



NoWar Newsletter



The official newsletter of [NoWar \(SA\)](#)
Issue 7
2 January 2007



Editorial

Happy New Year! This is our first newsletter for 2007 and we hope that it is good reading for you and that this and future editions will inspire you to further activities for peace in the coming 12 months. The beginning of a new year always brings with it the inspiring notion of hope and a determination to renew our efforts to bring about peace and goodwill. It is often hard to remain positive and push towards the ideal of peace when we know that there are often forces greater than us that can steam roll over our hopes, our beliefs and our efforts. It is logical to look at the grand scale of horror in our world and decide that our activities really aren't worth it and that we will be defeated by those more powerful than us.

But there are many examples of people, some well known, some not, who have achieved great things in the name of peace and justice. Some have led great movements, like Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Others have made small gestures, like school children who nurture flowers in their school garden to remember Hiroshima Day. Some people write poems about peace and share them with their friends, and others like John Lennon, write songs such as "Imagine", a song whose power knows no boundaries. There are people like Rachel Corrie, a young US peace activist, who was killed in Palestine in 2003 by an Israeli soldier driving an armored Caterpillar Bulldozer – her death serves as one focal point for the injustices perpetrated on the people of Palestine. Others do not become martyrs but work continuously, quietly all their long lives living in cities like Adelaide, going to rallies, sitting on committees, writing letters to the editor and helping kids turn the earth on their peace flowers in the school garden.

2007 will be a difficult year because the situation in Iraq seems to worsen with every passing day. The Israeli-US stranglehold on the people of Palestine is brutal and relentless and we know that the words of Bush, Blair and Rice are pap and that they have no intention of bringing justice to the Middle East, let alone the people of Palestine. The war in Afghanistan escalates and one can only wonder at the endurance of Afghani families as they cope in the mess we have made. The struggles of the peoples of the Third World in the face of the rapacious First World seem endless as does the struggle for the survival of the planet. So, it is understandable that we might feel overwhelmed, daunted, powerless and even at times part of the problem.

This edition of the NoWar newsletter features items about the achievements of 2006 that have been brought about around the world and in Australia by people who believe in peace and justice. Some of the achievements are small, others are momentous. They have been triumphs over significant forces and they demonstrate to us that peace and justice are achievable. So, we might despair at times, but a new year is a great symbol of hope. There is much to do but there are many of us. 2007 holds the seeds of hope and as we all know, from little things, big things grow!

Feedback

Feedback is the best way to keep us on our toes and to improve this newsletter. It also inspires us to keep going. December's edition was well received and people particularly liked the addition of the BOOKS section – so that's in again. We had a cautious "nice work" from one reader, while several people used the "E" word again ("excellent"), so that's great to hear. Someone who was a big fan of November's edition told us that December's was even better, with more diversity and more depth, so we must be doing something right. The most enthusiastic feedback of all was from Gerry who emailed and gave us the following:

Your monthly newsletter makes my spirit soar, knowing that we are not alone and that the message is relentlessly being pushed into the public domain. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

As we say each month, we are really keen to receive feedback, so please don't hesitate. You can email us on nowar@ihug.com.au to let us know what you think or provide any suggestions. We also welcome any ideas for contributions, especially for the *What's On* section.

Successes in 2006 - The 2006 You Didn't Hear About

This item is adapted from an article by [Rebecca Solnit](#) at the alternative media website [AlterNet](#). You can check out the full article by visiting that site.

While many of the big stories in 2006 were bad news, there were hundreds of successes in 2006 that permanently changed the world. Activists won dozens of small and not-so-small victories for human rights and the environment in 2006. The fabric of the world is woven out of small gestures; the large ones mostly just rend it and leave more to mend. And the small gestures continue. Here are some of them:

- **Indigenous peoples won victories** all over the world in 2006, perhaps beginning with the inauguration of labor leader **Evo Morales as president of Bolivia** on January 22nd, the first indigenous president of the largely indigenous nation since the Spanish invasion almost five centuries before. He made good on his campaign promises to nationalize energy resources and negotiated contracts giving the impoverished nation far higher percentages of profits from natural-gas extraction.
- **In November, the Achuar people of the Peru-Ecuador rainforest** blockaded a major oil producer and forced it and the Peruvian government to implement environmental reforms.
- **Similarly, on July 20th, the Nigerian courts ordered Shell Corporation to pay \$1.5 billion to the Ijaw people of the Niger Delta**, who had been fighting the oil company for compensation for environmental devastation since 2000.
- **In December, in Botswana, the San people** -- sometimes called the Bushmen -- won the court case over their eviction from their homeland. The decision restored their right to live, hunt, and travel on their ancestral lands.
- **A number of highly visible defections from the war in Iraq made a difference in 2006**, notably that of Lieutenant Ehren Watada, a Japanese-American officer from Hawaii who refused to serve in what he called "an illegal and immoral war." Recruiting kids to serve in the military became harder than ever, and recruiters fought back with ever-lowering standards, ballooning bonuses and, according to many sources, packs of lies.
- **Five central Asian nations -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan -- signed a treaty forswearing nuclear weapons** anywhere on their considerable territory in September, further upsetting the Bush Administration which hoped to reserve the option of siting a few nukes there.
- **Donald Rumsfeld was obliged to resign after the 2006 elections**, and he may join Henry Kissinger as thugs who don't like to travel abroad -- the U.S.-based Center for Constitutional Rights filed a lawsuit against the former Secretary of Defense in Germany, on behalf of torture victims from Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.
- **Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian revolution continued to evolve**, most notably with the early December meeting at which South American leaders looked at forming an economic bloc along the lines of the European Union -- an alternative not just to corporate "free trade," but to the colonialism that has long drained the wealth of the region.
- **Halliburton was so besieged by citizen-opponents** in Texas that it held its annual shareholder's meeting in Duncan, Oklahoma, and was even there surrounded by people chanting "shame!"
- **Bechtel, driven to move its headquarters out of San Francisco by frequent protest, withdrew from Iraq** in ignominy this year, its contracts canceled and its reputation sullied. The children's hospital in Basra that Bechtel was supposed to build and Laura Bush loudly championed as evidence of American virtue was put "on hold" in July far behind schedule and far over budget.
- **Late this year, even the European Union struck a blow against the reign of the corporations** when it adapted the Reach Regulation, a set of laws that essentially implements the precautionary principle: corporations will have to prove that their chemicals are safe, rather than requiring government agencies to prove they are dangerous. Austria banned Monsanto's genetically engineered canola and genetically modified corn; Romania banned genetically modified soy.

