

## Bring the troops home

While George Bush, Colin Powell, Tony Blair, John Howard and Alexander Downer continue to beat the war drums, millions around the world are demonstrating for peace and against any war on Iraq. In warmongering statements over the weekend, Colin Powell (the alleged “dove” of the US administration) said, “We continue to reserve our sovereign right to take military action against Iraq alone or in a coalition of the willing”.

A Pentagon official revealed a plan to rain as many as 800 cruise missiles on Iraq in two days. “There will not be a safe place in Baghdad”, said the official. “The sheer size of this has never been seen before, never contemplated before”. It would wipe out water and power supplies in the city and would kill tens of thousands of civilians.

The architect of the plan, a military strategist from the National Defence University in Washington, cold-bloodedly described the desired outcome: to achieve the same affect as another US crime against humanity – “the nuclear weapons at Hiroshima – not taking days or weeks but minutes.”

In an interview with Kerry O’Brien on the ABC’s 7.30 Report (27-1-03), Australia’s Foreign Minister Alexander Downer

continued to deny any decision had been made about Australia’s involvement in a US-led war. But when pressed by Kerry O’Brien conceded that the Australian Government is prepared to join a military strike on Iraq without the UN Security Council’s endorsement.

Australia’s forces are not only over there, they have been written into the US’s battle plans for Iraq. The US communications facility at Pine Gap plays a key role in the US’s planned war and the preparations for it.

The base should be closed and the troops brought home now. There is no public support nor justification for war on Iraq.

Across the world, rallies, marches, meetings, leafleting, paste-ups, street actions, petitions, letter-writing, pickets, new peace

groups, information sharing on the internet and many other actions are swelling the unparalleled global anti-war movement.

People from every walk of life imaginable swamp the talkback radio stations and letters’ columns. Peace activists, environmentalists,

workers and their trade unions, governments, churches, community groups, scientists, doctors, other professionals, students, Gulf War and Vietnam War veterans, military personnel and millions of other individuals voice their opposition to war.

The calls for “No War on Iraq” become louder by the day as more and more people come to understand the dangers posed by such a war and the longer-term agenda of the US (see editorial page 2).

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## NO US WAR NO UN WAR NO WAR.

As *The Guardian* goes to press, the UN Security Council is considering reports from the weapons (see page 8). Regardless of the outcome of that discussion, war against Iraq should be opposed. Whether launched by a US preemptive strike or endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, such a war has no justification and would result in the most horrendous outcomes for the people of Iraq. The time has come when war must be eliminated from the affairs of humanity and all disputes resolved by peaceful means, in accordance with the UN’s Charter.

Weapons of mass destruction, the most powerful of which are held by the US military, have become so horrendous in their destructive power and in their ability to kill that entire nations could be obliterated. The Voice of America has threatened the “annihilation” of Iraq.

The Chief of US armed forces, Myers has declared that on the first day of action against Iraq weapons with a destructive power more than those used in the two months of the 1991 Gulf War would be unleashed.

There is absolutely no case for war on Iraq, even if it were endorsed by the UN Security Council.

Here are nine reasons why a UN Security Council war resolution should also be opposed:

1. A war on Iraq will cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians – men, women and children. It would further destroy Iraq’s health system, water supplies, electric power and other facilities necessary for life. More territory will be poisoned by the use of uranium enriched weapons.

The Voice of America warned that “war plans are laid out for complete annihilation of Iraq via conventional weapons, or if needed, via nuclear weapons”.

2. The Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council the obligation to settle disputes without recourse to war. Millions around the world expect the Security Council to carry out its obligations. It should support the majority of the world’s people and decisively reject any war resolution.

If members of the Security Council are bribed or pressured into supporting a war resolution, it would be a violation of the UN Charter and their obligations. Despite its weaknesses the Security Council must act to prevent war, uphold peace and its humanitarian obligations.

3. In the present period, Iraq has not invaded or threatened any neighbouring state. Iraq certainly poses no threat to the US, Britain or Australia.

4. There is no proof that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction following the destruction of such weapons in previous years.

5. A “regime change” which has been repeatedly claimed as the objective of the United States, is the responsibility of the Iraqi people and not any outside power. This would also be a violation of the UN Charter and is a violation of the sovereign independence of nations.

A UN-authorized war would, in fact, hand over operations to the United States and would make the UN Security Council an agent of the violation of its own Charter. The UN would become the virtual prisoner of the United States and subservient to it.

6. Iraq would become an occupied country with a government imposed by the United States as has already happened in Afghanistan. Far from bringing genuine democracy, an imposed government would serve the interests of the US.

7. If the UN Security Council endorsed a war against Iraq it would set a precedent for similar action against any other country against which was alleged to have weapons of mass destruction or named as being a “rogue state” by the US and its few supporters.

8. Any war against Iraq would have devastating economic consequences, not only for Middle East countries but also for the whole world. It would give the United States control of the main supplies of oil and result in the economies of most countries being placed under the control of the US corporations.

9. A vote for war would be a vote leading to the virtual destruction of the UN and would show its inability to enforce the UN Charter and its responsibilities to the people of the world to uphold peace.

The only principled stand is to oppose any war, whether authorised by the UN Security Council or not. The world’s people want peace. ☼

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**Stop war before it starts**

The Howard Government is about to launch Australia into an aggressive and illegal war against another member of the United Nations. It would be an act of invasion. It would be a monstrous and immoral war waged by the most powerful military force in the world against a small power that has already been largely disarmed. It would be a war to impose the occupation of an independent nation by others for many years to come. It would be a war bringing immense death and destruction to the people of Iraq, whether or not it is sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council.

Britain, the US and Australia are planning a pre-emptive strike without the approval of the United Nations. Such an action is not only a violation of the Charter of the United Nations but would tear up long-established norms of international relations and would endanger the very existence of the United Nations.

It would be a war in disregard of the strong opposition of the majority of the people in Australia and Britain. There is a gathering storm of opposition in the US as well. France, Russia, China, Germany and many other countries refuse to take part. Most countries in the Middle East oppose a war. The common demand is that there be "No war on Iraq". The week ending February 15-16 will see a co-ordinated actions around the world.

In criminal disregard of the future of the people of the world both the US and Britain refuse to rule out the use of nuclear weapons. The "Voice of America" declared recently that US "war plans are laid out for the complete annihilation of Iraq via conventional weapons, or if needed, via nuclear weapons". Tony Blair also refuses to rule out the use of nuclear weapons. These politicians calmly contemplate the "annihilation" of the people of Iraq.

Such actions are war crimes and should be immediately taken up by the International Criminal Court set up by the United Nations. Bush, Blair, Howard and others responsible for such monstrous violation of international law should be arraigned before this body and tried for their crimes just as the Nazi leaders were tried at Nuremberg following WW 2.

Howard echoed the strategic plan of the United States when attempting to justify a war against Iraq. He claimed that if Iraq were not disarmed (as though it isn't already disarmed) other "rogue states" would be encouraged to accumulate weapons of mass destruction and use them against the US, ignoring the fact that the US has more weapons of mass destruction than all other countries put together.

Howard clearly supports the concept of a continuing war against other states - Iran, Libya, Cuba, North Korea, Syria, etc, etc. And then the bigger powers - Russia, China, India, Pakistan and so on. Iraq is not the end but only the beginning of war without end.

That is why the movement to stop any war against Iraq is vital for the future security of the whole world.

Australia is already deeply enmeshed in the long-range plans of the United States for world domination. The sending of Australian troops to Iraq is not the "miniscule" or "token" involvement that some in the media are suggesting.

The US spy station at Pine Gap that is involved in the preparations for war against Iraq and other countries is making a very significant contribution. This is probably more important to the US's war plans than even the sending of troops. An increasing number of US warships are now making use of Cockburn Sound (in WA) and other Australian ports. A crew-swap arrangement is being put in place whereby replacement crews are flown to Australia while the warships stay in Australian waters. Australian territory is being turned into a bombing range by US warplanes.

Australia should have no part in these mad and criminal plans. The Australian Government can and should make a contribution to peace rather than war by immediately recalling Australian forces. The US spy and war-planning station at Pine Gap should be closed. US warships should be refused entry to Australian ports until the US changes its policies of aggression, pre-emptive war, occupation and domination.

For the security of the whole world, war against Iraq must be prevented before it starts.

**PRESS FUND**

Another day, another war. Veteran photographer David Moore's photo of Harold Holt cowering and simpering behind US President Johnson helped to turn the tide of Australian public opinion against our involvement in the Vietnam War. But this time public opinion is already opposed to a US-led war against Iraq, and hardening rapidly, even before war has officially commenced. *The Guardian* intends to have an important role in the growing anti-war struggle. However, we'll need your help to do that, in the form of contributions to the Press Fund, which help us to meet the day-to-day costs of production. So how about dropping something in for the next issue of the *Guardian*? This week our thanks go to the following stalwart contributors:

Andy from SA \$14, Bert Appleton \$20, Dimitoa and Bill \$4, "Round Figure" \$12, Warramunga \$10.

This week's total: \$60 Progressive total: \$690

**Obituary****Bill Donnelly  
(1917-2003)**

**The first thing you noticed when you visited Bill Donnelly's house in suburban Darwin was the small bust of Lenin on his bookshelf. The second thing you discovered about Bill was that he was very proud of the fact that he was born in 1917, the same year as the Russian Revolution. These two facts give you a fairly clear idea of Bill's politics.**

*by Bernie Brian\**

Born in Ireland, he arrived in Australia as an 11-year-old orphan. He was attracted to the Communist Party as a young timber-worker in the Gippsland forests in eastern Victoria and he remained committed to the cause right up until his death early this year in Darwin hospital after developing complications from a fall at his home.

Bill, however, will be mostly remembered as a leading identity in the post World War II labour movement in Darwin. He arrived in Darwin in 1946 and got a job removing star pickets that had been dug into the shoreline as a defence against a possible Japanese invasion. It was very hard work in the hot and steamy conditions in Australia's tropical north.

At that time, the Darwin unions were still very weak after having been suppressed by the military authorities that administered Darwin during the war. In those days Darwin was an undeveloped frontier town with a small population.

Perhaps Bill found the town too crowded because he then moved 300 kilometres south to the smaller settlement of Katherine. From 1948 until 1953 he worked at the town's powerhouse where he soon attracted the attention of security forces and was labelled a "most dangerous" communist.

He was known as an avid reader of political literature and some people recall visiting his small hut near

the powerhouse and seeing all available space covered by copies of the *Tribune* (the Communist Party newspaper).

Soon after leaving Katherine, he secured a job on the Darwin waterfront where he stayed until his retirement.

"Wild Bill", as he became known in some circles, became a leading figure in the often-stormy battles of the Darwin union movement, especially during the bitter fights between the left and the anti-communist "Groupers" in the early 1950s.

Bill would have cut a striking figure at union meetings with his dark complexion, long black hair and thick glasses. He was nicknamed "Tarzan" by some of the young women of Darwin.

He even earned the grudging respect of a local ASIO agent who described him as a "fluent and convincing speaker" who was "popular" on the waterfront. This is probably why that same ASIO agent described him as "the most dangerous man in Darwin".

