



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.39, No.25

July 4th, 2003

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"It is no longer necessary, except through ignorance, that 'man should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow,' for the inventions and discoveries which have matured and which are now in full practice are more sufficient, with very light labour, under a right direction, to supply the wants and insure the independence of all without real injury to any."*

— Robert Owen, in 1829, taken from *"The Fig Tree"*, 1938

THE FACTS CLOSE IN ON HOWARD by Jeremy Lee:

John Howard now needs enough major issues to obscure the embarrassment over the Iraq war; and they're in the pipeline. 1,200 troops and 300 police to the Solomons, the sale of the remainder of Telstra, a new Governor-General, health and education will all serve to erase memories of the great deception over going to war. As politicians remind themselves regularly, a week's a long time in politics, and the memory of voters is notoriously short.

The only trouble is that events in the "coalition of the willing" keep popping up regularly, leaving an increasingly nasty taste to remind us of the lies and prevarication. A steady attrition of casualties among Americans and British still in Iraq are a reminder of how lucky Australia is that its troops are home. An explosive situation in Afghanistan serves to raise the question of what was achieved by the massive aerial bombardment that killed so many civilians and produced so many refugees

Can it really be said that the situation stretching from the Eastern side of the Mediterranean to Afghanistan is more stable now than at the beginning of the 21st Century? After hundreds of billions of dollars in warfare and rehabilitation, the answer can only be "No".

HOWARD'S OPINIONS: In a three-page Question-and-Answer interview with Fred Benchley (*The Bulletin*, 6/5/03) Mr. Howard made two significant points:

"Question: In economic rebuilding, what about a new currency for Iraq? They now have the dinar with Saddam's portrait. Mr. Howard: Well, we're very good at printing banknotes. We've done about 20 nations'. We have offered some views on the form of their currency. I would hope that after an interim period where I guess they'll use American dollars, whatever currency emerges is one that the Iraqi people want. Question: Do you think the Australian people will much care if no weapons of

IN THIS ISSUE: • *Thought for the Week* • *The Facts Close In On Howard* • *Howard's Opinions* • *The Last Straw*
• *BarterGrowth Soars* • *Queensland's Property Rights*

"ON TARGET"

July 4th, 2003

Page 1 (97)

mass destruction are ever found? Mr. Howard: I remain of the belief that evidence will be found but it may take time. I'm sure they tried to hide them. The public's support for our involvement was a mixture of things. The WMD was an important element, and a lot of people will be looking to see the outcome of that, let me put it that way. I do think the humanitarian and nature of the regime became stronger as time went by"

Nothing since that time has given any indication that Howard is prepared to modify his views – at least publicly. But the issue won't go away. More and more examples of the duplicity over the war are destined to keep popping up, niggling away at "honest John's" frankness. In response to a Howard statement on June 16th, i.e. "We went to war in a just cause, on a proper legal basis, to liberate an oppressed people", Paul Kelly (*The Weekend Australian*, 21-22/6/03) under the heading WHY WE FOUGHT – REALLY, started by saying:

"Australia went into Iraq because of its alliance with the US, not because of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction and not to liberate its people.

"There was a rationale for the war and a motive for war. The rationale for the war, Iraq's WMD capability, is in serious doubt. But the bigger story is that motive for the war, Iraq's WMD capability is in serious doubt. But the bigger story is that motive for the war – the US's strategic decision to remake Iraq – is also in strife. The historical judgment on the Iraq war will be that it involved a degree of duplicity. No other conclusion is tenable"

That's a serious charge from a lead article in one of Australia's major dailies. Paul Kelly went on to say that Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz – key members of what has become known as "the Cabal" – were the main instigators of the plan to "do" Iraq.

He added that Howard's present justification for the war on humanitarian grounds were negated by his remarks to the National Press Club on March 13th, when he said:

"I would have to accept that if Iraq had genuinely disarmed I couldn't justify on its own a military invasion of Iraq to change the regime. I've never advocated that."

But, as the evidence of WMDs vaporizes, he's saying it now.

A withering full-page article in *The Weekend Australian Financial Review* (14-15/6/03) headed THE WEAPONS THAT WEREN'T by Brian Toohey went even further:

"Did American and British intelligence agencies play John Howard for a sucker before the invasion of Iraq? Why did Howard's own intelligence agencies fail to spot some of the more glaring errors served up as established fact in the Australian parliament? Can the public trust that it will not be manipulated by false intelligence in the future?"

"These questions have added potency now it is clear that many of the specific pre-war claims about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and their whereabouts were incorrect. Other claims look highly dubious. In one case the 'evidence' amounted to no more than crude forgeries."

"Unlike his US and British counterparts, however, Howard is in the fortunate position of coming under almost no political pressure over the accuracy of his pre-war assertions about Iraq's alleged WMD. As more and more questions are raised in Britain about the use of intelligence, Blair faces intense criticism from the intelligence services, his own Labour Party and the Conservative Opposition. Bush is also facing a chorus of complaints from within the US intelligence community, and from both Republican and Democrat politicians, that his administration misled the public over the issue"

"In a major speech to parliament on February 4, Howard explicitly embraced a British intelligence committee claim that Iraq had tried to obtain uranium from Africa as proof of its continuing effort to

develop nuclear weapons. US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has since acknowledged that this claim was based on forged documents and that this was known at the time to at least some US intelligence personnel. The forgeries, relating to the alleged supply of 500 tonnes of uranium, were so blatant that one letter was purportedly signed on October 10, 2000 by the foreign minister of Niger, Allele Ellhadj Habibon. The dead giveaway was that Habibon had left that job more than a decade earlier"

"These questions have added potency now it is clear that many of the specific pre-war claims about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and their whereabouts were incorrect. Other claims look highly dubious. In one case the 'evidence' amounted to no more than crude forgeries.

