iran who would like Israel to disappear. There are people who would not. There are people who would like Islamist rule. There are people who would not. There are people who long for some idiot Western politician to declare war on them. There are people appalled at the prospect. The only question for Western strategists is which of these people they want to help".

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford and Global Security Consultant to the Oxford Research Group, picks up a similar theme: "What also needs to be borne in mind is that the strong US rhetoric on Iran is singularly useful for the Ahmadinejad government. There are serious economic problems affecting the country, with many of them affecting the poorer sections of the population that were largely responsible for Ahmadinejad's surprising election in 2005. The decrease in his own popularity is reflected in the poor performance of associates in municipal elections earlier in the summer and it is therefore to his advantage that Iran is facing such an antagonistic mood in Washington" (Oxford Research Group, August 2007, "Iraq After The Surge" http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/publications/monthly_briefings/index.html).

Iran has a poor human rights record and little respect for civil liberties. While elements of the Iranian Left helped to bring down the Shah in 1979, most were rounded up by Khomeini and his goons. By 1982 Iranian socialism could be described as almost literally "dead". In recent years there has been a resurgence among the Iranian Left. In 2005 members of an Iranian trade union, the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, left the lights of their buses switched on to show support for union leaders arrested by the regime. Bus drivers also refused to collect fares from passengers. The leader of the union, Mansour Osanlou, was sent back to the notorious Evin prison in July 2007, and is currently being held without charge. An international trade union campaign now seeks his release. Attempts to demonise Ahmadinejad are counter productive for two reasons. He is likely to gain more popular support than he deserves. More importantly, the focus on Ahmadinejad overstates his importance in the Iranian political system. Significant power lies with the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei and other clerical leaders. The fall of Ahmadinejad by itself is not likely to lead to significant change.

US Looking For Excuses To Attack Iran

In May 2007 the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran had failed to suspend its nuclear enrichment activities and heavy water related projects. Plans to proceed with fuel enrichment and construction of an underground enrichment plant had continued¹². Given the existence of undeclared nuclear related activities in Iran over the previous 20 years (these were revealed in 2002), the IAEA stressed the importance of Iran adopting the required "transparency measures" to allow the Agency to construct an accurate history of Iran's nuclear programme. Unless long standing verification issues could be addressed, the IAEA could not be in a position to provide assurances about the "exclusively peaceful nature" of Iran's nuclear programme. The IAEA also warned its knowledge of the Iranian nuclear programme was "deteriorating". While it had seen no evidence of Iran attempting to "weaponise" nuclear material, or of undeclared nuclear facilities in the country, the head of the IAEA, Mohamed El Baradei estimated that Iran was three to eight years away from producing a nuclear weapon if it chose to do so¹³.

In August 2007, following another inspection visit, the IAEA was able to announce significant progress. The IAEA accepted Iran's explanations regarding plutonium experiments as being "consistent with the Agency's findings. The Agency has been able to verify the non-diversion of the declared nuclear materials at the enrichment facilities in Iran and has therefore concluded that it remains in peaceful use". It also reported Iran as being unusually cooperative, "[t]his is the first time Iran is ready to discuss all the outstanding issues that triggered the crisis in confidence". In October 2007 El Baradei urged the world to give Iran more time to prove its nuclear intentions were peaceful (Associated Press, 4/10/07, "IAEA chief urges patience with Iran, warns against confrontations").

The reasons why Iran may want, or be developing, a nuclear weapon can be summarised, broadly speaking, into four arguments. The first might be called the proximity hypothesis – Iran wants a bomb because it is surrounded by nuclear capable neighbours. Secondly, Iran may feel it needs WMD to defend itself, as it remembers how the international community failed to act when Iran was subjected to widespread use of chemical weapons during the

Iran/Iraq War. The third is to deny Iran's claims it has no interest in developing such a weapon because it would not be able to complete its programme if the rest of the world knew about it in advance – it is true to say that all current nuclear capable states kept developments secret or made flat out denials before they exploded their first bomb. While there is some rational basis for each of these arguments, it should be noted that all three are based on circumstantial evidence. Having reasons for developing a bomb and actually developing can be two different things.

The final, and most crude line of argument, is that Iran wants nuclear weapons because its leadership is evil and has “links” with terrorists. This has become the favourite line of the Bush Administration of late, particularly as the rest of the world shows signs of remaining fundamentally unconvinced of US claims about Iran's nuclear ambitions. Its claims that Iran is backing the Shia insurgency in Iraq also look like an attempt by the US to blame someone other than themselves for the mess it has created in Iraq.

During Ahmadinejad's 2007 visit to New York, his request to visit and lay a wreath at the site of the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attacks was refused, on the grounds Iran was a “State sponsor of terror” - authorities also cited “security concerns” (Associated Press, 20/9/07, “Iran leader denied on WTC Wreath Request”). The refusal will also help the US to create an erroneous impression that Iran bears some responsibility for the 9/11 attacks – White House spin doctors played the same trick in the lead up to the Iraq War – even now many Americans wrongly believe Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11. If the Iranians banned American Presidents from visiting sites where Iraqi chemical weapons were used, they would be on stronger ground.

There are now 168,000 US troops in Iraq, the largest number since the start of the war in 2003. Hans Blix questions the commitment of the Bush Administration to diplomacy. “There are important cards that Washington could play; instead, they have three aircraft carriers sitting in the Persian Gulf,” he said. Regarding Iran's supposed role in Iraq, Blix said: “My impression is that the United States has been trying to push up the accusations against Iran as a basis for a possible attack – as an excuse for jumping on them” (New Yorker, 8/10/07, Seymour Hersh).

Throughout 2007 the White House, under the direction of Vice-President Dick Cheney, requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff review their long standing plans for a possible attack on Iran (opt. cit.). Instead of targeting Iran's known and suspected nuclear facilities, plans now favour so called “surgical strikes” on facilities associated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, who the Americans claim have been involved in Iraq and which the US Administration has now declared a terrorist organisation . This change in emphasis strengthens the perception that the hawks in the US Administration have decided to launch an attack on Iran – they are now looking for the excuses. Perhaps all that talk about the nukes was never about the nukes after all.

Sources

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This site includes up to date information and high quality analysis examining the risks of war with Iran and its likely consequences.

Dr Farhang Jahanpour has compiled a very useful chronology of Iran's nuclear programme covering the period between 1957 and the present day. I have used his chronology as a source for some of the historical points raised in the article above.

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“AN ACCEPTABLE PRESENCE”: The New US Basing Structure In The Philippines

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

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Editors note: This article came complete with 64 footnotes which filled several pages by themselves. If you would like a copy of the complete article, contact ABC at cafca@chch.planet.org.nz and we will send it to you as a Word attachment. Ed.

In 1991 the Philippine Senate made the historic vote to shut down what American analysts once described as “probably the most important basing complex in the world” -- the US military bases in Subic and Clark, along with other smaller support and communications facilities in the country. Taken after long and emotional debates, the Senate vote shook the Philippines’ relations with its most important ally. That one small and weak country could say no to what by then had become the world’s only remaining superpower reverberated across the globe.

Since then, every move by the US military in the Philippines has provoked controversy. For the most part, however, the question has tended to be framed in terms of whether the US is seeking to re-establish the kind of bases it had in the past. Such framing has consequently allowed the US and Philippine governments to categorically deny any such plans. But what has since emerged is not a return to the past but a new and different kind of basing.

Global Posture

Since the end of the Cold War, but in a process that has accelerated since the Bush Administration came to office, the United States has embarked on what American officials tout as the most radical reconfiguration since World War II of its “global defence posture”. This term no longer refers simply to the over 850 physical bases and installations that the US now maintains in around 46 countries around the world. As US Defense Undersecretary for Policy, Douglas J Feith, explained: “We are not talking only about basing, we’re talking about the ability of our forces to operate when and where they are needed”.

Billed as the “Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy,” the plan seeks to comprehensively transform the US overseas military presence – largely unchanged since the 1950s – in light of perceived new threats and the US’ self-avowed “grand strategy” of perpetuating its status as the world’s only military superpower. “The [US] military,” declared President Bush, “must be ready to strike at a moment’s notice in any dark corner of the world”. To do this, the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), an official document required by the US Congress of the Pentagon to articulate US military strategy, states that the US is seeking to move away from “obsolete Cold War garrisons” to “mobile, expeditionary operations”.

Reduced Footprint

The plan is simple: Instead of concentrating its troops and equipment in only a few locations, the United States will decrease the number of large well-equipped bases and increase the number of smaller, simpler bases in more locations. Marine General James Jones, Commander of US forces in Europe, described the aim as developing a “family of bases” that could go “from cold to warm to hot if you need them” but without having the “small town USA”-feel, complete with schools and families that have typically come with such bases.

Recognition of the rising opposition to the US military presence around the world is also driving these changes. As early as in 1988, a US Government commission created during the Reagan Administration concluded that: “We have found it increasingly difficult, and politically costly to maintain bases.” Apart from those in the Philippines, US bases have been closed or terminated in recent years in Puerto Rico, Panama, and recently Ecuador, as a result of public mobilisations. Turkey refused to allow the US to use its bases for the 2003 invasion in Iraq. Even in Japan and South Korea, hostility to bases has been growing.