Donnelly was involved in many campaigns during his time in Darwin including fighting for the rights of indentured Malay pearl divers. In 1955, Donnelly and others hid a pearl diver from the authorities for a number of weeks at a remote timber camp in Arnhem Land. The diver had been involved in an industrial dispute with his employer and as a result was being deported to Singapore.

For a number of years, Donnelly acted as wharf Vigilance Officer, a full-time union position on the wharf funded by a levy on all waterside workers.

During his time on the wharf, the waterside workers were also strong supporters of campaigns by Aboriginal people to gain citizenship rights.

Donnelly travelled to Sydney in 1962 to report to the Waterside Workers Federation conference about the local campaign to defend Peter Australia, an Aboriginal wharfie who had been jailed for 12 months for giving an Aboriginal friend a glass of wine. The campaign was successful and Peter Australia was granted early release by Federal Cabinet after serving four-months of his term.

This campaign was part of a movement which eventually forced the Federal Government to act and citizenship rights were extended to Aboriginal people throughout the '60s.

In recent years Bill's mobility was restricted due to ill health but he was still often seen at Darwin demonstrations if he was able to grab a lift with a wharfie mate.

He remained a member of the Socialist (now Communist) Party of Australia and, like in his days back in Katherine, he continued to read. His last note to me was a short message in a 2002 Christmas card decrying the destruction of the Amazon River.

With Bill's death, the Darwin Labour movement has lost one of the last living links with its radical and colourful past. Bill was cremated on January 21, his simple coffin draped in a red flag as he had requested.

\*Bernie Brian is a high school teacher who has written a history of the Darwin union movement. ☘

**Greek and Cypriot  
community reject war**

**The following statement was signed by over 100 prominent members of the Greek and Cypriot community in Australia.**

We ... express our common view that conflict of interests between nations and differences in ideology, ethnicity and religion should not be resolved by violence or war.

We abhor acts of terrorism, including the atrocity in Bali which killed and injured many Australian civilians and also persons of other nationality.

However we are concerned that an attitude of meeting violence with violence is creating a disastrous cycle of conflict on the world stage.

The pre-occupation of President Bush with war against Iraq and threats against the growing list of countries which constitute the so-called "Axis of Evil" represent a

serious threat to peace and security for the whole of the world.

There is no sound justification for a US-led attack on Iraq. As well as the loss of many lives in Iraq, war would inevitably entail serious social, political and economic consequences for the Middle East, as well as Cyprus, Greece and other countries of the region.

We do not see that the Australian Government's bellicose support for President Bush's "War on Terror" is in the best interest of the people of Australia. Not only will Australian citizens be vulnerable to further attacks, but the backing of US international policies has resulted in Australia losing its once widely respected, peace-loving reputation in the world arena.

We totally support the apprehension of terrorists and their punishment through the judicial system of the relevant countries.

At the same time we implore the Australian Government to withdraw from political and military allegiance to the US, and adopt a foreign policy which gives highest priority to peaceful international relations.

The Australian Government can contribute to peace and security for Australians and for the peoples of the world by pursuing policies which respect non-violent solutions to international discord, respect for the independence of each country to manage its own internal affairs, tolerance of people with different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and adherence to a compassionate, humanitarian world outlook. ☘



# Govt, loggers exploit fire victims

Victims of the Canberra fires have been harassed by real estate agents looking to turn a quick profit by offering cash for burnt out blocks of land. Though such behaviour from real estate parasites won't really surprise anyone, it is tantamount to looting in the context of such a disaster; four people killed and more than 500 houses burned. But there is another kind of profiteering on a much larger scale being attempted, involving the logging industry and a federal Government Minister.

by Tom Pearson

Regional Services Minister Wilson Tuckey used the devastating fires to push for the opening up of state forests and national parks. In cahoots with the chief executive of the National Association of Forest Industries, Kate Carnell (a former ACT Chief Minister), Tuckey called for roads to be built through national parks for bulldozers which would "frequently allow them to get the fire out ... before it builds up momentum."

The insinuation is that the preservation of old growth and native forests – their protection by law from the hand of vested interests – is the major cause of the destruction wreaked by the fires.

Environmentalists are holding state governments hostage, cried Carnell.

Carnell, of course, has the solution. "Hopefully everyone will understand that just locking up national parks has a significant downside", said the logging company mouthpiece.

"Those significant downsides are bad for the environment, bad for the greenhouse and in Canberra's case very bad for people."

The National Association of Forest Industries has written to PM Howard demanding that all restrictions on access to parks be removed.

No doubt, they'll get a sympathetic hearing.

In synch with Tuckey, Carnell continued to turn the whole issue on its head, calling for "new measures to carry out fuel reduction in these forests: to allow people (loggers) to come into national parks and take out the fuel."

Federal Greens Senator Bob Brown debunked these claims, saying human-induced global warming was a major factor behind the severity of this summer's bushfires.

"It is the extreme dryness of the vegetation, arising from global warming, which is making this fire season so devastating", said Senator Brown.

"As the world continues to get warmer we can expect droughts and fires to get worse."

He pointed out that forests are being cut down and woodlands cleared at the greatest rate in Australia's history, yet the fires are getting worse.

The Victorian National Parks Association said that national parks are the source of only ten percent of bushfires and that logging and grazing in parks did not reduce fire risks and in fact could actually promote that risk.

"We must resist the unprincipled who seek to use the human tragedy of the current Canberra fires to further their bash the bush agenda", said the



"We must resist the unprincipled ... who seek to use the fires to further their ... agenda"

National Parks Association's Mick Fendley.

Tuckey was also motivated by the need to do some damage control of his own. In April last year he announced that the Government was developing a national firefighting strategy to fill "any gaps in Australia's arsenal of aerial firefighting equipment".

But no funding was forthcoming. The nation's peak firefighting body, the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC), said last week that it had developed a strategy for the use of aerial equipment, as the Government had asked.

One of AFAC's proposals was costed at \$28 million and another at \$16 million. But Tuckey had rejected their proposals out of hand as a "\$28 million wish list".

AFAC executive director Len Foster said, "We provided an assessment at their request as to what would be an optimum situation in 2002-03. In discussions we recognised that \$28 million was a lot so we provided a second option."

(The Defence Department had no such problems getting its billions in preparations for war on Iraq.)

Mr Foster said the Government's rejection of the proposals had made it more difficult to fight the blazes raging around the country. So, Tuckey actually contributed to the carnage of the past months.

Senator Brown called for the mooted Federal Government inquiry into the fires this summer to include an assessment of the contribution of global warming to the severity of the drought and fires. He said the price of Australia's failure to shift to renewable energy sources is now being paid. ☼

## ASIO Bill – down but not out

The Federal Government is certain to regroup and make a third attempt at pushing through its ASIO Bill. John Howard conceded temporary defeat following a 25-hour Senate sitting on December 12. During this sitting the ALP, Greens, Democrats and One Nation successfully passed 35 amendments to the legislation, resulting in a Bill that Mr Howard rejected as an "unworkable" response to "the current situation".

Andrew Jackson

However, once the amendments were passed, the Liberals were forced to join Labor in voting for the "unworkable" amended legislation to be sent back to the Lower House. The Greens, Democrats and One Nation voted against the amended Bill in its entirety.

Labor's "watered down" Bill, as passed by the Senate and rejected by John Howard, stipulated:

- a three-year sunset clause;
- that nobody under the age of 18 be subject to the legislation;
- that the purpose of detention be only for questioning and not for the purpose of detention without charge;
- that a single detention period, under a single warrant, last no longer than a total of 20 hours of questioning, broken into three periods of four hours, eight hours and eight hours;
- that questioning be carried out only in the presence of a "prescribed

authority", i.e. a judge or retired judge; and

• that any person detained under investigative warrant have the right to immediate legal representation of his or her own choice.

ALP leader Simon Crean crowed: "The truth of it is, the (amended) legislation before the parliament provides the toughest powers that ASIO has ever had – unprecedented powers for ASIO, and powers that no Western democracy gives to its intelligence-gathering organisation".

Yet Mr Howard countered that the watered down Bill would allow terrorists to attack children over Christmas.

"What the Senate has done to this bill is nothing short of security vandalism", Mr Howard declared. "If this bill does not go through (in its original form) and we are not able to clothe our intelligence agencies with this additional authority over the summer months, it will be on the head of the Australian Labor Party."

Attorney General Darryl Williams, demanding the right to "disappear" children as young as 14, appeared to be taking a lead from the Israelis.

"We know that suicide attacks occur throughout the world. We know the devastation that they bring. We know they can involve people as young as 16 or 17, and yet the opposition is seeking to deny our intelligence agency the capacity to gather

intelligence in order to prevent suicide attacks."

In the midst of their rantings though, the Liberals did make a salient point.

As John Howard said, "Under the Labor bill passed in New South Wales the New South Wales Police have the power to strip search children between the age of 10 and 18 years without a warrant ... [and that] can occur with the authority of Michael Costa, the Police Minister. You don't need a judicial approval for it. We have built in judicial approvals."

"Now, for Daryl Melham to say that [our Federal Bill] is Augusto Pinochet, if he feels that way why didn't he say that about Bob Carr." *Touché.*

Yet it has been clear from the outset that ASIO does not need extended powers to deal with real terrorism. Their current powers – combined with those available to other security agencies – are sufficient to deal with any domestic threat.

The cross-bench parties, when voting down the final draft of the Bill, put the case clearly and firmly:

As Senator Brian Greig, Democrats, WA said:

"Despite many hours spent amending the Bill with several strong improvements, it remains rotten to the core."

"This legislation still means that people not suspected of any crime, could be immediately detained simply because they might have information relating to terrorism."

"A detainee would bear the burden of demonstrating that they do not have the information ASIO is seeking. This reverses the presumption of innocent until proven guilty."

Or as Senator Kerry Nettle, Greens, NSW pointed out:

"The powers ASIO and the AFP (Australian Federal Police) already have are clearly sufficient to allow them to do their job properly, these laws are an unnecessary and dangerous attack on Australia's civil rights."

"These measures establish a very serious precedent in Australian law that goes well beyond any comparable country's response to the worldwide terrorist threat."

Senator Andrew Bartlett, Democrats, Qld noted:

"There is an increasing tendency for Governments in Australia to remove basic legal rights of the people, whilst putting Government decisions and officials beyond the reach of the law in many areas."

And finally, as John Howard – realising his Bill had failed – spat vitriol at the Senators on ABC Radio National, Bob Brown (Greens, Tas.) let fly in Parliament:

"This idea that anything the Prime Minister puts forward in these increasingly tense and dangerous days cannot be countermanded, even by the elected Parliament of Australia, is a very dangerous mistake... it is democracy itself that is being questioned by the Prime Minister."

No surprises there. ☼



**COMMUNIST YOUTH OF AUSTRALIA**

**WORKING BEE**

- ☼ Sunday 2nd and 9th of February
- ☼ Making stuff for the February 16 "Walk against the War" rally.
- ☼ Making banners, placards, making up chants for the rally, making "No War on Iraq" badges.

