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A challenging legacy

Hans-Hubertus Mack discusses the place of memories of the First World War in Germany and the German approach to commemoration of the centenary of that conflict.

Let me begin with the year 1918. For Germany, the end of the First World War meant not merely the loss of its position as a great power and of its colonial empire. It also brought to light the serious social distortions that had been in the offing years before but successfully covered up in times of peace. After the end of the war, they inevitably caused the collapse of the monarchy. Admittedly, the formal transition into a parliamentary monarchy had been successfully completed during the war, but the circumstance brought about revolution and reorganisation. The elites who had been the pillars of the system responded to the inevitable loss with some kind of dual refusal. They refused to accept the reality of defeat and the introduction of democracy and parliamentarism, which they perceived as ‘alienation’ and ‘de-Germanisation’.

The Entente forces did not perceive the Weimar coalition as a political factor that gave rise to ideas of compensation and international co-operation, especially at the end of the war, but as representative of a state oriented towards aggressive expansion. Moreover, since 1917 the socialist forces in Germany had failed to hold a dialogue across trenches and borders so that it was fair to speak about a national camp mentality in Germany. Accordingly, the German social democracy responded quite sharply to the war-guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles. According to the future Reich president, Friedrich Ebert, they had wanted to reclaim a ‘Wilson’s Peace’ and ‘not let themselves be bullied by the Entente forces’.

As a result, the debate over the treaty and the heavy burdens included in it threw German society into long-lasting conflict, overshadowing any possible new beginning. The blame was not put on those who instigated and planned the war but on those who had doubts about a victorious peace and early on offered negotiations to end the war. Misjudging the real situation, the former were of the opinion that the German Army had remained undefeated in the field. In 1919, Field Marshal Mackensen got to the heart of the matter:

Not the troops of the Entente but Germany’s worst enemy, its own people, in its unique character brought about the collapse. And now, this people continues to rage at German flesh and blood in the cities... Prussian militarism educated, the social democratic ‘freedom’ corrupts the people.2

Mackensen thus put forward the leitmotif of the stab-in-the-back legend, an image that over the years served especially right-wing opponents of the young and unstable Weimar democracy as a means to play off the different political camps against each other and to eventually undermine the despised democratic system. To top it all, in his welcoming address to the troops returning from the field, Ebert himself declared: ‘No enemy has vanquished you.’

The fight against the so-called war-guilt lie, the reinterpretation of the defeat as stab in the back of the bravely fighting army and the revisionist concept against Versailles provided the basic attitude of a German policy of transition into the 1920s. The compromise of Weimar agreed by the political camps in Germany was shaky, and the right wing proceeded on the assumption that it was an interim solution that had to be overcome as soon as possible. For the remaining elites, accepting the defeat was out of the question. Among elite circles, the war itself — and this is part of its reception — was stylised as the frontline experience per se, and endowed with pathos. The extreme right wing added the glorification of being a frontline soldier (Frontkämpferum), which characterised, in particular, the

The First World War has achieved a relevance in Germany that would have been difficult to conceive just a few years ago. Until this change the study of the origins, course and results of the First World War from a German perspective has largely been confined to specialists. Only occasionally, as during the controversy over the theses advanced by historian Fritz Fischer in the 1960s, has the First World War overshadowed the Second World War in public discourse. The First World War seems to provide a challenging legacy and even after 100 years its reappraisal remains exciting and productive.

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many military alliances in the Weimar Republic. German memory in the immediate post-war period was thus characterised by two motives: revenge and repression.

**Academic context**

I will now examine the academic reception regarding this difficult legacy of the First World War as it took place in Germany and Europe on the cusp of the 21st century. July 2014 marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Whereas in Belgium, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Austria the Great War or Grande Guerre is commemorated with considerable expense and attracts great interest from the media and the public, the approaching anniversary does not meet with the same response in Germany as in the above-mentioned states.

In contrast, the discussion in Germany appeared rather restrained. Meanwhile, important events take place and especially the museum landscape faces this topic with impressive special exhibitions. The question, however, of whether the course and impact of this event of the century pull at the heartstrings of the Germans can be answered in the negative. There is no chance of a wide social discussion about the First World War with active participation of all relevant groups as in other Western European states. Nevertheless — and this should be emphasised — the federal president observed a day of remembrance of the First World War at his official seat in Berlin in an elaborate and impressive way in the middle of last year, which, in my opinion, set standards.

How to explain the differences in dealing with the ‘seminal catastrophe of the 20th century’? In order to provide an adequate answer to this question about the differences in the perception of this event, it is necessary to take a look at the context — and this also includes Germany’s neighbours. The main objective is to study the beginning and end, as well as the causes and consequences, of the First World War more thoroughly. While today in many parts of Germany, 11 November at 11 am is celebrated noisily and with joy as the beginning of a carnival, for many British citizens this is the day to quietly commemorate their soldiers who were killed in action. As an outward sign, they attach a poppy to their clothing. This tradition goes back to the poem ‘In Flanders Fields’ by John McCrae from Canada, in which he describes the red poppies on the battlefields of Flanders and northern France. The red colour of the poppy is also a symbol for the blood of the fallen soldiers.

**Armistice origins**

Although nowadays, on ‘Remembrance Day’, the United Kingdom commemorates British soldiers killed in all wars, the day — originally called ‘Armistice Day’ — dates back to the end of the First World War, since never before and after had Great Britain suffered greater losses in a war than in the ‘Great War’. In addition to the commemoration of soldiers killed in action, this is also a day of expressing pride in their own soldiers. In France, ‘Armistice Day’ is an official holiday of great social importance — as a day to commemorate the soldiers killed in action.

Up to the present, 11 November continues to be deeply anchored in the commemoration culture of both states, as well as of other former Entente states, to commemorate the glorious victory over Germany. Deep in their hearts, many French people regard the ‘Grande Guerre’ as a war that bled their country, but in contrast to the ignominy of the Second World War it was not associated with defeat and the occupation of Paris by German troops. French attempts, for instance by President Sarkozy in his day, to declare 11 November as the ‘Day of Franco-German Friendship’ and to celebrate this day together with Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Arc de Triomphe not only met with disapproval but also met with resistance instead.

Australians and New Zealanders commemorate their fallen troops on Anzac Day. This day commemorates the battles of Australian and New Zealand units on the Turkish peninsula of Gallipoli in 1915. It is marked on the day of the landing, on 25 April of each year. Australia commemorates not only those killed in action on that day, it also conducts a military parade to remember the victory over the Central Powers. What is important is the fact that in the commemoration of the Australians, the First World War as ‘blood sacrifice’ holds a key position as a founding myth of modern Australian society and its army, and so it is in New Zealand. In foreign policy, the ‘Anzac spirit’ represents the fact that during the Great War Australia had acted for the first time as a unified nation and a sovereign player on the international stage. In domestic policy, the ‘all-Australian community of suffering’ during the war years facilitated national integration.

On the one hand, the examples mentioned illustrate the dramatic political changes triggered by the First World War all over the world, which even nowadays still have a positive connotation in many states. On the other hand, despite the resistance of some national peace movements, military successes of great-grandfathers are still celebrated as military victories and serve as traditions for present-day military personnel. Against this background, it is not surprising that — as far as I know — the Australian government is providing more than $80 million for the commemoration festivities from 2014 to 2018.

**Unique approach**

In Germany, on the contrary, the way in which the former Entente states deal with 11 November, in particular, and the First World War in general is met with incomprehension. For many Germans, the idea of celebrating a military victory — and especially in the context of commemorating the dead — is just as incomprehensible as the idea of publicly demonstrating pride for their own military personnel. Such a tradition has not developed in Germany. The unique German way of dealing with military successes and the commemoration of military personnel killed in action — compared to other states that participated in the First World War — becomes obvious from German history in the ‘era of world wars’.

During the Weimar Republic and the ‘Third Reich’, it was inconceivable to commemorate the signing of the Armistice, which most Germans regarded as an admission of defeat. In the
1920s, only very few Germans would have found something positive in the defeat because of the reasons mentioned above. On the contrary, many Germans rejected the Treaty of Versailles, which in Article 231 made Germany and its allies responsible for the outbreak of the war, as a dictate of shame. In Germany, therefore, the end of the First World War did not have a positive or meaningful connotation after the war; 11 November disappeared from the society’s horizon of perception as a consequence of the Second World War, as did in this context the defeat of 1918 as a historical event.

Nowadays, Germany not only commemorates the military personnel killed in both world wars but also the ‘dead of two world wars at the fronts and at home’ and the ‘victims of tyranny of all nations’ on the National Day of Mourning on the last Sunday of the church year in November. Any kind of heroic pathos is deliberately avoided in order to make it clear that there is no connection to the Day of Commemoration of Heroes (Heldengedenktag) of the National Socialists. In this context, the First World War disappears in the shadows of the Second World War. At the same time, commemoration is extended to include the civilian victims of tyranny — and thus civilised and internationalised — which is in contrast to many other European states. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the National Day of Mourning, which was introduced in the 1920s, as were the memorial days in France or Great Britain, to commemorate the German military personnel killed in the First World War, no longer has a deliberate connection to the First World War. And by no means is this memorial day used to proudly point out the military achievements of German military personnel of the past and the present.

Last but not least, this is due to the fact that in the collective memory of the Germans the recollection of the First World War is overshadowed by the Second World War and the German crimes committed in the years between 1939 and 1945. Given the horrors of the Second World War and its consequences, neither the Federal Republic of Germany nor the German Democratic Republic had much interest in reappraising the history of the First World War in the post-1945 era.

Sensational bang
Only in the early 1960s did the First World War for a short time break the shadow of the Second World War with a sensational bang. This was occasioned by the publication in 1961 of Fritz Fischer’s book *Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/1918* (which appeared in English in 1967 under the title *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*).

The book triggered a fierce debate about the German past before the National Socialists’ grab for power that went far beyond the small circle of experts. Fischer did not just provide an analysis of the German war aims in the First World War, rather he placed considerable responsibility on Germany for triggering the seminal catastrophe of the 20th century. This resulted in a journalistic earthquake and a previously unknown discussion in the West German historical science community that also extended to large parts of the German public.

The debate about the German war guilt, which had been conducted in a highly politicised atmosphere in the years after the Versailles peace settlement, was reignited. Konrad Jarausch cuts right to the chase of the matter:

Fischer’s theses were shocking. Adolf Eichmann was on trial in Jerusalem, the Auschwitz trials began in Frankfurt. All Germans were made aware of the terrible things that had happened in the Third Reich. And now, they were also blamed for the First World War.

The Fischer controversy about the issue of the German Empire’s guilt in the First World War, which was to last into the late 1970s, took its course. In his book *Krieg der Illusionen. Die deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914*, published in English in 1975 as *War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914*, Fischer went even further by accusing the leadership of the German Empire of having made long-term war plans to achieve German hegemony in Europe. He thus not only refuted the thesis of the fateful involvement resulting in the war, he replaced it with the cool calculating act of the imperial leadership instead. Fischer’s academic opponents, like Egmont Zechlin, Karl Dietrich Erdmann and Gerhard Ritter, criticised his theses in the strongest terms. They accused him of placing the sole responsibility for the outbreak of the war on Germany and drawing an unjustified line of continuity in German history from Frederick II via Bismarck to Adolf Hitler.

Heated debate
All participants in the debate went beyond the academic dispute and almost reached the limits of personal defamation. This was not least due to the fact that the discussion about Fischer’s theses immediately extended into a debate about the continuity of the German war aims policy from Kaiser Wilhelm II to Adolf Hitler, and mass media like the *Spiegel* sided with Fischer in articles:

Fischer… demonstrates that the German Empire… had the urge for territorial expansion which appears to have been even more exorbitant than the ‘people without space’ complex of the National Socialists…. The imperial travelers to eastern lands had hardly less appetite than the future swastika-crusaders.

In next to no time large circles of the German public embarked on a discussion that hitherto had been conducted among professional historians. Even leading West German politicians, like...
Federal Chancellor Ludwig Ehrhard or Bundestag President Eugen Gerstenmaier, spoke publicly against Fischer, accusing him of damaging the reputation of the young Federal Republic and eventually obstructing the rebuilding of Germany.

Even though over the next few years moderate opponents of Fischer acknowledged at least parts of his position, namely that the German imperial leadership had deliberately taken a war into account, the disputing camps continued to be irreconcilable in many respects for a long time. Two doctrines evolved over the years: on the one hand, the uncompromising advocates of a planned war which the German imperial leadership had deliberately brought about and, on the other, representatives of the thesis that the main responsibility for the outbreak of the war lay in Berlin but that there had been no systematic long-term preparations for the war.

Waning interest
While the German historical science community continued to have lively discussions about the question of whether the German Empire was responsible for the First World War, politicians and public lost interest in this topic after a few years. For many, the fascination regarding this discussion did not lie in dealing with the outbreak of the First World War but with the special path of Germany and the determined German grab for world power culminating in National Socialism and the outrageous crimes of Germans during the Second World War.

For many years, the interest in the causes of the ‘seminal catastrophe’ remained unabated. Fifty years after the beginning of the ‘Fischer controversy’ and a few months before the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the war in 2014, changes in the perception of the First World War can be seen in various aspects. In Germany, new insights regarding the outbreak of the war in 1914 have meanwhile been introduced in history textbooks for schools, albeit with the delay typical for schoolbooks. The ‘innocence thesis’ — which had been commonly spread throughout the 1950s and 1960s — is ‘history’. The outbreak of the war is depicted as a complex process. In German history textbooks, however, the First World War does not take up as much space as in Great Britain, France or Australia. In the last decades, the First World War has rarely been mentioned in the German public or media, and whenever this had been the case then it was with reference to the Second World War. One example is the Spiegel Special Die Ur-Katastrophe des 20. Jahrhunderts (The Seminal Catastrophe of the 20th Century). It was published 90 years after the outbreak of the war, in 2004. Not only its subtitle ‘The First World War and its Consequences’ but also the pictures of Emperor Wilhelm II and of Adolf Hitler on the cover page presented the line of continuity from the First to the Second World War.

Centennial difficulty
Against this background, it is no surprise that the official Germany struggles with the observation of this centennial. Whereas many former Entente states began their preparations for the celebration of the world war anniversary many years ago, the federal government has tried to keep a low profile regarding this centennial and practiced official restraint since for Germany — as the loser of the war — a ‘meaningful interpretation’ like in the victorious states is not easily possible. For many Germans, a meaningful event in 2014 is the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the peaceful German revolution.

