

US forces in Australia: 2012

Fact Sheet prepared by **Medical Association for Prevention of War**, Based on an article "US military in the Asia Pacific" By Professor Richard Tanter in ARENA Magazine May 2012

In November 2011, Barak Obama and Julia Gillard announced a new level of military cooperation between the United States and Australia, including:

- The deployment of a 2500-strong US Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to Darwin.
- More use of Australian airbases by US aircraft: more visits, more frequently, by a wider range of aircraft.
- Both governments stress that US military will "rotate" through Australian bases, rather than set up US bases.

US surveillance drones such as the Global Hawk.

US forces in Darwin

The first 150 Marines arrived in Darwin in March 2012. The full MAGTF complement of 2500 is expected to be in place by 2016. There will be 2500 Marines passing through on 'constant rotation', probably on six month tours. When complete the Task Force will consist of command, ground combat and air combat elements available for rapid deployment for expeditionary combat. The Robertson Barracks in Darwin will effectively be a per-

Australia-US military and intelligence cooperation has been gradually growing over the last decade

The new joint facilities in context

Australia-US military and intelligence cooperation has been gradually growing over the last decade (see box page 3).

New operational capacities at Pine Gap outside Alice Springs placed this Joint Defence Facility on the front line in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. With a new US space surveillance radar planned for North West Cape, Australia plays a key role in US missile defence and space operations.

Following the Obama visit, and Australian government confirmed plans for an increase in the number, frequency and type of US naval visits to HMAS Stirling at Perth, the only major naval facility on Australia's west coast. The government also confirmed it was discussing possible use of the Cocos Island airfield in the Indian Ocean by the

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DISARMING TIMES

A quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia. It aims to provide members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views both local and international. We endeavour in each edition to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in study, Non-violent action and prayer for peace, justice, human rights, development and inter-faith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

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US-Australia defence ties have been building for a decade: do Australians know how far we are committed?

Professor Richard Tanter's review of the new joint facilities is necessarily incomplete, and he does not discuss changes in the capacities and operations of the longstanding and most important joint facility of all at Pine Gap. But the two page fact sheet of the US bases in Australia drawn from his longer article in *Arena Magazine* 2012 is scary enough.

For some time now Pax Christi has been engaged in challenging the faith communities to resist the militarisation of Australian culture most notably expressed by Australia participation in the illegal war on Iraq and the futile occupation of Afghanistan.

Richard Tanter highlights how far the alliance with the US has taken us in terms of participating in wars and preparing for wars. Pax Christi believes it is time to challenge this alliance as our defence become embedded with US military and expansionist interests.

Richard Tanter claims there is much that is troubling about these developments. Most disturbing is the lack of public discussion and detailed analysis of the implications of these new military arrangements for security in the Australian national interest and the broader human interest.

The reasons for this are not clear. Lack of information is not the answer: Australian media have reported most of these developments prominently, if not in depth. A great deal of informative and detailed background material is easily found by anyone who looks. In fact the problem is often a matter of being swamped by data and analysis. The usual reasons why Australian academic researchers are AWOL on these issues—the risk of damage to career prospects, disinterest in or aversion to 'technology matters', preoccupation with downstream theoretical questions, or the unfashionable status of 'mere empiricism'—does not entirely explain things either.

Perhaps, as with wider Australian resignation to the inevitable horrors of co-auspicings the war in Afghanistan, there is some sense that, when it comes to the US alliance, there is simply nothing that can be done, so brazen is the government's willing subordination, and so powerful the ally, that serious discussion of the operations and consequences of the alliance seems utterly futile. More dismayingly, perhaps both security practitioners and their would-be critics share a notion of Australia as inseparable from the US alliance. Alternatives it seems, analytically as much as politically, are just unthinkable. If any of this is close to true, we are all in for serious trouble.

For a fully footnoted version see: <<http://nautilus.org/about/associates/richard-tanter/>>

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manent joint base, and the organisational heart of the Task Force. The port of Darwin is deep enough even for the largest US aircraft carriers. The NT government is eager for more defence spending, which already makes up 12.6% of the Territory's gross state product.

US forces: Northern Territory training grounds

The three main training locations for the MAGTF will be the Bradshaw Field Training Area, the Mount Bundey Training Area near Humpty Doo, and the Delamere Air Weapons Range, 220 km south-west of Katherine. Together they make up the ADF's North Australian Range Complex (NARC). With Shoalwater Bay in Queensland, they are key locations for the multinational Talisman Sabre exercises. Bradshaw and Delamere were named as part of a Joint Australia-US Combat Training Centre (JCTC) in 2008.

Bradshaw is a former cattle station (just smaller than Cyprus). During Talisman Sabre in 2007, US and Australian personnel constructed an airfield there, with a 1250 metre runway which can take the largest US and Australian cargo aircraft. The NT government anticipates 7000 troops will visit Bradshaw every dry season.

Delamere Air Weapons Range, over 3000 square kms, is the RAAF's principal bombing practice and testing range. US fighter and bomber aircraft based in Guam and Japan have been using Delamere in exercises for many years.

These bases have sophisticated electronic networking which link them to other ranges and with US and Australian command and training centres. The JCTC is planned to link into the US Pacific Command's Pacific Warfighting Center and the US Joint Force Command's Joint National Training Capability.

Northwest Cape: Subs and satellites:

The Naval Communications Station Harold E. Holt at North West Cape is currently a VLF (very low frequency) communications base. It was originally a US-only facility for communications with submerged US nuclear missile submarines, then a joint station. After the Cold War it was returned to Australia who used it for submarine communications.

Following a new treaty in 2008 it again has a primary US war-fighting role, with two functions:

First, Northwest Cape will support operations by US attack submarines, which could be nuclear-armed.

Secondly, it is now proposed to build a new facility at North West Cape under a 2010 partnership agreement—a powerful US space surveillance sensor. Its published function is to locate space debris orbiting the earth and threatening the satellites on which our networked society depends. Its military purpose however is to detect objects in space for offensive and defensive aspect of war-fighting in space.

