



Submission No 2

Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

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Organisation: Private submission

[REDACTED]

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Dr John Carter
The Sectariat
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Suite 1 / 120
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Dr John Carter

I enclose a submission for the forthcoming inquiry into Australian relations with Africa. It addresses the specific issues of trade, defence and security. I regard the proposed inquiry to be long, long overdue in light of recent developments.

I have had a long-standing interest in international issues, the global economy, developing countries and defence and security. I enclose a brief Resume for your reference and consideration.

If you would like to interview me as a contributor to the forthcoming inquiry please do not hesitate to contact me as soon as possible. I will require adequate time, however, to request leave from my employer. I earn my living as a Process Worker in the car-components industry in South Australia and work as a freelance journalist and researcher in my non-work time.

The submission takes the form of a report in two parts written earlier this year for the International Committee of SA Unions which was the local component of the main ACTU network. I have been an active member of the trade-union movement for many years and am also a member of the Australian Labor Party, although forward this submission in a personal capacity. Please can this letter be used as an introduction which also highlights important background issues with the enclosed submission.

The report was given to the June meeting of the International Committee as agenda item 5.5.1 : Madagascar, things not being quite what they seem. It was based on information readily available from published sources, largely the Australian newspaper. The specific information about Madagascar was obtained from the internet. The report was then enclosed with minutes and circulated as correspondence within ACTU networks. It was also used as an article for the mass media in Australia and overseas.

I hope my submission enhances the discussion about the role of this country toward Africa in the forthcoming inquiry. I also hope the previous publicity of the report causes no problems with official parliamentary procedures and initial classification of submissions.

I regard an increased Australian role in Africa inevitable, due to:

- a. globalisation, which has increased opportunities for the business-classes to exploit foreign economies with greater ease;
- b. changes within United States-based defence and security systems which allocate a greater role for this country as a hub in an enlarged region.

While these developments obviously please the business-classes who use their endeavours to enrich themselves, problems arise which potentially expose Australia to the likelihood of being drawn into conflict within a continent which is no stranger to instability and military intervention.

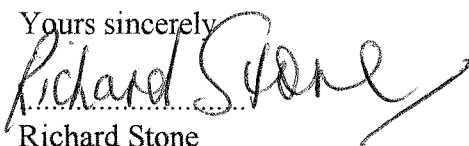
The fact that China has increased its trade with Africa to US\$109 billion in the past five years, which amounts to a 400 per cent increase, provides evidence of an increased influence of the PRC and the changing balance of forces within the global economy. The developments will expose Australia to greater risks with foreign policy as this country challenges the hegemony of the PRC in Africa. Escalating tensions between countries competing for greater hegemony are set to be played-out in Africa; a development strangely reminiscent of the previous dramas of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, which culminated with the First World War.

The fact any military and related assistance provided by this country to defend and extend the interests of the business-classes will be paid by the taxes of working people raises obvious concerns about our domestic economy. The finance could be better used elsewhere.

In conclusion, it remains a great shame the perpetrators of overseas missions specified in my submission cannot find other activities to be more productively employed and make the world a better and safer place for all its inhabitants. Properly supervised and efficient aid programmes, such as APHEDA, to assist genuine economic development and educational systems which encourage informed participatory decision-making for the mass of Africans would be a far more suitable role for Australia to take with its relations with the continent. Such assistance would truly make Australia proud. I doubt, however, whether such sensibilities and practicalities would even make the lower end of the present agendas pursued by the Australian business-classes.

Thank you

Yours sincerely


Richard Stone




SUBMISSION

PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

RICHARD STONE

NOVEMBER / 2009



10/11/09

GLOBALISATION AND NEO-COLONIALISM PART ONE

RICHARD STONE


MAY / 2009

Neo-colonialism, a term used by political economists to explain unequal and exploitative relations between advanced, industrial countries and the developing world, remains highly appropriate for our understanding of contemporary forces at work in the global economy. It enables an understanding of the correlation between economic, political, diplomatic and military forces and developments.

The military 'contingency' plans and objectives of the advanced, industrial countries, lead the way for economic goals; trade continues to follow the flag, in classic imperialist mode.

While impoverished developing countries, such as East Timor, struggle to deal with attempts to exploit and undermine their economies, massive military expenditure is directed toward greater control of the world by the United States and countries such as Australia which remain duty-bound to follow directives due to 'strategic relationships' and alliances.