Outside of Germany, the way Germany handled active politics of memory was met with incomprehension. Not everyone in the victorious states approved unconditionally the efforts of the German Foreign Office in the commemoration festivities to avoid pointing out who had won the war and instead focus on the joint commemoration of the more than 15 million dead of the First World War and ‘endow them with meaning’ for European integration. In the United Kingdom, the number of people wanting to celebrate the victory over Germany should not be under-estimated. In this respect, British historian Hew Strachan explained that ‘many people fought believing it was worthwhile. We have to accept this motivation’. With this statement he pleasantly sets himself apart from Michael Gove, the British secretary of state for education, who declared that the ‘Great War’ was a just war against the ‘ruthless social Darwinism of the German elites, the pitiless approach they took to occupation, their aggressively expansionist war aims and their scorn for the international order’. Even though these statements met with much criticism in the United Kingdom, it shows the difficult terrain for German politics of memory concerning the First World War.

In Germany, the many media and historians, including Gerd Krumeich, criticised the restraint of the federal government as disinterest and ‘foolishness’. Meanwhile, the new federal government has given up some of this official restraint. The federal president attended the celebrations in France and Belgium in the summer. With his book Sleepwalkers, Australian historian Christopher Clark proved that the First World War and, in particular, the outbreak of the war in 1914 still moves people also in Germany. For weeks, it was on the top of the bestseller lists. One of the reasons for the success of this book is that although Clark does not ‘exonerate’ Germany for its role in the outbreak of the war, he points out in his controversially discussed volume that before the war Germany was no more aggressive than the other European great powers. The war had been a joint European ‘fruit’.

Rekindled debate
With Sleepwalkers Clark rekindled a discussion about the responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War almost 50 years after Fischer which had long been conducted in the international historical science community but been unnoticed by the German public and which has increasingly shifted the focus away from Germany towards Austria–Hungary and other...
individual Entente states.

In his new book Der Grosse Krieg. Die Welt 1914–1918 (The Great War. The World 1914–1918), which some reviewers praised as a masterpiece, Herfried Münkler, the political scientist from Berlin, contradicted the thesis of German war guilt. This pointed statement, of course, did not remain without contradiction. In addition to Gerd Krumreich, other historians, like Michael Epkenhans, criticised the theses of Clark and Münkler. According to Epkenhans, Berlin and Vienna had set the course for war in 1914. As in the Fischer controversy, the media took up the discussion. In his article ‘Nun schlittern sie wieder. Mit Clark gegen Fischer: Deutschlands Konservative sehen Kaiser und Reich in der Kriegschuldfrage endlich rehabilitiert’, published in Die Zeit of 24 January 2014, Volker Ulrich established a direct link between the current discussion and the Fischer controversy. According to him, more recent works do not contain new sources that refute Fischer’s theses. Nevertheless, according to Ulrich, abuse of Fischer continues, as in the 1960s.

German conservatives are trying to regain the prerogative of interpretation of German history by setting the course in historical policy. Attempts were made to discredit the critics of Clark and Münkler, who continued to place the main responsibility on Germany with the term Schuldzolge (pride of guilt). With slight resignation Ulrich concludes: ‘It is conspicuous how dull resistance has been so far. It seems that the professionals have tired of the discussion.’ This statement also referred to the manifesto ‘Warum Deutschland nicht allein schuld ist’ (Why Germany is not the only one to blame) by Dominik Geppert, Sönke Neitzel, Cora Stephan and Thomas Weber, published in the newspaper Die Welt on 4 January 2014, where they also state that the war-guilt issue nowadays no longer plays an important role.

Public interest

Not least thanks to Clark’s Sleepwalkers, the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014 has reached German politics and society. The media have taken up the topic. Television programmes and journal articles deal with this topic. Many books on the First World War have been published or are forthcoming over the next months. In addition, a number of cultural events and historical specialist conferences have been planned.

The consequences of the First World War have also caught up with the German government. It is impossible to avoid an all-European remembrance of the First World War. We will have to return to this issue later. The current crisis over Ukraine, which as an independent state under German dominance entered the world stage for the first time as a consequence of the Treaty of Brest–Litovsk in 1918, shows that great power politics continue to be a common feature even in the 21st century and the importance of clever diplomacy in crisis situations. In his introductory speech at the event ‘Vom Versagen und Nutzen der Diplomatie’ (Of failure and benefit of diplomacy) hosted by the German Foreign Office, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier cautioned that given the failure of diplomacy during the July crisis of 1914 with a view to the situation in Ukraine ‘what happens when there are no efforts to talk’. With a view to the current Crimea crisis, the question of war and peace has returned to Europe and ‘is sending chills up and down his spine’.

It seems that the wish expressed by Kurt Kister, chief editor of the Süddeutsche Zeitung, a renowned newspaper in Germany, in January 2014 to finally consider the First World War ‘on its own’ after 100 years have passed has been too optimistic in view of the current developments despite all justified rejection of historical parallels.

European perspective

Looking at the future of commemoration beyond the conditions in Germany, in a certain way this perspective is still up in the air. However, it would offer a possible way to further develop the culture of commemoration. It also must include a European reference. Not only tradition but also commemorative cultures are changing. If we take a look on Europe as a whole, it might occur to us to think about a convergence of a European historical narrative and thus a connecting commemorative culture. It will not happen, of course, that France, Britain, the Netherlands and others merge their national commemorative cultures completely with a European perspective; and this is no less true for Germany as well. I have already explained the resistance to this idea above.

It is noticeable that for years it has been custom to also invite the Germans to join important commemorative events in other countries. This is not only true for the First World War. Furthermore, one should not forget that future generations will insist on developing their own forms of remembrance. Acquiring such a comprehensive perspective with regard to the commemoration of a jointly experienced history has become a reality not least for military personnel of European armies, because over the last 25 years they have stood side by side in international missions in times of peace, crisis and war. We cannot but understand that Europe has become a region of fate and its peoples a community of fate. This has always been the case, by the way. The common task of peacekeeping requires even today a mutual understanding of the common history without any glorifying myths and hampering positing. Furthermore, it is necessary to openly name the painful experiences of European history, to communicate with each other about them, to continue to remember them, to commemorate the people who lost their lives and to suppress nothing.

Difficult task

This is not easy. It requires complex education efforts, a permanent change of perspective as a methodical approach to start this process with the most possible success. In this context, the German historian Klaus Schönhoven declared with a view to a culture of memory:

As you know, there are positive and negative memories of certain events and periods of history, often there are no common but profoundly different memories because the generations of the participants and those affected had faced each other as
enemies or had been divided from each other as perpetrators and victims. Such boundaries and dividing lines cannot be removed either with a symbolic gesture of reconciliation nor with relativisations and equalisations motivated by politics of history. A common memory can only develop if enmities, conflicts and catastrophes of the past are included. There are always the own memories. And there are always the memories of the others. A discussion of the differences can be the beginning of rapprochement.

Further debate of common history will only be successful if people are prepared to deal with the dark chapters of their own history collectively and without reservation. In doing so, this social process can become the litmus test for the quality and maturity of democratic societies and states. As a result of a process of self-assurance in this context, the national horizon of experience and action can be abandoned in favour of a trans-national interpretation of history.

Looking at Europe today, one has to realise that it indeed seems to be historical patchwork. Therefore, it is difficult to refer to a European commemorative culture. One might justly ask: What could be the basis on which a common memory could be built?

European history is — in the perception of some — a history of long duration and ultimately aims for unity, either voluntarily or by force. Indeed, there are some crown witnesses to confirm this, ranging from Charlemagne via Charles V to Napoleon I and others. If something noble can be derived from European history it is also necessary to mention the cruelties of this history: the wars, the Holocaust, genocides, ethnic cleansing, displacements, state crimes in the course of decolonisation and many other things.

Is it at all possible to have a uniform view of history of Europeans that they could declare as the basis of an identity of whatever kind? Probably not. The differences between the individual histories, experiences and discourse are too great. What could be possible, however, is a conquest of purely national patterns of thought and identification allowing the basically different experience to become part of one's own experience, a mentality facilitating transnational thinking and acting.

**Common history**

Under the influence of European integration, Europe, indeed, does possess a common peaceful and value-based history. The common experience of European states with democratic structures, however, is still young. It starts in 1945 for the western part of Europe, and in 1989 for the eastern part. This joint time could be the foundation for a common awareness in the future. What gives rise to optimism is the fact that the appeal of the European idea seems unabated. With the inclusion of Germany in the middle of the continent, the Europeans will only be able to act if they act jointly.

What could be common topics to define a European culture of remembrance? The great wars of the continent have a lasting importance for the collective memory of the European peoples, but in different ways according to national significance. They have manifested themselves in different ways and established a physical representation in sites of remembrance. It certainly makes sense to visit these places and to discuss the different stories told about these places. Be it Verdun, Kobarid (the former Karfei) or the Atlantic coastline — these are places of European significance. They include in a particular manner Holocaust sites and locations and places of remembrance dedicated to displacement and ethnic cleansing.

In the commemorative culture of Germany, I have increasingly observed efforts on a local level to take up the history of the ‘ordinary guy’ in the world war. Such a perspective allows a shift of view from the great theatres of war and personages to the life, suffering and dying of the ordinary people in the world wars. Such approach to the history of memory is shared abroad. Belgium, in particular, takes a similar approach: there is no village, no small town that does not try to tell and stage a history of the people in their place during the world war. Could this be a starting point for joint commemoration?

**Reference points**

Year dates can mark reference points. The resulting memorial days, or more broadly the days of remembrance, have engrained themselves into the memory of European peoples. With regard to 1 September 1939, Poles and Germans have different feelings. In contrast, 8 May 1945 is perceived as a day of liberation in Europe. It is the starting point for reconciliation, which especially includes the immediate neighbouring peoples of Germany. From the very beginning, Franco-German or German-Polish reconciliation efforts have attempted on the one hand not to let the events be forgotten and on the other hand to make tangible the consequences of the war that continue to have an impact to this day. In the meantime, the Franco-German reconciliation immediately after the war is a concept that in turn has been historicised. What matters now, is to teach future generations this successful process of coming to terms with the past because it is part of our common history.

Germany is thoroughly engaging in studying and remembering the First World War. It is important to point out that the Germans gradually understand the relevance of the First World War to them and how much its results continue to have an impact. In the historical science community, we have proceeded to examine the period from 1914 to 1945 together, calling it the ‘era of world wars’. For a continued peaceful and liberal development in Europe it is absolutely necessary to obtain a transnational historical perspective. This could be the basis for the development of a commemorative culture that converges in many points, which could bring the peoples of Europe closer together.

**NOTES**

2. Quoted in ibid., p.182.
4. On this see the recent interview with Wolfgang Ischinger entitled ‘Europa steht vor tektonischen Verschiebungen im weltpoli
5. Klaus Schönhoven, ‘Europa als Erinnerungsgemeinschaft’, Farewell lecture at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Mannheim, 13 Sep 2007, in Dietrich Dowse (ed), Gesprächs
Australia’s dangerous ally

Malcolm Fraser outlines the dangers and disadvantages of Australia’s alignment with the United States and calls for a new approach to national security that would have important implications for New Zealand if adopted.

It is time for Australia to end its strategic dependence on the United States. The relationship with America, which has long been regarded as beneficial, has now become dangerous to Australia’s future. We have effectively ceded to America the ability to decide when Australia goes to war. Even if America were the most perfect and benign power, this posture would still be incompatible with the integrity of Australia as a sovereign nation. It entails not simply deference but submission to Washington, an intolerable state of affairs for a country whose power and prosperity are increasing and whose national interests dictate that it enjoy amicable, not hostile, relations with its neighbours, including China.

As painful as a reassessment of relations may be for intellectual and policy elites, there are four principal reasons why one is long overdue. First, despite much blather about a supposed unanimity of national purpose, the truth is that the United States and Australia have substantially different values systems. The idea of American exceptionalism is contrary to Australia’s sense of egalitarianism. Second, we have seen the United States act in an arbitrary, imprudent and capricious fashion. It has made a number of ill-advised and ill-informed decisions concerning Eastern Europe, Russia and the Middle East. Third, at the moment, because of US military installations in Australia, if America goes to war in the Pacific, it will take us to war as well — without an independent decision by Australia. Finally, under current circumstances, in any major contest in the Pacific our relationship with America would make us a strategic target for America’s enemies. It is not in Australia’s interest to be in that position.

American fecklessness has produced this state of affairs. As the recent 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall reminds us, the breakup of the Soviet Union created a different world. It was a world bursting with opportunity, as was first described by President George H.W. Bush in a speech to Congress after the 1991 Gulf War. Bush was then talking about a new world, one in which there would be much greater co-operation between nations large and small. It was the kind of speech that many people worldwide wanted to hear from an American president.

However, the purposes and commitment expressed in that speech were to be cut short. The presidents that followed — Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama — may have differed in tone but not in substance. They have all adhered to the illusion of American omnipotence.

It was Morton Abramowitz of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a former US ambassador and one of the prime movers in establishing the International Crisis Group, who wrote in 2012 that ‘American exceptionalism dooms U.S. foreign policy’. Nothing has altered since then. Even President Obama has embraced the idea of exceptionalism, telling the UN General Assembly in 2013, ‘I believe America is exceptional.’ A nation better than any other, innately motivated to do good; what America does is right because America does it.

The idea of American exceptionalism, which has always been present in the United States, has gone far beyond all comprehension in the years of America’s absolute supremacy. It has created a different nation, a different society. Such ideas influence American foreign policy in ways that make it much more difficult to achieve a secure and safe path in the future. Our task is not to embrace America, but to preserve ourselves from its reckless over-reach.

Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser AC, CH was prime minister of Australia from 1975 to 1983. This article was first published in The National Interest on 14 December 2014.
resources, was quite correct in wanting a close association with a major power in these circumstances.

Ending the communist threat was only one consequence of the breakup of the Soviet Union. A greater one, perhaps, was the absolute supremacy of the United States as a military and economic power. Before that time, each super-power acted as a restraint on the other. Neither wanted a nuclear war, and both took care to avoid the kind of provocations that would inevitably lead to war. After 1991, the United States was under no such restraint. Russia was down for the count, so far as global influence was concerned.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was a time for generosity. Recalling the spirit of the Marshall Plan and the post–Second World War enlightenment, it was a moment for magnanimity to prevail; it was not a time to revive the spirit of Versailles and exact vengeance on a fallen foe. Unfortunately, Europe and the United States chose the wrong path. Many ways could have been found at that time to secure the independence of states freed from Soviet domination. NATO and the United States chose what turned out to be the most dangerous and provocative mechanism, and worked to include much of Eastern Europe within the confines of NATO itself. This approach ignored history and past strategic relationships. The results speak for themselves.

**Opposition voices**

There were many who opposed the war. Mikhail Gorbachev had been particularly concerned, and he believed he had a deal with Secretary of State James Baker for NATO not to move east. Today, Russia believes that ‘agreement’ was broken. Russia's acceptance of the reunification of Germany was supposed to be the quid pro quo for NATO not marching eastward. But it did.

