

UPDATE ON THE GCSB

New Building, New PR, But Same Old Secret US/UK Connections

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Warren Thomson

The Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) has moved into new headquarters in Wellington's Thorndon Quay. The building, which has movement sensors in meeting rooms, will be home to several intelligence agencies, including the GCSB, the Combined Threat Assessments Group, the National Assessments Bureau and the Security and Risk Group. The building, named Pipitea House, also accommodates some sections of the Mental Health Services. According to the New Zealand Herald (19/5/11), the Government paid \$34.5 million for outfitting the rooms and setting up security. Entry to the building is controlled by fingerprint scanners, with security blinds to remain closed at all times. So we know that no-one from outside will be able to peer into the new glasshouse. Whether the spies will be able to look out and see the real world from within remains unclear.

The Athfield-designed building is touted as being an example of "green" architecture. This goes along with the GCSB's public image-building over the last decade: formal legislative establishment, annual public reports, photo opportunities for the Director, emphasis on the role of making Government communications secure, etcetera. However, no progress has been made in terms of revealing who the GCSB actually spies on, and how much of their work is subcontracting to their American and British spymasters. The move to the new headquarters meant the New Zealand taxpayer has had to fund hugely increased budgets for the GCSB over the last two years. In the May 2011 Budget the spies have been forced to rein in their spending and will have to manage on a mere \$56 million. Having local health department drug and alcohol services provided in the same building may prove a boon to an organisation which will be stretched to cover its expanding workload.

Spook agencies have been inundated with new tasks, according to the former head of Britain's MI5, Ms Manningham-Buller, the result of the invasion of Iraq. And the GCSB's big brothers are not coping. A 2010 report in the Washington Post, after a two year investigation, found the system "defies description" in the words of a senior official, and that sweeping intelligence reforms "deepened the problems they were designed to solve" (*Press*, 21/7/10.) How much the turf battles of the American agencies affect our own little part of the empire is impossible to guess.



SPOOKY BITS

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Warren Thomson

Reforms For NZ's Spook Groups

In May 2011, the Government announced “moves to improve the effectiveness and governance of the New Zealand intelligence system” (Prime Minister’s press release). According to Key, the Murdoch Review, which was carried out in 2009 by former Secretary of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Simon Murdoch, reported no performance failures, but suggested some “adjustments”. Hopefully any changes will be more successful than those carried out in the USA (see above). A major reason for changes was that: “The New Zealand intelligence community has expanded in scope and functions over the past decade as a result of changes in the security environment”. So our spooks are doing more spying. On whom? And how? And what changes in the security environment have there been?

One of the reforms is that the Director of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) National Assessments Bureau (renamed from the External Assessments Bureau) will now be responsible for a national assessments programme that includes domestic and external intelligence sources. Does this suggest that coordination of intelligence information has not been as good as it should have been? In other countries inter-agency intelligence evaluation has always been a source of intense friction as agencies prove reluctant to share information, dispute conclusions and battle for resources. In the past the GCSB has refused to divulge information derived from its overseas big brothers. This is unlikely to change, and its recent big budget allocations will not please other agencies.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Treasury and State Services Commission are now being given greater oversight of the intelligence agencies covering performance, the setting of priorities and resource allocation. But don't hold your breath if you want some real supervision of our aspiring James Bonds. Key's press release says that the central agencies will not have any role in relation to the actual operations of the intelligence agencies. The intelligence agencies will remain under the oversight of the Inspector-General of Intelligence & Security and the Commissioner of Security Warrants, a system which has in the past proved pretty well useless in offering any democratic control over the agencies.

Goodies And Buggies

In recent years the GCSB has “come out” and made an effort to present a positive face to the NZ public. The organisation's title has always been used to suggest that its main function is to protect important New Zealand secrets from foreign spies, or nowadays, from foreign terrorists. An opportunity to present the agency as one of the goodies came up in May 2011 when the agency reported finding a bug in a house occupied by a Government minister. The reason for the searches of various ministerial homes and offices by GCSB staff was given as an operation to detect surveillance devices ahead of the November election. According to a *Sunday Star Times* journalist “at least one listening device was found” (Jonathan Marshall, 22/5/11).

The Government has refused to comment on the finding of the bug. This could, of course, mean that they know who was responsible or that they have noted the Wikileaks cables and presume that the American Embassy is carrying out its normal functions. Politically they would like to nail the Labour Party with a Wellygate exposure, just to make sure of the upcoming election, but the New Zealand public are unlikely to believe that Goff and company would have the gall to mount such an operation. New ACT Leader Don Brash? Well, there's a thought. Apparently listening devices are cheap and easy to obtain. No doubt there are a number of criminal associates who would love to bug a building occupied by the Minister of Police. So who the buggers were is a matter of speculation. But the event has given the GCSB an opportunity to shine, to justify the 60 plus million tax dollars they chew up every year; and unfortunately very few of the public will realise how little of this agency's time is actually given over to tasks involving security of Government communications, and how much is occupied with spying.

GCSB Spied On Fiji Military, WikiLeaks Cables Show

According to WikiLeaks cables, a senior US official believed that NZ Government Sigint (signals intelligence; read GCSB spying) “had been critical to US Government understanding of the 2006 [Fiji] coup”. This comes from a cabled report of meetings that the then United States Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Randall Fort, had in October 2008 with the then External Assessments Bureau, the GCSB, the Prime Minister's Department and the Foreign Affairs Ministry. So the New Zealand government has been using the Waihopai

communications base to spy on Fiji's military, and passing the intelligence to the United States government. The base was used in the 2006 coup and probably the 2000 coup, although New Zealand officials have always denied that they were spying. The cables back up the general impression that Helen Clark was secretly cosying up to the US military-intelligence conglomerate during 2005-2006. One of the cables released by WikiLeaks, sent around March 2, 2007, from the US Embassy in Wellington and written by Deputy Chief of Mission David Keegan, reported that then Prime Minister, Helen Clark, "understood" the implications of a post-September 11 world for New Zealand security.

"She also realised after the Fiji coup that New Zealand had become too reliant on Australian intelligence," the cable says. "Clark grasps that NZ must 'give to get' and that some of our cooperative operations strengthen her country's security. But she also has been willing to address targets of marginal benefit to New Zealand that could do her political harm if made public. Over the past year, she has supported increased counterterrorism co-operation with us". According to reporter Michael Field (Stuff - Online 16/12/10) Mr Fort was also briefed on Chinese activities in the Pacific by Maarten Wevers, Chief Executive of the Prime Minister's Department, and on Venezuela and Cuba, whose interest in the Pacific he likened to "that of the Russians in the past". So, confirmation that NZ's spies are now collecting and/or analysing material from as far away as Asia and South America. No wonder the GCSB's budget is ever expanding.

ANOTHER MASSIVE INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM ERROR

So Shoot The Messenger!

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Warren Thomson

The US National Security Agency – the GCSB's Big Brother – failed to protect Americans from the 9/11 assault in 2001. One of its own denounced the failure – and is threatened with heavy consequences. The following is reprinted from the *Charleston Gazette* (2/6/11).

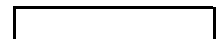
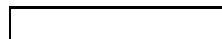
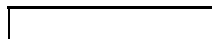
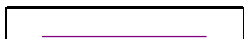
Travesty: Counterterrorism Flub

“America's super-secret National Security Agency had an intelligence-gathering system that might have detected the 9/11 suicide plot in advance, preventing the nation's worst terrorism atrocity, but the NSA didn't use the warning system -- and now it wants to jail an ex-spy whistleblower who talked about this lapse. Here's the saga, as related by 60 Minutes: During the 1990s, as the al-Qaeda menace grew, NSA agents monitored thousands - millions - of phone calls, emails, money transfers, faxes and other exchanges by fanatics linked to the furtive 'death cult' network. Some of the electronic surveillance undoubtedly was done by the US Navy's large eavesdropping dishes in the mountainous radio 'quiet zone' at Sugar Grove, Pendleton County, and companion dishes at Etam, Preston County.

“The volume of international messages completely overwhelmed the NSA's ability to sift them. NSA computers couldn't store them all. Confusion reigned. NSA digital experts Bill Binney and Kirk Wiebe developed a sophisticated computer analysis plan called Thin Thread, which could find crucial clues in the Niagara Falls of incoming data. They wanted to begin using Thin Thread in January 2001. It would have cost \$US3 million. However, the NSA's top brass brushed aside Thin Thread and instead used private defense contractors to undertake a long-term digital upgrading called Trailblazer. After years of problems, it was a colossal flop. Trailblazer cost US taxpayers \$US1.2 billion, but couldn't be used, and finally was abandoned. Former Navy intelligence officer Thomas Drake joined the NSA on September 11, 2001 -- the fateful day of the historic terrorist attack. Washington's counterterrorism agencies were devastated by their failure to head off the calamity. 'NSA went into immediate crisis-management mode', Drake said. 'We had failed to protect the United States of America. . . . It was a failure, a fundamental systemic breakdown'.

“Drake learned that project Thin Thread had been available well before 9/11, and might have averted the tragedy. He grew frustrated because the NSA blunder was concealed from Americans, even from Congress. He became a whistleblower. First, he went to a top staffer of the House Intelligence Committee. Then he helped file a confidential complaint with the Pentagon's Inspector-General. Meanwhile, Drake was outraged when he learned that the NSA was violating the US Constitution by wiretapping American phone calls without warrants. He protested to the NSA's top lawyers -- to no avail.

“After four years, he finally leaked information to the *Baltimore Sun*, which headlined: 'NSA Shelved Better Program that Shifted Calls'. Soon, FBI agents raided Drake's home. 'One of them came running up and pointed a gun at my eyeballs and pulled me out of the shower', he recounted. Drake was charged with violating the Espionage Act, as if he were a traitor to America -- not a patriot trying to help his country. He's scheduled for trial this month (June 2011), and faces a possible 35 years in prison. Basically, he's accused of telling the truth. It will be a shameful travesty if he's thrown in a cell for letting Americans know about a Government botch”.



PILGRIMAGE TO WAIHOPAI

Report On The January 2011 Protest

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Doug Craig

It is now some 22 years since the Waihopai spy satellite base was built in the Marlborough countryside, and many of those who came again in January 2011 to protest at the presence and operation of the base have been there from the beginning. To many of us it has the status of a pilgrimage, but not to venerate the object or site. Instead the twin domes squatting in a rural valley not far from the Woodbourne Royal New Zealand Air Force base are a concrete reminder of the complicity that the NZ government has with the world wide spying network of the US National Security Agency (NSA) and its partners through the Echelon project.

2011 was significant for two reasons. First, it marked the return of one of the Domebuster/Ploughshares Three, Father Peter Murnane, to Marlborough, the first time since the March 2010 Wellington trial and acquittal (see *Peace Researcher* 40, July 2010, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prcont40.html>, for several articles giving a full account of that trial). Second, it also marked the last visit of MP Keith Locke, the Greens spokesperson on foreign affairs before his retirement from Parliament at the November election. Keith has been involved in a number of protest visits to Waihopai and attended Waihopai camps from the time before he became an MP in 1999. In a forthcoming *Peace Researcher*, it is expected that he will review his career and involvement in uncovering and protesting about US interference in NZ domestic and foreign affairs.

These high profile activists were joined by another 40 or so protestors from Auckland, Wellington, Motueka, Coromandel, West Coast, Blenheim, and of course, from Christchurch – home of Anti-Bases Campaign and *Peace Researcher*. This year we were without the commanding presence of Bob Leonard as Uncle Sam, as he and his family have suffered a number of misfortunes including extensive earthquake damage to their Christchurch house. Murray Horton as organiser and protest spokesperson, brought the whole event together with his usual panache and efficiency, and was joined again by John Minto from Global Peace and Justice Auckland. ABC however brought its own new loudhailer to broadcast its message to those lurking behind the electronic gates at the Waihopai spy base.

The Camp

The camp was again at the picturesque Department of Conservation camping ground at Whites Bay. Unfortunately, the scenery was mostly hidden in driving rain and wind as a southerly beat its way up the island. In the brief non-drizzly intervals, we erected tents, rolled out mattresses, unpacked cooking gear and greeted old and new friends from other places. Two Canadian visitors also joined us for a peek into the secret life of NZ-US spying. With experience, we were able to pitch the tents in quick time and put up our new large gazebo for cooking and congregating. A small but cosy gathering. The Earth itself even made us welcome with a small 4.4 undersea earthquake off Picton, felt as an uneasy roll under the main tent. Those of us from Christchurch smiled and went back to sleep.

Blenheim March

On the Saturday morning we gathered at Seymour Square for the start of the weekend's activities. Banners were brought out and placards displayed. Some wore masks to recreate the secrecy of the faceless Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) officials who monitor our email and text traffic; others held signs saying "Big brother is listening to your calls and reading your emails" and "Peace and Justice for all" A small police presence watched from across the road. There was some debate about marching down the middle of the street or keeping to the footpath, but as veteran protestors we avoided overt confrontation and kept to footpaths except where the many shop signs blocked easy passage. Blenheim people seemed interested but non-committal and there was an absence of much anti-protestor banter –possibly because of the deteriorating weather. By the time we arrived for the speeches at the main rotunda, it was again raining.

Murray reminded us in his opening speech of the role of Waihopai in the secret intelligence relationship between US and NZ. He also referred to the Wikileaks NZ cables as "revealing the central role that this spybase plays" in the network. Murray reinforced that the theme of the protest was "anti-war", and that by protesting at the presence of the base we were protesting at a vital linkage in the Pentagon's war fighting machine; the stream of intelligence that allows the targeting of smart bombs and missiles on targets that often turn out to be civilians. Wikileaks were also referred to in speeches by John Minto and MP Keith Locke.

Father Murnane spoke about his role in the April 2008 Domebusters' action where he and fellow Ploughshare peace activists, Sam Land and Adi Leason, used sickles to slash the base of one of the domes. The legal defence that saw their successful acquittal, hotly disputed by the Marlborough Express and sundry letter writers, was based on a "claim of right*" – that is, a justly prima facie illegal action in order to prevent a greater morally wrong harmful action. Father Murnane said his actions were justified because "he was trying to raise awareness about the base's involvement in helping the American war machine which he said had committed horrifying inhumane actions in places like Iraq and Afghanistan" (*Press*, 25/1/11). The march then returned safely to Seymour Square for lunch and BBQ sausages. **The Government has since changed the law so that a claim of right defence cannot be used in any similar case. And the Crown is suing the three Domebusters personally for the \$1+ million cost of replacing the dome, right down to the cost of the pies and beer consumed by the workers. That case is due to be heard in the Wellington High Court. Talk about sore losers. Ed.*

Visit To The Base

In the afternoon, a convoy of vehicles travelled out 20 kms to the spybase to deliver a message to the base commander, and assorted GCSB personnel. Media were there to witness a small confrontation with a counter-protest lead by Greg Hine, a local contractor, and three others. They presented a mock invoice to Father Peter Murnane for damage to the dome, asking him to pay \$1.1million to PM John Key. Apart from the fact that John Key does not own the base but merely has some limited oversight as Minister responsible for the GCSB*, the Domebusters are mounting a defence to the Crown's civil court demand for such damages. Peace activists, of course, have been paying a share of the \$50 million plus per annum that the GCSB costs the taxpayer for such illegal spying. **Former PM David Lange admitted that Nicky Hager's book "Secret Power," which detailed the role of the base, had revealed to him much more than he had received in information from GCSB officials. Ed.*

Further speeches were made at the base by the main speakers and others and a protest letter formally delivered to the base commander. The gathering carried out its non-violent action and did not advance onto Defence Department land. To some old activists this may have seemed much less exciting than the midnight raids carrying homemade ladders in former protests, or the entering into the base itself in numbers on several occasions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But, more than a decade ago, the Anti-Bases Campaign made a decision to prioritise non-arrestable actions.