What all these victories add up to is a message that the grim superpowers of militaries and corporations can be resisted, and that the power of small activist groups, of workers, of citizens, of indigenous tribes, of people of conscience matters. 2007 will be a very interesting year.

Aussie version – by Sue Gilbey

Sue Gilbey, NoWar Committee member and presenter on [A Peace of the Action](#) radio program has put together an Australian version of the *AlterNet* article. Here is her collection of achievements for 2006 together with her invitation for more suggestions from our readers:



What better way to end a year than on a positive note. 2006 has been a difficult year but there have been achievements. They are only small shifts, but these small movements can become avalanches. I have a sense that the tide is turning, that people's comfort zone is being challenged and I am putting out a call to put it to your friends/workmates/groups/families to come up with examples of how 2006 was better than 2005. Then once we know what it was that worked we can try even harder in 2007 and as work on knowing that success breeds success. Here's a start:

- **I don't think it was a great year to be an Indigenous person but there were some wins, the Ngarrandjeri won the right to bring their old people home;** some were body parts that were stored in museums in England for so called anthropological reasons.
- **The Noongar won** their land rights claim.
- **The Palm Island Doomadgei case,** where blatant discrimination just like that experienced by Steve Biko in Apartheid South Africa, has caused so many people to question the system.
- **BHP committed to not taking any more water from the Artesian Basin** as a direct result of the Arabunna peoples actions from Mountain Springs. While this means that they are now looking at developing desalination plants from the ocean, which is not so good for marine ecology, it is a huge win in that it acknowledges the amount of water used by mining companies.
- **Australia Day in S.A has colloquially become known as Australia Change** with an emphasis on celebrating a day that has positive connotations for all Australians.
- **Locally also the situation for refugees has shifted** as more and more people became horrified at the way we were treating people who were simply seeking asylum.
- **In a similar vein the question of a Bill of Rights for Australia** was hardly a topic of discussion by most Australians, but now we have ACT and Victoria with their own and others hot on the trail, including an active group in S.A.
- **Public seminars were held at which prominent people such as Robert Fisk and Tanya Reinhart** and others helped to raise awareness of their perception of the true situation in the Middle East.
- **Experts in all things nuclear such as Dr Helen Caldicott, Avon Hudson, Dr Roger Cross, Dr Jim Green and David Nunan** addressed the problems inherent in nuclear energy, mining generally and in weaponry containing depleted uranium, helping to promote clean green energy alternatives.

There will be many more, this is just a start, but look at some of the **films screened this year**. *Ten Canoes*, the first film ever in Australia to use an Indigenous language with English sub-titles, the horror that was *An Inconvenient Truth* and while speaking of horror, *The Road to Guantanamo* and *In The Shadow of the Palms*. There was also *God on my Side* amongst many others that I'm sure to have forgotten. Perhaps the best, because it appealed to all age groups (most particularly mine) is *Happy Feet*, it covered everything: the futility of war, climate change etc etc, and all from a penguin's perspective, and most importantly with a happy ending! Film is such an important medium and all of these were shown in mainstream theatres, often with packed audiences.

So, fellow activists do not despair there *IS* a shift! All we have to do is identify it and then make the most of it by going in the same direction. Once you get started things just spring to mind, so get onto it, take it away and come back to us with any additions, new ideas or anything else that you think might help us AND YOU to predict our future in the world and most particularly 2007 with hope, optimism and justice for all.

Vision for a Better Australia - by Ruth Russell



Ruth in Baghdad
March 2003

Ruth Russell is a well known Adelaide peace activist and is a member of the NoWar Committee. She went to Iraq before the invasion in March 2003 as a Human Shield and has written about this and her other activities and ideas in her book called *A Human Shield In Iraq: A Way Forward For Peace*. Ruth is passionate about peace and justice activities and keeps her eye on the prize at all times. Here Ruth outlines her vision of a better Australia:

I have a vision of a better Australia. The Howard government is leading us down the valley of death following his current policies. Here is my list of goals I am setting as an Australian citizen for 2007.

