



ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance —

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Conformity is one of the most fundamental dishonesties of all. When we reject our specialness, water down our God-given individuality and uniqueness, we begin to lose our freedom. The conformist is in no way a free man. He has to follow the herd."

- Norman Vincent Peale

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? by Eric D. Butler:

When Israeli Prime Minister Rabin indicated before the last Israeli elections that the time had come when the Israelis must be prepared to make some concessions in order to reach some agreement with the Palestinians, he was reflecting the mood of a growing number of Israelis who have become tired of a situation which required young Israelis to risk their lives in an endeavour to control rebellious Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Every realistic student of Middle East affairs has always agreed that there was no possibility of genuine peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian problem was tackled. The Palestinian people were dispossessed of the land in which they had lived for over a thousand years. The fact that this dispossession was endorsed by the United Nations has incensed the whole of the Moslem world for nearly half a century. It has resulted in a number of anti-Israeli terrorists who have believed that the only way to destroy Israel was to use the same type of terrorist tactics which the Zionists have used against the Palestinians.

When Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat made his dramatic appearance at the U.N. General Assembly in 1974, he said, "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. I repeat, do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." This statement was a clear signal that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation under his leadership was prepared to abandon the unrealistic objective of regaining control of Palestine through armed struggle. However Yasser Arafat is viewed, he must be

described as a survivor blessed with a lot of good luck, including the survival of a number of assassination attempts and several serious accidents. While the official Israeli attitude has been to condemn Arafat as a terrorist leader with whom they could have no contact, eventually, as is now known, the Israelis were engaged in a series of private talks with Arafat in Norway. Both sides are taking big risks: Large numbers of Israelis, including religious leaders, have condemned the proposal that Israel withdraw from the Gaza Strip and allow Palestinian self-rule in Jericho, while Arafat has to face widespread criticism amongst the Palestinians. Jewish settlers in the occupied territories have also threatened violence.

Whatever the outcome of the Arafat-Israeli peace plan, it can be predicted with certainty that it is not going to usher in an era of peace and stability in the Middle East. Long term students of Political Zionism have always stressed that the establishment of the State of Israel was not an end in itself, but part of an on-going international programme. From its beginning Israel has been an artificial State sustained by economic blood transfusions from abroad, primarily from the U.S.A. and Germany. After the initial shock of the establishment of the State of Israel by violence, moderate Arab leaders indicated that they were prepared to accept Israel as a small independent State in the Middle East. But Israel's blatant expansionary policies created an image of Israel being little more than the tool of an aggressive international Zionist movement. Moderation in the Arab world was replaced with the type of leadership thrown up in Iraq and Iran.

One of the major facts of today's world is the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism, strongly based in Iran, which is fundamentally anti-Western and anti-Zionist. The leaders of Islamic fundamentalism bluntly charge that the Western world is corrupt and a creature of the Zionist enemy. Only the Western world can meet this charge by demonstrating that it is determined to return to its own historical roots and to espouse the cause of nationalism against internationalism.

DIVISIVE MABO DEBATE CONTINUES by David Thompson:

The Prime Minister's draft Mabo legislation, as he admits himself, will certainly not please everyone. The fact is that it pleases few of those primarily interested, including the Aborigines, since it fails to give them a veto over mining. In effect, as we have warned from the beginning, Keating's legislation is a thinly disguised threat to the sovereignty of the States. Western Australian Premier Richard Court is strongly critical of the Keating proposals, and it appears likely that Western Australia may mount a High Court challenge over the Commonwealth's attempt to take control of the States' constitutional right to control over land. The Commonwealth is relying upon the 1967 referendum giving it control over Aboriginal affairs, and the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act to dispossess the States.

Mr. Keating's National Native Title Tribunal system also threatens the States. He proposes that the States be forced to conform to his model tribunal, or be over-ruled in their own State by his own Federal model. As Premier Groom points out, each State should have some influence on who serves on the Keating tribunal, simply to protect their own constitutional interests. Professor Geoffrey Walker proposes the same principle be applied to the High Court, which caused the Mabo problem in the first place.

