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Cora Fabros' speaking tour was an important contribution to our ongoing anti-bases efforts and a great success in terms of direct education for those who attended her talks and those who read and listened to her many media reports. It was a networking success, bringing Cora into contact with our own foreign bases and those who try to expose them, and with many other individuals and organisations that need to hear Cora's message and to spread it widely. The world's sole remaining superpower is flexing its muscles by spreading its military might and influence around the globe, wherever it can gain a foothold with military visits, ship visits, bases of various kinds and duration, and creative new agreements that effectively bypass processes of democratic approval in the "invaded" countries. Cora told us about all this, and about local grassroots resistance that is gaining momentum in many countries. Waging war requires spying in order to locate targets for so-called smart weapons. Some of that spying is done by bases like Waihopai. We are currently seeing the tragic results in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US cannot function as a superpower without foreign bases. Cora has helped us to see the links more clearly.

Cora returned to the Philippines with fresh first hand knowledge of a new category of US base imperialism: the spybase with a geographic location well suited to spy on a vast area of the globe and then reported mindlessly and dutifully and directly back to Big Brother in the US. She is now an enthusiast, an international ABCer, carrying the message of our foreign bases struggle to the wider No Bases network.

### **Good News From Ecuador**

As a very positive postscript to the topic of grassroots resistance, in October 2008 Cora forwarded to ABC a message from Ecuador: "Dear No Bases friends. We are happy in Ecuador today because our new Constitution was approved by about 64-69%. YES! This means that Article 5, which prohibits the installation of foreign military bases, has been approved by Ecuadoreans. We feel that there are many positive issues in the Constitution, and the one related to military bases is very important, thanks to international support, the No Bases Network and the International Conference held in our country (*that was the 2007 conference which founded the International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases. Ed.*). We have to continue working to ensure through our participation that we can continue influencing policy and decisions".

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# BASES OF EMPIRE: The Global Spread Of US Military And Intelligence Bases

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

- Cora Fabros

Article prepared for Cora's speaking tour of New Zealand in July 2008, sponsored by the Anti-Bases Campaign.

## US military presence overseas



Map courtesy of [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)

### Introduction

The United States is the world's remaining superpower. By the end of the 20th Century, it had been struck hard by the global crisis of overproduction and by financial crisis of unprecedented proportions. The Bush regime launched its wars of aggression, in Afghanistan and Iraq, to acquire sources and supply routes of oil and other raw materials, markets, fields of investment and spheres of influence. History will tell us how the United States committed far worse acts of terrorism than those of September 11, 2001 in carrying out their continuing global War on Terror against the people of the world. The US does everything to maintain its superpower status through its high technology and high tech weaponry. Its history will indicate how it acquired its military bases as spoils of wars throughout the world to protect its own economic and political interests.

### US Military Overseas Deployment, Bases And Access

The US has the highest military expenditures in the world. It spent over 3.7% of its gross domestic production on its military (\$US478.2 billion) in 2000. This is half of the \$US1 trillion of military expenditures worldwide, more than double the budget of the European Union combined (\$US217 billion) and nearly five times larger than the budget of China \$US80 billion (2005 estimate). [1] There are 386,000 troops or 27% of all US military personnel deployed outside US territory. The US maintains a military presence in more than 155 countries and territories (30 of which have 100 or more US servicemen and 14 with more than 1,000). [2] Under the new Unified Command Plan instituted in 2002, the US has five geographical commands to cover and direct the US military forces overseas: the EUCOM for Europe, CENTCOM for the Middle East, PACOM for Asia-Pacific, SOUTHCOM for Latin America, and NORTHCOM for North America. The STRATCOM or the US Strategic Command covers space and missile early warning systems. [3] The various commands supervise and are responsible for military relationships with countries

in their respective regions in areas of security cooperation and military coordination. The commands also ensure interoperability of existing military and defence alliances with allies overseas. Recently, the African Command (AFRICOM) for Africa has been established, further strengthening the US influence in that part of the world

The US maintains the most extensive foreign basing structure in the world. The US Department of Defense itself acknowledged the extent of their domestic bases assets in 2005 (buildings, structures and utilities): more than half a million facilities (571,900) on more than 3,740 sites occupying nearly 30 million acres (over 12 million hectares). Overseas (in territories and foreign soil), there are 117,951 facilities occupying 318,819 hectares. These are in 769 sites in 39 foreign locations and seven US territories [4] not including those in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For the period covering 2003-2005, an average of around 390,000 overseas US troops were deployed around the world. This number was double that of 1993-2002, when overseas troops were lowest, and were at levels similar to those of 1970-1992. [2] Clark Air Base in the Philippines, Bitburg Air Base in Germany and Howard Air Force Base in Panama are examples of bases that were closed during the early 1990s together with the reduction of around 300,000 military personnel. [5] For 2003-2005, the US negotiated 20 treaties and/or agreements covering military deployment and personnel through Status of Forces agreements (SOFA), Access and Cross-Servicing agreements (ACSA) and/or Mutual Logistics Support agreements (MLSA), collectively known as S/A/M agreements.

We note that in 1993-2002 when US troop deployments were reduced, there were 62 such treaties/agreements that were newly signed between the US and other countries, either by adding on access and cross-servicing and status of forces to existing agreements or by signing new pacts. In all, the US has military, logistics and status agreements with at least 129 countries as of 2005. [6] More and more of the S/A/M agreements are being signed or negotiated by the US.

	1945-1970	1971-1992	1993-2002	2003-2005
SOFA/ACSA/MLSA [S/A/M] Total treaties in force: 129	23	24	62	20
Overseas military Deployment (yearly average)	752,686	462,249	212,277	389,026
Overseas Bases (average) (582-1139)	886	830	800	769
Data collated from [3],[4] and [6]				

Two things are noteworthy from Table 1: the reduction of US overseas military deployments during 1993-2002 and the closure of some of its bases were offset by the increased access due to the S/A/M treaties negotiated during that same period. More of these access and status of forces agreements or treaties are being negotiated by the US with other host or potential host countries. The number of troops stationed overseas has been reduced by more frequent but shorter deployments of troops. Furthermore, advances in transportation, communications and military technology have maintained the productivity and effectiveness of overseas bases despite the relative reduction in numbers.

The relative increase in troop deployments in 2003-2005 is due to the nearly 150,000 US troops in the Middle East that are currently engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq. The massive introduction of US troops into the Middle East that started during the 1991 Gulf War and the continuing deployment of US troops for the Iraq and Afghanistan occupation spawned new bases in these countries as well as those nearby. This is in line with the Project for the New American Century in which the personnel strength was to be restored to levels anticipated in the "Base Force" outlined by the Bush Administration. [7]

### **Repositioning To Meet "21<sup>st</sup> Century" Realities**

In the same document, the need to reposition US forces to respond to "21st Century" strategic realities was enunciated by shifting permanently-based forces to Southeast Europe and Southeast Asia reflecting strategic concerns of the US in these areas. Geographically, Europe remains the largest concentration of main operating bases outside the United States mainland. In 2004, European bases hosted over 116,000 troops, their 125,000 dependents, and 45,000 support personnel, plus their dependents. The key countries are Germany with air and ground troops, the UK with air and naval personnel, Italy with air and naval bases and Turkey with air bases. US documents indicate a planned force reduction to 60,000 and a shift to lighter ground forces and adding Romanian

and Bulgarian bases to US force posture (in 2005, US troops in the European Command numbered around 98,000).

In Asia, there are over 67,000 overseas troops in around 225 bases in Japan, South Korea and Indonesia. There are forces in Thailand, access agreements with Singapore and military exercises in actual combat zones in the southern Philippines. Guam remains the most important place outside the US mainland where new air, naval and ground facilities are being slated to be added. Guam is also set to receive redeployments of 7,000 Marines from Japan (Okinawa) while South Korea also faces significant redeployments and consolidations.

Using China as a pretext, US, as well as Taiwanese, military officials are pushing for a theatre missile defence (TMD) system installation in Taiwan as part of the US dual encirclement and engagement policy towards China. The absence of a US military base or deployment in Taiwan does not deter large arms sales to Taiwan. US arms sales to Taiwan have been significant at \$US71 billion for 1999-2005 alone, third after Japan and South Korea. In his confirmation hearing to become Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates said: "We should maintain our capabilities to resist China's use of force or coercion against Taiwan and assist Taipei in maintaining its self-defence". Regular defence dialogues between defence officials of Taiwan and the US are also held regularly.

In the Middle East, bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Oman in the south; in Lebanon, and Turkey in the north; and Pakistan and Afghanistan in the east form a partial ring around oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq and the critical sea lanes in the Persian Gulf. The Middle East has the largest number of US troop deployments with approximately 218,000 (but frequently changing). There are a number of bases in Iraq in the ongoing effort to conduct "stability operations" that serve as bases of power projection against Iran and Syria. There are also new bases in Afghanistan, which flank western China and provide control and protection of pipelines from the Caspian Sea basin through Central Asia. This economic aspect underlies the increasing importance of the bases in Central Asia in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan where around 70% of the world's oil reserves and natural gas lie. In Iraq in 2005, the US military maintained 106 forward operating bases with 14 "enduring" bases. There were around 40 large bases (2005) and 110 small to medium bases in Iraq. The reduction of base infrastructure brought the total number of bases down to around 75 in 2006. [8]

In 2006, US troop deployment at sea was about 127,000. Sea-based forces include those aboard ships such as aircraft carriers, destroyers and submarines. These carriers serve as moving centres of projected strength through their strike capabilities. These ships can also contain sea-launched cruise missiles such as the Tomahawk which are part of the existing triad of strategic nuclear force projection. In Asia, the US Third Fleet covers the Eastern and Central Pacific while the Seventh Fleet based at Yokosuka covers the length of the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean. There are around 35 submarines (nine SSBN, two SSGN, 24 SSN) deployed in the region, some of which are capable of launching submarine-launched Trident and Poseidon ballistic missiles. *SSBN – Ship Submersible Ballistic missile Nuclear powered. SSGN – Ship Submersible Guided missile Nuclear powered. SSN – Ship Submersible Nuclear powered. Ed.*

Through the US Navy Sea Power 21 [7a] and Marine Corps Strategy 21, the US Navy introduces new concepts of maritime prepositioning: high speed sea lift, new amphibious capabilities of Marine Corps and training for littoral warfare in Western Pacific. It has three prongs according to Sea Power 21:

- Sea Strike - Projecting Precise and Persistent Offensive Power. Expanded power projection that employs networked sensors, combat systems, and warriors to amplify the offensive impact of sea based forces;
- Sea Shield - Projecting Global Defensive Assurance. Provided by extended homeland defence, sustained access to littoral [coastal] zones and the projection of defensive power deep over land;
- Sea Basing - Projecting Joint Operational Independence and support for joint forces provided by networked mobile, and secure sovereign platforms operating in maritime domain.



