

SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY

WE REJECT RACISM IN ALL ITS GUISES!

EDITORIAL

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality ... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR

Racism isn't normal; neither is it acceptable in a democratic society. Racism is deliberately cultivated by governments for a variety of reasons. It flourishes where ignorance prevails.

Watch children at play in a primary school. They don't see other children as Muslim, Aboriginal, Asian or black: they see them as schoolmates. Racism is cultivated, motivated and deliberately nourished to divert, separate and divide a community.

Racism is nourished, both overtly and covertly. Racism consists of ideologies and practices that seek to justify or cause the unequal distribution of privileges, rights or goods among different racial groups.

Are we a racist society? Let's examine just one example in recent times, which is the deliberately fostered antagonism towards Australian Muslims, who make up less than 3% of the Australian community.

Societal racism is not new. In the 1930s Adolph Hitler and his Nazi Party targeted Jews in much the same way as happens to Muslims today. The Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe did not happen suddenly. It was the end of a long process of anti-Semitism and belief in the pseudo-science of eugenics. The Nazis used propaganda and terror to enforce their anti-Semitic policies.

Today, propaganda and terror are being used to target Muslims. Like the Jews in Germany, Muslims are not a homogenous group. They come from different countries, have different religious interpretations of Islam, and the overwhelming majority of them work hard, raise their families, contribute to the economy, pay their taxes and enrich Australia. Like the

Jews in Nazi Germany, however, the fact that they may look different, pray differently, and eat differently makes them easy to target, particularly for the ignorant in our society. We must not and should not allow this to lessen their great contribution to the country they chose to live in: Australia.

Who promotes anti Islam and why? The hysterical anti Islamic propaganda begins with the Abbott government and is promoted through the Murdoch media. It provides both a hook to justify repressive legislation that will affect us all, and a diversion from the economic crisis that is having such an impact on the living standards of the working class, exacerbated by government cuts. Again, this is not new.

So we are encouraged to hate, suspect and malign Muslims, asylum seekers, trade unions, the homeless and the unemployed, while secret trade agreements are signed that will further impact on our lives, wars are conducted for profit and plunder, politicians snout the public trough, international companies rip us off and our environment is raped.

While we are propagandised into racism and hatred, our society sinks deeper into high unemployment, spiralling youth unemployment, high and increasing homelessness, massive withdrawal of funding from social programs, growing cut-offs from essential services such as water, gas and electricity, marginalising or destroying sections of the community, while at the same time clamping down on community freedoms and democratic rights.

It is unacceptable to attack, berate or attempt to destroy the reputations of those seeking to highlight these aberrations, but this is exactly what is happening in our country today. People such as Gillian Triggs, President of the Human Rights Commission; Julian Burnside QC; Greens activist Sarah Hanson-Young; and many other patriots have all had their motives questioned and their reputations impugned. Again, this has happened historically.

Frederick Douglass, US civil rights activist said, 'Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe'.

Vigilance and the rejection of racism is an imperative. ■

June Factor is the convenor of the Befriend a Child in Detention Project, whose purpose is to inspire and support compassionate Australians to make a positive connection with child asylum seekers and their families living in detention: to ameliorate their experience in detention, to raise awareness of their circumstances, and to advocate for positive change. **The Project's website address is www.befriendachild.com, and the email address is project@befriendachild.com.**

Children were treated cruelly in convict times. But how far have we come since then?

IGNORANCE AND FEAR SEE A RETURN TO THE DAYS OF THE CHILD CONVICT



Once upon a time, in 1834 to be exact, British civilisation introduced, on the shores of Van Diemen's Land, the first children's prison in the British Empire. Not far from Port Arthur, Point Puer's Boys' Prison housed youthful criminals with the goal of reformation. According to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, 'it is utterly impossible to imagine a more corrupt fraternity of little depraved felons'. As young as nine years old, some 3000 robbers of knives, eggs, brooches and the contents of gentlemen's pockets

were incarcerated at Point Puer in the 15 years of the prison's existence. Reports of the time suggest its isolation and harsh regime proved a largely unsuccessful foundation for reformation.

Since then, we have continued to imprison children for crimes, although none so young or so relatively harmless as many of those confined at Point Puer. But it is only since 1992 that Australian governments, both Labor and Liberal, have detained children against whom there is no suggestion of criminality of any kind. Nor does the

policy of detaining children who, alone or with a family, seek asylum in this country, harbour any pretence of improvement of their character. Detention (including on yet another barren shore, Nauru), is instituted in order to deter others – adults or children – from trying to seek refuge here. This latest version of child incarceration lacks even the muddled good intentions of the early British colonists.

Australians largely view the convict era as a time of humiliation and cruelty – a product of the limited approach to human dignity and rights that was a feature of those long ago times, especially of those in power. So how to explain this contemporary return to indiscriminate child detention, from newborn infants to adolescents?