The point of all of this for Australia is that the United States — not for the first and surely not for the last time — exhibited a marked lack of historical understanding as well as an inability to exercise effective diplomacy and make choices that would provide for a lasting peace. There should have been more sustained attempts to make sure that Russia would be a collaborative and co-operative partner. As some commentators in the United States have argued, the West bears significant responsibility for more recent developments in Ukraine, based on that one major and tragically mistaken strategic decision to move NATO east. The United States must recognise the impact of its decisions in the difficulties that have ensued.

Throughout the past year we have seen turbulence in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and actions that have soured Western relations with Russia even further. There has been no understanding of the historical circumstances, no attempt to act in ways that might increase trust. This has been a continuation of a Cold War mentality, with dramatic and unfortunate results. President Vladimir Putin and Russia have been roundly condemned for the annexation of Crimea, but if Russia had not done so and if the United States had been successful in getting Ukraine to join NATO, the West would have faced a far larger problem. No Russian president would simply surrender the military facilities in Crimea. If Crimea, as part of Ukraine, became part of NATO, the alliance would have required those facilities to be removed. This is a demand that Russia could never accept. So Russian actions in relation to Crimea, as former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has said, should have been understandable and are not deserving of the intemperate obloquy that they have attracted from Western commentators.

**Different approach**

Instead of trying to induce Ukraine (and, in earlier times, Georgia) to join NATO, the United States should have been asking itself what is necessary if Ukraine is to become one country, cohesively and sensibly governed. Clearly, both the pro-Western and pro-Russian factions in Ukraine would need to learn the art of compromise, to know that neither can have it all. If they wanted their young country to become a cohesive, peaceful land, then the art of compromise would have had to be practiced by both sides. This could have been possible if the West and Russia had both taken the same view.

It is too early to predict how events in Ukraine may ultimately work out. Events in Eastern Europe centring on Ukraine represent a major strategic problem and have heightened present difficulties between the West and Russia, with potentially very serious consequences. The current situation, then, represents a failure of US diplomacy — a failure to understand historical perspectives and to reach decisions that could have led to a more secure outcome.

Something similar can be said about the Middle East. The 1991 Gulf War, designed to secure the freedom of Kuwait, was
a major international success. More than 30 nations fought together for this common purpose. At the time, there were many who claimed that George H.W. Bush should have marched on to Baghdad to get rid of Saddam Hussein. He did not do so, because he had an understanding of wider international events. He knew the importance of history and culture. It would have been easy to get rid of Saddam, but Bush understood that he did not have the capacity to establish a cohesive government or to prevent malignant sectarian hatreds from arising. As a consequence of the 2003 Iraq War, we now know that he was totally correct in that judgment.

Strategic folly
In retrospect, the 1991 Gulf War was the last American success in the Middle East. With turmoil in Libya and Yemen, difficulties in Turkey and Egypt, and continuing problems in Iraq and Syria, the whole region is more at risk than ever. Indeed, America, for all its fumbling attempts to withdraw from Iraq, has committed to a new air war in Iraq and Syria. President Obama must know that any kind of victory over the Islamic State (ISIS) cannot be achieved without effective ground forces. To commit to an air war without ground forces being in place, or in sight, is an act of strategic folly. It again underlines the melancholy fact that we are far too close to the United States.

We know what is said about Iraq. We are told that the new government will overcome the divisions between Sunni and Shia and that training from the United States and Australia will strengthen the Iraqi Army and help it stand up to the Islamic State. But there is no sign yet that the new Iraqi government is able to build a cohesive Iraq. If it cannot, all the airpower in the world will not be successful in the war against the Islamic State. In Syria, where the slaughter continues unabated, where the country is being denuded and where hundreds of thousands of refugees are seeking shelter in neighbouring countries, the situation is even more alarming.

The United States has been too ready to rush in and assume the people fighting a brutal dictator are necessarily going to have higher ideals as well as a better sense of values than the person they are fighting against. In relation to the rebels in Syria who have morphed into the Islamic State, that assumption was certainly wrong. The assumption that the so-called good rebels can be an effective force is also most likely to be proved false. How much moderation is there really among the ‘moderate’ opposition?

Slight chance
So America, Australia, Britain and others have embarked on this new war. We have been told it will take many years, but without troops on the ground, which I agree should not be ours or American, the chances of a peaceful outcome or a defeat of the Islamic State are slight. We have pliantly followed America into a war where the United States has acted without marshalling the necessary forces, the necessary coalition and the necessary assets to achieve a military and strategic victory. The reality is, at this stage, that there is no achievable and defined ‘end point’ — no real characterisation of what success will look like. Radical groups have emerged, designed to end Western influence throughout the region. Does this mean that such groups represent an existential threat to people further afield? So often, as we have learned more, and tragically often in retrospect, we have found that our basic assumptions were wrong. What we do know is that the Middle East is now more dangerously poised than at any time in the post-war years for further conflagration.

In Afghanistan, while most NATO forces are withdrawing, about 10,000 American troops are going to remain. We are likely to see increased attacks by the Taliban, who do not appear to have been particularly weakened by the long years of warfare. The way in which war has been conducted through South Asia — especially the use of drones, which have killed significant numbers of civilians — provides the extremists with a welcome and potent recruiting tool. Nor is this all. Events in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine also represent a grotesque failure of US diplomacy and a reduction in American influence worldwide. This has so often occurred because the United States (and, indeed, the West generally) interprets events through its own eyes without taking historical circumstances into account.

There have also been significant strategic changes much closer to Australia, in the Pacific and throughout East and
South-east Asia. Here, too, we have increasing tension. Western commentators tend to say that the rise of China and its growing military power are at the centre of that tension. Unfortunately, Chinese and Asian perceptions of what is happening often differ from American or Australian interpretations of events.

**Broader context**

The United States has sought to counter China’s military buildup and what it regards as growing Chinese assertiveness in the East and South China Seas. It is worth putting these matters into a broader context. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Chinese military expenditure in 2013 was 11 per cent of the world’s total. America’s was 37 per cent. There are vast differences in the circumstances of the two countries. America has no military problems on its borders, but claims to have worldwide responsibility and a need to exercise force anywhere in the globe. China has traditionally been, and continues to be, more concerned with its own region. It does have a number of unstable situations on its borders, problems between India and Pakistan, and difficulties with Iran and Iraq, to say nothing of an unpredictable North Korea. These factors alone give China a reason for a significant military force, a reason that the United States does not have.

But, as with Ukraine, relationships with China are also a function of history. The ‘unequal treaties’ forced upon China are distant in our memory, but are deeply relevant to the way China deals with issues at the present time. Because of Chinese withdrawal then and in the years after the Second World War, during which much of China was ravaged and brutalised by Japanese imperial forces, China has not participated as much to help solve major international problems as a country of its size and stature might be expected to do. What is more, from China’s perspective, a number of events would be regarded as provocative. First, the United States’ handing of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands back to Japan in 1971 occurred at a time when Sino-American relations hardly existed. There was little thought of the fact that Japan had taken those islands from China in 1895, and it has turned out to have been a provocative decision. It was an event that was ignored at the time, though, as China had no means then of asserting itself.

More recently, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta’s attempt to get Cam Ranh Bay reopened as a US naval base would surely have been seen by the Chinese as provocative. This was something the Vietnamese had the good sense to reject, on the grounds that Cam Ranh Bay was open to the navies of many nations who might wish to use it. It should not become a base for the United States — or any other country, for that matter. China has welcomed US diplomatic engagement, but at the same time wonders what policy America is actually pursuing — one of consultation and discussion and perhaps collaboration, or one of rearmament, encirclement and containment. Which America is going to win out? The one that wishes to talk, or the one that relies on military solutions?

**War possibilities**

Many have written about the possibility of war between China and the United States. If left to the two great powers, war could probably be avoided, but with Japan in the equation it is a different matter. Japan has become more assertive, far more nationalistic, if you like, with a growing militarism. It already possesses very powerful military forces, with a capacity to develop, in short order, effective and long-range nuclear weapons. Japan claims there is no dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. But this is unpersuasive. For one thing, the United States recently affirmed that its defence guarantee for Japan extends to those islands, thus effectively siding with Japan in that particular dispute. That act was a major strategic mistake by the United States, one that will encourage Japan to be increasingly assertive.

If shooting starts between China and Japan, then it is not possible to say with any certainty that calmer heads will prevail and that serious dangers will be averted. Such a dispute could easily lead to a long, drawn-out war, which the United States may well not win. If over many years the United States could not win in Vietnam, despite the resources poured into that particular war, how could it possibly win in a contest with China? If, moreover, Australia were to become involved in such a contest, we would become a defeated ally of a defeated super-power. Such an outcome would place Australia at great risk, leaving it without a friend in our entire region. And unlike America, we cannot retreat to the western hemisphere in this event.

Australia has been far too quiescent and passive. After 1990, Australia could have exhibited a greater degree of strategic independence, but did not. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Australia still had the capacity to make its own decisions about peace and war. We did not have to follow America. We were not committed purely because America was committed. In other words, up to that point, we had maintained the integrity of Australia as a sovereign nation, despite our close relationship with the United States. Up to that time, facilities on the Australian mainland did not, and could not, commit Australia to follow America into a war. These developments have occurred in the years since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

**Increasing enmeshment**

Through a series of missteps since 1990, we have become progressively more enmeshed in American strategic and military affairs. This has been achieved by close collaboration between our armed services, and with the agreement of both major Australian political parties. It is a mistake. Major issues were never put to the
Australian public. It was just assumed that these steps would be good for Australia. There was never a debate.

The idea of inter-operability of our armed services is something that has, of course, been assiduously promoted by the United States. It has influenced many decisions relating to military operations, including the kind of equipment that we procure. It has in part influenced the appointment of the Australian Army’s Major-General Richard Burr as deputy commander of US Army Pacific, in charge of 60,000 American troops, and the part-time deployment of a frigate as part of the USS George Washington’s escort. It is also relevant to our dependence on US satellites for communications.

There are, however, two factors that tie us more closely than any of these events to America’s military machine and strategic objectives. The first is the US military base in Darwin. If US leaders wish to use the air-ground task force from Darwin to attack some target — to use it in support of their defense commitment to Japan, for example — they will not ask an Australian prime minister first. They will do it, and Australia will be told about it later. There is nothing new or unique in that. It is the way a great power behaves. But the consequence of that is that we can hardly say we are not complicit in the actions of that task force when it has taken off from Australian soil.

More important still are the changed purposes and operations of Pine Gap. This used to be a largely defensive facility. It was, more than anything else, an information-gathering operation of significant importance. Changes in communications and weapons technology, and their application to a great variety of US weapons systems, from drones to longer-range missiles, have altered the character of Pine Gap. Information from Pine Gap is also used for missile defence (which China regards as vitally threatening its nuclear deterrent) and for targeting a range of modern offensive missiles. This would give Pine Gap a new and urgent relevance if a conflict between China and Japan involving the United States developed into a serious crisis. It is Pine Gap, above all, that makes it impossible for Australia to say that it is not involved.

**No option**

Thus, step by step, discreetly, even secretly, successive Australians have allowed a situation to develop in which America goes to war in the western Pacific, we will have no option but to go to war as a direct consequence. If Australia sought to stand aside, it would not be believed. We have never before been in such a situation. This situation is not compatible with Australian integrity or with Australian sovereignty. Australians do not realise that America’s capacity to declare war and include us is far greater than the power Britain had over the Dominions.

No foreign power should have that control over Australia, and certainly not a United States whose values are different and whose strategic decisions have been shown to be ill balanced and dangerous. Australians are unaware that the wars in which we have followed America were outside the terms of the ANZUS Treaty. Our commitment to the United States ties us to its values system and denies us the opportunity to decide our own fate.

**Rectifying steps**

There are several steps that Australia should take to rectify its previous shortcomings. For a start, the task force in Darwin would need to be moved to some other location outside Australia. This should be possible to accomplish in a relatively short time frame. The facility at Pine Gap would need to be closed, as we cannot control how America uses the intelligence it gathers from that site. Because it is a complex facility, we should give America time to do this — perhaps four or five years. However, Australians working at the base should be withdrawn at the end of six months. This would clearly result in implications for our shared intelligence arrangements, especially with Britain and America. When New Zealand left the ANZUS Treaty, it was not cut out of the ‘Five Eyes’ intelligence operation. There is no gainsaying that Australia may well find access to American military equipment diminished. But this is not necessarily a bad thing. We have sometimes bought American equipment because it aided strategic co-operation even when it was not the best equipment. There are a number of countries that are providers of quality military hardware.

Another step that Australia should take is to ensure that its diplomatic facilities throughout East and South-east Asia are reinforced to prepare for more active diplomacy in our own part of the world. Australia needs to reinforce its support for UN agencies and work more effectively both bilaterally and through the United Nations, with other middle-ranking and like-minded powers. Such approaches would add to stability throughout our region and over time greatly increase our capacity to help mediate difficulties between states.

Of course, all of this would involve greater cost, possibly requiring a boost in Australian defence spending to about 3 per cent of GDP. Until now, we have had defence on the cheap, hiding behind the American war machine, at too great a cost to Australian nationality and respect. At the end of the day, we need to ask ourselves what Australia’s independence — Australia’s integrity — is worth to Australians. Australia must regain the ability to deny any other power the capacity to decide whether we stay at peace or go to war. Only by embarking upon a new course can Australia recapture its squandered sovereignty.
Aaron Zelin discusses the problem New Zealand faces in dealing with Muslim radicalisation and the danger of participation by its citizens in foreign conflicts.

Unlike many other Western countries and its neighbour Australia, New Zealand historically has not had an issue with members of its Muslim population joining up with Sunni global jihadi groups abroad or sympathising with them at home. It is true that comparatively there still are not that many of these types of individuals in New Zealand, but with the unprecedented number of foreign fighters going to Syria and the rise of the Islamic State, there has been some New Zealand travel to Syria and support in its homeland. This should not lead to an alarmist interpretation, but rather provides an opportunity to illustrate what types of trends are occurring to better situate what is happening within the broader global jihadi milieu and how Kiwi jihadis fit into it. To get at this, this article will first provide background on the Syrian war and the Islamic State, then briefly discuss the historically extremely low rate of New Zealanders joining up with global jihadi organisations; afterwards it will highlight cases of individuals going to Syria as well as the rise in homegrown sympathisers, and lastly discuss how the New Zealand government has responded to this issue.

When the uprising in Syria first broke out in March 2011, like in other countries that saw outbreaks of peaceful protests in the region, jihadists, most specifically al-Qaeda, were flat-footed in their response. Al-Qaeda in Pakistan did not even put out a country-specific statement or video on Syria until February 2012. Although Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) was not officially announced until late January 2012, evidence suggests that it was originally established in the northern summer of 2011. Abu Lokman, a senior JN commander in Aleppo, explained to the BBC in January 2013 that he originally joined the group in its infancy six months prior to its first public video release. This would place JN’s founding at the end of July 2011 — a timeframe corroborated in interviews with other JN fighters who have spoken with Western and Arab media outlets.

