

Australia resists U.K. 'greenhouse gas' agenda

by Robert Barwick

The scene is set for an all-out brawl at the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) in Edinburgh, Scotland, on Oct. 24-27, over British Prime Minister Tony Blair's plan to force all nations to sign onto greenhouse emission reduction targets. On the one side, backing Blair, is a grouping of nations called the Pacific Island States, which have been told that the global warming which is allegedly being created by "greenhouse gases," will cause their countries to disappear beneath the waves; on the other side, standing almost alone in the Commonwealth, is Australia, whose government has consistently rejected the Blair agenda.

For Blair, success at CHOGM is crucial: The 52-member Commonwealth of Nations, the modern incarnation of the British Empire, is the largest single voting bloc at world forums such as the UN General Assembly, and a unified Commonwealth stance will assist him in forcing the rest of the world to agree to the cuts at the climate conference in Kyoto, Japan, on Dec. 5. Despite the Australian government's efforts to keep the topic of the greenhouse emissions cuts off the CHOGM agenda, the Commonwealth secretary general nominated climate change and sea-level rises as crucial issues for the Commonwealth in his bi-annual statement that precedes each CHOGM—a clear sign that the British Crown is determined to achieve its objective.

Although the Australian government of Prime Minister John Howard has publicly accepted the fraudulent science behind the global warming hoax, as have seemingly all other governments, it has vigorously disputed the need for set targets. A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade report calculated that Blair's emissions reduction targets, of 15% below 1990 levels, would cost Australia \$70 billion in new investment, and 90,000 jobs—a huge impact on a country of only 18 million people.

Howard laid out Australia's position in an address to the Australian Chamber of Manufactures on Oct. 6. "Australia cannot sign up to proposals that would lead to the export of jobs and our energy-efficient minerals- and metals-processing industries," Howard said. "There is a call that Australia's growing economy be burdened with a new, unrealistic, and unfair speed limit upon growth."

Meg McDonald, the Australian Ambassador to the Environment who was appointed by Howard to head up the Australian team at Kyoto, has rejected the Blair push for "legally binding" targets, on the grounds of "national sovereignty."

Australia has proposed a plan whereby nations can negotiate their own targets. The Australian plan, according to Howard, "promotes the national interest by offering the prospect of genuine improvements to the world environment without imposing speed limits on Australian industry and Australian economic growth."

British attacks

Because of its position, Australia has come under attack from the highest level of the British oligarchy. At a meeting of the Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA) at Chatham House in London, the venue where Sir Henry Kissinger in 1983 admitted to operating for the British while he was U.S. secretary of state, Britain's Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Derek Fatchett snarled, on Oct. 14, "It would be a mistake for Australia to find itself outside of a world of consensus, to appear to be enjoying the wealth and the riches of development whilst at the same time probably preventing other people having that in a world that is safer. Whether that can be described as selfish is another question, but certainly, I think there is a need for a change of Australia's position."

The aptly named Michael Grubb, Energy and Environment head at the RIIA, said that CHOGM should be the deadline for determining "whether Australia is going to be inside

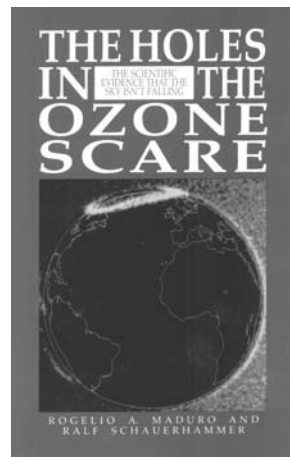
U.S. environmental groups were given millions of dollars in the past five years to spread scare stories about a man-made ozone hole that would cause cancer on Earth.

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this tent, or out of it,” and that Australia was on “thin ice” and did not have “a tenable negotiating position.”

The Australian head of Prince Philip’s World Wide Fund for Nature, David Butcher, also attacked Howard’s stance, saying that Australia would be completely alone if Howard continued with his campaign.