Data from the sensor will go to the US Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC which manages the US Space Surveillance Network at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. It will be part of a new Space Fence made up of US Air Force-operated radars, located at Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific or Ascension Island in the South Atlantic (or both).

Kojarena, W.A: signals and satellites

The Australian Defence Satellite Communications Ground Station (ADSCGS) is at Kojarena, 30km east of Geraldton. It is operated by the ADF Defence Signals (DSD).

Kojarena station is a major DSD signals interception facility and is part of a worldwide system of satellite communications keyword monitoring known as Eschelon.

In addition, under a 2007 MOU with the US, the Australian government has built a separate facility in the ADSCGS grounds for Ultra-High-Frequency satellite communications, enabling secure all-weather and all terrain 3-G mobile telecommunications. Kojarena will be one of four such ground stations world-wide.

Pine Gap

The Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, near Alice Springs remains the most important US intelligence facility outside the US.

Pine Gap is the command and control link to US signals intelligence satellites over the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, listening to ballistic missiles testing and launches, radars, satellite communications, and microwave transmissions.

After the closure of Nurrungar in 2000 it also became a Remote Ground Station for US thermal imaging satellites, providing early warning of missile launches, including as part of US and allied missile defence. Pine Gap has played a key role in the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Source:

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Violence in West Papua: The Vulnerable Become Indonesia's Latest Target

By Camellia Webb-Gannon, Coordinator of the West Papua Project at University of Sydney
The Conversation, July 2, 2012

Still on our doorstep and we look away.

Why has West Papua's non-violent student movement the West Papuan National Committee (KNPB) become the latest target of a campaign of terror in West Papua?

Calls for a referendum: - Since Indonesia's 1963 takeover of West Papua from the Dutch, the occupation has been characterised by oppression and violence...

Calls for a referendum

Since Indonesia's 1963 takeover of West Papua from the Dutch, the occupation has been characterised by oppression and violence.

Indonesia's unwillingness to allow West Papua a chance to choose its political future stems largely from the revenue it pulls in from the US-owned gold and copper mine in West Papua, Freeport McMoRan.

In passing months, the KNPB has organised protests across West Papua that call for an independence referendum. This has placed unbearable pressure on Indonesia. The protests have also raised awareness of the abuses committed by Indonesian security forces against indigenous Papuans, as noted at the May 2010 United Nations Periodic Review.

Indonesia's human rights record has also elicited criticism from Germany. This criticism was the precursor to a month of shocking violence in West Papua. Perhaps this is why KNPB has been the focus of the Indonesian security apparatus' latest attack on indigenous West Papuans.

Assassination, violence, and protest

The broad daylight assassination of KNPB deputy chairperson Mako Tabuni on June 14 by police, has enraged the indigenous resistance movement triggering a backlash of riots and fresh violence in West Papua's largest town, Jayapura.

Police claim Mako was armed with a police rifle and resisted arrest. Eyewitnesses to the murder disagree, saying Mako was standing at a kiosk

eating betel nut when several cars pulled up and shot him on the spot.

A week before the assassination, Buchtar Tabuni, the chairperson of the KNPB, was arrested for organising student demonstrations in West Papua. Police claim they pursued and killed Mako because of confessions from an incarcerated Buchtar that Mako had been responsible for several murders earlier that month, including of other KNPB members.

Mako had actually been campaigning for an independent investigation into the killings. The spokesperson of an Indonesian NGO for victims of violence, Kontras Papua, said that the Papuan police had spun myriad lies in the aftermath of Mako's assassination.

The police allegation was categorically denied by KNPB spokesperson, Victor Yeimo, whom I spoke to several days ago. Yeimo attested to Mako's commitment to non-violence and queried why KNPB would be shooting its own members.

Police and the Indonesian security forces have illogically pinned the murder of KNPB members and others on the Papuan indigenous resistance movement, and a police wanted list is circulating with more KNPB names listed.

On 23-4 June, five KNPB members were allegedly detained by Densus 88 (Indonesia's Australian-trained counter-terrorism unit) forces, and families of the five are worried as they have not been seen since.

In the week following Germany's denunciation of Indonesia's treatment of West Papuans at the UN Universal Periodic Review, a German tourist was shot in Jayapura by an indigenous-looking gunman police claim may have been Mako Tabuni.

In a handy turn of events for police the tourist's wife was unable to identify Tabuni due to his murder, and the legal system is saved from subjecting him to due process. The shooting may well have been executed by another indigenous Papuan. The use of ethnic Papuans to carry out Indonesian military dirty-work is a well known occurrence. The timing of Germany's criticism and the shooting of the German tourist is unnerving.

Military violence has also spread to West Papua's highland town, Wamena. When two soldiers hit a child whilst speeding, the local community retaliated by killing one of the soldiers. Hundreds of soldiers from the local battalion came back later

for revenge, running amok by setting fires, shooting into crowds and vandalising houses.

Over the past month the shooting spree in West Papua has claimed at least 18 lives. This is partly the work of trained killers, with snipers targeting vital organs.

The leaders of the two largest churches in West Papua, Benny Giay and Socratez Sofyan Yoman, assert that the mysterious killings are politically motivated and have left indigenous Papuans in fear of leaving their homes. Human Rights Watch also reports that the government continues to overlook the need to investigate the violence, barring monitors and journalists from entering Papua to investigate.

Justice and Australia's role

It seems unlikely that those to blame will be brought to justice, as Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has made light of the soldiers' rampage by labeling it 'inappropriate action'. He has called the shootings in Papua 'small-scale' in comparison to those taking place

in the Middle East.

Where is this leader's compassion for his people? Or are Papuans' deaths so insignificant that they only merit attention when statistically matched to those in other global tragedies?

The recent shootings in Papua are, sadly, nothing new for West Papuans, although the frequency of lethality and the accompanying power of the Papuan backlash by way of protest are increasing.

As Indonesian security forces fan the flames of West Papuans' independence aspirations, Australia must end its assistance to them.