Abu Lokman’s date also coincides with Zawahiri’s first video released on 27 July 2011. In it, he supported the ‘Muslims in Bilad al-Sham, the land of ribat, jihad, glory, Arabism, and nobility’. In the context of his latest announcement on Syria, this suggests that al-Qaeda Central had knowledge of — and perhaps even ordered — JN’s establishment. In late summer 2011, al-Qaeda’s affiliate at the time the Islamic

State of Iraq leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dispatched operatives to Syria to set up JN. Among them was Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, the leader of what would become JN, which officially announced itself in late January 2012. By November 2012, Jawlani had built JN into one of the opposition’s best fighting forces, and locals viewed its members as fair arbiters when dealing with corruption and social services.

Due to these successes, Baghdadi changed the name of his group from ISI to ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) in April 2013. He likely believed that it was acceptable to publicly announce what was already known: that JN and ISI were one and the same. Yet this did not sit well with Jawlani — he rebuffed the change and reaffirmed his allegiance to AQCC chief Zawahiri, who later tried (and failed) to nullify Baghdadi’s power play. Amid the confusion, many Syrian jihadis left JN for ISIS, while Baghdadi himself moved from Iraq and established a base in Syria, according to the State Department. ISIS also began to attract a growing number of foreign fighters.

Deadly rift

Therefore, contrary to the media narrative that JN merged with ISIS, the two groups actually separated. Things would only get worse over time. On the evening of 2 February 2014, al-Qaeda’s general command released a statement disavowing itself from ISIS: ‘ISIS is not a branch of the Qaidat al-Jihad [al-Qaeda’s official name] group, we have no organizational relationship with it,

Unlike other Western nations New Zealand, historically, has not had an issue with its Muslim citizens going abroad and joining up in foreign conflicts with Sunni global jihadi groups or with homegrown activism. While the rate of participation remains comparatively low, as a result of the unprecedented flow of foreign fighters to and growth in the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq there are signs that some within New Zealand have been drawn to the fighting or are sympathetic with what is going on. The civil war in Syria has been instrumental in encouraging such involvement.
and the group is not responsible for its actions.’ The rift between al-Qaeda/JN and ISIS at first consisted mainly of sniping between leaders, but turned deadly after that with internecine fighting occurring over the following few months until each group carved out a particular piece of territory.

Then in June 2014, after taking over Mosul and other areas in western Iraq, ISIS announced that it had re-established the Caliphate and was now just calling itself The Islamic State. The takeover of Mosul also supplied the Islamic State with new weapons when it overran Iraqi security forces, which allowed it to then pour these new resources into the Syrian conflict, helping it take more territory in Syria and consolidate its strength in eastern Syria. As a result of all of this, as well as the public beheadings of American and British journalists and humanitarian workers, since the fall of 2014 there has been an active air campaign by the United States, other Western countries and US Arab allies and others against the Islamic State, a campaign which as of January 2015 has had mixed results.

Unprecedented influx

As a result of this growth in jihadi organisations inside of Syria there has been an unprecedented influx of foreign fighters over the past three years. There are eight main factors that have contributed to why the Syrian conflict in particular has been able to sway such a large number of individuals to join the fight:

- Ease of travel: Unlike past foreign fighter mobilisations, it is relatively easy to get to Syria. Most individuals fly or drive from their locations to Turkey and then to Syria. Compared with Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia or Mali, going to Turkey also does not necessarily raise any red flags since it is a huge tourist destination. Flights to Turkey — at least from Europe — are incredibly cheap and most countries have visa waiver deals with the Turkish government. This makes it easier, especially for those who might not be willing to risk going to more isolated locations.
- Existence of seasoned grassroots support networks: In comparison with the Afghan jihad of the 1980s, today’s foreign fighter networks are not starting from scratch. Rather, they are building off past efforts and taping into local grassroots movements and organisations already established. For example, in Western Europe there is al-Muhajirun in Britain, Sharia4Belgium in Belgium, Forsane Alizza in France and Milla-tu Ibrahim in Germany to name a few. Also in North Africa, there is the Ansar al-Sharia network in Libya and Tunisia.
- Social media facilitation: In many respects, Syria is the first large-scale socially mediated war. Unlike in the past when individuals had to go out and seek the password-protected jihadi forums to get information about the groups and ideolo-gues and discuss things among peers of online jihadi activ-ists, it is a lot easier to access Twitter and Facebook. One does not necessarily need to seek out these sites since they are relatively open systems online and, in the case of Twitter, groups can target certain audiences through hashtags, poten-tially exposing those who might not have been exposed previous-ly to the ideas and plans of the global jihadi movement. Unintentionally, both Twitter and Facebook provide recommenda-tions for other liked-minded individuals to ‘follow’ or ‘friend’, making such groups relatively easy to find through their algorithms.
- Emotional resonance of the ‘cause’: A major motivating factor for many foreign fighters is the reaction to the over-the-top brutality and massacres the Assad regime has repeatedly per petrated against the majority Sunni Muslim Syrian popula-tion. It also does not help that the Assad regime is Alawite and is viewed as a heretical sect within Islam. The movement is being assisted by the Shi’a Iranian government and non-state actors Lebanese Hezbollah and a number of Iraqi Shi’a mili-tiamen. Additionally, widely disseminated images of brutality evoke visceral emotions to provide help, especially when added to the fact that overt response to the tragedy — whether by Western governments or Arab regimes — is limited. Many feel it is a duty upon themselves in solidarity with their fellow Sunni Muslim brothers and sisters in Syria to help out and fight the Assad regime.
- Five-star jihad appeal: To many, the Syrian jihad is viewed as a ‘cool’ and easy place to go and participate when compared with the mountains or deserts of Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia or Mali. In Syria, for example, many foreigners have lived in villas with pools and ones that have a video game room.
- Religious–historical and millenarian pull: The fact that the seat of the Caliphate was once based in Damascus provides a strong motivation for those who hope once again that the Caliphate will be resurrected. Additionally, Islamic eschatology on the end of times prophecies loom large since the key bat-tles are located in the Levant, with some of the foreign fighters believing they are bringing about the day of judgment. It should also be noted that Jabhat al-Nusra’s media outlet is named al-Manara al-Bayda (the White Minaret). This is in reference to the minaret at the Grand Mosque in Damascus that Jesus is allegedly supposed to descend from to then take on the dajjal (the false messiah) to hasten God’s judgment.
- Anti-Shi’a sentiment: Such sentiment has become more pre valent as the conflict has evolved due to two key dynamics: first, the assistance by the Shi’a foreign contingent of Iran’s IRGC, Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi militiamen to the As sad regime. The second factor is the radicalisation of many fighting forces within the rebel ranks into Salafism, which is anti-Shi’a from the basics of its doctrine.
- Caliphate project: Since the Islamic State announced itself as a Caliphate in June 2014, it has been able to recruit a wider diversity of individuals. Part of this is because it is now inter ested in a state-building project, which needs more than just fighters. As a result, in its messaging it has called for admin-strators, doctors, engineers, computer scientists and graphic designers, among others, to help build up its proto-state. As a result, this has widened the potential pool of recruits since those that might have been apprehensive about being fighters and were fine with being online grassroots activists and cheerleaders now felt that they had a role. Moreover, because this was about creating a state and putting down roots it also encouraged families and individuals that had girlfriends or wives to join up and as a result altered what it necessarily meant to be a foreign fighter, since not all of these individuals were fighting at all, but rather taking part in the daily main tenance and life of society within the Islamic State’s territory.

Small issue

Before getting into the history and current involvement of New Zealand Muslims in Sunni global jihadism, it is worth highlight ing how small the issue is relative to other Western countries.
Currently, there are only about 40,000 Muslims living in New Zealand with about 25,000 of them in Auckland. Historically, New Zealand’s Muslim community has its roots in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Fiji, but more recently has included immigrants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Somalia, Afghanistan and the Balkans. Just to place the Muslim population’s size in context in comparison with other Western nations that have had large foreign fighter mobilisations as well as blowback that has resulted in a terrorist attack against that particular country’s homeland, there are 4.7 million Muslims in France, 4.1 million in Germany, 2.8 million in Britain, 1 million in Spain, 940,000 in Canada, 640,000 in Belgium and 400,000 in Australia. As a result, the small relative size in New Zealand highlights the relative lack of comparative threat, but while the numbers are lower cases like Muhammad Merah in Toulouse highlight the fact that it does not take many to cause havoc. Therefore, the issue should still be taken seriously even if there are probably only a small number of sympathisers within New Zealand.

Prior to the Syrian conflict, there had only been evidence that two New Zealanders had ever tried to link up with jihadists abroad. One of them, Mark John Taylor, also known as Mark John al-Rahman and Abu Abdul-Rahman, was arrested in Pakistan at an al-Qaeda stronghold in 2009. Later, Taylor went to Yemen and tried joining up with a fellow New Zealander and an Australian who had been members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). There is not a lot of publicly available information on what Taylor did while he was in Yemen, but the two individuals he sought to meet were later killed in American drone strikes in 2013 against AQAP. These individuals were Daryl Jones, a dual Australian–New Zealand national who went by Muslim Bin John, and his friend the Australian Christopher Havard. The two of them met while they were attending a Christchurch mosque. Havard’s parents believe that is where their son was radicalised, though the imam there disputes that, suggesting it was more of a peer-to-peer and online radicalisation. But, as will be seen below, there is a radical milieu that is currently based in Christchurch.

In terms of the current conflict in Syria, based on publicly available data 6–9 New Zealanders have tried to go or made it to Syria. According to the academic Timothy Holman, extrapolations based on relative population sizes suggest that there could be up to 57 individuals from New Zealand involved.3 Of those who are known, Mark John Taylor is currently in Syria, adding his third country of travel to his resume of jihadism. He is the only one that can be confirmed as currently still overseas. It is believed that Taylor arrived in Syria in June 2014, even though he was on a restricted travel list issued by the New Zealand government. Following his arrival he posted on his Facebook page his burnt New Zealand passport, stating that he was ‘on a one-way trip’ and did not plan to return home.4 Because of an error on his own part — tweeting under the handle @M_Taylor_Kiwi with his locations services on — Taylor’s location from October–December 2014 was known to be Mar’at Nu’man in Idlib governorate and later al-Tabqah in al-Raqqa governorate. After this was leaked online, a clearly annoyed Taylor tweeted defiantly: ‘Come and get me! I’m in the heart of ISIS Territory! What can you do to me NOTHING!’ Moreover, on 7 December 2014, echoing the calls of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Taylor called on New Zealanders ‘to come Home to a new Islamic state. We need Doctors, Dentists, Electronic Engineers, Telecommunications, civil etc.’ He has since taken his Twitter account down.

**Other individuals**

In terms of the other individuals, Amin Mohamed was arrested in Australia while trying to get to Syria. He was believed to be in contact with two other New Zealanders that he had been recruiting to go to Syria as well, though their identities are unknown to the public.5 Additionally, there is Weiming Chen, a Chinese naturalised New Zealand citizen, who fought in Syria, but is believed to be in the United States as of June 2014 after leaving Syria.6 There have also been three individuals that have had their passports confiscated before they were able to make it to the war zone.7 Lastly, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key hinted that there might be a New Zealander who died while fighting in Syria, but this has not been confirmed, nor have there been further details released publicly.8 Beyond that, the New Zealand state currently has 30–40 individuals on its watchlist, while 40 more need investigation, according to Key.9

In addition to individuals that have gone or have tried to go abroad to Syria, there is the issue of homegrown support networks within New Zealand itself. This is relevant because we have seen the growth in localised milieus in many other Western countries that have become incubators for recruitment to foreign conflicts abroad, funding terrorist organisations and individuals that become inspired to plot an attack against the country they are living in. Therefore, although such entities might not be actively violent, the trend is worth watching. The prime example of this has been the al-Muhajirun network in England and its branches in France (Forsane Alizza), Germany (Millatu Ibrahimm), Belgium (Sharia4Belgium), the Netherlands (Sharia4Holland) and Denmark (Kalidet til Islam), among others. Many of these networks have lain behind some of the most notorious individuals who have gone to Syria or been involved in plotting attacks back home.

One of these milieus is based around the Muslim preacher Abu Abdulla (Mohamed Abu Hamam), 50, who preaches at the Blockhouse Bay Road Mosque in Auckland. He was originally a surgeon from an Egyptian background, who moved to New Zealand in 1998 and currently lives off...
state benefits and refuses to be employed. It is alleged that he previously spent time and fought in Afghanistan. Additionally, he was named in a US Embassy warning in 2005. Due to his radical views, the New Zealand Muslim Association (NZMA) banned him from mosques in Avondale, Ponsonby, Ranui and Birkenhead. His supporters have intimidated and beaten up other Muslim imans and individuals, including Haider Lone, a senior member of NZMA, who was in the hospital for ten days. Further, his son Abdullah Hamam is charged with threatening to kill members of the NZMA. Another follower, Imran Patel, has also been charged with threatening to kill and had his passport cancelled. Patel once stated: "We are peaceful, but we will attack when we are attacked. The whole world now will be engulfed in flames sooner or later because you cannot attack people... for too long and they are going to do nothing about it."13

This type of rhetoric has been seen from preachers like Anjem Choudary, the head of al-Muhajirun in England. Similar to Choudary, Abdulla has also discouraged followers from raising the New Zealand flag, declaring it as haram (sinful) because it has the St George Cross on it: ‘Do not be infidels by carrying or waving New Zealand flags to support the All Blacks.’ Moreover, two of the three individuals mentioned above who had their passports cancelled had been followers of Abdulla.14

Hastings focus

Another area that could see future activism is Hastings. Te Amorangi Kireka-Whaanga, 40, converted to Islam from his Mormon faith at the age of 22. He is now the head of the Aotearoa Maori Muslim Association, which has 150 members. In November 2014, he pledged support to the Islamic State and said that he wanted to travel with his family to Syria, where one of his ‘brothers’ (likely not a blood relative, but a brother in religion) already lived. As in Auckland there has been local pushback. There are 2000 Muslims in the Hawke’s Bay region. His ex-wife Jameela Hawkin explained that ‘there are a lot of really upset members of the Hawke’s Bay Muslim community’. Further, Kireka-Whaanga has been pushing his ideas on his Facebook page, which has more than 900 ‘friends’.15 Unlike Abdulla above, there has not been any signs of aggression or violence, or of individuals attempting to go abroad amongst his followers, but the fact that he has given support to the Islamic State raises a lot of questions about what could happen in the future, especially since in September 2014 the Islamic State’s official spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani called for lone wolf attacks in Western homelands.