I want to reclaim Australia as:

- **A country for peace – not war.** A Country that supports the United Nations' Charter to prevent war through mediation and rejects military aggression.
- **A country that upholds international law, covenants and human rights** – one that brings David Hicks back home now.
- **An independent country.** We don't need to blindly acquiesce to US and UK belligerence, rather we should build our own strong relationships with neighbours by encouraging student exchanges, learning their language and culture and reducing our fear of the other.
- **A country that gives a voice, dignity and respect to its indigenous people** – that listens to what they see as their best future options.
- **A civil society** – caring about all citizens and especially those most vulnerable by focussing on people's needs and providing quality education, health care, job training and employment opportunities.
- **A secular country that keeps politics and religion separate;** that takes religion out of community counselling; that encourages citizens to take responsibility for their own actions rather than take an Armageddon view encouraging world catastrophe.

- **A responsible country** by spending 0.7% of our GDP on genuine foreign aid (as we have promised) especially helping Africa which is so desperate now due to the AIDS pandemic.
- **A country that treats women as true equals and advances gender equity.**
- **A country that develops solar and renewable energy** for each household to be self-sufficient by producing energy at source and rejecting any nuclear options while committing to reduce greenhouse emission.
- **An ecologically sustainable country**, protecting bio diversity, respecting the land and natural resources, especially water resources. Not giving mining companies free use of precious artesian basin water for uranium mining but preserving this for future generations.
- **An inquiring country that refuses to develop a narrow, white history curriculum for Australia**, but a genuine inquiry into our past, building understanding of the real human impact of invasion, colonialism and wars to understand the lasting trauma and dispossession that ensues, so that we can reshape Australia as an independent, fair minded and ecologically sustainable, good world citizen.

This is the Australia I want. I offer my goals to you in the hope that you may choose them too. I hope we can work together to make this vision a reality in 2007. Together we can create an Australia we are proud of again.

If you have a particular interest or knowledge in any of these areas you are welcome to join a range of peace and social justice groups in Adelaide on various campaigns to bring about these goals.

You can contact Ruth on 0414 974 755 or aussieshield@chariot.net.au



Ruth and fellow Human Shield, Edward Cranswick, March 2003

What's on?

Peace convergence – June 2007



There is not a lot on in South Australia during January since a lot of groups go into quiet mode. We will have plenty of what's on in the February edition after people have geared up their planning for 2007. One of the biggest "what's ons" will occur later in the year with the peace convergence on the

Talisman Saber 07 military exercises between the US and the Australian military forces in Queensland and the Northern Territory. This will be a focal point for ant-war protests both in the specific area and around the country.

David Bradbury, the acclaimed Australian activist film maker along with others in the peace and environmentalist movements is planning a huge concert for June. He writes that he will be involving "musicians like Paul Kelly, Midnight Oil (friends from University days), John Butler, Deborah Conway, Robyn Archer, Kev Carmody and actors Judy Davis, Geoffrey Rush, Sam Neill, Bryan Brown, (and) we intend to put on a big concert which will spill into the evening with relevant films and speakers to raise awareness of just what Australia has signed up for with this new secret treaty then Defence Minister Robert Hill and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer signed with Rumsfeld and Powell back in July 2004. It is that secret treaty which is allowing the Americans to come here and do what they want - without so much as an environmental impact study being done before or after the exercises." David Bradbury is hoping that the concert will send out a message to other Australian citizens and the Government that we do not want this kind of militarism in our backyard. He is urging people to look at the Peace Convergence website and to keep up to date with the planning and for people to become involved to make this a big event. So, check out the website at www.peaceconvergence.com.

What's on overseas?

Shut down Guantánamo, Washington 11 January 2007

From the planners' website: "Thursday, January 11, 2007: The 5 year anniversary of the first prisoners being brought to Guantánamo. March, Press Conference and Nonviolent Direct Action in Washington, DC. The day will include a press conference led by lawyers representing the men at Guantánamo and family members of those detained. Then we will march from the Supreme Court to the U.S. Federal Court, theatrically taking the prisoners' case from the court that upheld their rights to the Federal Court where their cases need to be heard. With our action and our bodies, we will chart the course that Center for Constitutional Rights demands is taken on behalf of their clients. Outside the Federal Court, people will read stories from inside Guantanamo, do street theater and hand out leaflets. At the same time, inside the court house, we will bring the names and stories of those imprisoned at Guantanamo into the court; holding the court responsible for those men". See: [Witness Against Torture: A Campaign to Shut Down Guantanamo](#).



Convergence on Washington, 27 January 2007

Peace activists in the USA are highly mobilized and even more motivated by the recently reached milestone of 3,000 dead military personnel in Iraq. The people of the US want the war to stop and they want their troops home. The [United for Peace](#) website says it all:

*"Tell the New Congress: Act NOW to Bring the Troops Home!
Join United for Peace and Justice in a massive march on Washington, D.C., on Sat., January 27, to call on Congress to take immediate action to end the war."*



National Demonstration, London 24 February 2007



"[CND](#) and [Stop the War Coalition](#) have called a national demonstration in London on Saturday 24 February 2007, with the slogans **NO TRIDENT** and **TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ**. The timing for this demonstration has been determined by the parliamentary agenda set by Blair, particularly on Trident, which he wants to rush through in the hope that this will forestall opposition, which has the potential to build into a mass campaign that forces Labour MPs to oppose the lunacy of nuclear weapons. Parliament will debate and vote on Trident in early March".