The US Quadrennial Defense Review Report in 2001 [9] called for an increased naval presence in the Pacific as well as prepositioned equipment and contingency basing assets in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. These are in four forward regions: Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian Littoral regions and the Middle East-Southwest Asia. [10] Overseas base structures and facilities are now classified into three types: **Main Operating Bases (MOB)**, **Forward Operating Locations (FOL)**, and **Cooperative Security Locations (CSL)**.

Main operating bases (MOB) are US bases with permanently stationed forces with their families. Rearrangement of forces in European and Asian MOB's such as Ramstein (Germany) will result in relative force reductions: 65,000 troops are planned to be removed from Europe and one brigade from South Korea. These forces are to be deployed to other locations where they are needed. Forward operating bases or locations (FOB/FOL) include the sprawling Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo and Manas in Kyrgyzstan as well as the vast Grafenwoehr/Vilseck/Hohenfels complex in Germany. These FOL are bases with pre-positioned equipment and small military support groups.

Cooperative security locations or CSLs are facilities occupied only for training, exercises and other military interactions (e.g., rest and recreation activities) with regional partner countries. Examples of these locations are those where joint *Balikatan* (Shoulder to Shoulder) exercises in the Philippines and Cobra Gold in Thailand are usually held. New CSLs are being developed in Africa, South Central Asia and East Asia that do not require permanent basing structures such as the carrier pier in Singapore. Recent US military aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and in the Balkans has brought about new military bases and control over oil resources. But over the long term the US aims to increase its reach while keeping the profile of its intervention small. This is evident in the problems highlighted by the report of the 2006 Iraq Study Group. [11]

This is but a recipe for neo-colonialism: intervention or direct aggression in a country, rapid stabilisation of the state or area using the force required; a shift to a minimum US military presence as rapidly as possible; rapid creation and training of effective local security and intelligence forces; reduction of forces to a required minimum to encourage "sustained reform". However, "...the more that local government and security forces are seen as proxies or subordinates of the US, the more difficult it will be for them to establish legitimacy". [12]

As Khair al-Din Hasib, the "father" of pan-Arab nationalism, stated: "*Whenever, wherever there is occupation, there will be resistance*". The US has relearned this the hard way in Iraq with now almost 5,000 American servicemen dead, about 40,000 officially wounded and more than half a million civilians killed. Direct occupation in Iraq for the US has had many serious consequences. With the escalation of resistance, the casualty figures will increase. It has been recommended by the 2006 Iraq Study Group Report that the United States should "...provide additional political, economic, and military support for Afghanistan, including resources that might become available as combat forces are moved out of Iraq" and that "the primary mission of US forces in Iraq should evolve to one of supporting the Iraqi Army". [12] This shift is not surprising because the US failed in stabilising the region despite the large number of troop deployments during the continuing occupation of Iraq. It failed miserably to establish the legitimacy of its local partner state and army.

## The Role Of US Bases And Their Impact On People's Lives And Environment

*“The presence of American forces overseas is one of the most profound symbols of the US commitments to allies and friends. Through our willingness to use force in our own defence and in defence of others, the United States demonstrates its resolve to maintain a balance of power that favours freedom. To contend with uncertainty and to meet the many security challenges we face, the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of US forces”* George Bush, National Security Strategy, 2002.

***US overseas military bases reflect the need for the United States to project a visible and psychological presence and commitment to a country or region.*** US bases are stark reminders and real sources of control over a nation without necessitating formal political control over its territorial sovereignty. It can be likened to a loaded gun pointed at the government and peoples of its host country. Its mere presence intimidates and gives coercive power for the US to gain concessions from the host and allows it to interfere, in most cases with impunity, in internal affairs, commit crimes and violence on local people, and wreak grave social costs and environmental destruction.

***US military bases serve as surveillance and data centres.*** These bases, such as those within the NSA ECHELON network [13], provide intelligence gathering functions for the US. The data collected from these activities are not necessarily limited to those with military use but also extends to economic surveillance as well. [14] In terms of surveillance and data centres – we see this as a vital function taken on by host countries like the Philippines (until the US bases were booted out in 1992 after almost a century of military occupation). Currently, major US military facilities in Japan and Okinawa, in Guam and in Australia take on this function of surveillance and data gathering. Which makes me ask the question – how much of the surveillance and data gathering work done at Waihopai as well as at Tangimoana contribute to this global surveillance and data gathering work for the United States? While they are technically New Zealand facilities, as the New Zealand and the United States governments have consistently claimed, one can't help but ask the question how much of their work contributes to US capability and military strength in its global posturing. These are new issues I have encountered on my speaking tour of New Zealand with the Anti-Bases Campaign. It would be very interesting and useful to know the truth behind these facilities in New Zealand and how they contribute to the United States' wars of aggression in the Middle East and its expanding military presence in Asia and the Pacific. [15] [16]

***US bases also serve as locations for prepositioning supplies.*** Even before September 11, 2001, in the “Project for a New American Century” and in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR2001), the Pentagon was reconfiguring its forces to become smaller, more flexible, and better able to respond to sudden events, thus necessitating prepositioned supplies and war materiel. In situations lacking established bases, the US has entered into more than 80 bilateral agreements since 1992 to provide it with a range of access and status of forces agreements that it can call on depending on the need of the situation. In addition, through its use of advanced military technology, these agreements allow the US to apply greater amounts of military force over greater distances in shorter periods of time. The 2004 National Military Strategy [17] outlines how expanded bases can increase the ability of the US military to rapidly deploy, employ, sustain and redeploy capabilities in geographically separated and environmentally diverse regions. These bases serve as launch pads for the pre-emptive strikes including nuclear attack, “peace-enforcement” and “constabulary” functions that the QDR 2001 has called for.

***US bases also serve as sites for training & munitions testing.*** US Navy weapons testing was carried out in Vieques, Puerto Rico, for over 60 years (ended in 2003) and included testing for operations in the Persian Gulf region. Vieques also hosted a US Navy listening post for underwater tracking of submarines and an electronic warfare range for testing new weapons systems. Crow Valley in Clark Air Base in the Philippines was used as a practice bombing site before the removal of the bases in 1992.

***US bases provide medical and R & R facilities (rest and recreation) inside or around the bases for troops.*** These auxiliary functions are almost always a source of serious social problems arising from the interaction of US troops with the local population. Most of the support services in these bases have been subcontracted to private firms such as Kellogg, Brown & Root, DynCorp, and the Vinnell Corporation thus making the bases a lucrative area for service providers whose owners can be traced to favoured US corporations. Most of the Iraq overseas contract workers recruited post-2003 are stationed on US bases to provide security, food, cleaning and other services. However, these civilian contractors are not immune to the dangers created by the US occupation of Iraq.

***US military presence in bases or in exercises and training is usually seen as a precursor to intervention and war.*** In East Africa, where around 30 US National Guard soldiers from Guam have been training Ethiopian commandos in supposed “anti-terrorism” exercises, tensions flared up over a long standing border dispute with Somalia. It is not an accident that the US has been conducting this training near the border and that the Islamic Somali leadership has resisted this presence.

**US bases are bases for counter-insurgency in the host country and surrounding regions.** So-called “stability operations” are venues for political and military intervention in domestic affairs and excuses for US military presence. In performing “peace-enforcement” and “constabulary” functions, such as that in Iraq, the US has shown its willingness to directly intervene to allow US companies and firms free rein in the plunder of Iraq’s resources. In Mindanao, southern Philippines, the US military has provided training, war materiel, logistic support and “advice” to Special Forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as part of its War on Terror.

The forward positioning of US bases serves as forward tripwires, guaranteeing timely and rapid US intervention in a crisis situation as in the case of the function of US bases in the Korean peninsula. That the US calls the Philippines its “second front in the War on Terror” is not an accident. The US, through its periodic and overlapping joint exercises with the Philippine military, is able to strengthen its position in the Philippines for the purpose of ensuring its control over oil resources in Southeast Asia.

**US bases serve as launching pads for US aggression.** Clark Air Force Base, Subic Naval Base and other military installations in the Philippines were used for launching wars of intervention from the 1950s until 1991. Clark was used to send bombing missions during the Korean War of 1950-1953 and in the bombing of Sumatra during a rebellion by the Indonesian army in 1958. Clark also figured in the deployment of US forces in the area of the Taiwan Strait islands of Quemoy and Matsu, which were militarily disputed by Taiwan and China. From 1955-1986, US military bases in the Philippines were used frequently for bombing missions in the wars, the training and deployment of US troops, and as communication links as well as for rest and recreation of tired US servicemen.

**US bases serve to secure sea-lanes, oil pipelines and other economic interests of the US.** To provide energy security, the US surrounds oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait with a US military presence through direct basing or access agreements in neighbouring countries. In the guise of counter-narcotics to straddle Venezuela, Bolivia and other Latin American oil rich countries, the US launched Plan Colombia and other exercises. It has occupied Afghanistan to secure pipelines from Central Asia. It has positioned itself in Singapore and has established a US base within a Philippine military base (Zamboanga), and consistently maintained US troops in the Philippines through military exercises to protect the sea lanes through which nearly 50% of world trade passes. Military deployment under the US war on terrorism through direct basing and/or access agreements ensures continuing expansion of the US Empire and protection of its political and economic interests.

In terms of social cost of US military bases and presence, violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the host country has the greatest impact. The arrival of US forces invariably involves some form of military intervention including outright aggression, occupation and colonisation. This is aggravated by the US policy and practice of shielding its troops from criminal prosecution under the host’s judicial processes and system, oftentimes under the legal cover contained in access and status of forces agreements.