Globalisation has provided enormous opportunities for the rich and powerful to expand their wealth and influence. It is, however, not what those responsible do but how they do it which remains important. Behind a panacea handed out by those akin to medicine-men in the days of the Wild West, successive US administrations embarked upon a wave of globalisation directed through international financial institutions as they sought a central position in the world economy through the promotion of so-called free trade agreements.

Directive after directive coerced countries to adopt policies of the 'free market: deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation. The policies were directed toward enabling investors in the advanced, industrial countries to flung their capital to the four corners of the globe. The moves culminated in the so-called New World Order and the triumphalism of capitalism and imperialism.

The so-called New World Order was defined by then President Clinton as: the maintenance of a strong defence capability and promotion of co-operative security measures; the opening of foreign markets to spur economic global growth; the promotion of US-style democracy abroad.

The policies pursued by successive US administrations were responsible for dramatic increases in wealth and instability. In 1980 the income of the advanced, industrial countries amounted to eleven times that of the developing world. By 2000, it had risen to 23 times. The US-enforced policies were responsible for doubling world inequality in twenty years.

In the period 1980 to 2000, the share of world income held by the developing countries fell from 29 per cent to 19 per cent. The policies certainly benefited the wealthy and powerful, speeding-up the process of exploitation. In the period 1970-80 inequality grew at a rate of 2.4 per cent. During the period 1980-2000 it rose to an annual rate of 3.9 per cent. Today, many political systems across the developing world are in danger of collapsing, often with dreadful consequences and far-reaching implications for regional security.

While the present recession has affected millions of wage-earners across the world it does not appear to have caused the rich and powerful too much pain and suffering. Last September the New York-based Boston Consulting group published its findings from an extensive survey of financial developments. It found personal wealth had grown by five per cent during the previous twelve months. The top one per cent of world households owned 35 per cent of global wealth.

At the other end of the scale, poverty and marginalisation continues to increase. Casualisation and 'flexibility', hallmarks of 'free market' economics, have caused dramatic increases in unemployment in recent years. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) reported about 200 million workers without work last year. The total had risen from 190 million in 2007, 187 million in 2006, and 140 million in 1997.

In many advanced, industrial countries hardship and home repossessions are common, families living in poverty and being made homeless. In the developing countries the plight of millions of people is dire. Almost half of the population of the world exist on less than \$2 a day. A further 1.3 billion fare little better, not earning enough to lift themselves above the two dollar a day barrier used to define poverty.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the most dynamic sector of the global economy and home to about sixty per cent of world population, the masses continue to live in poverty. About 641 million people, approximately twenty per cent of regional population live on less than a dollar a day. An even larger number live on little more. In the Philippines a third of the entire national workforce exists on the equivalent of 78 cents a day.

It is not difficult to understand the rationale and driving neo-colonial mentality within business groups in the advanced, industrial countries.

In January, 2008, the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, heard a report from the McKinsey Global Institute. It specified a third of world assets were held in the US. In comparison, the 'emerging markets' held a mere \$23.6 trillion. Their economic growth rates, however, were twice that of the US. Business leaders sought to maximise returns on investments by grabbing greater shares of the developing world to exploit. The moves have also enabled business leaders to move holdings off-shore to gain exemption from taxation and other regulations which restrict accumulation of mega-profits.

Recent moves by Australia to develop an advanced satellite system positioned at 72 degree east longitude over Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean provide insights into the linkage between defence objectives and the neo-colonial economic goals of the business-classes.

Tucked within Australian defence budgets lies plans to pay \$230 million for an Intelsat 22 satellite due to be launched in mid-2012. Manufactured by Boeing Space and various intelligence organisations the system is linked to existing UHF bandwidth used by the Pentagon and other government departments. The Intelsat system will provide the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) with facilities suitable for small mobile terminals in remote locations used by ground forces and the Special Operations Command on 18.25 Hz UHF channels. The ADF will also have the option of making further use of bandwidth with access to C-band and Ku-band provision.

What remains significant is the use of commercial satellite systems for defence; most of the capacity will be leased to corporate customers under 'usual terms' while being owned by the ADF. The development fundamentally changes the manner in which defence budgets are also used for the private sector and business purposes and is referred to in military jargon as a 'piggyback payload'. The procedure is already used extensively by the Pentagon which directs an estimated 80 per cent of its military communications through commercial satellite systems.