The last potential hotspot is in Christchurch. This is also where Daryl Jones and the Australian Christopher Havard met and were radicalised last decade. According to Aaron Tahuhu (Yusif Haroon Mik’eal), 33, who converted to Islam two years ago, there are allegedly a dozen Islamic State supporters in Christchurch, including himself. Tahuhu is also a member of Aotearoa Maori Muslim Association, illustrating Kireka-Whaanga’s reach beyond Hawke’s Bay. A quote from Tahuhu highlights some of the challenges involved in dealing with some of these individuals:

'I can’t stay in a country that’s going to be fighting my religion [in reference to New Zealand joining the American coalition against the Islamic State]. If my country is going to make me an enemy of my country then I have no choice but to go and move to the Islamic State where I will be welcomed as a citizen… and not be persecuted for my religion or my beliefs."16

As we have seen in the past from other Western Muslims, such sentiments can lead to violence back at home. That is not to say that Tahuhu or others will necessarily turn to violence, but understanding these potential signs is crucial for understanding the environment that currently permeates the most radical milieux within the New Zealand Muslim population.

State response

As a result of all of this, the New Zealand state has attempted to combat any potential threats to its homeland. Since at least late 2013, the state has been aware of individuals being involved in foreign fighting and activism at home.17 For the first time, though, in early November 2014, Prime Minister Key laid out a plan for how the state was going to pursue the issue. In a speech to the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, he proposed five major prongs:

- reforming its terrorism laws, specifically closing current travel loopholes as well as confiscating passports;
- stepping up intelligence sharing/operations within Five Eyes;
- using New Zealand’s role in United Nations Security Council over next two years to diplomatically pursue resolutions to issues like the Iran nuclear negotiations or the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which could alleviate tensions elsewhere;
- partnering with regional actors: Indonesia, Malaysia and others; and
- further humanitarian help as well as capacity-building of the new Iraqi government (policing, courts, and parliamentary process).18

With anything related to issues of terrorism it is very difficult to predict if or when something might happen. Since the threat remains low in New Zealand, individuals should not take maximalist positions on these issues. That said, there are more identifiable individuals involved with foreign fighter and homegrown activism than there has been in the past. The chance of something happening in New Zealand is likely small, but the fact that there are now individuals within these milieus highlights that those in power should take the problem seriously and at least be prepared for the worst. The question now is, will the number of individuals that are sympathetic to the Islamic State or global jihadism in general remain small? Or will the base grow? If it does, this issue will probably become more serious in the years ahead. For the time being, it is sufficient to identify current cases and trends, thereby allowing people a better understanding of possible outcomes.
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New Zealand prime ministers – at the White House

Ken Ross outlines the course of top-level contact between Washington and Wellington in the last 75 years.

‘Chet Cooper, head of the US delegation, who had been in the Johnson White House, said, revealingly, that Australia and New Zealand had had priority tickets to the high table in Washington because of their Vietnam support. “And what did you come and tell us? That we were doing the right thing, when what we needed was new ideas.”’ (W. David McIntyre, 2009)


Ironically Eisenhower’s ‘adequate — but no more’ describes what, since the end of the Second World War, has been the enduring theme of the Washington–Wellington connection. Cooper’s rueful observation hits New Zealand’s ‘best and brightest’ hard — too often when prime ministers have gone to the White House they had nothing new to put forward. Norman Kirk stands alone in offering ‘new ideas’ when visiting the Oval Office.

The diplomatic chemistry that each New Zealand prime minister has had with the United States president has most driven the bilateral relationship. Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush marked Wellington’s card downwards. George H W. Bush’s goodwill expeditiously lightened Reagan’s previous heavy-handedness. The present tepid atmosphere between Barack Obama and John Key has seen missed opportunities for Wellington.

Kirk’s capable global diplomacy impressed Richard Nixon (and Henry Kissinger). Kirk and Keith Holyoake are the only New Zealand prime ministers since 1945 to have been guests of honour at a presidential black-tie dinner at the White House. Kirk’s encounter comes closest to the diplomatic Everest moment that New Zealand prime ministers climb for. Holyoake’s two dinner dates were more convivial occasions, yet lacking the rapport in global diplomacy matters which Kirk and Nixon shared.

Kirk’s and the other couple of best prime ministerial ascents to the White House since 1945 occurred irrespective of whether Wellington was in or out of good standing as a loyal ally — the status that the Second World War generation of New Zealanders so wanted to go on forever. Holyoake’s considerable rapport with Lyndon Baynes Johnson (LBJ) percolated through their relationship despite Holyoake’s clear unwillingness to go ‘all the

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New Zealand prime ministers have visited the White House 25 times. The first occasion was when Peter Fraser was there on 26 August 1941. Keith Holyoake went six times, meeting three presidents — Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Norman Kirk’s September 1973 meeting with Nixon is the Everest moment of the encounters — the only time a prime minister has contributed his ‘new ideas’. Otherwise, our prime ministers have seen their being there in itself as the reason for the visit, and, hopefully, a high point of their prime ministership.
way with LBJ’ — theirs seems to be the deepest friendship of all the pairings of prime ministers and presidents after 1945. In the final weeks of his presidency Johnson gave Holyoake a state dinner on the prime minister’s third visit to the White House. (Holyoake had hosted Johnson two years earlier.) Jim Bolger’s walking and talking with George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton were not diminished by his firm backing of New Zealand’s non-nuclear standing.

The pinnacle of the bilateral connection is actually outside the time frame of my forthcoming book. But Peter Fraser’s friendship with Franklin Roosevelt during the Second World War is well covered in Gerald Hensley’s Beyond the Battlefield (2009) and Fred Wood’s The New Zealand People at War (1958). They establish that those war years were the setting for the closest relationship which a New Zealand prime minister has had with an American president. Fraser had three bilateral encounters with Roosevelt (distinct from when they met at multilateral meetings). The first was a lunch-time meeting at the White House on 26 August 1941. Fraser returned a year later, spending from 26 August to 4 September in Washington: the first night the Frasers stayed at the White House. The husbands had a stag night, with all of Roosevelt’s Cabinet joining them. For the remainder of the visit the Frasers stayed at Blair House, across the road from the White House. Then the Roosevelts had the Frasers stay overnight at their New York home, Hyde Park on the Hudson, on 3 July 1944. Subsequently, no New Zealand prime minister has ever made it to a president’s home, or to the presidential ‘get away’, Camp David.

Since 1945

Roosevelt’s successor, Harry Truman, did not sustain that level of friendship. Fraser had two 30-minute White House appointments with him, in December 1945 and on 14 January 1949. Half-hour conversations have been the most usual allocation a New Zealand prime minister has secured since then — occasionally accompanied by lunch and/or a walk in the Rose Garden.

Sid Holland was at the White House three times, meeting Truman on 8 February 1951 and during Eisenhower’s presidency on 18 May 1953 and on one of the days 20 to 25 January 1955. Walter Nash was twice there, meeting Eisenhower on 28 October 1959 and 1 June 1960.

Keith Holyoake met Kennedy on 3 March 1961 and was to have hosted the president early in 1964 — the visit had been advanced in scheduling just days before the president’s assassination. Holyoake was at Johnson’s White House on 20 July 1964, 28 June 1965 and 10 October 1968. Holyoake became the first prime minister to host a United States’ president when Johnson made a 26-hour stop-over in New Zealand on 19–20 October 1966. Holyoake completed his White House calls by meeting Richard Nixon on 16 September 1969, including another official dinner, and again on 10 April 1971. Nixon, who was not known as a great entertainer when president, had a soft spot for New Zealand, reportedly sparked by his wartime encounters with New Zealanders in the Solomon Islands and because Wellington was the first capital he visited as Eisenhower’s vice president, a point he highlighted when toasting Kirk two years later.

Kirk’s meeting Nixon at the White House on 27 September 1973 involved official discussions, when the prime minister proffered the ‘new ideas’ that had been so evident six weeks earlier at the Commonwealth leaders’ meeting in Ottawa. That evening there was a black-tie dinner in Kirk’s honour. (Kissinger, secretary of state for just five days and still the national security advisor, was present at both occasions.) Bruce Kohn, the New Zealand Press Association’s Washington-based correspondent, reported it is apparent that Mr Kirk is held in high regard by the Administration. Officials here see him as pragmatic statesman who, while holding views not always in tandem with those of Washington, is prepared to debate his thinking in official discussions without introducing unduly emotional overtones.

Gauche attempt

Several months earlier, in June, there had been a gauche attempt by the White House to prompt Kirk to visit Washington at the beginning of August when going to Ottawa. The Nixon admin-
istration was seemingly seeking to mitigate the dynamics around Gough Whitlam’s declared intent to meet Nixon at that time. Whitlam did get his meeting but his time in Washington was deemed a ‘private visit’, which ensured that it was without the ceremonial and official functions Kirk received.

Bill Rowling was at the White House on 7 May 1975, but it appears with the most minimal of publicity back home. He was one of three Commonwealth leaders who had separate private meetings that day with President Ford: Whitlam and Harold Wilson were the other two. Each detoured through Washington after being in Jamaica for the Commonwealth leaders’ meeting.

Muldoon has the most chequered record. A difficult relationship with Jimmy Carter preceded two encounters with Ronald Reagan that became personal highlights of Muldoon’s prime ministership. Ahead of an already announced White House visit for September 1977, Muldoon described the president as ‘a peanut farmer’. The response was quick. Muldoon was told to his face by Cyrus Vance, Carter’s secretary of state, in a Paris hotel room that his call at the White House was cancelled. Frank Corner’s strenuous endeavours secured a re-scheduled visit for November. Carter made Muldoon work hard for his entrée — Muldoon spent three weeks in the United States (7–30 November), visiting eight states, including a peanut farm in Georgia, Carter’s home state. Muldoon is coy in his own writings of the turbulence ahead of the encounter but Barry Gustafson has a comprehensive account of Muldoon’s coming to grief. On 9 November, Muldoon was at the White House for two and half hours, including an official lunch that he subsequently described as ‘awful’. Later in Carter’s presidency Muldoon was twice more in Washington, but there was no further invitation to the White House.

Better lunches
Reagan was a different matter and the lunches were better. The first visit, on 24 July 1981, was during the Springbok tour mayhem in New Zealand. The second call was on 24 February 1984 and while the prime minister and the president were in the Oval Office Thea Muldoon had a separate meeting with Nancy Reagan.

David Lange did get to the White House. While leader of the opposition he had a 30-minute meeting with George H.W. Bush, the vice president, on 19 January 1984. Bush had long had good regard where New Zealand was concerned. His visit in May 1982 is the most recent by a US vice president — he was the sixth vice president to have called in. And, in early 1984 Bush had made a vital intervention to ensure New Zealand’s butter access to the United States was not reduced. During the ANZUS dust-up he stands out for his quiet role: in友好火 (2013), Hensley does not list the vice president as one of the Americans who were key characters in the drama.

Once president, Bush took a markedly different approach to Reagan. He was ably assisted by two of his top national security advisors, Brent Scowcroft (who had met Kirk and Rowling when they were at the White House) and Bob Gates. Scowcroft and Gates stand out as two of the three shrewdest highest-level presidential minders handling the New Zealand account since 1984. Leon Panetta, Clinton’s chief of staff in 1995 and Obama’s second defense secretary, is the third.

Soon after he became president, Bush had a familial encounter involving Lange as the latter set the die on his prime ministership. George Herbert Walker Jr, the president’s uncle, had endowed one of America’s most prestigious annual lectures on international security. Lange’s April 1989 Yale speech was that year’s lecture. Ahead of Lange, Harold Macmillan, Abba Eban and Willy Brandt had given the lecture; recent lecturers have been Ban Ki-moon, John Major and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Unprecedented call
Jim Bolger’s initiative in December 1990, just days after he became prime minister, to phone Bush to discuss a contribution to the 1991 Gulf War was unprecedented — apparently no New Zealand prime minister before or since has dialled the White House. Bush was forthcoming in September 1991 when he and Bolger met in a New York hotel room while attending that year’s United Nations General Assembly.

It was another two years before Bolger, always alert to making the most of an opening, got one when the new president, Bill Clinton, put his shoulder to the APEC initiative, hosting the leaders’ first gathering in November 1993. Bolger got to the White House, including for lunch, on 27 March 1995.

Jenny Shipley’s high presidential moment was hosting Clinton at the 1999 APEC summit in Auckland and for his two-day stay afterwards, which included Clinton golfing with her husband.

As prime minister, Helen Clark’s first contact with Clinton was his congratulatory phone call, during which he pushed firmly that New Zealand stay with the F-16 deal (she did not). Clark’s three encounters with Clinton when he was president were away from Washington — at Progressive Governance gatherings in June 2000 and September 2000 and at the 2000 APEC. She twice met George W. Bush at the White House — on 20 March 2002 and 21 March 2007.

John Key’s first foreign foray as prime minister was to Peru for the 2008 APEC, which was George W. Bush’s final
international appearance as president. For Key a first phone call, in May 2009, from Barack Obama was the only one for four and half years. Between phone calls Key encountered Obama at the 2009 APEC leaders’ gathering in Singapore and at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010. But it was not until 22 July 2011 that he got his much pursued first visit to the White House. The delay was due to Key having run a diplomatic ‘red light’ with his public utterance, shortly after their first encounter in Singapore, that he was soon to be at the White House.8 Key’s visit was on the graveyard shift — no other head of government visited the White House that month until a hastily convened crisis meeting between four West African leaders was had in the final days. That Key encounter appeared not to impress the White House. A lack of on-going contact between the pair was evident for several years. The coolness ended when Key stood in for Obama to chair a tricky meeting associated with the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations at the 2013 APEC meeting. Key’s reward was his second phone call from Obama. A game of golf in Hawaii in January 2014, when both were holidaying there, appears to be a moment when prime minister and president were not acting in their official capacities. Key’s second White House visit occurred on 20 June 2014.

**Pinnacle meeting**

Kirk’s September 1973 meeting with Nixon is the pinnacle of the encounters — the only time a prime minister has discussed his ‘new ideas’ with a president. The key to judging Kirk’s contribution is an observation that Keith Jackson made in 1970. Until then, Jackson argued, New Zealand foreign policy generally was to ‘acquire in the policies of its major partners even where it has important reservations about such policies’.9 Kirk broke that pattern. But subsequently there has not been a pairing where both leaders were interested in discussing ‘new ideas’.