Hence, the US has been trying to restructure its overseas presence in a way that aims to undermine this growing opposition. As US Navy Rear Admiral Richard Hunt, the Joint Staff’s Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy, said: “We don’t want to be stepping all over our host nations...We want to exist in a very non-intrusive way”. The aim,

according to the Pentagon, is to “reduce the forward footprint” of the military while increasing its agility and flexibility.

Mission Presence

As part of this over-all reconfiguration, the Pentagon now categorises its overseas structures into three: Main Operating Bases (MOBs), Forward Operating Sites (FOSs), and Cooperative Security Locations (CSLs - see sidebar). FOSs and CSLs are also called “lily pads” intended to allow the US to hop from MOBs to their destinations rapidly when needed but without requiring a lot of resources to keep them running when not needed. Referring to this kind of base, General Jones said: “We could use it for six months, turn off the lights, and go to another base if we need to”.

But, as mentioned earlier, the US definition of “global posture” goes way beyond physical structures. In an effort to maximise its forward presence while minimising opposition, the US has also been seeking to increase what US Air Force-sponsored analysts call “mission presence” and “limited access”. “Mission presence” is what the US has in countries where there are ongoing military missions which “lack the breadth and capability to qualify as true forward presence but nonetheless contribute to the overall US posture abroad”. “Limited access” is the kind the United States gets through exercises, visits, and other operations. Hence, the US’ global posture encompasses, by definition, not just those who are “forward-based,” or those units that are stationed in foreign countries on a long-term basis such as troops in South Korea and Japan, but also those who are “forward-deployed,” or those who are sent overseas to conduct various kinds of deployments, exercises, or operations.

The Greatest Potential To Compete

If, in the Cold War, the US’ overseas presence targeted the former Soviet Union and other Communist and nationalist forces in the Third World, today, the US’ current “global posture” is aimed at any state or non-state forces perceived to be threatening the interests of the United States. “Terrorists” stand in the line of fire. Regional powers hostile to the United States, such as Iran and North Korea, have also been singled out. But, in light of the United States’ self-declared grand strategy of preventing the rise of rivals who could threaten its pre-eminent status, one rising power is now clearly in its sights – China.

For years, American officials have been divided between those who believe that China could be a “strategic partner” to be engaged and those who believe that it is a “strategic competitor” to be confronted militarily before it grows more powerful. Since the end of the Cold War, indications are that the latter view has prevailed. As early as 1997, the Pentagon’s QDR had already identified China, along with Russia, as possible “global peer competitors”. In 1999, a pivotal Pentagon think tank conducted a seminar to lay down all the likely scenarios involving China. Its conclusion: no matter what happens, China’s rise will not be “peaceful” for the US.

In 2000, a US Air Force-funded study argued explicitly in favour of preventing China’s rise. Also in the same year, Robert Kagan and William Kristol, two influential commentators whose ideas have evidently moulded US policy, proposed that Beijing – along with Baghdad – should be targeted for “regime-change”. The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a grouping whose members and proposals have since staffed and shaped the Bush Administration and its policies, supported the same aims and made similar recommendations.

During the 2000 US Presidential election campaign George Bush distinguished himself from other candidates by singling out China as a “strategic competitor”. Since then, various officials have successively warned that China’s military modernisation constitutes a direct threat to the United States.

The Pentagon’s 2006 official report to Congress on China stated: “China’s military expansion is already such as to alter regional military balances” . If in 2001 the QDR was still vaguely worded, by 2006, when the next QDR was released, the assessment became more explicit: “Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States...”.

Moving To Southeast Asia

The problem for the US is its relatively weak presence in Asia. As a Pentagon report on China, whose conclusions have been widely echoed, warned: “Lack of forward operating bases or cooperative allies greatly limits the range of US military responses...”. What the US does have in terms of presence is now believed to be concentrated in the wrong place. Since the 1950s, the bulk of the US forward presence in Asia has been in South Korea and Japan, directed towards the former Soviet Union and North Korea. To address this, the US has been seeking expand southwards – to Southeast Asia.

By early 2002, the US began negotiating with various governments in Southeast Asia for use of bases in the region. In 2003, the then US Pacific Command (PACOM) Chief, Admiral Thomas B Fargo, stated: "Power projection and contingency response in Southeast Asia in the future will depend on this network of US access in areas with little or no permanent American basing structure". Along with the plans for East Asia and Southeast Asia, the US had also established bases to the west of China, in Central Asia, with new installations in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. While it had none before the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, by 2002 it had access to over a dozen bases in the region.

With the US forward presence northeast of China (in Japan and South Korea), the deepening cooperation with Mongolia to China's north, and its deepening alliance with India, to China's southwest, the United States is slowly encircling China from all sides. It is in light of these large, sweeping changes in US strategy, its perception of threats, and its tactics, that US military objectives regarding the Philippines can be best understood.

In The Dragon's Lair

Since the late 1990s, a chorus of American defence analysts, military officials, civilian leaders, and influential commentators have identified the Philippines as playing a critical role in the US' global posture and a succession of studies sponsored for different US military services have singled it out for its strategic location. The PNAC, for example, had proposed that the US Navy should establish a home-port while the US Air Force (USAF) should station a wing in the Philippines. Another study for the USAF noted the Philippines is located firmly within what US strategists have called the "dragon's lair" or those areas of the Western Pacific where China could potentially seek to prevent the US from deploying. Another US AF-funded study to develop a "global access strategy" for the USAF proposed renting an island from the Philippines for use as a military base.

A 2006 USAF-funded study evaluating basing options for storing and pre-positioning US' war material included the Philippines as among the most desirable sites. Exploring different alternatives, a US Army-sponsored research identified the Philippines as one of the suitable locations for a new unit of the Army. Although proposals made by military analysts do not necessarily translate into action, it is clear that a consensus has been building that "[A]ccess to Philippine facilities is much more important than most judged 12 years ago".

The Appearance Of Bases

One obstacle however remains: domestic opposition to US military presence in the Philippines. As yet another USAF-funded study acknowledges: "On the matter of US access to military facilities in the Philippines, the general view of Philippine security experts is that for domestic political reasons it would be difficult to give the appearance that the United States is re-establishing its bases in the Philippines". Hence, the aim has been to avoid giving this appearance. As Admiral Dennis Blair, former Commander of the US Pacific Command, explained: "[W]e are adapting our plans and cooperation of the past to the future. Those plans do not include any request by the United States for bases in the Philippines of the kind that we have had in the past" [italics added].

"Our basic interest," explained former US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, "is to have the ability to go into a country and have a relationship and have understandings about our ability to land or overfly and to do things that are of mutual benefit to each of us. But we don't have any particular plans for permanent bases if that's the kind of thing you mean...". Thus, instead of "the kind of bases we had in the past", the US is trying something new.

Training For Access

First, the US has stepped up deploying troops, ships, and equipment to the country ostensibly for training exercises, humanitarian and engineering projects, and other missions. Though the Visiting Forces Agreement was approved in 1998, it was only in 2001 that the number and the size of troops involved in training exercises jumped significantly. In 2006 alone, up to 37 exercises were scheduled; up from around 24 in the preceding years. As many as 5,000 US troops are involved, depending on the exercise. As a result of these continuing deployments, former US Ambassador to the Philippines, Francis Ricciardone, has described the US presence in the country as "semi-continuous".

Apart from training allied troops, the holding of joint exercises allows the US to gain temporary – but repeated and regular – access to the territories of countries in which the exercises are held. As former US PACOM head Admiral Thomas Fargo noted in March 2003: "The habitual relationships built through exercises and training...is our biggest guarantor of access in time of need". He said: "Access over time can develop into habitual use of certain facilities by deployed US forces with the eventual goal of being guaranteed use in a crisis, or permission to pre-position logistics stocks and other critical material in strategic forward locations".

As US troops come and go in rotation for frequent and regular exercises, their presence – when taken together – makes up a formidable forward presence that brings them closer to areas of possible action without need for huge infrastructure to support them and without inciting a lot of public attention and opposition. As analyst Eric Peltz has told the US House Armed Services Committee: “Other methods of positioning, such as training rotations, can provide a temporary ‘forward position’ or sustain a long-term position without permanent forward unit basing”.

And as US troops depart, they leave behind the infrastructure that they had built and used ostensibly for the exercises and which could still be of use to the US military in the future for missions different from those for which they were initially built. In General Santos City, on the major southern island of Mindanao, for example, the US constructed a deepwater port and one of the most modern domestic airports in the country, connected to each other by one of the country’s best roads. In Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, on the main island of Luzon, where US troops routinely go for exercises, the airport has been renovated and its runway strengthened to carry the weight of C-130 planes. On the far south Muslim islands of Basilan and Sulu, venues of Balikatan (“Shoulder To Shoulder”) exercises with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the US, through USAID, has also built roads and ports that can berth huge ships.