### **Rapes, Murders, Pollution**

After Okinawa was annexed to Japan, crimes involving US military and civilian personnel totalled nearly 5,000 by the year 2000, including twelve murder cases and 110 rape cases. In 1995, the rape of a 12-year-old child in Okinawa triggered nationwide protests against the bases. In Korea, there were around 100,000 criminal cases involving US soldiers over the last 50 years with none convicted under Korean law. In the Philippines, in the period from December 1985 to December 1986, 258 cases were filed against American servicemen in Olongapo courts where eventually 168 were dismissed, three were archived and one resulted in acquittal. For the same period in Angeles City, of 43 criminal cases three were dismissed while nine were classified as “pending arrest” since the accused were flown by US base authorities to another country. [18] *Olongapo and Angeles were the cities which hosted the Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base, respectively. Ed.*

In the Philippines, there is a general outrage over the transfer from Philippine custody to the US Embassy, in direct contravention of the orders of a Philippine court, of a convicted US serviceman who raped a Filipina in 2005. The US “blackmailed” the Philippine government by suspending the *Balikatan* joint war exercises over the custody issue. The US immediately announced the resumption of the war exercises when the Philippine government relented, citing the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Around US bases, the development of an “entertainment” and “service” industry prompted by the presence of US troops leads to a rise in the number of sex workers who are exposed to venereal disease, AIDS and abuse by US servicemen. Young girls have been subjected to sexual battering. In the Philippines, one such girl died when a vibrator wielded by a US GI broke off and left a part of the vibrator inside her body. Around 17,000 women were prostituted in bars and nightclubs around Olongapo City alone during the long tenure of the US military base in



Subic. The women of the Philippines have been forced to “entertain” US troops for four decades. These same “gentlemen's bars” exist in most major overseas bases. In other areas where the US military “practiced” its war games, sexual assaults were par for the course. In 2001, five young girls and one woman were gang raped by US soldiers in the Australian towns of Darwin, Hobart, and Perth. [19]

Environmental damage due to military activities has detrimental effects on the surrounding residential areas. The Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, through the conduct of numerous studies and investigations, is known to have toxic PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) that were left in corroding power transformers after 1991. This pollution has been revealed as the probable cause of many of the surrounding population's illnesses. In Subic, Filipino workers at the former base were forced to handle toxic waste, including burying it, and swimming through sewage to unclog pipes. Subsequent deaths of these workers and children near the area have called attention to the effects of these wastes. Recent Study by KALIKASAN-People's Network for the Environment revealed that 800 out of 4,000 residents near Subic Base are afflicted with asbestosis. Women have experienced spontaneous abortion and increased rates of childhood leukaemia, and incidence of morbidity and mortality have risen. The two former military bases contain high levels of heavy metals (such as lead) and other pollutants. While the US government acknowledged contamination in the former bases in 1992, the US has failed to clean up or rehabilitate the bases and the communities around them. [20] In South Korea, the Ministry of Environment has discovered soil and water contaminated with various nuclear wastes in 14 of 15 former US military camps. The US government refused to compensate the people of the Philippines for the estimated \$US100, 000, 000 cost for the clean-up.

In all of the US military facilities in the Asia and Pacific region, military pollution is a common problem. In most cases, the levels of toxic contamination are in the Superfund category (defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency for seriously contaminated domestic US sites). In most cases, the United States denies any responsibility for the cleanup and continues to deprive victims of toxic contamination of desperately needed treatment, care and compensation.

US war exercises have killed a number of civilians, mostly children. In the August 2000 Flash Piston exercise in Cebu, US Navy SEALs (Sea, Air, Land Special Forces) and their Philippine Navy counterparts held a secret exercise in the former Atlas Mine at Toledo where they left an unexploded rocket launched grenade. It blew up when local kids were playing with it, killing two and injuring another. In March 2000, three US sailors were arrested and charged with bashing up a Cebu City taxi driver in a dispute over his fare. War games in Central Luzon including the Crow Valley gunnery range have displaced several indigenous Aeta communities.

US servicemen also mistakenly fire on civilians around bases. In the past, there had been several accounts of US servicemen shooting to death a Filipino child by mistaking him for “a wild pig”. In Iraq in 2005, US soldiers fired on a civilian vehicle they feared might hold a suicide bomber, killing at least two adults and a child. On July 25, 2002, Philippine newspapers reported the shooting of an unarmed Filipino civilian Buyong Isnijal by a US soldier during a raid of Isnijal's house. The US military denied the allegation despite the testimony of the victim's wife. Since the 1940s, the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, two thirds of which was seized by the US Navy for US military purposes, was used for target practice for munitions. People in Puerto Rico protested the Navy exercises saying that the explosions were killing the fish on which local people depended to survive. Local and international opposition finally succeeded in ending the military occupation of Vieques in 2003. The atrocities committed by US forces on people, often women and youths, and environment, have ignited the people's rage against the continued foreign presence. The calls for their immediate pull out and subsequent punishment for the crimes they have committed add to the growing global campaign to stop US wars of aggression, occupation and military intervention.

## **US Bases In The Asia Pacific Region**

*“The presence of 100,000 US military personnel is not arbitrary—it represents the formidable capabilities of the US Eighth Army and Seventh Air Force in Korea, III Marine Expeditionary Force and Fifth Air Force in Japan, and the US Seventh Fleet, all focused on shaping, responding and preparing as necessary to achieve security and stability in the region.”* [21] These forces in the Asia Pacific region are mainly in these positions: Japanese bases which maintain the US Fifth Air Force, including 18th Wing, 35th Fighter Wing and 374th Airlift Wing; the Navy Seventh Fleet, including USS *Kitty Hawk* Carrier Battle Group (which was replaced by the US nuclear aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* on September 25, 2008); USS *Belleau Wood* Amphibious Ready Group; III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF); Ninth Theater Area Army Command (TAACOM); and First USA Special Forces Battalion. South Korea hosts the US Seventh Air Force, including the Eighth and the 51st Fighter Wings, and the Eighth Army, including the Second Infantry Division.

In addition to the forces above, visiting forces allow additional routine combined exercises and training, and ship visits. Changi Naval Station in Singapore accommodates US naval combatants and includes a pier which can

accommodate US aircraft carriers. Thailand is an important refuelling and transit point for operations in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf. Australia has long provided key access to facilities for US unilateral and combined exercises. The US makes 60-80 port calls per year to Hong Kong for minor maintenance and repair of transiting ships. Access agreements have become increasingly important as US forces and bases have been reconfigured and plans to downsize its forces in the region are underway.

In South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia, access to key host nation facilities, ports and airfields are critical to the US security objectives in the Asia-Pacific. Access agreements such as Mutual Logistics Support Agreements and Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreements make available the use of host nation resources to support day-to-day and future operational requirements. They also enable joint training and exercises, "constabulary" operations, humanitarian and disaster relief operations. These provide the US access to basing and infrastructure necessary for its force projection without the need for a permanent presence. The US offers these countries money to upgrade and maintain infrastructure, bases and airfields. In addition, the US spent \$US265.7 million for 2001-2004 in training 4,000 Indonesian, 1,200 Filipino, and 700 Thai police. Taiwan is also one of the region's largest weapons buyers from the US while the Philippines has been its largest recipient of military aid.

Under its global War on Terror, the Bush Administration deployed over 1,200 troops, including 150 US Special Forces, to the southern Philippines to advise the Philippine military in their pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf Group. It also increased intelligence sharing operations, restarted military to military relations with Indonesia and provided or requested from the US Congress over \$US1 billion in aid to Indonesia and the Philippines. [22]

### **Guam: The New Key Hub For Pacific Power Projection**

There are important developments in the region that we need to keep a close watch on. The Pacific island of Guam is being transformed into a key hub for American maritime power in the western Pacific. The strategic importance of Guam to Washington's long-term presence in East Asia was a point hammered home by US Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Singapore recently. Gates' speech to the Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual gathering of Asian defence ministers and military chiefs, was his most complete exposition of future US defence strategy in the region since he took over from Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon in early 2007. [23]

The US was not about to begin a long, slow, historic withdrawal from the region. Instead the US Defense Secretary outlined the concept of the US as a '*resident power*' in addition to its longstanding roles as an ally, partner, friend and routine offshore presence. Critical to its long term focus as a resident power will be Guam, the site of the largest US military build-up in the Mariana Islands since World War II. As the Pentagon chief pointed out, sovereign US territory in the western Pacific stretches all the way from the Aleutian Islands to Guam. For US defence planners aiming for a mobile, more flexible US global military posture across the globe, Guam is an ideal staging post. And for close allies of the US in the western Pacific, led by Japan and Australia, Guam promises to become a vital facility as it hosts exercises and trains with allied air and naval forces.

Secretary Gates also made a flying visit to Guam, 6,000km west of Hawaii and 2,000km southeast of Japan, to look at planned defence infrastructure. Acquired from Spain in 1898 following the Spanish-American War, Guam became a refuelling station for the US Navy. Guam has long been an important logistics base. Over the next six years the Pentagon will spend billions on a new port capable of berthing a nuclear powered aircraft carrier, and will build air bases, schools, hospitals and housing for US military personnel and their families. Guam's Andersen Air Base will soon be home to a detachment of unmanned, long-range Global Hawk surveillance aircraft able to track Chinese warships and submarines emerging from their home ports into the Pacific Ocean or the South China Sea.

The US Air Force's newest fighter, the F-22 Raptor, will also be periodically flying on exercises from the island. By 2014 Guam will receive about 8,000 US Marines who will transfer from their present base in Okinawa, the Japanese Government helping pay the \$US10 billion-plus relocation costs. With a population of about 170,000 Guam is already home to 12,000 US military personnel and the heavy build-up promises to put further strain on local communities. Its naval base hosts three attack submarines and the Air Force rotates its strategic bombers through Guam. [24]

As the island's new facilities take shape in coming years, they will be increasingly multilateral in orientation, with training opportunities and possible pre-positioning of assets. Clearly, a message designed to convey a reassurance to the US's close allies in East Asia that talk of the gradual diminution of the US's military posture in the face of a renascent China was misplaced. The Defense Secretary argues forcefully Washington's presence has been an essential element in assisting Asia's economic revival, "opening doors, protecting and preserving common spaces on the high seas, in space and more and more in the cyber world". "This presence has offered other nations the



crucial element of choice and enabled their entry into a globalised international society,” he said. “As someone who has served seven US Presidents, I want to convey to you with confidence that any future US Administration's Asia security policy is going to be grounded in the fact that the United States remains a nation with strong and enduring interests in the region, interests that will endure no matter which political party occupies the White House next year”. Gates went on to say that any speculation in the region about the US losing interest in Asia struck him as “preposterous or disingenuous, or both”. He stressed US military ties with East Asia, even with its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, were more constructive than at any time in US history.

### **New Spybase In Australia**

In Australasia a very significant new initiative is the construction of a new top secret US military communications base in Western Australia. [25] Australian Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon revealed recently that work would begin in July or August of 2008 on a satellite ground station for the US Mobile Users Objective System, a new satellite communications system being deployed by the US Navy. The new US defence facility will be located adjacent to the existing Australian satellite signals intelligence facility at Geraldton, Western Australia (the existing spy base is functionally equivalent to New Zealand's Waihopai station and both are key facilities in the US Echelon global intelligence system). The base will be linked to a network of communications satellites that will provide frontline US military units with instant access to high grade intelligence and tactical information. Once operational, the new facility will automatically provide communications support for US military operations in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Indeed, it will also automatically provide communications support for US military operations in much of the Asia-Pacific region.