"Unlike his US and British counterparts, however, Howard is in the fortunate position of coming under almost no political pressure over the accuracy of his pre-war assertions about Iraq's alleged WMD. As more and more questions are raised in Britain about the use of intelligence, Blair faces intense criticism from the intelligence services, his own Labour Party and the Conservative Opposition. Bush is also facing a chorus of complaints from within the US intelligence community, and from both Republican and Democrat politicians, that his administration misled the public over the issue

"In a major speech to parliament on February 4, Howard explicitly embraced a British intelligence committee claim that Iraq had tried to obtain uranium from Africa as proof of its continuing effort to develop nuclear weapons. US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has since acknowledged that this claim was based on forged documents and that this was known at the time to at least some US intelligence personnel. The forgeries, relating to the alleged supply of 500 tonnes of uranium, were so blatant that one letter was purportedly signed on October 10, 2000 by the foreign minister of Niger, Allele Ellhadj Habibon. The dead giveaway was that Habibon had left that job more than a decade earlier"

(The details of the Niger forgery were carried in the League's *New Times Survey* in April, and had been widely circulated on the Internet much earlier.)

In the face of this international duplicity and manipulation of intelligence, now prompting public questions overseas, Prime Minister Howard maintains his aura of invincibility, possible only because of the cowardice of his own Coalition members, who huddle like frightened sheep under the Party Whips.

THE LAST STRAW: What Howard's craven party colleagues refuse to question is now breaking out in Britain. *The Australian* (26/6/03) carried the following under the heading DODGY DOSSIER AND IRAQ DEATHS EMBARRASS BLAIR:

"The British Government admitted yesterday it was embarrassed by some of the material it used to justify its participation in the war on Iraq, then took a second blow as it struggled with the news that six military police had been killed in a guerilla attack in southern Iraq.

"Foreign Secretary Jack Straw apologized to a committee of MPs for the misleading nature of an intelligence dossier on Iraq's weapons programs used in February to justify the invasion.

"Prime Minister John Howard also turned to the material at the time to help justify Australia's participation in the war

"The affair was an embarrassment to the Government and he wished the dossier had never been produced, Mr. Straw said....

"Mr. Straw sought to play down the significance of a pre-war claim by the Blair government – later cited by the Howard Government – that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction that could be deployed in as little as 45 minutes"

Hanging like a Sword of Damocles over Howard's head is the stand of Intelligence officer Andrew Wilkie, who resigned because he believed the intelligence served up to the Government was 'bodgy'. It's no use attacking Wilkie when overseas governments are corroborating his stand, and publicly apologizing.

So when will John Howard come clean?

BARTER GROWTH SOARS: The use of a form of barter using alternative "barter dollars" continues to grow. Businesses join an association which lists products in a directory, and are able to trade goods and services between themselves using "barter dollars" which are exchanged simply by debiting one account and crediting another when purchases take place. *The Australian* (24/6/03) reported: "... There are two major exchanges in Australia, Bartercard and Business Barter Exchange (BBX).

"Australian company Bartercard is a global player in the bartering industry, turning over \$1 billion a year and having a membership of 20,000 in Australia and 45,000 worldwide.

"This home-grown organization has offices in New Zealand, the US, the UK, Asia and the Middle East. Membership is growing annually at 20 per cent.

"BBX has over 13,000 members across Australia and New Zealand, and turns over about \$120 million annually. Almost anything can be purchased using barter, from toiletries to holidays to investment properties"

Strictly speaking, such schemes cannot accurately be called "barter". They are in effect financial schemes using a different sort of currency.

They are another sign of the struggle against the current global money monopoly. When Local Government can be persuaded to look at the idea, the break-through will accelerate further.

(See the article "A Local Currency Scheme at Banjo Bluff", *New Times Survey*, February 2003. Also, Michael Lane's "Charles Ferguson - Herald of Social Credit", \$11.50, posted from the Australian Heritage Society, PO Box 163, Chidlow, WA, 6042.)

QUEENSLAND PROPERTY RIGHTS: Queensland's Senator Len Harris has vowed to put the State's contentious tree clearing legislation under the spotlight in the Federal Court later this year.

Senator Harris is spearheading a planned class action against the State Government's Vegetation Management Act to prevent 'agricultural genocide' in Queensland.

The State's sole One Nation Senator plans to use two cases where the Act has impinged on property rights to test the legality of tree clearing legislation.

Senator Harris explained, "One concerns a cane farm in Mackay which was leased land and under the lease conditions, the owner was required to clear a certain area on an annual basis. The Queensland Government refused to give the clearing permits and then took the leases away. This brings leased land into the equation."

The other case involves a landholder in south west Queensland who has breached the Vegetation Management Act on three occasions. "The reason I am doing this is based on contact from a considerable number of concerned Queenslanders who have been breached under the Vegetation Management Act," continued Senator Harris.

"We need to go to Federal Court to get a determination in relation to property rights and how they are being impacted by the Vegetation Act."

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