This is consistent with a USAF-funded study which recommended having more deployments to have more infrastructure. By increasing deployments, notes the study, the US can get into arrangements that “include measures to tailor local infrastructure to USAF operations by extending runways, improving air traffic control facilities, repairing parking aprons and the like”. Along with troops, an increasing number of ships have also been entering the country with growing frequency ostensibly for exercises and humanitarian missions. “[T]he Navy counts those ships as providing overseas presence full time, even when they are training or simply tied up at the pier,” said the US Congressional Budget Office.

As has been discussed earlier, the US sees these regular and frequent “temporary” deployments as part of its global “posture.” As the US National Defense Strategy states: “Our posture also includes the many military activities in which we engage around the world. This means not only our physical presence in key regions, but also our training, exercises, and operations”.

Base Services Without Permanent Basing

Second, the US has obliged the Philippines to provide it with a broad range of locally-provided services that would enable it to launch and sustain operations from the Philippines when necessary. In September 2001, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo granted the US free access to its ports and offered it overflight rights. In November 2002, the US and Philippine governments signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) which has been described by researchers with the US Congressional Research Service as “allowing the United States to use the Philippines as a supply base for military operations throughout the region”.

The MLSA obliges the Philippine government to exert “best efforts” to provide the US logistics supplies, support and services during exercises, training, operations, and other US military deployments. The Agreement defines these to include food, water, petroleum, oils, clothing, ammunition, spare parts and components, billeting, transportation, communication, medical services, operation support, training services, repair and maintenance, storage services, and port services. “Construction and use of temporary structures” is also covered.

In other words, the MLSA gives the US access to the full range of services that the US military would require to operate in and from the country. Through the MLSA, the US has secured for itself the services that it would normally be able to provide itself inside a large permanent base but without constructing and retaining large permanent bases – and without incurring the costs and the political problems that such bases pose.

Cooperative Security Locations

Third, the US has established in the Philippines a new category of military installations it calls “Cooperative Security Locations” (CSLs). In August 2005, the Overseas Basing Commission, the official commission tasked to review US basing, categorically identified the Philippines as one of the countries where CSLs are being developed by the United States in the region. As mentioned earlier, CSLs is a new category of bases that refers to facilities owned by host-governments but are to be made available for use by the US military as needed.

The Philippine government has not disclosed the locations and other details about these CSLs. But the description by Robert Kaplan, a prominent American journalist and best-selling author who has visited such facilities around the world, is quoted here in full because of the dearth of information about them and because parts of it could be describing the Philippines:

“A cooperative security location can be a tucked away corner of a host country's civilian airport, or a dirt runway somewhere with fuel and mechanical help nearby, or a military airport in a friendly country with which we have no formal basing agreement but, rather, an informal arrangement with private contractors acting as go-betweens... The United States provides aid to upgrade maintenance facilities, thereby helping the host country to better project its own air and naval power in the region. At the same time, we hold periodic exercises with the host country's military, in which the base is a focus. We also offer humanitarian help to the surrounding area. Such civil affairs projects garner positive publicity for our military in the local media...The result is a positive diplomatic context for getting the host country's approval for use of the base when and if we need it”.

The terms of the MLSA and the establishment of CSLs reflect the US' increasing emphasis on just-in-time logistics support and pre-positioning of equipment to ensure that US forces – dispersed as they are to be around the world, often far away from main bases where they store equipment and use all kinds of services – are always ready and on the go. Therefore, it is not so much the size of the base that matters but whether it can provide the US military with what it needs, when it's needed.

As the Council on Foreign Relations points out: “While host nation support often carries the connotation of basing, its role of staging and access is perhaps more critical. Support for port visits, ship repairs, overflight rights, training areas, and opportunities, and areas to marshal, stage, repair, and resupply are no less important for both daily US presence in the region and for rapid and flexible crisis response”.

Forward Operating Base

Fourth, the US has succeeded in indefinitely stationing a US military unit in the country. Since 2002, a unit now called the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTFP) has been deployed to the southern Philippines. While initially presented as being part of on-again off-again temporary training exercises, it has since been revealed that this unit has maintained its presence in the country continuously since 2002.

With the Philippine government not giving a definite exit date, and with US officials stating that this unit will stay on as long as they are allowed by the Government, it is presumed that it will continue to be based in the Philippines for the long haul. The unit is headquartered in the Philippine military's Camp Navarro in Zamboanga City, southern Mindanao but its “area of operations,” according to a US military publication, spans 8,000 square miles, covering the entire island of Mindanao and its surrounding islands and seas.

According to a comprehensive compilation of various media reports, the number of troops belonging to the unit has ranged between 100 and 450 but it is not clear what the actual total is for a specific period. It varies “depending on the season and the mission,” said US Lieutenant Colonel Mark Zimmer, JSOTF-P Public Affairs Officer. When it was publicly revealed in August 2007 that the US Department of Defense, via a US military construction unit, had granted a contract to a company providing “base operations support” for the JSOTF-P, the US Embassy admitted that US was setting up allegedly “temporary” structures for “medical, logistical, administrative services” and facilities for “for them to eat, sleep and work”. The Philippines' own Visiting Forces Commission also confirmed that the US maintains “living quarters” and stocks supplies inside Philippine military camps.

For The Containment Of China

Referring to their bases in Mindanao as “forward operating base-11” and “advanced operating base-921,” the JSOTF-P corresponds to what a US Air Force-sponsored study described as the ongoing “redefinition of what forward presence means”. In terms of profile and mission, the JSOTF-P is similar to the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-Horn of Africa) which was established in Djibouti in eastern Africa in 2003, also composed mostly of Special Forces, and which has been described as a sample of the US austere basing template and the “model for future US military operations”.

Indeed, more deployments similar to that of the JSOTF-P and CJTF-Horn of Africa are planned in other locations around the world in the future. In 2004, the former PACOM Commander, Thomas Fargo, talked about expanding Special Operations Forces in the Pacific. Apparently referring to the JSOTF-P, the former Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, had also announced that the Pentagon would establish more “nodes for special operations forces”.

“In place of traditional overseas bases with extensive infrastructure,” Rumsfeld said, “we intend to use smaller forward operating bases with pre-positioned equipment and rotational presence of personnel... We will maintain a smaller forward presence force in the Pacific while also stationing agile, expeditionary forces capable of rapid

responses at our power projection bases”.

The JSOTF-P's characteristics fit this description. Modest and austere, the JSOTF-P has none of the extensive infrastructure and facilities of the former US bases in Subic and Clark. But with the availability of local logistics and other services assured, the free entry of ships and planes and the pre-positioning of equipment allowed, and with the new roads, ports, and other infrastructure the US has been building in the area, the US Special Forces will be ready and able at a moment's notice to launch and sustain its operations in the region.

As evidenced by the fact that most Filipinos are not even aware of their presence and their actions, “the JSOTF had succeeded,” notes Kaplan, “as a political mechanism for getting an American base-of-sorts up and running...”. CH Briscoe, Command Historian of the US Army Special Operations Command, under which the units of the JSOTF-P belong, concurs: “After more than 10 years, PACOM has re-established an acceptable presence in the Philippines...” [italics added]. Strategically positioned between two routes at the entrance of a major sea lane, the Makassar Strait, at the southwestern rim of the South China Sea and closer to Malaysia and Indonesia than most of the rest of the Philippines, the JSOTF-P, according to Briscoe, is “now better able to monitor the pulse of the region”.

Having secured this presence, the US has become closer to the country with “the greatest potential to compete militarily” with it. By getting the US “semi-permanently” based south of Luzon for the first time since World War II, Kaplan notes that “the larger-than-necessary base complex” in Zamboanga has delivered more than tactical benefits. In the minds of the US Army strategists, Kaplan notes: “Combating Islamic terrorism in this region [Southeast Asia] carried a secondary benefit for the United States: it positioned the US for the future containment of nearby China”.

Qualitatively Transformed

All of the steps discussed above have paved the way for the gradual and incremental re-entry of the US military to the Philippines. At no time, since 1991, has the US military presence been more entrenched. At the same time, this presence is no longer the same; it has been qualitatively transformed. No longer are US troops permanently stationed and confined inside large bases in two locations in the country. Drawn instead from rotational forces, the troops have been deploying in various locations all over the country for exercises and other missions. Instead of being massed in the thousands inside huge fortifications flying the US flag, they are in the hundreds, dispersed and housed inside camps that technically belong to the Philippine military.

In the past, US troops could, despite the occasional deployment, expect to stay for long periods of time, stationed in the same base for years. Now, they are to be always ready and on the move, prepared to take part in shorter but more frequent deployments overseas. Before, they stored their equipment, weapons, and supplies in huge storerooms and warehouses inside their base complex at all times, ready to lift and carry them wherever they went; now, they are scattering and storing their equipment and supplies in various locations, guarded and maintained by host nation governments or private companies, and ready to be picked up on the way to the fighting. All these changes in the Philippines are driven by the overlapping goals of building up support for and countering domestic opposition to US presence while improving the agility and efficiency of the US military.

