




ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: *"My wife and I have just returned from the anti-war march held today here in Brisbane. Ten thousand were anticipated – ten times that turned up. The crowd had come downtown from across the board – mums and dads pushing strollers, old couples shading themselves under brollies, pimply and excitable teens, Vietnam vets sporting medals of service. Perhaps the best evidence of the broad base of the protest could be seen in the numerous protest banners and placards. The slick logos and professional print-work of those 'seasoned' campaigners such as the Greens, Democrats and various unions were there, sure. More noticeable, however, were the home-made jobs – a crayon and Texta message scribbled on the flip side of a cut-up removalist's box. A recycled primary school project, turned over, nailed to a piece of dowel from the shed, and inscribed with a kid's plea for peace. A series of anti-war messages done up on the home computer and taped to the outside of a golfing umbrella. Someone had even cut up an old banner promoting Ronricco (an 80s hypnotist) in order to flip it over and daub it with a clear message to John Howard – 'NOT IN MY NAME'.*

"Today's march made me proud to be a human again. It was a heartening indication that despite the torrent of empty 'Get Saddam' rhetoric from our leaders and the fatuous pro-war spin from the chicken-hawks in the press, we the ordinary folk are thinking with our heads and talking with our feet."
Webdiarist Jim Forbes in Brisbane, 16 February 2003.

– *"Not Happy, John"* by Margo Kingston, 2004

'OUT OF CONTROL' CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT – taken from correspondence from Jeremy Lee: "The US, through its past privilege of having the world's reserve currency, has been increasingly living on imports, paid for by 'printing' huge amounts of global-reserve-debt currency. Its Current Account Deficit is past belief, and if Asian and European nations pull the plug on the dollar – and it's already happening – God help America and all nations which have tied themselves to the dollar – particularly Britain and Australia.

But look at our own Current Account Deficit and Foreign Debt: Imports exceed exports by an average \$5 million an hour over the last quarter. Our foreign debt is expected to reach \$400 billion by Christmas – \$20,000 for each living soul in Australia.

If the oil-producing nations (OPEC) switch from the \$US to the Euro, and the price of oil in \$US soars, we can expect carnage. When? I don't know...

Can they hold it off until Britain, Australia and the US have their respective elections? Who knows?

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John Howard needed some dramatic crisis – like Tampa and Terrorism last time – to scramble home. A world financial crisis would do very nicely.

The future looks bleak but crisis is often the midwife of regeneration."

HAVE AUSTRALIA'S SHEEP HALVED? – taken from an article by John Carter, in *The Land* (NSW), July 22nd, 2004: *Australia's sheep numbers have halved and it appears their genes have been transferred to our journalists and politicians. Instead of thinking, they just follow.*

Rupert Murdoch and his New York business colleagues want access to Australia's remaining public assets and his newspapers push the US Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The Coalition is acting as it did over the Iraq invasion. One person rose in the party room to question an unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation, the Prime Minister told him to sit down, his colleagues jeered him and we followed the US into the debacle.

The capacity among Coalition members for independent thought hasn't improved with the FTA, and the Labor Premiers are no better as they applaud the consequences of a FTA without doing their homework.

Negative assessments of its impact on Australia have come from the International Monetary Fund, ACIL Tasman and the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, which calculated it would cost Australia up to \$50 billion and 200,000 jobs.

They are stating the obvious. Both US and Australian debt increases each month to unprecedented levels. If I was drowning, I wouldn't embrace a drowning gorilla.

Any perusal of the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement on Mexico (cheap labour used by US has bankrupted domestic companies) and Canada (no US access for their beef despite BSE being found in both countries) should warn us. Subsidies make US farmers much more competitive than ours but this agreement goes much further than trade.

- The chapter on quarantine gives US trade interests power over our scientific assessments and opens the way for multinationals to undermine our natural freedom from diseases.
- It gives the US multinationals power to stop our Government moderating their forays into media, copyright, patents, environment and health.
- And it covers service areas not specifically excluded!
- We are also relinquishing the right of future governments to regulate these services without a major argument with the US.
- Investors (read New York) are entitled to compensation if environmental regulations are too difficult in the eyes of their lawyers.

The Bolivian Government watched helplessly as a multinational charged Bolivians for their own water – until a boot maker triggered a revolution.

Our Government is silent about the Multinational Agreement on Investment (MAI) which was on the negotiating table. Some years ago they tried quietly to negotiate the MAI. The spectre of Australia signing away its sovereignty and giving multinationals free rein frightened many and it was temporarily abandoned.

The Brazilian President, Luis da Silva, sarcastically dismissed Robert Zoellick (the US trade negotiator) as "the sub-secretary of a sub-secretary" after he suggested Brazil would be reduced to exporting to Antarctica if it shunned the US plan for a Free Trade Area of the Americas. Here, we bow and scrape.

The New Zealanders are not only beating us at rugby this year, they are showing far superior moral fibre as they stare down France, the US and Israel.

Our senators have the chance to do a "Helen Clarke" and hold the self respect that our founding fathers gave us, but they will have to ignore the media in a testing pre-election environment.

