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Australia's Defence Policies: Immature, immoral, subservient and compromise our sovereignty

Australia's defence policies, have, since before Federation, been based on a principle which might be called strategic dependence. Before WWII the dependence was on Britain and following the fall of Singapore to Japanese forces in WWII, Australia switched its dependency to the United States as a way of securing military assistance in the Pacific Theatre against the Japanese.

In both cases of dependency, Australia took part in wars waged by the dominant power as a show of loyalty in the belief that such participation, irrespective of their necessity or morality, would demonstrate Australia's loyalty and strengthen the defence "insurance" policy which the dependency was expected to deliver.

Whilst strategic dependence was supposedly based on principle, in practice it ignored moral and humanitarian principles by supporting imperialist, immoral and illegal wars waged by one or other of the imperial powers upon which the dependence was based.

For example, Australia took part in Britain's 1885 colonial war in Sudan, followed by the Boer War in South Africa from 1899 to 1902 and Britain's suppression of the anti-colonial 'Boxer Rebellion' in China between 1900 and 1901.

This 1885 expedition to Sudan had nothing to do with defending Australia's freedom, let alone that of Sudan. Rather, Britain wanted to secure its colonial control of Sudan via British-occupied Egypt and to exclude its French rival.

The Boxers, as they were known, were one of several secret societies who in 1900 rose up against the colonial aggression perpetrated in China by Britain and other foreign powers, who demanded access to large tracts of Chinese territory and other concessions, including exemption from Chinese Law. Initially our troops were sent to help capture a Chinese fort at Pei Tang, but in an echo of the Sudan campaign, by the time they got there the battle was over. Other Australian troops joined an international contingent to take another fort, only to find the town had already surrendered. The Australian War Memorial history says: 'The international column then marched back to Tientsin leaving a trail of looted villages behind them'.

There's little to celebrate regarding Australia's participation in the 1899 to 1902 Boer War in South Africa, in which the British Army and its Australian followers fought the descendants of Dutch settlers called Boers, who waged an effective guerrilla campaign and inflicted embarrassing defeats on the British. The Boer War was nothing more than a brutal colonial war for control of territory. After the British raided a Boer state in an attempt to seize recently discovered goldmines, the Boers declared war. A total of 10,000 Australian soldiers were sent to support the British, with over 500 of them being killed. The British set up concentration camps and interned women and children who had been forced from their

homes by Britain's scorched earth policy in which thousands of homesteads were burnt, livestock and crops destroyed. No battlefield courage was needed when Australian soldiers shot unarmed civilians who had surrendered.

WWI saw Australia marching off to fight and die for Britain in an imperialist war for the re-division of the world and the seizure of colonies, including those held by Germany, whose rapid rise as an imperial and industrial competitor was a cause of great alarm to the British imperialists. It was an horrendous war in which upwards of 20 million soldiers were killed and a similar number injured. Under British command, Australian soldiers landed in Gallipoli in an invasion of Turkey which suited the purposes of British imperial machinations and which evidence suggests was intended to fail. We are frequently told that at Gallipoli the Australian soldiers fought bravely, showed mateship and so on. They may well have done, but this cannot alter the fact that they were carrying out armed aggression and killing Turkish troops who were doing no more than defending their homeland. Of the 60,000 Australians who fought at Gallipoli, there were 26,000 casualties and 7,594 were killed. The veteran investigative journalist Brian Toohey in his book "Secret-The Making of Australia's Security State" says of the Gallipoli campaign: 'They weren't defending Australia: they were helping to invade Turkey, a country that posed no threat to us. And in a crime that was covered up for decades, Australian and New Zealand troops massacred all the Bedouin males in a camp at Surafend in Palestine shortly after the 1918 Armistice began. As many as 100 were killed and the camp burnt'.

Australia's battle against the forces of Imperial Japan in WW2 remains today the one and only occasion in which Australia's military conducted a necessary and legal campaign to defeat a credible invasion threat, which it was believed at the time Japan posed. Australia did this with United States support, although nowadays Australia's role in the defeat of Japan is generally under-played while that of the U.S is heavily emphasised. Although US naval and air support was valuable in securing supply lines in the south-west Pacific, Defence analyst Andrew Ross makes a strong case that Australia's own forces could have mounted a formidable defence against any Japanese invasion. At the time Australia had one million men under arms. The then U.S president Truman, in a report to Congress in December 1946. said of Australia's role in the Pacific war, 'On the balance the contribution made by Australia, a country with a population of 7 million, approximately equalled that of the USA'. This statement by Truman contradicts somewhat the popular notion that the U.S saved Australia from a Japanese invasion.