The weather held off for a time and we also heard from some visitors who voiced their objections to the presence of the base. A person, unknown to us, from the American War Resister's League, was a surprise speaker but summed up the opposition to the way in which countries are held hostage to US war fighting goals. Uncle Sam (aka ABC member Alice Leney from Coromandel) finished off the protest, exhorting us to support him in world domination but adding a new twist in telling the base to "bugger off."

The Trip Home

After an eventful night, full of singing and dancing, and small earthquake tremors, the camp was packed up. The water was too cold for much swimming. People disappeared off to airports, buses and ferries and left a small stalwart group to put away the gear for the trip home. It was a long trip along the coast and into driving torrential rain from Kaikoura on. We arrived back in Christchurch after 7pm. And next year we plan to do it all again.



CLOSE THE WAIHOPAI SPYBASE & END NZ INVOLVEMENT IN US WARS

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Murray Horton

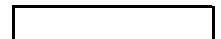
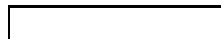
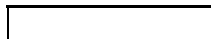
The Marlborough Express invited Murray to write this. It was published (22/1/11; "Spy base means 'blood on our hands') to coincide with the January 2011 Waihopai spybase protest. It has been slightly edited. Ed.

People from all around New Zealand continue to protest in Blenheim and at the super-secret Waihopai satellite interception spybase. The Wikileaks NZ cables reveal the central role that this spybase plays in the secret intelligence relationship between NZ and the US, proving what the Anti-Bases Campaign has been saying all along. Full US/NZ intelligence ties were secretly restored in 2009. The war in Afghanistan, in which the NZ military is directly involved, has got dramatically worse. Simultaneously, the US is dangling a Free Trade Agreement, via the Trans Pacific Partnership as NZ's "reward" – nothing has changed since Holyoake's "guns for butter" catchcry of the Vietnam War years. Now it's guns for milk. The theme of our activities, both at the spybase and in Blenheim, is anti-war. The US says that Intelligence is the key component of all the wars that it is fighting, or planning to fight, throughout the world.

The Anti-Bases Campaign (supported by the Wikileaks cables) points out that Waihopai, an important source of intelligence for the Pentagon, is New Zealand's most important contribution to the American war machine and it means that we New Zealanders have blood on our hands. The January 2011 demonstration was the first protest at the spybase since the March 2010 acquittal of the Ploughshares peace activists for the 2008 deflation of one of its domes, and part of the activities was a celebration of that acquittal.

Waihopai, of course, is a "New Zealand" base – or so the Government says. The fact is, however, that in everything but name it is an outpost of American intelligence – paid for by the long suffering NZ taxpayer. Between \$500 million and \$1 billion of public money has been spent on the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (the agency which runs Waihopai) in the 23 years of Waihopai's operation. That money could have been much better utilised on health and education, not spying on behalf of Uncle Sam.

Nor does it do anything to protect us from terrorists or foreign agents. Just seven years ago Israeli intelligence agents were caught in Auckland, fraudulently trying to obtain fake NZ passports. They were imprisoned and deported and there was a major row with Israel. But they were caught by an Internal Affairs officer who tipped off the Police. Waihopai played no role in protecting us from these foreign criminals operating in our country. Waihopai does not operate in the national interest of New Zealand. Waihopai must be closed. (For details on Waihopai and what it does, go to our Website www.converge.org.nz/abc).



MORE MEDIA WARMONGERING (PART 1)

Signs Of Things To Come

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

-Dennis Small

Due to the length of Dennis' article, it will be published in two parts. Part 2 will be in the next issue. Ed.

Challenging War!

In the second decade of the 21st Century, there are many converging pressures and incentives in Western capitalism for military reactions to global problems. Aotearoa/NZ will predictably come more and more within their compass. The mainstream mass media are critical to this process. We must closely monitor their messages, contest them as appropriate, and continue to develop our own alternative networks of news, information and communication. We need to work even harder at encouraging constructive rather than negative responses to global, regional and national problems, and in finding paths to creative and sustainable solutions.

- *Today, we know that every argument that is being used to escalate the war against Iraq is a lie.* (“*The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*” by Arundhati Roy, Harper Perennial, 2004, p75)
- *People can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders . . . All you have to do is tell them they’re being attacked and denounce the pacifists for a lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.* (Nazi leader Herman Goering quote, *ibid*, p114)
- *“We should never forget that war is big – very big – business.”* (“*Target Iraq: What the News Media Didn’t Tell You*” by Norman Solomon & Reese Erlich, Context Books, 2003, p.27) [1]
- *“The [Defence] White Paper is a further recognition that New Zealand’s role in the Pacific is shifting as China’s growth, and America’s recent hiccups, alter the balance of global economic power, bringing with it changes in strategic balances as well . . . these changes mean NZ will have more to do in the region and that will mean working closely with the United States”* (Press editorial, 4/11/10)

Anzac Day Part Of War Propaganda

Early on in 2010 it was noticeable that building up to Anzac Day and beyond, the mainstream media seemed to be bent on creating a climate of what remarkably smacked of war-mongering sentiment. Prominent Christchurch historian, social commentator, and World War 2 veteran, Harry Evison, drew attention to this in a letter to the editor of *The Press* (24/4/10). He observed that: “The present spate of American movies portraying war as heroic, and the extraordinary surge of attention to wars of all kinds, seem to be conditioning people for another world war, like 1914 all over again” (*ibid.*).

Harry criticised *The Press* for portraying “NZ heroes in the First World War when on the very next page we see the head of America’s Joint Chiefs of Staff calling for another war”, this time on Iran. The threatened war on Iran, still in the offing, is to supposedly pre-empt Iran from getting weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In the Western view, only the US and its mates can allow themselves the benefits of WMD, and the lavish capacity for coercion, intimidation and over-kill. The US alone accounts for about half of world military expenditure and has openly proclaimed its ambition to dominate the planet. It is no coincidence, too, that a more militarist orientation in US-led Western foreign policy has developed since 9/11 at the same time as Western media have become more concentrated in capitalist ownership. We have entered a highly dangerous era of media-induced war.

Media Concentration

Back in 1983, Ben Bagdikian’s seminal “The Media Monopoly” (The Beacon Press) chronicled how some 50 media conglomerates dominated the entirety of US mass media (“Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics In Dubious Times” by Robert McChesney, The New Press, 1999, p19). By the time of the 5th edition of Bagdikian’s book in 1997, his analysis had reduced the number of ruling firms to around ten (*ibid.*). Since then, the number of dominant media in the US, and indeed the whole Western world, has concentrated markedly further.

The first tier of global media conglomerates, on the turn of the 21st Century, included Time-Warner, Disney, Viacom, Seagram, Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, General Electric and Sony. The most important commercial broadcasters had become part of these media transnational corporations (TNCs), which each have their own political lobbying machines. The *Wall Street Journal*, added to Murdoch’s media empire in 2007, has called the

commercial broadcasters the “most powerful lobby in Washington” (ibid, p64). Murdoch has been a big campaign contributor to the Republican Party in the US but has given money to the Democrats too.

Crony-Media!

What can be called “*crony-media*” has been developed into a highly effective system by Rupert Murdoch. Crony-media is expressed in the close working relationship between certain media and ideologically consonant politicians. The recent controversy in Britain over “phone-hacking” and Murdoch’s *News of the World* newspaper, along with his News International conglomerate, has again drawn attention to the extent of his power (e.g. TV1, *Sunday*, 14/11/10). In Britain, he clearly exercises a disturbingly large influence on both politicians and police. Tellingly enough, Andy Coulson, former *News of the World* editor, is now British Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron’s Director of Communications. Coulson resigned from the *News of the World* over the original phone-hacking allegations and has come under fire again since.

Rupert Murdoch’s notorious political influence has indeed a vast global reach – from Sky Television to regular content input in media he does not even own, or only partly owns. For instance, the Fairfax Media-owned *Press* in Aotearoa/NZ reprints much of its foreign affairs content from Murdoch’s conservative British (*The*) *Times*, a key voice of the Atlantic Alliance establishment. This pattern was reinforced by part-ownership of Fairfax. In April 2007, the Australian government lifted “restrictions on cross-media and foreign ownership rules” (*Press*, 4/4/07). The “controversial new laws” allowed “foreigners to buy Australian media companies and lift[ed] limits on how many media outlets a single proprietor can own in one market” (ibid.). NewsCorp was quick to snap up 7.5% of Fairfax, a purchase in line with what Murdoch had been doing elsewhere (ibid.).

The Murdoch Monopoly Syndrome

This capitalist mogul certainly epitomises so much of the danger that George Orwell warned us about. Murdoch’s media empire today covers a very wide range of sectors: an extensive newspaper and magazine publication stable; media technology and the Internet; satellite television (TV); cable and broadcast TV; film and TV studios; books (e.g., HarperCollins); and even sport – 50% of the National Rugby League in Australia & NZ (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_Corporation).

It was constructed in a long career of political manipulation and cronyism, complex and systematic tax avoidance, and business and financial contrivances that mock the pure free market principles that his media so often trumpet. NewsCorp’s latest big business venture is to try and commercialise information on the Internet to its own benefit as much as possible. Rupert Murdoch’s ownership of influential British media and so many Australian newspapers along with all his extensive American assets, gives him a commanding overall position in the Atlantic Alliance - the Anglo-American axis – as well as its subsidiaries like Australia and NZ. Murdoch has created a strategic platform for cultural conditioning, and the transmission of information tailored to his very Rightwing agenda. The propaganda impact of his media conglomerate and similar blocs in helping drive support for the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq has been both huge and horrendous in its implications.

Malevolent And Malign Media

British Prime Minister Tony Blair benefited greatly from his crony-media links with Rupert Murdoch. This was highlighted in July 2006 when Blair attended a Murdoch-convened conference at the height of the Iraq war. Tony Blair spoke to “500 of Rupert Murdoch’s News International executives, plus their partners and VIP guests, who [were] in conference at the luxurious Pebble Beach golf resort” (*Sunday Star Times*, 30/7/06). Blair was able to pontificate in front of “an audience of admirers of his unfashionable pro-Americanism” (ibid.). At the time, Iraq was certainly to the fore in political calculation: “Iraq means Rupert will never dump on Blair’, explains a close Murdoch-watcher” (ibid.). It all reaffirmed Blair’s “poodle” relationship with both Murdoch and President Bush. Apparently, one of the reasons behind Blair’s attendance was “that if Blair had turned down the invitation, it would have gone to the British Conservative leader, David Cameron, the kind of rising star News International prides itself on cultivating” (ibid.). However, it was also reported that Murdoch was then somewhat cool towards Cameron (ibid.). No doubt, he has a different attitude these days.

Another star at one of these “Murdoch-fests” was also a central player in the “War on Terror”. Evidently, “General Tommy Franks, head of the Iraq invasion [and the Afghanistan invasion], was a popular turn” (ibid.). Even given the pervasive Rightwing bias in news presentation in the US, epitomised by Murdoch’s media empire, the Bush Administration’s “neo-conservative” campaign orchestrating the 2003 invasion of Iraq surely achieved some quite remarkable results in political manipulation of the American public. For instance, one poll found that 42% of the American public believed that Saddam Hussein was directly responsible for the 9/11 attacks, while according to

another poll 55% believed that Saddam Hussein directly supported al Qaeda (“The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” [OPGE], op. cit, p82).

More broadly, the general impact of NewsCorp on fuelling inequalities and racial, ethnic and cultural antagonisms, and all the other underlying and deepening causes of global strife, is enormously ominous. A footnote to this observation is that there are always plenty of ironies in the complexities of life, e.g., Arundhati Roy’s excellent book, cited several times in the course of the current article, was published by HarperCollins!

“Infotainment” And “Liberal Totalitarianism”

At the same time as the Murdoch media empire has cultivated a political programme, it has developed a policy of deliberate “dumbing-down” of many of its audiences for commercial goals as well. This has happened despite Murdoch’s personal fascination with politics as if in one way his commercial instincts have over-ruled his political interests (“The Murdoch Archipelago”, Bruce Page, Simon & Schuster, 2003, p164). But in fact, his politics and commercial instincts go hand in hand here, echoing the ancient Roman imperial canon of “bread and circuses” for us plebeians, the “proles” of Orwell’s “1984”. “Dumbing down”, of course, makes audiences easier to manipulate.

In line with a long American tradition, capital concentration and the diminution of democratic freedoms has been portrayed by NewsCorp as necessary for the defence of freedom, a continuing defence against what Murdoch has denounced as “liberal totalitarianism” (ibid, p465). “Sky, Fox, *Times* newspapers, the monopolisation of Australian journalism, and lesser coups in parallel amounted by the early 1990s to sweeping victory for Murdoch over structures devised by democratic states and intended to limit abuses in news media” (ibid, pp465/6). Sky’s market success, for example, was constructed by subsidising its early operations from the rest of Murdoch’s cross-media connections.

Media Control

The man, once called “an evil genius” by British Labour Party’s Michael Foot, has manufactured his own form of liberal totalitarianism. Rupert Murdoch has also found Chinese Communist Party media control compatible with his operations in this giant new marketplace. “NewsCorp is about eroding the boundaries between the State power and media operations, meanwhile cloaking this process in fantasies which – necessarily – feed back into and distort its journalism” (ibid, p472). Murdoch’s message of freedom is as hollow as that of the ruling American power elite, “freedom” being of course the US’s national slogan “brand”, and now its very tarnished corporate image.

A Pew Institute “poll of international opinion” published in mid-2007 found a “global backlash against American values” (*Press*, 29/6/07). According to the poll results: “Pluralities in most countries now express distaste for notions of democracy promoted by the US, blame it for contributing to global inequality and hurting the world’s environment, while also disliking the way American businesses operate” (ibid.). In the same year, Amnesty International lamented that: “The politics of fear are fuelling human rights abuses and creating a dangerously divided world” (*Press*, 24/5/07). Amnesty International denounced the “War on Terror” and the war in Iraq, with their catalogue of human rights abuses” (ibid.). It observed that: “The US Administration’s double-speak has been breathtakingly shameless” (ibid.). This sort of feedback has only served as an incentive for the Western mainstream media, at least the Anglo-Saxon lot, to exercise as much damage control as they can, ranging from criticising the Bush Administration for poor planning and policy implementation (the “mistake” syndrome), to preaching an eventual optimistic outcome.

