

OBSERVATIONS 5

ON HOW SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC CHANGE HAS BEEN OUTLAWED

The 'wheel' of history does not always spin, it jumps and bumps, moves both forwards and backwards, slows and accelerates, remains motionless and shoots like a comet through the sky. Individuals and groups, institutions and regions whether domestic or international, try to fashion methods of control, but it regularly surprises and shocks. Great Dreams suddenly collapse and time-worn ideologies reappear to be fought over in different forms and places.

And so it was in Australia on a bright Thursday morning 24th June 2010.

A Prime Minister, who had been overwhelmingly elected by the people of Australia in November 2007 but suffering a sudden dip for barely three months in disputed opinion polls, themselves orchestrated in a media frenzy of vicious reporting by an assortment of brazen highly paid scribes and opportunists, was politically executed. The executioners, as much responsible for the alleged grievous policies and exhibiting a dishonesty and moral cowardice of supreme repugnance, could only cite the opinion polls for the "murder". It was the act of a decadent society.

In the words of Whitlam "Well may you ask" why this intemperance?

Writing in the Sydney Morning Herald on Tuesday morning 29th June, Lyn Bender - a psychologist and social commentator, articulated a deep feeling of revulsion especially among older citizens:

"Kevin Rudd's dismissal has bypassed the will of the people and the thumbing of the nose at democratic principles has been driven by the desire, panic and self-interest of a few. This matters; even if it all ends well"

And further:

"A prime minister is not directly elected by all voters, and Rudd still has his seat. Voters, however, are strongly influenced in their choice, by whomever is the leader of the party. If this were not so, why would both major parties have so hastily toppled leaders, as the polls declined? The electorate clearly voted for Rudd. The polls are not the deciding vote but a work in progress. Responses can be fickle and influenced by the way questions are framed. The respondents know these answers are not final.

So I mourn for a prime minister who said a damn good sorry, signed Kyoto, accepted the moral imperative of climate change and buffeted Australia from the impact of the global financial crisis. I grieve for a good man and prime minister of integrity, who was not given a "fair shake of the sauce bottle".

Of fundamental importance is what this act of betrayal and brutality says about the body politic in Australia and the nature of its democratic institutions. What has changed is 'change'

– it has simply been outlawed. On the basis of what took place in the months leading to the 24th June 2010 no Prime Minister can now govern beyond a downturn in popularity as determined by opinion polls which are subject to great manipulation. No Prime Minister can stand against a journalistic onslaught orchestrated by media barons, often resident outside the country and proselytising theological programmes of little relevance to domestic issues. No Prime Minister, or Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition for that matter, can bring about reform or indeed even advocate reform without facing the whipped up hysteria of the mob. In rich countries like Australia there are always plenty of pieces of silver and men and women of no moral scruples whatsoever. Character is no longer just 'old fashion' it is now simply a device to be used by the hand maidens of conservative rhetoric for selling 'family values' that are always negotiable depending on the needs of the time. The inevitable result will be bloody revolution of the Right or Left. And it will be sooner than later.

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was never forgiven for his role in the events of November 1975, his leadership was crippled until the end in March 1983. Prime Minister John Howard will wear the AWB monstrous scandal, the David Hicks absolute disgrace and his Pacific Solution inhumanities like a crown of thorns until death. Prior to the 24th June the ALP had a tradition through Curtin, Chieflly, Evatt, Calwell, Whitlam, Hayden, Hawke, Keating, Beasley, Latham, Crean and Rudd of honour, loyalty and integrity. Now these values are all gone. It is not a question of policies, intelligent or imbecilic, but rather of the example set to the Australian people, to the families and the raising of children, the values and attitudes summed up by the phrase 'doing the right thing'. Gillard and Swan and the factional warriors of the ALP have joined the 'under-world' forces of winning at all costs. It simply means disintegration at a rapid speed with consequences far beyond the betrayal of a once great political movement or party. Moral authority is the basis of 'soft power' and without it only coercion and brut military might is left. This is the basis of authoritarian systems which depend on the intimidation of their peoples.

As with the Whitlam Federal Government, the Rudd ALP Government should have gone to an Election of the People in the normal way. There were sufficient experienced parliamentarians to change Whitlam's ways, or as most likely Fraser would have won the contest as he did in 1977. The policies of Rudd were those of the 'Gang of Four' and the collective responsibility of Gillard, Swan, Tanner and Rudd. If the marketing of policies was a problem it could have been solved – was there any genuine attempt? In the book that Tanner will undoubtedly write details should be revealed of the advice and "disputations" by Gillard and Swan. Did they have as many meetings with the Prime Minister as they did with representatives from the AWU (Australian Workers Union), the factional leaders (parliamentary and otherwise) and the Mining Industry (ex-Labour or otherwise)? Their integrity, honesty and morality are well and truly on the line – are they really Labor people or simply careerists in the corporate sense?

What is the upshot of all this putrid behaviour.

The bottom line is that stable representative parliamentary government has now been fatally undermined. In addition it is difficult to envisage future democratic reform overcoming wealthy vested interests. Finally the people have been by-passed by the faction leaders who determine the Prime Minister irrespective of past or future.

If citizens of Australia can not vote for Tony Abbott because of his fundamentalist Christian connections with the Republican power-sources of the USA are they to be 'blackmailed' into voting for Gillard/Swan? Could a Malcolm Turnbull, with all his imperfections, make a comeback – at least he had the integrity and honesty to stand by his principles and forgo the leadership of the Federal Liberal Party and possibly Prime Ministership. Could Kevin Rudd wait for the demise of the “betrayers” and return to the leadership, chastened and better equipped to govern next time – his actions over future months until the Federal Election will tell. Of course it is highly unlikely for an assortment of reasons, but there was a history before the Second World War of National and United Australia Parties - ALP Prime Minister Billy Hughes was expelled to form the first, and ALP Treasurer Joseph Lyons walked out to form the second. Some might say it is unfortunate that in today's world of multi-million dollar election campaigns a Rudd-Turnbull alliance is impossible, nevertheless I think the people would vote overwhelmingly for a libertarian progressive conservative coalition. Libertarian in the sense of permitting genuine freedom of expression, Progressive in honestly addressing Australia's international challenges, Conservative in maintaining decent family values. There would be contradictions but that is the art of 'Good Governance'.