By training Indonesia's counter-terrorism forces accused of carrying out much of the current violence in Papua, Australia is more of an accomplice to Indonesian crimes than it was via its wilful ignorance during the lead up to the intervention in East Timor.

It will be an embarrassment to Australia, but a blessing to West Papuans if, because of the violence that Australian expertise helps finesse, Australia is forced to intervene to prevent genocide in West Papua in the near future.

Did Timor teach us nothing?

Jennifer Robinson

June 24, 2012

The assassination of Buchtar Tabuni, the chairperson of the KNPB, follows years of violence. At least 16 people have been killed in the past month, according to human rights groups, and hundreds of homes raided, with many burnt to the ground. Thousands are reported to be evacuating, seeking refuge in the forest or heading for refugee camps in Papua New Guinea. Credible reports of human rights violations by Indonesian security forces have emerged, including torture, excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings.

Yet Indonesia's State Intelligence Agency chief, Lieutenant-General Marciano Norman, placed blame on the Free Papua Movement, "foreign agents" and local residents for the violence. The President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, played down the events. As Indonesia obfuscates and Australia remains silent, West Papua bleeds. While most Australians are proud of our role in ending 24 years of bloody Indonesian occupation in East Timor, we should not forget it came after a long history of accepting Indonesian assertions of sovereignty while ignoring human rights abuse on our doorstep.

After East Timor, we cannot claim any wide-eyed innocence regarding West Papua.

Australia is now bidding for a place on the United Nations Security Council on the basis of our alleged "human rights-based foreign policy",

highlighting our role in East Timor while trying to keep a lid on our history of inaction there.

The federal Attorney-General has refused freedom of information requests for the release of diplomatic cables dating to the 1970s - cables that a University of NSW professor, Clinton Fernandes, says will show Australian complicity in concealing the mass starvation of Timorese.

Are we now making the same mistakes with West Papua? Few are aware of Australian and UN involvement in West Papua 30 years before the intervention in East Timor. Like East Timor, West Papua was annexed by Indonesia in circumstances that violated international law. Comparisons are made, and with good reason. Both territories are made up of distinct minorities. Both are rich in natural resources. Both have struggled for self-determination. Like East Timor, West Papua had a UN vote for self-determination, only the outcome could not have been more different.

In 1999, East Timor got a proper vote and won independence (not before an estimated 200,000 Timorese had died). But in 1969, West Papua got a sham vote and became part of Indonesia.

Last month, East Timor celebrated 10 years of independence or, as the Timorese say, 10 years since the international community recognised their independence. But an estimated 400,000 Papuans have now been killed after more than 40 years of Indonesian oppression and abuse.

This year, Indonesia faced international condemnation for the imprisonment of West Papuan leaders for peacefully calling for independence. When asked if Australia had raised concerns with Indonesia, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Bob Carr, responded by admitting that "before I could raise the subject ... the Indonesian Foreign Minister nominated that they have a clear responsibility to see that their sovereignty is upheld in respect of human rights standards", and Carr "was impressed by that".

In responses eerily similar to statements made by Gareth Evans about East Timor during Indonesian rule, Carr warned members of Parliament "against foolishly talking up" West Papuans' right to self-determination because it "threatens the territorial integrity of Indonesia" and "would produce a reaction" towards Australia. It would be a foolish foreign affairs minister who did not

learn from our mistakes in East Timor.

Australia should, at a minimum, reconsider military aid to Indonesia and call for them to allow media and international organisations access to West Papua to investigate abuses and facilitate peaceful dialogue.

East Timor should remind us of the hefty price of turning a blind eye to repression in the mistaken belief that it serves stability in our region. As a Deakin University academic, Scott Burchill, has long argued, it is not only "a dereliction of our ethical duty, it is politically short-sighted and usually results in blowback".

Jennifer Robinson is an Australian human rights lawyer in London.

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/politics/did-timor-teach-us-nothing-20120623-20uvi.html#ixzz1z9iNJt7>

Indonesia-Australia Religious Dialogue

Regulating Religion in Southeast Asia and the Pacific? Preserving Religious Harmony and Seeking a New Model for State-Religion Relationship

By Rita Camilleri June 5-6, 2012 Bogor, Indonesia

Centre for the Study of Islam and Society, Jakarta, and the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University

A brief study of the Middle East and Iran today would give examples of how important the connection between the state and religion has become. European ideas of the Secular State requiring that all religions be treated equally; that religious differences be aired, without intruding into the state system; and that religion would become less significant, culturally and politically, are currently under enormous pressure because of the return of religion to politics; the increasingly evident pluralism (ethnic, religious, cultural) in many places; and the severe limits of power of the state. Because of this it is important that religious organisations reassess the relationship between Church and State. Different parts of religious movements and societies could also discuss issues which affect them today, in particular, 'What contribution can religion make to society?'

Our region is not exempt from such pressures. As part of a series of international conversations the *Centre for Dialogue* embarked on a two-day intensive dialogue in June, in Bogor, Indonesia. Besides being our close neighbour, the importance of Indonesia, was brought home with the possibility that in 30-40 years' time it could be among the top ten economies in the world.

For the purposes of this summary the focus will be on Australia and Indonesia although some of the participants shared their insights

into the plight of other regional neighbours such as the Muslims in Southern Thailand or Hindus in Singapore.

On the Indonesian side, we were invited by Hanif Dede Rosyada to look back in history in order to understand the harmonious ways in which diverse communities have co-existed in the past. Today religious intolerance seems to be increasing on the one hand while extensive work is being done by NGOs to spread tolerance on the other.

Beginning with individual examples, Dick Tomsa looked at Eastern Indonesia and religious harmony, in particular Maluku where forums on the subject have tended to be disjointed and where resources are non-existent. In spite of these obstacles Christians and Muslims have taken on inter-faith initiatives, rather successfully. In Sulawesi's north where there is a Protestant majority, religious harmony is the norm. In the island's south where 95 per cent of the population is Muslim, it is the same story, no religious tensions.

