

Let's give the man credit. Within a remarkably short period of time Donald Trump has succeeded in pissing off a remarkably large and diverse chunk of the world's population, ranging from the global (women) to regional (Muslims, Palestinians) to very specific (black American football players). Trump has done something to offend everyone. This country is no exception.

The advent of Trump provides an unprecedented opportunity to take a good, hard look at Aotearoa's place in the world. And to ask the question - why are we still a loyal member of the American Empire? As the old saying goes, you are judged by the company you keep. But let's be very clear, from the outset – this is not about Donald Trump. He is simply the catalyst who offers us a once in a lifetime opportunity to build this campaign and create a truly non-aligned Aotearoa. AIM's focus is the Empire and this country's place in it – who the Emperor happens to be at any given time is neither here nor there.

AIM Is Not About Trump But The Bigger Picture

- It's time for this country to pull the plug, to finish the business started in the 1980s which saw NZ both nuclear free and out of ANZUS; and to break the chains - military, intelligence, economic and cultural - that continue to bind us to the American Empire. The Americans are very proud of having won their independence from the British Empire; it's time for us to do the same from the American Empire. Let's deal with the world on our terms, not on those dictated from whichever empire we happen to be a junior member of at the time.
- **AIM's goal is initiate and drive a nationwide dialogue to advance the case for a non-aligned Aotearoa based on policies of economic, military and political independence.**
- **What is AIM? It's a campaign, not an organisation. And definitely not a new political party.**
- Since AIM was first publicised, there have been comments on it not including reference to tino rangatiratanga or the whole issue of internal

sovereignty and independence. This is a valid comment. Equally, AIM makes no mention of internal class or gender relations. Its initial focus is external, on Aotearoa's place in the world, specifically in the American Empire. Tino rangatiratanga and other internal questions will form part of the national dialogue that AIM wants to kick off.

AIM thinks that gaining true independence from the American Empire, and becoming non-aligned, is an idea whose time has well and truly come. It is not "anti-American" (or "racist" or "xenophobic", for that matter). We stand with the American people who are fighting back in their millions against the daily outrages being perpetrated by Trump and his reactionary billionaire cronies. We stand with them as we have stood with them in common causes ranging from the war in Vietnam to the invasion of Iraq and the campaign to impose the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) on our peoples

This is hardly a radical position anymore – pillars of the Establishment are also calling for more independence from the American Empire. For example, the Christchurch *Press* published an editorial (18/2/17) entitled: "Ties With US Must Be On NZ's Terms". To which we say, hear, hear! To quote: "What has to be remembered is that New Zealand has also grown up a lot since the ANZUS tiff 30 years ago. The anti-nuclear stance has matured into a more robustly independent New Zealand foreign policy".

"The old alliances with Britain and the US are in the past. New Zealand is now more interested in the United Nations and other multilateral arrangements. Our independent small-nation stance will become more important in the Trumpian era, when US foreign policy will become more uncertain and unpredictable. Our helpful American friends are very welcome here, but it is good to extend the hand of friendship on our own terms, and not as a junior partner in an outdated alliance".

What Would A Non-Aligned Foreign Policy Look Like?

It doesn't mean isolationism. It would mean that New Zealand would pick our allies and, if neces-



Empire but also about cutting all vestigial ties with our original Empire, namely dear old Mother England. Get shot of Mother England and Uncle Sam. It's called leaving home and living your own life and it's what all of us do in the much vaunted "real world" that we keep getting told about. It's called being independent.

But we do not advocate NZ transferring its allegiance to become a loyal servant of the arising Chinese Empire. Why jump from the frying pan into the fire? Let's stay independent of anyone's empire.

Neutrality should be on the agenda of that dialogue. Armed neutrality is a well-established practice globally. Does anybody think countries like Switzerland, Sweden or Austria are disadvantaged, poor, or isolated as a result of their long entrenched national policy of armed neutrality? The NZ peace movement put in a lot of work promoting positive neutrality in the 1980s as part of the successful campaign that made NZ nuclear free and out of ANZUS.

