



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.36

September 19th, 2003

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** *"Our national life is ended as soon as it has lost the power of noble anger. When it paints over and apologises for its pitiful criminalities, and endures its false weights and adulterated food, dares not decide practically between good and evil, and can neither honour one nor smite the other, but sneers at the good as if it were hidden evil, and consoles the evil with pious sympathy, the end is come."*

– John Ruskin in *The Queen of the Air*

## **BEING WISE AFTER THE EVENT** by Jeremy Lee:

World events are moving so rapidly that we forget it was a mere seven months ago that massive anti-war protests – the biggest ever seen – rocked the globe. Polls everywhere showed that people did not want war.

But our leaders knew better. Peter Hartcher (*The Australian Financial Review*, 5/9/03) quoted Bush at that time:

"...At some point, we may be the only ones left. That's OK with me. We are America," he said....."

Bush was not alone in believing he could belittle and ignore other nations. Australia hitched its wagon to the Bush star. Our brilliant Foreign Minister, addressing the National Press Club on June 26th – with the bells of an illusory Iraqi victory ringing in his ears – said:

*"Increasingly, multilateralism is a synonym for an ineffective and unfocused policy involving internationalism of the lowest common denominator ... Multilateral institutions need to be more results-oriented if they are to serve the interests of the international community, including Australia. We are prepared to join coalitions of the willing that can bring focus and purpose*

---

**IN THIS ISSUE:** • *Thought for the Week* • *Being Wise After The Event* • *Falling Out With Friends* • *Pigs Might Fly*  
• *European Dilemma*

"ON TARGET"

September 19th, 2003

Page 1 (141)

*to addressing the urgent security and other challenges we face. Sovereignty in our view is not absolute ...."*

Downer would never have dared to speak thus had he not had the agreement of his leader, John Howard who, on July 1st in an address in Sydney, contrasted the UN's success in East Timor with its failure in Iraq:

*"... By contrast the UN Security Council completely failed to meet the world's need over Iraq. That responsibility fell to the coalition of the willing, which included Australia. American leadership on Iraq has made the Middle East as well as the world a safer place ..." (AFR, 5/9/03).*

One wonders whether John Howard will keep up his public praise for the "coalition of the willing" in future? And whether he'll hasten the US to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with George Bush in the run up to the next presidential election?

Ignoring the widely-expressed views of the masses, George, John and Tony went to war in the battle for "good against evil" and "to make the world a safer place". They seem to have made a mess of it. The polls showing support for the war have disappeared. Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State under Clinton, in a three-page article in *The Australian Financial Review* (5/9/03), gave this picture:

*"... According to the recent findings of the Pew Global Attitudes Project, which surveyed 16,000 people in 20 countries and the Palestinian Territories in May, the percentage of those who have a favorable view of the United States has declined sharply (15 percentage points or more) in nations such as Brazil, France, Germany, Jordan, Nigeria, Russia and Turkey. In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority state, the view of the US plunged from 75 per cent favorable to 83 per cent negative between 2000 and 2003. Support for the US-led war on terrorism has declined in each of the countries listed above, along with pivotal Pakistan, where it stands at a disheartening 20 per cent. The citizens of such NATO allies as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy rated Russia's Vladimir Putin more highly as a world leader than Bush ...."*

But then Bush, until quite recently, was contemptuous of such opinions, and was prepared to go it alone, if necessary – with Alexander Downer loyally behind him.

So Bush has asked Congress to agree to a further debt increase of \$US130 billion to finish the war in Iraq.

There was one area where Madeleine Albright exhibited the same myopic views as her Republican counterparts about the Middle East:

*"...To this day it remains the majority Arab view that the militarily overmatched Palestinians are justified in fighting Israelis with whatever means they have. On the issue of terrorist financing, the answers I received were equally inadequate. When I confronted one Saudi*

*leader about payments to Hamas, he said they were merited because Hamas, unlike Yasser Arafat and his government, actually delivered social services to Palestinians. As for payments to the families of suicide bombers, those were justified not as an enticement or a reward but as a humanitarian gesture ..."*

Such a position can only be based on the belief that the actions of the Israelis are based on self-defence and are therefore legitimate, while those of the Palestinian militants are inexcusable.