Featured items

CHOOSE TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD - Words and music by Anne McMEnamin

Anne McMEnamin is another well known Adelaide activist and a past member of the NoWar Committee. Anne is known to compose a song at the drop of a peace badge and here is one of her latest with words and music to inspire you for 2007:

*A new world is desirable, so people can be free –
Free from hunger, free from wars, free from poverty –
So every child has the chance to grow in hope and dignity.*

A new world is desirable, and justice is the key

Chorus:

*So let's take hands, stand side by side, raise our
voice in song,*

*Choose to build a better world, together we are
strong.*

*A new world is essential, time is running out –
Resources dwindling, global warming, either flood or
drought.*

This planet must be nurtured, if it's to nurture us.

A new world is essential; we hold its fate in trust.

Chorus

*A new world is possible, we know it can be done.
This earth has the resources to provide for everyone
If everything is shared around, not squandered by a
few.*

*A new world is possible, help make the dream come
true.*

Chorus:

*Desirable, essential, possible, indeed!
Choose to build a better world, together we'll
succeed.*

Repeat Chorus



Music for Choose a Better World

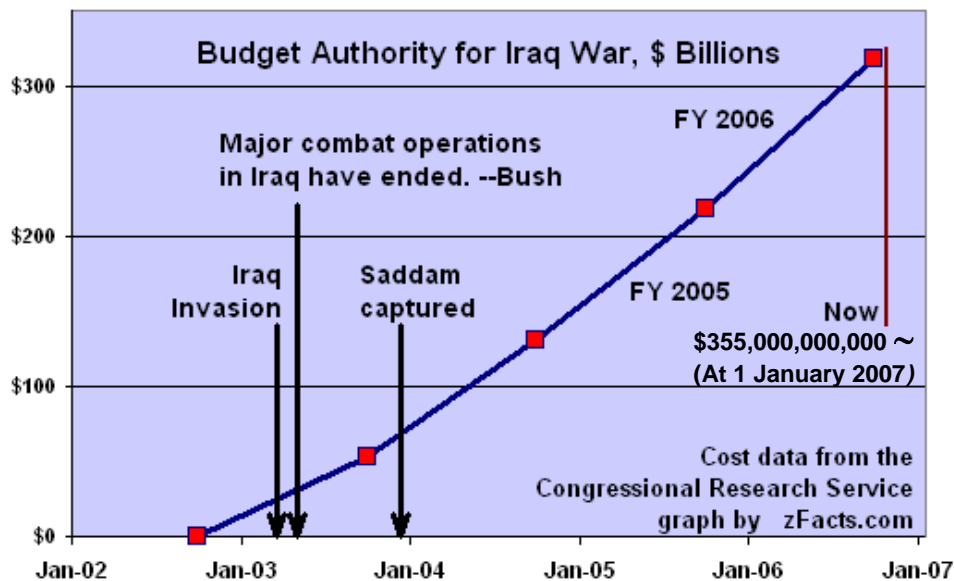
A new world is desirable, so people can be free, Free from hunger,
Free from wars, free from poverty - So every child has the chance to grow in
hope and dignity - A new world is desirable, And justice is the key. So
let's take hands, stand side by side, Raise our voice in song, choose to build a better world, To-
gether we'll succeed

zFacts.com - Know the Facts. Get the Source

Trying to discover the statistics on the fiscal costs to Australia of the war on Iraq is not an easy task. It requires patience and some know how in terms of researching source documents and analysing the data discovered. One indicator for Australian expenditure was an article in [The Age on 25 November 2006](#), which claimed that Australia's spending on the "War on Terror", including costs in Iraq and Afghanistan was up to \$AU 20 billion since September 2001. Precise answers to specific questions, however, are difficult to locate.

One American with apparent know how is Steve Stoft, who says that he is "a Ph.D. economist and my day job is consulting for electricity markets". Steve claims that he has no biases and that "at heart, I'm a scientist; that means I'm a skeptic. I don't trust easy answers especially from politicians. I also don't trust extremists, either left or right. But I don't think these are biases; they're based on observation. It's hard to know your own biases, but I believe in openness, information, and clear thinking—maybe that's my bias. I like to figure things out, and I don't like deceptions or misunderstandings, especially ones that harm people".

Steve has set up the web site [zFacts.com](#) to "investigate many of my interests and perhaps expose some deceptions and clear up some misperceptions". The following graph of US expenditure on the war on Iraq is featured on Steve's web site and is backed up by the evidence he discovered in his research. Check out the web site for other features, such as the [Death Toll in the Iraqi Civil War](#), [Number of troops in Baghdad](#) and [Will Bush Attack Iran?](#) You'll also find a section on [Global Warming](#) and [US Energy Policy](#). Check out [zFacts.com](#) and see what you think.



