



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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"Peace on Earth to all Men of Good Will"

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"The thief comes to destroy and to kill, but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."*

A TUMULTUOUS TWELVE MONTHS by Jeremy Lee:

Looking back over 2003 it is hard to credit how much has happened and how the world's geopolitics have changed.

In our first *On Target* of the year we reported that President George Bush had been grudgingly forced to allow UN weapons inspectors back into Iraq. It subsequently transpired that he had no intention of awaiting the outcome, despite a UN request for more time. Back home, Australians were being treated to a \$15 million advertisement campaign, urging us to "be alert but not alarmed". It was childish stuff!

The weapons inspectors found nothing. Opinion polls showed big majorities unconvinced that Iraq posed a threat to the world, in Britain 58 per cent, and even higher in Australia.

By the end of January a massive build-up of forces in the Persian Gulf made it clear that, weapons of mass destruction or not, war was the plan.

In honour of globalism and "free trade", Australia started moves to destroy one of its oldest and most stable industries – the cane industry which had been a chief exporter for over 100 years.

In response to the biggest monthly trade deficit in our history in December, the Government issued this incredible statement:

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

A former President of the Liberal Party, John Valder, started a movement "Liberals Against War". But the Liberal Party whip kept a tight gag on parliamentary members. Nobody knew what individual members really thought.

A former Australian Ambassador to Iraq, Rory Steele, pointed out that any military invasion of Iraq would be the easy part. It was likely to be followed by "the mother of all messes". His statement was prophetic.

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Prime Minister Howard, forgetting all the principles he had supported while in opposition, declared that the decision whether Australia went to war was his alone. 150,000 dignified, peaceful demonstrators from across the political spectrum marched through Melbourne in mid-February.

The first news broke (not in the national media) that there was a behind-the-scenes struggle to replace the US dollar as a world currency, particularly as a payment for oil. Saddam Hussein's decision to move from dollars to Euros was seen by many as the real reason for the impending war.

Malaysia's Dr. Mahathir continued to be a thorn in the world's conscience by pointing to uncomfortable truths. Speaking at the Non-Aligned Forum he said: *"... If we care to look back, there was no systematic campaign of terror outside Europe until the Europeans and the Jews created a Jewish state out of Palestinian land. It is the struggle of the Palestinians to regain their land that has precipitated, first conventional wars, then civil protest and violent demonstrations"* Nobody cared to listen to that sort of 'political incorrectness'.

In Australia, a super-performing Telstra decided to try its hand at globalism. It invested heavily in the Hong Kong telecommunications industry, and got its fingers badly burned, to the tune of almost \$1 billion, by one Li-Ka Shing.

In mid-March a slightly tearful George Bush let us in to the personal side of his outlook. He prayed daily for guidance, wisdom and strength. He prayed for his troops and for innocent Iraqis. He prayed for peace. This must have been balm to the souls of men, women and children in Iraq who knew what was going to happen when Bush pressed the button.

By the end of March the war had started. The world was treated to a panorama of pyrotechnics as the most deadly bombs in human history were dropped by wave after wave of aircraft on Baghdad.

In England a few more courageous members of the Cabinet resigned in protest. In Australia, not one Minister or backbencher stepped out of line.

Even before the final assault on Baghdad disturbing stories of concocted evidence about Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction were emerging. But in the glorious euphoria of imminent victory, who cared?

By mid-April the world was treated to pictures of Saddam's statues being toppled in Iraq. Both Bush and Powell had changed their reasons for war from eliminating weapons of mass destruction to "liberation". US leaders assured their rapt audiences that the Iraqis would welcome their liberators with open arms. Paul Kelly, writing in *The Australian*, said: *"... Howard wants the image of celebrating Iraqis, not mothers weeping over dead children, to frame this conflict in history's lens and Australia's memory"* He was to be disappointed.

As the smoke gradually cleared from a flattened Baghdad, one building stood, unmarked and unlooted, in the rubble – the Ministry of Oil!

All this set the scene for a euphoric announcement from the President of the most powerful nation on earth, standing on the deck of a US aircraft carrier, that the war had been won! As he was to discover, it hadn't really started.

In Australia another sensation started with an accumulation of media venom against the nation's head, Governor-General Peter Hollingworth. He had hitherto been virtually invisible as the Prime Minister bustled in to take over the bulk of his functions, buzzing like a bee from war to sport. Wherever the television cameras gathered, there was John Howard.

From the moment the campaign started, Hollingworth was doomed. If past omissions weren't enough, trumped up charges were portrayed as "allegedly proven". The office itself was stripped of dignity.

By the end of May we had learned that Britain was being faced with a new European Constitution which would strip all vestiges of national sovereignty from the oldest constitutional monarchy in the world. And Britishers were being given no say in assenting or otherwise to the new proposals.

In Australia, Treasurer Costello – surely the most self-satisfied paragon of economic correctness we have seen – assured us that Australia was the most stable and dynamic economy in the world. He forgot to mention that a growing proportion of Australians were being shunted to the sidelines. The last national census told us:

".... 12 per cent of men aged 25-44 years – in their prime income and family formation years – were not in full-time work and living on less than \$21,000 p.a. Indeed, 20 per cent were living on less than \$16,000 p.a. and showing disastrous marriage and divorce statistics. There were 850,000 children living in 435,000 no-income families...."

By the middle of the year the situation in Iraq had settled into what was quite obviously a classic guerilla war. Far from being beaten, Hussein's troops had kept their heads down during the aerial bombardment, only to emerge when US troops, completely untrained for policing activities, became vulnerable to swift hit-and-run tactics, aimed at daily casualties and sagging morale. Bush, Blair and Howard came under increasing scrutiny, in which their integrity suffered seriously.