The new Intelsat 22 system will provide the ADF and 'its customers' with communications coverage for a region ranging from Africa, to the Arabian Gulf, south Asia and Afghanistan, to countries closer to our shores in traditional spheres of influence. The range enables linkage to the recently established US Command Centre in Rwanda in the east, designed to maximise the role of the Pentagon across the Africa region and counter growing Chinese influence developed through favourable trading relations. In the north and east, existing military installations also enable strategic links to wider communications systems.

The fact Australia hosts a total of 124 mining companies operating across Africa and is at present involved in incursions in Afghanistan, an 'energy bridge' for vast oil deposits around the Caspian sea and gas deposits in Turkmenistan, raises questions about motives and military agendas. The new Intelsat 22 satellite would appear to be an important acquisition for those wishing to support forthcoming business endeavours with military adventures.

Another example of the links between defence and business lobbies is East Timor. A recent World Bank report about the country supported the view that while Australia

remains committed to extensive defence expenditure little has been done to develop the country for the benefit of the East Timorese. Official 'development aid' from Canberra in the 2008-9 period has allocated \$96.3 million and is focused upon security and rule of law. Little, however, has been done to deal with the underlying causes of political instability, marked by massive unemployment and lack of economic sustainability.

An estimated 36 per cent of East Timorese lived in poverty in 2001, today, it has been estimated to amount to half the population. Most citizens of the country live on the margins of their own society. Fleets of 'advisers' and 'aid-workers', meanwhile, continue to draw huge salaries for almost non-existent and non-operational programmes. Security issues are regarded as more important. The country, it should be noted, remains strategic for Australian 'interests' with huge deposits of oil and gas and jealously guarded to prevent foreign powers gaining access.

The recent signing, by Australia, of a Free Trade Agreement with the ASEAN grouping, also provides an insight into the dominant thinking of business agendas. Scheduled to be operational by no later than 1 January, 2010, the FTA will effectively link the Australian economy with those of the wider region; the most dynamic sector of the global economy. It is significant, however, China is not included within the FTA although remains a growing force in the region.

Recent moves to also establish an FTA between Australia and South Korea (ROK) can be viewed as another attempt to counter growing Chinese influence. In recent times the ROK has been drawn closer into the Chinese sphere of influence with favourable trading patterns; the proposed FTA would appear to be an attempt to draw it back into its previous status as a strategic buttress of western interests.

The recent Australian Defence White Paper, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, addresses the changing balance of forces across the region marked by China emerging as a power. The document, which legitimises an already existing trend toward a regional arms race and militarism, rests upon increased military expenditure until 2030 justified by a perceived 'sudden deterioration' in Australian security. Australia is set to purchase new submarines, planes and other military equipment despite acknowledging the chances of an attack upon the country as being 'very remote'.

The defence white paper provides useful insights into what are regarded as traditional Australian preoccupation's; threats to interests in the region around northern shores. The countries of close proximity have traditionally been referred to as 'the arc of stability', a term implicit within defence of Australia doctrines developed following the Second World War together with US defence and security treaties.

China, however, has been wooing governments across the region with favourable trade and embarked upon a diplomatic war with Taiwan for increased access to the region. The developments have not passed unnoticed by observers in Canberra and the Pentagon and those who wrote the recent white paper. There is little ambiguity in their statement: 'Australian interests are inevitably engaged if countries in the region become vulnerable to adverse influence of strategic competition'.

Australia appears to have been drawn into a growing trend of militarism across the Asia-Pacific region, at the behest of the US which seeks to defend and further its hegemony. Whether the mass of the population of the region acknowledge the sovereignty of their countries is incompatible with the interests of military planners and oil companies remains to be seen.

GLOBALISATION AND NEO-COLONIALISM

PART TWO

RICHARD STONE


MAY / 2009

The relationship between globalisation and neo-colonialism has been highlighted with a coup in Madagascar in March. Behind the regime change of the almost forgotten country lying adjacent to the eastern coast of Africa also hide some powerful agendas.

Recent developments in Madagascar have some interesting implications for decision-makers in Canberra following the recent acquisition of an Intelsat 22 by the Australian Defence Forces (ADF).

Following months of rising tensions across Madagascar the Presidency of Marc Ravalomanana was toppled in March by popular demonstrations led by Andry Rajoelina, mayor of the capital, Antananarivo. The events reached major international press agencies and television channels briefly before slipping from popular attention. The full effects of the regime change, however, are likely to linger far longer as other agendas become clearer.