The Oil Factor in the Iraq Study Group (Interview)

If you have read the report of the [Iraq Study Group \(see below\)](#) you will find Dahr Jamail's allusion in his analysis of the report to "good cop – bad cop" very apt. "...I think basically this report is a smoke screen, an attempt by the U.S. Administration to kind of play the 'good cop – bad cop' game and using this rhetoric like oh it's a 'grave and deteriorating situation,' as if this is going to address the problem. And the bottom line about this study group is that it does not talk about any firm dates or numbers for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from that country. It does not talk about a legitimate government in that country where Iraqis would have real sovereignty. Instead it lays out the importance of oil for U.S. interests in the region and on page 1 of the entire report it talks about the fact that Iraq has the world's second largest known oil reserves. Then it goes on in other areas of the report to mention very specific things they recommend to be done in order for the U.S. to get their hands on more of that oil." [Click here for a transcript of this enlightening interview with independent journalist, Dahr Jamail on Talk Nation Radio \(USA\), 13 December 2006.](#)

Dahr Jamail's MidEast Dispatches



If you have not yet discovered Dahr Jamail's *MidEast Dispatches* and his web site, then you are missing hard hitting, independent news and analysis from Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. You can regularly receive Dahr Jamail's *MidEast Dispatches* by subscribing and [clicking here](#). By visiting the web site, you can gain access to regular hard news reports, picture galleries, video broadcasts and blogs.

You can read an interesting if amusing [critique of Dahr Jamail](#) on the fascinating web site [DISCOVERTHENEWTWORK.ORG \(A Guide to the Political Left\)](#). This web site contains a long list with individual critiques of writers, academics, celebrities and activists, who plainly are misguided at the least or malevolent at the most!

Photo source: [Samidoun.org](#)

Books and publications

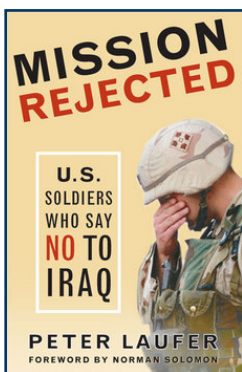
Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal (American Empire Project), by Anthony Arnove

"Three years after the start of the war in Iraq, violence and misery continue to plague the country, and conservatives and liberals alike are struggling with the question of when -- and under what circumstances -- U.S. and coalition forces should leave. In this cogent and compelling book, Anthony Arnove argues that the U.S. occupation is the major source of instability and suffering for the Iraqi people. Challenging the idea that George W. Bush was ever interested in bringing democracy to Iraq -- and the view widely held across the political spectrum that it would be more damaging to leave prematurely -- Arnove explores the real reasons behind the invasion. He shows why continuing the occupation is a wildly unrealistic and reckless strategy that makes the world a more dangerous place. *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal* concludes by laying out a clear vision for the antiwar movement, one that engages soldiers, military families, and the many communities affected by the occupation, who together, Arnove argues, can build the coalition needed to bring the troops home".



...See [The American Empire Project](#)

Mission Rejected: U.S. Soldiers Who Say No to Iraq, by Peter Laufer



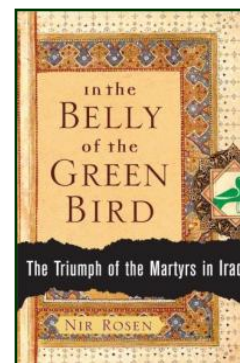
"Disillusioned, outraged, and betrayed, American soldiers are taking a stand against the war in Iraq. A shattering journey of revelation, pain, and betrayal, *Mission Rejected* takes the reader deep into the turmoil of U.S. troops confronting the Iraq War. Some of these soldiers have decided not to fight in Iraq. Others, who have served in the "Sand Box" only to return so appalled by their experience and by what that experience has done to them, choose to declare, in the words of the old Phil Ochs song, "I'm not marchin' anymore!"

Consider Specialist Jeremy Hinzman, who chose Canada over his military career. When queried about his obligation to follow orders, his answer came fast: "I was told in basic training that, if I'm given an illegal or immoral order, it is my duty to disobey it. I feel that invading and occupying Iraq is an illegal and immoral thing to do." Meet Sergeant Camilo Mejía, who said from prison, "Behind these bars I sit a free man because I listened to a higher power: the voice of my conscience." Increasing numbers of U.S. soldiers are

returning from Iraq horrified by what they witnessed and what they did. Journalist Peter Laufer tells how these soldiers are transformed from trained warriors to activists in the struggle to end the Iraq War. He puts their experiences into context by drawing on the lessons of the Vietnam War and citing the historical precedents for troops who refuse unconscionable orders. *Mission Rejected* probes the universal issue of resistance to war by the very men who chose to defend the nation". ...See [Chelsea Green Publishing](#)