Inside the US the cost of war was experienced in a serious financial crisis affecting over half the States. California headed the list, going into technical bankruptcy, during which, under the peoples' right of recall, the Governor was forced to declare an interim election.

In the Middle East more and more attention was being focused on the grotesque Berlin-type wall being erected by Israel, annexing traditional Palestinian lands beyond the "Green Line" – the 1967 borders seen by many as the starting point for dialogue

The Housing Industry Association in Australia issued a statement that housing had now moved beyond the reach of the majority of young Australians. This highlighted the possibility of a future Australia where the population had been dispossessed.

The political parties, to nobody's particular concern but their own and the media's, went through a welter of blood-letting. First the Democrats and then Labor, stabbed each other in the back to their heart's content. Had Howard not been so dominant in the Coalition, the same thing would have happened, as an obviously-chafing Peter Costello eyed the leadership enviously.

A bigger ripple occurred at the end of August when Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge were jailed for three years without parole. Even Hanson enemies were shocked at the savagery of the sentence – worse than many rapists and child molesters.

The disproportionate influence of Jewish interests over both major parties in Australia became obvious when two Labor backbenchers were gagged in Parliament – prevented from voicing some sympathy towards the Palestinians. Simon Crean was chided like a small school boy, and pulled into line.

News broke in early September that the June quarter had presented Australia with its biggest current-account-deficit in its history – \$12.6 billion. During the period exports were lagging behind imports by \$6 million each hour. "Ho hum" said most Australians as they reached for another foreign-owned beer – while Costello told us it was a sign of "confidence". Meanwhile, figures on Iraq's debt showed it to be ten times worse than Argentina's.

In November, to the relief of most and the consternation of a few politicians, Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge had their sentences overturned on appeal

As we moved towards the end of the year a momentous decision was made – the National Party changed its name to "The Nationals". If anyone thought this meant a change of fortune for the limping, compromising, dog's-tail former Country Party, they didn't say so. John Anderson made it clear his party would support the sale of Telstra, despite majority opposition by Australians at every poll..

All this was symptomatic of a spiritless, listless Australia, going through the motions of democracy and representative government without any intention of making it a reality. It was a dismal year. We can only hope and pray it gets better in 2004.

THE GREAT NEWS – WAS FOR ALL by Betty Luks: During the year preceding WW1, United States lawyer, engineer and theologian Charles Ferguson was sent on a mission by his government to find out how "big business" stood in relation to the State in the principle European countries. He wrote that at the time he had access to the best sources of information, and, as a result of his enquiries, he was firmly convinced 'that the sway of irresponsible finance has become intolerable to the world' and the business system of the United States must make a quick choice between regeneration from within and militaristic discipline from without. As an engineer he realised the enormous potential productive power of the emerging industrial nations – a productive power which he saw *was social* in its origins – would have to be harnessed and directed to the good of all – not just a privileged few – or it would lead to disastrous consequences for all nations.

THE GREAT NEWS OF WHICH HE WROTE: At the time Ferguson wrote: "If sociology had really become a science, and if its adepts were furnished with some measuring device – dynamometer – by means of which one could register the amount of nervous force that a nation habitually spends in producing goods, and on the other hand, the amount it spends in deciding who shall enjoy them – it would then be possible to definitely fix the rank of the several countries in the scale of civilisation. For the country where people care most for the advancement of the arts and sciences, and least for an exact distributive justice, is the richest and the strongest for peace or war – and excels all other in intellect and liberal generosity of spirit."

This is a practical truth. It is the pith (the most essential or most vital part) of the solution of the social problem. It has been expressed in perfect form in the New Testament and has been amply illustrated in the rise, from time to time, of many splendid cities; but it has generally eluded the clergy and the legal profession and it still awaits disclosure to the ordinary intelligence of mankind.

But privilege can have no peace and no continuing dwelling-place within the jurisdiction of the modern business (industry, commerce) system, because the inner law of that system, the law by which it lives or dies, is not arbitrary but intrinsic, not static but dynamic. The heart of the matter is not property or ownership but the correlation and direction of creative powers – through credit-centres, at which men assemble, not their assurances but their adventures, not their timidities but their affirmative and creative faiths. The system of industry and commerce is poisoned and paralysed and has fallen into fevers and convulsions of war – because the credit-centres have been inverted and have worked a kind of suicide of business – subjecting the masters of arts and enterprise to the holders of securities. This inverted capitalism has ransacked the corners of the earth to find the places where life is cheapest.

In countries of high political traditions (remember this was written nearly eighty years ago ...*ed*) – England, France, the United States – the democracies have stormed the polls and the parliaments, to get laws passed for justice and the raising of the standard of living; but the practical effect of these endeavors to make men dear, has been the export of capital to the communities and countries where men were cheap. (Today it is known as Multinational Economic Rationalism, or the New World Order...*ed*.)

The moral is that it is entirely futile to try to make human life dear by legislation – so long as the credit-centres are controlled in the exclusive interest of a creditor class. We must accept the axiom that the credit-centres should be operated with primary consideration for the producers... The serious obstacles to the solution of the social problem are all merely spiritual, psychological." Taken from "*The Great News*" by Charles Ferguson republished in 1915.

Clifford Douglas in "*Credit Power and Democracy*" emphasised the point: "Centralised financial credit-control will break up this civilisation." Why? Because "no man, or body of men, however elected, can represent the detailed desires of any other man, or body of men".

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