War, Media And Mass Society Theory

In the past, a prominent theme in the academic social analysis of modern society has been the power of the media in regard to what is called “mass society”. The most dramatic historical example on record relating to this societal theme is the success of Nazi propaganda and organization in Germany during the 1930s. During this period, the Nazis mobilised the German masses in an aggressive political programme geared at remaking the role of Germany in the European order, and, more broadly, the world. It soon resulted in World War II, drawing on grievances, often arguably valid, stemming in turn from the legacy of World War I.

NZ historian Stevan Eldred-Grigg puts the case for a more critical view of the senselessness of war and World War I in particular, as well as the folly of NZ’s participation, in his “The Great Wrong War” (Random House, 2010). The NZ people were swept into World War I by a combination of British and local establishment pressure, along with misplaced patriotism. But we could have chosen not to conform. Ironies certainly abound in perceptions of this war and the justice of war. One historian reviewer of Eldred-Grigg’s book, Nicholas Reed, argues it is a lot easier to “preach the senselessness of war” in relation to World War I than World War II where NZ helped fight Hitler and the Nazis (*Sunday Star Times*, 12/9/10). Stories from the latter war can be paraded and celebrated as on Sky’s History

Channel, “endlessly recycling tales of 1939-45 heroism” (ibid.). Besides pointing to the chain of compounding cause and effect, a response to Reed could well contend that celebrating this “heroism” of killing members of one’s own species makes more mass slaughter so much easier in the future.

Mass Manipulation

For sure, there were only 20 years between the two Western-generated World Wars. Only the horror of nuclear weapons and sheer luck kept the next potential war a Cold War. Yet deterrence nearly failed more than once, and the US and the Soviet Union both devised nuclear war-fighting strategies, the ultimate folly and obscenity of humankind. Nowadays, with unprecedented multiplying and deepening world problems, we are moving into an era of vast new dangers. Nuclear proliferation and other weapon developments threaten us all as never before. Various forms of violent political extremism have arisen, along with other states and movements having the potential for similar physical aggression. Consequently, lessons of mass manipulation from the Nazi era are most salutary.

The concept of “mass society”, i.e. a society of predominantly quite similar people in values and attitudes and open to propagandist or simplistic political influence, took grip of the sociological imagination after World War II, especially among a number of American analysts. However, by the mid-1990s, the concept of mass society was no longer influential in sociology. Why? Well, because: “(1) Contemporary societies are not seen as undifferentiated masses but as made up of competing groups. (2) Subordinate classes are not manipulated by an elite but are quite capable of active dissent. (3) There has not been a breakdown of family and community ties” resulting in a mass of atomistic individuals (“The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology”, by N. Abercrombie et al, 3rd ed, 1994, p256). In sum, people could supposedly not be easily manipulated.

War And Monopoly Media

Yet, the accumulating capital concentration of Western media continues relentlessly (for Aotearoa/NZ see Dr. Bill Rosenberg’s “News Media Ownership in New Zealand” <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/publications/Miscellaneous/mediaown.pdf>). Above all, in the post 9/11-world, the creation of a perpetual climate of fear and insecurity has given unleashed scope for governmental and media manipulation by dangerously Rightwing elites to manufacture consent on increasingly neo-fascist agendas. The role of Rupert Murdoch’s Fox News (and other Western media) in the instigation of the illegal wars on Afghanistan, and later Iraq and elsewhere, is a graphic and ongoing demonstration of the potential for endless evil.

As a rider to these considerations, while the war on Iraq is clearly illegal, for many people the illegality of the war on Afghanistan has not been quite so clear, following so quickly as a response to the 9/11 atrocity. However, this war, now into its 10th year, is also both grossly immoral and illegal (within an extensive literature see e.g. “Military Intervention in Afghanistan”, 2002 special edition of the *International Review of Contemporary Law*). In 2003, Murdoch-owned newspapers around the world beat the drums of war on Iraq as loudly as they could (*The Bulletin*, 12/2/03). Fox News was a very influential trumpet of the war. The development of some of the methods of the Murdoch media warfare line and neo-fascist style patriotism can ironically enough be traced back to America’s war on Nazi Germany. “Propaganda” to motivate American troops plugged into various methods of persuasion, especially film. As “brand” marketing experts Simon Anholt and Jeremy Hildreth declare: “The walls between marketing, entertainment, politics and the military, always somewhat permeable in the American culture, had truly been dismantled by this stage” (“Brand America: The Mother Of All Brands”, Cyanbooks, 2004, p70).

Capitalist Contradictions

The recommendation that Anholt and Hildreth offer to repair America’s battered image is “an inherently peaceful and humanistic approach to international relations” (ibid, p176). For them though, this approach is “based on competition, choice and consumer power” with these concepts “intimately linked to the freedom and power of the individual in a democracy” (ibid.). They say that this approach is “far more likely to result in lasting world peace than a statecraft based on territory, economic power, ideology, politics or religion” (ibid, pp176/7). There are obviously some good aspects here but Anholt and Hildreth are deeply confused about the nature of capitalism. While they see the combination of “democracy and free trade” as fundamental to America’s sense of “its national identity and purpose” (ibid, p176), they don’t see the huge ultimate contradiction within this combination. Simon Anholt has advised the NZ government, among others, on branding and international image.

Militarist media conditioning with all its warmongering hype and “infotainment” aspects - already so dramatically debuted and exhibited during the 1991 Gulf War - is bearing its poisonous harvest a couple of decades later, and into the foreseeable future. According to a very different sort of expert, Professor Colin Gray, a military strategist of the nuclear war fighting Dr. Strangelove-stamp: “On occasions, a high body count, not entirely excluding the innocent, is the pathway to strategy, i.e. effectiveness. Western societies have specialist professionals to do their

dirty work for them . . . Western, and increasingly some Eastern also, publics have become spectators of warfare. Combat already is presented very much as a sport, a visually compelling entertainment, delivered directly, even live, into the home. When there is a pause in the military action, impatient news anchorpersons tend to be critical, and speak as if they and their audience are owed continuous visual excitement" ("Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare", Phoenix, 2005, p163). Professor Gray, a dark eminence indeed, has been one of the leading Western military and nuclear strategists of the modern era, and was especially prominent during the 1980-88 presidency of Ronald Reagan.

Avaaz And The Campaign For Global Democracy

A recent corporate media war against the Internet-based Avaaz human rights and sustainable futures organisation (www.avaaz.org/) has again indicated the mounting threat of Orwellian mind control on a large scale. In this particular instance, however, the episode has also demonstrated the capacity for people power to repel the advances of crony-media and mass manipulation – *a victory for real democracy!* In September 2010, Avaaz came under attack from a major media mogul in Canada. Avaaz members there were opposing "Government favours for a new radical Right propaganda network run by the Prime Minister's former spin doctor", Kory Teneycke (ibid: Avaaz is further quoted below at length from its initial action alert). The organisation had aroused the ire of the "media empire behind the network and its billionaire owner Pierre Karl Peladeau", and consequently suffered "several smear pieces" in newspapers belonging to Peladeau's conglomerate. Peladeau is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Quebecor Inc., Quebecor Media Inc, and Sun Media Corp.

Repelling Reactionary Media

Significantly, however, one of the empire's "executives admitted insider knowledge of a criminal sabotage" of the Avaaz campaign. Furthermore, along with smear tactics, the media mogul even threatened to sue Avaaz unless it stopped its campaign. Avaaz then appealed to its international membership to donate to a campaign fund in order to resist such blatant coercion, "to keep the fight alive against crony-media across the world". Avaaz well warns about the growing global dangers of crony-media and its potential to marshal the forces of political reaction. "Crony-media and its incestuous combination of unscrupulous politicians and biased reporting is a rising threat to democracy in many countries, from Italy to the US to Australia". The media war in Canada, which erupted into an international issue thanks to Avaaz's action alerts, rather dramatically signalled the corporate concentration of communication power, and its growing capacity to both activate and aggravate social antagonisms worldwide. Avaaz is worth quoting at length on all of this: on the specifics of the Canadian campaign, and on the larger context and ramifications of this particular national media war (ibid: more again below from its initial alert).

Manipulative Media Moguls

"In Italy, Prime Minister Berlusconi controls over 80% of the news channels and has a major stake in leading newspapers, magazines and publishing. Berlusconi is mired in scandal and corruption allegations but the spin on his networks is always positive". It is apposite to add to Avaaz's comment here that Berlusconi has even publicly declared his belief that Western civilisation is superior to that of Islam. His media have expressed bellicosity suitable to such views.

Avaaz goes on to observe that: "In the US, UK and Australia, mega-mogul Rupert Murdoch exploits his empire to get sweet deals from politicians whom he in turn backs for office. His infamous Fox News is the largest cable news network in the US [reaching into almost all homes!]. After President Obama spurned Murdoch and boycotted his propagandistic network, Fox News spawned the radical Right Tea Party group, and provided a platform for hate and racism, suggesting that Obama is a terrorist and hates white people."

Hatching Plots

The idea for a new Canadian crony-media network was reportedly hatched in a secret lunch between Rupert Murdoch, Canadian Conservative Party Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Kory Teneycke. "Harper was George W. Bush's closest ally on climate change and many other issues", and has been pushing a new version of "Fox News" into Canada with its "radical form of Rightwing politics". This news outlet, SunTV, is obviously intended to be "an unscrupulously biased mouthpiece" for Harper himself. It threatens to transform "Canada's media landscape" for the worse. Many media barons across the globe are indeed "ruthless in how they achieve their political objectives, pushing opinions that poison people's hearts and polarise our world, threatening democracy and peace".

Promulgating Political Poison

The Western media pattern of projecting social antagonisms has certainly been exemplified in Aotearoa/NZ with the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, along with all the rest of the “War on Terror” agenda. Mainstream newspapers like the Press have continuously spouted Anglo-American propaganda, some of it quite rabid and perverse, while State-owned TVNZ has channelled a constant flow of pro-war CNN, BBC and co. “news” and commentary. Moreover, news and opinion frontmen for TVNZ like Paul Holmes and Paul Henry have been distinguished by racist remarks or Orwellian warmongering. In the Holmes’ case, he made a racist comment connected with the 2003 war on Iraq reminiscent of attitudes centuries ago, calling United Nations’ head Kofi Annan a “cheeky darkie” for his resistance to US pressure! At the time, Holmes was billed as NZ’s leading TV and radio broadcaster.

In turn, Paul Henry later drew a vigorous protest from Amnesty International when he seemed to heartily endorse torture for Afghani prisoners. He had been questioning TVNZ Political Editor Guyon Espiner on “a *Sunday Star Times* article about NZ Special Air Service (SAS) soldiers linked to insurgents being handed over to Afghanistan’s National Security Directorate – an organisation notorious for torture”). Henry went on to say: “. . . but these people, these killers, these morons are sort of taken out of their criminal activity, and then as you say, we need, are expected to hand them over with kid gloves. No, no, no! We need to get out the Stanley knives!” (ibid.). Amnesty International has been warning the NZ government for years about what it has described as ‘a pattern of human rights violations, perpetrated with impunity’ in Afghan prisons, including detainees being whipped, exposed to extreme cold, deprived of food, and shocked with electrical probes” (*Sunday Star Times*, 31/1/10).

The now disgraced “former *Breakfast* host Paul Henry says TVNZ encouraged him to be controversial, but then let him take the rap for on-air slurs that sparked strong public reaction, forcing him to resign” (*Press*, 16/11/10). Henry had even insulted the Governor-General (not white enough!), and offended India. Clearly, Henry felt that TVNZ wanted him to perform as a sort of American-style “shock-jock” in the mould of Rush Limbaugh or Glenn Beck. He stupidly overplayed his hand. “Freedom of speech”, however, is defended by Henry as the licence for his racist and socially antagonistic remarks (ibid.). This is very much in the American tradition, whereas freedom of speech for real dissent is systematically suppressed and marginalised by corporate forces. While it is heartening to see that there was sufficient outrage against Henry for TVNZ to finally get rid of him, the general, neo-liberal political line and world vision articulated in the NZ mainstream media continue with only the occasional note of real dissent or criticism. Sadly, social antagonism and even militarist extremism have already come a long way towards being the norm in much of the major Western media and this has been reflected in NZ as well.

Contesting The Corporate Media

As intimated above, Canadian Avaaz members scored a victory when they succeeded in shutting down the bid to subsidise the new Murdoch-linked network. A petition was mounted against “special Government handouts for SunTV”, a barrage of letters sent to the Government’s media commission, and a large amount of money donated to help fund legal action. Kory Teneycke was actually forced to resign and SunTV abandoned its application for Governmental funding to boost its launch. For the moment at least, the concerted crony-media move to push Canadian culture more to the Right has been checked to some extent.

Avaaz’s Canadian campaign exposed how taxpayers there were going to “foot the bill for this new network through their cable television fees. This is an example of how crony-media works – a billionaire gets Government-mandated funding for their media network while pushing propaganda that backs that Government’s leader”. Avaaz rightly pointed to the Peladeau media empire attack as a glaring example of “how big corporate power works to silence the people’s voices”. In addition, Avaaz pertinently remarks that as an international community of almost six million people and growing, it “might be one of the only organisations that can fight this rising threat to democracy”. Indeed, its’ successful Canadian campaign shows how we have to unite internationally against crony-media and all it represents.

As Avaaz also aptly says: “The subversion of democracy by the collusion of political leaders and media corporations is a threat to all the things we care about, from climate change to poverty to human rights”. In these times, the danger of warmongering looms as an ever present risk, especially with the seemingly more general militarist inclinations of many Western media and the broader culture. Worldwide, some ten million people marched against the 2003 invasion of Iraq but unfortunately failed to stop the war. To avert further violence and its destabilising momentum is going to demand even greater ongoing commitment.

Whipping Up War Fever

Besides Fox News, another example of the media warfare line in regard to the US’s illegal wars on Afghanistan and Iraq has been that adopted by the leading American radio group. San Antonio-based Clear Channel Communications, which had close links with President Bush II, demonstrated the new activist approach of some

powerful American media. Significantly, its Chief Executive Officer had contributed generously to Bush's election campaign (OPGE, op. cit, p120). After 9/11, Clear Channel even banned songs "that it felt might undermine public support for President Bush's declared 'War on Terrorism'" ("Media Merger Mania and Moves for Media Democracy" by Jerry Starr, Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting, 16/4/04). This ban got international publicity when it included the Dixie Chicks for their lead singer's criticism of the war on Iraq.

"When hundreds of thousands of American citizens took to the streets to protest against the war on Iraq, Clear Channel organised pro-war patriotic 'Rallies for America' across the country. It used its radio stations to advertise the events and then sent correspondents to cover them as though they were breaking news. The era of manufacturing consent has given way to the era of manufacturing news" (OPGE, op. cit, p120). Political manipulation, mass media, show business, and militarism interact regularly now in Orwellian orchestrated theatrics.

The Tea Party Movement

Murdoch's Fox News played a big role in the birth of the radical, Rightwing Tea Party movement in the US. Media Matters in America has compiled an analysis of how Fox News aggressively promoted Tea Party protests in the early days of the movement (www.mediamatters.org/reports/200904080025). Fox News quickly fastened on the potential for growth of what can be seen initially as a spontaneous outburst of anger at the policies of the new Obama Administration. It described these protests as primarily a response to President Obama's fiscal policies.