There are doubtless many reasons, but a combination of ignorance and fear – two characteristics also prominent in the convict period – are certainly implicated. Think how long it took the traditional media – newspapers, radio and television – to begin to question the careful, determined efforts of governments to keep asylum seekers nameless, faceless and voiceless. We glimpsed them only from a distance – strangers. And that made it so much easier to propagate the myth of stranger-danger: foreigners who may do us harm, take our jobs, our houses, our democratic freedoms ... Once we are afraid, it's hard to feel empathy. Thus even babies must be exiled from our community, for they belong with parents – asylum seekers, whom we are encouraged to fear.

Australia was an early signatory to both the international Refugee Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The first declares that people seeking asylum must not be discriminated against, not penalised for the way in which they've managed to reach a country for refuge, and not returned to a place where they fear threats to their lives or freedom. The second affirms that 'Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country'. It also insists that 'Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them'.

These are principles and precepts unthinkable in the convict era. They are a product of the second half of the 20th century, lessons painfully learned after World War II about the necessity for compassion and assistance for those in need of refuge and protection.

We are back to the bleak morality of the 18th-century English penal colony

Australia signed the Refugee Convention in 1951 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, but incrementally since 1992 our governments have chosen to contravene a number of the solemn commitments we promised to uphold. In their place, the current Prime Minister favours a 3-word slogan: Stop the Boats. A late acquisition on the part of both major political parties – a belated concern for the wellbeing of asylum seekers at sea – is used as the 'deterrence' justification for the isolation and degradation of the vast majority who have not drowned. We are back to the bleak morality of the 18th-century English penal code, where cruelty and deportation were justified as a necessary deterrence to crime.

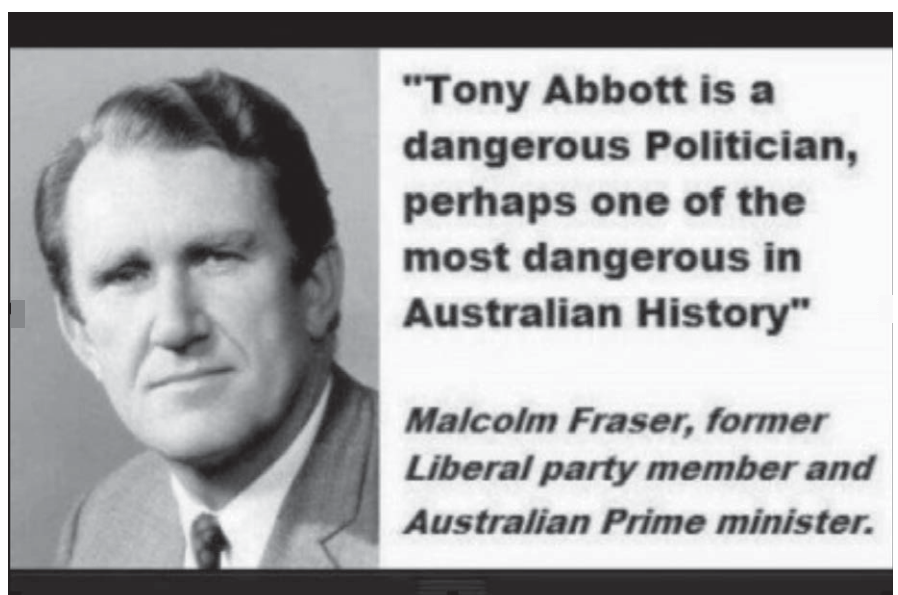
There is one crack in this grim facade of asylum-seeker political correctness: the unease in government because of the growing public objection to keeping children behind razor wire, their physical and mental wellbeing crumbling with every passing month of imprisonment. As the Human Rights Commission Report notes approvingly, the number of children in detention has been gradually declining – from almost 2000 in 2013 to 330 in 2015.

Despite the current manufactured fury at the Human Rights Commissioner for daring to document the unconscionable circumstances in which these children are kept, it is possible that before the next election, political pragmatism may empty the detention centres of the last of these unfortunate children. But why must they wait so long? ■

June Factor is a writer and an Honorary Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