Chaider S. Bamualim's paper, 'Islamization, Politics and the Revival of *Aliran Kebatinan* in Rural West Java (1998-2011)' told the audience of the journey of this group from acceptance, during Sukarno's rule, to exile or continual surveillance under the Suharto regime, because they were allegedly Communist sympathisers. Those who were left after 1965 kept a low profile and

remained in West Java. In the post-Suharto era they have been able to become more visible, claiming that their religion is that of their Sundanese ancestors, a claim that some believe is an attempt to reconstruct their identity.

Melissa Crouch spoke of a controversial draft law on inter-religious harmony in Indonesia. She compared two versions of the draft, the 2003 draft and the more recent 2011 version which signalled a move towards increasing criminalisation of 'blasphemy' and an attempt to reform the regulation of permits for places of worship. This document remains on the legislative agenda for 2011-14 because it failed to receive sufficient support before the end of the legislative sittings.

Using a broader brush, Indonesia specialist Greg Barton pointed out that Islamic intellectuals and leaders have been in the forefront of the push for democratic reforms (Amien Rais, Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid) in Indonesia. It has been claimed that Democracy in Indonesia emerged because of Islam. Democracy can be described as very young in Indonesia, and Religion is still important. He added, 'Religion and social harmony will face variegated and unpredictable challenges' and religious leaders and the community will need to work together. Religious social movements can play a vital and constructive role. Democracy requires allowing Islam a place in public discourse, political discourse, social movements and public life in general.

The question then arose, 'Can Islam and Islamic social movements be truly modern?' Some say yes, others no. Prof Barton concluded by reminding his audience that there are actually two Indonesias: those who live and work in the cities and towns are usually the ones that write about their country, and these who live in a 'developed' Indonesia have little or no contact with the second Indonesia which is largely rural, without piped water or modern services. The latter tend to be more conservative in their world view than the former.

Septemmy E. Lakawa reflected on 'a vision of a hybrid Indonesia as a theo-dialogical imagination of the religious freedom in the public sphere'. 'Indonesia-ness', as a collective identity, she claimed, 'has been used in a way to marginalise different voices that have different imaginations of what Indonesia should look like'. She continued, "Identity and difference" must be reclaimed within such an effort in order to open a new space for conversation'. This speaker believes that imagination within a hybrid Indonesia would envisage a space wherein the Pancasila

could be discussed as well as religious differences. Within this public sphere stories from survivors of violence would be heard, and the religious narratives of violence could be challenged through dialogue with religious narratives of non-violence.

Nicholas Herriman tackled the issue of 'Sorcery, Law and State: Governing the Black A 2001 Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, the Catch the Fire Ministries Case. At a seminar organised by a fundamentalist Christian group, Pastor Scot presented a hard-line Wahhabi version of Islam, insisting, among other things that it was the only true interpretation of the religion. According to three Muslims present, he gave the impression that Muslims were terrorists and wanted to take over Australia. The second part of the seminar dealt with ways in which Muslims could be won over to Christianity. The judge had to decide whether the seminar incited hatred towards Muslims or whether it was merely a robust discussion in the public's interest.

The case lasted four years, at the end of which the two sides 'released a joint statement affirming the dignity and worth of every human being; the rights of all to express and live by their religious beliefs; and the rights of all (within the limits of the law) to robustly debate religion, including the beliefs of others'.

Mr Zwartz showed how this particular case had polarised both Christian and Muslim communities in Victoria. It had also attracted international attention. At home Muslims, for the first time, saw that a State institution defended them. The speaker saw an important change resulting from the 'natural rise of a

new generation of leadership'. The first wave of migrants were perhaps unable to integrate and the suspicion of them was widespread. However, the next generation were confident in communicating with society at large, and as another issue took centre stage they were no longer under the spotlight.

Sven Schottmann spoke of the relationship between Australian Muslims and the State. This varies from one state to another. For instance the Islamic Council of Victoria has embraced Sunni, Shia, Salafi, and other Muslims while the Muslim community in New South Wales is split three ways rendering the federal body (AFLIC) dysfunctional.

He continued, that in the European context, Muslims come from one area, for instance in France Muslims are mainly from North Africa. In

Democracy in Indonesia requires allowing Islam a place in public discourse, political discourse, social movements and public life in general.

Australia, however, they are from different countries and backgrounds. Having said this, a number of 'grassroots' Muslims in Australia are involved in some issues which are not specifically Muslim, but can be social justice issues involving a wider range of Australians. As Muslims in a secular, albeit predominantly Christian country they are nevertheless contributing to it.

Samina Yasmeen discussed debates in Australia on banning the burqa and/or nijab. She said that the nature of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is understood as one of hostility, at the same time the history of co-operation between Muslims and others over centuries is bypassed. Islamophobia has crept through and spread throughout Western countries.

In spite of the fact that Muslims comprise only 1.7 per cent of the population, some Australians engaged in interfaith dialogue with them, while others did not. She also pointed out that inside the Muslim community there were also those who would dialogue and others who would not. Post '9/11' Australia saw the increased targeting of Muslim women wearing the traditional head covering or hijab. This practice began in Europe where France and Germany banned the wearing of the full-length burqa. In Australia the debate continues, with contradictory opinions among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The speaker concluded by pointing out that the continuing debate is likely to make Muslims feel more excluded, especially if they equate the freedom to choose (or not) to wear the dress code as equal Australian citizens.

Bishop Philip Huggins has long been asking, 'What is the positive contribution religions can make to peace and justice?'

He spoke of the application of such principles as:

- Learning from people of other religions; having conferences and informal gatherings as these all make for communal harmony and friendships.
- One needs to be clear about one's own faith tradition as there is plurality even within one's own religion.
- Listening, respecting confidentiality, asking for clarification are also important.
- And simple acts of kindness have great significance.
- Religious texts, shared perspectives, and seeing religion as a faith-journey rather than an ideology also have their place.
- A healthy faith-journey embodies compas-

sion, which is the core of all religious traditions, he added.