The Tea Party movement, which takes its name from the Boston Tea Party of the American Revolution period, pushes the traditional conservative American themes of smaller government, individual rights and freedoms, less taxation, and a correspondingly conservative view of the Constitution (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_Party_protests). But as a very Rightwing populist movement, the Tea Party articulates these themes with an extremist edge. At the same time, the movement has shown itself at times to be a fluctuating mixture and expression of inconsistent frustrations and anger. Therefore, manipulative media like Fox News and Clear Channel Communications have worked vigorously to direct this movement and related social trends according to their own hard right agendas.

Since early 2009, the Tea Party has carried out an extensive series of protests in the US. It has exploded in fact into a potentially very dangerous social movement. Its leaders are working to shift the Republican Party further to the Right. In recent times, a lot of their energies were directed into efforts to get extremist candidates elected under the Republican banner in the mid-term 2010 Congressional elections. To a large extent, they succeeded in this aim. Furthermore, polls show many mainstream Americans back the Tea Party. With compounding economic problems, 10% unemployment, growing socio-economic inequalities, an anxiety-ridden middle-class, foreign wars and terrorism, worries about the rise of China, and other concerns, the Tea Party movement can draw on a lot of societal stress and socio-economic insecurities.

A Toxic Brew

Adele Stan has identified certain traits that make the Tea Party movement quite distinctive. She emphasises that: "When it comes to the Tea Party movement, the media comprise the message as much as carry it", 5/710). The personalities of Fox News and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* do more than magnify the Tea Party's messages; they are communications strategists that reinforce the movement's themes with cogent framing and clever wordplay delivered incessantly across all forms of media in their purview and outside of it. These media figures also function as movement organisers . . . Glenn Beck is Rupert Murdoch's community organizer" (ibid.). In fact, Beck has become the top conservative radio and TV talk show commentator in the US.

In helping to foster traditional Rightwing values according to the virulent new Tea Party formula, the Murdoch empire and similar minded corporate forces obviously see direct commercial gains from the creation of a much more deregulatory climate for their operations and investments. Fox News, in particular, has "regularly featured TV programming leading into and promoting various protest activities" (ibid.), and has also regularly served the Tea Party as a "sound-system" and "visual display" for its spokespeople.

This is set in a context where even a *Times* journalist can write of the "controversial and secretive corporate money" pumped by conservative forces into the US midterm election (reprinted in the *Press*, 28/10/10). Political funding rules have recently been altered in the US by a monumental Supreme Court decision, "removing constraints on election spending . . . the ruling has worked disproportionately in favour of the Republicans, whose supporters have outspent liberal groups by almost three to one" (ibid.). Big Business, epitomised by the likes of the US Chamber of Commerce, went on an election spending spree.

The Cyclic Political Context Of Capitalist Media Concentration

The tightening grip of Murdoch's media conglomerate on American society as expressed by Fox News goes back to the militarist heyday of the Reagan era. Regulation against media cross-ownership was conveniently bent by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This allowed Murdoch's NewsCorp-Fox to take over Metromedia stations to "become the basis of a new Fox national network" ("The Murdoch Archipelago", op. cit, p351). The FCC Chairperson at the time "wanted to deregulate the media industries – a standard Republican position, as it tends to favour big money, which is a (arguably, the) Republican constituency... The particular reason for welcoming the new network was that its moving spirit was Murdoch. Reagan and his colleagues thought highly of what Murdoch's papers had done for them in the Presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984, and believed that it qualified him admirably to run a national TV network" (ibid.).

With the driving force of big business behind it, the FCC has carried on with its deregulatory programme. As Arundhati Roy has remarked, "America's media empire is controlled by a tiny coterie of people" ("OPGE", op. cit, p121). In the early part of the first decade of the 21st Century: "Chairman of the FCC, Michael Powell, the son of [the then] Secretary of State Colin Powell", was pushing for "even further deregulation of the communication industry, which will lead to even greater consolidation" (ibid.). This has certainly happened with Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of the Wall Street Journal, and similar moves towards increased concentration.

Reactionary Populism

Later in 2009/10, the use of the Tea Party by Murdoch and co, including the more reactionary elements of the Republican Party, is yet another case of the capitalist exploitation of "false consciousness" - another tradition so entrenched throughout US history. So many people, indoctrinated into American libertarian myths, are really acting against their own socio-economic interests in supporting the Tea Party and related movements. Crony-media, Big Business, and their political allies have now a new, dynamic vehicle on which to try and consolidate their grip on American society. However, the reality is also deepening social division.

The Relevance Of Mass Society Theory

Even Big Business is more divided these days with a much more public-spirited element exemplified by Bill Gates and co. In this sense, mass society theory may seem to have some limitations. But it is continually insightful and useful in highlighting the role of certain media and related political agents, and their increasingly harmful influence in Western society. Most importantly, it can have a critically pre-emptive purpose. After all, too, the Nazis faced strong opposition in their early days but still took control of German society. We need to constantly counter and repel the influence of crony-media.

Historically, there have been various strands of mass society theory, including even a culturally elitist perspective, and also some quite positive versions of the theory. My approach draws its main inspiration from the socialist Frankfurt School of thought, which developed much of its critical line from analysis of the German Nazi experience. This school is associated with social science researchers, analysts and writers like TW Adorno, M Horkheimer, E Fromm and H Marcuse.

"Dumbing Down"

There can still be interesting and curious theoretical and empirical cross-connections. For instance, the deliberate "dumbing down" approach by certain mass media is at least partially relevant to the critical, conservative cultural perspective, which lamented the decline of civilised "good taste" as it were. An updated case in point of such criticism from a more progressive perspective is a piece by American social critic Naomi Wolf on the Conservative British Government's "war on culture" (*Press*, 4/11/10). The British government is slashing funding for the arts and humanities departments of Britain's universities. This assault, coupled with "plans to triple university students' fees", has elicited large angry protests (*The Press*, 2/12/10).

Wolf notes that this downgrading has also happened in the US since the Reagan era. She warns about "a giant step in the direction of a pliable, dumbed-down citizenry", and the creation of "an increasingly ignorant and passive population that serves at the pleasure of corporate interests", including for instance ignorance of "what led to World War I" (*Press*, 4/11/10). Wolf sees this "war on culture" creating "a nation of quiescent citizens who, like their US counterparts, are better suited to a society whose official policies are more aligned to the will of corporate interests" (ibid.). The National Party government has been doing the same to a degree in Aotearoa/NZ, including the axing of adult and community education courses.

Orchestrating Special Propaganda

One of the criticisms of mass society theory from a sociological viewpoint is that it has proved to be too vague in meaning. But for my purposes, I am looking at causes and effects in two particular dimensions. One dimension refers to the power of a relatively small group in a climate of fear and anxiety to mobilise societal and even international support, through the purveyance of propaganda for the creation of a crisis and a subsequent violent "resolution". This dimension can apply to full scale war as in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the earlier intervention in Afghanistan following 9/11, as well as the 1991 Gulf War.

To some extent then, this thesis has already been illustrated above with regard to the activities of certain major media after 9/11, including the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, it was the conspiratorial activities of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's special intelligence/propaganda office in the Pentagon, and the way this office and other White House agencies colluded with certain strategic elements of the mass media that so crucially set the agenda and content for these media to exploit, and subsequently permeate the mainstream media in general with their poisonous messages. "The Office of Special Plans (OSP), which existed from September 2002 to June 2003 was a Pentagon unit created by Paul Wolfowitz [Dep. Defense Secretary] and Douglas Feith" (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_Special_Plans). It was "headed by Feith", as charged by Rumsfeld, "to supply senior George W. Bush Administration officials with raw intelligence . . . pertaining to Iraq" (ibid.). It is certainly well worth noting that a similar unit was set up on Iran in 2006, the Iranian Directorate.

Under Feith's direction, the OSP fed a stream of disinformation out into the rest of the American foreign policy establishment, even grossly perverting Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assessments and advice (e.g. see: www.antiwar.com/orig/leopold11.html). As indicated, this propaganda was relayed out to the public via a special communications network feeding into the mass media. Rumsfeld, who as a special envoy for the Ronald Reagan Administration was filmed in 1983 warmly shaking Saddam Hussein's hand, oversaw a calculatedly cynical campaign to portray the Iraqi dictator as an imminent threat to the US and the rest of the West. Politics, war, media, marketing and even entertainment all came together again in a co-ordinated programme, closely integrated and charged with the disinformation generated by Feith's OSP.

Conspiratorial Group Calls The Shots

A leading role was played by "top Pentagon spokesperson Victoria ('Torie') Clarke" who had previously run the Washington office of the Hill & Knowlton PR [public relations] firm ("Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq", Sheldon Rampton & John Stauber, Centre for Media and Democracy, Penguin, 2003, p39) [2]. Clarke "was reported to have assembled" an informal media communications group serving Rumsfeld which worked to disseminate the disinformation as effectively as it could (ibid, pp39/40). While highly pivotal, this informal communications group was just one of the media propaganda agencies at the Administration's disposal. Psychological warfare has long been critical to the conduct of US foreign policy in both its overt and covert forms, and the domestic and other Western populations have been critically important targets.

The OSP made its mark internationally too at the time in the more informed military/intelligence circles. For instance, ex-SAS Major Pete Tinley, who once had the job of promoting the Australian SAS to the US military for use in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, later became acutely aware as to how the OSP was drumming up the war on Iraq ("Soldiers Without Borders: Beyond the SAS – a global network of brothers-in-arms" by Ian McPhedran & Verona Burgess, CD Talking Book, Bolinda, 2008, final chapter). Tinley said that he could easily detect the obvious American "neocon" shaping of information from the Donald Rumsfeld/Paul Wolfowitz office in the Pentagon. This office was clearly perverting "intelligence" for warmongering purposes. His view was supported and confirmed by other intelligence and military personnel with whom he had contact. Yet the US, UK, and Australian governments ignored such concerns.

Doing One's Duty

While in the US, Tinley was assigned to Fort Campbell, Tennessee, from where he had access to the stuff coming out of the OSP. By mid-2002, planning for the war on Iraq, Plan 103 Victor, had already begun. Tony Blair's British government was deeply implicated in this war planning: in both conception and outline, even secretly back before 9/11 (*Press*, 24, 26 & 28/11/09; 2/12/09). Despite his concern, Tinley in the end adopted the rationale of having to do his duty ("Soldiers Without Borders", op. cit.). This is most significant in these circumstances because it again demonstrates how military men (and women) of some conscience will ultimately conform to militarist dictates. Tinley said that he had to do his duty according to the oath that he had taken – *despite the glaring evidence of manufactured "intelligence"!* The alternative, he maintains, would be "pretty chaotic" – *rather than the chaos of illegal war and all its consequences?!*

While the invasion had basically been premised on one issue, and one issue alone, WMD, and alarm bells were sounding in his head, Tinley still felt he had to do his best as a professional soldier (ibid.). Yet he knew that no WMD would be found in Iraq. So, although in fact there was no “actionable intelligence” - verified for him before the war by both CIA and British intelligence sources - he felt obliged to take part in what was a “political deception”, still proving chaotically horrendous for the peoples of Iraq, the Middle East, and elsewhere, indeed potentially for all of us. This is sad stuff indeed about the political conditioning to conform at all costs of the Western military. Tinley himself has since turned to Australian Labor Party politics!

Plotting Political Murder

Coordinated “neo-con” plotting for militarist imperialism and war, especially with regard to “regime change” in Iraq, had in fact really begun with the formation of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) in 1997, a hard Right foreign policy grouping that wanted permanent and pervasive world dominance. Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Vice President Dick Cheney, and a significant number of other PNAC members were to become leading members of the Bush Administration (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_for_the_New_American_Century). All of this, of course, is now extensively documented. As William Hartung of the World Policy Institute pointed out in 2002, “the Bush Administration’s strategy of ‘pre-emptive war’ in Iraq is the brainchild of a small circle of conservative think tanks and weapons lobbying groups like the PNAC” (quoted in “Target Iraq”, op. cit, p27)

In the global environment of the future, the potential for political manipulation such as that exhibited by the PNAC, OSP and closely related groups and agencies, remains virtually unlimited. The propagandistic actions of a small grouping have had global impact in ongoing consequences for everyone on the planet. Undoubtedly, people like former President George Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and Condoleezza Rice, as well as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and some members of his government at the time, can be considered war criminals of the worst sort. But in the Orwellian world of the “War on Terror”, Western government-mandated crimes against human rights are pretty well sacrosanct, certainly for its chief exponents, even if some of the foot soldiers are occasionally expendable!

Democracy Is War!

One of the cynical absurdities perpetuated by conservative media is the myth that some of the “neocons” are actually visionary democratic idealists who got carried away with their passion. This bizarre mythmaking centred on a bunch of ruthless imperial neo-fascists can appear in contexts that can even be quite critical of American foreign policy. Peter Maass may be a New York Times journalist but he surveys the devastation caused to humankind and the planet by our obsession with oil (“Crude World: The Violent Twilight of Oil”, Penguin, 2009). In yet exploring the connections of oil and geopolitics, Maass notes that Paul Wolfowitz was seen as “the official with the highest quotient of pro-democracy idealism in the Bush Administration” (ibid, p159). Maass is actually making the point here that even Wolfowitz had oil as part of his motivation!

In fact, Wolfowitz’s militarist and anti-democratic roots lie very deep. Most pertinently to his role in the OSP perversion of intelligence was that in 1976 he had been officially appointed a member of “an alternative team from outside the intelligence agencies to appraise the official estimates of Soviet [Union] capabilities and intentions” (“Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment” by Jerry Sanders, Pluto Press, p198). This team, which came to be known as “the Team B panel”, was composed of “hawkish”, Rightwing ideologues (ibid, p199). The panel became notorious for its propaganda in grossly overestimating and promoting the Soviet threat. It strongly accused the CIA of underestimating Soviet strength and intentions. Team B even enthusiastically promoted the strategy of nuclear war-fighting for the US (ibid, p285).

Circulation Of Elites

Very significantly, it provided a great deal of the ideological and technical ammunition for the alarmist and apocalyptic Committee on the Present Danger to fire away in helping to usher in the Reagan/Bush I era, another of America’s periodic bouts of imperial aggression. Indeed, 33 of its members came to participate in the Reagan Administration. Then in turn, PNAC was to later emerge as the 1990s’ equivalent of the Reaganist Committee on the Present Danger. The Committee itself has been revived as well in the last decade. In fact, this is actually the third historical incarnation of the Committee on the Present Danger, which harks back to its origins in the anti-communist hysteria of the early 1950s. Since the late 1970s, modern American history has witnessed some pronounced, cyclic swings to reactionary, militarist politics. As the sense of crisis is likely to grow in American society, given compounding problems, questions of identity and direction are going to be paramount. When coupled with the US’s growing economic dependence on overseas resources, some persuasive sociological theory points to an orientation to growing violence.

Endnotes

[1] Norman Solomon was then the executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, which he had founded, and author of many books, including “The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media”.

[2] John Stauber is the founder and director of the Center for Media and Democracy.