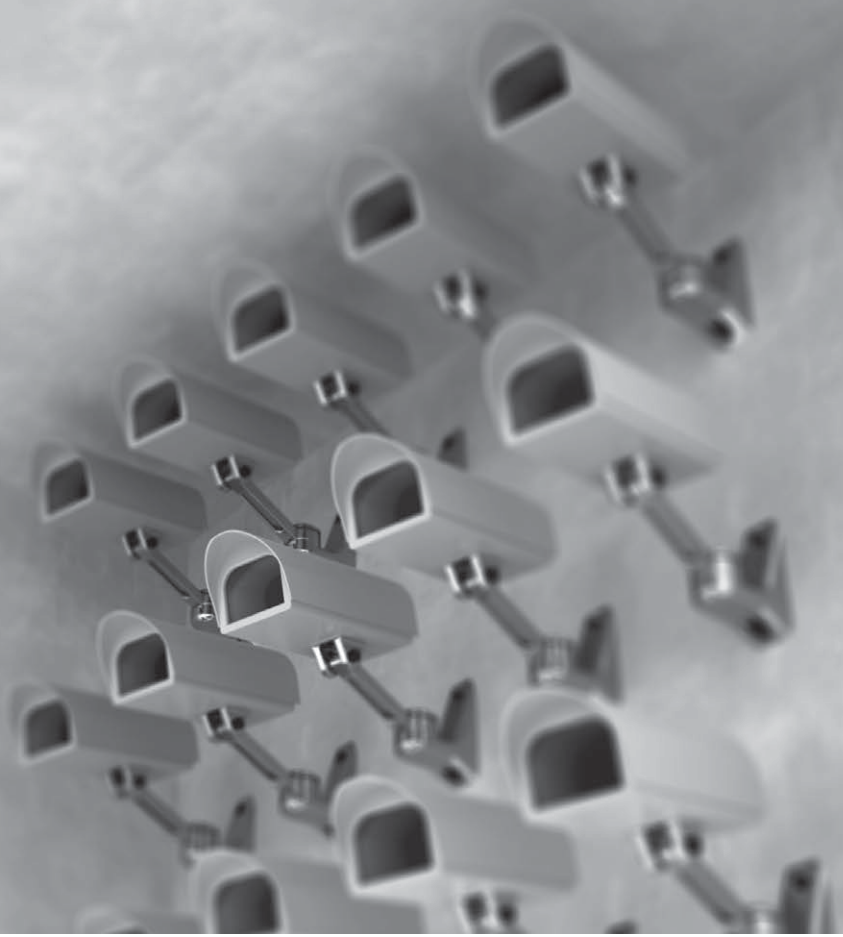
Source: The Age (Melbourne), Tuesday 17 February 2015

Did you know that **MALCOLM FRASER** said this?



‘Strange how paranoia can link up with reality now and then.’

PHILIP K DICK, *A SCANNER DARKLY*



JADE HELM, TERRORIST ATTACKS, SURVEILLANCE AND OTHER FAIRY TALES FOR A GULLIBLE NATION

BY JOHN W WHITEHEAD

Once upon a time, there was a nation of people who believed everything they were told by their government.

When terrorists attacked the country, and government officials claimed to have been caught by surprise, the people believed them. And when the government passed massive laws aimed at locking down the nation and opening the door to total government surveillance, the people believed it was done merely to keep them safe. The few who disagreed were labelled traitors.

When the government waged costly pre-emptive wars on foreign countries, insisting it was necessary to protect the nation, the citizens believed it. And when the government brought the weapons and tactics of war home to use against the populace, claiming it was just a way to recycle old equipment, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were labelled unpatriotic.

When the government spied on its own citizens, claiming they were looking for terrorists hiding among them, the people believed it. And when the government began

tracking the citizenry's movements, monitoring their spending, snooping on their social media, and surveying their habits – supposedly in an effort to make their lives more efficient – the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were labelled paranoid.

When the government let private companies take over the prison industry and agreed to keep the jails full, justifying it as a cost-saving measure, the people believed them. And when the government started arresting and jailing people for minor infractions, claiming the only way to keep communities safe was to be tough on crime, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were labelled soft on crime.

When the government hired crisis actors to take part in disaster drills, never alerting the public to which ‘disasters’ were staged, the people genuinely believed they were under attack. And when the government insisted it needed greater powers to prevent such attacks from happening again, the people believed that too. The few who disagreed were told to shut up or leave the country.

Finally, the government started carrying out covert military drills around the country, insisting they were necessary to train the troops for foreign combat, and most of the people believed them. The few who disagreed, warning that perhaps all was not what it seemed, were dismissed as conspiracy theorists and quacks.

By the time the government locked down the nation, using local police and the military to impose martial law, there was no one left in doubt of the government's true motives – total control and domination – but there was also no one left to fight back.

Now every fable has a moral, and the moral of this story is to beware of anyone who urges you to ignore your better instincts and trust the government.

In other words, if it looks like trouble and it smells like trouble, you can bet there's trouble afoot.

For instance, while there is certainly no shortage of foul-smelling government activities taking place right now, the one giving off the greatest stench is Jade Helm 15. This covert, multi-agency, multi-state, eight-week military training exercise is set to take place from July 15 through September 15 in states across the American Southwest.

According to official government sources, 'Jade Helm: Mastering the Human Domain' is a planned military exercise that will test and practise unconventional warfare including, but not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities and unconventional assisted recovery. The training exercise will take place in seven different southwestern states: California, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Utah and Nevada.

US Army Special Operations Command will primarily lead this interagency training program but the Navy Seals, Air Force Special Operations, Marine Special Operations Command, Marine Expeditionary Units, 82nd Airborne Division, and other interagency partners will also be involved. Approximately 1,200 troops are expected to participate in these exercises.