# Flight into bankruptcy



Photo: Joan Williams

Victims of the profit bottom line – an Ansett protest in Perth

In 2002 Qantas had a profit of \$428 million, a jump of 49 per cent from 2001. If the national airline hadn't been privatised that bundle would be going into the government coffers with the potential of being put to good use funding health, education, etc. Instead it will fatten the bank accounts of its directors and major shareholders, with chief executive Geoff Dixon being given an added bonus of \$1 million of Qantas shares.

by Marcus Browning

Of course, Dixon and his fellow board members didn't actually produce anything. The million-dollar pat on the back is an in-house reward for zealous exploitation of Qantas staff and a spin off of other casualties in the industry, such as Ansett Airlines and United Airlines.

United Airlines going to the wall leaves the Qantas/Air New Zealand alliance – an alliance that is the prelude to a takeover by Qantas (or whoever) – as the sole carrier on the US-Australia route.

Federal Transport Minister John Anderson was quick to resurrect a proposal – killed off a couple of years back – for Singapore Airlines to provide “competition” with direct flights from Australia to the US.

United Airline's demise is a classic case study. Last December United, the world's second largest airline, filed for bankruptcy. In doing so it followed in the wake of Sabena, Swissair and US Air.

It was already in trouble in the early '90s. United Airlines suffered

from over-capacity – empty seats, half empty planes – so management proposed a “solution” in the form of a share ownership deal traded off for \$4.9 billion of wages. Though there was strong opposition from sections of union membership the proposal passed in 1994.

United became the biggest worker shareholding company in the US (but with strict rules on workers selling their shares). And the cut in wages saw United's share price rise ... briefly.

The economic slump in 2000, added to by the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, saw an escalating crisis among airlines. The employer “solution” this time was to cut thousands of jobs, mostly unionised.

The taxpayers, via government loans, began bailing some airlines out. The loans came with the proviso that workers had to accept more cuts to wages, conditions and jobs. Last November, when the members of the Machinist Union at United refused to accept any more cutbacks, lenders forced the airline into bankruptcy.

United's shares are now worth virtually nothing. Having given up billions in wages and benefits, tens of thousands of United Airlines worker/shareholders have lost their savings.

Here, as in the US, the catchery is “competition”. It is an illusion, flying in the face of reality, whether under the title “free market”, “deregulation” or in the airline industry “open skies policy”. Capitalism's drive to monopoly ensures that this illusion is shattered time and again.

Propping up the aviation competition illusion are such devices as short-term reduced air fares, package deals, “no frills” flights etc. Ultimately and inevitably, when the profit bottom line is affected, the cost-cutting begins. Jobs are slashed, services on less profitable routes are scrapped and, as with Ansett and United, some airlines go to the wall.

The solution is clear: Australia needs only one airline, publicly owned, providing international and domestic needs. Such an idea is blasphemy to the ears of the high priests of privatisation and globalisation, but it is perfectly feasible and sensible. It just requires a government with the will to do it. A new type of government that puts people first. ✪

## LABOUR NOTES

When do over-the-counter painkillers become a workplace hazard? The answer can be found at the Abbott Point coal loading facility in Queensland where workers have been subjected to new drug-and-alcohol testing. They walked off the job last week after management began testing without prior notice or consultation. The union covering the facility, the Australian Workers' Union (AWU), described the urine tests as a gross invasion of privacy and expressed concern that the tests might go beyond the often agreed targets of alcohol, marijuana and amphetamines. A QLD AWU official reported that one of the workers had already being sent home for using Panadeine for a sore throat. The official said that another worker who suffers from a bowel condition was sent home for taking painkillers for his condition. The dispute is currently before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

As a result of the unprecedented destruction caused to parts of Canberra by fire the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) has launched an appeal to raise money for the people of Canberra and new equipment for the ACT voluntary fire service. According to CPSU National Secretary Adrian O'Connell, the union has received calls from public sector workers and others around the country wanting to lend a hand. “As well as the shocking damage caused to homes, the fires also destroyed or seriously damaged a number of workplaces. The union's organisers will be providing direct advice and support on workplace and leave issues for workers affected by the fires”, Mr O'Connell said. Call the CPSU Member Service Centre on 1300 137 636 for more details.

The ACTU has condemned Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott's plans to introduce new criminal sanctions, with jail sentences, for workers taking industrial action to save their jobs and entitlements. “It's disappointing that the Workplace Relations Minister's Christmas message to Australian workers is a threat to send them to jail,” ACTU President Sharon Burrow said. “Mr Abbott makes no mention of breaches of the law by employers resulting in workers' deaths or injuries and the non-payment of billions of dollars each year in wages, overtime and entitlements ... Mr Abbott opposes the use of criminal sanctions in relation to negligence by employers occasioning the death of employees but wants criminal sanctions against people attending picket lines.” Ms Burrow said that Mr Abbott's comments about the “rule of law” were incongruent with his support for the payment of \$96,000 of taxpayers' money to two government witnesses who lied in court in a failed attempt to frame a union delegate two years ago. Mr Abbott defended the payment of taxpayers' money for fabricated evidence against unions, telling Federal Parliament that: “People who give evidence on behalf of the Commonwealth should be supported.”

## Grocon comes to the negotiating table

Grocon's major projects in Melbourne resumed normal operation on January 22, following an agreement reached the day before between officials of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and company executives. CFMEU State Secretary Martin Kingham and Grocon's joint managing director Daniel Grollo said talks had staved off industrial action by the union and a possible shutdown of major projects in Melbourne worth \$2 billion.

The threatened action was in relation to the negotiation of a new enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) with Grocon. According to the CFMEU, one of the principle areas of disagreement is hours of work. Grocon wants to be able to work their employees unlimited hours and to buy out rostered days off, annual leave and sick leave.

The company had attempted to exclude the union from the process and deal directly with its 650 employees. However, in a vote late last year, brought on by Grocon under section 170LK of the Workplace Relations Act, workers overwhelmingly rejected the company's approach, preferring to be represented by their union.

The planned stoppages were in relation to the negotiation of a new enterprise agreement.

“The parties have created the right climate to allow negotiations for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement based on industry principles to be completed within a reasonable period of time”, Mr Kingham and Mr Grollo said in a joint statement.

“Our agreement involves the withdrawal of threats of industrial action on one hand and, on the other, putting on hold all pending legal action against the union and its officials.”

Grocon is pursuing damages claims in the Supreme Court against several union officials over two 48-hour strikes at major sites in Melbourne last year.

“Both parties have declared their commitment to this process and we're hopeful of a satisfactory outcome”, the joint statement concluded.

### Abbott behind Grollo

Workplace Relations Minister Tony Abbott has admitted holding meetings with Mr Grollo when the company plotted to use the Workplace Relations Act to sideline the CFMEU.

His plan, openly supported by Abbott, involved an early-morning mass meeting on December 19. CFMEU representatives were barred. Workers, surrounded by up to 200 salaried staff not covered by the negotiations, were asked to vote on a Sec-

tion 170LK agreement to which their union would not be a party.

The carrot-and-stick case put by Grollo included additional leave inducements and a warning that rejection would jeopardise employment.

The way Grocon counted its ballot suggests elements of a Patrick-style exercise. It seems that workers had been transferred from one company to another without their knowledge or agreement.

Despite being listed on IBIS's World Company Profiles as a company with “no subsidiaries”, Grocon divided ballot results amongst five separate entities and, just minutes after the meeting, put out a press release announcing “100 per cent” support for its proposition at one of those “companies”.

It was later revealed that this referred to a 2-0 vote of staff at something called Grocon PL.

It remains to be seen whether Grocon will seriously negotiate with the building unions and cancel the pending legal action or whether the dispute is only the beginning of a bigger political exercise to shut the unions out of major building sites. ✪

### If war starts rally at

Adelaide 5pm on the day Parliament House steps

Brisbane 5pm on the day in King George Sq, and then on the following Saturday at 12 noon

Canberra 5pm on the day US embassy

Hobart 5pm on the day Frankston Square

Melbourne 5pm on the day State Library

Perth 5 pm on the day outside GPO in Forrest Place

Sydney 5pm on the day at Town Hall

Wollongong 5.30pm the day after at the Ampitheatre

# Uni students battle rising fees

Australian students face rising academic fees. This year student debt will probably soar by almost \$1 billion to \$9.057 billion. The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) predicts the debt will grow by \$2.5 billion by 2006.

by Peter Mac

Some 20 percent of students managed to pay "up front" fees last year. The others will have to make Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) deferred payments when they land a job. Fees for some degrees exceed \$6000 per year, and most HECS students will have a debt of at least \$20,000 on graduation.

National Union of Students President, Daniel Kyriakou, last week commented that many students will have to reconsider undertaking courses, while "thousands of gradu-

ates will be unable to buy a house, start a family or make any savings." According to ALP parliamentarian Jenny Macklin, student debt has more than doubled since 1996, while student fees have increased 85 percent and now constitute more than a third of university income. Despite this, the government will allow universities to again increase the cost of the most popular courses.

are also being squeezed, and their numbers are dwindling. This year's University Triennium Report says that between 1996 and 2001 the number of postgraduate HECS places fell from 69 percent to 33 percent, with universities demanding upfront fees for the rest. Postgraduate student numbers fell by 15.5 percent, or 6900 places, in this period.

Despite the student fee income, many universities face major financial difficulties. Three universities applied for an advance on this year's federal funding.

been free, despite the relative impoverishment of the Greek population.

In contrast, since then Australian tertiary education has moved towards market-driven education. Previously, we received public education services out of our taxes. That simple and just arrangement is now being replaced by an education system where private education institutions are actually paid by the government to make huge profits at the expense of students.

And some universities are resorting to unscrupulous means to break even. Former Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Alice Tay, recently commented bitterly that "the scramble of universities to join the corporate world, the commercialisation of so-called education in the last 20 years, has made a mockery of the university. The dishonesty of the corporate world has taken hold of university management and scholarship."

She claimed that universities are now "selling degrees", results are inflated, students who should fail are passed, mediocrity is tolerated, and the current "ideology" corrodes scholastic rigour.

The Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson, has pointed out that a former Labor government introduced the HECS scheme. He failed to acknowledge that it was the Fraser Government that re-introduced tertiary education fees (for some categories of students), and that subsequent conservative governments starved universities of funding and forced up fees.

It is becoming ever more apparent that this appalling situation will only be rectified by electing a progressive party or coalition and consigning conservative governments to the dust-bin of history. ☺



Universities have moved towards market-driven education

**student debt has more than doubled since 1996, while student fees have increased 85 percent and now constitute more than a third of university income**



Queensland Premier Peter Beattie seized his opportunity when last week a farmer found a bucket with a map in it near the Wivenhoe Dam, about an hour's drive from Brisbane. The map, a series of crudely drawn lines, has "C4K4" written on it, as well as some other doggerel. C-4 is an explosive so Pete announced the formation of a new counter-terrorism unit to "provide expert strategic advice to the Government on developments in terrorism here and abroad." It didn't matter to him that the Queensland Police Commissioner dismissed the map as a hoax. "If something did happen it would be too late to be sorry later", reasoned Pete. Dingo's advice – just look for a bloke who's lost a bucket.

