



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.33, No.34

September 5th, 1997

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Two of the great policies active in history are religion, and power; and these are sometimes in association, and sometimes opposed – militant religion, or religion in restraint of power. But perhaps the most easily discernible policy is national power. There is, however, another policy, much less discernible, which stands opposed to national power: international power. It known by its manifestation, but the organisation which sustains it is much less easily discovered than in the case of a nation . . . At first sight, militant national power appears to be the major force in history; but if there is a power which can bring nations into military conflict, it is a superior power."*

– Dr. Bryan Monahan in *The Moving Storm*

WHY WORRY ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY? by Eric D. Butler:

The subject of foreign policy is not one which readily excites the interests of the average man, who is much more likely to be concerned about whether he is likely to lose his job, and his income, or whether his children are going to obtain work when they leave school. But such bread-and-butter issues are linked, both directly and indirectly to the type of foreign policy being pursued by a government. Although the rise of "Hansonism" has been the result of nationalism, with the major parties being forced to create the **perception** that they are softening their stance on immigration and tariffs, internationalism is still the dominant philosophy. This philosophy still permeates the thinking of the elitists endorsing internationalism, although there is evidence to suggest that they are concerned that John Howard still has latent nationalist tendencies. Commenting on the Federal Government's Foreign and Trade White Paper, Paul Kelly of the internationalist Rupert Murdoch paper, *The Australian*, expresses some doubts about John Howard who, according to Paul Kelly, has a "blinkerred" view of Australia's future.

Foreign policy is one which concerns the long term future of a nation. Without such a policy, a nation cannot survive in time. As distinct from a politician whose view of the future does not extend beyond how to win the next elections, a statesman is one who is concerned with the long view of history. A realistic foreign policy must, of course, attempt to ensure that foreign policy is sustained by domestic policies. A disastrous domestic policy can wreck a foreign policy. History provides many examples of this. British foreign policy was traditionally based on a strong deep-sea navy, behind which British communities around the world could develop, while a balance of power was supported to prevent the threat of one centralised power dominating Europe. It was this type of policy which eventually destroyed Napoleon.

But a deep flaw in British domestic policy nearly brought the British to disaster during the First World War. Confident that the dominance of the British navy would ensure that relatively cheap supplies of

food could be obtained from British colonies around the world, the British were seduced by the philosophy of Free Trade and permitted British agriculture to decay. A few farsighted British leaders warned of the folly of this policy. The framers of British foreign policy did not foresee the emergence of the submarine as a major instrument of naval warfare. German submarines played havoc with British shipping during the First World War and brought the British to a position where they were faced with defeat because of the difficulty of feeding themselves. Most of the other disasters which the British have suffered since the First World War can be traced back to a fatal domestic policy decision made last century.

One of the major features of the White Paper released by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer is that Australia must maximise its economic integration with East Asia. But at the very moment that Australia's foreign policy makers are clinging to the view that Australia's future must be linked with the "booming" economies of Asia, the much publicised "Asian Tigers" are starting to develop serious problems with their economies. There is no evidence that these problems are going to become less. It is a policy of national suicide for Australia to place itself at the mercy of what is happening, or likely to happen, in Asia. Needless to say, there is not the slightest evidence in the White Paper that its authors have a understanding of the flaw in modern finance-economic systems, flaws which must lead to mounting tensions between the Asian nations as they strive to solve their internal problems by "export drives". The Chinese factor is a major one and internal tensions inside China will lead inevitably to Communist China concentrating on the necessity to regain control of Taiwan to provide the traditional tactics of an external diversion. The shape of things to come has been signalled by the Japanese, who are now endorsing Beijing's "One China" policy.

The Foreign Policy White Paper devotes relatively little attention to the question of adequate military defence for Australia. Probably for reasons of diplomacy, and a fear of losing export markets, there is no outline of the massive build up of the Chinese military forces. Genuine Australian statesmen would be attempting to ensure that in any crisis in the future, Australia has adequate military capacity to defend itself. This is an appropriate time to draw attention also to the massive military build up in India, where militant Hinduism has emerged as a major force. Shapers of British foreign policy were once advised to study big maps. Australians would be well advised to do likewise and contemplate a big Indian navy operating in the Indian Ocean.

As Australia faces the next century it must take serious stock of what kind of a nation it is envisioned will continue into the future. The foreign policies of all Australia's Asian neighbours envisages these Asian nations growing into the future rooted in their own distinctive cultures and institutions. One of the major threats to Australia's future is the philosophy undergirding multiculturalism and internationalism. Lamenting what he sees as some of the flaws in the White Paper, internationalist Paul Kelly states that by implication the Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper says that "as Australia's relative power declines its future rests upon its successful integration into the region". Such an "integration" can only mean the eventual death of traditional Australia. It remains to be seen how many of the nation's political representatives are prepared to challenge what can only be described as a policy of progressive surrender to an alien philosophy.

VICTORIAN WARNING ON PRIVATISATION by David Thompson:

The social carnage that accompanies hard-line economic rationalism is gaining increasing recognition in areas where public infrastructure has been "privatised". Last weekend N.S.W. Young Labor overwhelmingly condemned the State (A.L.P.) Government's proposal to privatise the N.S.W. electricity industry at their annual conference. The main concerns were job losses, and the impact on rural communities.

The unions in N.S.W. have been placing increasing pressure on the A.L.P. Government to abandon privatisation. They warn that parts of regional N.S.W. that rely on the power industry will become employment wastelands, dotted with ghost towns if the industry is privatised.