Trial Balloons

But this too could change: for while large bases have their disadvantages, they also provide the guaranteed access, capacities, and other advantages that smaller more austere bases cannot. Also, while the kind of basing that the US is developing now can be useful for certain scenarios, they may not be appropriate and sufficient for others. In case of a long drawn-out standoff, for instance, it would take more than 500 Special Forces stationed in relatively simple bases to sustain US military operations.

Hence, given the right moment and given the need, if plans are not in fact afoot, the US may still want to re-establish larger bases in the Philippines. Given US strategy and the Philippines' location, the possibility cannot be ruled out. Indeed, the frequent reports that the US is trying to re-establish bases in the country have been characterised by an analyst with the Brookings Institute as “trial balloons” to test the atmosphere.

For the moment, however, it cannot be said that just because the US does not have large bases of the kind it used to have, the US has not been securing its military objectives in the country. Through the back door and largely out of sight, the US has gradually but incrementally reintegrated the Philippines firmly within its “global posture”. All these may have effectively reversed that historic decision, taken in 1991, to end nearly a century of US military presence in the country.

Sidebar:

CATEGORIES OF US OVERSEAS MILITARY STRUCTURES

Main Operating Bases (MOB) are those relatively larger installations and facilities located in the territory of reliable allies, with vast infrastructure and family support facilities that will serve as the hub of operations in support of smaller, more austere bases; examples are the Ramstein Air Base in Germany, the Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan and Camp Humphreys in South Korea

- Forward Operating Sites (FOS) are smaller, more spare bases that could be expanded and then scaled down as needed; they will store pre-positioned equipment but will only normally host a small number of troops on a rotational, as opposed to permanent, basis; while smaller, they must still be able to quickly support a range of operations with back-up from MOBs

- Cooperative Security Locations (CSL) are facilities owned by host governments that would only be used by the US in case of actual operations; though they could be visited and inspected by the US, they would most likely be run and maintained by host nation personnel or even private contractors; useful for pre-positioning logistics support or as venues for joint operations with host militaries, they may also be expanded to become FOSs if necessary

Source: US Department of Defense, "Strengthening US Global Defense Posture," September 2004



Review: “COUNTER-TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEW ZEALAND”

Alex Conte, New Zealand Law Foundation, Wellington, 2007

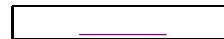
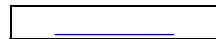
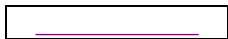
Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- **Jeremy Agar**

Downloadable from the Law Foundation’s Website <http://www.lawfoundation.org.nz/awards/irf/conte/index.html>.
Only a limited number of hard copies were printed. Ed.

This book originated with Alex Conte’s investigation of human rights and terrorism while at the University of Canterbury. It’s part of a comparative survey of New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the UK. Further books are planned in what is hoped to be a series. Conte, presently at a British university, is an adviser to the United Nations. One very recent issue of relevance is of course the Ahmed Zaoui fiasco (*see elsewhere in this issue for the conclusion, hopefully, of the Zaoui case. Ed.*). Writing before the Government admitted (*in September 2007. Ed.*) that it had never had reason to persecute Zaoui, Conte analyses what went wrong. Although the four countries under consideration by his group have broadly similar legal systems, Conte implies the others wouldn’t have made such a mess of the case. There was no need for Zaoui to have been persecuted and other jurisdictions have avoided such harassments. The supposedly tricky balancing act between the demands of security and of human rights could have been resolved years ago.

NZ is one of the last places where we’d expect terrorism, which might be why, according to Conte, legal safeguards against unwarranted State responses to it are flimsy here (*see the article elsewhere in this issue on the October 2007 “anti-terror raids” fiasco and how the first proposed domestic application of the terrorism laws left egg all over the face of the State. Ed.*). Let’s hope that the Zaoui business will focus minds. Let’s hope that we won’t have to find out. “Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights in New Zealand” is an academic book, replete with footnotes. Specialists will find it most useful, but the general reader will find it daunting.



Review: "THE PLOT TO SUBVERT WARTIME NEW ZEALAND"

Hugh Price, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2006

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Jeremy Agar

On March 28th, 1942, Syd Ross was released from remote Waikeria Prison, in the central North Island, having served his 13th sentence. This time it had been three years for breaking and entering at Te Puke. Hugh Price suggests that Ross was "puckish but never violent", a habitual though petty offender. Between jail stints he'd worked as an electrician, a baker and a salesman. Following routine, Ross was driven the 11 kilometres to Te Awamutu and issued with a train ticket to his home in Ellerslie. The man and the situation were entirely mundane.

At the station Ross crossed out the AK on his ticket and jotted WN. Arrived in Wellington, he crossed the street and checked into the then posh Hotel Waterloo. The next morning, a Sunday, he phoned Bob Semple, Minister for National Service, made an appointment, took the short walk to Parliament - and told Semple that a conspiracy of Nazis was about to subvert New Zealand. Semple rang the Prime Minister, the austere Peter Fraser. After lunch Fraser and Semple listened intently as Syd Ross revealed the threat.

Fraser summoned Major Kenneth Folkes, head of the Security Intelligence Bureau, at home in Wadestown. For the third time that day Ross told his story. On the Monday morning Folkes and Ross planned the nation's response. Ross, the Government's only lead, was to be given a new identity. He became Captain Calder and headed for Rotorua to investigate. Ross/Calder knew that Rotorua offered luxury accommodation.

Pure Invention

Ross' story was pure invention, lacking any circumstantial basis, however contrived (and we now know that there were no spies operating in New Zealand). Yet for months the State was on high alert as Captain Calder spun his fanciful tales. So how, within a day, did an anonymous rogue convince a smart Bob Semple and his dour Scottish PM to swallow his fiction? Hugh Price indicates that Ross was a convincing and inventive raconteur. The third cook at Waikeria later revealed that he had believed Ross' yarns that his mate Adolf Hitler thought Ross' imprisonment unfair. The Fuhrer would spring him just as soon as he could, but, in the meantime, he kept in touch, sending Ross money for smokes. Ross doubtless put on a great performance in Fraser's office but for all his blarney, he might not have got anywhere had it not been for one big lucky break. Ross did not know that on that very Sunday morning the Government had been alerted to an actual spy network in Australia.

Australia First was a confused bunch of fascists, originally ultra-Leftist anti-Empire intellectuals who concluded that their country would be best served by an alliance with Japan. If native-born Australians fancied General Tojo (Japan's WW11 leader, later hanged), Fraser must have been thinking, then might not some Kiwis be pro-German? So the Government would have wanted to check Ross' report. Maybe the lowlifes in jail get to hear stuff.

Price shows that the Police were wary from the start, and when they were finally called in, they soon justified their scepticism. But for a while Syd Ross/Captain Calder lived the good life, enjoying his continued taxpayer-funded accommodation at the Grand Hotel in Rotorua, as upmarket a stay as Waikeria had been downmarket. For a couple of months he drove around the countryside, finding "leads" for a bumbling secret service to follow.

Folkes had been recruited from an office job in a British carpet factory, promoted from Acting Lieutenant, and placed in charge of New Zealand's security. He seems to have been contemptuous of the colony's casual ways, keen for a bit of stiff upper lip discipline. He also wanted to panic the PM into establishing a state of emergency, so that the Security Intelligence Bureau - that is Major Folkes - could run the war. Ross was a happy fluke for Folkes, his ticket to power and glory.

Ross' stories were necessarily vague and suggestive, but to justify his crisis and to demonstrate his success, Folkes needed to be precise. So he provided "facts". Yes, he soon told Fraser, there was a spy network around Rotorua, and it was even more fiendishly cunning than Ross had imagined. On April 4th, an impressively short six days after having been phoned by Fraser, Folkes reported his initial findings.

The baddies were preparing counterfeit money to flood the economy, but no worries, he had their number, which was 17. The spy ring comprised 14 Germans, one Russian, one Asian, "believed to be Japanese", and one Swiss national. But, sadly, at least one Kiwi had been drawn into the web, KLEIN, a soldier at Trentham Army Camp. The Major capitalised names. (Why KLEIN? In keeping with prejudices endemic to his background, Folkes was probably

an anti-Semite and might well have thought KLEIN, with its Jewish connotations, was more sinister than a purely Aryan name. But that is just this reviewer's musing).

Of course the gang couldn't be rounded up because, Folkes said, while he had no doubt, he had yet no proof. So the Army and the Police had to be kept out. They weren't expert. Worse, they might be contaminated. The baddies, Folkes continued, were about to land on the Kapiti Coast. His agents had a setback when it turned out that likely traitors, an Italian couple in a car at the beach, were merely "engaged in an amatory affair". Disaster loomed. Folkes would need more men and more money, and soon.

Credulity Or Cynical Manipulation?