In NSW, if Premier Bob Carr farted the Liberals would say, "We support it, but it doesn't go far enough." With an election in March Liberal leader John Brogden has been running hot on the law-and-order ticket, promising to lock more people up for longer than the Labor Government. Thing is, Carr has pretty much taken over the right-wing, reactionary low ground usually occupied by the Liberals, forcing the Liberals to become a kind of ludicrous caricature of themselves. Thus, Carr's privatising agenda for public education sees Brogden announcing a plan to publish performance data on individual government schools, holding them – and their communities – up to public ridicule. As Greens MP Lee Rhiannon noted, performance tables "are based on inflicting market punishment on schools with problems."

They just don't get it dept. Agriculture spokesperson for the Australian Democrats, John Cherry, noting that food prices have been rising three times faster than the price of all other goods, rightly calls the 10.4 percent rise in the supermarket milk price over the past two years a scandal. He says this has happened "despite the deregulation of the dairy industry" and that we need to "get to the bottom" of this question. At bottom is deregulation.

This may come as a surprise, but immigration detention centres have an "emotionally charged environment"... for the staff. Those employed by Australasian Correctional Management to act as jailers at the centres have been lodging a lot of stress claims with the US-based private prison company. Basically the problem is that they are not simply security personnel or prison officers, but concentration camp guards keeping innocent men, women and children locked up under inhumane conditions.

**CAPITALIST HOG OF THE WEEK:** is former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger who was in Australia last week to tie up some deals on behalf of his employer, the giant JP Morgan bank. In his time in office in the corrupt and disgraced Nixon administration, he oversaw the dirty and murderous war on Vietnam, the illegal invasion of Cambodia and the fascist coup and slaughter in Chile, to name but a few items on his CV. Now a "respectable" businessman, he should be on trial for crimes against humanity. PM John Howard, a long-time admirer, met him for a chat.

## PEACE ACTIONS

### Melbourne

No war on Iraq: Rally for Peace  
Friday 14th February 5pm  
State Library, City

Further information:

Stephen Ames 0425 765 467 hosea@bigpond.com  
Harry Kerr 5221 6694 ahmkerr@hotmail.com  
Wes Campbell 9375 1065 wcampbell@vic.uca.org.au

### Sydney

Walk for Peace  
Sunday 16th February noon  
from Hyde Park North

Contacts: Alison 9389 2084; Nick 0409 762 081;  
Bruce 9386 1240; Hannah 0418 668 089

### Adelaide

Don't attack Iraq  
Sunday 16th February 11.45am  
Victoria Square for 12 noon  
walk to Parliament House

Speakers: Brian Deegan, Mem Fox & David Palmer

### Canberra

Anti-war rally  
Saturday 15th February noon –  
further details soon

Contact: ACT Network Opposing War,  
actnow\_canberra@hotmail.com  
or phone 0417 2699 8402

### Darwin

Contact: Environment Centre  
ecnt@octa4.net.au, 08 8981 1984

### Brisbane

Rally for peace  
Sunday 16th February 12 noon  
QUT Riverstage,  
march across Goodwill Bridge

Contact: Queensland Peace Network phone  
Gavin Sawford (QCU) 3846 2468

### Perth

Dawn-to-dusk fast for peace  
every Friday  
on Parliament House steps

Contact: NoWar Alliance (08) 9218 9608  
or (08) 9277 6307

### Launceston

Contact: Launceston Peace Action Network  
<http://www.elaunceston.com/people/peace/>  
Terence Seymour 0409 414 562

### Hobart

Rally Saturday 15th February  
details to come

Contact: Peace Trust -  
David Burn david@lhmu.org.au 6224 9288  
or Unions Tasmania 6234 9553

### Wollongong

Saturday 8th February 10.30am  
March from Fred Moore House  
to Ampitheatre

Contact: South Coast No War,  
Leanne Ph: 02 42251 339



# Bush at War

## by Bob Woodward

Bob Woodward is an assistant managing editor of *The Washington Post* and has written four books on American Presidents. Perhaps the best known is *All the President's Men*. He is regarded as an investigative journalist and, for the book under review, he was given extensive interviews with President George W Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Collin Powell, National Security adviser Condoleezza Rice, CIA Director George Tenet, and other leading figures of the Bush administration.

Woodward's book opens on the morning of September 11, 2001, the day of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. But rather than start this review with the events of that day and their consequences I will quote the very last few paragraphs of *Bush at War* and then wind back the clock to the events of that day.

Woodward says: "On February 5, 2002, about 25 men representing three different Special Forces units and three CIA paramilitary teams gathered outside Gardez, Afghanistan, in the east, about 40 miles from the Pakistani border.

"It was very cold, and they were bundled in camping or outdoor clothing. No one was in uniform. Many had beards. The men stood or knelt on this desolate site in front of a helicopter. An American flag was standing in the background. There was a pile of rocks arranged as a tombstone over a buried piece of the demolished World Trade Centre. Someone snapped a picture of them.

"One of the men read a prayer. Then he said, 'We consecrate this spot as an everlasting memorial to the brave Americans who died on September 11, so that all who would seek to do her harm will know that America will not stand by and watch terror prevail.

"We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth in defence of our great nation."

Despite this revealing quote, Woodward fails to ask Bush and his cohorts many obvious questions:

Why weren't airforce planes, which were on duty specifically for the purpose, scrambled to intercept the hijacked planes on September 11?

Why did President Bush continue to listen to children reading a story at a school when informed

that the World Trade Centre had been hit?

Why did the two World Trade Centre towers implode in exactly the same way after the planes struck? Were there other causes for their collapse?

Why hasn't a thorough and independent investigation been held into all the issues?

Why were the many warnings received about a possible terrorist act disregarded by the CIA, the FBI and the Government that must have been informed?

Were plans for military action against Afghanistan in the pipeline before September 11 as has been alleged?

What were (are) the political and economic ties between the Bush family and the bin Laden family and why does the book not discuss them? Why were members of the bin Laden family who were in the US at the time of the attacks allowed to leave without questioning? What is the significance of the oil question in regard to both Afghanistan and Iraq?

Woodward raises none of these questions which continue to swirl around the September 11 events. He fails completely to set the subsequent events in any sort of political or economic context except to speculate on President Bush's "vision" for the world in the last few pages of his book.

He records Bush's claim to "worry about the human condition" and, in regard to a war against Iraq he reports Bush as saying, "As we think through Iraq, we may or may not attack. I have no idea, yet. But it will be for the objective of making the world more peaceful."

How often have those about to launch a war claimed to be doing so for "peace"? Make war for peace!

In many respects Woodward's book is totally unsatisfactory and could be seen as no more than a cover-up for the Bush administration and their plans to "export death and violence to the four corners of the earth".

Most of the book recounts the innumerable meetings of the US National Security Council (NSC) that is made up of the top names already mentioned and their day-to-day preparations and prosecution of the war against Afghanistan.

Neither the book, nor those involved in the NSC discussions of the war against Afghanistan make any attempt to give proof that the attack on the World Trade Centre was actually implemented and

So the war against Afghanistan was to be launched without proof "beyond reasonable doubt", and thousands of people killed in the process.

The same US approach is being applied to Iraq with the unsubstantiated claims that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.

Rumsfeld and Cheney emerge as the most rabid warmongers. The book quotes Rumsfeld quite early on in the Afghanistan war as asking: "look, as part of the war on terrorism, should we be getting something going in another area, other than Afghanistan, so that success or failure and progress isn't measured just by Afghanistan?"

The means to achieve the desired ends for the Bush administration have no limit or restriction. Here is a classical case of the "ends justifying the means". Principle among their means is bribery.

The author writes: "Gary (a CIA operative in Afghanistan) had stuffed \$1 million into his backpack so he could move around and pass it to people on other operations. He had signed for the \$3 million as usual. What was different this time was that he could dole it out pretty much at his own discretion."

And, when Gary meets the intelligence chief of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, Woodward records that "Gary nodded and placed a bundle of cash on the table: \$500,000 in 10 one-foot stacks of \$100 bills."

"There's big money to be made if you can ambush Zawahiri", says Gary.

Woodward records many similar instances of bribery. "The CIA was buying its way across Afghanistan, at least trying, giving out rice, guns and cash."

But it was not only the forces in Afghanistan that were being bribed. When Bush met with the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika Woodward records that "the CIA was heavily subsidizing its intelligence service, spending millions to get their assistance in the war against al Qaeda."

The same story is true of Jordan. George Tenet (CIA) met King Abdullah of Jordan and Woodward declares: "The CIA was subsidizing the Jordanian service to the tune of millions of dollars a year."

*"We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth."*

planned by al Qaida.

Although Bush and company immediately blamed bin Laden and al Qaida, even a fortnight after September 11, Woodward records that "the evidence was circumstantial and somewhat fragmentary, though there were some hard nuggets."

The NSC decided against issuing a white paper: "The danger of issuing a white paper that presented evidence was that it could condition people to view the war on terror as a law enforcement operation, within the model of the judicial system with its evidentiary standards, burden of proof on the government and proof beyond a reasonable doubt - things that could not possibly be met."



Why were the many warnings about a ter

The Russians had their hands out too. "The Russians were willing to send weapons to the Northern Alliance ... but somebody would have to pay for the arms. It was eventually decided that the CIA would pay. They (the CIA) would give their former enemy about \$10 million."

The members of the NSC cynically joked: "You can't buy an Afghan but you can rent one".

"The CIA calculated that they spent only \$70 million in direct cash outlays on the ground in Afghanistan. The President considered it "one of the biggest 'bargains' of all time", writes Woodward.

Not in any single remark is there any mention of international law or the Charter of the United Nations. The UN is mentioned merely as a handmaiden of American policy.

When it came to the question of who was to run Kabul after the Taliban had been driven out, the response was "Let the UN administer it ... plus third country forces ruling Kabul". The thinking behind this was not rooted in some principled concern for the United Nations but Bush's view that the US army is not about "nation building".

The US Army is to fight wars with the responsibility left to others to pick up the humanitarian calamity and property destruction that was inevitably mean to others. Rebuilding was of no concern to the American leadership.

"Look", says Bush, "I oppose using the military for nation building. Once the job is done, our forces are not peacekeepers. We ought to put in place a UN protection and leave..."

But the truth lies elsewhere. While assuring Russia, Pakistan and others that the Americans have no intention of staying in Afghanistan George Tenet remarks to the NSC "We need to tell the southern tribes what the political scenario is ... We need to make it clear that we're there for the long term."

The FBI had compiled a list of what it claimed to be the 22 "Most Wanted Terrorists". "Bush took a classified version for himself that



# United, we can win

**As we celebrate the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King, tens of thousands of US troops are being deployed to the Persian Gulf for war on Iraq and the US is rocked by an economic and civil liberties crisis.**

by Judith Le Blanc\*

King's stand against the war in Vietnam linked that war with the denial of the urgent needs of poor and oppressed people here at home.

Today, the US people in the millions are beginning to question the wisdom of war with Iraq and its relationship to the crisis hammering every aspect of our daily life.

The horrific events of September 11 have caused many in the US to think deeply about security, foreign policy and the use of weapons of mass destruction by our own government as well as others.

Last week a Knight-Ridder poll showed overwhelming opposition to unilateral US military action despite a right-wing/media pro-war blitz.

