



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "In about seventy years Political Zionism, a movement of Russian Jews, has established its power over the masses of Jews everywhere and, through Gentile politicians, over English-speaking nations, the major policies of which are clearly conditioned by it now... The propagandist approach to the masses worked wonders. The minds of the men in the mass like screens, on which headlines produce an impression." – "Behind the Scene" by Douglas Reed, 1976

BRINKMANSHIP IN MIDDLE EAST MADNESS by Jeremy Lee:

Israel has now declared full-scale war on the Palestinians, filling Gaza and the West Bank with hundreds of tanks, thousands of troops, supported by artillery and helicopter gun-ships. The media has been barred, indicating that the Sharon government wishes to hide its actions, preventing the world from seeing what is occurring. Nevertheless, reports from one or two intrepid journalists who have managed to witness part of what is going on give a picture of unmitigated horror.

All vestiges of civilized humanity have been eradicated. The wounded lie where they have been shot, unreachable by ambulances. The burial of the dead has been prevented. The Palestinian population – men, women and children – have been confined to their homes in a 24-hour curfew, deprived of basic necessities such as water, food and lighting. Tanks indiscriminately smash homes, and troops roam from one heap of rubble to the next in the hope of apprehending youths and girls who might conceivably be potential suicide bombers.

In mid-March, two weeks before this massive escalation, the US – incredibly – tabled a resolution before the UN Security Council which " ...legitimized the aspirations of the Palestinians for self-rule and endorsed a series of similar initiatives, the latest one being pushed by Saudi Arabia ..." (*The Australian Financial Review*, 22/3/02).

Hitherto, the US has always used its power of veto on behalf of Israel to annul such propositions in the Security Council. But this time it sponsored the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Does this mean that the US is taking a more objective approach? By no means. It dares not even draw public attention to its actions in this regard, simply wringing its hands impotently, while Ariel Sharon

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pours contempt on the timid and half-hidden actions of the US by his savage invasion. Vice-President Dick Cheney's tour of the Middle East to drum up support for another US war against Iraq proved impotent. Little wonder.

Palestinian Yasser Arafat, penned in isolation amidst the rubble of his headquarters, currently looks a statesman compared to Sharon. According to *Time* (1/4/02) 36% of Israelis want him assassinated, while a further 66% want him exiled permanently. Yet it is obvious that Arafat has had little control over Palestinian militants for some time, and none now. Any action against him would give him martyr status, and would inflame Islamic nations round the world.

Apart from its heavy military presence in the Occupied Territories, which has necessitated the call-up of reservists, Israel also faces renewed activity on a second front, Lebanon, where rocket attacks have been launched on northern Israel. Some 25,000 Syrian troops are stationed in Lebanon, plus 12 refugee camps housing 280,000 Palestinian refugees, which are the scene for seething military activity.

There is no doubt that Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, despite the US resolution at the UN Security Council, would dearly love an American escalation of war into Iraq as both cover and diversion for his own dark activities. But the US would have to risk such an escalation alone. Both Europe and former Islamic allies in the war against terrorism cannot be counted on to sanction further activities – let alone partake.

It would take something as disastrous as the bombings in New York and Washington before wavering support could be stiffened again. In the present climate anything could happen anywhere in the world.

CLERIC SPEAKS OUT: Apart from the Pope, no Christian leader has had much of relevance to say about the Middle East; which is why it was heartening to see the following letter in *The Australian* (3/4/02):

"Witnessing the horrors in Israel/Palestine, I ponder how long it will be before the world recognizes the right of Palestine to exist an independent state.

"I fail to understand how the Jewish people, who were victims of the Holocaust, can fail to uphold the rights of Palestinians to a free homeland. Two wrongs just don't make a right

"The latest ramblings by the US President can only be described as 'frightening'. To try to link the Palestinians with Al Qu'ida and terrorism generally is a long and mischievous bow. As I long and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, I grieve for the Palestinian people who have lived in that land since the time of Christ, and long before." – **Rev. Graham Reynolds, Dean, St.Alban the Martyr Cathedral, Griffith, NSW.**

Ironically, at the time of writing, hundreds of Islamic Palestinians are seeking sanctuary from their Israeli pursuers in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, reputedly Christ's birth-place, over which the angelic host sang "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards men"

MORE BLUNDERING IN AFGHANISTAN: Now that the need and opportunity for bombing in Afghanistan diminishes, and the complex problem of "mopping up", diplomacy and re-building gets under way, the Western Alliance is facing a sombre reality. The Taliban and Al Qa'ida are very much alive. And they're fighting back. A major survey by journalist Michael Ware in *Time* (1/4/02) who

was permitted to meet with Taliban leaders, claimed that the growing resistance in Afghanistan was much more than "a few pockets" as Donald Rumsfeld is so fond of stating. Considerable numbers who have survived, together with their arms, are re-establishing their communications. They are hard to identify as they merge with the civilian population, which largely supports their cause in the face of what they see as "the US war against Islam". There is still heavy fighting between ethnic factions, which can only be checked by a continuing western presence. But how long is the US prepared to stay? For the years that are necessary to bring some sort of peace to Afghanistan? Withstanding all the time the steady trickle of casualties of US troops that will inevitably result?