The training is known as Realistic Military Training because it will be conducted outside of federal property. The exercises are going to be carried out on both public and private land, with the military reportedly asking permission of local authorities and landowners prior to land usage. The military map listing the locations that will host the exercise shows Texas, Utah, and the southern part of California as 'hostile territory'. According to US officials, these three areas are marked as hostile to simulate environments where American troops are viewed as the enemy. The other areas on the map are marked as permissive, uncertain (leaning friendly) or uncertain (leaning hostile).

Military officials claim that the southwestern states were chosen because this exercise requires large areas of undeveloped land as well as access to towns and population hubs. These states purportedly also provide a climate and terrain that is similar to that of potential areas of combat for the United States, particularly Iraq, Iran and Syria.

Now the mainstream media has happily regurgitated the government's official explanation about Jade Helm. However, there is a growing concern among those who are not overly worried about being labelled conspiratorialists or paranoid that the government is using Jade Helm as a

cover to institute martial law, bring about total population control, or carry out greater surveillance on the citizenry.

In the first camp are those who fear that Jade Helm will usher in martial law. These individuals believe that by designating the two traditionally conservative and Republican-dominated states, Utah and Texas, as hostile territory, while more Democratic states like Colorado and California are marked as friendly, the military plans to infiltrate the states with large numbers of gun owners and attempt to disarm them.

Adding fuel to the fire is the mysterious and sudden temporary closures of five Walmart stores in Texas, California, Oklahoma and Florida, two of which are located near Jade Helm training sites. Those in this camp contend that the military is planning to use the Walmart stores as processing facilities for Americans once martial law is enacted.

Pointing to the mission's official title, 'Jade Helm: Mastering the Human Domain', there is a second camp that fears that the military exercises are merely a means to an end – namely total population control – by allowing the military to discern between friendly civilians and hostiles. This concern is reinforced by military documents stating that a major portion of Jade Helm training will be about blending in with civilians, understanding how to work with civilians, using these civilians to find enemy combatants and then neutralising the target.

In this way, the United States military is effectively using psychological warfare to learn how people function and how to control them.

As a study written by military personnel states, mastering the human domain, also known as identity processes, means 'use of enhanced capabilities to identify and classify the human domain; to determine whether they are adversarial, friendly, neutral, or unknown'. The study later states that identity processes can be used to 'manage local populations during major combat, stability, and humanitarian assistance and/or disaster relief operations'.

While the military has promised that the work they are doing is aimed for use overseas, we have seen first-hand how quickly the military's weapons and tactics used overseas are brought home to be used against the populace. In fact, some of the nation's evolutionary psychologists, demographers, sociologists, historians and anthropologists have been working with the Department of Defense's Minerva Initiative to master the human domain. This security research includes 'Understanding the Origin, Characteristics, and Implications of Mass Political Movements' at the University of Washington and 'Who Does Not Become a Terrorist and Why?' at the Naval Academy Post Graduate School. Both studies focus on Americans and the different movements and patterns that the government can track to ensure 'safety and security'.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is also working to infiltrate churches across the country to establish a Christian Emergency Network, carry out emergency training exercises to prevent and prepare for disasters (active shooter drills and natural disaster preparedness), and foster two-way information sharing, while at the same time instituting a media blackout of their activities. As the DHS continues to establish

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DANGEROUS ALLIES – US PIVOT INTO ASIA-PACIFIC – US BASES & TROOPS IN AUSTRALIA



There's a great deal that could be discussed and analysed about the US Pivot into Asia-Pacific, but I will confine the talk to the US-Australia military alliance and its implications for Australia with a threat of war in the region.

The world today is torn by imperialist wars, wars by proxies of imperialism and threats of war. Behind most major wars of aggression, occupations, regime changes, is the hand of the US empire and its multinational corporations, banks and financial institutions. At the centre of these wars is monopoly capitalism's insatiable drive and need to capture more natural resources, new markets, cheap labour and expanded areas of new investments for capital. Sovereign countries that refuse to be subjugated to imperialist powers' demands are savagely attacked, and in the case of Libya, Syria and Iraq, are crushed. Where there is resistance by governments and the people of sovereign countries, the imperialist powers install their local fascist puppets to suppress the people, divide, conquer and loot the sovereign countries' resources and wealth.

The major powers of US and EU collude in waging wars against sovereign countries and people, and at the same time, they are in fierce competition with each other in the re-division and capturing of the world's resources, markets, cheap labour and political and economic spheres of influence.

This is what drives wars of aggression and occupation by imperialist powers and their proxies.

By all indicators the Asia-Pacific region is becoming another major centre of economic rivalries in the 21st century.