REVIEWS

"OPERATION 8"

A Film By Errol Wright and Abi King-Jones

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Jeremy Agar

"Operation 8" is a documentary on the "anti-terror" raids in the hills behind Opotiki (see Peace Researcher 35, December 2007, "A Bad Case Of 'Terrorism' Hysteria", by Murray Horton, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prcont35.html>. Ed.). Those who believe NZ to be a country where terrorism is an unlikely prospect would have wondered what was going on. The Ureweras, the range that separates the eastern Bay of Plenty from Gisborne, are one of the more remote places in a country that, in the eyes of the big countries in the Northern Hemisphere, is itself remote. This is an honest and intriguing film, well worth the viewing for any New Zealander, but anyone not up with the play will go away still wondering. The terrorism charges were eventually dropped but the 18 people charged now face weapons charges (*the trial has been postponed, yet again, until 2012, because of appeals, etc.* Ed.). There might have been pig hunting rifles involved but not a terrorist's smoking gun.

The immediate background is that the Clark government enacted the 2002 Terrorism Suppression Act* as a response to 9/11. That was ill-advised. Ten years ago any connection between Osama bin Laden and his mates and the issues that face NZ society were invisible and nothing's changed. Unfortunately at the time a global panic meant there was little intelligent or honest debate in the House or the country. One of the more sensible comments has come from retiring Green MP Keith Locke, who has pointed out that existing laws are sufficient to deal with any plots against the peace and good order of the country **You can read the Anti-Bases Campaign's submission on it at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/abcterr.htm>. Ed.*

Rubbing Tuhoe's Nose In it

The more interesting background dates back to early European settlement. The very remoteness of Tuhoe country meant that it was never fully absorbed into post-Waitangi NZ either by conquest or land sale. Tuhoe's relationship with the Crown remains ambiguous and occasionally uneasy and over the years, talk of the implications of Tuhoe's unique history and how Tuhoe might assert autonomy is never far away. For the rest of the country, though, the Police raid on October 15, 2007 was a total surprise. We'd heard nothing to indicate tensions; which suggests that the media were similarly unprepared. So, it seems, were the locals. The effective opening and closing shots introduce us to women whose children's bus was intercepted by the Police on the way to school. Even had there been serious plotting by the adults in the hills behind, the scale of the Police response was disproportionate to whatever might have been needed. As the women speak, a helicopter stands behind them. Beyond are the village goal posts against a backdrop of Urewera bush.

The Police set up their line on the road at the point of the 19th Century Government land confiscation line, the cause of subsequent resentment. It could turn out that this was an oversight, but it was certainly seen as a provocation. In his history of NZ Michael King quoted a Pakeha judge who sentenced the charismatic Tuhoe leader Rua Kenana in 1917 with the warning that "in every corner of the great Empire to which we belong the King's law can reach anyone who offends against him. This is the lesson your people should learn from this trial". The local interpretation would be that nothing has changed.

A century on, have we all learned more positive lessons? One of the film's many virtues is the seamless connecting of its several strands as it moves from Waioeka to Wellington and beyond to look for the terror. Howard Broad, the Police Commissioner, didn't seem to have his heart in it and what we hear in the way of justification is unconvincing. He refers to "training camps", which had "an element of illegality" about them, constituting "a risk" to the peace, so it had been "prudent to act now". He's qualifying his responses, and if all Broad's testimony is in the same vein, it suggests he doesn't think a crime had taken place, as if he's trying to explain away what he regards as an overreaction by his subordinates.

An ex-undercover cop and Ross Meurant, a former policeman and politician (well-known for his role during the 1981 Springbok Tour protests), are contemptuous of Police operations, saying that lying and the planting of evidence "were the norm" in the force. Evidence of this kind, which comes across as the settling of scores, needs to be regarded sceptically. More germane is their point that the mass of evidence in this case - apparently there are 30,000 pages of it - means the cops were on a fishing expedition. Compromising evidence would come in short specifics. The authorities probably never have had much beyond a few rifles and wild words.

Catapulting A Bus Onto George Bush's Head

We are shown a clip from the court, where evidence of a Tuhoë plot against a certain GW Bush was being presented. From Urewera apparently terrorists were hatching a scheme to catapult a bus onto the President's head. How many of the 30,000 pages are like this? It's reminiscent of the reports we hear of passengers being detained at airports because of "jokes" about bombs. NZ spy agencies have a long record of being humourless and lacking in judgement. And ignorant.* It's even possible that whoever sifts through the material can't see the difference between chat after a day's pig hunting and a plot against the State. *For a comparable story, check my review of "I Almost Forgot About The Moon" by Selwyn Manning, Yasmine Ryan and Katie Small, an analysis of the Ahmed Zaoui episode, *Peace Researcher* 30, March 2005, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr30-106.html>.

There are other comical moments, not least the sight of Rodney Hide bellowing to a deserted Parliament. To his credit, Hide was scathing. Traditionally the cops harbour an intense dislike of middle class radicals. It remains to be seen what connections, if any, existed between Tuhoë locals and other critics, but anarchists especially are a species that tends to baffle and infuriate the Police mind. Urban North Islanders were rounded up, as was a Taupo couple's computer, apparently because its owners were environmentalists, greenies.

An academic suggests that the State needs to stir up trouble to justify its powers to repress dissent. An enemy is a handy thing for a Government to maintain itself, and if one doesn't exist it might have to be invented. Usually these are external foes, potential invaders and suchlike, but internal threats are all the more potent. Our most abusive political language is reserved for those who can be tagged as subversives or traitors. All power structures (including those involving personal relationships) employ this tactic, so it's a valid point to make. It's a matter of degree. NZ is regularly deemed to be one of the world's safest and most peaceful countries (making it "boring" to the young graduate males who tend to compile these lists) and it's hard to imagine where a real terrorist threat would come from.

Wikipedia describes Annette Sykes as a radical lawyer, "an advocate for Maori independence and a nuclear free, genetic engineering free independent Pacific. She is a Mana Party member", so she comes as close as anyone on view to being able to claim to tie the various strands. For Sykes, "sovereignty" 'means the "right to secede". There can be only one sovereign. She's right. That's what the word means. So if a Rotorua lawyer wants the Ureweras to be sovereign she means she wants it to be an independent country. Yet it's become the norm to chat about "sovereignty" to allow it to mean whatever the speaker feels like. For some sovereignty equates to mana or self-esteem. For Auckland authorities hanging what's called a Maori sovereignty flag on the Harbour Bridge for a day as a feel good exercise, it's a bit of branding. Loose terminology doesn't help understanding.

State Terrorism

When we talk of something we call terrorism we'd be well advised to be precise. Has NZ seen terrorism? By one activist's count there have been just three acts of terrorism in our modern history and none of them came from progressives or activists. They came from the State or the State's agents, from reaction. The best known terrorist act in NZ was the most recent, the 1980s' blowing up of the *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland Harbour by agents of the French government, an outrage that killed one person. This was terrorism by anyone's definition, but the other two acts should be too. During a strike at Waihi mine in 1912 a mob of Police and scab strike breakers, themselves starving and desperate for work, killed Fred Evans because in the eyes of the Prime Minister, William Massey, as a striking miner he was one of the "enemies of order". A third murder, also in the 80s, of a caretaker killed when Wellington Trades Hall was bombed, remains unsolved.

Three violent acts to defend power from democracy. Three deaths. Historians might not agree about whether the death of Evans, from wounds in a scuffle, resulted from an act of terror, as both sides had arms and were prepared to use them. The charge of State terrorism stems from the fact that the violence, strike breaking, was instigated by the Government and the mine owners for reasons that were entirely selfish. The miners were merely defending their jobs from an overwhelming force. In the context, where there was no alternative work, this amounted to self-defence of themselves and their families.

It would be useful to know whether people like our Prime Minister (any Prime Minister), our Attorney General, our Police Commissioner, our Supreme Court judges or the chief executive officers of transnational corporations would agree about the three instances, but it's probably a safe bet that they would see Evans as having been responsible for his own demise. A disquieting detail from the film, about which we need to hear detail, is that new discoveries of evidence were being made as late as March 2011, when it was already known that terrorism charges weren't in the offing. If so, who was looking for what or whom and why?

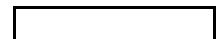
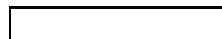
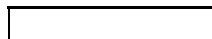
Privatisation Of Spying

It could well be that interest in whatever was happening in the Ureweras will fade away as attention focuses on systemic questions. The scope and balance of the film hints at a wider relevance, inviting us to consider if the raids might turn out be a prelude to a new, repressive era. There's a significant discussion on the privatisation of spying. In the neoliberal "free trading" world, which is keen to erase the barrier between the interests of Big Business and the ability of democracy to act in the interest of all citizens, security firms spy for corporate interests. The governments of the US and UK, for instance, already treat the needs of big corporations as their need, and are happy to collude with corporate interests to shut down popular criticism*. NZ governments don't have the reach and the power of the big countries, but we shouldn't doubt that the present NZ government has the same ideological prejudices. Were the raids a gathering of information in case some yet unknown future crisis provides a pretext to extend a similar surveillance and control of dissent? *I discussed an example, the Tesco case, in which a British supermarket chain prosecuted environmentalists, in a review of "Global Intelligence" by Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch, in *Peace Researcher* 30, March 2005, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr30-106.html>.

Another matter of language arises. The persistent cliché that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter does little to clarify matters because - pacifists possibly excepted - practically everyone in the world sees some people as terrorists and some people as freedom fighters. But they're not the same people. Terror as a tactic is not, in itself, Leftist or Rightist. If you think militants are terrorists, you're saying you don't like them. If you think they're freedom fighters, you're registering support.

From modern NZ, when we think of discussions over the place of civil disobedience or popular resistance to authoritarian regimes, we tend to think of Vietnam or South Africa. North American liberals think of Cuba or Nicaragua. Europeans might think of the Algerian war for independence. From these instances progressive opinion learned to regard guerrilla war as an act of liberation, and in all these cases it was. Those "terrorists" merit being honoured as freedom fighters. But what of the skinheads and Nazi gangs of 1930s Germany? Or Christopher McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber? Or, in our era, the men who coerce innocent women and children into suicide bombing? All these fascist acts of violence are terror and nothing else.

The difference is that Rightist violence is reactive, waged against the wishes and interest of the mass of the people, and unlike the self-sacrifice of progressive liberation, it doesn't work. The most famous of all the freedom fighters, Mao Ze Dong said that a guerrilla was like a fish in the sea. To succeed, the guerrilla needs to be at one with the population where, together, they swim. If he's not wanted, he is indeed a terrorist - and he'll flounder. The urban terrorists of post-war Europe were less than unsuccessful because by blowing up people in Rome or Frankfurt they did nothing to advance the cause of Italians or Germans but a lot to alienate the mainstream. This is where we get back to NZ. There is probably no country in the world where terror is less likely to succeed and more certain to consolidate opinion behind reaction than Aotearoa. In a place like the Ureweras, where there is no-one to fight, and no sharks infest the ocean, the prospect becomes farcical. Fortunately it's most unlikely that anyone in Tuhoe country fails to appreciate this.



"STANDING ARMY"

A Film By Enrico Parenti And Thomas Fazi, 2010

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Jeremy Agar

According to my dictionary the dugong, a large sea mammal, inspired the belief in mermaids. A curious creature, it features here as a victim of the American military presence in Okinawa, where less than 50 of them remain. The dugong looks endearing, but it's not just sentimental to single it out. If it's endangered, the less visible aspects of the ecosystem will be too. Who cares? Certainly not the US Army, which used Okinawa as a base to attack mainland Japan in 1945, and has stayed on ever since. We hear that it's the only place where the Yanks can do their jungle training, but that's a flimsy excuse to continue the occupation. Japan is not in any way a military threat to the US, but beyond Japan lie Korea and China, the usual suspects. The dugongs have it bad, but so does the human population. Apparently over a 30 year period US personnel have committed 5,269 unpunished crimes against civilians.

Diego Garcia, Okinawa, South Korea

South of Asia, Diego Garcia is a small atoll in the Indian Ocean. Unlike Japan, it's never been caught up in the world's wars and, unlike Okinawa, the American base there doesn't have the pretexts that history offers to explain its existence. The US and the UK collaborated in expelling Diego Garcia's conveniently small and uninfluential human population so that it could be used only as a landing strip for bombers and as a port for aircraft carriers (for more on Diego Garcia and US bases check my reviews of "The Bases Of Empire", edited by Catherine Lutz, and "Island Of Shame" by David Vine, in *Peace Researcher* 38, July 2009, online at <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr38-175c.htm>). Here, because there are no people to spoil the view, the atoll can be promoted as a home away from home. We're shown recruiting films of water skiers and palm trees as the lucky few sailors enjoy "the Navy's best kept secret", a paradise abounding in "quality of life opportunities".

There are 38 bases in Okinawa, among 716 overseas bases which the US admits to having. South Korea, with 26, is another favourite locale. There are others, in Israel for instance, which are more secret and aren't counted. If the bases exist to project American power this need can be sold to the American public only if the elites talk a good game. The charitable view of this is that Washington sometimes has to stretch a point to make its case. Some details might be dodgy, but someone's got to defend freedom. Another view, the one the filmmakers might want us to see here, is that the US elites are serial liars. The film wants to make the case that reasons for the military to exist have to be invented because there aren't any good reasons. It's a case that all the evidence points to. But in this ambition it gets sidetracked.

With such a wide and various topic the documentation can only be sketched and the problem is not what's left out so much as what's chosen to be put in. Two possible culprits for US military excess are institutional momentum and the profit motive. To deny either is a factor would take a wilful denial of the facts and the film is justified in not lingering on such obvious targets. The gist of what "Standing Army" is (sometimes) arguing is less conventional. It's saying that the US fights wars so that it can build more bases. Usually that's put the other way round. It wouldn't be easy to affirm that the US responded to Pearl Harbour in order to put a base on Okinawa afterwards, and there's no such implication here. More plausibly, it could be said that, having attained a uniquely powerful strategic position at the moment of the defeat of the Axis, the US used the opportunity to embark on a half century of empire building. That makes the choice of Okinawa to introduce the doco even more appropriate. So far, so good.

Chalmers Johnson, a long term critic, reminds us of the origin of the "military-industrial complex", a beast that merits a closer inspection. Days before leaving office in 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower (a Republican) gave a speech in which he said that US prestige depended not on a raw projection of might but on "how we use our powers", a concept that has since evolved into the "soft power" urged by latter day liberals. The US would do well to consider that "arrogance and a lack of comprehension would inflict upon us grievous hurt" at home and abroad. America should avoid trying to impress through the "spectacular" and "miraculous".

The armaments industry, Eisenhower continued, had 3 1/2 million personnel (and according to Parenti and Fazi the US military now consumes as much energy as all of Sweden) and exerts an influence, "economic, political, even spiritual", that affects "the very structure of our society [and] carried with it a potential for the disastrous use of misplaced power". The military-industrial complex was expressed through its corrupting of universities and research. The elites were capturing public policy. To resist this and to preserve democracy, America needed "an alert and knowledgeable citizenry". Living only for the present risked its becoming an "insolvent bank of tomorrow" in "a nation

of fear and hate”.

