



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"Every observant visitor to the newly Balkanized Africa can report, though he is more likely to do so privately than in public, that the primary content of independence of many of the nationalist leaders is a car and a chauffeur, a new house with servants, a bevy of mistresses, and plenty of beer and champagne consumed nightly in public competition with rivals to see who can finish with the largest number of empty bottles on his cafe table. Kwane Nkrumah may be 'Mr. Prime Minister' in speeches to the United Nations, but at home his fellow citizens who wish to stay out of jail do well to remember that he is Osaagyefo, the Redeemer. Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, the apple of many a liberal eye, had a law enacted requiring all vehicles going in either direction to pull to the side of the road and stop when he and his retinue of white-garbed security guards come in sight."*

– June Burnham in *Suicide of the West* (1964)

THE GROWING THREAT FROM THE NORTH by Eric D. Butler:

Some of the more realistic writers are expressing the opinion that the worst has yet to come throughout an Asia gripped by crisis. It is certainly clear that the International Monetary Fund, which, both directly and indirectly, has been responsible for the crisis, has no constructive suggestions to make. Some of its proposals, such as the removal of consumer subsidies on food and other basic items in Indonesia, are similar to throwing petrol on a fire. One of the major features of growing economic and social convulsions around the world is big shifts in populations. Desperate and semi-starving people automatically start to move to areas which they feel offer some security. Such movements produce conflicts between different racial and cultural groups. The shape of things to come is manifesting itself in Asia as Malaysia seeks to deal with the growing tide of illegal Indonesian immigrants. Reports state that while the Malaysian police had been able to detain boatloads of Indonesians they have admitted that large numbers of Indonesians were able to evade their patrols. Some of the Indonesians have openly admitted that they want to be arrested by the Malaysians, stressing that it was better to eat rice in Malaysian jails than to try to survive on sweet potatoes or tapioca in their own villages. Singapore police express fears that the Asian economic crisis will result in a crime wave.

Growing numbers of the hard pressed Chinese ethnic minority in Indonesia are already seeking to move to Australia. As the Asians' economic crisis deepens, there is going to be a growing stream of boat refugees heading towards Australia. These refugees can logically argue that it is better to be fed and looked after in Australian detention centres than starve in their own country. In spite of massive Australian aid, Papua-New Guinea continues to become more unstable. Prime Minister John Howard promises that Australia will endeavour to take as many refugees as is "practical". But Australia has its own growing internal problems as those managing the Aboriginal growth industry threatens international action concerning land claims. It is instructive to note that in "liberated" Africa it is black politicians

who benefit the most from such programmes. The latest evidence is provided by Zimbabwe, where comrade Robert Mugabe and his fellow "comrades" (members of the Zimbabwe Government still refer to one another as "comrades") are now busily depriving the few remaining white farmers of their farms, these now being allocated to members of the government. The great majority of Africans are now worse off than they were when the Europeans ran the country. A combination of the liberals of the west and international finance has produced what Solzhenitsyn has described as "the betrayal of Western Civilisation". Typical of the traitors of the West was former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, the man who played such a key role in the betrayal of former Rhodesia, describing Communist terrorist Mugabe as a great "statesman". Perhaps Malcolm Fraser might at some time devote one of his boring press articles to explaining why the overwhelming majority of African leaders have been financed by international bankers, these closing their eyes to blatant corruption.

While the liberals continue to praise the benefits of multiculturalism, India's neighbours fear the bullying tactics of the recently elected Hindu Government. Pakistan, which has already fought three wars with India since the two countries were granted their independence by the United Kingdom in 1947, have charged that India was responsible for a series of bomb attacks in the volatile State of Punjab. Although it qualifies for foreign aid, India has built one of the biggest military and naval forces in the world. The new Hindu government is threatening to increase its military forces, with Pakistan responding with the threat of developing nuclear weapons.