It was Folkes who ensured that the hoax had legs. Had he had better luck - had there been a real threat, either of invasion or internal subversion - might he have become a sort of dictator? It wasn't to be, meaning that two generations later this colonial-tinge stage of our secret service's bumbling history plays for laughs. Folkes was fired and left the country, yet, in the subsequent years, before the hoax was forgotten, he was still able to present himself as hard done by. Price had to be persistent to gain access to the archives, which he attributes to a lack of staff resources. It's a charitable view, and undoubtedly, to an extent, true. Yet the suggestion remains that the final word on the whole caper is yet to be written. Price was denied almost all material directly to do with Folkes. Officialdom might still feel unable to pass him off as an aberration.

Fraser himself called the Ross caper "one of the most extraordinary instances of human credulity I have heard of in my life ... I hope the story will be written up". Price, whose career in publishing in Wellington was long and successful, has done so as a sort of retirement project. It's an entertaining read. But did Fraser pick the right word? Was it a tale of credulity or of cynical manipulation?

Review: “GHOST PLANE”

Stephen Grey, Scribe, Melbourne, 2007

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- **Bob Leonard**

Unless otherwise noted, quotes in the text are from the book.

America hardly qualifies now as a functioning democracy considering the entrenched low voter turnout and corruption of national elections via an impressive array of ballot-rigging and disenfranchisement techniques employed by Bush’s henchmen in both the 2000 and 2004 elections. When America was stung by the attacks of September 11, 2001 its “leadership”, with George Bush as the puppet at the helm, responded like a wounded beast, paying scant heed to the outpouring of support and sympathy from around the world, and instead choosing the loner path of attacking “terror” with a big stick. Being a very blunt instrument the stick sometimes hit its intended targets (the Taliban in Afghanistan), but often it did not, with serious consequences for innocent victims. “Ghost Plane” is an account of one major and tragic element of that big-stick response to terror/terrorism – the rendering of thousands of prisoners to countries outside the US for interrogation.

And the interrogation method of choice in those countries, including Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and Uzbekistan, was almost inevitably torture. Controversial conservative American columnist Andrew Sullivan recently described the “power to torture – the most dangerous of all powers held by executives in Western history” (“Bush’s drive for absolute power”, *Press*, 31/10/07). Stephen Grey’s book is a detailed and thoroughly documented report on the origins, evolution and conduct of the US rendition programme. It takes a strong stomach to read it through; if you do, you will have gained a profound understanding of why America has all but exhausted any good will that outsiders may have felt toward it immediately after 9/11.

Defining Rendition

“Rendition” is a euphemism, a word you would not expect to apply to the practice of extra-legal abduction and imprisonment. You won’t find that definition in the dictionary. In his Introduction, Grey describes “...the rendition programme of the CIA (US Central Intelligence Agency), a programme...of snatches and imprisonment that operated outside normal rules; and one that was protected almost always by a veil of secrecy... When I use the term, I refer to what became the CIA’s principal tactic – the transfer of a prisoner by US agents to any place but an American court of law.”

The early uses of rendition involved moving prisoners captured outside the US back to the US for prosecution and handling by the courts under US law. But Islamic militancy and Osama bin Laden in the mid ‘90s (and by the late ‘90s, al Qaeda) motivated the creation and expansion of rendition. Clinton’s Head of Counter-Terrorism, Richard Clarke, was an early and persuasive voice warning of the global threat of Islamic extremists. The CIA by the mid-90s had been severely depleted in its capability to carry out human intelligence (HUMINT) on the ground. This serious intelligence gap was crudely plugged by what could be called a programme of desperation, conceived by Clarke and the CIA: “extraordinary rendition”. Direct action against bin Laden and al Qaeda was not an option under the Clinton Administration, so extraordinary rendition was the indirect action alternative. How did it differ from simple rendition? Grey quotes a lawyer at the Centre for Constitutional Rights in New York, Barbara Olshansky: “Now, this entire idea of rendition was turned on its head. We now had extraordinary rendition, which meant the US was capturing people and sending them to countries for interrogation under torture: rendering people for the purpose of extracting information. There was no planned justice at the end”.

The practice of rendition did not begin with the second Bush regime or with 9/11, but had its roots in the CIA’s infamous Air America, the largest airline in the US in the 1960s and ‘70s. It’s not in the least surprising that the need for a covert airline never really died after the official end of Air America in the late ‘70s. “The launch of the rendition programme in the mid-1990s [under Clinton’s regime] saw the airline’s growth”. The “airline” was small, a company called Aero Contractors Ltd. operating out of Johnston County in North Carolina (other CIA front companies also became involved). A key element in Grey’s success in revealing the inner workings of the rendition programme was obtaining flight logs of planes they used in this “new version of the old Air America”. The Ghost Plane of the book title was a luxury executive jet, a Gulfstream V with registration number N379P. But it wasn’t the only plane in the airline. After months of research, he had compiled a list of over 20 planes used by the CIA and had over 12,000 records of the movements of those planes. This very basic groundwork for nailing the CIA, and the Administration that was fully aware and approved of rendition and the torture that ensued, was amazingly easy: “I discovered there were many means to track an aeroplane. It was clear the security of the CIA’s covert jets was compromised in one

way after another". Grey was able to do this research via the Internet, using special software, since the CIA/Aero jets were ostensibly civilian.

Rendition Flights Tracked Via The Internet

The mind-boggling stupidity of the CIA and ultimately of the Bush mob (no surprises there) is a significant thread running through this riveting account. And the ease of tracking the rendition flights is perhaps the most amazing aspect of this stupidity. Grey states: "So it was possible to get a history of a particular plane's movements. There was one security feature. The owner of the plane could ask, for the sake of privacy, for its movements to be 'blocked'. Under a voluntary code, none of the aviation Websites would then publish its data. *Curiously, in the case of the CIA planes, the Agency appeared remarkably slow in using this feature. Time and time again, they seemed to ignore the most obvious ways of keeping their operations secure*" [emphasis added].

Of course, having thousands of flight logs of CIA planes provided only circumstantial evidence that these flights were actually involved in the transport of prisoners for rendition and interrogation under torture. This is where the hard research grind began. Grey had his own "Deep Throat" * to set him on the next critical path to tracking the rendition flights around the Middle East. Air traffic control centres were the key and the author was well on his way, with important contributions from a number of other intrepid journalists whom he duly credits, to revealing the guts of the US rendition programme to public scrutiny **The code name of the famous Nixon Administration insider during the 1970s' Watergate scandal, who played a key role in the downfall of the only US President ever to have to resign. Ed.*

This book is structured in three parts, Destination Torture, Air America, and Backlash. After an introductory chapter (entitled "Not for the Squeamish" but without details of torture) that provides invaluable background on the CIA and an overview of each of the parts, the first part launches straight into detailed descriptions of several rendition cases. These cases, as well as other descriptions later in the book, convincingly corroborate descriptions by rendition victims themselves with the flight details derived entirely independently by Grey and others. Proving that flights actually carried the victims to specific locations where they were held and tortured was not an easy matter. It took meticulous matching of times and locations, both in logs and as variously determined by the prisoners while they were in transit, and accounts of the prisons in which they were held and interrogated, often for months or years. Grey travelled extensively to key locations to interview victims and many others who were involved.

Oops, We Got The Wrong Man

Chapter 4, in Part 1, is entitled "Mistaken identity; a German citizen's journey to an Afghan hell". The victim was Khaled al-Masri. He was on holiday in Macedonia on New Year's Eve 2003 when he was pulled aside at a border crossing – "...he disappeared for five months into the black hole that was the dark side of the War on Terror. His story seemed so strange that, at first he hesitated to recount it. 'One person told me not to tell this story because it's so unreal, no one would listen,' he recalled". He had ended up in an American prison near Kabul in Afghanistan where his treatment was appalling, primarily mental torture (isolation, sleep deprivation, continuous loud music). His arrest had been a mistake caused by his having a name similar to that of an al Qaeda suspect; his period of confinement was greatly prolonged by incompetent CIA staff. The facts of his case could not be swept under the carpet. "When Khaled first described his treatment publicly, at the beginning of 2005, and when his account was corroborated, among other things by the flight logs, the US government could no longer pretend that such renditions did not occur". The case caused a political scandal in Europe and put the CIA firmly on the back foot. Its countless rendition flights over and through Europe without the knowledge and consent of the countries involved, and in violation of national laws and international conventions, were no longer a secret.

Part 2 is a detailed account of the new Air America, the transport backbone of the rendition programme. The aircraft that Grey tracked meticulously (Gulfstream executive jets, Dehavilland Twin Otters, a Learjet, a Boeing 737 Business jet) "helped unlock America's torture scandal". Part 3 describes the "Backlash" that followed both the revelations of renditions and, critically, of the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in early 2004. The spotlight was now focused on torture of prisoners at the hands of Americans, both CIA and military, either directly or indirectly. "The working logic of the War on Terror had begun to be laid bare".

