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Michael Bevan
Why the
jury is out

SPORT



At last, the truth on Timor

COLUMN 8

What distinguished Whitlam from Menzies is that his government seemed willing to give a wink and a nod to the Indonesians.

DAVID JENKINS - Page 2

By PAUL CLEARY

The Federal Government plans to release key documents on the development of Australian foreign policy on East Timor between 1974 and 1976, and on the deaths in Balibo of five Australian-based journalists in October 1975.

This latest attempt to set the record straight follows the Government's decision last week to overturn two decades of support for Indonesian rule in the former Portuguese colony.

But it also comes ahead of a Senate inquiry this year into the

present situation in East Timor and past and present policy.

The Foreign Minister, Mr Downer, believes the release of documents is one way to ease community concern over policy on East Timor in the past 25 years.

The December 1975 invasion and occupation have cost the lives of up to 200,000 Timorese — about one-third of the population.

It is understood Mr Downer has said privately the Government made an "in-principle" decision late last year to release the documents covering key Whitlam decisions and the Fraser

Government's response in the first year after the invasion.

Departmental officials have been told in recent months to ensure that records on East Timor are in order.

A spokesman for Mr Downer said last night that the release of the papers was being considered, but it was one of a number of options formulated in "response to community interest in the East Timor issue".

"Any possible release of documents is a long way off; no final decision has been made."

However, the Government

appears unwilling to extend the release of documents to key decisions made by the Fraser Government, including the extension of de jure recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in 1978, which opened up negotiations on the Timor Gap oilfield.

The 1977-1978 period is also considered the worst for Indonesian atrocities, and Australian intelligence services are believed to have records of many of them.

But the Government is unlikely to release highly sensitive records on Indonesian

military activity from the Defence Signals Directorate, whose listening devices are believed to have picked up accounts of atrocities from military radio traffic.

The plan to release the Balibo papers follows revelations in the *Herald* last year that the Department of Foreign Affairs knew Indonesia was planning an invasion, but that it did not warn the five newsmen who were killed during the October 1975 attack.

Key documents on East Timor policy appear to be

missing, including the record of the Whitlam-Soeharto meeting.

The Government is also planning to release a second inquiry by Mr Tom Sherman, QC, following his 1996 report which concluded that the five newsmen died "in the heat of battle".

The Opposition spokesman on foreign affairs, Mr Laurie Brereton, said last night that he welcomed the opening up of archives, but that it was "too cute by half" for the Government to have sport with Whitlam while preventing scrutiny of Fraser's decision of de jure recognition.

IN THE RECESSES of the Roman section of the British Museum, a researcher recently found a tattered parchment. Translated, it was a letter from Plutonium, "magister factorum", or keeper of the calendar, to one Cassius, dated, oddly enough, 1 BC, January 19, or 2,000 years ago today:

DEAR CASSIUS, Are you still working on the Y zero K problem? The change from BC to AD is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having been working happily downwards forever, now we have to start thinking upwards. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left it to us to sort it all out at the last minute.

I spoke to Caesar the other evening. He was livid that Julian hadn't done something about it when he was sorting out the calendar. We called in the consulting astrologers, but they simply said that continuing downwards using minus BC won't work. As usual they charged a fortune for doing nothing useful. As for myself, I just can't see the sand in an hourglass flowing upwards. Best regards, Plutonium

BOB CORK, of Kiama, saw it parked outside the *Kiama Independent* — a red Barina, with the numberplate GOS51P. It's the car of reporter Rebecca Hayter, of course.

WE GENERALLY don't run Lost and Found, but when Brian Smart, of Clontarf, told us Belinda, 9, lost her backpack on Saturday at Darling Harbour, and listed the contents...

Mr Bean Teddy Bear. Hippy Bear. Gorilla soft toy. Magic Card trick. 17 nail polishes, plus remover. Bubble gum. Goose bumps. "Bugs life" battery-operated motorised lollipop holder. "Best Friends" necklace. Dragon Fly necklace. Black wallet containing about \$30. Electronic diary. Mickey Mouse watch.

WHAT will she carry in her purse when she grows up?

