



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET



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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance -

Print Post Publication Number 381667 00258

Vol.41, No.3

January 28th, 2005

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"In war more than anywhere else in the world things happen differently from what we had expected, and look differently when near from what they did at a distance." – General Carl von Clausewitz

Iraq's 'American' election: Sudad, the travel agent, said she too would leave – if she did not have so much business making departure arrangements for everyone else. Asked if she intended to vote, she just laughed and said, "Come on."..."There's no cooking gas, no cooking oil, no electricity and no gasoline. There's no security and everyone's a thief... If Saddam participated in the election, I'd vote. Everyone in Iraq is a thief, but Saddam was a good thief." – MidEastRealities.com January, 2005

FARCE OF THE CENTURY from Felicity Arbuthnot, UK:

Registration in fourteen countries for expatriate Iraqis to vote in the Iraq elections has begun – Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Jordan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States (and runs until January 23rd). However, according to a renowned expert on international law, Sabah Al Mukhtar, the election is not alone fatally flawed, it is illegal.

"Under the Vienna Convention, an occupying force has no right to change composition of occupied territories socially, culturally, educationally or politically. This election was based on the laws laid down by former 'Viceroy' American Paul Bremer and is entirely unconstitutional. (When did the Americans bother with 'rules' anyway?...ed) Bremer personally appointed the overseers for the election," says Al Mukhtar, thus, far from 'free and fair' and heralding Iraqi 'democracy' they are entirely engineered by Bush's man.

Further, says Al Mukhtar the names of those standing for election are not widely publicised, many names are indeed unknown and little or no manifestos have been published. However, what is publicised are the names and addresses of all who register to vote, they are displayed – in Iraq and all voting centres abroad – at all polling centres. This is simply and purely "intimidation" says Al Mukhtar, it will "encourage some and discourage others – disclosing names and addresses is highly dangerous, no one will be safe within or without polling stations, now or later", he contends.

Intimidation needs no encouragement: Nadia Selim, from Notholt, Middlesex recounts how her family in Hay Al Jamia in west Baghdad, a mixed Sunni and Shi'ite neighbourhood, were planning to vote in spite of the dangers – until they were visited by their local shopkeeper. He requested they hand

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over their ration books for 'safe keeping'. The ration books are the means of identity for voters. Gunmen had visited him and ordered him to collect all ration books in the neighbourhood. The family refused his request. Later he returned sobbing and begged them not to condemn his children to death, reluctantly they gave in. One can only speculate how widely similarly intimidating actions are being replicated throughout Iraq.

Further says Al Mukhtar no one knows who has drawn up the electoral lists and on what they are based. "I am an Iraqi and entitled to vote, but no one has contacted me." As a prominent and internationally well known Iraqi he can hardly have been overlooked; one wonders how many other Iraqis who are hardly likely to have voted for puppet 'Prime Minister' Allawi and his gang have been similarly 'overlooked'. Further, allegation of intimidation of Iraqi expatriates abroad seems to be borne out by the fact that of an estimated seventy thousand Iraqis living in the north of England, just three hundred and fifty have so far registered to vote, according the Chair of the Manchester based Iraq Solidarity Campaign Hussein Al Alak.

A strange reluctance in some cities to hold the elections in public buildings also appears to have crept in. Manchester Town Hall declined as a venue on the basis that there were too many weddings being held there on polling day. When the wily Al Alak checked, there was, in fact just one booked. 371 Oldham Road has now been designated in an area entirely dominated by the BNP. (British National Party...ed) In Glasgow polling is inexplicably listed at two private houses, 71 Holland Street and 94 Elmbank Street.

Where the external votes will be counted, and by whom, and under what independent monitoring body, is unannounced and unknown says Al Mukhtar. Further, he adds, that legally elections must be 'possible, fair and reasonable' – none of which apply in the chaos of occupied Iraq where votes are also being bought and even Iyad Allawi – who recently tried to buy favours from journalists with hundred dollar bills in brown envelopes – is complaining of being intimidated in spite of being surrounded by US soldiers and tanks.