The narrow Mozambique Channel separating Madagascar from mainland Africa is a few hundred kilometres wide. It remains, nevertheless, a major sea-line for maritime vessels travelling the Indian Ocean. The politically sensitive nature of parts of Eastern Africa also contribute toward Madagascar achieving the status of an important geo-political and strategically-placed country.

The nearby Comoros Islands, likewise, also have similar status. The tiny islands were used by South African military intelligence, the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) operating in cahoots with French counterparts the Direction Generale des Services Exterieurs (DGSE) during African independence struggles during the 1970's and 1980's period. Secret surveillance, tracking and listening equipment monitored the movements and their Cuban support.

It was only, however, during recent court appearances in Paris by the legendary mercenary leader Bob Denard that sufficient evidence was disclosed to provide links between the DGSE and liaisons with apartheid South Africa. The secret relationship formed a vital part of French foreign policy across the continent and subsequent neo-colonial role following independence of former colonies.

The immediate post-independence history of Madagascar follows a common pattern. The country gaining independence from France in 1960. It then followed a strongly anti-Communist foreign policy linked to apartheid South Africa through the latter part of the Cold War. Strong tutelage from metropolitan France was, nevertheless, maintained. The relationship, however, was to briefly undergo turbulent change in the 1972-75 period.

In 1972, the strong French control of Madagascar ended abruptly as the country veered toward the Socialist bloc, establishing diplomatic links with China, North Korea (DPRK) and the former Soviet Union. While some western countries retained diplomatic support for the country, links between Madagascar and France, were strained. Madagascar embarked upon a wave of nationalisation aimed toward creating a socialist political system.

While the political ambitions of the Madagascan leadership did not reach fruition, it was leave a political legacy of hopes of a better future for the mass of the population despite their poverty-stricken existence. In 2002 Marc Ravalomanana assumed the presidency following hotly contested and disputed elections. The outgoing President, Didier Ratsiraka, a self-styled Marxist who had ruled the country for most of the previous three decades, still retained, however, claims to the leadership of the country together with a large support base within the electorate.

The international backers of President Ravalomanana soon revealed themselves. The governing administration soon adopted policies of the so-called New World Order at the behest of international financial institutions and compliant donor nations. Deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation were to become the order of the day.

The Ravalomanana administration was also successful winning the support of foreign investors interested in mineral exploration and extraction and oil deposits. Rio Tinto, Exxon Mobil and others poured millions of dollars into the country to win support and eliminate competition in the struggle for control of mineral wealth.

A tourism industry was also actively supported by the new presidency, catering for the richer end of the market. It exposed the mass of Madagascans to holidaymakers from elsewhere who basked in relative opulence while improving their suntans and hunting big-game.

Rising from the status of a milkman, President Ravalomanana used his political aspirations to become one of the richest men in Madagascar. As owner of Tiko, the main dairy company in the country, Ravalomanana wielded considerable economic and political power enabling re-election in 2006. It was, however, his failure to improve the living standards of the 20 million population which saw support for the administration ebb away in the subsequent two years.

The main characteristic of globalisation has been the rapid transfer of capital to remote areas of the globe for neo-colonial purposes. In Madagascar the concentration and accumulation of wealth within the elite at the expense of the mass of the population created an explosive situation. The protests against the Ravalomanana administration were also accompanied with questions about massive corruption.

Madagascar remains one of the poorest countries in Africa. An estimated 70 per cent of the population continue to exist on less than US\$1 a day. Even in Antananarivo many residents have no access to electricity and running water.

During the period two other developments also occurred which were to have a major bearing upon the Ravalomanana administration. In October, 2008, the South Korean multi-national Daewoo, announced it was aiming to lease one million acres of land in the south of Madagascar. The plans, officially, were to create a massive sweet-corn plantation with a yield of five million tonnes per annum by 2023. Leases on the land were awarded for 99 years. In addition, the Daewoo organisation also had plans to grab a further 300,000 acres for palm-oil production.

In recent times South Korea (ROK) has resumed its previous position as a stalking-horse and conduit for western interests following the end of the Roh presidency in 2008. The present compliant leadership of the country, around conservative President Lee Myung-bak in Seoul, slavishly follow plans formulated in other capital cities around the world. The policies include a greater role for the ROK elsewhere in the global economy and confrontation and aggression toward the northern DPRK in contrast to the Roh period which was marked by engagement and diplomacy.