STRANGE business names (Column 8, yesterday)? Says Daniel Meijer, of Willoughby: "An ad in your employment section described a receptionist as Director of First Impressions."

WHEN a young Sydney woman e-mailed a backpacker hostel in Berlin for accommodation, she got back this confirmation: "We waiting of you to come... if you don't mine I would like to ask you for a favour. You could bring us some jars of vegemite for displaced Australians. I will pay for all of it you can carry."

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Air safety groups scrabble over trial papers

By BERNARD LAGAN

Air accident investigators have stunned the Federal Government's aviation watchdog by making unprecedented use of legal powers to force it to hand over hundreds of pages of sensitive boardroom discussions.

A Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI) officer hand-delivered the demand to the Canberra office of the chairman of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Mr Dick Smith, last Thursday.

BASI wants the documents in connection with its investigation into last October's controversial uncontrolled airspace trial by CASA.

The action has led to a tense stand-off and accusations from CASA that the demand implies that it has been lying to investigators. CASA had not produced the documents by a 2 pm deadline on Friday and still has not.

The airspace trial led Qantas to cancel flights for safety reasons and allegedly caused a near-miss between an RAAF jet and a passenger aircraft.

The bitter stalemate between the Government's two main air safety bodies brings to a head tensions between the two since BASI forced CASA to abort the trial because of the safety fears. The trial involved withdrawing ground-based staff who track the movements of light aircraft and instead putting the onus on pilots to signal their whereabouts to each other.

It was cancelled on December 9 following a series of reported near-misses and incidents and after an interim BASI investigation found CASA's management of the trial had been deficient.

BASI's continuing and wider investigation into how the trial proceeded comes as CASA is under intense pressure because of a series of accidents and incidents that have brought its competence into question.

BASI's demand for board minutes suggests that it is investigating the actions of board members in relation to the trial.

The decision by BASI to use tough coercive powers has infuriated CASA's Government-appointed board members, who are refusing the demand because they believe it implies CASA has lied. They also argue that to give in would compromise CASA's status as an independent body. The board also believes that the use of the extreme powers by BASI is not lawful.

Mr Smith strongly supported the airspace trial as part of his doctrine of affordable air safety.

Documents obtained by the *Herald* show that BASI has been unsuccessfully demanding boardroom minutes from CASA about the airspace trial since November but CASA has refused to provide complete copies, instead giving some "extracts". Finally, on Thursday, BASI invoked its

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What a load of rubbish: police wage war on the wave



"The police have a duty to ensure patrons are not in danger of being injured by crowd behaviour. We want to stop people throwing beer and rubbish."

Photograph by VINCE CALIGURI

By PAUL SHEEHAN

Be careful what you do with your arms at the cricket. You could be removed from the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The NSW police are trying to tame the wave. Dozens of patrons were removed from the SCG by police on Sunday night for starting several Mexican waves that rippled around the ground.

"We gave the whole front row of one section two warnings for

instigating the wave, and after they did it a third time they were all removed," Superintendent Gary Hodson said yesterday. "I thought we were very fair. We only removed them after they went ahead a third time. By the third wave there was rubbish being thrown up everywhere, which we've got to stop."

"The police have a duty to ensure patrons are not in danger of being injured by crowd behaviour. We don't want to stop the wave, but we want to stop people throwing beer and rubbish."

"We are enforcing the will of the Sydney Football and Cricket Ground Trust," Mr Hodson said. "It is easy to pick the instigators and we have 176 cameras at the ground."

The problem with this policy is that people who start the Mexican wave are not usually the same people who throw beer and

rubbish into the air. Mere exuberance could lead to expulsion.

"For the police to try and stop the Mexican wave defies reality," the State Opposition spokesman on sport and recreation, Mr Brad Hazzard, told the *Herald*. "Half the reason people go to the cricket is to enjoy the atmosphere. If there are people throwing beer or rubbish, that is sheer stupidity and should be dealt with. But

can you imagine the unfairness if people are thrown out for doing nothing but having fun?"