Holyoake is the prime minister who intrigues most — he has the most calls at the White House and develops the closest friendship with a president that any of our prime ministers have had. Yet on the leading topic of interest of the day he was extraordinarily reluctant to stand alongside his good friend LBJ. Holyoake’s handling of the Vietnam commitment must have perplexed many. His own Cabinet was solidly pro-military commitment. Within his government he seems to have been the solitary nay-sayer. As a result New Zealand is well described as being ‘the most dovish of the hawks’ among the troop-contributing states. Nicholas Sarantakes’s recent research of the dynamics of the Johnson–Holyoake relationship is perceptively titled ‘Dead Beef and Live Soldiers’10 and suggests even more forcibly than Roberto Rabel and David McCraw had before him just how determined Holyoake was to limit the New Zealand military contribution.11

Holyoake’s tactical sense was evident in his getting Ormond Wilson, a prominent Vietnam protestor, to host the Johnsons on his farm, which was nearby the Ohakea air base, from where Air Force One was departing. The media was agog — it was front page news, with headlines such as ‘Farm Host of President is Anti-Vietnam’. In his 1982 memoir, Wilson has a laconic account of hosting the Johnsons.12

Most recently, in April 2010, we had a serious moment when we had it seems no ‘new ideas’ to offer at the first Nuclear Security Summit, even failing to capitalise on Kevin Rudd’s late absence. We had been invited in the hope that the Kirk Brand was still at work. This was an occasion where Washington was hungry for ‘new ideas’. Some of the Clinton national security ‘kids’, who had with Leon Panetta got President Clinton to quietly protest the 1995 French nuclear testing,13 were now in the top relevant roles in the Obama White House. It was they who ensured that New Zealand, a non-nuclear state, was at the summit — all of the other 46 governments present had nuclear industries or weaponry.

**NOTES**


3. ‘President John F. Kennedy planned to visit Australia prior to his death in 1963’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 Nov 2013. The article was based on newly released Australian diplomatic reporting from 1963 — initially Kennedy’s visit was contemplated for October 1963 but had been re-scheduled for early 1964. Kennedy informed the Australians he would visit New Zealand on the same trip.


13. On 18 October 1995 the White House announced that President Chirac’s imminent state visit was rescheduled to February 1996. Before Chirac arrived he had announced the early conclusion of the testing.
When diplomatic breakups occur
Paul Bellamy traces the troubled course of Australian–North Korean relations since 1974, and its impact on New Zealand.

Canberra established relations with Pyongyang against the background of Australia’s previous involvement in the Korean War. After increasing tension, North Korea had invaded the Republic of Korea (South Korea or the ROK) on 25 June 1950. The United States asked the United Nations to intervene against Pyongyang and Australia became the second nation, behind the United States, to commit personnel from all three armed services to help Seoul. Fighting lasted until armistice negotiations concluded in July 1953 at Panmunjom, and the military demarcation line of separation divided the Korean peninsula. Australian forces remained in Korea as part of the multinational peacekeeping force until 1957. More than 18,000 Australians served in the Korean War, of whom 340 were killed. Australia subsequently established full diplomatic relations with Seoul in 1961.

On winning election in 1972 the Australian Labor Party gave priority to affording diplomatic recognition to the People’s Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Although North Korea and its allies continued to deny the legitimacy of the South, Canberra felt there were grounds for establishing diplomatic relations with Pyongyang as well. Peninsula tensions had declined somewhat with the 4 July 1972 Joint Statement by both Koreas providing an avenue for significant political talks, while the North’s purchasing of Western technology encouraged expectations that there would be greater economic openness. The Labor government considered that North Korea’s on-going diplomatic isolation was anomalous, and that wider acceptance of the reality that there were two Korean governments would promote the peninsula’s peace and stability while not prejudicing future steps towards reunification. Furthermore, there was some public support for North Korea with the Australian DPRK Friendship and Cultural Society created during the early 1970s in Melbourne available to promote bilateral relations.

**Ties established**
After eight months of negotiations in Jakarta diplomatic relations were established on 31 July 1974. The announcement’s timing was apparently influenced by Canberra wishing to avoid ‘any unpleasant repercussions’ for an Australian trade survey team in South Korea until 27 July. North Korea established an embassy in Canberra that December, and Australia did likewise in Pyongyang during April 1975. The Australian minister of foreign affairs visited Pyongyang for talks with his counterpart the following month.

The establishment of Australian–North Korea relations was major news in New Zealand, the *Dominion* reporting it under the front page banner ‘Wellington set to follow Canberra into Korea’. Prime Minister Norm Kirk said that the move was important, with the friends of both Koreas responsible for helping build confidence and goodwill between them, and that New Zealand would eventually wish to establish similar relations. In December 1973 New Zealand officials had felt there was a quiet move towards official relations, thereby strengthening the argument that two Koreas existed de facto, a reality that required recognition. Likewise, there was a feeling that urging Pyongyang to adopt less provocative policies without diplomatic relations had achieved little, and non-recognition was inconsistent with the recognition of North Vietnam, which had engaged in at least equally provocative behaviour. ‘The arguments for early recognition thus seem to us conclusive.’ During early 1974 there was a feeling that Pyongyang was ‘emerging from its long isolation’. There was also media support for recognition, the *Christchurch Press* saying it would ‘show that New Zealand’s thinking about Asia is no longer confined by Cold War prejudices and stereotypes’.

**Tactical approach**
However, the New Zealand government was reluctant to establish official relations at that time. It considered the *Dominion* headline misleading, Kirk clarifying that such a move would not be made in the meantime. Officials considered waiting a better tactical approach; there was reluctance to have anything

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This year marks the 40th anniversary of the sudden break in diplomatic relations between Australia and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea or the DPRK). This widely publicised and controversial break, along with somewhat bizarre developments, occurred only shortly after the establishment of relations in 1974 and helped lay the foundations for a challenging future; official relations did not resume until May 2000. Canberra hoped that New Zealand would also recognise the North. Developments were watched closely across the Tasman Sea, and they ultimately helped to discourage Wellington from taking similar steps. Indeed, official relations with North Korea would only be announced in March 2001.
blur the distinction between New Zealand policy as independent and distinguished from that of Australia. Some media reported that the government did not wish to appear as ‘just tagging along behind the Australians’. Kirk was also scheduled to visit Seoul in early 1975, and would reportedly wait for a ‘decent interval’ before any closer ties with the North that would ‘obviously not go down well with the South Koreans’. Wellington advised its diplomats in Canberra not to actively discourage North Korean Embassy approaches, but to avoid ‘giving any impression that they might lead to an early relaxation of the Government’s position’. 

Canberra had closely consulted with Wellington, and hoped that New Zealand would establish diplomatic relations too. Indeed, there had been an impression gained by some Australians that New Zealand was prepared to do this. In early 1974 Australian officials sought Wellington’s support for their position. They were told that while Kirk supported recognition in due course, it would not occur soon. That July Australia provided a briefing on its moves. This asserted that Canberra did not believe a difference in ideology should restrict recognition and diplomatic relations, and North Korea was now the only Asian country that Australia had yet to recognise. It also said that, at Seoul’s request, Australia had unsuccessfully approached five East European countries to persuade them to move towards South Korea. New Zealand officials noted there were no current plans to do likewise. However, while Korean unification might be the goal, it ‘would be wise for each state and for the international community to recognise that two sovereign governments existed in Korea’.

Pyongyang apparently believed that Wellington would act like Canberra. A July 1974 approach in Jakarta by the North Koreans indicated that they assumed Wellington had already embarked on the same process as the Australians to recognise the country, and they appeared ‘genuinely taken aback’ by New Zealand’s reluctance to increase contact. The New Zealand Embassy felt ‘it may well be salutary for them [the North Koreans] to realise that we cannot necessarily be taken for granted, and are not under any particular time pressure’.

**Sudden withdrawal**

North Korea suddenly and controversially withdrew its diplomats from Canberra on 30 October 1975. There was no formal warning, though a diplomatic note was sent via commercial mail accusing Canberra of continuously taking an ‘unfriendly attitude’ towards the North, and of ‘intolerable provocative acts’. Shortly before withdrawing a North Korean Embassy car crashed into a tree outside the South Korean ambassador’s residence. When the car’s ruptured petrol tank exploded, the South Koreans ran outside to investigate and the driver fled. The following day a North Korean diplomat visited a local Mercedes Benz dealer seeking a replacement from the showroom floor for cash, but was told it would need to be ordered as the South Korean Embassy had already purchased that particular vehicle. Although somewhat bizarre, scholar Adrian Buzo believes the Mercedes incident and aftermath had no bearing on the broader Pyongyang decision to withdraw, which had already been made at least two or three weeks earlier. Australia’s diplomats were then expelled from Pyongyang on 8 November after the North Koreans delivered a letter accusing them of ‘unfriendly behaviour’ and ‘abuse of diplomatic immunity’. 

The Australian foreign minister said that the government regretted Pyongyang’s ‘unsubstantiated and baseless assertions’, which it formally rejected, and said the North Korean note used insulting terms. A note rejecting the allegations was delivered to the Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang but returned unopened. The Australian diplomats in North Korea themselves had faced various challenges, including significant restrictions on their activities. For instance, they reportedly were once rebuked for buying ice cream without permission. The New Zealand media wrote that the embassy’s ‘main problem’ was Pyongyang’s refusal to accept that a diplomatic mission ‘should do more than jerk its limbs in unison with the dance of adulation constantly performed round President Kim [Il Sung]’. There was also anxiety that the North Korean authorities would mount a ‘popular demonstration’ to humiliate the embassy staff.

The North’s actions were apparently mainly because Australia failed to accept that North Korean officials were Korea’s only legitimate representatives. Furthermore, Pyongyang was influenced by Australia’s position on South Korea at the United Nations, where it had abstained on a resolution seeking the withdrawal of UN forces from Korea and the dissolution of the UN Command. There is debate over the nature of this influence. Some scholars assert that Pyongyang was angry that the Australian representative appeared to support the South Korean resolution and abstained only on the day of the vote. Others believe it was pleased as Australia had initially supported the resolution, but this was insufficient to overturn their basic calculation that allowing Canberra a resident embassy in Pyongyang was a mistake. North Korea likewise expressed frustration at ‘excessive’ travel restrictions on its diplomats in Canberra, and accused Australian diplomats in North Korea of trying to misrepresent life there.

**Southern response**

The South’s response to Australia’s 1974 recognition of the North highlighted the risks of closer relations with Pyongyang. New Zealand officials noted that there seemed to be ‘some disagreement’ among Australian diplomats over Australia’s likely reaction; some felt that threats of retaliation were ‘largely bluff’ while others thought South Korea was serious. However, Australia’s briefing to New Zealand before recognition conceded that South Korea, the United States and Japan were not pleased with Canberra’s moves. Indeed, Seoul’s reaction to developments was ‘a vigorous one’ with President Park Chung-hee ‘extremely upset’.

South Korea made a ‘strong plea’ for Wellington to try and dissuade Canberra from establishing diplomatic relations, New Zealand replying that it did not consider Australia’s proposal as being against Seoul’s interests. In response to Seoul reportedly threatening to break off diplomatic relations with Australia, New Zealand told the South that it saw ‘no possible advantage’ in doing this, while there were ‘very serious disadvantages’. Wellington ‘fully understood’ Australia’s reasons for recognising the North, but felt that the ‘time had not yet come for us to do likewise’. Diplomats in March 1974 noted that ‘for some months now the [South] Koreans have been leaning over backwards to
make it clear that Australia is in disfavour’, and those like New Zealand who ‘do not abandon old friends lightly’ continue to ‘bask in the warmth of [South] Korean goodwill.

Both Seoul’s reaction and the breakdown of relations helped discourage Wellington’s moves towards stronger ties. The sudden breakdown was reported in New Zealand under headlines including ‘Korea quits Canberra in a diplomatic huff’ and ‘North Korea ousts Australian envoys’. Moreover, the ‘sharp deterioration’ of Canberra–Pyongyang relations in 1975 influenced Wellington’s decision to disallow North Korean visits.

**Limited contact**

Australian–North Korean contact was limited after the 1975 events. Obstacles to stronger relations ranged from the North’s significant debts left with Australian lenders through to its actions against the South. In March 1987 Australia’s Foreign Affairs Department indicated that ‘feelers’ from Pyongyang on improving relations had occasionally been received. For example, a 1986 approach to an Australian diplomat within Indonesia suggested better relations, and a similar approach occurred in Beijing during early 1987. Indeed, that year Pyongyang reportedly asked some Australian travel agencies to organise tours of North Korea, encouraging commentary that it appeared to have chosen Australia as a testing ground for more open relations with the West. Relations were also promoted by the Australian DPRK Society. In March 1980 it brought to Australia a North Korean arts exhibition, while Councillor and then Mayor of Fitzroy City Council (now the City of Yarra) Harold Mackrell visited North Korea in 1983 and 1987 to promote contact through establishing sister city relations.

As Seoul shifted towards engagement with Pyongyang, and Cold War tensions declined during the late 1980s, Australia evaluated greater contact. In January 1989 two Australian diplomatic officers visited Pyongyang, a visit the foreign minister described as ‘testing the water’, and the most senior visit by a North Korean official since 1975 occurred in late 1991. Against the background of South Korea’s ‘Sunshine’ policy of engagement with the North from the late 1990s Australia re-evaluated its position on North Korea. In September 1999 foreign ministers from both countries met in New York, and during February 2000 talks between senior officials occurred in Pyongyang. Diplomatic relations were ultimately restored in May 2000. Australia labeled this ‘a positive contribution to improved relations among countries in the Asia–Pacific region and to strengthening regional linkages’. Relations would also ‘add impetus to the spirit of dialogue and compromise on the Korean Peninsula’.

**Challenging situation**

Since 2000 relations have remained challenging. Obstacles to better relations have included the 2003 interception of a North Korean freighter (the Pong Su) in Australian territorial waters smuggling heroin, Pyongyang’s bellicose actions, nuclear and missile tests along with its poor human rights record. North Korea re-established an embassy in Australia in 2002 (and apparently there was another embassy car crash) but this was then closed in 2008. North Korean officials noted that ‘We have no friends’ and blamed the closure on financial constraints. More recently, Pyongyang’s attempt in 2013 to re-establish an embassy in Australia failed with the Australian foreign minister referring to the North’s aggression. The North Korean Embassy in Jakarta is currently responsible for Australia, while Canberra conducts relations through its Seoul embassy. Aid to North Korea is restricted to humanitarian assistance provided via international agencies. Canberra has indicated that it is prepared to move bilateral relations forward if Pyongyang makes substantial progress towards denuclearisation and ceases all provocative actions threatening the peninsula’s stability. The society describes diplomatic relations as ‘very poor’ and refers to ‘Overcoming the hostile Government propaganda as a result of our [Australia’s] alliance with the US’ as a major challenge to its efforts to promote relations.

Unofficial Wellington–Pyongyang relations remained until nearly a year after Canberra re-established diplomatic ties. Despite Wellington’s reluctance to strengthen relations, the New Zealand–DPRK Society had promoted contact. Reverend Don Borrie, the current society chair, met a 1980 delegation visiting Australia that hoped to invite Labour MPs to the North. As with Canberra, the late 1980s saw Wellington’s position become more relaxed, and interaction increased during the following decade. With South Korean encouragement and reduced peninsula tensions July 2000 witnessed the meeting of foreign ministers, and New Zealand’s first formal encounter in Pyongyang occurred shortly thereafter. The establishment of diplomatic relations was announced in March 2001.