In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq, by Nir Rosen

"If you want to know what is really going on in the Iraq "insurgency" and among the Iraqi people -- vis a vis the U.S. occupation -- read this extraordinary book by journalist Nir Rosen. ... Make no mistake about this. After reading Rosen's detailed and courageous book, you will never be under even the slightest illusion again that we are in Iraq to provide freedom, liberty and democracy. We are in Iraq due to Bush and Cheney's perceived interests that benefit American foreign and oil policy, not the interests of the Iraqis. ... And the Iraqis are not dumb. Since tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed by the all sides in the pit of horror kindled by Bush's invasion, they don't generally believe for a moment the platitudes Bush mouths for domestic American political consumption. Rosen achieved remarkable access to so many people whose names and causes are just rendered into caricatures by the Bush propaganda machine. Finally, you get a chance to see them fleshed out". ...See [BuzzFlash.com](#)



Recent reports on Iraq

AFTER BAKER-HAMILTON: WHAT TO DO IN IRAQ by the International Crisis Group, December 2006



20 December

"A diplomatic effort involving all five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council is the only way to stop Iraq falling apart in a religious, Sunni-Shia conflict that could spark a regional conflagration, an influential non-governmental organisation warned yesterday. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group's (ICG) findings will make even more grim reading for the White House than this month's report from the American Iraq Study Group, as President George Bush struggles to come up with a strategy change."

(From [The Independent](#))

[Read the report ... \(International Crisis Group\) - 44 pages](#)

BLAIR'S FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR(S) by Victor Bulmer-Thomas, Chatham House, December 2006

19 December 2006

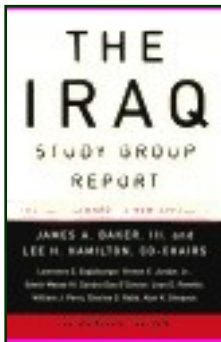
The foreign policy of Tony Blair, the British prime minister, has failed because of his inability to influence Washington and his successor must carve out a leading role for Britain within Europe instead, a UK think-tank has said. The Chatham House report said...Blair's support for the US-led invasion of Iraq was a "terrible mistake" leading to a "debacle" that will have repercussions on policy for years.

(From [Aljazeera](#))

[Read the report ... \(Chatham House\) - 6 pages](#)



THE IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT by James A. Baker III et al, December 2006



6 December 2006

"What we recommend in this report demands a tremendous amount of political will and cooperation by the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. It demands skillful implementation. It demands unity of effort by government agencies. And its success depends on the unity of the American people in a time of political polarization. Americans can and must enjoy the right of robust debate within a democracy. Yet U.S. foreign policy is doomed to failure—as is any course of action in Iraq—if it is not supported by a broad, sustained consensus. The aim of our report is to move our country toward such a consensus."

[Read the report ... \(US Institute of Peace\)](#)

Speaking with forked tongue

23 December brought resolution 1737 of the UN Security Council to impose sanctions against Iran over its nuclear development program. Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but has not complied with a verification regime to assure the UN Security Council that it is not developing a nuclear weapons industry. UN source documents below will link you to this latest resolution, plus resolution 1696, which demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, with this to be verified by the [IAEA](#), of which Iran is a member.



All member states acknowledge that Iran has no nuclear weapons and Iran itself insists that its nuclear development activities are for peaceful purposes. The Security Council (read the USA) has asserted that Iran has not kept to the requirements under resolution 1696, and therefore action must be taken against it. This of course, has nothing to do with US foreign policy in relation to Iran and the Middle East.



An interesting related issue is that the US has recently signed a nuclear trade deal with India even though India has **not** signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and possesses nuclear weapons – as in "weapons of mass destruction". Since this event (December 2006), Howard is giving consideration to also selling uranium to India, even though Australia has a policy of not selling uranium to countries that have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Ummm... when is a treaty not a treaty? When is a principle not a principle? When is a security council really a puppet?

Photo source: [Sydney Morning Herald](#)



Source documents:

[Security Council imposes sanctions on Iran over uranium enrichment](#) – UN News Centre – 23 December 2006.

[UN Security Council Resolution Resolution 1737 \(2006\)](#) - Non-proliferation - Adopted by the Security Council at its 5612th meeting, on 23 December 2006.

[UN Security Council Resolution 1696 \(2006\)](#) - Non-proliferation - Adopted by the Security Council at its 5500th meeting, on 31 July 2006.

[Iranian Foreign Ministry Statement on Security Council Against Iran](#) – 24 December, 2006.

[Australia to Implement UN Security Council Resolution on Iran](#) – Media Release, Alexander Downer, 24 December 2006.

News

US death toll reaches 3,000 in Iraq

31 December 2006



Photo source: Aljazeera

The US military death toll in Iraq has reached 3,000, an unwelcome milestone for George Bush, the US president, who is searching for a way to turn around the unpopular war even if it means sending more troops.

[Read more ... \(Aljazeera\)](#). [See Iraq Body Count website](#).

SADDAM HUSSEIN: A DICTATOR CREATED THEN DESTROYED BY AMERICA

30 December 2006

Saddam to the gallows. It was an easy equation. Who could be more deserving of that last walk to the scaffold -- that crack of the neck at the end of a rope -- than the Beast of Baghdad, the Hitler of the Tigris, the man who murdered untold hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis while spraying chemical weapons over his enemies? ...But history will record that the Arabs and other Muslims and, indeed, many millions in the West, will ask another question this weekend, a question that will not be posed in other Western newspapers because it is not the narrative laid down for us by our presidents and prime ministers -- what about the other guilty men?



