



A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

ON TARGET

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The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance –

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THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

ANZAC Day 2008: "I have the testimony of hundreds of Australians who had served with me and who accompanied Weary to Burma and Siam that he was both the inspiration and the main instrument of their physical and spiritual survival."

Sir Laurens Van der Post

"My years between the ages of seven and twelve that I spent on my father's farm, Summerlea, about the Sheepwash Creek at Stewarton, coincided with the momentous events of World War I. Scores of sturdy, heroic men, including four Dunlops, donned the ANZAC garb to seek high adventures or death. It was a bitter frustration to my burning ardour that my participation was largely limited to The Young Gardeners' League, for my heart yearned for the high romantic ground of adventure in strange lands, and the challenge of death.

Later, I was to reflect upon the advice of a Spanish proverb: 'never wish for anything too much. It might come true.'

His book was dedicated to: "Those prisoners-of-war of several nations whose courage and fortitude uplifted me during dark days. The many dead are hallowed in my memory and the friendship of those living is one of life's precious gifts. I pray that 'they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat'. (The Revelation of St. John the Divine, vii.16)

– Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop in "The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop", 1986

IS THIS ALSO AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE? Out of Africa – Marxist-Thug Mugabe is not the sole problem. If Mugabe could cure the present situation by slipping quietly away to retirement outside Zimbabwe it could doubtless be arranged. Of course, his removal would not provide such a cure for the problem is not just Mugabe but Zanu PF whose leading members are terrified that if they lose control they will be punished for their grotesque behaviour since 1980. Mugabe may well not be in control any more.

In Zimbabwe, hope has turned to silent terror: *The Spectator* U.K., 9/4/08. Peter Osborne says that the post-electoral limbo leaves Mugabe with a series of unpalatable options, the armed forces in disarray and Zimbabweans with a sense of grim foreboding.

On the night after the presidential elections 12 days ago, a British diplomat, Philip Barclay, witnessed the count at the little outpost of Bikisa deep in rural Masvingo. This part of Zimbabwe is Zanu PF

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heartland. In all five presidential elections since independence in 1981 the people of Bikisa had voted solidly for Robert Mugabe – and there was little expectation of anything different this time.

Barclay reports feeling faint with sheer amazement when it became clear that the largest pile of votes was for Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Just 44 people in Bikisa voted for President Mugabe, against an overwhelming 167 for Tsvangirai.

Reports from other areas soon made it clear that Bikisa was not exceptional, and that Mugabe had been voted out of power in a political earthquake. By late in the afternoon on 30 March the day after the election the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, an independent body charged with overseeing the poll, was in a position to make a cautious estimate of the result. It judged that Morgan Tsvangirai had secured almost 60 per cent of the vote, more than double that of Robert Mugabe with 27 per cent.

Sources say that when this news was brought to the President his first reaction was genuine incredulity. He is now so out of touch, and so used to winning elections, that he had felt confident of a comfortable majority.

Mugabe orders Electoral Commission to declare him victor: Incredulity swiftly turned to anger, and Mugabe grimly ordered the Electoral Commission to declare him the victor. This command was resisted by very brave election officials. They received unexpected support, however, from senior personnel within the Zimbabwe state security apparatus, fearful of the public order consequences that would certainly flow from such blatant fixing of the result.

At this stage South Africa's President Mbeki tried to solve the problem. Reportedly Mbeki also wished the result to be rigged, though not as blatantly as Mugabe. He seems to have proposed that the ZEC should sharply downgrade Tsvangirai's share of the vote, sharply upgrade Mugabe to a more respectable 40 per cent and dramatically increase the share of the vote enjoyed by the renegade Zanu PF presidential candidate Simba Makoni.

Kind of politician that appeals to Bureaucratic Mind: Simba Makoni is Mbeki's personal choice as the next president of Zimbabwe. There is some evidence that he is also supported by the U.S. state department. A highly intelligent and well-educated man, Makoni was a member of the Mugabe inner circle for many years, while maintaining warm links to foreign observers and exercising care to evade personal responsibility for the worst of the regime's atrocities. He only stood for the presidency after being given the green light by Mbeki earlier this year. Unlike Morgan Tsvangirai, a former miner of incredible courage but with little formal education, Makoni is the kind of politician who appeals profoundly to the bureaucratic mind.

Mbeki, quietly backed by the United States, hoped to induce Mugabe to step down and get Makoni to stand in his stead. This plan had definite logic. Makoni, though he will never be forgiven by Mugabe for what the President sees as an act of unspeakable betrayal, retains the strongest links with Zanu PF. This means that he would probably be acceptable to the senior generals and policemen who hold the key to Zimbabwe's immediate future, and to whom Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change is utterly repugnant.

He led North Korean-trained Fifth Brigades in the genocide of early 1980s: By the start of this week it was beginning to be clear that the Makoni wheeze was not going to fly. The trouble is that like many politicians beloved of the official class Mbeki's protégé lacks mass support. The failure of the South African intervention means there was stalemate in Zimbabwe as The Spectator went to press. Basically, President Mugabe has only three options, and time is running out very fast indeed.

The first of these is to mount a coup d'etat, the solution which is preferred by Mugabe's inner circle. Significantly, it seems to be favoured by General Constantine Chiwenga, commander in chief of the armed forces, and by Air Force Marshall Perence Shiri, Mugabe's blood relation and close ally.

It must be borne in mind that senior figures such as these do not merely stand to lose power if

Mugabe wins. They also face the prospect of being brought to justice for the crimes of the Mugabe regime. It was Perence Shiri, for instance, who led the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigades in the Matabeleland genocide of the early 1980s.

