



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "Society is a continuum. It exists through time. It does not consist solely of those who happen to be alive at any given moment, it is both an inheritance and a bequest. This continuity is expressed through the universal moral law which is superior to both transient 'majorities' and transient power. It's overthrow by power-seekers, however temporary, can only result in catastrophe. As St. Thomas Moore, Lord Chancellor of England, put it, 'England is hedged thick with laws, which, if they were uprooted, such a gale would blow through the realm that no man could stand.' Charles I stated the same thing regarding the rights of the subject: 'Their liberty does not consist in making laws, but in *having* Law.' ... What is the remedy for our present predicament? It is not to seek to defeat power with power, to cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub... Power properly resides in the person... and nothing is so effective as individual initiative. Certainly the collectivists both fear and hate individual initiative, it is indeed the one thing they do fear."

– Anthony Cooney, *"The Moral Implications of Centralised Power"*, 2002

FREE TRADE TALKS STUMBLE ON by Jeremy Lee:

By the time this is read, Trade Ministers from 25 countries will be meeting at the Imperial Hotel in central Tokyo to map out this year's agenda and programme for the "Doha Round" – the World Trade Organisation's pursuit of 'free trade' in about every area of life.

Looming large on the agenda are the two issues of free trade in agricultural products, and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which would open up every area of domestic services – health, transport, water, sewerage, welfare, electricity, road-building and other public works, communications, etc. – to "international competition", including Competition Commissions and accountancy standards. The cheapest tender, including labour required, would, of necessity, be compulsory. Any idea of Australian projects for Australians would be abolished.

Add to this list international conformity in taxation and budgets and the need for national governments would no longer be required. The proposal is so "globally totalitarian" that few have heard of it and those that have find it hard to believe it could be an actuality.

But governments, with one eye over their shoulders at increasingly-restless electorates, are shuffling

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their feet. Among the most starry-eyed is Australia, which stopped protecting its farmers and industries long ago, and imagine it's only a matter of time before giants such as Europe, the US and Japan follow our enlightened lead.

All of which is hard to sustain when we look at the massive subsidies the United States has agreed to pay its farmers – over \$US300 billion for the next ten-year period; while it keeps up the rhetoric of "free trade" for the rest of us.

Japan, too, is digging in its heels. *The Australian Financial Review* (3/3/03) said:

".... In Japan, the peak farm lobby, the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (Zenchu) has flatly rejected any US and Cairns Group proposals for sharp reductions in farm tariffs, including a top-tariff cap of 25 per cent.

"If that happens it would destroy Japanese agriculture," says Zenchu's manager of international policy, Masahiro Konno. 'From the standpoint of agriculture associations in Japan, we cannot find any midpoint between our stance and the stance of exporting countries; and we think we should not make any compromise'

"Asked about the status of the farm talks, an Australian official simply sighs and says: 'We are shaping up for a stalemate'"

SACRIFICING ANOTHER GREAT AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY: Australia's cane industry, which stretches from northern New South Wales almost as far as Cooktown, has produced prodigiously for well over 100 years since long before Federation. It has supplied Australia's sugar needs and exported onto the world market. It has prevented other countries selling sugar in Australia with tariff protection, thus keeping our own industry viable.

All that is changing. At a time when world sugar prices have tumbled, and giants such as Brazil are stepping up their already massive cane plantations, the rug is being pulled out from under our own producers, threatening to destroy them. Three recent reports, including a Federal Government report and a Queensland Government report, have recommended 'de-regulation' (that trendy "free market" word). No support for 'inefficient' farmers!

Currently, the world price for sugar is half the average world price of production. Other sugar-producing nations make up the difference with subsidies. Australia won't.

Of Queensland's 6,400 cane farmers about one-third (2,700) have an average debt of \$428,000 each, and the industry's total debt is \$1.2 billion – about the same as the total value of the crop.

Already, the crisis in the cane industry is having a drastic effect on towns and industries. Five years ago, some 160 cane harvesters a year were being sold. By 2001 this had been reduced to 15, and in 2002 only nine. It is estimated that 50% of the farmers in the Burdekin were unable to pay their last water bill due to financial hardship.

The farmer receives a miserly 16 cents a kilogram for sugar which retails to the consumer for \$1.36.

World wheat prices are tumbling again. Wool is at the highest level for some time, but drought-beset producers are unable to take advantage. The drought has turned a slow destruction into a quick

catastrophe. One hopes that it will shake Australia into the realization of how important its remaining farmers are. But there is no sign of such realism yet. They are still the sacrificial lambs on the altar of insane global policies which few nations take seriously except our myopic rural politicians.

