

BISHOP HILTON DEAKIN launching Greg Poulgrain's *The incubus of intervention: conflicting Indonesian strategies of John F. Kennedy and Sukarno*

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I had to chase up my Latin dictionaries to find out what 'Incubus' meant. Apparently, it's a latter-day word in the Latin language, when Latin was decaying as a means of communication, in the 3rd and 4th centuries, until it decayed itself into the Italian language, Spanish, and all those other languages around the Mediterranean.

'Incubus' is a word that was used as a tag for what people in those days believed was an evil spirit that hovered around the world, and every now and again inspired people to do the wrong thing. And ... I say this with some carefulness the main aim of the 'incubus', was to have people who were in a state of flux, or mixed up in some fashion, to develop a sense of wanting to seek their pleasure on a person next to them. In other words, to have sex. Now that's quite extraordinary, but that's what I read. I'm not sure whether Greg read the same Latin dictionary to produce this book title, but if he has, it shows that he's a very widely read and studied man.

In the 1940s, when I was just starting to become a fairly snifty human being—I was a little boy in the Riverina, and I was brought up with a sense of terror. I lived in the bush, with my parents, and my parents kept on telling me that this country, would, in the next year or two, be taken over by the Japanese. I didn't know very much about Japan or the Japanese, but I'd heard recordings of the Japanese language on the radio, or the wireless as we called it in those days, and it was a most unspeakable sort of a language.

That time in history was a time when a lot of things began to collapse. For instance, the whole Nazi-socialist movement, the national-socialist movement of Nazism, and Adolf Hitler was one of the awful things that happened. Then there was the growth of the Communist powers in Eastern Europe and Russia, and so on. All of this was developing, and it was going to be a crushing experience for millions and millions of people, and it was going to be the death of millions and millions of people. And while that was going on, around Europe especially, and parts of Asia, with the Japanese invasion and so on, another collapse began to develop. The collapse was the collapse of colonialism as we understood it, of political colonialism. And it was essentially, not totally, but essentially British, French, Dutch. They were the three nations that held onto colonial structures, and forces, and economies, and politics around your country and my country.

We of course were part of the British colonialism, where we would send people to go fight for Queen and Country, or King and Country, and all that sort of stuff. And I remember when I was a kid, living in the bush, my parents discussing having to send butter to England, at something like five pence a pound, while we had to pay fifteen pence. I couldn't work out how this could happen. I was only a kid at the time, but trying to coming to grips with this sordid convoluted economic pressure that was going on around the world. And of course, if you were a farmer, my dad was a farmer, not a dairy farmer, but there were dairy farmers down the road, and they weren't paid much more than five pence by federal governments that were terribly pro-British.

At the time, in the Dutch East Indies, centred in Batavia (Jakarta), there were a few people who decided they liked the sound of independence. Sukarno was one of them. I'm told he didn't know what sort of an hegemony he wanted to produce in Indonesia. Was it going to be a federation of states? A unitary state? Was it going to be a united series of states like the United States? He eventually opted for the one that presently prevails. And a lot of people still regard that as having been an awful political mistake. That's the sort of mess that was going on. And stuck away in the middle of it of course was a little place that we call West Papua.

I couldn't believe it when I started reading Greg's book. Actually I read the book twice; the first time in about three days. I just couldn't put it down. And then I went back, and tried to be a little more analytical, and have a look at his sources, to see where he got all of his material from. And the mind boggles. The mind boggles.

I found the book disturbing, absolutely disturbing, and if it's the truth, awesomely disturbing. It had in it ... and I'm sure Greg would be able to give the exact sort of substantive evidence you must give in order to make the claim he makes on all these things. Especially when you start talking about analyses of things, and systemization of policies, you begin to shape up what you've been reading. And there were some evil people in the world, who had a lot to say about West Papua. And the two main substantive collectives of decision-making were the United

States of America and Indonesia. It's quite incredible how each of them played one another off. How each of them tried to develop a sense of control and possessiveness about the future of this part of the world.

Remember the decolonisation process being pushed by the United Nations around about this time, which was being backed by the one country, the United States, that was giving most of the money needed. It had to be liberal, democratic, structures to take place. Not dictatorships, not military dictatorships, not benign, or anything else, but liberal democracies. And of course, if they were going to be anything like America, god knows what might have happened to them all.

But that wasn't the main thing that was going on, and during my first read of the book I began to suspect that maybe there was a bit of building up of conspiracy theories. You know, conspiracy theory is a way of trying to understand things, but you haven't put your finger quite or right on it in order to prove a point at least that's the way I see it. But when I read the book the second time, no, it was much more substantive than that.

In America, there was a whole pile of people, and there's no point in giving names to them, but I will mention one, because I think he deserves it. He was such a bad man. And his name was Allen Dulles. He was a brother of John Foster Dulles. Some of you are old enough to remember him. John Dulles was a Secretary of State; you know the Hilary Clinton of Eisenhower days, and just as verbose I would have to say. But Allen was a malevolent person of the first order: a liar, a manipulator of people.

The one thing that struck me ... I kept on writing the notes, and every note was the same: 'There are no principles in this'. The only thing that seemed to me that Allen Dulles was after—not only him, but other people in the CIA in America, and other organisations, and also on the other side of Indonesia—they were after money, finance, the gospel of the economy, and especially, as it was expressed in tons of gold, in Freeport. And then when they began to realize that they were floating on billions of litres of oil and petrol and gas, there was an extraordinary manipulation of various organisations, structures, and decision-making processes in an effort to get control of all of these things. The Indonesians tried to do it, the Americans tried to do it, the Dutch tried to do it, and others tried to do it. But the one people, the one people, who were given no say in it, were the people who were living on top of it, namely the West Papuans.

When I'm saying this, I am telling a very similar story to the story that I could be telling you about East Timor. On the top of it you don't get ... although the Timorese are getting a bit now because they've got their independence.

I found all of this deeply unsettling. Because other people involved in the process of the decision-making were people like John F. Kennedy, and people held in high regard by political analysts around the world. Australia was playing, I think, almost the gesture of the court; we were small time in all of this. As a matter of fact, to tell you the honest truth, I don't think we've changed very much. If you want to analyse, and be both critical and honest about the shooting of two Australians for instance, and then find ourselves two days after it's all over that we are being lectured by those on high that we must be good friends with Indonesia or else, where do you go?

I'm hoping to persuade each of you to buy one of these books, and then get another fifty people to buy a book. I think Greg deserves congratulations for making it possible for us to find out something that's gone on not terribly far from our shores. Maybe in a negative sense, but I also suspect partly in a positive sense, we have made an addition to this whole thing as well.

This book is a very dense text. You look up the sources of information that Greg has used over many years, and you'll see just how this man has tried to put this thing together and make sense of it. Not only is it dense, but it's disturbing. And I think when you get hold of a book that should disturb you, it's worth reading.

So I congratulate Greg, and I hope the book does well. I hope it furthers the cause of the West Papuan struggle for freedom and for independence. Because in the long run, nature gave them these gifts, not to the bigwigs in the United States and Indonesia, but to them, and it should be theirs. Thank you.

Bishop Hilton Deakin is well known for his sustained support for East Timor's liberation and self-determination, and was once detained by the Malaysian authorities, along with one-hundred other activists, for three days. He has been the Patron of the Australia West Papua Association in Melbourne since 2000.

Transcribed, and lightly edited by Louise Byrne