Sunday's one-day international at the SCG between Australia and England was marred by several crowd disturbances when beer and rubbish were thrown in the air during the wave. One man was arrested for running on the pitch and will appear in court, 16 were given infringement notices and will be fined,

and another 63 were escorted from the ground for instigating the wave or throwing debris.

The disruptions prompted the Police Minister, Mr Whelan, to call for a national list of cricket hooligans, and for those on the list to be barred from matches.

The idea was supported by Australia's one-day cricket captain, Steve Waugh: "If people continually make trouble they shouldn't be there."

Pitiless Serbs return to the slaughter

By JULIUS STRAUSS

in Racak

Terrified women, children and old people, survivors of the worst massacre in Kosovo, have been driven from their village after a renewed and pitiless onslaught by Serbian tanks and mortars.

The Serbs returned to the attack on Sunday in a gesture of contempt for the West and its monitors who abandoned the village when it came under mortar and machine-gun fire, leaving the remaining residents to fend for themselves.

Among those trapped in fighting was a 12-year-old girl whose father and brother were among the 45 ethnic Albanians butchered in Racak on Saturday.

The Serbian assault came as 100 or more civilians, Western monitors and aid workers sifted through the gruesome evidence of the massacre.

The Serbs claimed that ethnic Albanian rebels had opened fire on their scientific experts as they tried to enter Racak to investigate the massacre.

But General John Drewienkiewicz, the British deputy chief of



A man weeps over his dead brother and father.

Photograph by AP

the international peace verifiers, said the experts had insisted on entering the village under Serb police escort, despite the monitors' objections and assurances that they would provide security.

As the verifiers negotiated with the Serbs, automatic gun and mortar fire broke out.

On Saturday evening, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), responsible for monitoring the crumbling

peace in Kosovo, had assured villagers that their teams would stay in Racak to deter the Serbs from attacking the survivors.

Drawing confidence from these pledges, 100 or so villagers, who had ventured back after fleeing Saturday's onslaught, slowly gathered their dead. Some bodies bore grotesque grimaces. One was missing its head.

On Sunday, observers had visited the mosque where the

bodies were laid out in lines. One of them was Halim Beqiri, 13, lying next to his father, Rizah, and uncle Zenel. All had been shot by Serbian police.

About a kilometre up the road was Halim's mother, Emine, who had seen her husband and son shot. She said the Serbs had begun shooting at them as they fled their home.

"We scrambled behind some rocks but then my husband and son fell," she said. "Both were next to me, my son only about four feet away. But the bullets were so intense I could not reach out to even touch him. I lay there and watched him die."

For the next six hours, Emine cowered where she lay surrounded by her dead relatives. When the Serbs left, she returned to her home.

As she recounted her story the neighbours gathered in the house, but suddenly panic broke out. Women and children were screaming and begging for help as gunfire erupted and Western

Continued Page 8

PAGE 10: Shades of Saddam. PAGE 12: Editorial.

INSTITUTIONS TO CLOSE

The State Government plans to close all institutions for disabled children and spend more than \$200 million over the next four years to tackle the crisis in disability services.

PAGE 3: Full report.

MURDER: BOYS IN COURT

Emotions were high when four boys — two of them aged 12 — appeared in the Children's Court yesterday charged with the bashing and stabbing murder of a Wollongong father of two.

PAGE 2: Full report.

FAHEY BACKS REPUBLIC

The Finance Minister, Mr Fahey, has come out strongly for the republic, as Government sources speculate that the Prime Minister may soon set limits on the ministerial battle over the issue.

PAGE 6: Full report.

GAMES CRISIS MEETING

A crisis meeting of Sydney Games powerbrokers today is expected to ask the IOC to help the city in its preparations.

PAGE 4: Full report.

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WEATHER
TODAY Sydney 21 to 30. Very warm to hot with the chance of a late thunder shower.
Liverpool 18 to 33. Richmond 16 to 35.
NSW: Isolated showers and storms in the southern and central areas, fine in the north.
Sunrise 6.03 am Sunset 8.08 pm.

TOMORROW Sydney Showers with an expected maximum of 24.
NSW: Showers on the coast. Isolated thunderstorms in the northern inland.
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