The war between Israel and the Palestinians is certainly the ugliest and longest of all the hideous confrontations in the world. It cannot be divorced from its beginnings - the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the resulting Palestinian refugee crisis, as the ancient people of the land were driven from their farms and villages. Slowly and remorselessly the Israeli State has expanded, trampling on any vestiges of human rights of the original inhabitants.

Madeleine Albright might complain about the funding of Hamas. But she fails to mention the huge funding of the Israelis by the United States, which disqualifies it in the eyes of many Muslims round the world from any right to be an arbiter or judge in the future of the Middle East. This has been emphasized by the disproportionate influence that pro-Israel lobbies hold over politicians in the Western World.

**FALLING OUT WITH FRIENDS:** The issue has been highlighted by an article in *The Australian* (5/9/03) by Cameron Stewart, dealing with the influence of the Jewish lobby in Australia. Following a motion put forward by Labor backbencher Julia Irwin last November, a note was immediately sent to every federal MP, expressing the outrage of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, condemning the motion as "counter-productive" to peace in the Middle East.

Julia Irwin countered by claiming that free speech was being compromised by a code of silence forbidding genuine debate on Middle East policies.

*The Australian* said: ".... This week - after Jewish community leaders had expressed their concern directly to him - Opposition leader Simon Crean delivered a blistering speech that overrode his backbenchers and strongly reaffirmed the Labor Party's commitment to Israel.

*"In the eyes of some, Crean's speech was a dramatic illustration of the power of the so-called Jewish lobby - a well-organised and well-funded group that critics say wields disproportionate influence in political affairs ...."*

The article continued: *"Despite their relatively small numbers the affluent Jewish community is a solid financial contributor to both main political parties. Many wealthy Jewish businessmen choose to donate to both.*

*"Shopping center magnate Frank Lowy last year gave \$300,000 to each main party via his private company; billionaire Richard Pratt's company, Pratt Holdings, gave \$218,000 to the Coalition and \$125,000 to Labor; and property developer Harry Triguboff donated \$278,000 to the Coalition, and \$107,000 to Labor via his Meriton Apartments. ...."*

Whether or not large donations to political parties are interfering with the democratic process and genuine impartiality in Parliament is up to readers to judge. It raises the whole question of political parties, their financing, and genuine representation. They've started with Pauline Hanson, who was strongly opposed by the Jewish lobby. Why stop there?

**PIGS MIGHT FLY:** One man who believes the matter of funding of parties should be urgently addressed is Bob Hogg, former national secretary of the Australian Labor Party. Writing in *The Australian Financial Review* (4/9/03) he said:

*"... There certainly is a need for a national standard of compliance on party registration and on public funding and disclosures, as there is a desperate need to clean up the fundraising activities of all parties. But don't hold your breath waiting for action. It is beyond the political will to reach a considered federal-state agreement even on something as critical as the funding of our health system.*

*"The need for reform of funding and disclosure laws is pressing. Issues of public probity in public life cut to the very heart of trust in the political system ....*

*"There is the potential federally to stabilize campaign expenditure and to set decent probity standards. This can be done by applying conditions to public funding, such as setting limits to the amount that individuals and companies can donate and by reducing public funding by two dollars for every dollar raised above a capped limit.*

*"A failure to rein in campaign costs and reduce fundraising pressures will further diminish democracy. But then, who cares?...."*

**EUROPEAN DILEMMA:** The European Union is having trouble with some of its member-states. They are refusing to eliminate their budget deficits when ordered to do so. France is the main offender. It insists on the right to run a deficit when the economy is stagnant and unemployment high.

So what will happen? Will France be thrown out? Hardly likely! What about a "pre-emptive strike" by the freedom-loving European Commission? A military intervention by NATO? Or even an appeal for "unilateral action" from President Bush? Or even Alexander Downer?

France, as we understand it, has weapons of mass destruction, including atomic weapons. We know that from the Mururoa Atoll tests in the Pacific. Isn't that enough for an invasion? Perhaps the famous Eiffel Tower is a missile launching pad in disguise?

But then they need a smiling, agreeable France to vote the right way in the UN Security Council to help the US in Iraq! Truly, international diplomacy is a tricky question!

---

"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.