

Empire No More!

By Ken Coates,

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The Meaning of 'full spectrum dominance'

This book provides a collection of papers generated by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for the Network for Peace and Human Rights. Many were drafted by Ken Coates, the indefatigable peace campaigner and former Labour MEP.

The papers expose the aggressive US policy of recent years, particularly under President Bush and throw particular light on the military doctrine of 'full spectrum dominance'. It was defined in a document of the US Department of Defence in 2000 in the following terms: 'the ability of US forces, operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations.'

The philosophy of this doctrine is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and had been gradually developed over many years. In Chile, the US government as far back as 1973 engineered the overthrow of the democratically elected President Allende. In Nicaragua the US provided arms and money for the so-called 'Contras'. Grenada, Panama and Cuba were all invaded by the US. More recently the US at first backed the reactionaries with arms and money in Afghanistan. The Taliban owe much to the US government. The US also led the bombing of Yugoslavia, but without backing from the UN. It resulted in the dismemberment of that country. Most recently of all, they led the aggression against Iraq based upon false charges and deception.

The military doctrine of 'full spectrum dominance' displays contempt for the UN Charter and any international bodies that might restrain the unilateralism of the US government. Hence the refusal of the US, over a long period, to pay its dues to the UN. In 1972 it withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It rejected the Landmine Treaty and the Kyoto Agreement. It opposed the creation of the International Criminal Court and demanded immunity for all US citizens.

By its conduct in Guantanamo Bay it has made a mockery of international conventions on the humane treatment of prisoners of war. It simply denies that they are prisoners of war.

This is one more book to provide a persuasive message of the continuing threat to peace in different parts of the world so long as George W. Bush remains US President. It is a message that needs to be heard throughout the British labour movement.