Polls are consistently showing that most people do not want war and favour continuing UN inspections to avoid the deaths of American soldiers as well as Iraqis.

With the Bush administration's continued assault on civil liberties, fears about an endless war on terrorism are growing. There is increasing suspicion about who will profit from a war, starting with the oil companies.

International co-operation to safeguard the planet from war, terrorism and destruction is increasingly seen as not just a good idea but a necessity.

Peace sentiments among the American people are bolstered by mounting international anti-war feeling, leading governments that have been Bush's staunchest supporters to express hesitations about his drive for war.

Reflecting the mounting international and domestic pressure, differences in the Bush administration are surfacing, although the differences revolve around how and when to go to war, not on whether to go to war or not.

Nevertheless, these differences can provide opportunities for the peace movement to win victories in delaying and ultimately preventing war.

The belief that the war can be stopped is the strongest foundation for organising a winning peace majority.

Broad new elements are emerging daily in the rising peace tide, invigorating the traditional peace movement. The most dramatic upsurge is seen among the religious community, in the labour movement, in the fight to defend civil liberties, and in cities across the country.

The National Council of Churches, US Catholic bishops and new ecumenical coalitions have led vigils, lobbies, peace services and delegations to Iraq. Their moral leadership sharply challenges the Bush administration's demagoguery.

Over 100 resolutions have been passed by labour bodies, and a national labour peace group has been formed, US Labor Against the War.

More than 30 city councils have adopted resolutions against war,

ness to the multiplicity of forms and spontaneous expressions.

Most important, it will take a commitment to mobilising the full fighting power of the entire labour movement, communities of colour and other people's movements alongside traditional peace groups in united grassroots action to stop the war and defeat the ultra right agenda.

The Communist Party is dedicated to helping build a broad nationally co-ordinated people's movement for peace. At the same time, we place special emphasis on activating people at the grass roots, in neighbourhoods, union halls, places of worship, campuses and wherever people can come together to give voice to their yearning for peace.

An all-people's peace majority is emerging that can stop the Bush warhawks in their tracks. In the process, a broad people's movement is coming into being against the waste and destruction of militarism, and for a foreign policy of peace and co-operation and a humane, just and democratic society.

United, we can win!

\*Judith Le Blanc is a vice chair of the Communist Party, USA and works with United for Peace and Justice. She can be reached at [jleblanc@cpusa.org](mailto:jleblanc@cpusa.org) *People's Weekly World.* ☪



terrorist attack disregarded?

had photos, brief biographies and personality sketches of the 22 men. When he returned to his desk in the Oval Office, he slipped the list of names and faces into a drawer, ready at hand, his own personal scorecard for the war."

Such is the mentality of this saviour of humanity!

Throughout the period the National Security Council receives continual reports of supposed terrorist threats none of which eventuated. One wonders whether the alleged terrorist threats are real or are being deliberately manufactured to keep the American people and those of other countries in a continual state of worry, tension and fear.

While the spread of anthrax was initially blamed on Iraq or Russia, the fact that it was being mailed by persons within the US is not reported by Woodward. Why?

Everything and everybody is systematically manipulated to achieve US aims.

When it is suggested that Syria come out against all terrorism, Rumsfeld declares, "We can't let Syria help us with al Qaeda and then [have] us feel constrained about pursuing them with respect to their support for other terrorists".

Says Bush, "We need to get some of our people on Al-Jazeera" (a Middle East TV station) ... We need people to feed some information to them."

"We're holding the Northern Alliance in place and there's a question of when we release them", says George Tenet in one of the NSC briefings.

Humanitarian aid was another weapon to be cynically used and paid for by others. "We need a donors' conference", said Bush meaning all the countries who were making humanitarian donations to Afghanistan. "We need ... to get the coalition something to hang its hat on when we continue the bombing during Ramadan..."

While European leaders had expressed the view that "to maintain the coalition was to have lots of consultation, for the US to show respon-

siveness, take account of the views of others and understand their reasoning", Bush had other ideas.

"My belief is the best way that we hold this coalition together is to be clear on our objectives and to be clear that we are determined to achieve them. You hold a coalition together by strong leadership and that's what we intend to provide."

"Well", said Bush, "you can't talk your way to a solution to a problem. And the United States is in a unique position right now. We are the leader..."

Woodward comments: "because it would be the policy of the United States, the only superpower, the rest of the world would have to move over, would adjust over time. His vision clearly includes an ambitious reordering of the world through preemptive and, if necessary, unilateral action to reduce suffering and bring peace."

But when the question of Iraq was raised again, Bush says: "A president likes to have a military plan that will be successful" and Woodward comments: "Whatever his course, he will have available a CIA and military that are both more capable and more hungry for action than is generally recognised".

It is this terrible purpose and not peace on earth that those constructing the memorial in Afghanistan echoed when their spokesman said: "We will export death and violence to the four corners of the earth in defence of our great nation".

Woodward's book, despite its serious omissions, paints a picture of an American leadership that is hell-bent on war.

The Bush regime is manipulative, always looking for means to divide its real or imagined opponents, fearful of a string of concocted terrorist threats, prepared to use bribery on a massive scale, corrupt and incompetent but with a messianic belief in America's mission to rule the world and now using assassination as a means specifically authorised by Presidential edict.

*Bush at War* is published by Simon and Schuster ISBN 0-7432-0473-5 ☪

## A BROKEN BUTTERFLY

(to Kabul and the Kabuls still to come)

Yesterday  
before the bombers came  
laden with Peace enforcing bombs  
she played a game along the road from school  
and sat peacefully at home  
writing in her homework book.

Today  
the bombers have come and gone.  
Peace has been enforced.  
To Law and Order due respect is done.  
Innocents have paid the price of blame.  
All is still among the tumbled stones  
in a gentle wind and smiling sun.

In the quiet rubble a playful wind  
rustles a dusty, tattered page  
of her half-buried homework book  
that - at a second look  
seems a broken butterfly  
whose dead wings flutter  
in a silent tangled stubble  
of disordered stone and lifeless rage.

Tomorrow?  
She will not see tomorrow  
now that the bombers have done  
their civilising work.  
"Enduring Freedom" plays out its righteous game  
on smoking ruins with no name.  
She knows nothing about tomorrow.

The quiet air  
turns the fluttering page  
that tomorrow her teacher will not see,  
nor need she ever  
this poor field has yielded up its crops  
and here that simple story stops,  
forever.

We of a different age and place  
will never see her blameless face.  
We, too, know nothing about tomorrow  
but that whether it bears us grace or sorrow  
in the end depends on us.

EB

## Israel

## War the cause of wretched economy

The Labour Party chair and pretender to Israel's premiership after the January 28 Knesset elections, Amram Mitzna, who is the incumbent Mayor of Haifa, has declared that in no circumstances would he, and his party, again join a coalition government, headed by Ariel Sharon. The Party had fatally burned its fingers with the 20 month-long participation in Sharon's cabinet, which resulted in the present decline of the Party's once strong influence, he said.

by Hans Lebrecht

However, there is more to it than meets the eye. First of all, it is noteworthy that Mitzna stresses, and repeats his "promise", not to join a cabinet headed by Sharon. He, at least so far, has never spoken of Labour's opposition to a renewed "Unity Government" with a ruling Likud Party, or one headed by Likud's second choice, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Anyway, as it looks like at present, Sharon might be forced to resign not long after the elections, whether his Likud party wins or not. His apparent involvement in several multi-million dollars bribery and corruption scandals, at present under investigation by the State Attorney office and the police, will

make Sharon's resignation only a matter of time.

When asked, Mitzna declined to answer the question of why he speaks only of not collaborating with Sharon, without mentioning Netanyahu or the Likud, instead saying vaguely, "Let's wait and see..."

The fact is, there is an economic time bomb ticking. The year 2002 was the worst year Israel has had since the first few years of austerity after the war of independence (1949-53). The annual rate of inflation and consumer price index hikes reached 6.5 per cent, up from one to two per cent over the previous few years.

Unemployment at the end of 2002 stood, according to official figures, at 10.4 per cent of the civil workforce, and if the unregistered



Sharon maybe forced to resign over bribery and corruption scandals

unemployed are taken into account the figure is almost 14 percent.

The gap between rich and poor has drastically deepened. During 2002, almost a third of the Israeli population had to live below the official poverty line.

Further, 22 per cent of children below the age of 14 suffer grave malnutrition and go to bed hungry. Especially hard hit by these hardships are the million strong Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel.

The correlation between the economic crisis and the futile attempt to drown the Palestinian resistance against the colonialist occupation in streams of blood – or to rule over the Palestinians by re-occupying their cities and countryside by gross viola-

tion of human rights and war crimes – becomes increasingly obvious.

Even such "friends of Israel" as US Professor Stanley Fisher, questions the Government's "solution". "There is no military solution to the continuing bloodshed" said Fisher.

"Renewing the peace process is of enormous importance. Only ending the state of war and renewing the dialogue with the Palestinians will turn the Israeli economy around.

"True, that alone will not turn the negative growth into a positive one. But, if not for the Intifada and the war against it, the Israeli economy would be growing, not as fast as in the past, but definitely growing. Much of the misery it causes might become easier."

Strong popular circles and forces within the Labour Party and other parties and movements for peace and democracy are putting pressure upon Mitzna.

They advise the Mitzna camp that if the Likud and their collaborators win the elections, as predicted by the opinion polls, to not again fall into the trap of a so-called "Unity Government". Instead they should lead – together with all the Jewish and Arab centre and left parties – a stiff opposition with a sharply outlined policy of a national and social alternative to the chauvinist, racist and anti-labour, anti-popular policies of a renewed Likud-led government.

People's Weekly World (abridged). ☼

## Blix report: No case for war

The reports of Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei to the UN Security Council are arguments for a continuation of the work of the weapons inspectors and definitely do not provide reasons for a war in which hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians would be killed. (A fuller analysis will be made in the next issue of *The Guardian*)

The report of Hans Blix has many "ifs" and "maybes" on vital questions. The fact is that after more than two months of operations and visits by weapons inspectors to about 230 sites, no weapons of mass destruction have been found. Nor has any evidence of them being manufactured been provided.

Blix's report says, "Iraq has on the whole cooperated rather well so far ... access has been provided to all sites we have wanted to inspect and with one exception it has been prompt."

Noting that Iraq appeared to have decided in principle "to provide cooperation on process, notably access", Dr Blix goes on to say that, "A similar decision is indispensable to provide cooperation on substance in order to bring the disarmament ask to completion through the peaceful process of inspection..."

"The substantive cooperation required relates above all to the obligation of Iraq to declare all programs of weapons of mass destruction and either to present items and activities for elimination or else to provide evidence supporting the conclusion that nothing proscribed remains."

On specific issues such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and missiles Dr Blix's report is peppered with such equivocal comments as, "This could be the case", "It might still exist", "We are trying to get a clear understanding", "before we reach a conclusion on this issue", "That is yet to be determined", "UNMOVIC is not presuming that there are proscribed items

and activities, but, nor is it presuming the opposite", "Presumptions do not solve the problem"...