**Critical requirement**

With the on-going threat to regional stability and peace posed by Korean tensions, and the 40th anniversary of Australia–North Korean relations breaking down, actively supporting international moves to encourage constructive dialogue on the peninsula is critical. Australia’s relationship with North Korea is challenging, as highlighted by the 1974–75 events, and obstacles hinder better ties. While New Zealand has not experienced the upheaval of such a dramatic break, its official relationship with the North is also challenging.

The future of relations largely depends on Pyongyang. Canberra and Wellington have limited influence, and caution is warranted given North Korea’s tendency to alternate between provocation and reconciliation. However, official and unofficial dialogue with the North represents an important avenue for communication, supporting efforts to moderate Pyongyang’s foreign policy, and encouraging mediation and trust-building. Direct interaction also can provide useful insights. Though the North’s regime has shown durability, the possibility of future upheaval and change warrant the international community’s attention and efforts that help promote stability and peace. Ultimately, Australia and New Zealand can play a key role in facilitating the longer term emergence of a unified, democratic and strong Korea that enhances regional peace.
A chain over sea and time

Yosef Livne looks at Anzac and Zionist enterprise in two great conflicts.

2015 is not just another new year. In different parts of the globe, the coming year will also usher in memories of highly significant events in the history of many nations and peoples. One such event is the centennial commemoration of the battle in Gallipoli. That battle was certainly a life-changing chapter in the lives of Australians and New Zealanders, as well as others. Besides this event 2015 will also see the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War.

For us Israelis, these events cannot go unnoticed. Any which way we may look at them, both world wars are intertwined with the story of our rebirth as a sovereign state. Whereas the memory of the Holocaust is well known, relatively little is known of the Zionist involvement in the different facets of the First World War. As the centenary is now upon us, I thought it appropriate to shed some light on the role played by our founding fathers back in the time of the Great War as well as some of the encounters between our two peoples in the Second World War.

The Zion Mule Corps was established in Alexandria, Egypt in April 1915. Its founders were two young Zionist activists, Ze’ev Jabotinsky, who always dreamt of forming a Jewish unit that would join the Allies and would advance the cause of Jewish statehood, and Joseph Trumpeldor, a heroic figure in the Russian Army. Even though the idea of forming a fighting unit did not prosper, a transport regiment, based on mules, was formed and was sworn on 1 April as the Zion Mule Corps. Lieutenant-Colonel John H. Patterson, a pro-Zionist officer was appointed as its commanding officer and Trumpeldor was appointed as adjutant with the rank of captain. The regiment was shipped to Gallipoli on the 16 April. Half landed in the southern part of the peninsula and the other half was attached to the ANZAC troops on the western side. That must have been the first time New Zealanders and Hebrew men in uniform came into contact. Two years later, the Hebrew population of the Holy Land came to know the New Zealanders as they fought to defeat the Ottoman Army.

Two decades later the world was engulfed in a new global conflict. Once again our men in uniform found themselves together in different circumstances — from the sands of North Africa to the hills of Greece. Soldiers of the auxiliary pioneers stood together with New Zealanders, building fortifications in the Western Desert as well as in Greece. Both Palestinian Jewish and Kiwi soldiers were taken prisoner and spent captivity in the same camp. Those who died in captivity found eternal rest side by side in the same cemetery. New Zealand rail workers participated in laying down railroads in British mandated Palestine and got a firsthand look at the early kibbutzim. It is known that troops from New Zealand visited Tel Aviv and Kfar Vitkin, a village some 30 kilometres to the north, which became a convalescent centre for New Zealand troops. When the orders arrived to move the 2nd NZ Division back into Egypt in 1942, a Hebrew transport unit was among those who participated in the operation. As the war progressed, troops from New Zealand and the Jewish Fighting Brigade were shipped together from Egypt to Italy on the same ship to take part in the Italian Campaign.

These are but a sample and yet the conclusion is one. Though geographically distant from each other, our paths crossed in times of challenge and established the first rings in the chain across the oceans and time.

HE Yosef Livne is Israel’s ambassador in New Zealand.
CONFERENCE REPORT

Exchanging regional perspectives

Peter Kennedy reports on the seventh Track II dialogue between Japan and New Zealand.

The Seventh Track II dialogue between Japan and New Zealand took place in Tokyo on 22 October 2014. The Japanese Institute of International Affairs represented Japan, and the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs and Asia New Zealand Foundation represented New Zealand.

The talks covered a broad range of topics including East Asian security (and relations with the United States, China and the Korean Peninsula), maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region (including the South China Sea and East China Sea); regional economic integration and Japan’s economic reforms (in particular ‘Abenomics’).

From a Japanese perspective the role of China in the region provided a major focus. Japan has sought to meet what it sees as a systemic challenge by strengthening its national security infrastructure and reinforcing its alliance with the United States (which benefited in public opinion by the assistance the US military provided following by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami). India has also become an important part of relationships within the region.

Maritime security in the South China Sea and the East China Sea continues to be of concern to Japan despite a more recent lessening of tensions. A large number of sea exits from China coincided with Japanese or ASEAN territorial areas. But market risks within China had to a degree become more significant than geo-political risks with original contract and investment conditions as the economy expanded now lapsing.

Troubling situation

The situation in North Korea was not improving with little chance of the Six-Party Talks resuming and some question about the degree of China’s influence. A lot of effort had gone into seeking to resolve historical difficulties with the Republic of Korea and it was hoped there might be positive developments on this in the future.

The point was made that there could be improving economic prosperity in the region through integration under the trade and investment frameworks of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the ASEAN-based Regional Com-prehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). But differences that appeared to exist between the detailed positions of countries like Japan and New Zealand would have to be resolved first. A factor in Japan’s position was its own economic reforms. The Japanese side considered that ‘Abenomics’ driven by Prime Minister Abe (who visited New Zealand in 2014) had contributed to a real GDP growth of 2–3 per cent, but the real test will be the ‘third arrow’ — boosting private investment, coping with the labour shortage (encouraging women, youth and elderly), creating new markets and promoting integration.

It was agreed that another session of this dialogue should be held in 2015, hopefully in New Zealand.

Peter Kennedy is the executive director of the NZIIA.
AMERICAN BIODEFENCE: How Dangerous Ideas about Biological Weapons Shape National Security

Author: Frank L. Smith III

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was launched ostensibly to deal with that state's covert programmes for the production of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological). However well founded that threat might have seemed at the time, the plain fact is that little of this Iraqi preparedness was evident when the country was eventually occupied. This may have been just as well. It now appears that at the time of the invasion the United States military was woefully unready to deal with biological weapons they had been used against them. The central purpose of Frank L. Smith's book is to explain why this was so and to draw attention to the persistent flaws in US military policy formation that gave rise to the situation. He also suggests that these flaws have the potential to undermine the American strategic response to other modern threats, such as cyber warfare.

As Smith sees it, the central questions of military policy formation turn on what weapons will be used and how they will be used, and the crucial concept here is what he calls the 'kinetic' concept of war. Within this, the weapons to be used will be predominantly guns and bullets, planes, bombs and tanks, and the organisation involved will be what is necessary to deploy them to best effect. This, he argues, is the dominant frame of reference for policy decisions in the American military, and always has been. Within it, non-kinetic weapon systems, like gas and biological weapons, struggle for recognition. This is the problem of 'American biodefense' and the source of the 'dangerous misconceptions' that are the main focus of the book.

Could it have been otherwise? Smith considers the possibility that military policy in regard to biological weapons and defence against them could have been formed in the post-Second World War world on the basis of a realist appreciation of the potential and the danger of such weapons. But it was not. Neither was it driven by bureaucratic capture, where competing hierarchies struggle for power when a new funding stream becomes available. It was, he concludes, simply a case of a dominant ideology ('a fire-power obsession') which made serious consideration of biodefence impossible. Human and organisational factors pushed in the same direction. As is true in other contexts, attachment to the central dogma was also a key to individual advancement: a great incentive to toe the line.

Appropriate consideration of biological warfare, and defence against it, was also compromised (Smith says) by its administrative association with chemical weapons. The Chemical Corps, formed after the First World War, was always seen as the poor relation. In part this is because of the anomalous position of gas munitions under the Geneva Gas Protocol of 1925. Such agents were prohibited but could be used in retaliation and thus were able to be researched and developed. In fact they were not used in the Second World War (except by Japan in China), which only added to their anomalous status. Of course, they are now unequivocally banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993.

When biological weapons came into consideration after the First World War, they were assigned to the same organisational unit as chemical agents, the Chemical Weapons Corps. This had the major disadvantage that biological weapons were seen as similar in mode of operation and in terms of biodefence. Smith provides considerable detail on this point and, particularly, why this inhibited the provision of effective means of protection against such agents. In 1969, under President Nixon, the United States gave up preparations for the offensive use of biological weapons (Smith has no reason to doubt this, notwithstanding suspicions to the contrary, elsewhere). However, the fact that the American military was, apparently, substantially unprepared for biodefence as late as 2003 is largely due to a long period of neglect, which persisted through the whole of the Cold War period and really only ended when civilian agencies took over responsibility for the work (mainly Health and Human Services and the Center for Disease Control).

In a final brief chapter, the author broadens the argument by placing the means of war on a diagram, which distinguishes them, on one axis, according to whether they are 'blunt and penetrating' (bombs and bullets) or 'dispersed' (fire, chemical weapons) and, on the other axis, whether these effects are 'immediate' (bombs, etc) or 'delayed' (mines and improvised explosive devices). In the category of both dispersed and delayed are biological and radiological weapons. In this category he also places cyber warfare and asks rhetorically, will the US military neglect the threat of cyber weapons, as it neglected for so long the threat of biological weapons? It is a good question, especially since the new director of the US National Security Agency has specifically drawn attention to the fact that there are a number of contemporary states that have the capability to completely shut down the infrastructure of the United States. It is the virtue of

Notes on reviewers

Dr Ron Smith is the former director of international relations and security studies at the University of Waikato.
Dr Negar Parrow is a senior lecturer in security studies at Massey University.
Neil Fraser retired from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries in February 2014, as principal adviser (international relations); and is currently chair of the guiding group of the FAO-based Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock.
Dr Christopher van der Krogt is a lecturer in religious studies at Massey University.
Since the termination of political ties between the United States and Iran in 1979 many scholarly efforts have been made to explain the reasons for the failure of reconciliation efforts between the two countries. This is because the termination significantly impacted the political map of the region and the balance of power amongst the major regional actors. The present book is a brilliant attempt to elaborate the position of Iran’s government and the obstacles that have prevented the re-establishment of ties with the United States or the progress of any possible opportunity for re-normalisation of political ties.

In his book Mousavian, an Iranian career diplomat since the 1979 revolution, studies United States–Iran political relations in a historical context to identify the factors that have shaped the fate of many attempts for negotiations, including spoilers, ideological positions and the domestic politics of each country. He argues that mistrust between the parties is the core factor in the failure of many unofficial attempts conducted by moderate technocrats since 1980. Through a detailed historical account of the major events that have shaped Iran–US relations, Mousavian explains how mistrust developed as the dominant factor and then suggests ways through which the two countries could more positively interact. He acknowledges the difficult path to normalisation of relations but suggests that the benefits of dialogue for both countries supersede the cost that each has paid for the historical issues.

Rather than a literature-based book solely concentrating on secondary resources, Mousavian has produced one that combines scholarly literature as well as personal experience. Mousavian argues that for Iran’s supreme leader and other politicians, particularly amongst the conservative factions, the United States’ ultimate goal is regime change and replacment of the Islamic Republic with a puppet regime. On the other hand, the US administrations of the last three decades, while differing in policies and in some cases more lenient towards the resumption of political ties with Iran, all share a mistrust in Iran’s sincerity. Mousavian, who has been either a member of Iran’s nuclear negotiation team or their advisers since 2002, explains how mistrust between some political factions in both countries prevented any direct negotiating opportunity between the United States and Iran until the election of Rohani as president of Iran in 2013. It is this engrained mistrust that has doomed to failure any attempt at reconciliation even though Iran and the United States have co-operated in regional issues such as Afghanistan and, later, reconstruction of Iraq’s political system. For Iranians, this mistrust, he suggests, is embedded in historical events such as the 1953 coup in Iran and the United States’ unconditional support of the Pahlavi regime during the 1979 revolution.

Mistrust leads to mis-perception and mis-analysis. Mousavian notes that there is a lack of understanding of US domestic political dynamics in Iran and vice versa. Conservatives in Iran do not seek changes in the status quo, as they view the United States to be a declining power and adopt a more ideological position. The moderate technocrats also at times interpret the rhetoric of US presidents towards Iran as humiliating comments rather than a political rhetoric aimed at the domestic political environment. As the result of such mis-analysis, Iranian conservatives criticise the moderates for their confidence-building policies towards the West and view the US interest in the resumption of the relations as another plot against the Islamic Republic.

By explaining the existing conflict situation in the Middle East and progress in Iran’s nuclear negotiations, Mousavian suggests that there is a necessity for direct negotiation based on various issues between the United States and Iran. The continuation of the status quo or the failure of the nuclear negotiations and the exacerbation of the conflict situation in the region has a detrimental influence on the security of the region and for Iran and the United States. While he admits that negotiation between the two countries is a lengthy process and requires determination on both sides, he views the potential for reconciliation as a reality. Mousavian suggests that the two parties begin a case-based negotiation with a clear aim over various conflicting issues. These negotiations should be based on measured phases and be strengthened by the participation of mediators who could see the benefits of the resumption of political ties between the two. Mousavian uses the success of the November 2013 nuclear agreement as an example of such negotiations. Rather than focusing on points of difference, he notes, the United States and Iran should concentrate on the issues with mutual interest such as security in Afghanistan and Iraq, the anti-terrorism struggle in the region and a weapons of mass destruction-free zone Middle East.

Throughout the book Mousavian emphasises Iran’s eagerness to build friendly ties with the West, its willingness to develop co-operation with other countries and its pragmatic approach towards foreign policy. He, however, significantly underplays the ideological position of the Islamic Republic and the negative impact that the resumption of relations with the United States could have on the legitimacy of the supreme leader and the conservatives. Hermidas Bavand, an Iranian political scientist argues that Iran’s decision in 2013 to accept negotiations with the United States is not based on trust-building policies but rather is a deterrent strategy against military invasion. Rather than changes in the ideological position, he is the balance of power between the moderates and the conservatives and their relations with the leader that determines Iran’s foreign policy. Although Mousavian is correct in calling the Islamic Republic a pragmatic state, the resumption of political ties with the United States requires the undermining of one of the tenets of the revolution, and a major...
When the Farm Gates Opened: The Impact of Rogernomics on Rural New Zealand

Author: Neal Wallace
Published by: Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2014, 160pp, $40.