WA OPPOSITION TO INTRODUCE NEW 'ETHNIC VILIFICATION' LAWS: In a media release 21/7/04 the WA Coalition announced they "will introduce new ethnic vilification laws".

The Coalition's Shadow Attorney-General Sue Walker said, "A Coalition Government would introduce new laws to ensure people guilty of racial and religious harassment and threats and graffiti attacks such as those seen in Perth over the weekend were severely dealt with by the law. They planned to introduce a Private Members' Bill that would "toughen racial and religious vilification laws removing them from the criminal code and bringing them under separate Act of Parliament."

Mrs. Walker thinks "The laws that we have at the moment are clearly inadequate and that is reflected in the difficulty faced when attempting to charge and prosecute people under the laws," she said.

What's the purpose?

It couldn't be that the present 'racial vilification' laws themselves are outrageous and are intended to psychologically, politically and legally pressure people to refrain from speaking out on religious, racial, political and social issues of great concern to them? It couldn't be that what she wants to do is turn the screws tighter and so apply more psychological, political and legal pressure on more and more people to silence them?

The good lady should look around the world at the present time. Tell us where there are not religious, racial, and political social issues needing resolution. Making more and more laws will not resolve the issues. Getting to the reasons for the conflicts might be a better place to start.

Let's look at some of the words the lady uses:

Vilification: meaning 'slandorous defamation'.

Slandorous: If I 'slandered' someone, I would be claiming something about them that was harmful and/or often untrue.

Defamation: Meaning I tended to discredit or malign. If I discredited or maligned someone I would be claiming something about them that caused them to be distrusted or disbelieved. If I maligned them, in modern terminology I would be 'bad mouthing them' or speak unfavourably about them.

Harassed: I was tormenting them by continued attacks and criticism.

Threats: Declaration of intention to inflict harm.

I would have thought any acts of vandalism, threats of inflicting harm, or slanderous defamation against any citizen, no matter of what race or religion, was already covered by the present criminal code.

We encourage West Australians to follow up this proposed 'new vilification' legislation, the wording could be most enlightening. The definitions most informative.

Mrs. Walker says: "The new laws that we are proposing will clarify what constitutes a racially or religiously motivated offence and make it easier for police and lawyers to prosecute people for religiously motivated crimes as well as introduce tougher penalties."

Mrs. Walker said that if a person threatened to kill someone, they were dealt with harshly (by the law...ed) and it should be no different for those that made racial threats by breaking windows, fire bombing or painting swastikas or threatening messages on, etc., etc.

I would have thought every one of those acts was covered by the criminal codes.

So, what's the purpose? Are we drawing too long a bow by tying in the above plans of the West Australian Coalition's intention to introduce 'new ethnic vilification legislation' and the news of Israel's plans to make "Holocaust denial crimes committed overseas... an offence under Israeli legal jurisdiction"?

If John Howard's government thought nothing of the rights of Australian citizen David Hicks – incarcerated by the American authorities, for two years in Guantanamo Bay, without any legal rights, what would they do if Israel demanded Australian "holocaust deniers" be extradited to Israel? **Read on...**

ISRAEL WILL PROSECUTE HOLOCAUST DENIERS – *Jerusalem Post*, July 19th, 2004, by Nina Gilbert:

Holocaust denial crimes committed overseas would be an offense under Israeli legal jurisdiction and serve as grounds for extradition under legislation, which is expected to pass a first reading in the Knesset this week.

The government is backing the bill, drafted by MK Aryeh Eldad (National Union). Eldad originally proposed the measure as a move against then Palestinian Authority prime minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) for his doctoral dissertation 20 years ago in which he estimated that the Nazis killed less than a million Jews.

But the bill is unlikely to be anything more than declarative in nature. Countries that don't have laws against Holocaust denial are unlikely to extradite citizens to be tried in Israel for the crime, although Israel's protective measure would not require such a law to be on their books, according to Justice Ministry officials. Another problem is the fact that Holocaust denial is a crime of expression, and most countries treat such crimes liberally.

A more practical implication of the law is that it would deter Holocaust deniers from visiting Israel.

In 1994, Israel extended its legal protection abroad for the state and its citizens to Jews and Jewish institutions, which enables it to obtain justice for them as it does for Israelis. At the time, the idea of including Holocaust denial in Israel's ex-territorial laws was considered, but eventually dropped.

Eldad said the amendment to the law in Israel, where Holocaust denial is a crime, is necessary because "almost all" of those crimes are committed abroad.

He said he believes the law is going to be "very practical", since violations would give Israel the right to demand prosecution even if it does not request extradition. He said it would also enable Israel to file counter suits if Jews are sued for libel for labelling Holocaust deniers.

The law would also "send a signal to a Holocaust denier like Abu Mazen" that if he enters Israel he is a "criminal". Eldad said.

Moreover, he said the passage of the law would send a message that for the Jewish people there is "no statute of limitations" on the Holocaust. "The generation of survivors is dwindling," he noted, emphasizing the need to keep Nazism from rearing again.

The bill has the support of Knesset factions on the Left and Right.

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