He concluded his report by saying that "...we have now an inspection apparatus that permits us to send multiple inspection teams every day all over Iraq ... which is now at the disposal of the Security Council".

The chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Dr ElBaradei, was much more specific and asked the Security Council to extend inspections for months.

Never before in history has any sovereign nation been subjected to such treatment by the United Nations which is charged with upholding the sovereignty and independence of nations.

While many other countries, principally the United States and Britain are awash with weapons of mass destruction, Iraq is being singled out in the most hypocritical exercise ever devised.

The Australian, US and British Governments are using the Blix report to defend going to war and will continue their rush to war. None of them have ruled out launching a preemptive strike without the approval of the UN Security Council.

The alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq is merely the pretext to seize possession of Iraq's oil resources and to occupy Iraq into the foreseeable future so as to control the whole of the Middle East.

This criminal war must be prevented. The time to act is now. ☼

## Bring the troops home

continued from page 1

In Australia, preparations are well under way for big national actions over the weekend of February 15-16 (see details page 5).

Peace groups in Australia have condemned war on Iraq – with or without UN approval.

On Friday last week, a group of parliamentarians, church and trade union leaders put on hard hats to join construction site workers on the top of the World Square Project in Sydney's CBD as they hoisted a 20-metre purple ribbon on a giant crane. People are urged to wear purple ribbons to show opposition to war with Iraq.

Protestors also delivered the anti-war message as Prime Minister John Howard farewelled *HMAS Kanimbla* with Australian troops bound for the Gulf. "We absolutely condemn the dispatch of Australian military forces to the Gulf in the face of massive public opposition, and without any parliamentary debate", said former Senator Bruce Childs, a spokesperson for Sydney's Walk Against The War Coalition.

Care was taken to direct the protest against the Howard Government's policies, not the troops who were following orders.

A statement issued by the Federal ALP Left declared: "The Left opposes Australia's involvement in a war irrespective of whether it

is endorsed by the United Nations Security Council or not".

In Adelaide last Thursday (January 23) a procession of about 100 cars made its way through the city streets with their headlights on, and carrying placards drawing the public's attention to the forthcoming "Don't Attack Iraq" rally.

Then on Saturday, a group chalked slogans and projections of casualties in any invasion of Iraq around the outlines of bodies on the pavement of Adelaide's Gawler Place. Loudhailers and leaflets promoted the rally in the busy shopping precinct.

### Peace activists head to Iraq

During the week, the media carried the news that Adelaide residents Ruth Russell and Edward Cranswick were preparing to go to Iraq to serve as human shields.

"I'm squeamish about blood but if US President George W. Bush wants to start a war he's going to have to bomb innocent Australians", Mr Cranswick told *The Advertiser*. The two Adelaide protestors will join other courageous volunteers from around the world as part of a human shield in the hope that their presence in that country would prevent bombing by the United States and its allies.

"We will run the risk of being maimed or killed, but it is simply the same risk that innocent Iraqis will themselves face", human shield organiser Ken O'Keefe was quoted as saying in an online interview. Mr O'Keefe is a former US Marine who served in the Gulf War in 1991.

"I would rather die in defence of justice and peace than 'prosper' in complicity with mass murder and war", he said.

A group of about 60 volunteers from Britain, the US, Spain, Brazil, Australia and Israel left London last week. Others will join them as they cross Europe by bus.

In Britain, a group of train drivers refused to move a freight train carrying ammunition believed to be intended for British forces in the Gulf.

In Geilenkirchen, Germany, peace activists blocked the entrance of a NATO base where Airborne Warning and Control Systems airplanes are stationed. They carried signs with slogans such as: "No Blood for Oil" and "War is Murder". In Davos, making the link between big business and war, about 1000 protestors demonstrated against the World Economic Forum. Their banners carried such slogans as: "No Business over Dead Bodies" and "Leave Iraq in peace, stop the Bush warriors". ☼



# "NO to Ports of Convenience"

European dock workers took unprecedented action this month to oppose EU proposals to allow shipping lines to organise their own port handling, without using local workers. The workers say this would threaten their jobs and safety.

The Secretary General of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), Doro Zinke, has sent a solidarity message on behalf of European transport workers of all modes of transport to all European dockers who have turned a new page in the history of the trade union movement.

"With the actions which are taking place across the European ports, dock workers have sent a clear message to all European decision makers. The Commission, the Member States and the members of the European Parliament must understand what is at stake with the proposed directive.

"It would degenerate the working conditions of port workers, threaten their employment, jeopardise their health and safety, slash their vocational training and weaken their skills.

"Subsequently, it would harm the quality of the service provided to port users, introducing substandard ports."

The action is also proof that, independently of their affiliation, dockworkers are united in defence of their jobs and working conditions.

Reports of actions ranging from a few hours to three days have been received from Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Cyprus, Sweden, the UK and Malta.

In a solidarity statement, the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (SATAWU) said it

fully supports the action of European port workers.

"The European Commission and European parliament are playing with fire in their attempts to unilaterally alter the organisation of work of port workers and seafarers. The changes will result in a deterioration in working conditions as well as of service to port users.

"Our own government should also take heed. Its own unilateral approach to the restructuring of South Africa's ports will also not be tolerated.

"Government has since November last year been avoiding meeting SATAWU to resolve major differences in approach. Scheduled meetings to address the dispute have been postponed on three occasions due to the government's 'unavailability'.

"Should government not come to the table within the next two weeks, SATAWU will escalate the dispute and consider exercising its right to strike over the matter." ✪



## Corporate rule in Colombia

On December 31, 2002, Alfredo Porras Rueda was detained by the Colombian Government. In a televised statement hours later, General Jairo Duvan Pineda, commander of the Fifth Division of the Colombian Army, accused Rueda of being a member of the insurgent group Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN).

Rueda worked at Coca-Cola's bottling plant in Bucaramanga, and was President of the local National Food Industry Workers Union (SINALTRAINAL).

On August 31, 2002, Adolfo de Jesus Munera – also a Coca-Cola employee and President of the SINALTRAINAL local in the town of Barranquilla – was murdered. Local law enforcement officials have still

not launched an investigation into the case.

SINALTRAINAL has been the victim of a systematic campaign of destruction, which has included: the assassination of 14 union leaders, half of which worked at various Coca-Cola plants; death threats; forced displacements; the incarceration of workers and union leaders on false charges;

raids of union offices, co-operatives and union members' homes; union de-certification; extortion and kidnapping of union members in order to force them to renounce their right to association; and the violation of collective agreements.

In addition, hundreds of workers have been fired from their jobs over the past decade. As a result, SINALTRAINAL has seen its membership decrease by over 50 percent.

The Colombian state has been an accomplice to the actions of the transnational corporations, by neither investigating nor punishing those responsible for carrying out these crimes.

It continues to promote policies that heighten terror and poverty via the privatisation of public sector companies and the creation of "free-trade" zones.

According to the Colombia trade union confederation, CUT, 148 unionists were killed in Colombia in 2002. Of these, 42 were leaders, including five national union presidents.

The information here was provided by the Campaign for Labor Rights, [www.campaignforlaborrights.org](http://www.campaignforlaborrights.org) ✪

Write to the Colombian Government and demand that they stop their policies of corporate militarism.

The address is:  
President of  
the Republic of Colombia  
Dr Alvaro Uribe Velez  
Palacio de Narino  
Carrera 8 No. 7-26 Santafe de  
Bogota, Colombia  
[auribe@presidencia.gov.co](mailto:auribe@presidencia.gov.co) /  
[rdh@presidencia.gov.co](mailto:rdh@presidencia.gov.co)

### Demand:

- the immediate release of Alfredo Porras Rueda;
- an end to harassment and persecution of workers and union leaders;
- an investigation into Coca-Cola management's role in the death of Adolfo de Jesus Munera.

## Modern day slavery

The case of the Filipino domestic worker who gave her kidney to her employer makes the depth of exploitation of such workers even more evident, according to community groups in Canada.

The domestic worker in Toronto donated her kidney when her employer could not get an adequate donor elsewhere.

Frustrated with the public health care system, the employer turned to his domestic worker for help, claiming that she is part of his family.

"Women giving their internal organs to their employers shows just how deep the modern-day slavery of our women runs and how far the exploitation of domestic workers can go", said Monica Urritia of the Philippine Women Centre of B.C.

Since 1992, Filipino women have been entering Canada in increasing numbers under the Federal Government's Live-in Care-giver Program (LCP).

Under the LCP, the women live and work in the homes of middle- and upper-class families on temporary visas for a minimum of 24 months within a strict 3-year period.

Many women earn only \$2/hour for their labour.

While under the LCP, they are restricted from taking any academic courses not allowed to work for more than one employer.

Entrenched in an unequal relationship with their employer who can determine their immigration status, and in fact their very survival in Canada, the LCP forces women into vulnerable positions where they are open to any kind of abuse and exploitation.

"Is Canada stepping into a new frontier in the exploitation of Filipino women?" questioned Cecilia

Diocson of the National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada.

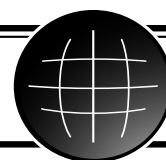
"Should we expect Canada to tolerate bringing in Filipino women to provide rich Canadians with their internal organs and body parts".

*People's Voice, Canada, fortnightly communist newspaper.* ✪

Sydney Public meeting  
**5pm Sunday 9th Feb**  
**Cypriot Community Club**  
58 Stanmore Rd, Stanmore

Speakers:  
**Carmen Lawrence**  
**Kerry Nettle**  
**Hannah Middleton**  
**President Greek Community**  
**President Cypriot Community**  
**Other Greek speakers**  
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Peace Committee  
For more info ph: 0418 270 450



### Global briefs

**INDIA:** India rejected part of the United States Government's annual \$100 million worth of food aid to impoverished parts of the country because the food was thought to have genetically modified content. The US says that it cannot guarantee that any of its shipments of maize to India will be free of GM grain since GM and non-GM food are typically mixed together.

**VIETNAM:** Strong industrial output helped Vietnam record the fastest GDP growth in all of Southeast Asia at seven per cent, according to preliminary estimates for 2002. The economy has doubled in size in the last ten years and avoided the contractions that hit Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in 1998. Last year, industry and construction accounted for 39 percent of Vietnam's economy, up from 38 per cent a year earlier.

**USA:** Kmart is sacking up to 35,000 staff and closing 326 stores across the US as it attempts to avoid bankruptcy in a weak retail environment. Last year Kmart closed 286 stores and sacked 22,000 staff.

**RUSSIA:** Moscow security forces are on high alert against a possible Chechen attack. It appears Chechen warlords have warned wealthy Chechens living in Moscow to sell their properties and preferably move to the Czech Republic, Germany and Belgium with a view to finally settling in Britain or Belgium. Moscow authorities revealed that a similar warning had been issued before the Moscow theatre siege but had not been acted upon soon enough. This time round the authorities are taking the warning very seriously.

**UN:** Libya was elected to chair the United Nations Human Rights Commission after the United States broke with tradition and demanded a vote. In a secret ballot of the 53-nation commission Libya won 33 votes, with 17 abstentions and three votes against. The United States had recommended a no vote. Libya was nominated by African nations, whose turn it was under UN practices.