If Australians look at a world map, they will see that Australia is on the rim of a convulsed Asia with enormous populations. Looking West across the Indian Ocean is the spectacle not only of a Hindu dominated India in conflict with a Moslem dominated Pakistan, but indirectly involved with the ongoing conflict as the Tamils seek independence from Sri Lanka. The Balkans have burst into open conflict again, with Balkan problems spilling over into multicultural Australia.

Australians have to face the reality that the convulsions of those parts of the world from which they have already taken many immigrants, are going to result in growing pressure on Australia to take more refugees from these areas. If Australia is to survive as a Western European nation it must make every effort to become independent in every way. Rather than destroy Australian primary industries by allowing the country to be flooded by production from what are virtually slave labour camps, Australia should be building up its own industries. Food can be used as a tool of international diplomacy. A regenerated Australian rural economy could offer assistance to its Asian neighbours and encourage them to resist the lash of the International Monetary Fund.

Unless Australia can put its own house in order, it must become increasingly vulnerable to international pressures which, unless checked, will eventually destroy what's left of Australian sovereignty. The next Federal elections will provide Australian patriots with the opportunity to insist that all those politicians who have contributed to Australia's present perilous situation must be replaced with genuine patriots. The sands of time are now starting to run out.

THE GUN LAWS GHOST COMES BACK by David Thompson.

It is clear that the National Party in particular is feeling the electoral 'heat' on an issue that they had been assured would 'fade away' before the politicians who betrayed their constituents most comprehensively had to face re-election. It has always been our view that these politicians would have a price to pay, especially in Queensland, where the National Party could have refused to be a party to "uniform national gun laws", but did not have the courage to hold out.

While Prime Minister Howard has largely been silent on the proposals from four States to change their firearms regulations, some of his Ministers (and, of course, the anti-gun campaigners) have been adamant that there will be no retreat on guns; "not one inch". Most adamant has been Justice Minister

Mrs. Amanda Vanstone who, as the Federal spokesman on the issue, has given many press interviews confirming that the Commonwealth would insist that the national gun laws remained in place.

But against the icy winds of electoral defeat, it is unlikely that Coalition State Ministers will keep the faith with Mr. Howard and the uniform legislation. The firearms legislation, as we have constantly pointed out, is *a State power*. If such powers are available to State governments facing electoral punishment, they will use these powers to minimise the punishment if possible. What can Mr. Howard do about it?

Mrs. Vanstone is warning that the Commonwealth can withdraw the funding for the gun buy-back scheme. But surely this has already been paid to the States? This leaves the weapon that Mr. Howard first used to force the States to an agreement on firearms. In a ruthless demand that the States comply, or lose Federal funding for budget essentials, the States buckled. This was the kind of stand-over tactic upon which the New York Mafia built an empire. It was essentially dishonest, and right against the spirit of the Constitution. If a Prime Minister was to resort to financial blackmail every time he is opposed by a Premier (or Premiers) then there is no future for the federation anyhow. The Prime Minister becomes a dictator by subterfuge.

If Mr. Howard proposes to again prevail over the Premiers on firearms, then let him do it honestly, rather than with the subterfuge of funding threats. Let him seek the legitimate use of firearms powers. The mechanism is at his disposal, and the Commonwealth Constitution clearly lays out how he can attempt to acquire the powers. It is through a change to the Constitution in which the State powers to regulate firearms are transferred to the Commonwealth by a majority of people in a majority of States by referendum.

This mechanism has always been available to Mr. Howard. Why has he not used it? He and his colleagues repeatedly claim that there is "overwhelming support" for national firearms legislation. But the history of referendums to change the Constitution shows that where the proposal will enhance the powers of politicians (in this case, in Canberra) the answer is always a resounding *NO!* vote.

If Mr. Howard cannot acquire power over firearms legislation legitimately, then let him keep out of the issue. To do otherwise endangers federation, and generates even more cynicism among electors.

RETURNING PRESIDENT SUHARTO: The Australian press has exhaustively covered the re-election of President Suharto to another five-year term as president of the Republic of Indonesia. Much has been said and written concerning endemic corruption under Suharto, with his extended family enjoying many monopoly enterprises under state patronage.