Betraying Core Values

If this speech were to be made now it would come across as a direct counter to the likes of Sarah Palin, also a prominent Republican. Given his career, Eisenhower would hardly have opposed America's having a standing army, but he might well have regretted the need for it. The thought of Palin or John McCain (the 2008 Republican candidates for President and Vice-President) - or any contemporary top American - rejecting the notion is inconceivable. To them, having a big standing army is the one indisputably important purpose of the State. They're all betraying core values. George Washington, who led the fight for independence and became President, set an early tone by disbanding his revolutionary army and sending the soldiers home. That's why the Constitution allows people to carry guns. It was to defend themselves against any returning British. Two centuries later, those who defend the right of the deranged to keep guns so they can mow down other Americans in shopping malls are missing the point.

If you lived through the 50 years between the age of Eisenhower and the age of Palin it might have seemed as though little was changing in the way America wielded its guns, and that's the interpretation on show. Yet how dated and simplistic looks the overt drive for conformity of the 50's and 60's. We're shown a military propaganda piece featuring young people with a relaxed take on life and clothes (hippies). The voiceover remarks that most of us (decent God-fearing folk) care about how we look. But (cue hippies) "some don't worry at all but only because" the Army is standing guard.

You couldn't do that now without earning ridicule. But neither could a President sound like Eisenhower without inviting assassination from a crazy demented by Tea Party rhetoric. This apparent contradiction between the verities of 1961 and those of 2011 (who are the sophisticated and who are the simpletons?) points to the familiar knowledge that things that make sense at the time often don't make sense in the cold light of the next day. Historical perspective allows a rethink. As an example, consider an offering of Chalmers Johnson, a key observer in the film.

Johnson has been a trenchant critic of US policy for a long time, but his contribution here is confusing. He says he used to be a cold warrior, a supporter, that is, of American anti-Communism, and that he does not repudiate that. He says that "after the collapse of the Soviet Union" his country's standing armies have become "irrelevant". They continue to exist, Johnson argues, because the power elites need a new enemy to justify their existence, so they declare war on drugs or terrorism. Both parts of this critique - that the Russians were coming and that the whole military-industrial complex is a con - are staples, and the case can be made - and has been, many times - for either one. But not both at once.

This film is otherwise premised on the latter proposition. Its theme is that the standing army is self-interested, a machine created to generate profits for corporate America. Parenti and Fazi occupy this tradition, a position which straddles libertarian and anarchist worldviews. They have compiled some of the vast array of evidence to support the film's assertion that the standing army serves at least some dishonest purposes. On this almost everyone from Eisenhower on down is agreed. The question the film is asking (but wisely, Johnson and a mate excepted, is not explicitly answering) is whether there can be any legitimate purpose for all the hundreds of bases.

Chalmers Johnson is begging this question. One man's personal views are being privileged to a 21st Century audience that might not share his knowledge of the last century's history. Consistency demands that no received wisdom be inserted, especially in a film which sets out to be iconoclastic. Why single out the Soviet Union? Others might say terrorism or drugs are legitimate exceptions to the rule that the elites are scoundrels. In the end, little would remain of the whole argument. Johnson was once a policy analyst for the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), so it's not actually surprising that he's here endorsing General Eisenhower, the leader of Allied armies in World War 2 and the Republican President elected in the immediate aftermath of Senator Joe McCarthy's* appalling career (rather than the surprising convert to moderation of his valedictory speech). This was the era of film clips such as the attack on counter-culture America that we're meant to despise. **Senator Joe McCarthy, with his inquisitions and deranged accusations, became synonymous with the anti-Communist witch hunts and hysteria in the 1950s. Ed*

The militarist ethos grew up as an expression of the Cold War. The big wars that America fought, in Korea and in Vietnam, the conflicts that have shaped policy ever since, were ostensibly waged to stop Communists from taking over the world. Conventional wisdom, as designed by the CIA and related outfits, wasn't sure whether that meant Russia or China was the culprit, but it had to be one of them. In reality the long Vietnamese search for peace and independence was waged for decades against Japan, France and the United States (and its sidekicks), an ordeal which divided established opinion in New Zealand. Deluded by CIA analysts, militarists here argued over whether it

was China (a traditional enemy of Vietnam) or Russia (distant and keen not to incite the US) that was forcing Vietnamese people to die for their country.

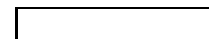
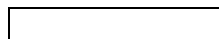
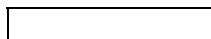
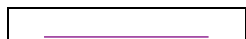
Endorsing US Cold War Ideals

An endorsement of US Cold War ideals is an endorsement of its wars in Korea and Vietnam and to support US foreign policy in the period when Johnson was helping to design it is to support the whole array of despots that America installed just so it could fight "Communism". Were Cuba to have been discussed the film might have been induced into some clarity. Because Fidel Castro had an exotic beard and Che Guevara was seen as hip and the CIA was just so uncool, Cuba became a favourite with elements of American opinion that were otherwise right into the Cold War. This enabled people to see why a beleaguered Castro - unlike the governments of Korea and Vietnam - asked the Soviet Union for help. He was in search of friends.

"In Search Of Enemies" is another critic's book title. The film might well have kept to that theme and left viewers the space to reflect, rather than pre-empt with quick answers. Unfortunately Johnson's remark is not here as the accidental eccentricity of an old guy from another era. Another talking head, identified as a former State Department official, makes the same point. It seems that the film itself was captured by nostalgic cold warriors. Noam Chomsky, usually so sharp, and Gore Vidal, previously so witty, are wheeled out here, but their brief contributions add nothing. It's unlikely that Parenti and Fazo intended to endorse the logic of the Cold War, not in a doco which often seems to want to critique from a sort of anarchist perspective, but they're not in control of their material. The opportunity which the Eisenhower speech afforded to look at moral and social issues was not taken up, but neither is there a coherent historical narrative of foreign policy.

Profiteering, careerism and institutional inertia have all had a part to play - as they must have had in any enterprise born from a marriage of arrogance and unbridled power. But what is the instigating force? Is there an overarching US need? Does it, the disease, exist apart from its symptoms or its secondary infections? These, the key questions, are not addressed. Given their assumption that militarism has an unchallenged grip, it was perhaps inevitable that the film ends pessimistically. Parenti and Fazo, Italian-Americans, show us a vigorous Italian grassroots campaign against a US base that has been thwarted by the Italian State (that is, the campaign has been thwarted, not the base, unfortunately). They report that a Japanese Prime Minister who had vowed to get tough over Okinawa had to resign. And in 2010 the UK overturned legal rulings that had allowed the exiled people of Diego Garcia hope that they might one day go home. All non-military human activities on the island will henceforth be illegal.

DVDs of "Standing Army" can be bought from the filmmakers' Website www.standingarmy.it. Ed



"SECURITY WITHOUT NUCLEAR DETERRENCE"

Commander Robert Green, Astron Media and the Disarmament and Security Centre, 2010

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Doug Craig

*I have become Death, Shatterer of Worlds
If the radiance of a thousand suns
Were to burst into the sky
That would be like the splendour of the Mighty One.*
[p65 Bhagavad Gita]

These were the reputed words of Robert Phillip Oppenheimer, the director of the Manhattan Project as he watched the rising mushroom cloud from a new weapons test. At 5.30am on July 16th 1945, a new and terrible weapon had blossomed above the barren Utah desert. This nuclear blast at the Almagordo test site was the outcome of a vast military-industrial programme to invent a new category of weapon of almost inconceivable power – the atomic bomb. The world has never been the same since. From those early beginnings nuclear weapons were made to be used as weapons of war. The first nuclear weapon to be used offensively was detonated less than a month later on the morning of August 6th over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. A second bomb of 17 kilotonnes was released on Nagasaki three days later. By August 15th Japan had capitulated and the Second World War was over.

The use of nuclear weapons on a non-nuclear armed belligerent state set a dangerous precedent. The world's first nuclear power had both broken the nuclear barrier and opened the way to threat of use against any power that challenged its hegemony. The threatened use of nuclear weapons to accomplish geopolitical goals both built on earlier use of chemical weapons and mass bombing campaigns in warfare in terms of its horrific impacts, and also the potential mass destruction of entire centres of population. The key difference as a calculated weapon of warfare was the long term impact from radiological effects that continued to kill many civilians and affect the unborn into the far future. This impact was not confined to actual warfare. The testing of nuclear warheads in the atmosphere by the United States in the Marshall Islands, the British at Christmas Island and Maralinga (Australia), and the French in Algeria and at Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific's Tuamotu Islands, added more casualties to the growing list. Many others were affected by the mining of the uranium that was part of the manufacture of enriched uranium bombs in the superpowers' growing nuclear arsenals.

Retired Commander Green's book on the theory of warfare "Security Without Nuclear Deterrence" is handsomely produced but curiously bloodless in its discussion of the history of nuclear deterrence. The human victims of this arms race are only present in the margins of history, while military and political leaders of the major powers jockey for position. He covers the main players from Kennedy's close confrontation with Khrushchev over the siting of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) missiles in Turkey and the attempted counter installation of missiles in Cuba; through to Reagan's MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine and Gorbachev's 1986 disarmament proposals. On the way the book traverses through a number of doctrines, explained in a full glossary at the back of the book, such as counter force, first strike, no first use, and LOW (launch on warning) – a strategy that famously almost brought about a nuclear attack when a flight of snow geese in the Arctic was mistaken for a missile track on Russian radar.

Nuclear Proliferators

While the book discusses the concept of nuclear deterrence at length (some 82 pages), it does hop around a bit. A chronological account of nuclear proliferation and its associated military postures amongst the superpowers and their client states (originally Britain and France on the NATO side, Israel on the US side, and India and Pakistan assisted by China and North Korea respectively) would have proved useful. For example, the spread of the associated ballistic missile technology, necessary to actualise the threat of nuclear weapons as a credible system, is not covered. The so-called SCUD intermediate ballistic missile technology from the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries aroused the NATO military planners in Europe, who responded with ground launched cruise missiles in the early 1980s and that led to a huge groundswell of peace protests by the West German and British peace movements. When the earlier versions of SCUD proved unreliable, the Soviet Union on-sold them to Egypt (1971) Iraq (1974), Libya (1974, who also on-sold versions to Iran in 1982), Syria (1974) Vietnam (1979) Yemen (1978) and Afghanistan (1988). This knock-on effect of arms transfers illuminated the linkage of the quest for some countries with nuclear ambitions to the necessity of obtaining the required ballistic missiles needed to threaten nuclear destruction on neighbouring countries.

The United States, Britain and France also had a hand in expanding nuclear proliferation during the Cold War from 1955 onwards through promoting the necessary technology for enriching uranium. France managed to covertly assist Israel in its quest for a nuclear bomb during the 1960s, as well as sell a light water graphite research nuclear reactor and 27.5kg of enriched U-235 to Iraq in the 1970s. Although Iraq military attention was focused on the war with Iran from 1980 onwards, Israel took the opportunity to pre-emptively bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor on June 7th 1981 in Operation Osirak and, according to Israeli Defence Forces at the time, remove a potential Iraqi nuclear threat to Israel's security. Vital elections for the Israeli Knesset occurred less than three weeks later. Menachem Begin, the new and bellicose Israeli Prime Minister, headed a militaristic coalition of Likud and other smaller conservative parties that oversaw the 1982 Lebanon War, the annexation of the Golan Heights and the Sabra and Shatila massacres (of Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps by Israel's Lebanese Christian allies, while the Israeli military stood by).

What this lesson in realpolitik seemed to prove is that nations with war-like postures and nuclear weapons (such as Israel) could embark on military ventures in other countries without fearing any credible international retaliation. The United Nations Security Council was riven by superpower rivalry and there was little likelihood of UN sanctions being imposed. A similar position obtained with India and Pakistan during the 1990s when they both had nuclear weapons, and had also clashed militarily over the Kashmir borders in 1998 and again in 2002. India had Soviet backing and Pakistan was the recipient of massive US military aid. The Pakistani nuclear establishment also had covert interaction with North Korea and had acquired ballistic missile technology (the Hatf missile) via North Korea's unauthorised copy called the Hwasong 5, a copy of the earlier SCUD 21 missile. While the US and Soviet Union signed the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT 2) to reduce their bulging nuclear stockpiles, the spread of nuclear weaponry to other would-be nuclear powers continued largely unchecked.

Commander Green does a very credible job covering a number of these developments and in discussing the legal and moral arguments about the possession and use of nuclear weapons; for example, in his discussion of the 1996 World Court decision* which is built upon his pivotal role as Chair of the UK World Court Project. However his chapter on non-nuclear security that is the title of the book and should be the heart of his arguments for non-nuclear defence is thin (only 36 pages including footnotes), and a large part of it is centred on the restructuring of NATO. **This gave an advisory opinion on the legal, or rather, illegal, status of nuclear weapons under international law. Ed.)*

While this is appropriate if the book is intended for a European audience, it would have benefited from a stronger and lengthier discussion on attempts to defuse and wind back nuclearism in the UN and other international fora. For example, the Pugwash Conferences are not mentioned, nor the work done by the International Peace Bureau, END (European Nuclear Disarmament) or the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The current discussion about removing US nuclear weaponry from the European NATO partners' territory (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Turkey and Norway) is covered only in a brief paragraph and a footnote (*in April 2010, US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, ruled out the removal of the remaining nuclear weapons – 200 aircraft delivered bombs - from Europe. Ed.*). Britain, the US's major military partner in Europe, continued to play into the nuclear deterrence myth by opting for an upgrade of its nuclear armed submarines from 2006 but is also scaling down its operational nuclear readiness (presumably this did not include upgrading the British nuclear attack submarine which broke down off Scotland in 2010).

Personal Motivations

The book is strongest in Chapter One which explains Commander Green's personal motivations in rejecting nuclear deterrence. Being asked to test the readiness of nuclear depth charges from a Sea King helicopter brought home to him the insanity of using nuclear weapons to fight conventional battles. From there via the experience of the suspicious and unfortunate 1984 death of his aunt Hilda Murrell (an anti-nuclear activist), he changed from being a Cold War warrior to a confirmed anti-nuclear activist with a significant insight into military thinking from his armed forces strategic and operational background.

Unfortunately the book has a number of shortcomings in its layout. It could have benefitted from an index, and less repetition of the argument that nuclear deterrence has failed in significant ways in the 60 odd years since Hiroshima. It is also unclear if the book is intended for students of international politics, or for the general informed reader. If for the former, it needed some reorganisation and a clear chronology of instances of nuclear proliferation, both horizontal (more states with nuclear weapons) and vertical (more weaponry using diverse launch platforms) along with a clear exposition of nuclear disarmament globally. A case study approach such as examining the Cuban missile crisis, or NZ's nuclear free legislation following popular public peace campaigns, or the issue of the many changes in the North Korean nuclear posture may have helped here.