**SCOTLAND:** In early January, two Scottish train drivers made headlines when they refused to move a freight train carrying munitions to the Glen Douglas base on the west coast of Scotland. A total of 15 drivers are threatening some form of anti-war action. Glen Douglas is NATO's biggest weapons storage base in Western Europe and the war material was to be shipped to British troops deployed for war in the Gulf. The two Scottish drivers are the only ones at the Motherwell freight depot trained to operate on the route to the Glen Douglas base. The ministry of defence is faced with moving the war material by road. The two workers' actions have been supported by the anti-war movement in Britain which hopes that similar actions can be taken by workers across the country to stop the escalating war preparations.

## Vulgar point-scoring

I've been very moved by the response of the Australian people to bushfire crisis we've been suffering over the last couple of months. At the same time I am getting increasingly frustrated at Government response.

Every day on the news I watch vulgar political point-scoring, both State and Federal polities desperately trying to outdo the other with tours, tears and blame-laying.

The ACT has blamed NSW for the fires, NSW blames the Federal Government, the land-owners blame the National Parks; then they all troop in front of the TV cameras saying "this is a time for healing, not blaming".

It has, for some time, been blatantly obvious that managing Australia's land is beyond our capabilities. Yet arrogantly we still do not utilise a vast source of expert knowledge available to us.

The Indigenous people of this land survived here for 40,000 years. There is no doubt that during that time there were fires, floods and droughts far worse than anything we

have encountered during our short 200-year stay.

Though much of that knowledge has now been lost during the past 200 years of extermination and integration, there are still communities where this traditional knowledge exists.

In fact, the University of the Northern Territory has been conducting experiments using traditional fire management techniques since as far back as 1973. They are currently being practiced across the top end in Kakadu and Arnhem Land.

Why am I not reading about the study and application of these methods in Southern Australia?

Because there is money in the south.

Following traditional methods would mean an end to the plantation pines, the vast crops and grazing pastures, and the ever-spreading suburbs.

At the same time as our cities are burning, our rivers are dying, our land is either salting over or washing out to sea, and the fish stocks dwindle. And the pace of all this will increase exponentially as the world temperature keeps rising.

I am reminded by all this of the Burke and Wills tragedy – the two great Australian "heroes" dying

needless deaths in the Australian outback. Had they turned to the locals – people who had survived in those conditions for thousands of years – for help, there would no doubt have been a fairytale ending to that story.

We should heed that warning. We either dramatically change our attitude to this land, forgo lifestyle, spend the cash required for restoration and turn to the traditional caretakers for knowledge; or carry on living as we do and head inexorably to our own demise.

Roger Gaudio  
Sydney

## Humanitarian disaster

The Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD) is appalled at the decision of the Howard Government to send Australian troops to Iraq to join the US forces already assembled around that country.

We realise that governments have the right to make urgent decisions, but in such a divisive issue as this it is not unreasonable to expect a parliamentary debate at least.

There is no definite basis for military action, only the unsubstantiated "knowledge" of the US and UK that Iraq is hiding weapons of mass destruction.

Such a show of military force around a country and the threat it implies before the UN inspectors have delivered their first report is to be regretted.

The inspectors say they need more time.

This should be granted and every diplomatic avenue should be exhausted to avoid a war in which the United Nations' report dated December 19 foresees millions of Iraqi civilians imperilled by a disruption to the UN supervised food supply network currently in place.

The UN also predicts 500,000 Iraqi casualties in any war; this includes 100,000 injured as a result of combat and a further 400,000 as an indirect result of the devastation.

This report was prepared by the World Health Organisation.

We should do all we can to avoid such a humanitarian disaster for the already weakened Iraqi people.

Pauline Mitchell  
Secretary CICD  
Trades Hall  
Carlton Sth  
Vic 3053

## I thought we lived in a democracy!!!

I am OUTRAGED at PM Howard and Senator Hill placing our country so squarely into the threatening attack on Iraq, when a mass of opinion polls have so clearly shown that 80-90+ per cent of the Australian population are absolutely against such involvement without a United Nations Security Council decision.

I naively believed that Australia was a democracy!

WHAT do we have to DO to make John Howard and Robert Hill REALISE that they must TAKE SOME ACCOUNT of public opinion?

On ABC radio this morning, when Mr Howard was asked how he would withdraw our troops if the UN did not sanction an attack, he continually dodged the question without answering it.

WHEN IS THE NEXT ELECTION??

Irene Gale AM.  
Adelaide, SA

## Howard supports Iraq nuke war

John Howard must be ignorant or just kidding when he tells us that he would not have sent Australian troops if the US was prepared to use nuclear weapons against Iraq (Sydney Morning Herald, 24-1-03).

The US Nuclear Posture Review states: "Desired capabilities for nuclear weapons systems in flexible, adaptable strike plans include options for variable and reduced yields, high accuracy, and timely employment.

"These capabilities would help deter enemy use of WMD [weapons of mass destruction] or limit collateral damage, should the United States have to defeat enemy WMD capabilities." (p. 48).

The report specifically identifies the use of nuclear weapons against deeply buried and hardened weapons of mass destruction bunkers and identifies seven countries including Iraq as potential targets.

Now that Mr Howard is aware that our troops may be involved in nuclear war will he recall them?

Gareth W R Smith  
Byron Bay, NSW

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## Culture & Life

Have you noticed how the people of Iraq have more or less disappeared from our TV screens and newspapers? The country seems to be inhabited only by Saddam Hussein and the Republican Guard.

by Rob Gowland

Iraq on TV appears to be an uninhabited desert with "Presidential palaces" scattered about the sands in splendid isolation like the forts in those old movies about the French Foreign Legion.

Cynical people, or those with experience of US propaganda techniques from previous conflicts, might think that this less than truthful picture is a deliberate policy. And they'd be right.

In anticipation of war with Iraq, the US leadership is naturally at pains to ensure that the enemy does not have a human face, especially not the face of a child or its mother.

So they are busy making the Iraqi population invisible in the mass media. We are not going to war with the people of Iraq but with Saddam Hussein. But it's the Iraqi people who will do the dying.

Even the US Census Bureau (hardly an unbiased source) admits that the last time a Bush administration went to war with Iraq on behalf of US oil companies "Iraq probably suffered 145,000 dead – 40,000 military and 5,000 civilian deaths during the war and 100,000 postwar deaths because of violence and health conditions" (quoted by the *Los Angeles Times*).

"The war also produced more than 5 million refugees. Subse-

quent sanctions were estimated to have killed more than half a million Iraqi children, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and other international bodies" (*LA Times* again).

That's the way to wage a war, eh? Pulverise 'em from afar with missiles and high-level bombing, pound 'em with long range artillery and incinerate 'em with new generation petrol bombs each of which creates a football-field-sized inferno when it explodes. Oh yes!

But of course we only hit military targets, don't we? Indeed, the precision of US "smart bombs" and missiles is almost an article of faith today, so often are we shown images of "surgical strikes" on specific buildings.

The USA's arsenal of formidable weapons are uniquely capable of seeking out enemy soldiers (and "terrorists", of course) while leaving all others unharmed.

Almost the only images of actual warfare seen during the Gulf War were gloating pictures of "smart missiles" taking out designated buildings. They were presented like a computer game, with care being taken to avoid any suggestion that there were people in the buildings.

Once again, the image was essentially false. "While American [and Australian] TV repeatedly broadcast pictures of cruise missiles homing in on their targets, the Pentagon quietly went about a campaign of carpet bombing", notes the mass circulation daily *LA Times*.

"Of the 142,000 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq and Kuwait in 43 days, only about 8 percent were of the 'smart' variety."

Shorn of the sophisticated spin-doctoring and image-management that an army of US propagandists and psy-war operatives have given it, the US propaganda position can be summarised very simply:

"There are no ordinary people in Iraq, just evil military types and fanatical terrorists. They are armed

with weapons of mass destruction hidden in a cupboard under the stairs which we can't find because apparently they keep moving it. This is not very sporting of them, but what can you expect of foreigners who don't go to a regular church?"

From the Pentagon's point of view, waging war at a distance with devastating weapons has a distinct advantage. Your soldiers do not have to confront the reality and enormity of their own acts.

One way to prevent this is to convince then that the enemy is sub-human, undeserving of sympathy or the normal exercise of humanitarian concepts. The Nazis exemplified this in WW2.

In the post-WW2 wars against the various national liberation struggles – in Malaysia, the Philippines, Kenya, you name it – reaching their zenith in Vietnam, Western governments assiduously pursued the policy of racist demonisation of the enemy while brutalising their own soldiers ("turning men into beasts", as Soviet film director Mikhail Romm put it).

But in Korea and Vietnam they also tried to have as much of the killing as possible done by forces that were not in actual contact with enemy troops (let alone civilians). Battleships were brought out of mothballs to stand offshore and pound inland targets.

Aircraft from carriers and Japan flew to points designated by radar and dropped bombs on targets they could not even see. It was impersonal, there was no blood, there were no visible victims of any sort.

There was an episode of *MASH* shown not so long ago in which Hawkeye encounters a US flyer whose plane had crash-landed. While making his way back to Tokyo the pilot told the *MASH* folk what a good war he was having (living it up in Tokyo, popping over to designated target zones to drop a load of bombs then back to Tokyo for cocktails).



Absent in mass media – the human face of the Iraqi people

*MASH* and Alan Alda being what they were, of course Hawkeye took the gung-ho pilot for a tour of the operating room, to show him war up close and personal. That was only a TV show, and the experience was not nearly as horrifying as the reality would have been, but it is not an experience the Pentagon wants repeated, especially in real life.

Iraq is a populated country; war will kill tens of thousands of men,

women and children, and will physically and mentally maim tens of thousands more.

The poster for the No War Rally and March on Sunday February 16 in Sydney is a photo of an Iraqi girl or young woman, a victim of the Gulf War or the regular Anglo-US bombing since then.

She gazes out sadly at the passer by, one of her arms a mere stump. The poster encapsulates the reality of Bush and Howard's war. ☹

**Rob Gowland**  
previews

**ABC & SBS public television programs**

Sun February 2~  
~ Sat February 8

Near the end of September, 1965, the Indonesian military, with US and British backing, was preparing for a coup against President Sukarno of Indonesia. His influence among the non-aligned countries and relationship with the Indonesian Communist Party – PKI – was just too much for Washington in particular. The PKI attempted to arrest the military brass leading a coup attempt, hoping thereby to persuade a reluctant Sukarno to act against the military before it was too late.

It all went wrong, and the arrested Generals ended up dead. Other army leaders like Suharto took advantage of the convenient deaths to accuse the PKI of attempting a coup! The Army launched a savage attack on the “plotters”, massacring 500,000 people in a fortnight.

Sukarno was duly ousted and replaced by the pro-US Suharto. CIA involvement in the coup has never been confirmed but in *Shadowplay: Indonesia's Year Of Living Dangerously* (SBS 8.30pm, Sunday) communiqués from American, British and Australian diplomats reveal their readiness to back the army against the PKI.

This included complicity in the propaganda war waged by the Indonesian army (disinformation we would call it today). The US ambassador in 1965 writes, “What happened is still obscure but we can help shape events to our advantage ... spread the story of PKI guilt, treachery and brutality”.