He referred to New Testament texts in which he pointed to the universality contained within them. He referred to generosity of spirit, bringing us to the subject of asylum seekers in Australia. While economic strength and political stability are important for maintaining harmony, he spoke of the importance of intermediary organisations (trade unions, welfare agencies, universities, other faith communities) in also enabling harmony to flourish.

After Conflict and Alienation comes Reconciliation: whereby peaceful coexistence leads to trust-building which paves the

way for unity in a healthy, normal relationship. Bishop Huggins, in citing the South African example reminded his audience that Reconciliation is complex, and that it requires a 'sustained, pure commitment'.

Learning from people of other religions; having conferences and informal gatherings as these all make for communal harmony and friendships.

Thoughts raised during the final plenary session included:

- *How do we handle religious diversity without what might lead to the breakup of social order and violence?*
- *What are the responsibilities of the State, Religious institutions and the Academy?*
- *Can we learn from each other's experience?*
- *The separation of Church and State is not as clear cut in Indonesia as it is in Australia.*
- *A suggestion that refugees and asylum seekers meet with Australian and Indonesian Christians and Muslims.*
- *We need good quality documentary work.*
- *The idea that Religion is a journey of hope rather than being an ideology.*
- *Linkages are very important: media/ educators/ ordinary people.*
- *International connections: minority to minority across religious differences, such as Indonesian religious organisations and Christian religious organisations in Australia.*
- *To what extent can we persuade governments to fund such linkages without controlling them?*

Over the two days there had been no shortage of questions, ideas, or suggestions. A most worthwhile experience.

Rita Camilleri

The art of peace making in a time of permanent war

By Graeme Dunstan – peace activist and grey nomad captain of the Peacebus*

Art of Peace

A reference to Sun Tzu's classic *Art of War* gave rise to the question: what is the Art of Peace? What is good practice or "skillful means" as the Buddhist call it, for making peace in this time of permanent war?

In response to that question I offer the following prescriptions and aphorisms, the fruit of many years of community organising, many seasons of creating cultural movement.

Seize the day. Persevere with the good.

When it comes to war and peace, successive Labor and Liberal governments in Australia have demonstrated they are more loyal and more responsive to US interests than they are to the will and the welfare of the Australian people.

Furthermore time is short, death certain and the time of death uncertain. Better then to act out of despair now than wait for wishful hope to deliver in some uncertain future.

The cost of fear and passivity is a life less lived. By contrast a life lived in faith and courage is a life lived in creation and revelation.

Embrace impermanence. Understand that all phenomena, social and physical are in flux and what seems so massive and immutable now, is sure to change. Every thesis is pregnant with its antithesis. Every excess will unravel. Every tide will turn.

So stand before Fate the Annihilator and choose to persevere with the good. Choose to act fearlessly and hopelessly for peace. Now.

Turn off the Television

Turn off the Television because it can not only cause the brain to rot from the constant stream of corporate lies it broadcasts and its agenda of deception and distraction, but the medium itself is toxic.

No matter what the content, the fruit of TV watching is inculcation passivity, fear and disempowerment. In truth we live in high tech global enthrallment. But the world of appearance was ever thus. Most people are asleep most of the time and the prophets who wake us up are ever few.

So turn the TV off. Especially the TV news, which serves to alarm, distort and confuse. Get your news information from the web or better still from awakened friends.

Look and you will see. Listen and you will hear. Personally I am not convinced that a TV set can ever have anything more important to say than a gum tree or a sunset. Or a friend.

Turn towards kindness

The TV diet of manufactured desires, loathings and hysterias, creates mental confusion and robs us of time. Turning the TV off gives us time and space to inhabit real time, real locale, community.

Look about and notice where the kindness in your life is coming from. Turn towards it. Walk towards it. Run towards it! Return it. Extend it. Help out best you can. Make service your path. Dedicate every word, deed and breath of your life to bringing peace to these times and for future generations.

In Buddhism, among the virtues which carry one across this world of suffering, the practice of generosity is considered the supreme and the most difficult to attain. It is a virtue fundamental to peace making.

It is clear that not only will the revolution not be seen on TV, nor peace come with a corporate sponsorship and full page ads in the Murdoch press.

Nor will peace come with a government grant or a well paid job. Even less will it come from the rich and powerful. Nor will it come with public liability insurance.

The movement for peace can only come from the generosity of the friends of peace who offer up their time, their talents and their cash however meagre.

Peace is the goodwill of good people. It will come from the poor and the marginal and from liminal social zones. Like the birth of a king in a stable, the arrival of its prophets surprise and humble us.

Listening deeply and reflecting in silence are great virtues. But creating cultural movement requires more; it requires voice.

Speak up and speak out

Find your voice for peace. Speak from your heart and say your fears for the fruit of endless war. Challenge government lies. Speak plainly of your desire for peace.

Speak up in your family, amongst your friends, in your work place, and on the path with strangers. Always listening carefully too; listening for

the words that touch your heart and the heart of your listener. In this time of pumped up consumerism, the soul searches for authenticity.

The humble and tentative voice searching for truth is a more penetrating and more powerfully persuasive than any billion dollar corporate ad campaign. Find that voice.

And cultivate public oratory. See protest actions as training opportunities for public speakers. Draw people forth and encourage them to speak up.

You will note that once a person has found courage to speak publicly and is affirmed, they will have the courage to seize opportunities to speak up in other contexts too.

Reach out, link up, act!

Join with like minded friends and do something together. That might be going to a protest action together or participating in a meeting seen advertised on a community notice board.

Or it might be something you initiate. For example a picket at your local military base or a media ambush of your local lying member - something as simple and as daring as holding up placards behind as s/he fronts the cameras. Remember small is beautiful. And easier to organise.

Make art that builds community

Whatever the event you create or participate in, work to make it artful, both in conception and in execution. Conceive of protest, however small as theatre with a big story behind it, a mytho-poetic narrative. Aspire to poetry. Choose locations with strong symbolism and meaning for your local community.