Perhaps coincidentally, but perhaps not, Howard’s government has been rocked by scandal in recent weeks, that saw him forced to sack three key ministers in one week, over alleged excessive travel claims. It was the single-worst scandal ever endured by an Australian government, apart from the 1975 sacking of the government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam by the Queen.

Revive nuclear energy

One of the scandal’s victims is Science and Technology Minister Peter McGuaran. McGuaran had been the driving force behind a recent reinvigoration of Australia’s nuclear industry, which, due to a political decision in 1967, is virtually nonexistent, save for one small nuclear reactor used to produce medical isotopes. Half of the so-called greenhouse gas emissions is carbon dioxide (CO₂), one source of which is the burning of fossil fuels. As Australia’s electricity production is largely reliant upon coal- and gas-fired power plants, any sane strategy to reduce greenhouse emissions, without crippling industry and development, would necessarily involve increasing use of nuclear power, which has zero emissions. Even the Japanese, the hosts of the Kyoto summit, admit that the strict greenhouse reduction targets they have set themselves are reliant upon them having 20 new nuclear power plants operational by 2010.

In the event of McGuaran’s departure, it is not known whether any of his plans will survive in the government; however, a recent public statement by Resources Minister Warwick Parer, who pointed out that the best way to reduce emissions is to use nuclear power, indicates that they might.

Terrorists brought into play

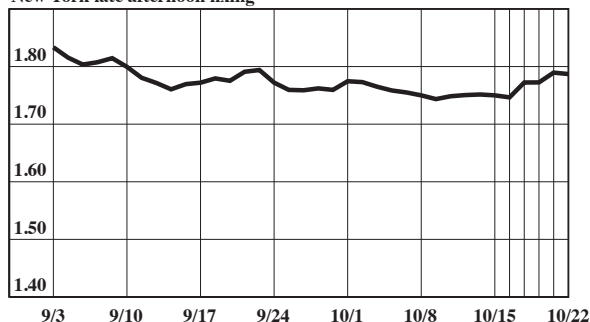
On Oct. 20, eleven activists from Greenpeace, which is linked to the terrorist group Earth First!, breached the security of Kirribilli House, the Australian prime minister’s official residence in Sydney, and occupied the roof, while two of Howard’s children were inside. The activists unfurled banners attacking Howard’s position on the greenhouse emissions cuts, and tried to erect solar power panels, before finally coming down and being arrested for trespassing. Greenpeace is run by the British Lord Melchett, the heir to the ICI chemical fortune.

The incident perhaps best illustrates what is at stake at the CHOGM meeting: the genocidal plans of the British oligarchy’s empire, as opposed to the welfare of the nation-state. It remains to be seen whether Howard can successfully continue to stand up for the nation-state, in the face of immense pressure. If Tony Blair has his way, Howard won’t.

Currency Rates

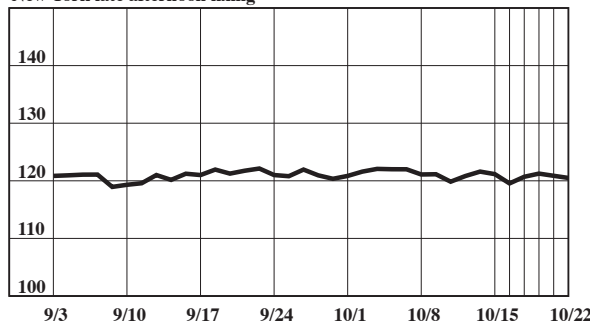
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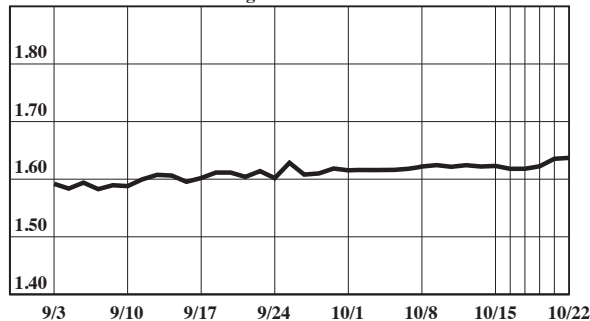
The dollar in yen

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The British pound in dollars

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