The US Government also provided financial assistance and detailed lists of PKI leaders to the army. In instructions to Radio Australia on media coverage the Australian ambassador directed, “Do not suggest that the army is acting alone against the PKI – I can live with this even if we must be a bit dishonest for a while”.

And, reminding us that controlling news began long before the Gulf War, reports from journalists on the ground in Indonesia were suppressed or reinterpreted as describing a civil war instead of a one-sided massacre.

The program, an SBS Independent production directed by Chris Hilton, interviews Colonel Abdul Latief, the only surviving member of the Communists' anti-coup 30<sup>th</sup> September Movement within the military. He reaffirms that the rebel soldiers never intended to kill the generals but to bring them before Sukarno – to face charges of plotting a coup.

Even now, more than 30 years later, efforts to rehabilitate some of those murdered by the military and buried in mass graves provoke violent resistance.

Nevertheless, Indonesian, American and Australian diplomats and journalists are amongst those who provide powerful testimonies on the hidden history of this era which continues to reverberate in Indonesian politics today.

The grandeur that was Ancient Egypt was built on – and by – slave labour. Varying forms of forced labour ensured sufficient production of staple goods and food to enable large numbers of the populace to be diverted into designing, constructing and decorating palaces, public buildings and, of course, royal tombs.

It sustained an army that brought in great wealth and tribute, as well as more slaves, and allowed the privileged (and the priestly) to develop art and culture, learning and science.

In studying this period, however, it is the few who sat at the top of this hierarchy who are remembered, while the masses who created



Not much room for character development (*Welcher And Welcher*)

their wealth and power are nameless ciphers.

SBS begins repeating this week its sumptuous three-part series, Egypt's *Golden Empire* (SBS 7.30pm Tuesdays). The series begins around 1580BCE (as we say these days – BC is no longer acceptable in hip historical circles), with the struggle of the King of Thebes to prevent Egypt from going completely down the drain and being split up.

He was so successful that over the next 300 years Egypt again became a mighty empire, despite its ruling class being rent by vicious family squabbles and religious upheavals. For armchair Egyptologists this is a must.

For the rest of you, the series did win the Special Jury Prize at the San Francisco Film Festival. So take a peek.

If you were wondering where all those Al Qaeda soldiers

who were infesting Afghanistan according to President Bush went when the US forces overran their “mountain hideouts”, *The Cutting Edge: In Search Of Al Qaeda* (SBS 8.30pm Tuesday) claims to have the answer.

It seems they simply went over the mountains to Pakistan, into “tribal areas” where conveniently the Pakistani army claims not to be able to go. Martin Smith, a producer for the US Public Broadcasting Service's *Frontline* program, claims al Qaida is gaining ground, and support.

I find PBS very often acts as a discrete mouthpiece for the US Government amongst “thinking Americans”. After travelling to the Middle East, Pakistan and Europe, Smith reports: “We discovered that Al Qaeda is more than an army of terrorists.”

“It's an idea about how to hurt the West. And it's an idea that is taking hold with more and more people in

countries as disparate as the United Kingdom and Yemen.” Half of Al Qaeda's foot soldiers are allegedly from Yemen.

Smith goes to Yemen and “finds that Yemen, the ancestral home of Osama bin Laden, has been sending young boys to fight the jihad since the early 1980s”. But that was the jihad against the Soviet Union, the jihad the US instigated and funded and armed, a fact Smith seems to have forgotten.

He has also forgotten that South (PDR)Yemen at least was for a time pursuing a socialist course of development, a process that was derailed in bloodshed by the same combination of US and British-backed feudals and fundamentalist clerics that was also used in Afghanistan.

*Welcher And Welcher* (ABC 8.30pm Thursdays) is a new sitcom about husband and wife lawyers. The husband is played by Shaun Micallef.

It's an OK entertainment, let down by its writing. The publicity for the program gives us a clue: Micallef's character is “a pompous, accident-prone fool and a terrible lawyer to boot”.

That does not leave much room for character development, and confronts the viewer with the puzzling question, why would his smart, principled, clever, sympathetic lawyer wife (played by Robyn Butler) ever have married this berk?

I actually counted the laughs in the first episode, and you should not be able to do that.

I have not seen any of the new series of *Silent Witness* (ABC 9.30pm Fridays), but on past experience of this series it should be well worth a look. ☺

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# Life behind the wall of fire

**Fire balls. Twenty metre flame walls roaring into suburbs. A city in tatters. Over 530 homes burned to the ground, many more damaged. The sewerage processing plant, Mt Stromlo Observatory, a power station, churches, schools and recreational areas, all destroyed. This is the big picture.**

by Sarah Lyons

It didn't happen the way it sounded. It was not a fire for the movies. There was no clear beginning, middle or end. No hero triumphant.

Each household saw the fire differently, and handled it differently. It was only when we had time to stop and live again that we started comparing stories. And we exchanged the stories in an entirely different coming together, one that is still happening. Our city is turning into a village.

There have been fires in the mountain ranges for a while. Southern Canberra was used to a veil of smoke and news about fragile ecosystems being destroyed. So when the air was smokier on Saturday our first reaction was unhappy, but not overly concerned. The sky was, during the morning, a dirty white cover tinged with stale smoke. Then it grew darker and the clouds changed to a grimy orange, then almost an ochre colour.

In the early afternoon, it became a deep red, and people in my suburb went outside to investigate. We got out hoses and buckets. An alert was run across the bottom of the television screen just before 5 pm warning that certain suburbs were on fire alert. All of these suburbs were just the other side of the mountain, so we kept an eye on things, but did not panic.

Then embers started to rain down. Bigger embers in some areas. The closer you were to Mt Taylor and Oakey Ridge, the more debris in the air. The yellow and black air – patterned by the fire's refuse. And that wind! It gusted and swirled, changing direction every other minute. We brought out more hoses, and tubs of water. A new garden recreation became hitting spot fires with buckets of water before they could spread.

We talked to each other. For some, this is when we discovered the extent of the fires for the first time, since not everyone affected has a direct view of Mt Taylor.

The red sky was the reflection of the flames in the clouds. The whole mountain was alive with fire. Tolkien's Mt Doom. All we needed was Frodo and the One Ring.

Some people evacuated, quietly, without fanfare. Those who didn't were often short on concrete knowledge of what was happening. All we knew was the strange air and the embers. The world had shrunk without us knowing. Tiny clusters of worried people swapped gossip.

## A night without stars

It was a night without stars, and almost without breathable air. And it was only mid-afternoon.

When the sky lightened to deep red again, people moved. Some people in our area moved straight to the fire front. Groups of teenage boys grabbed their family shovels and helped bury embers to prevent the fire spreading.

Other people moved to the properties where horses were kept and shifted the horse to safety, one by one.

Still more people collected blankets and clothes and delivered them to the evacuation centres. Except to the Phillip one, which was evacuated itself. Only the frail, the elderly, children and asthmatics were confined indoors, vulnerable and disempowered. For these people, the world was still tiny.

Another message appeared across the bottom of the TV screen, announcing an emergency bulletin at 5.45 pm. The TV station didn't interrupt the important repeat of a program on Princess Diana. So TV watchers waited to see what we should do. Radio-listeners were already out and about, helping fight the fires, or evacuated.

Our area may never know what that emergency bulletin said. We lost power shortly after 5 pm, when the power station was destroyed. Three homes in another suburb burned when a transponder exploded. The explosion could only be heard locally, because of the winds. But gas tanks exploded, so our sound horizon was punctuated by short sharp bursts of sound.

When these fell silent, we had light again. Murky, but still light. The world was suddenly new, and peaceful. The sky was the clearest it had been all day. Then the sun set.



Each household saw the fire differently, and handled it differently.

## The sun set

Many suburbs were evacuated by then – at least 5000 people were homeless, we are told. These people are mostly not telling their stories yet. These are the people who would not know for at least 24 hours if they had a home to return to.

But for the rest of us, in the suburbs that were threatened rather than destroyed, it was a strange evening. Some houses were empty. Cars were fewer than they had been. There were no traffic lights and no bird noises.

The lights in the car yards in Phillip came on for a time, and the people living closest joked about sitting in the murky air and watching outdoors TV. When these faded, there was no light. Except, faintly visible, a dark pink moon.

With many telephones out, no power, and a surprising shortage of radios, many of us fumbled in the dark for candles and torches. Some neighbours knocked on doors, offering candles for those who didn't have them. Some neighbours even knocked on doors offering chocolates.

During the early part of the evening quite a few people paid visits. So many of us have been surprised this week into the comment, "I spent

the evening with neighbours I hadn't ever spoken with till now."

The later part of the evening was dark and alone. We drew together for comfort where we could. Families grew from two to five or from four to eight to accommodate friends from Duffy or Chapman. People played cards, chatted, read by torchlight. Almost no-one slept. The smell of smoke was far too close. The grittiness of it had crept through our closed windows and into our pores.

And that was Saturday on the slopes of Mt Taylor.

On Sunday there was another rash of doorknocks. Those who had operational telephones handled non-stop calls as the rest of the universe rang in. We have all swapped stories about calls from Japan, New Zealand, the USA, the UK.

The phone calls were expected but nice. They brought us back from our tiny worlds into a bigger world.

## The doorknocks

But it was the doorknocks that were extraordinary. We updated each other on what things had looked like on Saturday – whether the family had stood on the roof of their house to watch the pattern of the fire, or watched from the street. Or been unable to watch at all.

We discovered and explored the size of what we had been through. We were in shock. We were crying. We were angry. Each of us handled Sunday differently.

Except that all of us shared. Households without radios suddenly had one from a friend or neighbour. People with too much milk gave to people with big families and no milk. People with cars found neighbours without and took them to buy imperishables and water and batteries.

Some lucky souls who had power 24 hours after the blackout, started a new trend. Instead of pot luck din-

ners with friends, we had refrigerator luck dinners. We shared items that were still edible but needed finishing. There were some very odd menus.

These doorknocks have set the pattern for the week. The frail and the isolated have found that they are watched out for and helped. Those who can't drive are given lifts to the shops or stay with friends. We all chronicle who we know and help find out if people are safe, and if they still have houses. And if the houses are insured.

A new Canberra preoccupation is thinking how many clothes we actually need, how many household goods we actually use, and how many should be given away to those with no house insurance. It is not charity. It is friendship.

More than that, it is a remarkable solidarity – Canberra is a village right now. An unusual village. The golf course and at least one recreation centre are harbouring horses. The Dinosaur Museum has a healthy crop of children being minded for free. Some offices have cats hiding under desks, waiting to be allowed home. Some hotels have free accommodation for the stranded, and many more private houses have retained their new extended families. And the Canberra public service has been a tower of strength, moving us from catastrophe to normalcy at an extraordinary pace.

There are big struggles to come. Many of our industries are in severe trouble. Canberra now knows exactly how a pine tree explodes when subject to extreme heat. We have yet to find out how to deal with the job loss from the loss of four fifths of our plantation pines. Canberrans, however, are becoming very skilled at working and living as a close community. Maybe we can stay a village, to help us with the challenges of reconstruction. ☘

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