Photo source: AlterNet

[Read more ... \(Robert Fisk at AlterNet\)](#).

IRAQI HOPES DIM THROUGH WORST YEAR OF OCCUPATION

22 December 2006

Despite promises from Iraqi and U.S. leaders that 2006 would bring improvement, Iraqis have suffered through the worst year in living memory, facing violence, fragmentation and a disintegrated economy. A year back Iraqis were promised that 2006 would be the fresh beginning of a, prosperous, democratic and unified Iraq. Through an elected parliament and a unity government, they would find peace, and start rebuilding a country torn apart by the U.S.-backed UN sanctions and then the U.S.-led invasion and occupation.

[Read more ... \(Dahr Jamail's MidEast Dispatches\)](#).

EIGHT MARINES CHARGED OVER HADITHA DEATHS

22 December 2006.

Eight US Marines have now been charged in connection with the killing of 24 Iraqi civilians in the town of Haditha late last year. The US military has announced four Marines have been charged with murder over the deaths of the two dozen men, women and children. One of them, squad leader Staff Sergeant Frank Wuterich, is facing 12 individual murder counts and a 13th charge of ordering his subordinates to kill six of the Iraqi civilians. [Read more ... \(ABC\)](#).



Photo source: ABC

BUSH PLANS TO EXPAND US MILITARY

20 December 2006



Photo source: Aljazeera

George Bush has said he will seek to expand the size of the US military amid warnings that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have badly strained the armed forces. ...Bush declined to put a number on the proposed increase, and disputed the assertion made at the weekend by Colin Powell, his former secretary of state, that "the active army is about broken". Bush said: "I haven't heard the word 'broken,' but I've heard the word 'stressed'". [Read more ... \(Aljazeera\)](#).

U.S. TROOPS RAID HOSPITAL AGAIN

14 December 2006

Iraqi doctors and medical staff are outraged over yet another U.S. military raid at Fallujah General Hospital. The raid followed a roadside bombing Dec. 7 where four Iraqi policemen were killed and two civilians injured. The injured were taken to Fallujah General Hospital. [Read more ... \(Dahr Jamail's MidEast Dispatches\)](#).

KOFI ANAN'S FINAL SPEECH AS UN SECRETARY GENERAL

11 December 2006

As President Truman said, "the responsibility of the great states is to serve and not dominate the peoples of the world." He showed what can be achieved when the US assumes that responsibility. And still today, none of our global institutions can accomplish much when the US remains aloof. But when it is fully engaged, the sky's the limit'. [Read more ... \(UN\)](#).



Photo source: UN

IRAQ PRESIDENT REJECTS BAKER REPORT

10 December 2006



Jalal Talabani, Iraq's president, has rejected recommendations by the US bipartisan Iraq Study Group, calling them dangerous and an insult to Iraqis. [Read more ... \(Aljazeera\)](#).

Photo source: Aljazeera

RADIO PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Peace Program – Radio Adelaide: *A Peace of the Action* – Sundays at 12:30



A Peace of the Action

A Radio program about Peace and Social Justice

Every Sunday, 12:30pm 101.5 FM [Radio Adelaide](#)

'*A Peace of the Action*' is a half hour program going to air on Sundays at 12.30 pm on [Radio Adelaide](#). The program is a collaboration of the Australian Peace Committee, NoWar, WILPF, ANTaR and the Human Rights Coalition and our main sponsor is Single Step Printing. The half hour program covering peace and related issues includes interviews, reviews, commentary, magazine items, music and announcements of local events. During December, we welcomed on board 3 more presenters as they concluded their training. Samantha, Clayton and Ruth now join Sue, Jane and Stephen as regular presenters and each of them represents the member groups who are partners in this project.

During the last month, we have heard interviews with David Hick's father, Terry, local musician and activist Mary Laslett, peace activist Ruth Russell, Alex Douglas of the United Nations Youth Association and more. Inspiring international musicians were featured and we heard live from Mary Laslett and Anne McMenamain singing their own compositions of songs for peace. There's also the wit of "*SIN: taking the "P" out of SPIN!*" with Geoff and Clayton that will bring a wry smile to your face.

If you haven't tuned in to *A Peace of the Action* yet, then you are missing a great half hour devoted to peace and social justice. So, tune the radio to 101.5 FM on Sundays at 12:30pm and wait for that great theme for the program; the question posed by Marianne Faithful in her song *Broken English* – **What Are You Fighting For?**

The following pages are standing items in our newsletter. They provide basic reference information about NoWar for our readers and particularly for newcomers to NoWar.

The information does vary from month to month as it includes summaries of recent meetings. The names of the members of the NoWar Committee and links to the NoWar web site for the Constitution and membership forms can be found in this section.

What is NoWar?

NoWar is a South Australian peace group originally formed at the time of the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. We oppose the idea that a military response to terrorism ("The War on Terror") can succeed or that its cost to innocent people could be justified.

We organized protests against the invasion of Iraq, including the biggest protest in the history of South Australia on 16 February 2003, when 100,000 people filled the streets of Adelaide. We opposed the war on Iraq because it was unnecessary, unjust and illegal. Iraq had not attacked anybody nor threatened to, nor had the capacity to do so.