The US has more than 1,000 US military bases and intelligence installations in countries around the world and on every continent. And these are the publicly disclosed. There are many more secret or camouflaged US military and intelligence bases around the world. At least 300 of these known US bases are in Asia-Pacific: Japan, South Korea, Australia, Guam, New Zealand, Thailand and Vietnam.

Even before the US announced its US Pivot into Asia-Pacific in 2011, more than 320,000 US troops and marines are already stationed in Asia-Pacific. This number will grow much higher over the next 5 years with the announcement that 60% of the US military, naval, air and ground forces will be shifted to Asia-Pacific by 2020.

In November 2011 President Obama visited Australia to make the first public announcement of US new policy named the US Pivot into Asia-Pacific. The announcement was enthusiastically greeted with a great deal of fanfare by the gushing Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the equally subservient LNP opposition. In October 2012 the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, also graced

Australia's shores to reaffirm and strengthen the US-Australia military alliance. She commended Australia's two main parliamentary parties' subservience and unquestioning support for US preparations for another major war and Australia's integration into the US war machine. Significantly, both Obama's and Clinton's announcements were made in Australian parliament. There was no need for parliamentary and public discussion or debate as it would only jeopardise and upset US strategic plans in Asia-Pacific and Australia's crucial role as its deputy sheriff.

Successive Australian governments have a long history of subservience and submission to US domination economically and militarily since the Second World War, and before that to British imperialism and colonialism.

And what is the US Pivot into Asia-Pacific really about? It's about protecting and expanding the economic domination by the US and its multinational corporations and monopoly banks in the region. The rapid economic growth and influence of China threatens the US economic and political hegemony in the region.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is the economic side of the US Pivot into Asia-Pacific and is driven by the US and its multinationals and banks. It is being ruthlessly imposed on 40% of the world and nearly one billion people. The TPP will open up and create new markets and areas of investments for its corporations, banks and giant financial institutions to intensify and broaden the exploitation of people and the environment to maximise profits.

Thomas Friedman, the famous US economist and *New York Times* columnist said in 1999, 'The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist of the military. McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.'

Friedman clearly demonstrates that the US economic power cannot be sustained and enforced without the backing of the US military.

In the past few years the US has shifted more attention to the Asia-Pacific. Kurt Williams, assistant secretary of the US Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs, told the US House of Foreign Affairs committee in October 2011, '... we are witnessing the re-emergence of the Asia-Pacific as a key theatre of global politics and economics ... as Asia rises, so too must America's role in it.'

Hillary Clinton refers to the Pivot as 'forward deployed diplomacy', 'expanding trade and investment, forging a broad-based military presence and advancing democracy and human rights'.

For past 60 years, since the Second World War, the US and its corporations have dominated the Asia-Pacific

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region economically and militarily. They have been able to maintain that power over countries and people through their client governments in Japan, Australia, South Korea, Philippines, etc. However, whilst militarily it's still a super power, economically it's in decline, due to its own worsening capitalist economic contradictions and crises.

By 2020 the US will relocate 60% of its military forces, naval, air and ground forces from around the world to Asia-Pacific. New bases will be built, existing bases upgraded and expanded, and the previously decommissioned bases closed down by the people's movements would be re-opened e.g. the Philippines.

The Pivot is turning Australia virtually into a US military base and a launching pad for its imperialist wars. Australia's military and intelligence facilities have now been officially opened to US

war ships, nuclear powered submarines, US Air Force, intelligence gathering and spying on other countries and people. The joint US-Australian military facilities are 'joint' only in name and in reality operate as American-run facilities with the US in command. The upgrading of existing Australian military facilities with high-tech military equipment, the establishment and maintenance of new bases and hosting US marines in preparation for the US launching pre-emptive wars, will be paid for mainly by the Australian people through our taxes, just as the people of Japan have been paying for the gigantic US military base on Okinawa for more than 60 years.

This is one of the demands of the US Pivot, together with the integration and interoperability of Australia's military forces into the US imperialist war machine. The US is insisting on large budget increases in Australia's military spending on the Pivot. This is clearly spelled out in the US Pivot documents, and Australia's two main parliamentary parties oblige.

There are more than 20 highly secretive, so-called joint military and intelligence bases and facilities in Australia, in reality under the US command. They are based mainly in West Australia and the Northern Territory. I won't list all of them just now. Pine Gap in Central Australia is best known and warrants special attention. It is the most important base of all the US overseas intelligence installations. There are also Australia's air force and naval military facilities that will be virtually operating as US bases.

The two main parliamentary parties enthusiastically welcomed the permanent rotational stationing of 2,500 US marines at Bradshaw Military Base near Darwin. However, it is accepted that the number of US marines stationed in Australia will be significantly higher.

The decades long mass struggle by the Japanese people to rid Okinawa of US troops and bases is forcing the US to look at relocating some of their military to a more safe and stable country. Guam, a significant US outpost covered with US bases and thousands of troops, has no more room to expand. It is likely Australia's compliant

governments will bow and allow the US to move more of its troops here.