Valuable Addition

Commander Green has produced a valuable addition to the small number of books analysing the strategic nuclear postures of the nuclear weapon states, and he points the way forward to consideration of some non-nuclear security arrangements that may make the world a safer place. The general informed reader not familiar with military or security jargon may possibly need to read further around the topic (a useful text, by Stephanie Cooke, on the links between civilian and military nuclear programmes is reviewed below). In the end the best argument for nuclear deterrence is given by India's public position detailed in a submission to the International Court of Justice on the Advisory Opinion requested by the World Health Organisation, on the health and environmental effects of the use of nuclear weapons. This is quoted on p 154 of Green's book. "*...whether the keeping of peace or prevention of war is to be made dependent on the threat of horrific indiscriminate destruction that justifies the stockpiling of such weapons at enormous expense, in the hope that they will merely act as a deterrent but will not in fact be used. However those who do not have such weapons would all the time be racing to build them and those who already have them would continue to develop even more destructive weapons to maintain the superiority necessary for deterrence and this would keep humanity in the perpetual fear of total destruction*". Surely the insane nature of this Faustian bargain of peace guaranteed by threat of destruction should be obvious.



"IN MORTAL HANDS: A Cautionary Tale Of The Nuclear Age"

by Stephanie Cooke, Bloomsbury Books, 2006

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Doug Craig

This important book, which offers useful additional material to Commander Green's one, was written by a nuclear insider. Stephanie Cooke was an editor and journalist for the Energy Intelligence Group writing for publications such as *Nucleonics Weekly* and *Nuclear Fuels*. As such she had a close up view of the work of the international Atomic Energy Agency and Nuclear Suppliers Group – the agencies charged with promotion of the international nuclear industry. The nuclear industry from the very beginning was an offshoot of the nuclear bomb making enterprise. The so-called Atoms for Peace programme of the Eisenhower Administration in 1953 promoted safe clean nuclear power - too cheap to meter. On the US side this was linked to US allies as it was recognised that the byproduct of the civilian nuclear fuel cycle, suitable for reprocessing, was plutonium – the key ingredient in the hydrogen bomb. The Soviet Union had similar caveats for acquisition of nuclear technology by Warsaw Pact countries. Stephanie Cooke calls this the atom's "dark side; "nuclear weapons capability by "seduction of promises of unlimited power".

The safeguards against the diversion of nuclear fuel into weaponry programmes were not set up until 1957 with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). More restrictions on potential nuclear powers were imposed via an early disarmament measure- the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968). Unfortunately this United Nations initiative was not signed by several key players – France, India, and Israel. Another 40 countries are said to have the capacity to develop nuclear weapons but have not chosen to do so. Most have joined the NPT regime.

Evasion Of Nuclear Safeguards

The meat of Ms Cooke's book is a revelation of how various nuclear scientists and politicians enabled an evasion of nuclear safeguards and allowed the current climate of insecurity surrounding the possession and use of nuclear weapons. The role of scientists such as Bertrand Goldschmit (1) from the French nuclear establishment, who was one of the few foreigners allowed to work on the Manhattan Project, and the infamous Abdul Q Khan, father of the Pakistani atomic bomb, who spread nuclear technology to Iraq, North Korea, Iran and Libya, is detailed in the book. The US and Canada contributed to the tension in the Indian subcontinent by selling a CIRUS reactor to India in 1955 without any inspections to verify use and nuclear material safeguards.

Israel managed to escape IAEA inspections through hiding its Dimona nuclear facility deep in the Negev Desert - a fact revealed by the whistleblower Mordecai Vanunu (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mordechai_Vanunu) in 1986. The French also assisted the Israeli drive for nuclear self sufficiency as a by-product of the 1956 Suez affair (where Israel, Britain and France unsuccessfully invaded Egypt to seize back the nationalised Suez Canal). The French saw an advantage to be gained over the British (2) and the Israeli military was keen to build on fears of a resurgent nationalist Egypt. The British Foreign Office in March 2006 revealed that Britain assisted in the start-up of the Dimona reactor by covertly supplying 20 tonnes of "heavy water" in 1959 and 1960. The US also played its part by turning a blind eye to Israeli plans for nuclear weapons development and the refusal to adhere to the NPT, through secret high level understandings from President Richard Nixon onwards (revealed by Avner Cohen in his book "Israel and the Bomb", Columbia University Press, 1998).

The Soviets, for their part, also assisted the Chinese before their 1960 split, leading to the Chinese joining the nuclear club by 1963. One important fact arising out of the history of such dealings is the focus on secret scientific and military establishments dedicated to developing nuclear fuel enrichment and reprocessing technology. The Chinese have their extensive Mianyang complex in Xianging Province, the Russians had at least ten closed cities or Atomgrads and the testing site of Semipalatinsk, and the Israelis have Dimona. Much of the spying programme of the US and its NATO allies is on these complexes via high flying spy planes and surveillance satellites (see Jeffrey Richelson's book "Spying on the Bomb").

According to the Federation of American Scientists' Website, the world's combined stockpile of nuclear warheads remains at a very high level: more than 20,500. Of these, some 4,800 warheads are considered operational, of which nearly 2,000 US and Russian warheads are on high alert, ready for use on short notice. The following table shows FAS estimates.

Status of World Nuclear Forces 2011

Country	Operational Strategic	Operational Nonstrategic	Reserve	Military Stockpile	Total Inventory
Russia	2,430	0	5,500	8,000	11,000
United States	1,950	200	2,850	5,000	8,500
France	290	n.a.	?	300	300
China	0	?	180	240	240
United Kingdom	160	n.a.	65	225	225
Israel	0	n.a.	80	80	80
Pakistan	0	n.a.	90-110	90-110	90-110
India	0	n.a.	80-100	80-100	80-100
North Korea	0	n.a.	<10	<10	<10
Total:	4,830	200	8,650	14,000	20,500

Stephanie Cooke's own change of mind about the nuclear industry came after the US Three Mile Island nuclear reactor incident in 1979, followed seven years later by the Chernobyl catastrophe in the Soviet Union (now Ukraine). With her knowledge of the whole nuclear fuel cycle, she began to see how the nuclear industry is inherently risky, and inextricably linked to the military aspects of nuclear threat and war fighting. As a part of her education she interviewed one of the original nuclear scientists, Joseph Rotblat <http://en.wikipedia.org>

[/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Rotblat](#) – the founder of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and initiator of the Pugwash Conferences on nuclear disarmament, and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1995. Her interview of him contained in a chapter of the book is worth the price alone.

Endnotes

[1] "Taking advantage of my experience with Seaborg's group in 1942, I was able, with a small team of Canadian chemists, to establish the outline of the first solvent extraction process for plutonium in 1945, thus demonstrating for the first time the relative ineffectiveness of the policy of secrecy in such a specifically sensitive field as the reprocessing of irradiated fuels and paradoxically between close allies during the war" http://www.npolicy.org/article.php?aid=73&rid=3#_ftn5#_ftn5. This was the beginning of the "French way" in international nuclear policy. In contrast to other countries, France has always been quite generous with information, technology and nuclear materials transfers. Mycle Schneider, "Nuclear France Abroad: History, Status And Prospects Of French Nuclear Activities In Foreign Countries", Non-proliferation Policy Education Center <http://www.npolicy.org/article.php?aid=73&rid=3>, 2009.

[2]: Shimon Peres, the Director-General of the Defence Ministry and aide to Prime Minister (and Defence Minister) David Ben-Gurion, and another high ranking Israeli official, met with members of the CEA (France's Atomic Energy Commission). During September 1956, they reached an initial understanding to provide a research reactor. The two countries concluded final agreements at a secret meeting outside Paris where they also finalised details of the Suez Canal operation.

OBITUARIES

NORMAN ROBERTS

15 February 1915 - 16 November 2010

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Kate Dewes

My obituary of Betty Roberts, Norman's wife, was published in Peace Researcher 37, November 2008, <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/pr37-173a.htm> .I recommend that you read that for a detailed account of their life together. They were Anti-Bases Campaign members from 1993 until 2006 when old age forced them to give it up, and members of the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA)from 1985 until 2005 .Throughout those decades they were regular donors to both groups and to the CAFCA/ABC Organiser Account which provides my income. As a courtesy I sent Norm a copy of the issue containing my obituary of Betty (by then he was in his 90s and living in a home). He responded by sending yet another donation to the Organiser Account, accompanied by a letter of thanks. He was one of Nature's gentlemen and someone who kept an active interest in the big issues right to the end of his life. I last saw him at the winter 2010 launch of the book "Security Without Nuclear Deterrence" by Rob Green, Kate Dewes' husband (reviewed in this issue by Doug Craig). He had been badly afflicted by a stroke but he was determined to be there. Murray Horton.

Research scientist and community leader Norman Roberts died of pneumonia on 16 November 2010 aged 95. He was well known to Christchurch peace people through his membership of various groups, his regular attendance at meetings on foreign affairs and defence and his many letters to the *Press*, including one published only weeks before a debilitating stroke earlier in 2010. They were always thoughtful, well researched and challenging. Norman was a high achiever with a very strong belief in civic responsibility, community service and working for the good of all. He was dux of his school at 15 and completed his BSc with first-class honours in Physics and second-class honours in Maths at Sydney University at 19! His Masters was awarded in 1939 for experimental and theoretical work in nuclear physics.

During WW2 he established and headed up an electronic instrument factory, and then a Government research laboratory for measurement of wool characteristics in Sydney. He moved to New Zealand in 1962 with his wife Betty, and two of their four daughters, to become the founding Director of New Zealand's Wool Research Organisation at Lincoln. He retired in 1978 after experiencing a decline in health. He assisted in the formation of the Old Stone House Trust in 1970 and acted as its Chair, and as President of the Cracroft Community Centre, for many years. Both he and Betty had been members of the Student Christian Movement which had been gifted Old Stone House for conversion to a Conference Centre and they were the driving forces behind its restoration. They met when Betty was the Woman President of the University Student Christian Movement in Sydney in 1939 and married in 1941.

He was an active member of the St Augustine's Church in Cashmere and various Rotary Clubs since 1968. In "retirement" he was a Chairman of the Family Life Education Committee and an active member of Trade Aid, CORSO, the Royal Society, the Gwynfa Avenue Community Group, United Nations Association, the Institute of International Affairs, India Society, the North Korean Friendship Society and the China Society. Before coming to NZ from Australia in 1962 he was Chairman of the Marriage Guidance Council of New South Wales, had taught Sunday School and help found an Anglican Youth Movement. He played competition tennis, cricket and baseball for many years and was a keen gardener. Renowned for being a keen handyman he was in great demand for house repairs from members of his extended family. In amongst all these activities, he found time each week, when health permitted, to work in the kitchen at the City Mission.

Active In So Many Causes

Norman and Betty were always keen supporters of the World Court Project (*to give an advisory opinion on the legal or, rather, illegal, status of nuclear weapons. Ed.*) and other nuclear disarmament activities of the Disarmament and Security Centre; the NZ Nuclear Free Zone Committee; CAFCA and Anti Bases Campaign to name a few, and were regular attendees at many WEA and other peace talks. Frequently they held the other end of a peace banner with one of my daughters at the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day Lantern ceremonies. In 1998 Betty invited me to speak at the National Organisation for Women Annual Suffrage Day Dinner on the topic "Women 25 Years On". I will never forget that dinner: Betty, in her inclusive way, had invited my husband Rob Green to come. He provided much needed male support for Norman who was serving the food and washing dishes! What a wonderful role model of support for their women!

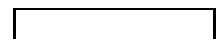
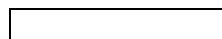
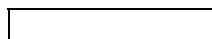
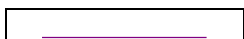
Rob remembers Norman and Lloyd Whitten (aged 94 and 92 at the time!) sitting in the front row at a WEA meeting and asking thought provoking questions when he gave a presentation on North Korea's nuclear weapons. The next day Norman wrote an email to Rob: "I was very glad to find you so interested in the North Korean situation as the poor people of that country would be much happier if friendly relations could be established between them and other countries, and the danger of foolish tragedy averted. What you or I can do to help is our problem. If you have a direct route to Obama's ear that's fine, if not have you a route to someone who has, direct or indirect? Going to both North Korea and USA via China seems one possibility".

After his two week trip to North Korea in 1980 Norman had tried to develop some trade between it and NZ but gave up after repeated failure to get a reply half way through negotiations. He said that Bob Tizard, a former Cabinet Minister in the Labour Government, had had the same trouble and also gave up. Norman was extremely concerned with the growing tension around the Korean Peninsula. Not long before his death Rob sent Norman a long report from the South Korean Marine Engineer appointed by his own Government to enquire into the 2010 sinking of their warship - the Cheonan. This report countered US claims that a North Korean submarine torpedoed the ship. The South Korean had evidence that it had run aground and broken its back and there was no evidence of an explosion. The man was then put on trial by his own Government. Despite Norman's severe stroke, he was determined to read this long evidence and to discuss the intricacies of the case with Rob when we visited, and over the phone. He even read Rob's latest book "Security Without Nuclear Deterrence" while lying immobilised in his bed! He would phone with critical comments – both positive and negative, which were always appreciated.

Norman's strong interest in our work was maintained right up until the end. Despite the stroke he was determined to attend the last Friends of the Disarmament and Security Centre dinner, and to go to the Cathedral to hear Helen Clark speak about her work with UN Development Programme. Before we could phone him to see how he fared during the September 2010 earthquake, he was ringing us to check out how we had got on. When he learned that we had lost three chimneys and that repairs were partially dependent on getting slates shipped to Christchurch, he said he had left a big stash of them at his old homestead in Gwynfa Ave. Within days, the current owner phoned to offer us some of these, in response to a call from Norman. He also sent us a donation to help with the costs of replacing the smashed photocopier in my office because he knew how important it was to keep educating people (*sadly, Kate and Rob's Riccarton home sustained more severe damage in subsequent aftershocks and the devastating February 2011 earthquake. Ed*). When he knew we were leaving to do a speaking tour of Australia promoting Rob's book, he phoned to ask where we were meeting so he could alert his friends in Melbourne to attend the meeting... that was less than a month before he died!

Shining Example

Norman and Betty were both shining examples of how to live a long and fulfilling life with purpose and determination. We will never forget his wisdom and intellect, his encouragement and generosity, his gentlemanly manner and wry smile, his honesty and integrity, his vigorous enthusiasm for life and above all his friendship. Like his youngest daughter Lin we remember him for his incredible honesty and commitment. At his memorial service Lin said: "I have not met anyone else in my life with Dad's commitment to deeply thinking through what was the right thing to do in any given situation and then making sure he did it. This worked at many levels – from concern about international relations and national governance and his own work, through to things as simple as always stopping the car to remove an obstacle like a piece of wood on the road that might cause an accident. Cynthia (older sister) has etched on her memory an incident as a young child when she wanted to take a piece of chalk home from Dad's lab & being told in no uncertain terms that such an action would be theft from the Government. I must have absorbed this view also because later in my own management roles (in the more self-interested era of Rogernomics), I encountered surprise if not resentment from staff when I took the attitude that one should not dine better when travelling on Government business than one would when paying for oneself. The example of commitment to social justice from both my parents, for me has turned into a 30 plus year journey working for a more sustainable world". Norman's younger sister Helen remembers Norm's response to a question about what he'd learned from life, and he said something like this: "When you meet someone, don't expect them to live up to your standards, but look to see how closely they live up to the standards they profess themselves". This is Norman's greatest challenge to us all!