Since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, NoWar has continued its work of raising public awareness about the aftermath of the invasion, both for Iraq and the world. Unlike our government, we believe it is important that the public is made aware of the costs and reality of war. Unlike most of the mass media our interest in the war on Iraq did not diminish once the US and its allies launched their aggression.

NoWar opposes American militarism and unilateralism being the guiding forces in international relations. We support a more just world with peaceful resolution of conflicts, where acknowledgement is given to genuine grievances and our common future is not just about American political, military and economic interests. We support an independent foreign policy for our country and we want to see Australian troops only being used for the defense of Australia. NoWar continues to work for peace through public meetings, hosting visiting speakers, screening important films and holding public protests.

The aims of NoWar are:

To educate, inform and mobilise people based on the following principles:

- Opposition to the increasing militarisation of the world, and the consequences for the international community;
- Support for a reversal of the global military build-up, specifically the removal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, an end to the trade in arms, and a reduction in the current level of conventional arms;
- Support for the removal of foreign military bases around the world, and an end to foreign military interventions;
- Support for the resolution of conflicts in a just and peaceful manner, having regard for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international law and the rights of all peoples to self-determination.

Click here to view the [NoWar Constitution](#).

NoWar consists of a Committee, a financial membership that elects the Committee (see below) and a large support base, the names of which we have collected over time at our various functions and events. From this membership and support base come people such as you, who become involved in our public meetings, rallies and other public actions towards peace.

NoWar Committee

The NoWar Committee is elected at the AGM each year in October-November. The current members of the Committee were elected at this last AGM on 11 October 2006. They are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Mike Khizam (Convenor) | • Renfrey Clarke |
| • Jeanie Lucas (Secretary) | • Jane Bower |
| • Margaret Peterson (Treasurer) | • Sue Gilbey |
| • Stephen Darley | • Colin Mitchell |
| • Ruth Russell | • Bob Eastman (co-opted) |

The Committee meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. The Committee has met approximately every 2 weeks for the last 3 years (with a short Christmas break each year!). Prior to that, particularly in the build up to the war, the Committee and membership met more than that, as many of you would remember!

During the height of anti-war activities in 2002-03, NoWar maintained a staffed office. Currently, the meetings are held at NoWar Committee member's homes.

What does NoWar spend its money on?

Like other groups, NoWar needs funds in order to conduct its activities, and like other groups, maintaining a viable bank balance is always a challenge. Sometimes people ask us what we spend our money on, and fair enough too, since much of what we have is provided through donations or membership subscriptions. Here is a list of items that cover our current expenditure:

- *Web site account*
- *Email account*
- *Paper and stationery*
- *Copying and printing*
- *Postage*
- *Telephone calls*
- *PA system hire for rallies*
- *G.P.O. Box hire*
- *Radio program*
- *Merchandise (e.g. T-shirts, badges, stickers)*
- *Costs associated with organizing events (e.g. hall hire)*
- *Accommodation, travel and meals for visiting speakers*
- *Equipment (e.g. tables, banners, storage boxes)*
- *Advertisements in newspapers*

Ways we communicate

NoWar has a policy that, except in special circumstances agreed to by the Committee, we only send out emails related to NoWar matters and concerns. In this way we hope to keep email traffic to a minimum. Most emails you will receive from NoWar will be about upcoming events or notices about meetings – and now this newsletter. Very occasionally we may forward an item generated by another group or about another matter.

Aside from emailing what we call our “data base” (the approximately 700 people who have given us their email addresses), there are a number of other ways that NoWar communicates with people. These are:

The website. Visit www.nowar-sa.net regularly as it is updated at least once a week and has excellent links to alternative sources of information about the war on Iraq and other anti-war groups throughout Australia and the world.

nowar_announcements. This is a newsgroup we set up for people interested in keeping in touch with supporters of NoWar SA. Various interesting and wide ranging items are posted to this news group and it is sometimes used for discussion. [Click here to join nowar_announcements.](#)

nowar_australia. This newsgroup was originally set up as is a communication and information forum for members who attended NoWar Committee meetings. Subscribers must have attended NoWar meetings and the group is moderated. This news group and nowar_announcements are very similar and there may be a need to consolidate them. [Click here to join nowar_australia.](#)

Summary of last minutes

The last Committee meeting of NoWar was held on 22 November 2006 (see [last edition of this newsletter](#) for summary). The Committee and Financial Members met at the Sagarmatha Nepali Restaurant on 6 December for a Christmas dinner.

The next Committee meeting of NoWar will be the planning meeting to be held on Sunday 4 February at 1:30pm to 5:30pm. This will be the first meeting for 2007. The subsequent meetings for the year will be held at 6pm every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 6pm, venue to be fixed at each meeting.

Membership forms

If you would like to become a financial member of NoWar, please have a read of our constitution and then complete the membership form which is available though this link on our web site: <http://www.nowar-sa.net/pdf/IndMemb2006.pdf>.

There is also a membership form for groups at: <http://www.nowar-sa.net/pdf/GroupMembForm2006.pdf>.

Membership is \$10 for individuals and a starting membership for groups (under 100 members) is \$50. NoWar needs all the funds it can get so your membership fee is of significant value.

Our contact details

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See you next month!