That is the path the former Soviet Union trod, with heavy casualties and eventual withdrawal.

NOTICED THE PRICE OF OIL? World oil prices have risen by \$10 a barrel over the last few weeks. Once again, Australians are facing 90 cents to \$1 at the bowser. They may well go higher.

Iraq has suggested to its neighbors that any escalation of Middle East hostilities should be met with an Oil Embargo. That was before Israel's latest actions. Any further price increases will have an inevitable effect on industrial economies. Australia should be doing everything possible to enable the successful development and expansion of its huge oil shale deposits, presently being opened up at Gladstone, despite the harassment of Greenpeace.

All-in-all, current events in the Middle East are frightening. The US has bitten off more than it can chew. Sharon can only be compared to Attila the Hun. It needs only one more match to ignite the possibility of nuclear war. The implications are too fearful to contemplate.

NEW ZEALAND SLIPPING DOWN THE MULTICULTURAL MUDSLIDE: The latest census in New Zealand shows all the ingredients of racial mixing that have beset Europe and America. The original partnership between Whites and Maoris has been one of the more successful racial arrangements over the years, recognizing the distinctions of both races. Part of that success has depended on the setting aside of some land areas for exclusive Maori use as set out in the Treaty of Waitangi. But even this has been marred with hostilities at times.

The massive influx of Pacific Islanders and, more lately, Asians has been ominous. The census revealed:

- The census counted more people of Asian ethnicity than Pacific peoples.
- Almost 240,000 or 1 in 15 people were Asians.
- Numbers of Asians have more than doubled between 1991 and 2001.
- There were 231,801 Pacific Islanders.
- 1 in 7 people are of Maori ethnicity.
- Two-thirds of Asians live in the Auckland region and 1 in 8 live in the Wellington region.
- Two-thirds of Pacific Islanders live in the Auckland region.

Among the fastest-growing minorities are Koreans (19,026), Arab (2,856), Croat (2,502), Iraq (2,145), South African (14,889) and Russian (3,084). Auckland is now a city of crime and violence.

Of course, New Zealanders have never been asked by referendum whether that approve this drastic change to the make-up of their nation.

PRISON INDUSTRIES: One industry has profited considerably from the events in New York and

Washington on September 11th, 2001 – that of prison industries. *The Australian Financial Review* (22/3/02) noted:

"While global security companies had been experiencing a contraction within the market for the past five years, the events of September 11 have put an end to that. Before then, growth had been forecast for Group 4 at about 5 percent a year, but this is now expected to get close to 8 or 9 percent....."

The comment came in a full-page article describing a merger agreement between Wackenhut, the US multinational which runs prisons and detention centers in Australia among other countries, and the Danish firm Group 4 Falck, the world's second prison services group.

Group 4 Falck will acquire 100 percent of Wackenhut's shares, valued at \$A62.26 each. That's twice as much as shares in Australia's four major trading banks fetch. There must be excellent shareholder profits in the imprisonment business, with a guarantee of continual expansion.

Wackenhut's Australian subsidiary, Australian Correctional Services, runs the detention centers at Curtin, Port Hedland, Perth, Woomera, Villawood, Christmas Island and Maribyrnong. Also three jails in Queensland, NSW and Victoria, plus the transport of prisoners and a police custodial center in Melbourne.

The record of privatized detention centers in Australia has not been a happy one, with a number of reports of brutality and indifference to suicides. The psychology, which obviously entails making as big a profit as possible from each operation, is incompatible with the idea that imprisonment is about reform and rehabilitation rather than revenge.

But if you want a good return for your investment, privatized prisons and burgeoning prison and refugee populations are about the best on the stock exchange!

A CENTURY OF SERVICE – Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother: The truly delightful lady, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, has passed away at the grand age of 101 years. We extend our deepest sympathy to Queen Elizabeth II and the other members of the Royal Family. It is heartwarming to hear, and fitting, that young members of the Royal family will mount an all-night vigil around the body of their beloved grandmother as it lies in state at Westminster Hall.

ANOTHER CENTURY OF SERVICE – Sir Walter Crocker: At the same time, we want to acknowledge the hundredth year of Sir Walter Crocker, distinguished statesman and former Lieutenant Governor of South Australia. Sir Walter, who celebrated his birthday (March 25th) with "a quiet day at home with his two sons, five grandchildren and close friends" said he would "spend the day soberly".

In 1992 he graciously consented to write a foreword to the book *"The People's Prince: Discovering the Real Prince Charles"*, a collection of major addresses by Prince Charles published by the Australian Heritage Society. Reading his words 10 years later makes one realise he understood how 'fragile' is our world. "Existence for living things on earth carries no guarantee of permanence... the whole world, and particularly the developed countries, face stresses which could entail calamities... The threats are compounded by instabilities, brought about by human greed and human folly - in the financial system (which is fiduciary and fragile) and in the system of international relations..." *"The People's Prince"* is available from all League book services.

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