Some 30 years after the economic reforms unleashed by Roger Douglas and the Labour government of David Lange, Otago journalist Neal Wallace has published a book that outlines and describes some of the subsequent impacts these reforms had on the rural sector. It is a story worth telling, and this is a book worth reading.

This is a book of ‘two halves’. The first part lightly traverses the economic and policy history that led to the need for these reforms, and the fiscal and economic nature of the reforms that were applied in agriculture; in the second (longer and more satisfying) part Wallace shares with the reader the results of his interviews with a selection of those who carried the brunt of farm-level adjustment forced by these reforms. In this sense, Wallace accurately suggests that ‘the Rogernomics era changed forever the social order’. Some very dire situations are described. But all is not gloom. Adjustment, freedom, determination, innovation, diversification and, above all, resilience appear on the other side of the vale.

Having got the economic and fiscal aspect out of the way, it is at this point that for this reader the book really takes off, providing an illuminating and absorbing read. The human and emotional dimension is the centre-piece and strength of this book, which is (aptly) ‘dedicated to rural New Zealanders’ by the author. Words such as stress, anger, despair, adversity, crisis, vulnerability and frustration express the situation of farming families as they struggled to confront the impact of the removal of agricultural support, low commodity prices and high interest rates. In many cases these hurdles were compounded by drought, and/or under-capitalisation, in some instances on farms that would in the best of times be marginally economic. (This tends to reflect the author’s ‘sample’ having a heavier weighting towards North Otago.) The stoic nature of the response is portrayed along with the difficulties and despair of farmers and their families. Some very dire situations are described. But all is not gloom. Adjustment, freedom, determination, innovation, diversification and, above all, resilience appear on the other side of the vale.

In the telling, the author reveals many heart-wrenching and also heart-warming experiences. Some interviewees were able to restructure their farms and their finances such as to continue farming, while others were able to ‘exit with dignity’ and draw on various life-skills (some of which they had not previously recognised) to fashion for themselves a ‘life after farming’.

It is interesting that, for most, the rancour and frustration and despair of 30 years ago has given way to an acceptance that agriculture is better off for the reforms (‘the cost to the rural sector could have been much worse if changes had not been made’) and that often the path they were forced onto has provided them with stimulating and fulfilling lives. Apropos of this last point, Wallace devotes one chapter (‘Out of the kitchen’) to highlighting the indispensable supportive role that farm wives played, not only for their spouse and their families emotionally but also through the emergence (for some) of income-earning capacity off the farm, and in providing guidance and support in financial management and decision-making. In this sense, Wallace accurately suggests that ‘the Rogernomics era changed forever the social order’.

Farmers and their families are not the only players in this ‘saga’ (as in heroic achievement). Wallace gives special recognition to the ‘unsung heroes’ (his words) who acted as counsellors and provided support to the distressed families, initially facilitating significant debt restructuring though the Rural Bank Discounting Scheme and later through other support groups including the NZ Rural Support Trust. Helping farm families through their woes while...
also maintaining confidentiality placed a considerable burden on these counsellors. Also an integral part of the adjustment picture were bankers (both helpful and unsympathetic), farm advisers and lawyers, some of whom are given voice in this book.

The impact on rural towns is portrayed through pen-pictures of Lawrence and Taumarunui. They usefully give some sense of the impact that was borne by rural towns and the service sector, including rural contractors, and this reader would like to have had more examples; also, perhaps, a wider sweep of the social landscape that expressed the views and experiences of local government politicians, farm servicing businesses, lawyers, bankers, schools, post offices, sports clubs and community groups.

The indulgence of a few (minor) quibbles: ‘demise’ of the family farm seems a bit hyperbolic (p.26); on p.34 we are informed that SMP payments ‘peaked’ at $334 million in 1984, but we have already been told (p.24) that SMP payments were $500 million in 1983—84 — which is it?; p.38 alerts us to a ‘crisis’, but it is not until p.55 that the reason for this alarm is revealed (it is the Bank of New Zealand situation confronting incoming Prime Minister Jim Bolger in 1990); the reference (p.39) to ‘World Trade Organisation discussions in Uruguay’ presumably refers to the GATT round of trade negotiations which commenced in a meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay in September 1986 (the WTO was not established until 1995) and were finally agreed on 15 December 1993 in Geneva and signed in Marrakesh, Morocco in April 1994 (this clarification also corrects the statement on p.145 concerning ‘free trade agreements, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, settled on 25 December 1993’). And, finally, physical readability would be improved for many readers by presenting us with a larger font.

Neal Wallace is to be thanked and congratulated for bringing to our notice some insightful personal stories that accompanied the great agricultural reforms of the 1980s, in a very readable book that is a testament to the resilience of New Zealand agriculture and New Zealand farmers and their families.

NEIL FRASER

INTRODUCING ISLAM

Author: William E. Shepard

In 21 chapters, the second edition of this book offers a very substantial survey of Islam from its origins to the present. After a methodological introduction, the book has three chapters surveying Islamic history to about 1700 and then ten thematic chapters on the Qur’an, Muhammad, ritual, sects, scholars, law, theology, Sufism, three key thinkers, and the arts. The third section includes a chapter outlining modern challenges and responses, case studies of four countries (Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia), a chapter on globalisation dealing with jihad, the Muslim diaspora in the West, and liberal Islam, and a very topical new chapter on gender, democracy and human rights.

This is a Religious Studies text book in a series with volumes on other major religious traditions, and its chapters follow a prescribed format. Each begins with a list of the topics to be covered, uses plenty of subheadings, summarises the key points, poses discussion questions, raises issues for critical thinking (a new feature), indicates what is available on the companion website, and lists reading suggestions both in print and online. There are black and white photographs as well as appropriate maps and other diagrams, a substantial glossary of names and terms, a chronology and further appendices on the Islamic calendar and Muhammad’s wives. In addition to the final reading suggestions and references, there is a fairly detailed index, though readers will often find the detailed contents pages more useful.

The book is clearly written and attractively produced.

While the website currently delivers less than promised, hopefully it will be extended. I would suggest the addition of sound files to supplement the transliteration and pronunciation notes. On that issue, the use of consonantal diacritics and macrons to indicate long vowels is inconsistent: they are sometimes included in the main text but often omitted (see, for example, murid and qasida). Otherwise, there are very few typographical errors.

William Shepard’s explicit aim — promoting ‘empathetic understanding’ — is to introduce Islam to readers who want to know how Muslims themselves understand their religion. He writes that ‘If today Westerners tend to be more aware of the negative aspects of Islam, this is all the more reason why we need to stress the more positive aspects that have attracted many to it and still do’. Explaining his methodology clearly and explicitly, Shepard is more faithful to the admonitions of his Harvard mentor, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, than this reviewer is to those of his own teacher in Islamic studies!

The limitation of Shepard’s approach, I would submit, is that it does not take us far beyond what an informed, committed believer could tell us. From a critical-historical perspective, for example, the Qur’an seems just as dependent on older sources as any book of the Bible. This important point is effectively downplayed, however, because ‘For Muslims all these stories come from Allah’ — albeit they were clearly circulating among Muhammad’s contemporaries. Even when readers are invited to compare the portrayals of Abraham in the Bible and the Qur’an under the rubric of ‘critical thinking’, they are not directed to post-biblical Jewish texts, readily available in English translation, which first record the very stories that reappear in the Qur’an.

Similarly, the book does not give enough information for a Western non-Muslim to make a reasoned assessment of Muhammad or respond to Muslims’ accounts of him. It gives rather short shrift to critical revisionist perspectives, partly because they are contradictory and complicated, but mainly because Shepard is far more concerned to emphasise the ‘founding myths’ that dominate Muslim thinking, past and present. Indeed, their importance cannot be over-estimated, but this neglect of historical questions turns Islamic origins into a timeless story, rather than an historical event. It ignores the problem of how the world’s second largest religion began,
Correspondence

Sir,
The January/February issue of the NZIR on security (vol 40, no 1) contains a disturbing anomaly which raises concerns about the framework of our security analysis. While climate change is addressed by Vikas Kumar, it is virtually ignored by all other writers.

Vikas Kumar, in addressing the perils of island nations, states: ‘the looming climate crisis has completely altered the nature of their problems at a time when the international system is itself unstable’ and refers to ‘the never-ending climate change negotiations and the doubtful efficacy of belated implementation of adaptation/mitigation solutions’.

These are not issues that affect only the Pacific Islands: the environmental issues affect nearly all countries, particularly those that have highly populated coastal areas, those dependent on a fragile agriculture, and those that will be affected by the destabilising of neighbouring countries. This is an issue that has been recognised as a major threat by President Obama, the US Defense Department, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and the United Nations.

The instability and ineffectiveness of the international system, which is demonstrated by the climate change negotiations, reflects on virtually all our security issues.

In this context, the lack of attention to these matters by the other writers presents a major concern, particularly as they claim to be taking a broad view of security. John Key, in particular, does not even mention climate change, although in 2007 he called it ‘the biggest environmental challenge of our time’. This challenge certainly has not reduced in importance over the last eight years. Perhaps Key finds terrorism a much more palatable security subject to discuss. Other authors dismiss climate change with a sentence or two, ignoring the distinctive challenges it presents.

Yet climate change, and the broader sustainability issues, presents a novel and overriding challenge to the continuing existence of our civilisation. It is also placing unprecedented demands on capability of our global governance infrastructure, which is being seriously tested. Ironically, our future is being threatened not by the specific actions of others, but by the inaction of the international community, including ourselves.

It seems that our security thinkers are still largely focused on the threats that come from outside and are unable to effectively consider those that come from within.

‘We have met the enemy, and he is us’ — Pogo

GRAY SOUTHON
Tauranga Branch
National Office and branch activities.

At a meeting at Victoria University on 2 December Colonel Dr Hans-Hubertus Mack, the director of the Bundeswehr Center of Military History and Social Sciences, gave the first lecture in the NZIIA’s First World War remembrance series. His topic was ‘A Challenging Legacy: Memories of the First World War in Germany’. (The edited text of this address is to be found elsewhere in this issue.)

On 8 December Dr Jonathan Spyer, a senior research fellow at the Center for Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA), Inter-Disciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel, addressed a meeting at VUW on ‘Syria, Iraq and Lebanon: the Rise of ISIS and Sectarian War Across Borders’.

A symposium on ‘The Arctic and Antarctica: Differing Currents of Change’ was held at the James Cook Grand Chancellor Hotel in Wellington on 27 February. It considered issues of commercialisation versus conservation, national versus international interests and the likely prospects of both areas 100 years hence. Speakers included Prof Donald Rothwell (Australian National University), Associate Prof Alan D. Hemmings (Gateway Antarctica, University of Canterbury but resident in Perth, Western Australia), Prof Klaus Dodds (Royal Holloway University of London, specialist adviser to the House of Lords Arctic Committee), Prof Tim Naish (director, Antarctic Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington) and Prof Anne-Marie Brady (editor-in-chief of The Polar Journal).

On 29 January Dr Giacomo Lichtner, a senior lecturer in VUW’s School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, gave a presentation on ‘The Pursuit of Closure: Mourning in Holocaust Cinema’. One of the NZIIA’s remembrance series, this meeting was co-hosted with the school and the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand.

On 19 February General Knud Bartels, the chairman of the NATO Military Committee, addressed a meeting at VUW on ‘Current and Future Challenges Facing NATO’. He is the principal military adviser of the NATO secretary-general.

Wellington

On 18 November a panel discussion was held on ‘Inside the UN Security Council’. The panelists were Terence O’Brien (former New Zealand representative on the Security Council), HE Laurent Contini (ambassador of France to New Zealand) and James E. Donegan (US consul-general in New Zealand).

The following meetings were held:
3 Dec Martha and Tony Vickers (former British local body politicians), ‘A LibDem View on Current British Politics’.
29 Jan Lt-Col Vernon Bennett (NZ Defence Force), ‘An Operational Perspective on Peacekeeping in the Middle East’.
5 Feb Dr Alexander Bukh (senior lecturer in international relations, VUW), “Takashima” and “Northern Territories” in Japanese Nationalism.
11 Feb Dr Einat Wilf (senior fellow with the Jewish People Policy Institute and an adjunct fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy), ‘From Spring to Winter: The Unravelling of the Post-Ottoman Order’.

New Zealand and the World: Past, Present and Future

Co-directors: Prof Robert Patman and Dr Iati Iati

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Chief Justice Sian Elias described Sir Ivor Richardson, who passed away last month, as having had ‘an unparalleled influence on New Zealand law during his long tenure as a judge, law teacher, and adviser’. During his long and distinguished legal career, Sir Ivor had a close association with Victoria University of Wellington, where he was appointed a professor of law in 1967 and where, later in life, he was chancellor. He built his formidable legal reputation initially in private practice and the Crown Law Office, but it was his appointment to the Court of Appeal where he made his lasting contribution. He had been appointed a Supreme Court (now High Court) judge in Auckland in 1977 but was almost immediately elevated to the Court of Appeal, where he served from 1978 to 2002. At his memorial service in January, it was noted that he was the longest serving judge of the Court of Appeal ever. Previously Attorney-General Christopher Finlayson commented that ‘Sir Ivor Richardson was unfailingly courteous and pleasant to appear before. But if you weren’t on top of your material, his questions would destroy your case very quickly.’

Richardson was born in Ashburton and suffered considerable tragedy in early life, losing both his father and mother to illness and accident before he was out of his teens. His academic adviser at Timaru Boy’s High School suggested he go into teaching, but a relative fortunately steered him towards law. He won the Canterbury District Law Society’s Gold Medal for the best law student at Canterbury University before achieving his masters and doctorate on a full scholarship at the University of Michigan.

Those who were fortunate enough to attend Professor Richardson’s lectures in taxation and estate planning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when he was dean of Victoria University’s Law Faculty, not only received the benefit of a sharp and incisive mind but also caught glimpses of a quiet sense of humour that was most appealing. He was one of those rare individuals whom everyone seemed to like and respect.

Around his time at Victoria University Ivor Richardson and his wife Jane, whom he met in Michigan, started to compile an art collection that grew to one of the finest in the country. In subsequent decades they were familiar figures together at Dunbar Sloane auctions. When a large part of their collection of 200 paintings by Rita Angus, Frances Hodgkins, Maud Sherwood and other early female artists, together with at least one McCahon, went on sale in 2006 the New Zealand Herald said the catalogue alone was worth an offer, given its pictorial descriptions of such a wonderful collection.

Ivor and Jane Richardson travelled widely together and shared an interest in international relations. In retirement they became strong supporters of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, as Sir John McGrath noted at the memorial service. Sir Ivor continued to attend NZIIA lectures regularly right through to the final year of his extraordinary life.

Peter Kennedy
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