Australian defence officials announced late in 2007 that they had finalised an agreement with the US Navy for the new satellite communications centre. Mr Fitzgibbon's confirmation that construction would proceed came shortly after newly elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's withdrawal of the bulk of Australian combat troops from Iraq. The new Geraldton facility will be the first major US defence base to be established in Australia since the construction in the 1960s of the Joint Defense Facility at Pine Gap in the Northern Territory and the now closed early warning satellite ground station at Nurrungar in South Australia.

It was also revealed that the US Navy had contracted with Boeing Australia to provide construction services for the new Geraldton base. Boeing Australia already provides operational support for the existing facility at Geraldton, another Australian signals intelligence facility at Shoal Bay near Darwin, the Australian Navy's communication station at North West Cape near Exmouth, and the Defence Communications Network facility at Deakin. About 70 Australian contractors are working on the design of the new Geraldton building and up to 20 United States staff and 100 Australian contractors will be involved in the construction phase. The ground station will comprise three buildings housing sophisticated electronic infrastructure, three 18m satellite dishes and two smaller antennas. Once complete, the base will be fully automated and will require only call-out maintenance support. All costs will be carried by the US. Informal discussions on the possible location of the facility in Australia began in 2003.

Australian Defence and the US Navy signed a classified memorandum of understanding setting out the governing arrangements for the station in November 2007. The conclusion of a secret memorandum of understanding rather than a formal treaty means the agreement has not been reviewed by Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. Mr Fitzgibbon has said the ground station will be operational by 2011.

There is also the new Hawaii Regional Security Operations Center complex at the US Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific. The \$US318 Million, 250,000 square foot complex is the largest construction in Naval Engineering Facility Command and is scheduled for completion in late 2010. The new facility will be used to gather and analyse intelligence from US interest areas, such as the Middle East and South East Asia, allowing high ranking officials to make better tactical decisions. Because of the tremendous changes in communications technology over the past two decades, coupled with the disturbing social and political dynamics, newer and better ways to process intelligence are needed. [26]

### **People's Resistance To US Military Occupation**

In the 1960s, in the face of the threat of nuclear annihilation, the dangers of toxic waste and radioactive fallout in a worsening global environmental condition, the US military bases became a target of protests by anti-nuclear and non-proliferation movements and by environmental movements. The intimidation of the local population by the mere presence of US bases and personnel has generated a wide range of responses. Opposition to the bases has been similarly wide ranging from the environmental effects of the bases to crimes against the local population such as murder, rape, indiscriminate shooting, target practice on boys in Clark Air Base and others. The concomitant proliferation of prostitution and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, drug use and other related vices directly

linked to the presence of US military bases has also spawned protests from women's organisations. Many anti-bases action groups have sustained campaigns against the US military presence in their own regions: in Greece, Spain, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Japan, Okinawa, Australia, Italy, Sardinia, Diego Garcia, Guam, Hawaii, South Korea, Ecuador, Czech Republic, Germany, Ecuador and in other parts of the world (*such as New Zealand, where there have been anti-bases protests since the 1960s. Ed*).

In Iraq, the Iraqi people are proving to the US, as they did to the British in the 1920s, that colonial occupation is no longer profitable. The disaster of the Iraq war directly contributed to the electoral defeat of US Republicans in mid-term congressional elections in 2006 as well as to the issuance of the Iraq Study Group Report which admitted the difficulties the US is facing in its occupation. Similarly, successes in the resistance of the Afghan people through guerrilla warfare has forced the US military to share the burden and responsibility of "peace keeping" with its NATO allies. The government of Hamid Karzai has not effectively stemmed the Taliban nor has it provided for the wellbeing of the Afghan people. Instead it is becoming more and more hated for serving US interests and making life more difficult for the people.

Through its military bases and access agreements, the US makes its presence felt in an ever-widening circle driven by its greed for resources and markets. However, as attempts are made to expand this circle, the US faces the resistance and condemnation of oppressed people of the world who continue to develop solidarity to strengthen their continued call for peace and justice. Nations have also stood firm in their assertion of sovereignty and independence against the US Empire's never ending greed for power and dominance.

### **No Bases! Network**

Finally, let me just say a few words on the International Network for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases or No Bases! Network. Formally launched in Ecuador in March 2007, the No Bases Network pursues a campaign focusing on the global military infrastructure with priority placed on bases of the United States and Europe. Network membership is part of the larger global struggle for peace and justice. It is steadily developing into a global network of predominantly local grassroots groups challenging the global expansion of hundreds of foreign military and intelligence facilities. [27]

A review of recent initiatives and actions has shown us that organising our struggle on a global level has enhanced its effectiveness. Local campaigners find moral support in the fact that many others around the world struggle for similar goals, facing similar obstacles; campaigners learn from each others' experiences; and sharing information on specific bases, their functions and their legal status has improved our understanding of the whole network of military bases globally. Value added for the global No Bases! Network is found also in the ability to jointly fundraise, to build a knowledge base and to build international solidarity among fellow civil society campaigns, scholars and political actors.

The Network works through:

- 1) Communication strategies (Website, e-lists, teleconferences, face to face meetings)
- 2) Research/Analysis (Global Observatory and outreach to researchers and analysts in the US and other continents working on bases related issues. The Network offers a pool of experts from the field to work with, and a platform for critical researchers to present their work on the Website and during its forums/seminars or roundtable discussions organised nationally or in the regions.
- 3) Outreach to new groups and to new allies
- 4) Regional coordination, research and monitoring, strategic alliance building, lobbying and advocacy, public global actions and supporting local struggles.
- 5) Rapid response which may be crucial to win a political battle especially in countries that are for the first time "offered" a military base. Campaigning materials could be made available online, and the networks hope to provide some support for translation and production of campaign materials. Previous experiences show that organising visits and speaking tours of international no-bases campaigners can be very important tools for information exchange, organising, media and strengthening solidarity among network members and supporters. [27]

While much of the campaigning against foreign military bases is done on the ground, close to the existing or planned military facilities, the international network will engage in policy dialogues with governments and international institutions in the coming years, to table foreign basing and its effects on local populations at an international political level. One of the outspoken strategies of the Network is to place the pervasive and expanding network of foreign military facilities and their impacts prominently on the United Nations' agenda. The No Bases! Network will support and stand in solidarity with those who struggle for the abolition of all foreign military bases and

military aggression worldwide.

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# CITIZENS' PEACE WATCH OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

7 October 2008

- Cora Fabros & Virginia Suarez Pinlac

## ON US MILITARY BASING IN MINDANAO

### An Appeal For Truth And Vigilance In The Midst Of Deceit

The Citizens' Peace Watch is gratified that we are contributing in a small way towards attaining the truth about US military basing in the country (*i.e. the Philippines. Ed*). Our fact-finding mission report[i] has apparently served as the basis of the Legislative Oversight Committee on the Visiting Forces Agreement's (LOVFA) recent trip to Zamboanga City (*southern Mindanao, where the country's Muslim minority is concentrated and where a civil war between the Government and Muslim separatist guerrillas has raged for more than three decades. Ed.*) ostensibly to verify our allegations that, among others, the US has built a military base in the said city.[ii]

We, however, raise issues with the manner by which the six hour-long "inspection" was conducted. First, it was conducted by and only with parties whose backgrounds cast immediate questions on their conclusions: they are known proponents of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), are on record as having defended or supported US military presence in the country, or whose personal or institutional interests lie in perpetuating said presence. This is like getting friends of a crime suspect to investigate the crime.

Second, it was hosted by the very parties that were supposed to be subjected to the investigation: the US and Philippine military and defence officials who may be the very people responsible for the violations being investigated by the committee. Like giving a crime suspect the power to dictate what the Police can and cannot examine in a crime scene, the inspection gave the organisers the opportunity to stage manage the inspection, allowing the so-called investigators to see only what those being investigated would have wanted to see.

Third, it appears that the LOVFA did not interview a single person whose testimonies and opinions diverged from those of the ones being investigated. They could, for instance, have sought out the airport official who claims that the US has been expanding the structures it has been using inside the airport, or the Commission on Human Rights officials that investigated the involvement of US troops in the February 2008 incident in which eight civilians were killed, or rank and file Filipino soldiers who have said that they are barred from entering the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P) compound, therefore belying the claim that the JSOTF-P camp is under Philippine control. This is like the Police not interviewing any witnesses whose testimonies could pin the suspect. Fourth, that only a limited number of reporters were allowed to cover limited moments of the event, raise further concerns on the openness and transparency of the process.

### None So Blind As Those Who Will Not See

Given all these, it is no surprise that the LOVFA members overlooked what they were supposed to oversee. It is not that they did not catch sight of US military bases. In fact they were pictured as walking out of the US military's JSOTF-P base inside Camp Navarro – the very US military base which we saw with our own eyes last February but from which we were denied entry despite formally seeking permission from the authorities.

The members of the LOVFA just refused to call what they saw as a "US military base." Senator Rodolfo Biazon, Co-Chairman of the LOVFA, has gone on record to admit that "what the LOVFA members found were US military facilities built within the existing rules and regulations of the VFA". In other words, for Biazon, a "US military facility" is not a "US military base." According to the US Department of Defense's own Dictionary of Military Terms, a "base" is defined as "1. A locality from which operations are projected or supported. 2. An area or locality containing installations which provide logistic or other support." [iii]

The JSOTF-P headquarters in Camp Navarro is the locality from which the JSOTF-P's operations are projected or supported, as US troops themselves have acknowledged. They even refer to their bases in Mindanao as "Advance Operating Base" or "Forward Operating Base." [iv] The US Embassy itself has admitted that the US has been building structures in Zamboanga City for "medical, logistical, and administrative services" "for them [US troops] to eat, sleep, and work." [v] The Visiting Forces Commission itself has acknowledged that the US maintains "living quarters" and stocks supplies inside their camps. [vi] Zamboanga City's airport and piers have been used to regularly transport troops in and out of their area of operations and therefore serve military purposes even if they are

nominally Philippine owned and civilian infrastructure. From the outside, the JSOTF-P's satellite dishes and other communication devices are visible and it can be safely assumed that these devices serve to support operations. What else is inside the compound cannot be ascertained precisely because of the deliberate secrecy enforced by the US and Philippine governments.

Regardless of what are there, however, they are there for a purpose: to support US military operations. Biazon's claim that the base is "administrative in nature and not combat in nature" is contrary to how US and Filipino troops themselves describe the activities the US military is conducting in Mindanao. US troops are not just slumped on their desks filing logbooks, making coffee, or waiting for five o'clock. US troops are first to declare that they are out there on the battleground – to conduct "humanitarian" operations "to win hearts and minds", yes, but also to gather intelligence, and to join Filipino troops in their operations, in the thick of the battle.[vii] They are at war.