Prepare banners, placards and props and take the time and effort to make them visually beautiful. A good picture is worth a thousand words. A good slogan can excite the imagination of masses.

Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry. Best we can.

At this end of a long career as an events creator, I now never take on an organising project which does not involve me in making something. I find that the act of making concentrates my mind on the organising task and that, using my hands, also liberates my imagination from the logical linear obsessions of text.

The process of making can also be an opportunity for engaging people in the project and building community around it. It can also be an opportunity for getting some pre-event media attention of the happy faces with paint brushes in hand.

For example the 2012 Yeppoon Peace Parade was preceded by a series of weekly sewing circles of local ladies who prepared 20 splendid flags. Not only did the flags make a glorious spectacle, they also served as a means for promoting the event, a photo story in the local paper and a word of mouth appeal for flag bearers.

"Best we can." is my organising mantra. The object is not perfection but service in the art of the possible. Doing something is infinitely better than waiting around for the perfect moment and the perfect conditions. Just do it! Learn as you go.

Agitate and celebrate

What builds community best is celebration. What makes an event celebratory is participation in ritual. What makes them bonding is the engagement of our mammal brain senses.

As an event organiser ask yourself, how can I make this event: welcoming, convivial, visually beautiful, pleasant on the ear, high touch, yummy and fragrant? Visualise the event in as much detail as you can. Imagine what participants will be saying afterwards. "Oh I loved those flags ..." and so on. This is a kind of magic, a magic of manifestation. Pray and expect miracles.

But don't let your event become just another pass time entertainment, another band concert. Keep the witness intent of the gathering in focus.

Invent or borrow rituals, create liturgy and aspire to the sacred. The higher we reach in collective spirit, the deeper and more enduring our bonding. The path to a big celebratory event is a series of small celebratory events. Organising successive events gives momentum to your cause.

Build resistance

In the forming, storming, norming, decaying process of group evolution, hang in with the first two and keep with the momentum of event making.

If a meeting becomes bogged down in talk of constitutions, procedure, grant applications and obligations or public liability insurance, head for the door and take the path to where you can be helpful organising the next event.

Community building bears sweet fruit for us, we love to belong and sooner or later the community builder will experience; including, excluding and scapegoating. If you are a maker of cultural movements, expect to feel rejection and hostility. Particularly from the ones nearest in view and mission.

Persevering with open heartedness in the face of this experience is when faith is tested. And courage too. Aim to build more than community; take it beyond the comforts of belongingness and niceness. Address the oppression directly and build resistance as you go.

Here another mantra: "Build community. Build resistance. Community resistance. Sustainable resistance. For peace. For justice. For the Earth ... to the dust!"

We must start from where we are and work with what we've got. There are plenty of talkers in the woods and many would-be controllers of the efforts of others. But precious and few are people who act, organise and get things done. If you are one, blessed be. If you are not, support and assist those who are.

Be visible. Be heard. Occupy public place and public imagination

Click activism is a delusion, a belief as inane as believing that having an opinion about some thing somehow makes one a powerful citizen. Opinion is worthless without action. Feet on the ground and crowds in public place is what brings on change. The great fear of tyrants is people power, the mob in the streets!

Be visible. Organise occupations of public place. With flags and banners make your occupations eye catching and transformative. It's a liberation for the fearful to come out from behind their screens and feel proud and strong in public place.

Assert your right to freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. If these freedoms are not exercised regularly they will be denied.

The Occupy movement has tended to long term occupations and there are some fine examples of long time occupations, the Canberra Tent Embassy the outstanding one, 40 years this year. But be warned that long term occupations demand big commitment because, along with the pioneers and prophets, they attract the mad and the broken. As well as provocateurs.

Easier to see your action as a show with a clear beginning, middle and an end; take your action, make your point, and out before trouble collects. The zen of resistance.

Beware the limitations of consensus

Consensus decision making is good for building inclusion and identifying group policy. But when consensus decision making becomes ideology and an end in itself, it leads to lots of talk and little action. And mediocrity in action at that. One wouldn't build a house using consensus decision making. Or produce a movie or a stage performance. Nor events. For such tasks we look towards hierarchies of skill and experience.

So it is when producing events of peace witness: respect elders, encourage and support leadership, and foster individual initiatives. Go for creative daring ahead of safe repetition and replication.

Cultivate the police

Give notice, negotiate events with the police and seek their counsel. Police liaison is an art form and it warrants cultivation. A sure sign of

progress in peaceful social change is when the police are friendly, cooperative in removing obstacles and unwilling to bust heads.

There will always be things the police cannot tell you and, if an action requires surprise, things you cannot tell them. But strive to build trust and respect none the less.

It's music to my ears when I hear a police officer begin negotiations by saying: "I respect your right to protest ..." I recall with gratitude the bloody struggles of the ancestors who won those rights. And send a prayer.

My experience is that police officers feel good about themselves, their role and their institution when they are protecting the right to freedom of assembly and speech.

And if your event is artful in its presentation and respectful of the mores of the locale, they will be even more happily cooperative.

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These are some of the views and skillful means which Peacebus will be offering to resistance building in Darwin

*** *Peacebus.com***

The Peacebus Mission to Darwin aims to organise community based resistance to the recently established US Marine base there, and highlight the folly of inviting the US Marines to set up in our land and to prepare for war in the Pacific.

In Darwin, I will seek support from the Larrakia people, concerned Darwin residents, faith based groups, union activists and others to organise a campaign which occupies public space and is visible and vocal in calling for the Marines to be deported and the US military banished from this land.

I am under no illusion about the magnitude of the task; after all it took the Japanese over 60 years to eject the US military for Okinawa and they haven't left yet.

But the journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step and I am proposing an early step be a popularly supported **Peacebus Mission to Darwin** this June - August.

May this campaign be the beginning of the end of the US/Australia alliance which has cost us so dearly in terms of wasted lives, squandered tax dollars, the theft of the commonwealth and the imposition perverted social policies such as neo liberalism and the Drug War.