Chinese Mig Fighters Buzz Low over Bulawayo: The problem with the idea of a coup d'etat is not really the international condemnation that would inevitably result. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) might not like it, but under the prostrate guidance of Thabo Mbeki it would never lift a finger.

The true problem is different: there are real reasons to doubt whether commanders like Shiri (whose Chinese Mig fighters were buzzing low over Bulawayo in an act of naked intimidation when I was there two weeks ago) have the support of their troops. There is overwhelming anecdotal evidence that ordinary soldiers and policemen, even some members of the feared Central Intelligence Organisation, have turned against Mugabe. The director of intelligence, Happyton Bonyongwe, is said to be quietly supporting Tsvangirai.

Mugabe's second option is to declare the recent elections null and order a re-run. There is strong evidence that the President is preparing the way for this. He is already taking revenge, for example, on the hapless Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, several of whose members have been arrested over the last few days. In a marvellous irony, they are being accused of rigging the result against Zanu PF. If the President calls a second election, it will be marked by all the intimidation and horror which was to a certain extent lacking on 29 March. Mugabe's green bombers, his licensed torturers and murderers who bear close comparison to Hitler's Brownshirts, are already off the leash.

Finally, Mugabe could stand down. Here one key ingredient would be a guarantee that he and the scores of murderers and torturers who are linked to him can live the rest of their lives in the peace and tranquillity they have denied so many others. Granting Mugabe immunity from prosecution is hard to engineer and would be unpalatable for some. Others may judge it well worthwhile.

Meanwhile, everyone waits for the old man's next move. I am told by a friend who runs one of Zimbabwe's very few remaining factories that the mood among the workforce has changed very sharply over the last 48 hours. Hope has turned to bemusement and then on Tuesday morning to a silent, pervasive sense of terror, as if something horrible might be just about to happen.

HEY BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE ME AN IDEA? by James Reed: One thousand of the "best and brightest" will have marched up to the 2020 summit by the time this edition of *OT* comes out and they will have come up with "ideas" for Australia's future. All this "brightness" and busy, busy thinking reminds me of Donald Horne's work which embodied the same ideal. Come up with the right ideas and all will be well. But who constitutes the 1,000 – surely it is the people who should have already given us the solutions?

The 2020 Steering Committee issued back-ground papers on the areas to be considered. The background papers, we are told, give a snapshot of Australia and some of the challenges facing Australia. (*Herald Sun*, p.21, 4/4/08)

Of course. What did you expect? But I can be sure that not a single one of these university elites will have tackled the core problems of the world – economic globalization, financial tyranny and monopolization. Core problems that can only be dealt with by radical changes to our present economic system, such as envisaged by the social credit movement.

Even in terms of its own politically correct values the "RuddFest" was criticized because only one out of the 10 participants are women. I note the irony and pass on. The Ruddfest is all hot air and public relations. Not a single good idea will eventually come from this talkfest because it is flawed in its basics.

It is the elites who are the problem and it is their ideas that have mortally wounded our society.

COMRADE KEVIN'S NIGHT ON THE TOWN by James Reed: I would like to remind readers that nothing was heard about Comrade Kevin's visit to New York strip club "Scores" in 2003 during the Federal election. The background is that in 2003 Al "the legs" Downer asked John Howard to approve the Rudd trip to the U.N. General Assembly in New York. The trip cost taxpayers \$20,431. Subsequent revelations (*The Australian*, 4/12/07, p.5) revealed that Rudd failed to properly account for \$1,100 – of the taxpayers' money – he was given as "spending money".

Rudd had been advised to keep all receipts and he failed to meet the 28-day deadline to submit receipts and ignored follow-up letters from the Department of Finance and Administration.

I would like to say that the Commonwealth police are investigating but I can't. But don't worry, the ever-delightful Therese Rein has forgiven him.

I don't forgive you Kevin. The ordinary over-burdened taxpayer is not governed by the same rules you live by. He can't put his snout into the public trough and swill away.

'REPUBLIC' A HUMPTY DUMPTY WORD from David Flint's *Opinion Column*: A serious weakness in most polling in the constitutional debate has been in the use of the word "republic" without some elaboration. This has inflated the apparent support for change. Used alone, "republic" is a "Humpty Dumpty" word.

In "Alice Through the Looking Glass" Humpty Dumpty said there in a rather scornful tone, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." "Republic" is the Humpty Dumpty word par excellence.

Montesquieu and classical political philosophers would have seen the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic. So did Cardinal Moran at the time of Federation. Bagehot saw the Westminster system as a "disguised republic".

Recently Mr. Justice Michael Kirby rejoiced in the Commonwealth of Australia as a "crowned republic." So a poll or plebiscite question which uses "republic" does not tell us much.

The question in the *Sun Herald* Taverner poll was: "Should Australia become a republic?" Apart from the Humpty Dumpty word "republic", the first word of the question is "should".

This has the core meaning, according to the Encarta dictionary, "that something is the right thing for somebody to do". A more neutral verb would give a fairer view.

Even the verb "become" is not the most neutral word. It also has the meaning of being "an appropriate or socially acceptable thing for somebody to say or do". This is not nitpicking. The words used in polling are crucial.

By way of contrast the 1999 referendum question, developed by a parliamentary committee and settled by republican and monarchist MP's, briefly elaborated on the sort of republic which was proposed and used neutral language.[ii]

In any event, 49% said yes to the Taverner poll, but according to a second question, most of these want it delayed. Accordingly, the Taverner Research managing director Philip Mitchell-Taverner issued the following warning.

"It would appear from these latest poll findings that those who want us to become a republic may be sensible to wait at least until Queen Elizabeth leaves the throne before there will be ready acceptance of the change."

The last Newspan showed support for a vague republic was down to 45%.[iii] and according to the last West Australian in depth youth survey, 38%.[iv]

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