DEATH IN THE FAMILY

ALEC MILLER

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Murray Horton

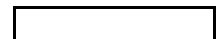
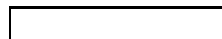
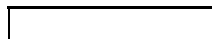
Back in the 1990s Christchurch filmmaker **Sam Miller** made the short film "Base Deception", for the Anti-Bases Campaign, about the US base at Christchurch Airport. In 2010 this became the first (and so far, only one) of ABC's collection of historic videos to be transferred to DVD. ABC expresses our condolences to Sam, whose father Alec (also known as Alex) died in February 2011, aged 70. He died a mere two months after being diagnosed with bowel cancer. Alec was a man who, all his life, loved the mountains and loved flying, as detailed in his *Press* obituary (19/2/11; "An eye on the mountains", Mike Crean). Becky and I benefited from both of these passions of his when, in 1993, we stayed in his Franz Josef home of for a couple of days as guests of Susan and Alec. On the morning we were due to catch the bus back to Christchurch Alec said that he planned to take his plane up for a flight and would we like to come along. He then proceeded to fly us right up the magnificent Franz Josef Glacier, so close to the snow covered valley sides and peaks that it felt like we could reach out and touch them. Although we didn't land on the glacier, it remains one of our most vivid memories of travel anywhere in New Zealand and for that I am eternally grateful to Alec (who duly got us back in time to catch the bus). He ended up owning and operating the ski plane flights business at Mount Cook.

Direct Action On Tarmac Of Christchurch's US Air Base

Alec was a dedicated conservationist all his life and he said that he is how he wanted to be remembered. He had been active in the 1960s' peace movement and was one of the founders of a West Coast hippie commune at Fox River. There is a wonderful story about how he managed to combine his peace activism with his flying career to stage a unique protest at the US military base at Christchurch Airport (which is still there today). Susan described it to me in a March 2011 e-mail: "As far as the 'incident' went, it was during his time at the Canterbury Aero Club, where he was a 'B' Category instructor there in the latter half of the 1960s. He was walking back across the tarmac from an instructing flight, when a Deep Freeze Hercules came trundling along. On an impulse, he decided to make a one man protest against US military policy in Vietnam in particular, as informed opinion had it that the US military was probably using its Harewood base for nefarious military purposes, and not just for its stated mission of servicing the Antarctic.

"He lay down on the tarmac in the path of the Hercules and held his breath that the pilot and co-pilot had spotted him. He refused to budge, regardless, and was very relieved to hear the enormous machine slowing down and finally grinding to a halt only a few metres away. At that point Alec got up, dusted himself off and proceeded back to work, none the worse for his experience, having made his opinion on US foreign policy very clear to the crew of the Hercules. At that time we knew Owen and Joan Wilkes* through mutual friends. Owen had hoped that Alec would get involved with his research work into military systems; however Alec was not cut out to be that sort of activist. We were concerned about US policy and its actions in Vietnam and Alec was not averse to taking action at the right time and in the right place on his own terms. Although Alec's protest was not filmed or photographed at the time, there is a rather compelling synergy with the action of the lone activist stopping the tank in Tiananmen Square. Can you imagine the hysteria today, with all the anti-terrorist hype surrounding airports, if someone did something similar at Christchurch Airport, let alone involving a US military plane? So there was a consistent thread concerning the US base at Harewood running through the lives of both father and son, Alec and Sam.* *Peace Researcher 31, October 2005* <http://www.converge.org.nz/abc/prcont31.html> was a special issue devoted to Owen Wilkes. Ed.

To quote from his *Press* obituary: "Susan says his mountain flying, which included nearly 4,000 ski landings, gave him a unique perspective for observing the alpine environment. 'He had an understanding of the massive systems involved'. His greatest concern was for global warming. 'He had no pretence. He loathed artifice and insincerity, was always straight and honest. He allowed no compromise on standards...he was a man of integrity and principle". Haere ra, Alec, you were a bloody good bloke.



IN MEMORY OF DON GRADY

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Murray Horton

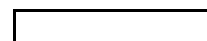
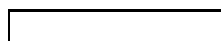
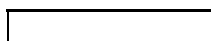
You know the old movie stereotype of the fast talking newspaper reporter wearing a hat with a card in the hatband saying "Press". Don Grady didn't have the card but he always, always, had the hat (which he wore decades after they ceased being part of Kiwi blokes' daily dress). "A hat was Don Grady's trademark. Scoop was his nickname. Booming voice and boundless enthusiasm were his hallmarks" (*Press* obituary, 22/1/11, "Veteran with a fine nose for 'cracker' stories", Mike Crean). Don, who died in January 2011, aged 81, was a legendary old school reporter; an author of 12 books; and one of the most memorable characters I ever met. My dealings with Don were when he worked at the *Christchurch Star* (which was then an afternoon daily paper) from the early 70s through the 80s. He obviously regarded me and my protestor mates as providing plenty of good copy for "cracker stories". Long before the Anti-Bases Campaign there was an anti-bases campaign (if you see what I mean) and Don was only too keen to chronicle it. In 1972 the country went into a moral panic when us protestors wrecked the access road to the US Air Force observatory atop Mt John at Tekapo (we did it in retaliation for the cops attacking us the night before with fists, boots and dogs). Don profiled me under the immortal headline: "Mt John Murray, always marching" (one old mate still quotes that at me. That story was duly clipped by the Security Intelligence Service and came back to me when the SIS released my Personal File to me a couple of years ago). It gave my Dear Old Mum palpitations, courtesy of its revelations about my political activities and personal life.

Don always had a close interest in Marlborough (he retired there and died in Blenheim), so, throughout the 80s and into the 90s he gave very regular and generous coverage to the early years of the Waihopai spybase protests. He personally accompanied us more than once and took photos to accompany his reports. He had a great rapport with the late Owen Wilkes (they were both classic Kiwi jokers, in their own different ways) and was happy to quote him at length. I can still remember the billboard that we saw outside every shop and service station from Christchurch to Blenheim on one Waihopai trip, which read "Wilkes: We'll Stop Waihopai" (Owen had national name recognition. But, sorry mate, we haven't stopped Waihopai yet. But we aren't giving up).

Climbed Black Birch With ABC

Don's (literal) high point with ABC was when he accompanied us, on foot, 1500 metres up to the former US Naval Observatory at Black Birch, in Marlborough's Awatere Valley (this was in the context of ABC's 1990 Touching The Bases Tour, which involved people from around NZ and several other countries). Despite it being November we encountered a midwinter southerly storm, which meant that it was actually snowing up that mountain. Our police escorts advised us not to go, but we pressed on regardless. Don, who was then in his early 60s, was dressed in office shoes (not to mention his ubiquitous hat). The cops offered him a ride but he declined, saying that he had to maintain the independence of the press. So he walked all the way up the hill with us, into the snow. It astonished me then and 21 years later it still does.

In his Marlborough retirement Don still kept in touch with me, as he was doing some freelance reporting for the local community weekly paper. I last saw him when I was in Blenheim for the 1997 Waihopai protest, staying with my wife and in-laws in a motel which was walking distance from Don's home. I have never forgotten this wonderful character who puts today's pallid young journos to shame. Don was always on the lookout for a "cracker story" and he got plenty of them from the likes of me, Owen and ABC. He gave us coverage which you couldn't buy. Thanks, Don.

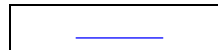
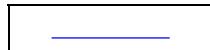
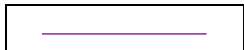


SPACE SHUTTLES RIP

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Doug Craig

The final flight of the NASA space shuttle touched down at Kennedy Space Centre at Cape Canaveral in July 2011. In the 30 years since the launch of Columbia in 1981, the space shuttles carried out 134 missions on behalf of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration. What is not generally known is that a number of these missions were carried out solely for the US Defense Department. Between 1985 and 1992 there were ten missions of a military nature. These were for the launch of surveillance and military communications satellites, mainly in geostationary orbits. They also included the launch of the MAGNUM signals intelligence (SIGNIT) stealth satellite during the Reagan Star Wars era. This type of satellite was shielded by a deflective layer to make it invisible to radar and optical instruments. Unlike other space objects, it is unable to be picked up by amateur telescopes. While we will miss the work done on acclaimed projects such as the Hubble telescope and the International Space Station, and mourn the loss of life from the Columbia and Challenger tragedies, we will not miss the connections that have led to the militarisation of space.



EXPANSION OF US MILITARY BASES CONTINUES

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

- Warren Thomson

Following is an international statement in support of Gangjeong Village, South Korea, where villagers and activists are trying to halt the expansion of the American military machine in their area. The statement was posted by the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space.

“We, the undersigned organisations, [111 American and Asian-Pacific groups] stand in complete solidarity with the Gangjeong villagers on Jeju Island, South Korea in their struggle to stop the construction of a (US) Navy base. The Navy base construction effort has begun the destruction of this fishing and farming community’s natural way of life. This construction process will irreparably harm the soft coral reefs, the fish, the rocks, the vegetation, the water, and other life forms.

When Gangjeong supporters have called the South Korean Embassy in Washington DC they have been repeatedly told, ‘Call the US government. They are pushing us to build this Navy base’.

It is evident that as the US expands its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region it needs more ports of call for its naval arsenal. China transports 80% of its oil on ships that pass through the Yellow Sea alongside Jeju Island. A base on Jeju Island would give the US Navy greater access, and thus, potential control, of those shipping lanes. The people of Jeju Island wish to be an island of peace. The building of a Navy base for US warships will only make Jeju Island a target and a zone of conflict. We demand that construction of the Navy base at Gangjeong be halted and the village be left to its natural state”. This statement, slightly abridged, comes from the “No Base stories of Korea” Website. The original blogger, Sung-Hee Choi was illegally arrested for her participation in the struggle against the Jeju naval base construction on May 19, 2011 and her friends continuously update the news, on her behalf, since the date of her arrest.

APOLOGIES FOR LATENESS

Peace Researcher 41 – July 2011

-Murray Horton

I am acutely aware, as *Peace Researcher* Editor, that I have not got an issue to you since July 2010. Please accept my apologies. There are a couple of major reasons why there has been a year between issues. Firstly, it is no secret that my top priority is my work for the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA) and that is what takes up the bulk of my time – my Anti-Bases Campaign work tends to get done in concentrated bursts, such as organising a Waihopai spybase protest; or the March 2010 week of Wellington solidarity activities during the Domebusters' trial. In 2010 and 11 my CAFCA work has been even busier than usual – for example, I spent a total of three weeks in April, May and June 2011 on my national New Zealand Is Not For Sale speaking tour, which took me from Whangarei to Wellington and Dunedin to Takaka. It was a CAFCA tour but my speech had ABC content (you can read it online at <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/publications/Miscellaneous/NZNotForSale20.pdf>). And you can read my 2010 Organiser's Report, including a lengthy section on my ABC work, at <http://www.converge.org.nz/watchdog/25/10.htm>.

Secondly, of course, the seemingly neverending earthquakes in Christchurch and Canterbury have proved a major disruption, and continue to do so. We're all still alive and uninjured but there were some close shaves – I was in the CTV Building on the morning of February 22nd, being interviewed in an upstairs room. The 25 year old reporter was one of the 116 people killed (including 16 CTV staff) when it pancaked a couple of hours after we parted company. And, believe it or not, when the big jolt hit on June 13th, Becky and I were in shop just a block from where the CTV Building used to be.

Sad Farewell To Bob Leonard

The ABC committee has been hit hard by this crisis, much more so than the CAFCA committee. Bob Leonard - one of my closest friends and colleagues; ABC founder and committee member since 1987; Uncle Sam at every Waihopai protest for years, right up until 2009; *Peace Researcher* Editor from 1983 until 2002 - had his hillside house destroyed on February 22nd (having seen inside it I'm amazed nobody was killed) and he and Barbara are now earthquake refugees, having immediately fled to Wellington for the indefinite future. We had no chance to farewell our close friend and colleague, who has been the key figure in ABC since the outset. These are not the circumstances under which we expected to say goodbye to Bob.

And the earthquakes have also accounted for our newest committee member, veteran ABC activist Doug Craig (who only joined the committee in 2010). The September quake put a finish to his job; the February one led to him losing his flat, so he's decided to make a new beginning back in his hometown of Nelson. Lynda Boyd is the committee's "distance" member but she was in Christchurch on February 22nd, got whacked in the ear by a hunk of falling steel and endured the nightmarish horror of being engulfed kneedeep in sewerage when a central city street suddenly opened in front of her. Yani Johanson lives in the central city, so he and Katya had to live behind the cordon, with no power or water for weeks, under military curfew.

All of us went without power, water and toilets for varying periods of time in February (five days in our case, during which time Becky and I lived in our dining room and slept under the table as wave after wave of aftershocks slammed into the house.). During the thousands of aftershocks there have been further power cuts and loss of water. Daily life has become "the new normal" that we keep getting told about. Comparatively though, we have nothing to moan about. We are alive, uninjured and both have our jobs and experienced no interruption in our incomes. Our plain but strong old house has sustained no structural damage, just lots of cracks to interior walls and ceilings (we have "moderate" damage i.e. in the \$10,000-\$100,000 range) and is one of the first to be repaired. We lost a chimney and logburner, which has been replaced by a free heat pump. As I write this Becky and I are back living in our dining room, the one habitable room and, yes, sleeping under the table again (it's like bunking down in a submarine, I imagine). This is our status quo for several weeks, while the rest of the house – including my office – has been emptied and put into temporary storage to enable the repairs to be done as quickly as possible by builders, plasterers, painters, glaziers, electricians and carpetlayers, etc. So we are literally living in a construction site at present. Naturally it is winter, just to make the whole project even more of a challenge for all concerned. All of which obviously impacts on my ability to work at anything like the normal rate. But we'll get there – just bear with us.

Cometh The Hour, Cometh The Man

I'm delighted to have some good news for you, amidst all this gloom and devastation. This issue of *Peace*

Researcher sees the welcome return of Warren Thomson, also an ABC founder and veteran committee member (known to all as Waihopai Warren due to his numerous arrests at spybase protests in the 1980s and 90s). Warren was a longstanding *Peace Researcher* writer and, for several years in the 90s, he and Bob Leonard were Co-Editors. Warren moved to Bangkok in 1997 to work, got married and ended up staying there until 2010, when he and Noi returned to Christchurch. She was very lucky to escape the central city alive and uninjured on February 22nd; that quake also ended Warren's work until further notice. But he has decided to put his unexpected free time (early retirement?) to good use and has plunged back into *Peace Researcher*, both as a writer and editor.

The fact of the matter is that you would all still be waiting for this issue if it wasn't for Warren and Doug Craig (whose swansong this is before he left for Nelson). I am deeply grateful to both of them for taking this in hand and making it happen. My role in this issue has been more of an "executive editor", overseeing the finished product. This is not a one off - Warren has agreed to join me as Co-Editor (after he left for Thailand, Bob and I were Co-Editors for several years; I have been Editor since 2003). I look forward to working with Warren on future issues and his decision to get stuck in again (after a 14 year break) guarantees the future of *Peace Researcher* for the foreseeable future. Welcome back Waihopai Warren!