May the fruit of my actions peace in the Pacific, peace in our times and peace for future generations.

Graeme Dunstan 12 June 2012

Johan Galtung: Religions have potential for peace

Galtung, 81, was born in Norway and founded the Peace Research Institute Oslo in 1959. This has been described as the world's first academic centre devoted to peace studies.

Since then he has acted as mediator in many international conflicts, and is known for developing the idea of 'structural violence'.

'Religions are enormous reservoirs of experience,' Galtung said in his 22 May lecture sponsored by the World Council of Churches, Globethics.net, and the [Galtung Institute for Peace Theory and Peace Practice](http://Galtung-Institute-for-Peace-Theory-and-Peace-Practice).

Galtung is the co-author of *Globalizing God: Religion, Spirituality and Peace*. The book explores how religions relate to spirituality, understood as an inner sense of something beyond the self, and peace, a pattern of nonviolence and equity.

The insights of religions can also serve to judge political developments, suggested Galtung, referring to current tensions in the European Union.

'Germany is acting against a very important religious principle,' he said. 'Inequality in economics is incompatible with peace. Germany has forced other countries into debt bondage. Here we have something to preserve, the egalitarian peaceful tradition.'

In a lecture covering a range of religions - from Judaism to African indigenous religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Polynesian religions, as well as humanism - Galtung described the insights of religions as a 'tool box' in the search for peace.

'Their comparative advantage is their transcendence perspective,' said Galtung, who described himself as a

'pagan with Buddhist spots'.

'The kind of peace message I try to extract is a message against structural violence, from the insights of Islam, and against direct violence, from those of Buddhism,' said Galtung.

He recalled that he is sometimes accused of only wanting 'to take the best from all the faiths', leaving others to deal with the rest. 'There is some truth to that,' he acknowledged.

In his welcome to Galtung, the Rev. Dr Hielke Wolters, WCC associate general secretary, recalled that the theme of the forthcoming WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea, 2013, is '[God of life, lead us to justice and peace](http://God-of-life-lead-us-to-justice-and-peace)'.

Religious questions often play a role in peace building, but also in justifying and inflaming conflicts, he warned. However, 'the God of life inspires us to work for justice and peace,' Wolters said.

In a response to Galtung, Professor Christoph Stückelberger, the founder and executive director of Globethics.net, said the peace researcher had not addressed enough the 'instrumentalization' of religion by economic, political, racist, sexist and ethnic powers.

Still, Stückelberger warned politicians against attempting to banish religions from the public sphere because they are seen as a source of conflict.

'If you exclude religion, you don't solve the problem, you just postpone it,' said Stückelberger. 'Often it comes back in violent and fundamentalist ways, so it is better to integrate it now.'

Globethics.net is a global network that promotes the exchange of insights and research on ethics and values.

Truth and Spirituality in My Activism

By Anita McKone

We requested many people to reflect on their peace-journey. Some we get a chance to share with you.

Born in 1969 and brought up a strongly anti-religious atheist, I originally became a nonviolent activist for ostensibly 'humanist' reasons. But at the heart of my commitment to nonviolence was a deep desire to know (and admit) the truth - about myself, about the world and about the universe as I perceive it. The most important truth that I discovered in my mid-twenties was that I was largely ignoring my emotional and physical existence and during an extensive period focussing on and allowing my emotions to surface fully and 'exist', a transformation took place which I had not been expecting. As I became conscious of my natural, active self (as opposed to my frightened and paralysed socialised self), and integrated my emotional and physical self with my intellectual processes, I became aware of a far greater Self that existed both within and beyond me. And it is my increasing consciousness of and trust in this Self that has given me power to

take personally challenging nonviolent actions which were impossible for me in the past.

In the mid-1990s I was arrested three times for trespass during creative nonviolent actions, once at Fort Queenscliff, which was training military officers from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and twice at the Australian Defence Industries factory in Benalla, which was producing bullets used in the war on Bougainville. I was a member of Australian Humanitarian Aid for Bougainville which campaigned to undermine Australian government and corporate support for the PNG military's war against the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, who had sabotaged and closed down the CRA-owned Panguna copper mine because of economic inequities and severe pollution of the Jaba River.

I defended myself in court alongside other arrested activists, and was fined a total of \$150 dollars by relatively sympathetic magistrates. I wanted to not pay the fines and

to serve time (maybe 3 days) in prison instead, but as the time came to decide what to do, I realised that despite having a clear sense of what was 'right', I was too afraid not to pay up. And this was for the most 'trivial' of reasons – I was afraid of having to use a toilet in a camera-supervised cell! But it was this kind of observation that seemed important to me in trying to understand why so few people actively stand against injustice (particularly if they are given the choice to live a relatively comfortable life 'within the system'). Sometimes the fears raised by standing up for justice are 'primary' fears of being killed or physically injured, but often as not, the fears are more obscurely social/psychological in nature. Regardless of where they come from, however, the fears that are raised for people by exposing conflict and paying the price of resistance are deeply personal and very powerful, and while people can use many means to temporarily overcome their fears and act courageously, there is always the possibility that they will be overwhelmed by panic or pain and lose their sense of control over their life.

So, my personal journey has been one of progressive self-realisation, hunting for the truth amid contradictions, increasingly aware of my personal shortcomings, grappling with the internal conflict which (still) makes it difficult for me to focus on how I really feel and to trust my feelings and inner sense to guide me powerfully.

As a child and teenager, I was assisted in developing libertarian and pacifist beliefs by my father's espousal of these ideas, and by my reaction to a violent and authoritarian mother. I was exhausted by her chronic anxiety and hated the way she treated her family, and wanted never to verbally terrorize, oppress and control people the way she did. I identified strongly with my father, believing his assertions that he was the appropriate person to 'defend' me against her violence. To my horror, I eventually realised I had copied far more of my mother's negative attitudes and behaviours than were comfortable to contemplate. And, as my paradoxically deep commitment to libertarian and nonviolent principles led me into real risk-taking nonviolent activism, my father's 'pacifism' was revealed as cowardly, a cover for collaboration with social violence – he would not support me to tell deep and painful truths about the wider political world, or about the reality of our family experience, if that meant risking my own (and his) emotional safety.