The Whistleblower

Chapter 8, "The special relationship: our man in Tashkent", deserves particular attention and emphasis. It is the shocking story of the courage, and decline and fall, of Craig Murray, British Ambassador to Uzbekistan beginning in July 2004. As I read this book up to this chapter I frequently asked myself how such monstrous crimes against humanity could proceed seemingly unhindered when so many people knew what was happening, either in whole or

in part and yet said little or nothing. Surely “plausible deniability” (the universal tool used by all intelligence agencies to avoid accountability) has a lot to do with it. The many minions in the grand scheme of things just do their jobs and draw their (frequently) fat pay cheques, and keep quiet because who would believe them if they did reveal what they know? One highly placed individual, Craig Murray, called a spade a spade and paid the price. Soon after he arrived at his post in Tashkent, Murray got wind of the fact that intelligence was being obtained under torture in Uzbek prisons and was being supplied to Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) via the CIA. Murray didn’t mince words in a confidential telegram to Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw:

“Summary

1. We receive intelligence obtained under torture from the Uzbek intelligence services, via the US. We should stop. It is bad information anyway. Tortured dupes are forced to sign up to confessions showing what the Uzbek government wants the US and UK to believe, that they and we are fighting the same war against terror”.

The telegram continued -

“On the usefulness of the material obtained, this is irrelevant. Article 2 of the [UN] Convention [Against Torture], to which we are a party, could not be plainer: No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political stability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as justification of torture. Nonetheless, I repeat that this material is useless – we are selling our soul for dross. It is in fact positively harmful. It is designed to give the message the Uzbeks want the West to hear”.

In my view, there is no better statement in condemnation of torture in this book than Murray’s. It touches simply and elegantly on the moral issues of torture and exposes the stupidity of those who would condone torture to obtain “useful” information. What happened to Ambassador Craig Murray? “It was the last telegram the British ambassador would ever send...on 13 October the telegram was leaked to the media. Speaking in public, he defended its contents. Within four days, he was withdrawn from his post...In many ways he seemed quite a typical ‘whistleblower’, a risk-taking maverick prepared to lose everything to do things his way”. Murray did lose pretty much everything. But he had impact and putting Grey on the track of just what was happening in Uzbekistan was vital. It’s all laid out in this fascinating and pivotal chapter of the book.

Torture – Utterly Immoral, And Even Useless

Grey lays out the law on torture in his 10th chapter, “The torture lie, rendition and the law”. If indeed you need any law to tell you that torture should not be done to anyone under any circumstances, this section of the book fills the bill, from the weasel words and lies of George Bush and his man-of-the-law, equally dim-witted former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, to the compelling sanctions of the Geneva Convention and the UN Convention against Torture, it’s all here in clear and compelling prose.

And I cannot resist repeating Grey’s list of the CIA’s ultra-lame defences of its manifestly illegal extraordinary rendition programme: “We are just the taxi drivers”, “The law doesn’t apply to us”, “They promised us they wouldn’t torture”, “It may have been rough, but it wasn’t strictly torture”, “In war, the President is the law”, and ultimately “Let’s keep it secret”. I’m sure these need no elaboration here, but Grey does elaborate on each CIA excuse – a bit of light relief in an otherwise very black book.

Finally, the author tackles the truly challenging questions in “The realpolitik of torture” and, in particular, a section on “The effectiveness of torture”. It is here that I recoiled, but I guess in a book as comprehensive as this one, the issue of effectiveness must be addressed: “People will say anything under torture!” is the refrain. This is too easy an answer. Judging the success of torture depends on what exactly the torturer is trying to achieve”. I cannot escape the feeling that in considering such issues one risks concluding, however unlikely that may seem, that torture can be acceptable under some circumstances. Grey does spell out a powerful practical argument against the use of torture: “As the world’s most successful insurgent movements have found (from the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, to the Kosovo Liberation Army in Kosovo, to the National Liberation Front in the former South Vietnam, to Sunni insurgents in Iraq today), the way to turn a minority terrorist movement into a broad movement with popular support is to provoke repression, preferably of the worst kind”. Surely this is a major lesson to be heeded in Iraq, a country whose people have suffered repression in the form of prolonged occupation, torture, death and destruction at the hands of the United States military, the CIA and private security firms like the infamous Blackwater.

The temptation in reviewing a book like this one is to add quote after quote from the text. Every page contains information and analysis worth bringing to the attention of the reader (but a sparse index is a minor disappointment). So my recommendation is *read the book yourself*. You can skip the torture scenes, and there are plenty of them, after getting just an indication of what humans are capable of doing to their fellow beings, in case you didn’t already know. Stephen Grey is a good writer. We can thank our lucky stars that intrepid investigative journalists like Grey

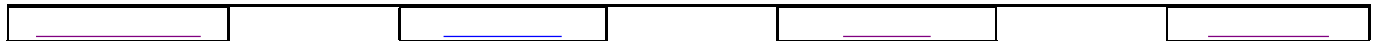
produce credible, hard-hitting books like this one. The referencing is extensive and thorough, but one of the greatest strengths of Grey's work, as in the work of journalist Robert Fisk, is that they don't just use secondary sources of information. They interview primary sources on all sides of the issues and travel extensively where the action is taking place. You can believe the substance of this book - it's an appalling indictment of America's unelected leadership and its mindless and totally counter-productive pursuit of the so-called War on Terror.

Footnote: Insight Into A Sociopath

Cartoonist Garry Trudeau, creator of *Doonesbury*, was a classmate at Yale with George Bush. Trudeau said he penned his very first cartoon to illustrate an article in the *Yale Daily News* on Bush and allegations that his fraternity, DKE [Delta Kappa Epsilon], had hazed (bullied) incoming pledges (new boys) by branding them with an iron. The article in the campus paper prompted the *New York Times* to interview Bush, who was a senior that year. Trudeau recalled that Bush told the *Times* "it was just a coat hanger, and ... it didn't hurt any more than a cigarette burn".

The Bush Administration's obsession with torture is deep-seated and personal. George's love of it in particular is not so much for what it might do in assisting in the War on Terror as it is a perverse exercise in humiliation and the exercise of absolute power to inflict pain on other people through the use of unaccountable and an all-powerful authority. What we have been seeing unfold before us since the rendition and Abu Ghraib stories first broke (and there were earlier indications in Afghanistan of mass killings and torture, although not as widely reported) is the elevation of a sadistic fraternity head to the highest office in the land, but his delight at "harmlessly" branding pledges has just progressed to the next level: torture, murder (remember the tortured to death cadavers at Abu Ghraib), and the "disappeared".

Buzzflash News Analysis, 11/1/07 <http://www.buzzflash.com/articles/analysis/227>



OWEN WILKES CHRISTCHURCH MEMORIAL (FINALLY) OPENED

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Murray Horton

The late Owen Wilkes, Anti-Bases Campaign (ABC) founder and world famous peace researcher and activist, requires no introduction to *Peace Researcher* readers. To refresh your memory about the astonishing amount of achievements that he packed into his 65 years before killing himself, in 2005, read *PR* 31, October 2005, the Special Issue on Owen, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prcont31.html>

On the very deliberately chosen date of July 4th, 2005 there was a Christchurch memorial meeting for Owen (also reported in that issue of *PR*). It was attended by more than 100 people, remarkable when you consider that he permanently left his home town in the 1970s. That wonderfully cathartic event which celebrated an extraordinary life of our friend and colleague left the organisers, ABC and Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA, of whom Owen was also a founder) with the desire for some sort of permanent memorial for him. Ideally it would have been some sort of a research scholarship, but that would have involved very major ongoing fundraising and the necessity to go through all sorts of procedures to set up a permanent structure to administer it. Too ambitious for us, unfortunately.

Council No To Statue, Yes To Park Bench

So we looked at a physical monument in Christchurch. We would have loved to have had a statue of him, clad only in his trusty leather shorts, peering with his binoculars through the Christchurch Airport fence at the US military aircraft which he assiduously researched for so many years. But the Council was never going to consider that, let alone fund it. So we lowered our sights to something more “realistic”. In my 2006 Organiser’s Report (*Peace Researcher* 33, November 2006, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr33-133a.html>), I wrote: “May (2006) was the first anniversary of his death and to commemorate it, a fellow employed by the Christchurch City Council to take guided walks (he calls himself a “walktologist”) led one through Beckenham, the suburb of Owen’s childhood. That Sunday morning was a brief spell between vicious southerlies, so numbers were down, but the Mayor and his wife were there. It turns out that Garry Moore knew Owen, and contributed several Owen anecdotes (hilarious stories about Owen as a 1960s’ City Council dustman) to the few hardy souls who took part. He was amenable to the suggestion of both ABC and CAFCA that there be a Christchurch memorial for Owen and we’re currently negotiating the details with the designated Council bureaucrat...”

We settled on a humble park bench, with a memorial plaque. Little did I know that it would take nearly 18 months to come to fruition. There were many twists and turns in this seemingly simple process (after all, the Mayor had pledged his official support). First we had to choose a site, and it soon became apparent that the Council would not make any public land available in any of Christchurch’s usual “peace” sites (let alone at the airport). So then we agreed that it be in Beckenham and we acted on the suggestion of ABC committee member, Robyn Dann, who nominated the ponds area of Beckenham Park, facing the Heathcote River. This was particularly significant to Owen, as he grew up just metres away in a riverside corner dairy (which is still there) owned by his parents, and went to Beckenham Primary School, which neighbours the Park and uses it for sports grounds. Owen was very proud of his Beckenham background. Many years after he left Christchurch, when he was staying with me, I found him rummaging through my pretty sparse wardrobe. He said he was looking for a respectable shirt, because he was in town for the Beckenham Primary School reunion and was off that night to go dancing with his girlfriend from when he was 12 years old. He found something, put on a pair of trousers (now that was a rare sight), jumped on the wobbly old bike that I loaned him and pedalled away down memory lane. When he got back he reckoned that he’d had a great time. So Beckenham Park was adjudged the perfect site (and was also endorsed by his family).