AUSTRALIA'S TRADE DEFICIT: Our Trade deficit in December almost touched \$3 billion – our biggest ever. Imports were up 12 per cent and exports down 2 per cent. The Government's response? *The Weekend Australian* (2-3/3/03) reported:

"... The Federal Government said strong imports were a sign the Australian economy continued to outpace the rest of the world ..."

Pardon me? Does this mean that if our imports had been 24% higher, rather than 12%, we'd be better off still?

As a reflection of this marvellous state of affairs a report by two sociologists, Peter Dawkins of the University of Melbourne, and Editor-at-large of *The Australian*, Paul Kelly, shows one Australian child out of every six living in a household with no employment.

Conscious of how well the nation is doing, a report in *The Australian Financial Review* (3/3/03) told us that the average Coalition Federal MP spent \$129,000 in 2001 on newsletters and stationary. Four backbenchers spent more than \$300,000 each, no doubt to keep their electorate informed about what a marvellous job they were doing.

In 1992-93 the average amount spent was about \$12,000. They can't have had as much good news to report!

LIBERALS AGAINST WAR: The former President of the Liberal Party, John Valder, has launched a movement called "Liberals Against War", with one or two other former front-benchers. One wonders whether there are any current Coalition MPs who are opposed to the war. We'll never know, unless a miracle happens. They are all subject to strict party orders that they must keep their consciences to themselves and vote as they are told.

Simon Crean was asked whether he would move for a "conscience vote" in parliament over a war against Iraq. He declined, preferring the same "party solidarity" as the Coalition. It makes an absolute mockery of the parliamentary process.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INVASION? Rory Steele, who was Australia's Ambassador to Iraq from 1985-1988, in a comprehensive article in *The Australian* (5/3/03) has warned that an invasion of Iraq would be the easy part, but would usher in what he calls "the mother of all messes". He pointed to the diverse and hostile groups waiting for a chance of revenge, from the Kurds to the North to the bitter divisions between the two hostile elements of Islam, the Sunnis and the Shias.

Steele contends that the idea of producing a stable leadership from exiles is as preposterous as the hope of a stable leadership in Afghanistan. He concludes:

".... Who will oversee this mother of all messes? It's unlikely to be the UN. The international community, after all, has no stomach for invasion, let alone possibly years of subsequent crackdown. The invaders and their allies must do itThe peacekeepers' role could be thankless, dangerous and open-ended"

FINANCING DESTRUCTION: Whatever happens, it's not going to come cheap. Under the heading BUSH WAR CHEST TO LEAVE U.S. IN THE RED, *The Australian* (5/3/03) reported:

"The US will run record deficits for the next two years and remain in the red for a further three under a \$US2.23 trillion (\$3.81 trillion) budget plan published by President Bush yesterday.

"The White House proposals seek a massive and sustained boost to military spending, accelerated tax cuts and a squeeze on most domestic programs. Over the next five years the US budget deficits will total \$US1.08 trillion, starting with \$US304 billion this year and \$US307 billion next year. ... The money is earmarked for elite special operations forces, more unmanned drones, new warships, a boost in military pay and more testing of the President's planned missile defence shield"

So far we haven't discovered whether this added budget spending will include fridge magnets for all American households!

WORLD'S FALLING BIRTHRATE: The United Nations releases a report every two years on projected global population growth. The latest report has surprised the doomsayers by releasing the news that the world's population has peaked and is beginning to fall. A *Sunday Times* (UK) report told us:

"... In 2000 the average fertility figure for 2050 was estimated at 2.1 children – the replacement level – but recent shifts have been so remarkable that the forthcoming report for 2002 will reduce this projected world average to 1.86. The current Western average is 1.6. Alarmist predictions of a world population of more than 10 or 11 billion by mid-century would not be reached"

And George Bush is doing his little bit to help!

MULTICULTURAL-IMMIGRATION TIME-BOMB: For some electors, the policy of 'multiculturalism' has produced some bitter fruits and is now being examined closely. It has dawned on them there is in their midst a 'multicultural-migration-time-bomb', which has been 'ticking away' during the politically correct years. Newspapers now see fit to publish letters on the worrying subject, something that would have been unheard of ten years earlier.

Many are questioning why these policies were allowed to be pursued in the first place. Some ask why were migrants encouraged to form enclaves and why were they not encouraged to assimilate as were the post WW2 immigrants?

Electors need to be asking their federal politicians these questions and demanding answers.

The League warned that Australia was heading for disaster; pointing out there was, as yet, no country in the world that demonstrated 'multiculturalism' worked successfully.

It is tempting to say 'we told you so!' Especially when one remembers all the smears and personal attacks League members endured for daring to publicly question the bipartisan multicultural policies of the major parties.