## **A Base Is A Base Is A Base**

In other words, under the US military's own definition – and, in fact, under a commonsense layman definition – the "US military facilities" that the LOVFA members admit to have found constitute a "US military base". To insist that it is not is to create distinctions that do not exist – not even in the minds of those who use the bases. It is also to deliberately ignore how US military bases have evolved through the years: from large fortress-like city-size bases to smaller, more austere facilities that accomplish the functions of a "base." [viii] Whether or not they fly the American flag, whether they are as big as Subic or Clark, or whether they are inside Philippine camps – these are not the defining characteristics of a military base. What defines a base is the fact that it is used by the military for military operations – a definition that covers the US' structures in Mindanao. It is thus regrettable that the LOVFA has refused to see what they have found.

In light of this, we with the Citizens Peace Watch reiterate our call for a truly independent investigation into the issue – an issue of grave constitutional import and an issue that affects the prospects of peace in the country and beyond. We call for the formation of an independent commission composed of people of unquestioned integrity and impartiality – none of whom should have voted on the VFA or similar agreement before and none of whom should have past or present ties with the military and the administration – and with real powers and resources to inspect the military bases, to compel officials to appear, to summon witnesses and to provide protection to them, to conduct their investigation without interference from US and Philippine militaries and the executive branch. Their findings could serve as the basis or guide for further legislative and judicial actions on the matter.

Pending these actions, we reiterate our call for the suspension of the deployments of US military troops to the country. No investigation can be fair and thorough as long as the subjects of the investigation are in a position to change the facts on the ground and to determine what can and cannot be investigated. The Citizens Peace Watch believes that the truth about US military basing in the country can be visible to all but those who refuse to see.

## **About The Citizens' Peace Watch**

The Citizens' Peace Watch is an independent initiative of concerned citizens brought together by various non-government organisations and other civil society groups to continuously and consistently monitor the peace and security situation in the country in order to contribute to well-informed public debates and policy discussions.

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- Murray Horton

## **Waihopai Protest; Speaking Tour**

This can be very short and sweet for the simple reason that the great bulk of what I do as Anti-Bases Campaign Organiser is regularly reported in *Peace Researcher*. ABC had two major projects in 2008, namely our regular January protest at the Waihopai spybase and the Cora Fabros national speaking tour in July. I organised both of them and it's the first time I've organised two such major projects within a few months of each other. The Waihopai protest was reported in *PR* 36, August 2008, which you can read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr36-166.html> and you will find Bob Leonard's report on Cora's tour, plus her paper on America's global empire of bases, elsewhere in this issue. A speaking tour always takes a lot of time and work to organise (I won't bore you with the details) – it certainly did with ABC's only previous speaker, Canadian ex-spy turned whistleblowing author, Mike Frost, back in 2001. In Cora's case I spent the best part of a year organising it, dating from meeting her in her hometown of Manila in August 2007 to hosting her at our Christchurch home in July 2008 (her first stop on her NZ tour), with an awful lot of work inbetween those two dates. Bob was her travel companion and opening speaker, on behalf of ABC, as he had been for part of the Frost tour. Wearing my Philippines Solidarity hat I have played that role with several previous Filipino speakers and in October 2007 I accompanied the first one that we've taken to Waihopai, namely Amirah Ali Lidasan, a young Muslim woman activist.

## **Supporting The Domebusters**

Of course between the Waihopai visits of those two Filipino speakers there occurred the spectacular April 2008 deflation of one of the spybase's domes by the Ploughshares Domebusters (which is one reason why Bob and Cora and their accompanying journalists and photographers were not allowed to set foot on the base's property, whereas Amirah and I and our media companions were allowed right up to the inner gate). For my very detailed account of that dome deflation, read "Pop Goes The Spybase", the cover story of *PR* 36, August 2008, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr36-165.html>. And in this issue you can read the latest on the subject, namely Bob Leonard's court report of the depositions hearing in the Blenheim District Court in September 08 and my report on the accompanying protest activity. Bob and I went to Blenheim for a couple of days as ABC's act of solidarity with the Domebusters.

We haven't set any date for our next Waihopai activity (beyond publicising that it won't be the usual January camping weekend one), as we will connect it to the Domebusters' trial and as of the time of writing we don't know when that will be or even where – the defence is applying to have it transferred from Blenheim to Wellington. When we have those basic details, then we can work out what we will do. But rest assured that there will be ABC activity about or at the Waihopai spybase sometime in 2009. Stay tuned.

## **Waihopai Display**

The Waihopai display has had a quiet year and hasn't left Christchurch since it went to Dunedin for the Alliance's annual conference in October 07. But it spent several weeks on show in the Students' Association building at the Christchurch Polytechnic (attracting some controversy from administrative staff in the process) and we had it at Cora Fabros' Christchurch public meeting.

## ***Peace Researcher***

I edit *Peace Researcher*, so I'm biased, but I reckon it's pretty darned good. I certainly enjoy being the editor and writing about subjects such as the 2007 "anti-terror" raids (see "A Bad Case Of 'Terrorism' Hysteria", my cover story in *PR* 35, December 2007, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr35-156.html>). My only regret is that I don't have more time to spend on it, the range of subjects on which I collect material to "one day" write up into articles for it forms a most impressive pile in my office. Getting out two issues a year is as much as I can manage, because of my other commitments, but it's always good reading and it looks very good, thanks to my wife Becky as layout editor. And this issue marks a first in that we are printing one page (and one page only) in colour. It's the colour coded world map of US bases which accompanies Cora Fabros' paper. It would be meaningless if printed in black and white. But we're not going to make a habit of it, as it costs five times as much to print as any other page in this issue.



Bob Leonard, at 70, is now finally retired from a quarter of a century at Lincoln University, so he has more time for ABC activities such as writing for *PR*, which he edited for the best part of two decades. I'm delighted to have Bob back as a regular writer. Although we are no longer co-editors, I regularly consult him about every issue of *PR* and we work together closely. Special thanks to committee member Yani Johanson, who is ABC's Webmaster. Yani waged a hard fought campaign to get elected as a Christchurch City Councillor in 2007, so he had precious little time for ABC activities. But, eventually, he gets each issue of *PR* online.

## A Committee Of Activists

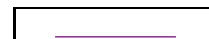
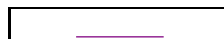
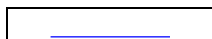
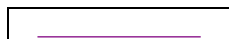
ABC is in good shape. We have a small membership – it is a specialist niche subject – but plenty of active supporters who don't need to be actual members (most of those who were the invaluable local organisers and hosts for Cora Fabros' tour are not ABC members). Our committee is in healthy shape, with a couple of new members, namely Andre Prassinos and Dan Rae, both veterans of years of protests at either or both Waihopai and the US base at Christchurch Airport (to read about Dan's peaceful invasion of the latter, to protest the commencement of the Iraq war in 2003, see my article "Harewood Protester Convicted", in *PR* 28, December 2003, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr28-90.html>). Lynda Boyd is still at Auckland University but she plays a full part in the ABC committee when she's back home for the holidays and she organised the solidarity activity at Blenheim in May 08 when the Waihopai Domebusters first appeared in court after five days in custody (they were released on bail). Frances Mountier has resigned from the committee this year, but she played a leading and active role in all ABC's 2008 activities, such as at Waihopai in January, at the Domebusters' Blenheim court appearance in May, and Cora Fabros' visit to Wellington in July (when Francie was living there; she's back in Christchurch now).

## Media

I am the ABC's media spokesperson and did a lot of media work both around our usual Waihopai spybase protest in January and an enormous burst of it caused by the Domebusters' action – newspapers, radio, TV, the works, even writing a guest editorial in a liberal Catholic magazine. The media also rings me for comment about subjects that they think might be related to ABC's interests so, for example, this year I have done interviews about new Police intelligence gathering powers and international Police intelligence sharing. Those are not actually our subjects, but I'm happy to give the hapless reporters a quotable quote.

## Organiser Account

The CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income, has now been doing so since 1991, which is quite remarkable. It is in reasonable financial health (there are now 47 regular pledgers – 50 was the highest there has been in recent years), but it needs to fill the coffers some more, because on a couple of occasions this year it has dropped too low and we needed to top it up from the term deposit that we keep as an interest earning contingency fund. The number of donations has dropped, doubtless reflecting the harder financial times that people are facing. Having said that, the generosity of some people staggers me – very recently the Account received a \$1,500 donation, bringing to \$7,000 that one person has donated in less than a decade. The Account is in sufficient health that my pay has been increased again recently, from \$13.50 per hour to \$14. Both CAFCA and ABC have decided to send out a special appeal in early 2009, and to aim at a wider audience than just our own members, on the basis that a lot of groups and individuals who are not members of either benefit greatly from the work of either and/or both CAFCA and ABC. Once again, my heartfelt thanks to all of you who keep supporting my work, and therefore that of CAFCA and ABC, by your generosity. I (quite literally) couldn't do it without you.





# CAFCA/ABC ORGANISER ACCOUNT

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

- **Bob Leonard**

## Income:

One-off donations	\$8,992.07
Cash pocketed by MH	30.00
Pledges	17,668.50
Interest	8.47

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**Total** **\$26,699.04**

## Expenses:

Murray's pay	27,834.16
Cash pocketed by MH	30.00
Other cheques	103.20

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**Total** **\$27,967.36**

Income minus expenses = **-1268.32**

Cheque account balance on 31/03/07	\$10,089.29
balance on 31/03/08	3,820.97

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Difference between balances	-6,268.32
Term deposit on 04/05/07	5,000.00

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Balances income minus expenses **-1,268.32**

One-off donations 33.7%  
Pledges 66.3%

Number of pledgers as of August 2008 = 47

Bob Leonard, Organiser Treasurer, 23/9/08

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# REVIEW “ARSENAL OF HYPOCRISY”, A Film By Randy Atkins, 2003

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

- Jeremy Agar

The title of this disturbing documentary is a play on the US's role, during World War 2, as the “arsenal of democracy”. The phrase was intended as a compliment as it was American industrial capacity that armed Britain when it was fighting alone against Nazi Germany. And of course the good guys went on to win. By converting “democracy” to “hypocrisy” the filmmakers, themselves Americans with an intense knowledge of their country's Government, are crediting their audiences with a historical perspective they might not always have. As the reference assumes (though George Bush did all he could to discredit it) American power is still regarded by many as essentially a benevolent influence. This is in large part a residue of the War and the years immediately after.

