



DEPUTY SHERIFF MARK 2

Newspaper boss Hardigan made a pithy statement before a committee of enquiry. "When a government is on the nose" he said "It would find someone to blame" The situation now is not where a government is down really. It is the leader who is desperate to cling to someone's boot strings and lift herself up. The Australian prime minister down in opinion polls after so many broken promises and suspicious moves, looked to the arrival of the most powerful man in the world, as the best and perhaps the last opportunity to try her luck.

As everyone noticed there was perfect body chemistry between the two leaders from the moment they greeted each other. That affinity or the closeness seems to easily surpass the historic relationship that existed between John Howard and his buddy George W Bush. George Bush in fact dubbed his mate "A man of steel". Barrack Obama did not use similar jargon but used all his histrionics and superlatives to pay attention and please Julia Gillard.

Both of them are placed in more or less similar predicaments in their own lands. Facing the challenge of being re elected Obama may be having a better chance than Gillard for the simple reason that all the likely Republican opponents to challenge him are vying with each other turning themselves into virtual non-starters.

That Gillard is in a mighty hurry becomes obvious by the way she is handling some of the issues cropping up now and then. Her rival Kevin Rudd made the pointed remark that he was not consulted before the announcement of Uranium export to India. It is true that she did not announce the final decision which is theoretically to be taken at the ALP conference, but the very intention could have easily been conveyed to her Foreign Minister in advance.

One would again raise the question as to why this sudden about face on an issue which had been sacred to the ALP for so

long. Was she again trying to play up to her guest from America? John Howard on his part was ever ready to export Uranium to India in spite of its non-compliance with nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Perhaps Howard had already got the nod from his sheriff in charge.

All these moves and fine footwork are taking place on the sideline leaving sufficient space for the drama. (Whether tragedy or comedy) to be acted out on the stage. This was performed on a grand scale both in Canberra and in the Northern Territory by the two main players Obama and Gillard.

What was the need for US troops whatever nature and form to be station in Darwin at this juncture? The only and obvious answer is that the US wants to flex its muscles for all in the Pacific to see. There are two relevant questions to be raised as to the timing of the announcement and the move. Has the international policeman completed his assignment in other parts of the world, i.e. Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria? They have the never ending

challenge of taking care of their unpredictable prodigy Israel too. At the same time even so demanding a task of putting down Iran with its nuclear ambitions. They can easily sweep aside the issue of the nuclear arsenal that Israel would not reveal, with the connivance of IAEA and the big powers.

Perhaps the US has at last found out that its presence has to be felt worldwide, in particular in areas in which new powers are emerging with military hardware and immense manpower. Their main thrust is obviously China which is fast becoming a super power. India is a country the US would not worry too much about, but China would prefer to remind US of its own importance.

As far as the US is concerned it can flex its muscles as much as it likes and feel safe. What about Australia? What is the geopolitical situation and the climax it is placed in? Australia apparently accepts one China policy while the US throws its weight behind Taiwan at the drop of a hat. With all the new declarations and strategic moves isn't Australia too indirectly tagging along with big brother?

The history of Australian involvement in world wars as well as other international operations is nothing but a repetition of running to the aid of the US. Some Australian journalists made it a point to declare that Australia has always sacrificed its men in wars fought for others, mainly the US. This was pretty obvious when John Howard joined George W Bush in the invasion of Iraq in search of WMD which everyone knew was not there. Australia is still stuck



in the country, Julia Gillard following suit in spite of labours opposition to the war. Afghanistan is another such operation with no obvious excuse for Australian men and women to sacrifice their lives. Even public opinion of the country does not seem to favour the continuation of this operation. Whether it will end in the same way as Vietnam is yet to be seen.

How about our immediate neighbor Indonesia? It is a country which does not look favorably at its Southern neighbor. Does it see a big brother try to teach the younger one how to behave and manage? Indonesia has its own legal system which is not acceptable to many Australians, specially to those caught smuggling drugs. Penalties are far harsher than in Australia. This itself has led to many controversies and adverse comments by some Australian politicians.

Perhaps the most disturbing feature is the existence of a number of terrorist groups keen to attack Australians and other white foreigners. Indonesian government seems to be taking action against terror groups and leaders but the popular support they enjoy in the country does not always enable this operations to be successfully carried out.

Indonesia would not naturally welcome the presence of US troops in this part of the world. The relationship it has with the US has never been cordial.

All these factors go to aggravate the misunderstanding and ill feelings already existing between Indonesia and Australia.

Why this background was totally ignored is hard to be determined.

China has already expressed its concerns. Probably Australian PM as her main aim the keeping of her mentor happy.

