A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.35, No.41 October 22nd, 1999

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"I have grown past hate and bitterness, I see the world as one: But though I can no longer hate, my son is still my son. All men at God's round table sit, and all men must be fed; but this loaf in my hand, this loaf – is my son's bread."* – ***"Nationality"*** by Mary Gilmore

DO WE LIVE IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY? by Tom Fielder:

Today, October 13th, 1999, along with 575 ex-prisoners of war from every theatre of war, I was a guest of the State Government of Victoria and its caretaker Premier, Jeff Kennett.

Sixty years ago Australia was just five weeks into a war that would take me to Bomber Command in England and, finally, for the duration of the war, captivity in Germany.

Today, we are also five weeks into a war situation now called "peacekeeping": where will this take Australia? How many soldiers will come home in body bags? How many broken and diseased young men and women will return to their loved ones?

As I walked the streets of Melbourne today, I reminisced about the time I was on leave almost 60 years ago; the streets were thronged with every second person in uniform. Today, there were no uniforms, but every second person did not look like the average "Aussie" I knew all those years ago. I could easily imagine myself in Singapore. Then I read in the daily ***"Sun"***, front page: *"Alien scam, boat people exploit law . . . huge numbers of illegal migrants mass in Indonesia."* While on page three it was reported: *"Victorians sink into poverty."*

How long before politicians claim that we need "an illegal migrant growth industry" to keep the economy afloat? Perhaps Graeme Campbell was right when Indonesian military personnel told him: *"No, we are not going to invade Australia, we are only going to send our starving women and children."* Already boats with hidden compartments to hold 1,000 illegal immigrants are being built (***Australian***, 12/10/99).

Yes – we have been occupied by a silent invasion and I wondered if the suffering of those 575 ex-POWs was all for nothing.

Further information by the late Dr. Dique: Formerly a doctor with the British army in india, he believed that Australia's immigration policies have always been controversial and Australia is widely considered to be a multicultural nation. He accused the Australian governments of acting irresponsibly and of brainwashing the public into accepting policies contrary to its best interests. Tape: ***"Future Trends"*** – $7.00 posted. Book: ***"Immigration: the Silent Invasion*** – $10.00 posted.

EAST TIMOR TORMENT by Neil McDonald:

Australian troops in Timor – no further from Australia's coast than Sydney and Melbourne – will need to be at their patriotic best to maintain morale. In the past decade, almost 2,000 Indonesian soldiers have trained at Canungra, Queensland, and other places. Britain, France and Germany are major arms suppliers; Hawk jets, Scimitar armoured combat vehicles and sniper rifles exported last year totalled almost $250M. Indonesia bought 16 jet aircraft at a cost of nearly $600M and French exports, including combat vehicles, recently cost $440M.

In 1995, Indonesia bought the former East German navy's entire 33 ships, plus submarines from Germany. Former Liberal leader John Hewson wrote in ***The Australian Financial Review*** (7/9/99): *"It will not only cost $300 to $400 million to just deploy the troops to East Timor, but considerably more to sustain them there."*

To keep Australian troops in Timor will cost about $2.5M every day. If conflicts and casualties are the result, will Australia fall into the trap of borrowing into bankruptcy? It will take a better treasurer than Peter Costello to balance the budget if skirmishes test Aussie-trained opponents.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT TRADE ESCALATING by Jeremy Lee:

Following our recent ***Los Angeles Times*** report on illegal Chinese boat people filtering through Canada into the US comes a report in Queensland's ***Courier-Mail*** (24/9/99) that syndicates orchestrating the trade in China are working hand-in-hand with three Chinese Government agencies. Australian expert Mark Craig, who last year led an Australian delegation to Fujian Province, and who briefed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1996, said there were syndicates in Sydney, Vancouver, Toronto, New York and San Francisco working in conjunction with the Peoples' Liberation Army, the Peoples' Armed Police and the Public Security Bureau in China.

Craig, who was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study illegal immigration, concluded *"....No-one can say we haven't been warned ..."*

Australia has allocated a further $124 million to beefing up surveillance under Rear-Admiral Russ Shalders, who was seconded to Coastwatch in July. Most will be spent on surveillance equipment in the form of accoustic sensors, satellites, tethered balloons, aircraft and helicopters.

The Australian (7/10/99) reported: *". . .The new Coastwatch director-general concedes that the job will not be easy. Organisers of immigration rackets are becoming increasingly savvy, using purpose-built boats with hidden compart-ments, sprucing up rusty hulks and changing the way they land their cargo to avoid detection . . ."*

Boat people are not the only, or the chief threat. Tourists overstaying their visas, and colleges providing extended visas for non-existent students – as has recently been discovered – is all part of a major threat to Australia.

GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER INCREASING FIRE: The amount of intelligent, perceptive criticism of such institutions as the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund increases day by day. It is the first sign of the pendulum-swing against the World Government view. Over the last few weeks the WTO has imposed fines and ordered tax reforms in a number of countries. Bigger and bigger numbers of lobbyists and lawyers spend more and more finance presenting trade-cases against other countries. It is quite clear that the right of nations to determine their own trade, wage and tax regimes is being whittled away.

Typical is the WTO ruling that the European Union may not maintain a ban on hormone-fed beef from the United States. The full implications of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) has not appeared before the WTO Star Chamber, but we would bet that free trade will take precedence over free choice when it does.

The IMF, meanwhile, is earning its just share of criticism. A recent Economist article (syndicated in ***The Australian***, 24/9/99) included these remarks: *" .... The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank stood unchallenged as the world's top economic doctors. No longer. After a series of financial crises from South Korea to Brazil and an economic meltdown in Russia, the consensus has broken down. Many traditional prescriptions have been discredited and the doctors are at loggerheads with each other .... The institutions have become a more explicit tool of western, and particularly American, foreign policy. Such politicisation, many feel, threatens their credibility in handing out disinterested policy advice.*

"Among the most successful countries have been those which, although strongly reformist, ignored the IMF on important questions. Estonia, for instance, successfully reintroduced its pre-war currency, the kroon, in place of the rouble in 1992, when the IMF was still calling for a single currency from Tallinn to Tashkent ...."

All of which must gratify Malaysia's Dr Mahathir, who thumbed his nose at the IMF and took charge of the nation's economy, with the result it is now the most stable in SE Asia.

The single most important step for national economies is to remove from private banks the role of creating new money, returning it to the public sphere on behalf of the people.

Pitting nation against nation in a cut-throat competition for exports before a body such as the WTO, in an environment where the world's money systems are privately-controlled and debt-dominated is, as C.H. Douglas once said, a recipe for war.

SIR OTTO NIEMEYER SCHOLARSHIPS: We were intrigued to see advertisements in a number of papers announcing the establishment of The Sir Otto Niemeyer Scholarships by the Australian Centre for Global Finance.

Those who have looked at the history of Australia during the 1930s Depression will know about the visit to Australia in 1930 of Sir Otto Niemeyer, accompanied by Professor Theodor Emanuel Guggenheim Gregory, of the London School of Economics. ***The Melbourne Argus*** quoted Sir Otto Niemeyer on August 22nd, 1930, as telling a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers (at a time when Australia was in the worst throes of Depression with many out of work and starving): *" ...There is* *also evidence to show that the standard of living in Australia has reached a point which is economically beyond the capacity of the country to bear without a considerable reduction of costs resulting in increased per capita output ..."*

As a result of Niemeyer's advice, Commonwealth economist Professor Copland forced through the now infamous Premiers' Plan, whereby the already inadequate wages in Australia were cut by 10 per cent!

Niemeyer provided the same advice in New Zealand and South America. Imagine such thinking in charge of "global finance"!

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS IN EUROPE: There was a time, not so long ago, when we measured the world-wide takeover business in $billions. Now it's $trillions. ***The Australian Financial Review*** (6/10/99) reported: *" ....Propelled by a surge in merger activity in Europe, worldwide mergers and acquisitions hit a record $US2.2 trillion ($A3.4 trillion) in the first nine months of the year. According to data compiled by Thomson Financial Securities Data, reported merger activity around the world in the first three quarters jumped 16 per cent, far outpacing the $US1.92 trillion recorded in the same period last year ...."*

The figures represent over $A560 for every living person on earth! In nine months!

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: Who remembers *"The Little White Wool Book"*? Compiled by Harry Bethel and Roy Donohoe of Nyngan in NSW in the late 'sixties, it showed how, with a relatively small investment, Australia could open up wool processing industries, going from scouring to top-making and spinning, in a number of country centres, providing employment and halting the rural exodus.

Poo-poohed by Country Party politicians, the scheme never got off the ground. Particularly galling was the fact that some of the best spinning equipment in the world had been developed in Australia.

Latest news (***AFR***, 6/10/99) is that a new wool-scouring venture is opening up in Western Australia, at Rockingham, south of Fremantle. The Government has kicked in $13.6 million for a water treatment plant. But who are the owners? US-based Standard Commercial Corporation (25%) and France's Compagnic d'Importation de Laines (75%).

On the other hand, Roger Fletcher, who started a sheep fellmongering business in Dubbo (NSW) in 1987, has developed the operation right through scouring to top-making. Skins are processed and finished wool ready for spinning is now all handled in a $200 million-a-year industry that has transformed the town.

We can do it if we want – and if the Government would take the shackles off our own financial system, instead of relying exclusively on foreign capital.

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"ON TARGET" is printed and published by The Australian League of Rights, 145 Russell St., Melbourne.
Postal Address: GPO Box 1052J, Melbourne, 3001. Telephone: (03) 9650 9749, Fax: (03) 9650 9368.
Subscription $40.00 p.a.