Is all lost?

Historically whenever any society has experienced a decline into the cesspits of political immorality, an opposite reaction of reaffirmation of standards and principles has occurred. Leadership comes from very unusual people and places. Could Barry O'Farrell and NSW be the man and the State? His likely forthcoming election in late March 2011 as the Premier of New South Wales offers a rare opportunity to confront the culture of sleaze and rorting that has for so long been the calling card of Macquarie Street. Rather than relying on the 'religious right' and thereby providing the same-old avenues of attack by Sussex Street, could a libertarian progressive conservative government of New South Wales smash forever the Tammy Hall? Can the political culture of NSW be changed? Could this success permeate through the other States of Australia and across the Tasman and the South West Pacific? Could Australia play a role in the rebirth of Western Civilization? Stranger things have happened. Athens intellectually dominated Sparta. Rome militarily out-performed Carthage. The United Kingdom pioneered private enterprise and free trade. The United States for a time guaranteed Human Rights and Rule of Law. All were not likely winners in their early years.

Does it really matter?

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere is a well known saying of my generation and my answer to those who would challenge my condemnation of Gillard and Swan and their allies. The way things are done are as important as what is done. The Bush Presidency was a moral sewer because of this.

Is it possible for a derivative society, emerging from a dependence on an Anglo-Saxon heritage, to maintain an insular and parochial super-structure totally at variance to the realities of its domestic population and regional environment? The Jewish Lobby, guaranteed by New York and over dominant in Canberra, continues to deny a Two-State-Solution let alone the devolution of a Jewish-Israel and its replacement by a secular-state. Yet how else are the views of the Moslem citizens of Australia, Israel and the Palestinians to be represented? How else do we speak with integrity and honour to the millions of moderate

Moslem peoples from Lebanon to Indonesia? Israel is a nuclear state, Iran wants to be. Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Turkey and Brazil have quietly been lukewarm in their support for the US and EU. Australia's opinion as a major resources power does matter. A political coup against the Prime Minister whose stewardship saw the rise of Australia is a terrible global image.

Australia has become a Great Power – in the last two years on Kevin Rudd's watch.

Under the leadership of Kevin Rudd since December 2007 Australia became a Great Power. Whether that would have happened under Prime Minister John Howard is problematic but doubtful – he was too much of the shopkeeper. Gough Whitlam recognised the possibility from the beginning, Malcolm Fraser in later years, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating grasped the opportunities of APEC. Vietnam in the 1960s was the lowest point of this country's grovelling, something that Bob Menzies and his acolyte John Howard never understood.

Firstly why Great and secondly why under Rudd?

Australia is realising a destiny not unlike the USA because of, in part, geography and resources and also, in part, new technologies and circumstances based on the needs of other countries.

The USA as a continental domain dominates both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Similarly Australia is the strategic base for controlling the Western Pacific, Eastern Indian and Northern Southern Oceans.

The resources both continental and maritime that Australia owns/controls has accelerated its importance to the first rank of global economies. Not only China and East Asia, Indonesia and ASEAN, but also India and West Asia are increasingly dependent on the shipping and air routes that transverse Australia for their domestic growth and prosperity.

Modern technologies of security and defence, whether aerospace, telecommunications and transportation make large populations unnecessary and perhaps limiting for national governments. A materially wealthy country such as Australia has the ability not only to defend its territory but to inflict devastation on the shores of any regional would-be aggressor.

Most importantly the times or circumstances must be with or against a people – do people make the times or the times the people? I suggest the latter – Gough and Malcolm would understand. Many countries need Australia and none can afford any of the others to maintain a Monroe Doctrine. The Australian people and particularly the character of the nation, so subservient and lacking in vision, is about to be forced into the frontline of the history books of this 21st century. Not only the USA and PRC are to blame. Both the Moslem world and Africa will hold us accountable.

Just look at the Membership of the G20. South Africa, Saudi Arabia, India, Indonesia and Australia are in the Indian Ocean with Turkey accelerating its influence throughout West Asia. China, South Korea, Japan - major Australian trade partners – and the USA, Canada and Mexico in the Pacific Ocean with Brazil and Argentina already significant resources trading

nations in the region. And then there is the Old World – Australia’s cultural heritage – of the UK, France, Italy and Germany.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd played a significant role in the rise of the G20 to global prominence and in the on-going process of reform for international economic institutions such as the UN and its Agencies, WTO, World Bank, IMF, ILO and others. His advocacy for Climate Change action, whilst not initially successful at Copenhagen, will eventually be accepted and legislated policy. Similarly Resources Super-Profit Taxes will become common place throughout the world. He may or may not have won the Federal Election this year – in my view he would have consolidated his lead in both the Two-Party and Preferred Prime Minister opinion polls. Bob McMullen MP, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, openly argued so in the Federal ALP Caucus.

‘Change’ in the sense of significant domestic reform may have been for a time successfully ‘outlawed’ in Australia, but internationally the juggernaut of China envelopes the world relentlessly and therefore threatens to overwhelm this country on all fronts. Perhaps Rudd’s legacy, if there is not to be a political resurrection, will be the forward planning concerning Australia’s security outlined in the Defence White Paper, something I would argue that only Prime Minister Kevin Rudd could have accomplished.

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