There are also military facilities for joint US-Australia military exercises on land, sea and air. Talisman Sabre is a major joint military exercise held every 2 years, mainly between US and Australia's military forces. Many of these military exercises are now also jointly held with Japan, US, Australia and New Zealand. This year, from 4–12 July, some of the world's largest military exercises will be held in Queensland, primarily on the central coast of Queensland in Shoalwater Bay near Rockhampton, and also in the Northern Territory near Darwin. More than 34,000 troops will be involved in these joint exercises – over 20,000 US marines, 10,000 Australian troops, 500 NZ troops and up to 40 Japanese military personnel will be holding their biennial joint military exercises. Many US war planes, war ships, nuclear submarines, war technologies and intelligence, will be brought to our shores and activated during these pre-emptive war preparations.

During the exercises a group of several hundred people will be holding a Peace Convergence in Rockhampton to protest at the rehearsals for pre-emptive wars of aggression, calling on Australia to break from the US-Australia military alliance and for an independent and peaceful foreign policy.

The deep integration of the Australian military into the US war machine is accelerating. There's been extraordinary growth in Australia of US military intelligence activities. The opening up of Australia's military defence facilities to the US and handing over command to the US military and the permanent stationing of US troops and marines will deepen the **integration and interoperability** between US, Australia and Japan's military forces and foreign policies, with the US at the helm.

Behind the moves by the Australian government handing over the lucrative contract to the Japanese to build Australia's submarines is the pressure from the US who want **full integration and interoperability** of US, Japan and Australian military, with the US in command.

US forces and air force bomber planes regularly use Australia's Bradshaw Military Base near Darwin for exercises and reconnaissance. In early April 2015, US Lt Col. Dougherty excitedly proclaimed Australia as an empty place: 'You guys have opened up your homes to us. We're living in your guesthouse. The outback truly is out back, with vast wide open spaces. There's things we can do here we cannot do back in the States. [In the US] it's very restricted; you have to worry about safety considerations like not shooting other units as you train. Here you don't have those issues. It's a blank slate.' – no recognition of local Aboriginal communities, the environment and other local communities. The terra nullius of British colonialism in 1788 continues today, but is now replaced by the US.

In May this year, during testimony before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, US Defence Department Assistant Secretary for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, David Shear, announced that in addition to the movement of US Marines and Army units around the Western Pacific region, 'We will be placing additional Air Force assets in Australia as well, including B-1 bombers and surveillance aircraft.' It was later claimed that Mr Shear 'mis-spoke' – it's more likely that he 'let the cat out of the bag' and revealed the US's real intentions for this country.

The US Pivot is defining Australia as a major US military and intelligence base, and a launching pad for its drones, overseas military incursions, targeted assassinations and, eventually, major wars in our region.

The strategic and military importance of Australia's subservience to US military and economic interests was in open view in 1975 when the newly elected progressive Whitlam Labor government of that time dared to question and raise concerns about the US-controlled Pine Gap. He also expressed his leanings towards making Australia more independent of the US, economically and militarily. Recent WikiLeaks documents confirmed the US role in the 1975 coup that overthrew the progressive Whitlam government.

The two main parliamentary parties' subservience to US military plans for Australia as its deputy sheriff in the region, and the erosion of independence and sovereignty to make our own decisions in the interest of Australia's ordinary people, peace and the environment, appals growing numbers of people.

The call for an independent Australia with an independent foreign policy that builds peace with justice, and friendship with the people in our region, is now frequently raised. The late Malcolm Fraser, and former Liberal prime minister, had been publicly speaking out and warning of the dangers of US-Australia military alliance to Australia's people. He called for immediate removal of US troops from Darwin and closing down Pine Gap within 5 years. In his recent book *Dangerous Allies* (reference to the dangers that the US is posing to the interests of the Australian people) he wrote, 'Any political leader who offends, or who is believed to have offended the United States, is unelectable. Keeping the US alliance in good health is taken to be the first and most important aim of foreign policy.' Fraser, as a former Liberal prime minister, had direct knowledge and insight into the relationship between the US and Australia. In the last 2–3 years of his life he strongly advocated breaking out of the alliance for an independent foreign policy and an independent Australia. Fraser's stand illustrates the breadth of the growing united front movement for an independent foreign policy and strivings for an independent Australia.

Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

IPAN was formed in early 2012 in response to the joint US and Australian governments' announcements on the Pivot, expansion of US bases and the stationing of US marines in Australia. It brought together peace, anti-war community groups, faith organisations and unions concerned with the rapidly increasing US military presence in Australia; the government's subservience to US foreign policies, and the distinct possibility that this will lead us into another major war – this time on our doorstep with countries in our region.