A non-aligned Aotearoa would be the opposite of "isolationist". It would pursue an activist foreign policy. There is plenty of unfinished business.

Let's spread "the Kiwi disease" and actively work for a nuclear free world, one country or region at a time, if necessary.

Let's demand that all the nuclear powers, overt or covert, disarm and dismantle their weapons of mass terror and genocide. Let's speak truth to power and tell countries such as Australia and the US what we find abhorrent in areas such as their human rights and race relations practices. Because that's what's friends do.

There have been some encouraging signs of this with the Ardern government politely offering to help Australia solve its self-imposed mess vis a vis the refugees cruelly imprisoned and then abandoned on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island. But the Aussies said "mind your own business, little brother". NZ's response should be: "This is our own business. Human rights abuses are everyone's business".

Regionally, Aotearoa needs to be much more activist.

As a First World capitalist economy we are part of the climate change problem that threatens the whole world and nowhere more imminently than our tiny Pacific neighbours. There is clamour for NZ to take

sary, our wars, on a case by case basis, decided first and foremost by what is in the interests of the New Zealand people, not the interests of foreign governments and/or corporations. It would involve cutting the strings that continue to bind us to the American Empire. Specifically:

- get out of the Five Eyes spy alliance (with the US, UK, Canada and Australia), and pull the plug on the ANZUS-in-all-but-name military and intelligence alliance with Trump's increasingly dangerous and unhinged US. Renounce the recent Wellington and Washington Declarations with the US. Get out of the American wars that we are already in, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan and definitely stay out of any new wars that Trump may try to drag us into, such as in Korea.
- the NZ Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) spy bases at Waihopai and Tangimoana (which are US National Security Agency bases in all but name) must be closed;
- the GCSB, which is simply a junior subcontractor for the NSA, must be abolished. Cyber-security (the excuse offered for its existence) can be provided by a dedicated non-spy Government agency.
- the US military transport base at Christchurch Airport, which has been there for more than 60 years, must be demilitarised, to end it providing cover for US military and intelligence activities that have nothing to do with providing logistic support for peaceful scientific research in Antarctica.

AIM believes that not only should the national dialogue be about cutting the ties with the American

in more refugees and AIM fully supports that – the inhabitants of these doomed atolls need to be at the top of the list. All of them, if necessary – we’re only talking thousands of people. This is not a solution to the problem of climate change (that’s a whole other, but vitally related, issue, one which Trump is actively making worse) – it is merely a reaction to the problem, a recognition that we have a responsibility to help our neighbours whom we have harmed.

There are other regional issues that Aotearoa should be addressing. Decolonisation of France’s Pacific empire is an obvious one. Support the benighted people of West Papua to gain their freedom from Indonesia, in the same way we (very belatedly) supported the East Timorese people. Confront the government of the Philippines over its shocking human rights record (President Duterte makes Trump look like a sensitive new age guy). Offer the peace-making skills that we demonstrated so successfully in Bougainville to help the Philippines to find an end to the wars that have wracked it for more than half a century. These are some regional examples of where Aotearoa could offer to “lend a hand” (to quote Jacinda Ardern on the Manus Island refugees).

AIM & Globalisation

Would a non-aligned Aotearoa want to get out of the international market? No, why would we? We’re an international trading nation and always have been. Bill Rosenberg, Policy Director/Economist of the Council of Trade Unions, has written: “Could We Have A People-Friendly Globalisation?”. To quote: “I suggest that what we should seek as far as possible is consistency between our aims at home and our international aims. Wellbeing should be primary. Agreements should recognise as primary the right of each nation to make rules in its citizens’ interests in certain essential areas”.

“An example is in areas fundamental to their wellbeing including health, education, safety, environment, conservation, culture, human (including labour) rights, and actions it considers necessary to address disadvantage of social groups, inequalities of income and wealth, and inequalities of outcomes. Within those limits, intentional trade barriers can then be reduced. The process of developing these agreements should be as similar as possible to the development of domestic legislation, with much greater openness and public consultation”.