Oh, and the only 'independent' monitoring of the elections within Iraq are being carried out from Jordan – twelve hundred kilometres away. No wonder Allawi has kept his British passport and his mansion in leafy Surrey as insurance.

Further trouble in Paradise has broken out in Amman, Jordan, between the International Organisation for Migration – who control overseas voting on behalf of Out of Country Voters. The IOM has stated that Israelis of Iraqi origin are eligible to vote. Asma Khader, Jordan Government spokeswoman and Minister for Culture says Israel-based Iraqis voting in Jordan is quite simply 'out of the question'. In Baghdad the Independent Electoral Commission's Farid Ayar also stated that those with Israeli papers would be barred from voting. Jordan is the nearest country designated as a voting point, to Israel. Further, looking at the list of countries where Iraqis can vote and the vastness of say, America, Canada and the US, many Iraqis will have to invest in an airline ticket to vote – even those resident in Ireland will have to travel to the UK.

A nation of hostages for three days: Intimidation is not alone rife for voters; from Basra, Iraq's beautiful battered southern city, to Mosul in the north and at virtually every designated polling station in Iraq, electoral committees have fled in terror – in Mosul the entire seven hundred left, polling stations, have been bombed, burned and officials murdered. In Allawi's Alice in Wonderland world, he has, he says, devised the most stringent security tactics to ensure safety on polling day. He'd be wise to implement them forthwith – if they exist.

To add to the joy of Iraqis liberated from electricity, clean water, and largely too scared to venture out, they are also to become a nation of hostages for three days before and during polling day. Borders will be closed, phones disconnected, mobiles rendered useless – and US 'other forces' already murderous and unaccountable will be able to run riot and spill blood at will with not the slightest chance of the world knowing in this four day suspension of any semblance of 'freedom and democracy'. Cars will

not be allowed near any polling stations so even those prepared to risk queuing to be blown up will certainly not risk walking to do so.

'Possible, fair and reasonable' the elections are not. A farce of historic proportions they certainly are.

HO... HUM... LABOR TO – AGAIN – ELECT A LEADER by Betty Luks: Will it be Kim, or Kevin or Julia? Who will be able to present the right 'image' for a political party of the 21st century? Physically, poor Kim has his weight problems (who must remember to always have coat buttons done up when approaching cameras), while Kevin has the nickname of 'pixy'; hardly the right 'image' for a national 'leader'. Maybe if they dress him up in a Napoleon's uniform...? Hmm...?

As for Julia she has a 'hip' problem (sorry Julia, I don't mean to be too personal here, just want to make a point. My own physical proportions leave much to be desired.) Not a good 'image', and let's face it, Julia lacks the appeal of a Pauline Hanson.

Do they have brains? Probably. But is that what the Labor Caucus wants for a 'leader'?

So, what are they looking for? Probably, a Labor version of John Howard; someone who can be stood up in front of the cameras and parrot his lines, word perfect; just as he has been instructed by his 'advisers'. If such a person can fit in an early morning 'power walk' – for the cameras – so much the better.

What! Did I hear someone say Labor supporters want different policies from their party? Did I hear someone say they are sick to death of the Labor Party hacks presenting themselves as a pale shadow of the corporate-fascist-Liberals?

Bernard Freedman of the *Australian Jewish News*, January 21st, 2005, assures us: Former federal minister Barry Cohen believes Kim Beazley will be the new federal Labor leader. Why? Because he will "enhance its relationship with Israel, the United States and British Labour leader Tony Blair". According to the federal parliament's "only Jewish MP, Labor's Michael Danby... both Beazley and Rudd had recently visited Israel". That should stand them in good stead. But not only that, "They had longstanding friendships with the Australian Jewish community and supported the State of Israel..."

Julia Gillard thought the new Labor leader should have **"a deep connection with the thinking and feeling of the Australian people"**. Not good Julia, that statement won't go down well with some people.

The Labor Party's problems are much more than just 'image' problems. In fact the problems could be terminal without a radical change of *policies*. Policies which promote the well-being of all the Australian people!