Suharto was re-appointed by the People's Consultative Assembly, consisting of 923 members allegedly 'appointed by Suharto himself'. This is not quite true, since technically the Assembly is delegated or nominated by the House of People's Representatives. This is the main legislative body, which is made up of about 360 members elected by proportional representation, and 100 others appointed by various official bodies. In addition to this, there is a Regional Council of Representatives which oversees provincial government, which is constituted along similar lines.

Indonesia, the world's fourth-largest nation, is mainly ruled by presidential decree, the president being advised by his cabinet of ministers whom he chooses. As such this is a dictatorship with elements of "democracy" in a multicultural society in which there are 200 - 300 identifiable ethnic groups, although the main groups comprise the Javanese, Sudanese and Bahasa Indonesians.

The truth of the matter is that Indonesia would be almost impossible to govern as a "democracy" because of the multitude of almost incompatible ethnic groups. The recent Indian elections have

again demonstrated that with so many ethnic groups in the one nation, any government that can be formed will be a coalition of different groups bound together by the thirst for power. Remove the element of dictatorship from Indonesia, and it is almost certain that the nation would immediately fly apart, with a period of civil war perhaps resulting.

One of the few things that helps to hold the 13,000 islands of Indonesia together is the fact that around 90% of the 190 million population is Moslem.

It has apparently escaped the attention of the press that the method of appointing Suharto to the Indonesian presidency is quite similar to the method that the Constitutional Convention adopted for the appointment of an Australian president in the proposed Australian republic. While Indonesia has the People's Consultative Assembly, the Australian Republican Movement recommends a "Nomination Consultative Committee" in its model to select the president.

No doubt this coincidence has been ignored by Australian republicans in case other less than attractive ingredients of the Indonesian republic are compared with the proposed Australian republic. As Australia becomes progressively more "multicultural" and can expect to face some of the cultural problems presently being demonstrated, we shall also face similar problems in how to govern ourselves. There is no evidence that the Indonesian system of a multi-party republic is any better than the Australian system of constitutional monarchy.

"EFFICIENCY" AND HUMAN BEINGS INCOMPATIBLE: With the Australian economy in the grip of economic rationalism, largely forced upon us with the decision to "globalise" Australia, the drive towards "efficiency" is in direct conflict with the drive towards "full employment". One area that provides a useful example is that of banking.

We were told by Prime Minister Keating at the time that the new growth areas would be in the "service industries"; information technology, computers, financial services, etc. The record to date does not bear this out. For example, the ANZ Bank is to shed 1700 employees in the drive towards "efficiency", and electronic banking. It is a sign of the dominance of The Market that, as soon as the ANZ decision was announced, the Bank's share price rose.

The new ANZ Bank Managing Director John McFarlane has an annual salary package of about \$2 million, and he was voted an options package worth \$12 million in February. Presumably this is to reward 'efficient' management in the era of electronic banking, where people are almost obsolete. This year something like 10,000 banking jobs are expected to disappear.

The combined effects of deregulation, advanced technology, competition policy and privatisation has meant that big companies have become the most "employment-adverse" of all. Research by IBIS Research shows that the 20 companies that have sacked the most staff have shed 180,000 of 684,000 employees since 1990 - a staggering 26.3% (*Business Review Weekly*, 2/3/98). Alternatives to work-related income are now more urgently required than ever before. But they are also less likely than ever before to receive the consideration that such ideas merit.

THE AUCKLAND POWER DEBACLE AND NSW PRIVATISATION: Opinion polls taken at the end of February indicate that around 65% of NSW voters are against the privatisation of the NSW electricity industry. The polls were taken at the peak of the Auckland power failures, and whatever the facts about privatised power companies, the *perceptions* are that privatised power companies strive more for profits than service. A culture of risk-taking, cost cutting and minimal maintenance is expected of privatised power, and NSW Treasurer Michael Egan has virtually no chance of forcing privatisation on the industry until the Auckland disaster is long-forgotten.