Bill quotes other experts who write that what they call “hyper globalisation” is a direct threat to both democracy and the nation state. Bill writes: “I unashamedly choose a working democracy: The point of this is certainly not to advocate closing up the borders. That would be daft. The point is that the current intense model of globalisation – hyper globalisation – must be reformed to make it friendly to democracy within nation states”.

Bill’s whole article is well worth reading – it is in the February 2017 *CTU Monthly Economic Bulletin*, which is [online](#). AIM has also written a [paper on trade](#). The shorter, downloadable, [leaflet](#).

(Full URLs are available at the rear of this publication)



Things have not got off to an encouraging start with the new Government. In Opposition, Labour came out against the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), although pretty feebly and not very convincingly. But no sooner was Jacinda in office than she and David Parker were jetting off overseas to proclaim NZ’s support for the TPPA (which is now minus the US) and to urge less gung ho countries to sign it.

So, having been elected on a platform of opposing the TPPA, Labour blithely turned around and immediately supported it, whilst claiming that it had achieved some “reforms” to it, such as stopping foreign speculators buying houses (it was so anxious to make sure that could be done without triggering TPPA problems that it avoided the word “ban” at all, instead declaring all house sales to foreign speculators to involve “sensitive land”, which is covered under existing law).

The reality soon became apparent when it discovered that the Government couldn’t implement even minor election promises like taxing foreign

companies that are granted access to NZ water for virtually nothing, bottle it and export it for profit. Why? Because that would not be allowed under the TPPA (or several other “free trade” deals that NZ is already signed up to).

How Would This Affect Kiwis’ Daily Lives?

How would being non-aligned and truly independent affect ordinary New Zealanders in their daily lives? For starters, it would give the people of this country more control over our own destiny. It’s a lesson we learned when we adopted the nuclear free policy a generation ago – despite all predictions, the sky didn’t fall. With regards to transnational corporations and foreign individuals buying New Zealand companies and land, the central principle would be that their presence here would have to be genuinely deemed to be in the national interest and in the public interest.

This is our home and they are visitors to our home – the home owner sets the rules for the visitors. Let’s apply that slogan that we keep being told in other contexts – it is a privilege, not a right. As far as foreign purchases of NZ rural land are concerned, there is a good case to be made for a blanket ban. If that is deemed “aspirational”, then the “realistic” option is to only allow land to be leased by foreigners, not bought.



AIM sees capitalism as the problem, not the solution

This has got nothing to do with immigration. We have no argument with people from overseas wanting to live in this country. But what we do need a lot less of are the foreign absentee owners buying up and sealing off great tracts of NZ’s rural land for use as boltholes or private playgrounds. AIM is very pleased that the Government announced that the rules around foreigners buying NZ farmland have been tightened up. But this new regime “does not change the rules regarding acquisitions of significant business assets”, to quote from the press release

announcing it. Land sales, although they get a lot of attention, only involve tens of millions of dollars.

The real guts of any modern economy, the high rollers' lounge of the capitalist casino, is the business sector. That's where the billion-dollar deals are done. And we've heard nothing from the Government about what, if anything, it plans to do about the transnational corporations (TNCs) that so dominate the NZ economy (apart from the commendable, but comparatively minor, aim of trying to get them to pay their fair share of tax). It needs to be a lot bolder. Labour in government is always terrified of upsetting business. Labour never has, and never will, confront the fundamental nature of the economic system. It always markets itself as the more attractive administrator of capitalism. The stated goal of this Government is to “put a human face on capitalism”.

But AIM sees capitalism as the problem, not the solution, and this needs to be part of the national dialogue.

The whole purpose of the Aotearoa Independence Movement campaign is to initiate and drive a nationwide dialogue to advance the case for a non-aligned Aotearoa based on policies of economic, military and political independence. It is to provide the means for discussing, defining and deciding what would be involved in that, and everything that would flow from it. To decide what that would mean and how to get there. This is a discussion that Aotearoa needs to have and that now is the time to have it.

Article URLs

CTU Monthly Economic Bulletin,

<http://www.union.org.nz/economicbulletin186/>

AIM Trade Paper

<http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/aim/aim-on-trade.html>

AIM Trade Flyer

<http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/aim/aim-trade-flyer.pdf>



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