The experience in Victoria tends to support the union assertions. Late last month 10 N.S.W. Government backbenchers spent two days in the Latrobe Valley, where they learned the results of the Victorian privatisation. The Sydney M.P's. were prepared for some of the negative social effects of privatisation, but were staggered by their scope and depth.

Delegation leader Ian Macdonald said, "What we've found . . . is the tremendous despair that's been caused by the loss of 8,000 jobs in a very short period of time in the Valley." He is quoted by local newspaper, *The Express* (21/8/97), as saying that the unemployment had had a "roll-on effect", with large numbers of shop closures, small business closures, youth suicide, 70 percent youth unemployment and a high divorce rate.

When the N.S.W. delegation found in Gippsland made them fear for regions like the Hunter in N.S.W., where privatisation would be just as devastating. The N.S.W. committee examining privatisation in N.S.W. has been forced to concede that of the 13,500 power industry workers, around 4,000 would lose their jobs.

The Gippsland experience of "privatisation" is a bitter one, where the "restructuring" of the S.E.C. included the intimidation of unwanted employees into leaving the industry. Surplus workers were herded into work sheds, and given little useful work for months on end, until boredom drove many to take up departure packages.

The delegation was told that those employees who took up retrenchment packages early in the restructuring process had paid off mortgages, and bought vehicles, but had not found alternative employment. By 1995, many were destitute, finding that the value of their property had slumped. Domestic violence had become common, along with other social problems like marriage breakdown and suicide.

The N.S.W. proposal to privatise had not included consultation with A.L.P. M.P's. or the party room, and was made against the feelings of the A.L.P. membership. Ian Macdonald now vows that M.P's. would go to the A.L.P. Annual Conference in October and speak against privatisation.

The irony of the N.S.W. situation is twofold. First, the planning for privatisation took place under a Keating A.L.P. Government, who fostered the Hilmer Report, and the National Competition Policy, right against the interests of traditional A.L.P. voters. This was one of the reasons that Keating's leadership was rejected so savagely in March 1996.

Secondly, there appears to be no **opposition** to privatisation in N.S.W. except from the grassroots, and through the unions. The Coalition parties have meekly accepted the Keating agenda of privatisation, and only opposed some of the mechanics of it. The weakness of the Collins Coalition on industry policy is pathetic and encourages Premier Carr to press ahead for privatisation. The Victorian Shadow-Minister for Energy & Resources, Peter Loney, summed up the Gippsland experience: *"There is a lack of trust that now exists in the community in the political process, and a great feeling that they (in Gippsland) have been sacrificed essentially for nothing."*

THE END OF A TRAGIC LIFE: The death of the Princess of Wales highlights a struggle faced in principle by each person confronted by technology as a threat. For Diana, the telephoto lens that probed and pried into every instant of privacy became an unbearable tyranny. It appears that it was largely this tyranny that led to her destruction. But as with all technology, the telephoto lens is merely a tool, and it is the hands in which the tool was used that must be accountable.

It would appear almost certain that the Princess' death will lead to new restrictions placed upon the British press concerning harassment of the individual, and personal privacy. This will be ironic, considering that the pursuit of the Princess was not confined to Britain, and the accident took place in Paris. This tragedy might serve some purpose if it leads to a constructive reassessment of the role of the press as a servant of the individual, rather than his master.

In his Harvard address in 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn had the following to say about the press: *"What sort of responsibility does a journalist have to his readers or to history? . . . The press can stimulate public opinion and mis-educate it. Thus we may see terrorists turned into heroes, or secret matters pertaining to one's nation's defence publicly revealed, or we may witness shameless intrusions on the privacy of well-known people under the slogan 'Everyone is entitled to know everything'. But this is a false slogan, characterised by a false era: people also have the right not to know, and it is a much more valuable one. The right not to have their divine souls stuffed with gossip, nonsense, vain talk . . . "*

The demise of the Princess of Wales obviously has constitutional implications, especially for the British, and perhaps for Australians. Does this affect the Prince of Wales' position as heir to the Australian throne, and possible desire to re-marry?

In personal terms, the Princess' death is obviously a terribly tragedy, particularly to her sons. In political and constitutional terms, it is one of what C.H. Douglas termed the "unrehearsed events of history".

WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN? The continuing determination to destroy the Independent Member for Oxley, either urged or led by the press, should be treated with no less disgust than the pursuit of the Princess of Wales by photographers. The motivation might be different, but the perversion of the role of the press is the same.

Those high-profile business and political leaders who demand Pauline Hanson's "destruction" display an alarming arrogance. The viciously anti-Hanson political leaders refuse to acknowledge that **many other Australians support Hanson's views**. There is a dangerous assumption that once Hanson is destroyed, the views she expresses will just "go away". This is not "leadership" – this is totalitarianism, especially when such "leaders" have been elected to represent the views of others.

The self-righteous business leaders who condemn Hanson do so largely from self-interest. They wail about how "Australian" trade and commercial interests are being damaged in "Asia" although there is little hard evidence of this. What they really mean is that **their** business interests **might** be affected by an entirely legitimate discussion about matters of culture in Australia. These business leaders are poorly equipped to argue the case for the preservation and protection of Australian culture, and lack the courage to attempt it. As such, they suffer from a crisis of moral courage, and seek to blame someone else for their refusal to face the issue. Their only answer is "crush Pauline Hanson" – and ignore her supporters.