

Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick

Australia To Invade Solomons

As with Iraq, the sovereignty of the nation-state is out and neo-colonialism is in.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who enthusiastically endorsed the invasion of Iraq, is smarting from the same kind of heat that's on Britain's Tony Blair and the U.S. "chicken-hawks" under Vice President Dick Cheney: The lies they told, to motivate the war, are now exposed. The Howard Administration, however, has not yet deviated from its profile as loyal henchmen of a new, imperial world order.

Even as the forged-document scandal intensifies in Australia and around the world, Australia is preparing a new imperial-style venture—to restore "order" in the Pacific, by intervening in a social crisis in the Solomon Islands. That Pacific nation, with its population of one-half million people, has suffered an economic breakdown. Armed militias are gaining strength and threaten to overwhelm the Solomons government.

On June 25, Howard told Parliament that Australia would act on Solomons Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza's request for an intervention force, mustering 2,000 police and troops primarily from Australia and New Zealand. "It is not in Australia's interests to have failed states in our region," Howard intoned. (In reality, Australia has abetted the development of chaos in nearby Pacific states—including resource-rich Papua New Guinea, which is also descending into ungovernability—by its fanatical pro-free trade policies.)

As in the case of the law to turn the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) into a secret police,

passed just two days later, Howard's Solomons intervention overturns 50 years of policy tradition. The government is aligning the country with the Cheney-centered neo-conservative war party in Washington: imperialism abroad, police state at home.

The Solomons intervention means a full-scale assault on the principle of national sovereignty. As recently as February, Australia's foreign policy White Paper had declared a non-intervention policy for the Pacific, stating, "Australia cannot presume to fix the problems of the South Pacific countries. *Australia is not a neo-colonial power.*" Moreover, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer wrote in the *Australian* of Jan. 8, "Sending in Australian troops to occupy the Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme. It would be widely resented in the Pacific region. It would be very difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers. And for how many years would such an occupation have to continue? And what would be the exit strategy?"

But on June 26, when Downer elaborated Howard's pledge, he said that sovereignty was no longer absolute, as Australia pursued a new foreign policy in the "real world." The July 15 issue of the *Bulletin* observed that this "exotic form of gunboat diplomacy" became possible for the government as an "Iraq war dividend," because it seems to have gotten away politically with tailing the Anglo-Americans into that invasion.

"This 'real world' is where the Howard government's foreign policy operates," Downer thundered at the

National Press Club. "We cannot afford to be complacent and we cannot afford to spend time and effort on processes and institutions that are marginal to our interests. Iraq was a clear example of how outcomes are more important than blind faith in principles of non-intervention, *sovereignty*, and multilateralism. The reality is that our interests are global. . . . *Sovereignty in our view is not absolute.* Acting for the benefit of humanity [sic] is more important."

Lyndon LaRouche's associates in the Citizens Electoral Council (CEC) are leading the Australian opposition to this warped notion of what is a "benefit for humanity." The circulation of 30,000 copies of a special Australian edition of the LaRouche campaign pamphlet, "The Children of Satan, the 'Ignoble Liars' Behind Bush's No-Exit War," exposed the neo-conservatives behind the push for a "clash of civilizations," as well as Howard's fascist laws, and catalyzed the scandal over the bogus intelligence used to justify the Iraq war.

Now Howard will have no peace from the uproar over faked intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In mid-July, Australian-born former UN weapons inspector Richard Butler went on national television to denounce Howard for having "pumped it up" before the war, when Howard talked about "mammoth quantities" of Iraqi WMD. At a higher political level, former conservative Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, in an op-ed in the July 14 *Sydney Morning Herald* titled "The End of Our Independence?" wrote, "Some would believe that we are now a completely subservient ally." As evidence, he pointed to Australia's "uncritical support" of the United States and "apparent loss of purpose and independence."