Following announcement Daewoo were intent of beginning ventures in Madagascar, discontent with the Ravalomanana presidency grew into a credible opposition movement around Andry Rajoelina. The allegations Ravalomanana was running the country as a private business became more plausible for the mass of the population.

Secondly, the official visit to Chinese President, Hu Jintao, to Madagascar as guest of President Ravalomanana alarmed United States diplomatic opinion and raised serious concerns within the Pentagon about regional security issues. While many observers regarded the visit as little other than a further business venture in the offing, US defence and security systems retain encirclement and containment policies toward China. While President Hu Jintao appeared primarily concerned about development of iron-ore projects in the country, the Pentagon feared sea-port facilities would be arranged to enhance Chinese naval expansion strategies.

There is little doubt the US actively supported President Ravalomanana. Despite Madagascar being seemingly a relatively unimportant country, it possessed a high-level diplomatic ambassadorial post. It would also appear resident US Ambassador Niels Marquardt miss-read the situation, fearful a convenient and vital bridgehead to the African continent which safeguarded sensitive intelligence facilities on Diego Garcia was under threat. He stated in some official reports which have been declassified, that, 'I note with a great concern and a great deal of sadness that Madagascar is nearly on the verge of civil war'. What remains classified will have to wait until a later date for verification.

While over a hundred people were killed in fierce fighting and the Madagascan military and police were involved in the political disturbances, the US feared a loss of their influence; Ravalomanana was a compliant leader who served US interests well.

What further courses of action were taken by Marquardt to safeguard US interests remain unclear. It is significant to note, however, 'foreign-aid' sources conveniently dried-up during the period heightening fears by many Madagascans the country was veering toward bankruptcy and even poorer living standards.

Diego Garcia, situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean, remain central to the US National Security Agency (NSA) preoccupation with perceived threats to their defence and security. Linked closely into other intelligence networks, the Diego Garcia facilities provide strategic regional surveillance as part of global security. In recent times a main focus has been upon the balance of forces in the wider region and emergence of China as a regional power.

China has also had a long-time interest in Africa. Until the mid-1970's period it provided an anti-imperialist counter-weight with assistance for economic development to many African countries. In the period, 1955-77, China was responsible for providing US\$142 million of military equipment to African countries. Thousands of technicians, agricultural engineers and medical doctors also saw service in sensitive Cold War arenas across the continent. Many African students were able to study in China.

Chinese foreign policy toward Africa since the 1970's period has, however, been primarily concerned with trade which in 1977 reached US\$817 million. Beijing, nevertheless, maintained its reliable contacts from the previous period of involvement which were responsible for invaluable assistance. During the 1990's Sino-African trade relations grew by 700 per cent. In the 2000-04 period, trade further doubled. In 2007, China was responsible for investing US\$4.5 billion in African infrastructure projects which amounted to more than the allocations of the countries of the G8.

Today, many African countries view China favourably as a good partner in trading relations. Behind the strong Sino-African trade relations also lie extensive diplomatic relations marked by official functions and state visits.

The developments have not gone unnoticed by the US who have sought to challenge the Chinese position. Using the so-called War on Terror as a pretext, the US has attempted to strengthen its relations with some African countries. Its foreign policy is noted as possessing a preoccupation with cheap sources of oil. A number of military treaties and agreements have been established with the specific intention of gaining access to key-markets and providing militarily secure communications channels.

On 23-24 March, 2004, military chiefs-of-staff from a number of what the US regarded as strategically-placed African countries, were invited to a meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, hosted by the US military European Command (US-EUCOM). The main agenda item of the 'secret meeting' was defence of sensitive areas between oil-fields in the north and those closer to the Gulf of Guinea. Those in attendance were invited to assist with the compilation of a list of 'terrorist organisations' which might hinder and obstruct US interests.

President Bush also travelled extensively in Africa during the period visiting a number of strategically-placed countries including Rwanda, where a new African

Regional Command Centre was established. The facilities provide the Pentagon with direct access into Africa while its Centre for Strategic Studies, a branch of the Pentagon National Defence University, provides high-level training for military officials and corporate leaders.

By 2004 the US was directly involved in military training of decision-makers in 44 African countries. Tens of thousands of personnel have been trained by special operations groups linked to the CIA.