The wordplay is a neat, succinct jibe, one that his film more than justifies, and it's not the fault of Bruce Gagnon (the film's presenter and spokesperson for the US-based Global Network Against Weapons And Nuclear Power In Space) that the allusion might pass some by. The content he is presenting might be similarly challenging to audiences with but a cursory understanding of American state policy. The immediate charge of hypocrisy is levelled at any and all US Administrations since 1945. Gagnon is looking at space policy, making the point that all post-war American administrations have assumed the need to control space and, thereby, Earth.

Put baldly like that, the accusation will strike some viewers as overwrought. If so, the “Star Wars” imagery we see will reinforce an assumption that Gagnon is exaggerating, that he can present his contempt for his country's leaders only by a selective use of the evidence. This would be a pity. Although the American drive to rule space has received less attention from the world's media than it merits, there are more than a few other reliable observers who have been making the same point for decades.

The DVD came out several years ago, but it is not in any way dated. In a sense, it's better to look at it now than it would have been in 2003 in that during the intervening period we haven't been able to see past Iraq and Afghanistan. It was around the time that Gagnon produced “Arsenal Of Hypocrisy” that Bush was launching his arsenal of deceit. Bush was no hypocrite: he lied to justify his wars. Meanwhile the militarisation of space has continued, with no essential change from the decades before Bush came into office. Had the doco been released now, audiences might have found it hard to think past the specifics to do with Dubya, whose follies could have been a diversion. Bush was demonised as an individual, but unlike some uniquely Bushian aspects of American “defence” policy, space policy has not essentially changed.

The specific hypocrisies underlying space policy are that the US says it wants nuclear disarmament, when in fact it wants nothing less than to give up its own nukes. It suggests it has to keep its nukes in the meantime to police the world, when their real purpose is to threaten the world. The drive to dominate space is motivated in part by the need to use space as a launching platform. Reagan's Star Wars programme of the 1980s, so named because it seemed more sci-fi than science, was not the fantasy that our wishful thinking supposed. It is more accurately seen as a stage in an enduring policy. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the stated need for all the space shields and weapons has gone, but the programme hasn't. It just took another form under a new name. That's been another hypocrisy.

Gagnon starts his story with Werner von Braun, the man who used concentration camp labour to build Hitler's rockets. In 1945, American and British troops entered Germany from the west, while Soviet troops entered from the east. As strategists wondered where the eventual boundary would lie between the two emerging big power blocs, the US and Soviet Union raced to recruit German scientists, who enjoyed a mystique in both Washington and Moscow. The Cold War had begun even before the hot war had ended. It did not matter that many of the scientists were Nazis. To some cold warriors in the West this was in fact a good thing as it proved their anti-communist credentials. 1,500 Nazis were smuggled into the US. Von Braun ran the US space programme, but he was only one of several top men with dubious backgrounds.

## **US Wants To Be “Master Of Space”**

From the start the idea was to “conquer, occupy, keep and utilise space” so that the US would win “the third world war”. The motto “Master Of Space” was chosen to inspire what would now be called a mission statement. America must at all costs have “the ability to deny others the use of space”. Gagnon discusses the seminal Vision For 2020, which set out the strategic context. Because of its dominant military and economic position at the War's end, the US did not need to fear a potential rival - not if it consolidated its advantage by taking over space. Neither the Russians

nor anyone else could pose a threat. But sometimes, because the threat of an external enemy is a great fundraiser, it had to be pretended that they did.

The justification for first going into space, and then, militarising it, was rationalised in terms which foreshadow the more recent analyses of outfits like the American-dominated World Bank and the International Monetary Fund: “The globalisation of the world economy will also continue, with a widening between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’”. The Vision For 2020 anticipated that “accelerating rates of technological development will be increasingly driven by the commercial sector”. Military policy was an extension of economic policy, and economic policy was to establish neo-liberalism around the globe.

Despite the hypocrisy that bangs on about how the rising tide of American power lifted all boats (a remark of Kennedy’s), policy makers have always known what has become so obvious in our new century: that the touted “free market” economies would lead to increased inequality, and, with it, increased regional instability. That, Gagnon explains, is why, whether or not there is a Soviet Union, space remains important as a place from which to spy. Every country being either a potential rival or a potential trouble spot, it’s safe to assume that we’re all being watched.

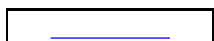
How Reagan would love being still around now that his Star Wars has become technologically possible: the purely military aspect of wars, the destruction of the enemy’s ability to retaliate, can be achieved almost entirely from space. The trick, which Gagnon thinks is now in place, is to destroy any potentially hostile missile while it’s still on the ground or, at worst, as it takes off. He dubs Gulf War 1 as Space War 1. The second space war was Kosovo; the third, Afghanistan. Since then of course we’ve had Gulf War 2 (Space War 4). Reagan could hope only to erect a barrier in the skies.

To buttress his case, Gagnon could have looked at lots of White House and Pentagon think tankers. His choice of Zbigniew Brzezinski is apt. Brzezinski advised Jimmy Carter, the 1970s’ President whom Republicans like to pretend was wimpy. From way back in the 1960s’ Kennedy era and since, Brzezinski had been one of the main Cold War strategists. He operated at a time when the notion of detente (the hope that the nuclear warriors could have a cuppa) made occasional appearances. Whenever it did, Brzezinski would panic. Ever eager to arouse tension, he crafted Presidential Directive 59, which committed the US to a nuclear war-fighting stance. This was quite an achievement in that there remains doubt as to whether he consulted either the President or the Central Intelligence Agency. It was Brzezinski who insisted that the US needed to blur the boundary between nuclear and so-called conventional weaponry, thus making extreme violence more thinkable. It was Brzezinski who insisted that the US had to push for a military advantage whenever and wherever opportunity arose. In characteristic vein he once told an interviewer that “it’s inaccurate thinking to say that the use of nuclear weapons would be the end of the human race. That’s egocentric thought” (quoted by Fred Halliday, “The Second Cold War”, Verso, London, 1983. See also “With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War”, by Robert Scheer, Random House, New York, 1982).

Post-Gorbachev (i.e. after the collapse of the Soviet Union), the world is supposed to be a different place, yet Brzezinski’s pronouncements have moved neither ideologically nor geographically. Gagnon mentions a book called “The Grand Chessboard” in which Brzezinski detects two global “collision points”. One collision point is central Asia and the “Stans”, next to the oil pipelines running through Afghanistan. The other hotspot is the coast of China. Developments since the book came out in 1997 indicate that Zbiggy is still influential. Gagnon’s other point is also as relevant as the latest news. The US wants to control space as it is a potential source of minerals. A NASA scientist is seen predicting that there will be mines on Mars by 2025. When, in July 2008, TV pictures showed the probe on Mars, the reporter repeated exactly that. According to Gagnon, Congress had before it a bill to make space profits tax exempt. If so, then America wants to privatise the universe in its own interests.

That’s why this film might seem too Darth Vader, too bad to be true. Because it has so much to say, and so much background information to provide, “Arsenal Of Hypocrisy” is intense in both tone and content. It’s essentially a lecture with the odd shot of a rocket or the Moon, interspersed with Gagnon’s talking head mate, Noam Chomsky, himself an uncompromising critic. As an unremittingly harsh dissection of US policy, “Arsenal Of Hypocrisy” has the potential to dismay the popcorn brigade. As an analysis of global insecurity, it’s essential viewing.

*Global Network Against Weapons And Nuclear Power In Space, Box 652, Brunswick ME 04011, USA, [globalnet@mindspring.com](mailto:globalnet@mindspring.com) <http://www.space4peace.org> Anti-Bases Campaign has been receiving information from them for years and we exchange publications. We can thoroughly recommend them. Ed.*



# OBITUARY - BETTY ROBERTS

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

- Murray Horton

Betty Roberts, who died in September 2008, aged 89, was a fixture of the Christchurch progressive movement for many decades and in many different capacities – for instance, she was a leading feminist, peace activist, community activist for a multitude of groups and sectors, local body politician and a tireless political activist at all levels of the political process. She was a member of the Anti-Bases Campaign from 1993 until 2006 when old age and ill health forced her to give it up; likewise she was a member of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) from 1985 until 2005 until the same reasons forced her to quit. She was a regular donor to both groups and from 1992 until 2004 she donated a total of several hundred dollars to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account, which provides my income.

And she was living proof that appearances can be deceiving. She was always immaculately dressed and well spoken (until I went to her memorial meeting, I had no inkling that she was actually an Aussie and had lived the first half of her long life there – she betrayed no trace of an Australian accent). Photos of her throughout the Australian first half of her life show her in gowns, gloves and jewellery, socialising with the upper crust and then later, in Christchurch, as a gracious hostess entertaining distinguished visitors (although she'd ditched the gowns and gloves by then). She and her husband Norman, to whom she was married for 66 years until death separated them (he is 93), lived for around 40 years in a home with a beautiful garden, in a private lane, on the Cashmere Hills. To the casual acquaintance, she could be mistaken for a typical Cashmere lady. She came from a privileged background in her native Australia – her father was a leading academic who, in retirement, became a Liberal (i.e. conservative) MP in the Federal Parliament. He was influential enough to be consulted as a constitutional expert by the New South Wales (NSW) Governor who wanted advice on whether he could dismiss the State's Labor Premier during the Depression. Betty's father advised him to do so and the Premier was duly fired. Her political journey can be measured by the fact that as a teenager, in the 1930s, she was taken by her family to see all the sights in pre-war Britain and Europe; 50 years later she was a political tourist to rather less fashionable countries like China and North Korea.

Betty Bland was born in Sydney in 1919, into a world just coming out of the horrors of the First World War and in the grip of the flu pandemic which killed tens of millions more than the war did. "I was probably very special being the first girl and surviving the flu epidemic at the time of my birth" (manuscript on Betty Roberts' life, written by Jennifer Evans for a Sociology paper in 1989 and updated to be presented to Betty for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1999). Her family was active in both politics and the Anglican Church, her father was the Foundation Professor of Public Administration at Sydney University. When Betty was four the family relocated to the Blue Mountains, to provide a healthier environment for her and her brothers (one of whom died of leukaemia at the tragically young age of 14, an event which traumatised the whole family). "Probably because the family wanted to build up Betty's health after whooping cough, etc, and because school was so far away and through the bush, she did not go to school until she was seven year old, the legal limit" (ibid.). The family moved back into Sydney to be closer to the kids' schools.