We are concerned that Australia does not have its own independent foreign policy that builds peace and friendship with ordinary people in our region and the world. In defence of Australia's security, sovereignty and peace in the region we've put forward a call for Australia to become independent of big powers' dictates and interests, and chart our own foreign policies that uphold and build genuine peace and justice. ■

CITIZENSHIP IS A RIGHT

BY LYDIA SHELLY

The Abbott government has recently stated that they intend to make changes to Australian citizenship, namely to revoke Australian citizenship from Australians suspected of committing terrorism offences.

Citizenship is a right and not a privilege – despite what the Abbott government would lead you to believe. To believe otherwise would allow our political leadership to walk away from its responsibilities towards its citizens.

Believing that citizenship is a right also means believing citizens have civic responsibility. We are in danger of abdicating our democratic rights to the very political leaders who are threatening to curtail these rights.

Whilst the legislation has not been introduced yet, concerns have been raised over the legal implications and the ‘unintended consequences’ of making any such amendments to Australian citizenship. There is concern over what the Abbott government has publicly said regarding the issue so far.

Australia is a signatory to several human rights conventions that state that we cannot allow anyone to become ‘stateless’. Some members of the coalition have proposed making a late ‘reservation’ that would allow Australia to make citizens who only hold Australian citizenship (and not dual citizenship), stateless. Minister Phillip Ruddock has implied that there will only be a mere presumption of an entitlement to second citizenship.

In other words, there may not be any requirement that the suspected person actually holds second citizenship before their Australian citizenship is revoked.

It is difficult to imagine what other country would grant citizenship to a person who has had their Australian citizenship stripped on suspicion of committing terrorism offences. On national radio last week, Minister Ruddock used an example of an Australian-born person from Lebanese heritage as someone they would assume could obtain Lebanese citizenship.

If you are in Australia when your citizenship is revoked, you could be detained without charge indefinitely. If this were to occur, this would be the birth of an Australian ‘Guantanamo Bay’.

The Abbott government has also stated that citizenship would be stripped based on suspicion that a person has engaged in ‘terrorism offences’ and not after a conviction in a court of law. Suspicion would be formed from ‘intelligence’ that is then passed on to the Minister (from the government of the day). This is outrageous. We have never had a government that speaks so much about ‘the law’ whilst simultaneously taking active steps to undermine legal processes. Ministerial discretion and the judicial process are not the same.

The fact that intelligence forms the basis for citizenship stripping means that an affected person would have very limited means of appeal. Any appeal would be conducted in a Tribunal (not a court) similar to a passport cancellation matter. You would be limited in seeing the ‘intelligence’ against you, as it is secret and related to national security. Intelligence is not facts. Simply, you cannot prepare and effectively participate in any appeal process if you do not know what the details are that are alleged. This in itself is a process that has no place in a democracy.

Last year, the Abbott government said Australia had an obligation ‘to stem the flow of foreign fighters’. Now, they are doing a complete backflip and saying ‘we do not want these people in our backyard’. Australia has the most robust criminal laws relating to terrorism amongst the Western democracies. Yet the Abbott government seeks to bypass the legal system and seek discretionary power to revoke citizenship. The discretionary power to strip citizenship is pure ‘counter terrorism theatre’ with very dangerous implications for our country.

If and when the bill is introduced, further information will be provided. In the meantime, contact your state and federal members to express your concerns regarding the proposed changes. ■

Lydia Shelly is a lawyer from Osborne Howell Lawyers, community activist and a member of the Muslim Legal Network.

Source: Australasian Muslim Times

Dear *Beacon* readers

We are currently working on our next E-Newsletter: the first one was very well received. If you would like to read our second one, please send your email details to Donna at admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au. The material in our E-Newsletters is designed to bring you current affairs issues between *Beacon*.

itself within churches, a growing number of churches are adopting facial recognition systems to survey their congregations, identify and track who attends their events, and target individuals for financial contributions or further monitoring. As the partnership between churches and the DHS grows, their facial recognition databases may be shared with the federal government, if that is not already happening.

Finally, there is the third camp which fears that Jade Helm is merely the first of many exercises to be incorporated into regular American life so that the government can watch, study, and better understand how to control the masses. Certainly, psychological control techniques could be used in the future to halt protests and ensure that the nation runs 'smoothly'.

It remains to be seen whether Jade Helm 15 proves to be a thinly veiled military plot to take over the country (one lifted straight out of director John Frankenheimer's 1964 political thriller *Seven Days in May*), turn the population into automatons and psychological experiments, or is merely a 'routine' exercise for troops, albeit a blatantly intimidating flexing of the military's muscles.

However, as I point out in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, the problem arises when you add Jade Helm to the list of other troubling developments that have taken place over the past 30 years or more: the expansion of the military industrial complex and its

influence in Washington DC, the rampant surveillance, the corporate-funded elections and revolving door between lobbyists and elected officials, the militarised police, the loss of our freedoms, the injustice of the courts, the privatised prisons, the school lockdowns, the roadside strip searches, the military drills on domestic soil, the fusion centres and the simultaneous fusing of every branch of law enforcement (federal, state and local), the stockpiling of ammunition by various government agencies, the active shooter drills that are indistinguishable from actual crises, the economy flirting with near collapse, the growing social unrest, the socio-psychological experiments being carried out by government agencies, etc.