Observers should brace themselves for huge increases in human rights abuses. Military officials and those subject to their training procedures tend to be devoid of social, political and economic vision. Left to their own initiatives, they invariably resort to the only behaviour they understand; elimination of opposition. Having been trained in anti-subversive and counter-insurgency strategies imported from the US they are more inclined to act like rogue and occupation military apparatus, rather than providing protection for their own and other people. United States military assistance to the developing countries does not assist national-building but is invariably used to further neo-colonial plans made operational through ruling elites and specific tribal groupings.

The timing of attempted coups in Sao Tome and Principe and later, Equatorial Guinea, provide ample evidence of a pattern of behaviour with unmistakable characteristics which continues to unravel to the present day; hidden hands, pursuing hidden agendas.

The attempted coup in Sao Tome and Principe, took place in July, 2003. The country, a tiny Gulf of Guinea state rich in oil, precipitated US military intervention in the area. Significantly, only three months later, a number of mostly-US oil companies offered more than US\$500 million to establish exploration programmes. The sum of money was double what the government in Sao Tome and Principe had actually expected. The fact the Commander-in-Chief of US-EUCOM, General Carlton Fulford, was identified when he also visited Sao Tome in October, 2002, supposedly for establishing a regional mandate in West Africa and training coastguards, remains embarrassing for the Pentagon. It has proved extremely difficult to explain away.

Developments in Equatorial Guinea with mercenary-leader Simon Mann continue to provide observers with insight into military minds intent on securing personal financial gain. The backers, directly or indirectly linked to oil companies, included a vast assortment of personnel from the business world including Mark Thatcher, son of the infamous Margaret who was main an honorary citizen of apartheid South Africa in 1985.

Australian involvement during a the period has also proved noteworthy. In the period 2001-06, trade relations with Africa grew by 10.5 per cent. A issued statement by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade specified Australian involvement in Africa during the five-year period had risen to be worth US\$15 billion. Exports from Australia had risen by 54 per cent. Africa was also host to 124 mining companies registered in Australia which in 2006 spent US\$160 million to realise, in some cases, huge profits.

The acquisition, by the Australian Defence Force, therefore, of a new Intelsat 22 satellite system costing an estimated US\$167 million with a range covering Africa to Australia, should come as no surprise to observers. Situated over Diego Garcia, the new Australian satellite is expected to be operational by mid-2012. The acquisition of the satellite, earmarked for operations by the ADF with 'regional direct voice and data communications' has been specifically designed for use by Special Operations Command.

To date, however, the ADF have the grand total of 23 personnel in Africa: 15 in Sudan with Operation Azure and a further 8 in Darfur with Operation Hedgerow which assists United Nations and African Union Missions. Observers might well question why 23 soldiers require access to such sophisticated and expensive telephonic equipment to speak to colleagues and send emails. The new satellite system, however, will possess facilities for 'corporate customers' to obtain reliable access to remote areas. It will provide mining and oil companies with much sought-after secure communications.

The added fact that western interests will now have to deal with a new administration governing Madagascar will, no doubt, cause problems. The first major policy decision of the new President Rajoelina was to cancel the deal with Daewoo which he referred to as 'neo-colonialism'. Rumours that former President Didier Ratsiraka wields considerable power behind the scenes of the new administration may also result in significant reversals of the 'free-market' policies pushed by the previous administration of Marc Ravalomanana.

Whatever future developments unfold in Madagascar, the present situation remains a legacy of the Bush period and sycophantic allies such as John Howard. Their continued adherence for 'free market' reforms amounted to continuing to force their will until something gave way. Due to their imperialist arrogance and general incompetence they never even considered it might be the credibility of their policies which was at stake.

The likes of Bush and Howard, however, do not have to live with the dreadful economic consequences of their policies. Millions of people throughout the world are not so fortunate being subject to economic policies which resemble modern-day pillaging and plunder of whole areas of the globe; they remain in poverty.

Despite possessing 12 per cent of global population, aid-programmes and 'free-market' economics have enabled Africa to only reach about one per cent of world GDP. Its volume of trade amounts to a mere two per cent of total world trade. A recent UN report also stated 40 per cent of Africans still live on less than US\$1 a day. Like the unfortunate residents of Madagascar, most Africans live within a global economy where wealth does not 'trickle-down' from the top. They, nevertheless, await the opportunity to claim a better future. If they follow the lead taken by the masses across Central and Latin America, Africans will also be claim it.