## Childhood During The Depression

"By the time the Blands had settled in Strathfield the economic depression in Australia was well underway. Mr Bland kept his job at the University, though all teaching salaries were cut by 30%. Betty remembers a constant stream of unemployed people at their door. These unemployed people were given a meal or a job of work. If you had work and therefore had an income you tried to share it around for other people, and so found all sorts of jobs to do around the place. A lot of hawkers came to the door selling shoelaces, cotton, pins and such things.

"The Depression had a big effect on everyone; it made a very strong impression on Betty. In August 1929 wool prices fell heavily and in the same month, London financial houses refused any further long term loans. The Scullin Labor government came into office in October. Betty recalls: 'In NSW the Government Savings Bank had closed because everyone tried to withdraw savings at once. Thomas Laing, (State) Premier, declared a moratorium on payment of overseas debts. In the resultant outcry the (State) Governor consulted Dad as Constitutional Expert and he recommended that the Premier be dismissed. He was. The only other time the Governor or Governor-General has exercised such power was in the case of Whitlam (*the Labor Prime Minister fired by the Governor-General in 1975's bloodless constitutional coup. Ed.*). The tension in our house at the time was really high, the phone never stopped" (ibid.). The Depression was a killer, bringing TB and malnutrition in its wake. A young unemployed woman, a next door neighbour, died of TB. "The Depression made a very strong impact on Betty. She had a feeling of having to study well to get a good job later and this concern probably influenced her to take the first job offered" (ibid.).

Betty's attendance at a Sydney girls' high school made a lifelong impression on her, as evidenced by the fact that those attending her Christchurch memorial meeting were asked to sing the school song – not once but several times. After five years at high school, her family thought, over her objections, that she was too young to go to university, at 16, so she was sent up to the colder northern tablelands of NSW to attend a girls' school. "Half the people were very snobby, they all got their wealth from land" (ibid.). She was only there nine months before her father removed her in order to accompany the rest of the family on their trip to Britain and Europe.

### **Student Christian Movement, Pacifism & Marriage**

Upon returning home, she started at Sydney University. This marked the real beginning of her life as an activist. She graduated with a First Class Honours degree in History and Second Class Honours in English. She joined a whole variety of clubs and societies, with the Student Christian Movement (SCM) being her top priority. She became national Secretary and, at 19, national President. This involved her regularly travelling to NSW conferences and to Melbourne for national committee meetings. It was at SCM that she met the young Norman Roberts, who was President of the post-graduate branch (in his eulogy at her memorial meeting, Norman said that his first impression of SCM was that it was "too wowserish").

In her third year at Sydney she got her first job, in the University Library. "My father was terribly cross about my taking the job – he thought I could have gone on and got a university scholarship. I really loved university and hated leaving it. I loved the Gothic buildings, the atmosphere, the students, SCM conferences, the Balls (in spite of the problem of a partner), the carillon and the processions. I guess I'd been going there with my father as long as I could remember and maybe I took the first job offering in the Fisher Library to prolong my association" (ibid.). At her memorial meeting a 92 year old friend from those days told us how he and Betty had "danced, danced, danced all night" at one of those Balls. In his eulogy, Norman (93) brought the house down when he replied: "As you can see, I had my rivals".

World War Two broke out while she was at university. "We were very upset. I was a pacifist and we supported (*British Prime Minister*) Chamberlain trying to stop the war. I fell out with various boyfriends because of my pacifism'. The university campus was split by the pacifist issue. Betty was an extreme pacifist, her father did not go to the first war but was patriotic" (ibid.).

On her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, she announced her engagement to Norman (this was the usual age for girls to get engaged and it was equally common to announce it at their 21<sup>st</sup>). 15 months later, in 1941, they got married, bought a house in north Sydney and started a family. "After a brief stint working at (the local) City Council, they had a daughter (*the first of four. Ed.*). Betty Roberts hid her pregnancy until the last possible moment to keep her job. As there was no local kindergarten the couple established one at their home. By the end of the year a paid kindergarten teacher and a different mother on duty each day were caring for 30 children, three days a week. This operated for six years and created a community of mothers interested in the education of their children. During this time she had three more children" (*Press, Obituary, 27/9/08, "An unbending campaigner"*). By way of contrast, when the Queen visited Australia in 1953, she and her sister were called upon to accompany their widowed father, now a Liberal MP, to royal tour functions in Canberra.

"After the kindergarten era, six years, Betty decided she would like to do some work outside the home. Betty taught Sunday School and was trying to find out what was taught – 'they systematically went through the Bible'. Betty wanted to modify what the children were taught (the diocese in Sydney was very fundamentalist). Betty did a theological course by correspondence, also a training course in scripture reading. She passed with distinction. 'I thought I would teach scripture in the schools – I had the idea of getting a bit more liberal teaching into the school religious courses'" (manuscript, ibid.). "As her elder children progressed beyond kindergarten, she arranged for a Girl Guides and Brownie organisation in the district. This allowed her daughters to be initiated into camping and bushwalking and to form a lifelong love of the wild. Respect for nature, and its importance to people, led the Roberts to organise for the establishment of a bird reserve in a large gully, near their house, that was to be subdivided for homes" (*Press, ibid.*). And Betty was involved in the big national battles too, such as the campaign, in the depths of 1950s' Cold War hysteria, to prevent the Liberal Government outlawing the Communist Party of Australia.

### **Christchurch, Feminism & Teaching**

Everything changed in the early 1960s. "He (Norman) felt there was not much prospect for promotion in his present job (a textile physicist with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) and saw the opportunity to set up wool research in New Zealand. The move meant leaving Betty's family and friends. Betty prayed he wouldn't get the job. Norman came over to New Zealand for interviews and much to Betty's horror he got

the job (*founding Director of the Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand, based at Lincoln College, near Christchurch. Ed.*). “You can imagine what it was like to move after 20 years in our house. Moving to another country was very traumatic” (manuscript, *ibid.*). The two youngest daughters came with them, the two oldest stayed in Australia. “The family was welcomed in their local community, thanks to their SCM friends” (*ibid.*) and within months had bought the Cashmere house that was to be their home for around 40 years.

“Betty received a copy of Betty Friedan’s “Feminine Mystique” for a Christmas present from a friend and she felt that it changed her life. This was a very important time for Betty, she felt her own views were validated. Up until this time she had felt she was a ‘misfit of society’ because of her views on women in society. She felt guilty about being discontented with her lot, but she was. The thinking of society seemed to be that a mother’s place was in the home, the woman subservient to the male. Magistrates and judges blamed mothers for their children’s misconduct, never the father. Betty thought that women had no real political or economic status. “Feminine Mystique” showed her that she was not alone, others thought as she did” (*ibid.*). The story was told at her memorial meeting of the prospective son-in-law who was given a copy of that book to read by Betty and then she tested him on it to make sure that he had read and understood it, before deciding that he would be a suitable husband for her daughter.

She decided to get a career and, in her 40s, trained as a secondary teacher, getting a job teaching English, History and Scripture at Rangī Ruru, a private girls’ school. “Betty found teaching hard, English and History not so bad but Scripture hard going. Betty also took Social Living classes as she had been involved with sex education for children in Australia. She used to go around the school and give lectures and show slides, she felt she was well trained in Social Education. ‘I didn’t believe in the Resurrection, the children told me I had to believe in it. I might not have been much good as a teacher but my Social Education was good’... Betty did not feel successful as a teacher as she was not a disciplinarian. She expected children would want to learn but this was not always the case. Betty felt successful in Social Education and when she became Careers Advisor she felt very comfortable in that job. Betty was able to promote the idea of women taking up work in new fields...

“Betty always put a feminist input into her teaching and staff contacts, but she often found a blank wall with her students. Betty was surprised to find later, so many of her former students were in women’s organisations, especially groups working in new fields, such as pornography and anti-beauty contests. Quite a few have subsequently told her they wish they had taken more notice of her views at school...One good thing about going to work was that Betty no longer had to write the hated word housewife on forms, since retirement she has also refused to do so. ‘I write unpaid community worker’. (When a doctor wrote housewife as her occupation on a form) ‘I wrote immediately asking him to correct his records and whether he would like to be called a househusband’” (*ibid.*).

### **Women’s Movement, Councillor, Saving The Old Stone House**

As a teacher at Rangī she also enjoyed “organising Sixth Form forums in connection with the schools branch of the SCM, and the United Nations Association, in which topical political and social issues were discussed. Finding she was not alone in wanting to be active beyond the domestic sphere, in the mid 60s she worked to help women. After retiring from teaching (*she taught for 13 years. Ed.*), she began researching childcare for low paid women for the Society for Research on Women. She became Chairwoman of the National Organisation for Women (NOW), in 1983 (*until 1986. Ed.*) and oversaw a trebling of membership” (*Press, ibid.*).

“As (NOW) coordinator you could speak up on any issue that affected women – provided your collective approved. There were many issues affecting women at this time so there was a continual response in media statements and letters to the editor. Many submissions were made, newsletters (8-10) sent out each year, letters written to MPs. They also sent nominations of suitable women to boards e.g. park boards. Because Betty was ‘retired’ she was in a position to respond immediately to items that would appear in the news and so NOW developed a high profile and membership trebled at that time” (manuscript, *ibid.*). For many years Betty organised the annual September 19<sup>th</sup> Women’s Suffrage Day Celebrations, which were attended by up to 200 people and she organised a candidates’ forum every election year, which she presided over with a bell to shut them up if they exceeded their time limit. The manuscript lists other women’s groups with which she was actively involved – “night shelter for women (took four years to establish), Women Against Pornography, Women’s Employment Group, Group Against Beauty Contests, Group Against Miss Universe being staged in Christchurch, Budget Submissions Group, and Maternity Action Alliance, which is trying to get better conditions for women in childbirth and to stop the medical interference in the birth process and feeding regimes” (manuscript, *ibid.*).

At the grassroots level Norman and Betty Roberts were known throughout Christchurch for their leading role in saving and restoring Cashmere’s Old Stone House (where her memorial meeting was held, entirely fittingly, and where she had presided over those Suffrage Day and election candidates’ forums). It started in 1967, and the following year, Norman became the founding Chairman of the Old Stone House Trust. The historic but derelict 19<sup>th</sup>

Century building had been gifted to the University of Canterbury branch of SCM in the mid 60s. "The couple became involved as former SCM members in Sydney; their daughter was a member of the SCM in Christchurch. Fire gutted the building in 1971. Many people said the project should be abandoned but Mr and Mrs Roberts disagreed. 'We felt we must rescue it as a valuable historical relic and for the reputation of the SCM', Mr Roberts said. The fire had trebled the costs of restoration and, amid calls for the building to be bulldozed, a public meeting was called. The meeting proved a turning point in recommending the Old Stone House become a community centre" (*Press*, 18/3/03; "The Old Stone House loses two old friends").