LABOUR PEER WITHDRAWS BILL TO AMEND ACT OF SETTLEMENT: "The Monarchy does not belong to Britain alone but also to us of the Commonwealth Realms", insisted Phillip Benwell, National Chairman of the Australian Monarchist League. The following report came from a colleague in Britain with a commendation for the work done by Philip Benwell of Australia:

"In December 2004, Lord Dubs, a former Labour Minister and a member of the Executive of the Fabian Society, sought to implement the Society's recommendations on the 'Future of the Monarchy' by introducing an Act into the House of Lords entitled 'Succession to the Crown Bill (HL)'.

The Bill was presented to the Lords for its Second Reading the January 14th, 2005.

Philip Benwell, National Chairman of the Australian Monarchist League, wrote to all non-Labour Peers pointing out that the Bill was unconstitutional under the Statute of Westminster which required: **"That any alteration in the law touching the Succession to the Throne or the Royal Style and Titles shall hereafter require the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom."**

Mr. Benwell also wrote in a like vein to the Clerk to the Parliaments and to all the Speakers of all the Commonwealth Realms.

At its Second reading yesterday the Lord Chancellor, stated that the Bill was a "complex and controversial undertaking raising major constitutional issues". Lord Dubs then had no option but to withdraw his Bill.

The situation became quite critical when the former Labour Chief Whip, Anne Taylor, mirrored the Bill in the House of Commons, thus giving a possible governmental imprimatur to the proposals.

Mr. Benwell made clear that his action to have the Bill withdrawn was not due to any religious concerns or about the issue of primogeniture but that the move to amend the Act of Settlement whilst appearing to be so reasonable, particularly in the current 'politically correct' environment, were so obviously a part of a programme to abolish the Monarchy.

"Something, " he said, "they have no right to do, for the Monarchy does not belong to Britain alone but also to us of the Commonwealth Realms."

Well done Mr. Benwell!

Mr. Benwell retraced his efforts which led to the withdrawal of the Bill by Fabian Lord Dubs. "Over the past five years I have spoken at a number of gatherings in the United Kingdom pointing out on all occasions how The Crown of the United Kingdom is linked to all sixteen Commonwealth Realms and how, under the Statute of Westminster, **the British Parliament is fettered from enacting legislation** 'touching the Succession to the Throne or the Royal Style and Titles' and that such legislation 'shall hereafter require the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.'

Close to a thousand copies of my Address to a meeting in the House of Lords on the 21st April 2004, which went into great detail on this point and the interest that the Realms have in the European Constitution, have been distributed to people throughout Britain.

However, only *one* person in the whole of the United Kingdom thought to inform me of the Dubs' Bill in the House of Lords to amend the Act of Settlement!

Lord Dubs is a member of the Fabian Executive and made no bones about his proposals being a part of the recommendations of the Fabian Commission on the Future of the Monarchy.

Within a few days I had written personally to ALL non-socialist Peers expressing my concerns, as well as to the Clerk to the (British) Parliaments and to the Speakers of all Commonwealth Realms. A message received from a Peer sitting in the House of Lords at yesterday's Session at which the Second Reading was listed stated: "Without a doubt your message of concern coming as it did from Australia together with your reminder of the responsibilities of the British Parliament had an effect, particularly on those of the Lords who were undecided on this issue and facing its certain defeat, Lord Dubs withdrew his Bill".

The point of these comments is that no one person and no one organisation can alone defeat the forces that are against us.

It is likely that in 2005 Britain will have a referendum on the European Constitution, the results of which will have a grave effect on the Commonwealth Realms. The millions of British subjects residing throughout the Commonwealth have a moral right to vote in the Referendum. Whilst it is not likely that the Blair Government will allow them to do so (even though they will allow non-British citizens residing in Britain to vote) these people can influence their relations and friends in the United Kingdom. No stone can be left unturned in the battle to retain Britain's sovereignty and if we in Australia have any say, even if we have to fight alone by ourselves, no stone *will be left unturned.*"

"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.