Things ground to a halt when the Council bureaucracy asked us who was going to pay for it. ABC and CAFCA figured it shouldn’t be up to us, as surely to God the City Council of Christchurch the Peace City could find a few dollars to honour such a famous Christchurch peacenik, particularly as the Mayor was on board. Reluctantly both groups said that we could out up some money, and Owen’s ex-wife, Joan Hazlehurst, was also agreeable to do so. But I put it to the Mayor that the financial onus was on him and the Council. He agreed, and offered \$2,000. That was enough to satisfy the bureaucracy and work resumed. Bob Leonard and I attended a site meeting with Council officials as far back as early 2007, where Bob introduced a new angle by asking for a pictorial representation of Owen on the plaque (which is not normally done). However, the money was enough to accommodate that, so it was agreed. We supplied the photo (the cover one from the *Peace Researcher* Special Issue on Owen. It was the cover photo of his Hamilton funeral programme, and is a really lovely smiling one of him). We worked out the wording and off it went to the Council’s monumental masons. As long ago as May 2007 Bob and I inspected the finished item.

Then things ground very, very slowly through the winter for a whole variety of reasons.

But finally, in September, we were told that the plaque was on the bench, and that the bench was about to be installed in the Park. Local body elections were imminent, Garry Moore was not running again, so we only had a window of a few weeks if he was still to be Mayor when performing the official opening. We asked, he agreed, and the only available weekend day that he had available while still Mayor was only a week away, so we suddenly went from very slow to very fast. Invitations were sent out to family, friends, colleagues and local ABC and CAFCA members. The media were notified. Because of the non-negotiable date, we stressed that it would be on regardless of weather, and to bring a picnic if it was a fine day. Then we thought, how do you actually open a park bench? My wife Becky (*PR's* Layout Editor) advised that we cover it with an appropriate banner and open it by the simple gesture of removing that. Brilliant. We decided on ABC's generic banner, which mentions the US military base at Christchurch Airport, and the "NZ" spybases at Waihopai and Tangimoana, all three of which had preoccupied Owen for years.

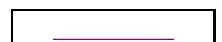
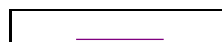
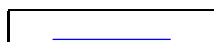
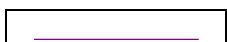
An Opening Which Did Owen Proud

The last Saturday in September was beautifully sunny, warm and calm. That would have pissed off Owen, who loved discomfort (just a few days later he got his revenge as I found myself cycling through town being battered by hail and blown about in a freezing southerly). Up to 50 people gathered, including family, friends and colleagues. People were there from as far as Wellington and even Sydney. The *Press* sent a photographer. As master of ceremonies, I read a variety of messages from right around the world from people and organisations sending apologies (such as Owen's partner, May Bass) and ringing endorsements of Owen's life and work from Australia, England, Norway, Denmark and NZ. Those vulgar Australians hoped that his bench might put a deserved splinter into the arses of the powerful should they choose to sit on it.

We'd done hours of speeches about Owen at his 2005 memorial meeting, so we kept this brief. I spoke for a short time about him, the significance of the setting for the bench, thanked everyone who needed to be thanked, and gently chided Mayor Garry Moore about having got nowhere with the statue idea (other messages referred to that as well). Garry, who has been known to bite like a big fish at real or imagined criticism, confined himself to suggesting that the Council might like to have me stuffed when it came to my turn (that greatly appealed to my darling wife). Garry told us how pleased he was to have been invited to do the honours and told one Owen Wilkes story that we hadn't heard before. He said that he'd first met Owen at a 1970s' summer school at Arthurs Pass. When lunchtime arrived, Owen suggested that his class go for a walk and before they knew it he'd got them to climb a bloody mountain! At the conclusion of Garry's short and funny speech, he invited Owen's relatives present to perform that actual opening – thus denying the *Press* a front page photo of the Mayor of Christchurch holding a banner calling for the US Air Force to get out of Christchurch Airport. A small group of old friends and former colleagues, some of whom hadn't seen each other for decades, stayed on to picnic in the sunshine in beautiful Beckenham Park. Stories were told and much hilarity ensued.

The next day I got an e-mail from "Gazza" once again thanking me for having invited him to do the honours, and once again repeating his preference for a memorial park bench rather than a statue. He concluded by saying "statues are so bloody passé" (actually in a wonderful slip of the tongue for a very senior public official he said "statutes" are passé). The *Press* ran a photo and small story on the Monday, omitting all mention of the Mayor's involvement, and including a quote from Owen's 2005 suicide note (which is bit odd, don't you think?).

We're very pleased that this seat is now in place, for perpetuity, in such a beautiful setting and one which held such personal significance to Owen. The plaque reads: "In Memory Of Owen Wilkes, 1940-2005. International Peace Activist, Researcher, Archaeologist, Who Spent His Early Years In Beckenham". We invite all those who knew, or knew of, this extraordinary man to visit his humble park bench (which is right in keeping with such a modest person) and share a few moments of reflection with him. Just watch out for those splinters.



- **Murray Horton**

The name Graeme White mightn't ring any bells for you. But if you were on, or saw media coverage of, the Anti-Bases Campaign's (ABC) protests at the Waihopai spybase in either 2006 and/or 2007, you'll know exactly who I'm talking about when I describe him as the bare arsed goatman. He was not the only nudist we've had at Waihopai protests (there have been several naked protests at the base, by both men and women), but he was definitely the only one to remain resolutely bare arsed throughout the whole weekend, whether in our camp, in central Blenheim or at the base itself. When he came into that conservative provincial town with us he made sure that everyone knew he was there by dint of playing his bagpipes and/or horn while simultaneously flying a halfmast New Zealand flag. A naked bagpiper in the central business district is not something the good people of Blenheim had probably ever seen before (his bare bum formed the background for an otherwise perfectly respectable national TV interview with Green MP Keith Locke). As you can imagine, his 24/7 nudity posed problems for us as the protest organisers, with complaints coming from several quarters – from within our own ranks, from members of the public, and from the cops. I give credit to the latter, as they could easily have arrested him and provided the media with an easy side issue to focus on. Instead they simply told him to cover up, which he did, to the bare minimum, wearing a tiny money pouch to cover his danglers but nothing else. In 2007 we only accepted his registration on his acceptance of our written condition that he put his pants on. Naturally he turned up pantless, denying all knowledge of having received any such letter, but he agreed to do his skimpy cover up for us.

So why did he go around naked (or nearly thus)? I never discussed this (or anything else) with Graeme, indeed I didn't know him at all personally. So what I've heard on the subject has been second hand, ranging from that he was protesting at the sweatshop labour involved in producing the clothes that we import, to that "it reflected his disdain for the modern celebrity culture and the moneymaking machine it represents. For Graeme, 'clothes didn't maketh the man'. He believed human beings were beautiful without clothes as God had made them!" (*The Common Good*, Christchurch Catholic Worker, Spring 2007). The clue could be found in Graeme's only choice of garment – sackcloth (I don't know if he also wore the ashes that are supposed to go with that). He painted phrases and slogans both on that basic garment and on his own body, as a walking banner. With his long hair and beard, weatherbeaten face that made him look older than his 46 years, penitential garment and/or nudity, Graeme looked every inch like an Old Testament prophet or one of those early saints who used to live on top of a pillar of salt in the desert for decades. The modern versions are the sadhus, the Hindu holy men in India who go about naked, smeared with ash and with matted hair and beards.

But what about the goat? The answer why he drove it in his slogan-festooned car all the way from Christchurch to Waihopai and back, tethering it outside our camp, was simple and mundane – he had to milk it every day (he didn't bring it on the actual protests). Bare arsed goatmen tend to get short shrift from society, no matter how nominally Christian it is. "He recently appealed against a conviction for indecently exposing himself to a woman while tending a goat. At the time he was wearing a money pouch over his crotch and a sack cloth. While defending that charge he gathered a further conviction when court staff saw his bare buttocks. He has also been convicted for riding his bicycle wearing nothing but a helmet" (*Press*, 13/8/07, "Swim attempt feared fatal: Graeme White was an altruistic volunteer who helped the mentally ill. He also has a string of convictions. One of Christchurch's more eccentric residents has probably died in a bizarre incident", Ian Steward).