Suddenly, the overall picture seems that much more sinister. Clearly, there's a larger agenda at work here, and it's one the American people had better clue into before it's too late to do anything about it.

Call me paranoid, but I think we'd better take James Madison's advice and 'take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties'. ■

Source: The Rutherford Institute

See more at: http://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/john_whiteheads_commentary/jade_helm_terrorist_attacks_surveillance_and_other_fairy_tales_for_a_g#sthash.uATUpjbV.dpuf

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NEW Unitarian E-Newsletter

The Melbourne Unitarian Church has decided to move into the digital world by launching an **E-Newsletter** every two to three months that will bring you up-to-date information and comment from home and around the world. If you would like to be part of our exciting E-Newsletter, please send an email to us at admin@melbourneunitarian.org.au and we will add you to our growing database. If, on receipt or at any point you decide you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, you can easily unsubscribe.

from our readers



Editor Beacon

I want to give a gift subscription to a friend.

I have been passing my *Beacon* on to him for quite some time, and have decided it will be a great birthday present for him for the end of June.

Keep up the good work!

J Stewart, Vic

Dear Marion

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$50 being concession membership fees for Sonja & John Rutherford and a small donation respectfully.

Sonja and I appreciate the insightful articles in the *Beacon*. They provide the light forward to a better society.

Warmest regards

J Rutherford, Vic

Hi All

Every now and then when I come to the church I pick up the *Beacon* and the May issue I picked up at the New International Bookshop at the Trades Hall.

I would like to say congratulations to the person who wrote the editorial in that issue. It's very well written!

I would like to subscribe to the *Beacon* and I will pay by Direct Deposit (EFT) to the ANZ Bank.

If possible, I would like to have the March and April issues. Thank you.

B Stuber, Vic

Dear Editor

I hope that many Australians saw the program *Secret River* on ABC. Even though it was at times difficult to watch, especially the last episode, it gave a genuine insight into the profound atrocities and ordeals inflicted upon Australia's Indigenous peoples by colonialism. Those watching would have gotten some measure of understanding and appreciation of the cruel nature of the subjugation, dispossession, displacement and destruction of the First Peoples' way of life, society and culture. The present plight of the Aboriginal peoples is a direct result of the past gross suffering and blatant denial of their inalienable rights by the imposed settler state. It is vitally important that we recognise this sordid history of inhumanity if we are to move forwards and make some amends for what terrible, callous wrongs the European invasion perpetrated. Many Europeans believe that the superiority of their ideas, culture and values enabled them to dominate the world, but as was rightly shown in *Secret River*, the truth is different, that the force of superior weapons, the use of organised violence and sheer brutality won the conflicts that gave rise to the

western colonial settler states (Australia, USA, Canada, NZ, Israel and others). And real harmony will only come about when past and present injustices are fairly and properly resolved.

Steven Katsineris, Vic

Editor Beacon

Just finished your great article on public funding of private schools – the obese elephant in the room that has been ignored for decades lest it be interpreted as 'class war'. 'Poodle' Pyne's assertion that the coalition has a special responsibility for private schools not public ones is offensive to ordinary Australians and exposes the elitist thinking of this mob. What should be of added interest is that Catholic schools do not receive their government handouts separately. The lump sum is given to the central Catholic educational bureaucracy that then ladles it out. The bulk of those funds go to their elite selective schools, De la Salle, Marist Brothers, etc., while their provincial schools receive the scraps. The philosophy behind this is to spend the big dollars on developing the future leaders of commerce, education, politics, etc., who will promote the Catholic cause. When these potential leaders are identified in these schools they are invited to retreats so that they can network and give or receive leg-ups to positions of influence. Yes, Peter Fox, there is a Catholic Mafia. Taxpayers are in fact paying to promote a narrow religious ideology. Funding of private schools of any ilk should never have been introduced. It is just another divisive element from bigoted politicians. By the way, keep up the good work.

Bert Candy, NSW

Dear Sir

Enclosed please find my cheque for \$25 to cover a concession subscription and a donation.

Keep the *Beacon* alight; Australia has lost direction and needs it.

Forever hoping.

P Bamforth, NSW

Dear Friend

I have enclosed a cheque for \$100 to take out a new subscription to the *Beacon*.

Unfortunately my subscription has long lapsed, but I do read this wonderfully honest publication through our UAW Newcastle Branch.

Please accept the remainder (over the subscription) as a donation.

Best regards and thank you for the *Beacon*.

J Mundie, NSW

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Citizenship is a right

Beacon Editorial Board

Peter Abrehart
Marion Harper
Donna Sensi
Julie Stafford

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