The Prime Minister's Tribunal system proposes to "screen" claimants for native title, in order to establish their bona fides before claims are heard. As yet it is unclear exactly how claims would be judged as legitimate. Some questions are unanswered: Who is an Aborigine? Are only full-blooded Aborigines eligible to claim? Are part Aborigines eligible? How much Aboriginal ancestry is required to establish the legitimacy of claimants, and can part-Aboriginal people claim the protection of the Racial Discrimination Act if they are regarded as "not Aboriginal enough" to establish their legitimacy to claim? Can non-Aboriginal Australians resort to the same Act if they are regarded as ineligible to lay any claims? These are the questions that must be answered if the Prime Minister is at all serious about reconciliation.

The mining industry is understandably critical of the new draft. One of the most incredible sections of it provides for the right of "claimants to native title" to negotiate with miners applying for a new mining lease. At present, only those with proven title to land may object to leases being granted, and even then only on narrow grounds. In addition, such a provision even encourages more outrageous native title claims than previously if "claimants" can negotiate with miners.

IS THE HIGH COURT SOVEREIGN? Premier Court raises other questions not spelt out by the Keating legislation; how much compensation is to be awarded to "Aborigines" when native title is extinguished, and who will pay it? The proposed Act will provide incentives for many new "ambit claims" for native title - claims which will be funded by the Commonwealth - but no provision is made for others to defend themselves against such claims. Mr. Michael Mansell, described as a spokesman for Aborigines who attended the Eva Valley conference in August, condemns the draft as being too flexible, and offers too many opportunities for the States to frustrate Aboriginal claims. He is especially critical of Richard Court and W.A., noting that "Premier Court refuses to accept native title in W.A.....".

Richard Court, and many others, do challenge the validity of what is really revolutionary High Court ruling on the Mabo issue. Hugh Morgan, for example, makes the following telling point in his address to the Victorian State R.S.L. Conference on June 30th:

"In 1951, when the High Court of Sir Owen Dixon found that the Menzies Government's legislation banning the Communist Party was unconstitutional, Mr. Menzies did not waste the time of the Privy Council. He

took the High Court decision to the Australian people, and asked them to amend the Constitution so as to enable Parliament to pass constitutionally acceptable legislation."

The referendum result went against Menzies (narrowly) who then had to abandon the attempt to ban the Communists. But the point Morgan makes is that "argument that the High Court is Absolute Sovereign, and enjoys some sort of divine right to legislate is total nonsense. The Australian people are above the Court, and if a High Court decision contains within it the capacity to grievously divide the nation, ... sooner or later the High Court will have to be over-ruled, if necessary, through an amendment to the Constitution...".

This is the issue that Keating bluntly refuses to address. It could yet undo him completely, as any attempt to impose an unpalatable and completely unprecedented entity such as native title upon a large majority of Australians who bitterly resent it, is doomed to failure.

CURRENCY NEEDS RUDDER: Mr. Alan Wood, Economics Editor of The Australian, presents what we consider to be a clear and straightforward picture of the current "drive" on the Australian Dollar. From The Weekend Australian, September 4th-5th, part only of article:-

"The problems that have driven the dollar to a record low can be summed up quite simply: overseas investors have decided we are a country without an effective government.

"There are disturbing parallels with the MX missile crisis that hit the Hawke Government and the dollar in the mid-1980s.

"The essence of that crisis was a perception that a Labor Government that foreign investors had decided was conservative and stable had suddenly become radical and erratic when the Left rolled Bob Hawke and rejected U.S. plans for MX missile facilities in Australia.

"This time around, too, they are alarmed by a Government that they thought they knew suddenly losing control of its policy agenda, with power switching to Senate minorities and the unions.

"The Reserve Bank has so far responded in the same way it has to every political shock in the 1990s - by intervening in the foreign exchange market to support the currency and avoid a collapse of the dollar"

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