"A True Christian Radical"

Despite being a Protestant (and his memorial service was held in a Presbyterian church), Graeme was a central figure in the Christchurch Catholic Worker group, one which has had a long working relationship with ABC, regularly joining us at protests at both Waihopai and the US military base at Christchurch Airport. Graeme was never an ABC member but he came to Waihopai at least three times that I can remember. He was very much a practitioner of Christian militancy, which led to the full force of the law coming down on him hard on two high profile occasions in the 1990s. No sooner had a statue been erected in Amberley of Charles Upham, New Zealand's double Victoria Cross winner from World War 2, than Graeme had a pretty good go at chopping it down with a concrete cutter, in broad daylight. He was belaboured by the outraged locals who stopped him, arrested and fined \$600.

He was a fervent anti-abortionist, regularly protesting at Christchurch's only abortion clinic (as well as a placard he carried a small cross with a lifelike foetus strapped to it across his back) and was sent to prison for two and a half years after being found having tunnelled in under it, complete with what the Police described as "incendiary devices", which meant that he ended facing very serious charges. At his trial Graeme said: "My main aim wasn't to

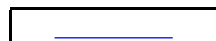
burn the building down. It was really to facilitate a situation like this (public forum) where I could talk about it. I wanted to present a lot of information but I haven't been able to. I thought this might be a test case for abortion law and bring about some change" (Press, 9/5/00). He served 14 months in prison.

To him, Waihopai and the abortion clinic were part of the one big "death machine" that he opposed. I must say that I entirely disagree with him on this issue, and the methods he used. I've never discussed abortion with any of the Catholic Worker group (or with Catholic friends in general) but let's just say that I'm completely on the other side of the argument on this one, and have been for many decades.

"Graeme was a true Christian radical and a prophet in our time. What work he did, how he spent his money and time, how he travelled, how he used his talents, how he behaved, how he lived and loved – he examined every facet of his life in the light of the Gospel of Jesus and acted accordingly. This took him to examine the roots of what he was doing and why he did things. This is what radicals do. This was reflected in the way Graeme approached what food he ate, how he travelled (mainly by cycle), what work he did (mainly manual), how he would be paid, how he would use his earnings, what justice campaigns he would support and what would be his own individualistic response....Many people, including the mainstream corporate media, were confronted by his lifestyle and wrote him off as 'an eccentric'....But, from a Christian viewpoint, it is a description that does him a disservice....He was a true believer to the point where his beliefs affected every area of his life. In a world which has made an idol of greed and wealth, he chose voluntary poverty over acquisition of wealth and goods. Despite having a university degree (in engineering), he chose to be a humble labourer gardening or milking cows, rather than seeking status...He was as close to the spirit of St Francis (of Assisi) as anyone we've met...Graeme had a special charism (a quality of being able to inspire others) for the mentally ill and peacemaking. He was a genuine pacifist, drawing strength for his life from the power of Christ in the midst of the community. He was the resident guitarist at the Wednesday evening Catholic Worker liturgies, at the weekly Sunday morning Hillmorton (mental) Hospital service, regular in supporting prison ministry over many years. He also peeled the spuds each week for the Catholic Worker communal meal and then washed the dishes after it was finished. His favourite saying when complimented was 'no worries'..." (*The Common Good*, Christchurch Catholic Worker, Spring 2007).

Graeme's altruism was broad in its scope. "In 2002 he became the second living person in New Zealand to donate a kidney to a stranger. Professor John Morton, who coordinated the kidney donor programme, said the following year that White was a likeable and intelligent man who generously gave a part of himself to save another. 'I found him a fascinating individual', Morton said then" (Press, 13/8/07, *ibid.*). And thus it was that his death was entirely in character with an altruistic "eccentric". On a Saturday in August 2007 he went as a volunteer, as he regularly did, to help a conservation group plant native trees on Quail Island, in Lyttelton Harbour. Because he had to milk cows, he missed the boat from Lyttelton, so drove around the harbour to the nearest point, then managed to walk or wade to the island across the mudflats during low tide. But when it came time to make the return journey, the tide had come in and he made the fatal decision to try to swim across to where his car was parked – taking the boat back to Lyttelton was not an option. He was wearing his usual attire (i.e. almost nothing), it was a Christchurch winter's day and Lyttelton Harbour is never very warm or welcoming at any time of year. His body has never been found. So his family and friends had to settle for a memorial service, rather than an actual funeral.

I freely admit that I am one of those whom Graeme made to feel uncomfortable. In this secular society a (quite literally) naked display of religion has that effect. He wasn't a proselytising Biblebasher; quite the opposite, he aimed to live his life on Biblical terms and in strict accordance with his social justice beliefs. Inevitably, that made him an extremist and a genuine Christian radical. Nothing wrong with that, the country could do with more of them. His long time friend, Jim Consedine, described him as "a modern day John the Baptist figure... the dispossessed knew they had a champion in Graeme" (Press, 22/8/07; "Christchurch Eccentric: Tributes to 'John the Baptist figure'"). ABC expresses our deepest condolences to Graeme's widow, Lynette and to all of his (and our) friends in the Christchurch Catholic Worker group.



DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- **Murray Horton**

ABC expresses our condolences to Bill Rosenberg, a longstanding member, for the death of his mother, **Ann Rosenberg**, aged 85, in Christchurch, in August 2007. This is the second consecutive issue of *Peace Researcher* in which we've marked the death of one of Bill's parents – his 92 year old father, Wolfgang Rosenberg, died in February 2007. Murray Horton's lengthy and detailed obituary of Wolf is in *Foreign Control Watchdog* 114, May 2007, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/14/04.htm>.

Likewise, Murray's obituary of Ann is in *Watchdog* 116, December 2007 <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/16/09.htm>. Ann was on ABC's mailing list in the final years of her life. The Rosenbergs were active supporters of our work. From the outset, in 1991, they were monthly pledgers to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account which provides Murray Horton's income and enables him to work for both ABC and the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa. Individually, and as a couple, Wolf and Ann were central figures in the Christchurch progressive movement for more than half a century. Her death really does mark the end of an era.



THE CASE OF PROFESSOR FRED HOLLOWES - Hounded Out Of NZ By SIS

Peace Researcher 35 – December 2007

- Hugh Price

Fred Hollowes (1929-93) was born in Dunedin and became a celebrated ophthalmologist – though he always described himself more modestly as an eye doctor. He studied in New Zealand and in Britain to become an Associate Professor at the University of New South Wales, and Chairman of Ophthalmology at Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney. He was famous for his work to treat and prevent blinding eye infections, especially trachoma, among Australian Aborigines, Eritreans and Vietnamese. In Eritrea he trained doctors to carry out simple eye surgery, and helped establish a factory to manufacture plastic intra-ocular lenses. He planned and headed similar projects for Vietnam, Bangladesh, Burma and Nepal. In 1991 he was named Australian of the Year and awarded the Order of Australia. A heroic man.

In Australia, and throughout the world, Hollowes is respected to a degree that is roughly equivalent in New Zealand to our respect of Sir Edmund Hillary – so why is he *Australian Man of the Year* and not *New Zealand Man of the Year*? After all, he was born in New Zealand and spent a good deal of his life here. The fact is that Fred Hollowes left New Zealand because he was so irritated at being probed and chivvied by officers of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, who wrote to his overseas colleagues to ask about his political opinions. In his autobiography he wrote in his usual down-to-earth style: "...it really pissed me off ...to think that these (SIS) numbskulls were keeping tabs on me in New Zealand ...".

In his autobiography he tells that he joined the former Communist Party of New Zealand while he was working as an eye registrar in Wellington Hospital (*he left the Party in the 1960s. Ed.*). "My thinking was simple pure bolshie stuff. If everyone's against them they must have some of the right ideas". The SIS missed the point and kept up the questioning and harassment that tipped Hollowes to work at the University of New South Wales rather than the Dunedin Medical School. For years New Zealand's secret police stuck to misinterpretation of his nature and motives.

Even after Professor Fred Hollowes was awarded his Australian Order of Merit, and gained his Australian Man of the Year recognition, and went on to set up and lead sight saving programmes in northern Australia, Eritrea, Nepal and Vietnam to restore sight to thousands and lessen the health disparities in health treatments between "haves" and "have nots" – after all that he got not a single word of apology or regret from the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service for their implied suggestions to his colleagues that he might somehow be a "subversive".

The *British Journal Of Ophthalmology* ended its review of Fred Hollowes' book - "...his desire to help and identify himself with the suffering people of Eritrea did not end with the eye programme. He undertook the task of finding the solution to the removal of the millions of landmines scattered in Eritrea and other countries". Fred Hollowes was no dry, dusty academic but had considerable style and *joie de vivre*. He maintained an active family life with his wife and their five young children. "Fred Hollowes will remain for a long time in our hearts and memories". To read a New Zealand review of *Fred Hollowes – An Autobiography* written with Peter Corris, see Colleen Foley's piece "NZ security trailed Australian of the Year" (*Dominion* 1/10/91).

I wonder if the SIS has thought of showing decency by signalling even a little bit of regret for their boneheaded and insulting delinquency against a great New Zealander? They could start by making a donation to the charitable Fred Hollowes Foundation, whose New Zealand office is in Auckland. Better still, why not make it an automatic payment that would deliver a donation every month?