In 1996 my husband Robert J. Burrowes and I undertook an intensive process of deep psychological self-reflection and emotional healing to try to understand the roots of human violence. We lived in seclusion for a period of 14 years (much longer than we expected), including six and a half years living in a tent in East Gippsland (a wonderful and educational experience in itself). The healing process was difficult, painful and at times, terrifying. However, sometime in 2004 I had a dream which later led to me gaining a clear definition of God/Truth: "As I awoke, I was aware of losing consciousness of an extraordinary (and completely inexplicable) quality of feeling, but I could remember two aspects of the dream clearly: I was in a place which, physically, was an unbroken field of white light, and I had a sense of being both where I was (at my viewing point, although I had no body) and every-

where else at the same time" (*The Unbelievable Truth: The Paradoxical Nature of the Universal Mind*; <http://anitamckone.wordpress.com>). This deeply emotional experience gave me a sense of power (the power to exist, rather than to destroy) that I had never previously known, and also gave me a sense of the positive that allowed me to take increasingly brave actions in relation to my mother's ongoing violence toward me, to more effectively defend myself and to regain my sense of self that had been destroyed by my terror of her violence. And, during my imprisonment related to a number of nonviolent actions I have undertaken in the past few years, I have been able to relax, 'be myself' and remain powerful with police, prison staff, prisoners and judges by allowing myself to connect with this truly whole state of being.

My emotional and spiritual growth have led to my deepening desire not to engage in acts of violence against myself, others or the Earth, and I have undertaken this as a public pledge by signing *The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World* * launched around the world on November 11 2011. I am personally committed, for example, to not contributing my resources to the killing of people through war – I will never pay taxes or fines to a government that kills and steals the resources of the poor in my name, and currently avoid doing so by having an income well below the taxable level. My commitment is to use all resources available to me to continue my search for consciousness of truth through self-realising action and the public promotion of nonviolence.

My search for truth has led me to define 'war' as the terror of awareness that I exist. I define 'peace' as the awareness that I exist, most completely as the Universal Self, or God. I know that I exist when I pay conscious attention to myself, including, paradoxically, when I pay attention to my terror: my absolute and overwhelming belief that I am about to die, that I am nothing, that I do not exist and am not worthy of existence.

For me, the shooting, bombing and torture of war, and the greed and desire to destroy that lead to these behavioural outcomes are merely the external manifestation of peoples' unconsciousness of their own terror, and, beyond this, unconsciousness of their true Existent Self. The Self who *knows* it exists needs no weapons, no violence, no terrorising force with which to defend itself.

Using Christian terminology (which feels very apt, although I do not follow any specific religion), I see the universe as a system of communication embodying God (loving awareness of truth), Satan (terrified and insane self-destruction) and Christ (the interface between both these states: the mind which is empowered to make conscious choices to achieve wholeness). Reassuringly, I have found that my most powerful, truthful and ultimately successful choices have always been extraordinarily challenging at the time, but joyfully liberating in the end.

*(<http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com>),
Contact Anita on <http://anitamckone.wordpress.com>

Anita McKone
15 March 2012

NOTICE BOARD

**NEW SOUTH WALES
Pax Christi Meetings**

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm..

**Contact: Claude Mostowik
(0 2) 9 5 5 0 3 8 4 5 o r
0411450953**

The venue: MSC Justice and Peace Centre, 15A Swanson Street, Erskineville. 2 minutes walk from Erskineville Station.

**QUEENSLAND
Pax Christi Meetings**

Pax Christi Queensland Branch meets monthly.

Contact:

**Pancras Jordan OP
0415 461 620
panjordan@yahoo.com**

**Clare Cooke SSps
mclcl@holy.spirit.com.au**

**VICTORIA
Agapes**

Agapes are on the third Sunday of alternative months

Start time 12:30pm for 1:00 meal and 2:00pm discussion session

Dates: August 19th
 October 21st
 December 9th

Venue: St John's Uniting Church
567 Glenhuntly Road Elsternwick
Themes advertised later

Peg Fitzgerald (5/1/1925—17/6/2012)

Paul Lansu—our international Secretary, on hearing of Peg Fitzgerald's death said: *You have lost a true Pax Christi mother.* I think there he got it right. Peg definitely was for decades a nurturing presence in Pax Christi Australia. She was more than anti-war which she described as a stupid way to decide anything. but an active peace-maker. Her father and later her brothers had fought in world wars and when Peg, at 18 refused to work in a munitions factory she joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service instead of the Women's Army Service which would have freed up a soldier to be sent overseas.

After the war Peg joined the Sisters of Service –often referred to as the Caravan Sisters, who taught religion to children as well as to migrant workers on the hydro-electric projects in Tasmania. In 1965 she left the congregation and went to New Guinea as a lay-missionary and spent her time living or visiting local villages where she focussed on empowering woman to take the lead in preparing Papua New Guinea for independence. In a society that give little merit to women, Peg stood for the local government seat vacated by Michael Somare when he became the first Prime Minister of PNG. Peg courageously took her seat in the East Sepik Council, the only woman among 58 male councillors.

When Peg returned to Australia in 1980 the experience in New Guinea had grounded her spirituality and faith in the reality of God's kingdom—kingdom people—living Gospel values guided not by laws but by the Spirit and the beatitudes. Back in Melbourne after a stint in Sydney, Peg found a home in the Pax Christi community and brought this spirituality and practice also to her peace making in Pax Christi. And it is this kind of commitment to the foundational pillars of Pax Christi—namely study, spirituality and action that has kept Pax Christi strong for forty years in Australia.

We are grateful to Peg (Miss Margaret in PNG) for her energy and life force that has enriched us all in Pax Christi.

Vale Peg (ed.)

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia. Membership is from January to December)

(Please tick box if you wish to receive you copy of Disarming Times by E-mail)

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