"They then spent nearly seven years of raising funds by fairs, socials, bottle drives, etc. and applying to councils and Government for funding (and not getting it). Betty and Norman made a huge contribution to Old Stone House as a community centre. After a very difficult period of frustrating problems and fruitless negotiations with the (former) Heathcote County Council and Christchurch City Council, Betty decided to stand for election to the Heathcote County Council (*at the 1977 local body election. Ed.*). It was a last minute decision. 'At midnight I decided to stand. Nominations closed the next day, Friday at noon'. Betty got nominators next morning from two women and two men (two Labour, two National) and her nomination was in by 11.40 a.m. Then came the hard work of finding out what local government issues there were, getting advice on them and making a policy statement and campaign strategy...She was the third highest polling candidate in the County and the first woman representative in Cashmere. 'I thought I had a mandate for the Old Stone House so I went to it with vigour'" (*ibid.*).

"On the Council she pursued the restoration with vigour. Her zealotry, criticisms of the near-dysfunctional Council and push for reforms riled fiery County Chairman John McKenzie and rubbed some councillors up the wrong way..." (*Press, Obituary, ibid.*). "I was a thorn in the side because I believed in doing a job thoroughly. I believe my background (father an expert in local government) and my own interest in government made me eminently suitable to be a local government councillor. However, I probably pushed too hard for reforms in all sorts of directions in too short a time and failed to conform to the pattern of compromise which seemed to be an essential part of politics'...Norman had been very supportive but being on the Council was very stressful and by the time Betty's term had finished (1980) she did not contemplate a second term" (manuscript, *ibid.*).

## **Awards, An Open Home, Travel**

But she had the last laugh, as she accomplished her goal during her single term as a councillor and secured the necessary funding, from both Councils, for the quality restoration of the Old Stone House, which is now the home of the Cracroft Community Centre. In 1990 Betty and Norman wrote the history of the Old Stone House; in 2002 they were both awarded Queen's Service Medals for community service, specifically their role in saving and restoring the Old Stone House (they had already received Community Services Awards from the Christchurch City Council, in 1999). They retired from the Cracroft Community Centre in 2003, when both well into their 80s, after 35 years involvement with it (Betty's final role was as its newsletter editor for many years). Nor did the pyrotechnics of her single term as an elected representative diminish her interest in local government; she remained a local politics activist all her life. And, as one of her daughters told those attending her memorial meeting, she regularly wrote to Ministers "telling them how to do their jobs better" (one Minister, who couldn't attend in person, sent a warm tribute to be read out at the memorial meeting).

Betty and Norman's Cashmere home was a virtual open home for all manner of friends and strangers. She was a great hostess, always entertaining and feeding guests. Her idiosyncrasies as hostess were recounted by several speakers at her memorial meeting. Her favourite meal to serve guests was a roast, which led to her being duly reprimanded by one particular lady who informed her that in Canterbury roast was reserved for Sunday lunch. Her kids told of her instructions for them to waylay guests and take them on a lengthy tour of the garden while she frantically made last minute preparations. One son-in-law described how her dinners were always a work in progress and how, on one occasion, "I think we had the gravy with the dessert".

Betty always loved travel and did as much of it as possible. There was a family world trip in 1965, which included off the beaten track destinations such as Lebanon and Pakistan. She also regularly accompanied Norman when he went to international conferences. When he retired as Director of the Wool Research Organisation, they had a fortnight in the Cook Islands. "I thought it was wonderful. Riding a bicycle on the pot hole roads took its toll, but living on fruit and crossing the lawn and road to swim in lagoons was paradise" (*ibid.*). In the 80s they visited China and North Korea a couple of times. They "found North Korea most impressive, to see a country which had been napalm bombed to a rubble 30 years previously rise like a phoenix" (*ibid.*). They travelled there at the invitation of the NZ Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea Society, of which their daughter Cynthia was a committee member for decades (as I was in the 70s and early 80s. I used to attend committee meetings at Cynthia's then home. I didn't see her again until her mother's memorial meeting in 2008).

## Veteran Peace Activist

I will quote from the speech delivered at her memorial meeting by Kate Dewes, Christchurch's internationally renowned peace activist (I am indebted to Kate for lending me the manuscript from which I have sourced nearly all of this obituary). "Betty and Norman became my foster peace parents in Christchurch many years ago...I knew of Betty and Norman before I met them, through their letters to the *Press*. They wrote on a wide range of issues, and I was inspired by their thoughtful, well researched and challenging arguments... This is what I loved about Betty (*i.e. being uncompromising. Ed.*). This trait was also evident in her friend Harold Evans, who had the principled audacity to initiate a project in 1986 to ask the World Court to give an advisory opinion on the legal status of nuclear weapons. Norman and Betty were always great supporters of this project, and their belief in it, and us, helped sustain us through some very lonely and hard times at the United Nations and World Court... (*for the obituary of Harold Evans by Kate Dewes and myself, see Peace Researcher 33, November 2006, which can be read online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr33-132a.html> Ed.*).

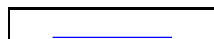
"...Betty maintained a strong interest in the work which Rob (*Green, Kate's husband. Ed.*) and I were doing. She would phone regularly to get an update on what we were up to even when she was finding it hard to speak. I will never forget her coming out in the freezing cold in her wheelchair in winter (2007) to the opening of the Nuclear Free Nation Exhibition at the Museum. She was determined to be there despite her many health problems. She also generously gifted many of her peace and justice papers and books to the Peace Collection at the MacMillan Brown Library (University of Canterbury). Ten years ago, in 1998, Betty invited me to speak at the National Organisation for Women Annual Suffrage Day Dinner...In her vibrant and entertaining newsletter she described each of us (*the speakers. Ed.*) in some detail. She acknowledged the difficulty she had writing about peaceful projects without using the language of war. For example, when writing Elsie Locke's background, she used the words 'campaign, struggle, fight, battle, combat'. She wrote: 'I'll try to do better, bearing in mind that language shapes the way we think'. Having just married a former British Commander who flew nukes around, I knew how ingrained such military language could be'...(for my obituary of Elsie Locke, see Peace Researcher 23, June 2001, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/elsobit.htm> Ed.).

"On another occasion Betty invited me to address the National Organisation for Women about juggling a young family as a solo mother with my peace work. In doing so she gave an opportunity for honest exchanges of how as she said 'women had to be two people – the private mum and the public career person'. Like Betty, many of us were limited in our choice of career by having to care for our young families. However, it was women like Betty, Elsie Locke and others who were our role models; they were the wise older women who encouraged us to break through these barriers, reassuring me that my kids would not suffer from sharing their mother with the wider community".."

## She Made A Difference

Betty became very frail and wheelchair bound in her final years, when I only ever saw her at funerals. She and Norman went into a home. But she never lost her spirit or her sense of humour. In her 1999 generic letter to "Very Dear Friends and Rellies", thanking them for putting on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party (at which she was presented with the "This Is Your Life" manuscript which I've quoted throughout), she concluded: "As an afterthought born of a market led economy – if you're not yet 80 you can think about how turning 80 must lead to a great increase in the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). In my case, not only were there your contributions, I've added my bit too - doctor's and chemist's fees needed for driver's licence, and its own fee; new glasses (optometrist's fee); and new tooth (dentist's fee). It pays the State to keep you alive!!!"

Betty Roberts lived a very long life, one devoted to feminism, peace, social justice, democracy and community activism, as well as her family and friends. She was a true servant of the community. Coming from the background that she did, it could have easily been so different, a life of self-indulgence with a bit of charitable good works thrown in to salve the odd pangs of conscience. That was far from the case with Betty. The word stalwart is over used but it is eminently applicable to her. For decades she was a stalwart of many campaigns in Christchurch, and a leader of several. Betty was a person of whom it could be truthfully said: "She made a difference; she left the world a better place".





# DEATH IN THE FAMILY - Brownie Dann

Peace Researcher 37 – November 2008

- **Murray Horton**

ABC expresses our condolences to **Christine** and **Robyn Dann**, who are both members (Robyn has been our Treasurer and a committee member for several years) for the death of their father, **Brownie Dann**, who died in Christchurch in August 2008, aged 92. Christine shares some memories of her dad.

Dad was born in Christchurch and lived there all his life, apart from an involuntary sojourn in a prisoner-of-war camp in Austria during World War 2. He was a carpenter by trade, working first on building houses and then as a factory maintenance carpenter. Outside of paid work hours he worked for his family, growing great veges and fruit, making playthings for his three children (from swings to doll's houses), taking us on walks and holiday excursions, and reading us bedtime stories. He also did voluntary work for the community all his life, giving sterling service to the Beckenham School Committee and the Ex-Prisoners-Of-War Association for many years (*which is where I first met him, a long time before I met either daughter. My late father was a WW2 prisoner of war and I accompanied my parents to the Association's social functions when I was a kid. Ed.*). When our late mother contracted Alzheimer's Disease he volunteered for the Alzheimers Society, and was organising the local branch mail outs up until the week he died. After he retired he was also kept busy assisting with renovations on his children's houses right into his late 80s, and with developing and maintaining facilities at the Cashmere Club.

His only involvement with national politics that I know about was his active membership of the Labour Party in the early 1980s, when he campaigned for Labour in the Lyttelton electorate in 1984. By 1987 he had become disillusioned with what the Party was doing in power, and by 1990 he was so disgusted at the sell-off of New Zealand's assets and the impoverishment of its working people wrought by Roger Douglas, Richard Prebble and the rest of the neoliberal wolves in sheep's clothing that he said he wasn't voting for that lot again and voted Green.

He was always Left of centre, albeit in a quiet way. He followed global political events, and sometimes took personal action. I first realised this in 1966 when the family had recently got its first car, and Dad refused to buy Caltex petrol in a personal protest against the Suharto-led coup in Indonesia (I was only 14 at the time and to this day still don't know what the connection was - perhaps a reader could enlighten me.) A rugby fan all his life, his personal protest against the 1981 Springbok Tour was not to attend any of the matches or to watch them on TV (he must have watched footage of the Christchurch demonstrations against them though, because he told me he saw Rod Donald among the group who were dismantling a paling fence Dad had built outside Lancaster Park).

He was as disgusted as most New Zealanders with the bellicose foreign policy of the Bush administration, and just before he died he was reading a biography of Barack Obama, perhaps to see if he would make much of a difference. I think the most important "political" message I got from Dad, though, was not anything in particular that he said or did, but the way that he lived his life. He put people before money and possessions, and being of service to others before "getting ahead" for himself. He didn't preach about this - he just went and did it. A great example for his children and grandchildren, and anyone else who was lucky enough to know him.