In the years following the Second World War, Australia and New Zealand began pressing the United States for a formal security guarantee. The two nations felt threatened by the possibility of a resurgent Japan and viewed the emerging anti-colonial movements to their north as part of a 'communist threat'. The United States was initially reluctant, offering instead an informal guarantee of protection. But in order to gain Australian and NZ support for a "soft peace" with Japan, the United States signed the ANZUS Treaty at San Francisco on 1 September 1951; it entered into force on 29 April 1952. The treaty bound the signatories to recognise that an armed attack in the Pacific area on any of them would endanger the peace and safety of the others. It stated: 'The Parties will consult together whenever in the opinion of any of them the territorial integrity, political independence or

security of any of the Parties is threatened in the Pacific'. The three nations also pledged to maintain and develop individual and collective capabilities to resist attack.

In practice, ANZUS has been used by Australia as a pretext for joining U.S wars of aggression in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, countries which are **not** in, or bordering, the Pacific and which **did not** pose a military threat to Australia or any other ANZUS signatory.

So began the period of Australia's strategic dependence on the United States, and as had been the case with our strategic dependence on Britain, Australia's ruling circles felt the need to prove their loyalty by participating in U.S wars as a sort of down payment on the protection supposedly guaranteed by the U.S. The main examples of this are:

Korean War

From 1950 to 1953 Australia participated in a so-called 'United Nations' force led by the U.S to drive North Korean forces led by the Korean Communist Party from southern Korea back over the 38th Parallel into northern Korea. The 38th Parallel is an arbitrary and interim dividing line between North and South Korea imposed by the U.S. The U.S was intent on pursuing the North Korean army to the border with China. Concerned about a possible attack on China, a Chinese volunteer army joined the northern Korean forces and forced the U.S - led forces back to the 38th Parallel. A ceasefire was declared in 1953 but the war has never officially ended and an uneasy peace settled on the Korean peninsula with periodic outbreaks of hostilities between North and South. The United States maintains an army in South Korea to the present time. Australia suffered 339 dead, and 1200 wounded. At no stage did the North Korean military forces present a military threat to Australia or the United States. It is estimated that over 3 million Koreans died in this war, with U.S. carpet bombing reducing almost every building in North Korea to rubble, with dams, roads, rice paddies and power stations also destroyed. So intense was the U.S bombing that they ran out of targets.

Vietnam War

The U.S military build-up in Vietnam between 1965 and 1975 reached a maximum of half a million soldiers. The US requested that Australia become involved, and this began with a commitment of 30 military advisors in 1962. In 1965 the then-PM Menzies committed the first Australian combat troops, and over the following decade this commitment increased to a peak of 7,672 Australian personnel. Menzies sought to justify this commitment by claiming it would stop the spread of communism south towards Australia; he called it the domino theory. "One country falls to communism and then the next, then the next and it will then be on our doorsteps". Blinded by its Cold War anti-communist fixation, the Australian government refused to recognise that the war in Vietnam was a war to liberate the whole country from foreign interference and win independence. At no stage did the North Vietnamese military forces present a military threat to Australia or the United States.

Between 1962 and 1975 Australia deployed over 60,000 servicemen and women to the conflict in Vietnam, with 521 Australians losing their lives and many more severely damaged by PTSD and other injuries. Many other returned Vietnam veterans fathered deformed children as a result of exposure to the deadly toxins and mutagens in Agent Orange, a herbicide sprayed widely by the U.S on the Vietnamese countryside. The toll of Vietnamese lives lost numbers upwards of one million, including those burnt alive by napalm dropped

from U.S. aircraft, as well as children born with horrific deformities resulting from their parents' exposure to Agent Orange.

Gulf War

Australia was a member of the U.S.-led international coalition during the 1991 Gulf War, also known as Operation Desert Storm. More than 1,800 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were deployed to the Persian Gulf from August 1990 to September 1991, while contingents from the Royal Australian Navy circulated through the region in support of the sanctions against Iraq until November 2001. Whilst there were no ADF casualties during the conflict, a significant number of Australian Gulf War veterans continue to suffer from illnesses which appear to stem from this war, the so-called Gulf War Syndrome.

At no stage did the military forces of Iraq present a military threat to Australia or the United States.

Afghanistan War

Australia first committed military personnel to Afghanistan in October 2001 after the 9/11 incident in the U.S. Prime Minister John Howard sought to justify Australian involvement in Afghanistan by invoking Article IV of the ANZUS Treaty, the only time this Treaty has been invoked. Australian involvement in the Afghan imbroglio continues to the present time. President Biden has committed to the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops in September of this year, although U.S. Special Forces and military contractors will remain. Presumably the Australian Government will follow its U.S. masters. At its peak, Australia committed 2,000 military personnel to Afghanistan with lesser numbers at various times over the last 17 years. Nothing has been achieved by the invasion of Afghanistan and the country has turned into a ruined wasteland and a training ground for Jihadist terrorists.

During the Afghan conflict 41 Australian soldiers have been killed and 261 wounded, the majority since October 2007. Another Australian was killed while serving with the British Army. At no stage in this war did the Taliban present a military threat to Australia or the U.S. Tens of thousands of Afghans have been killed or been forced to flee their homes as refugees. Following the release of the Brereton Report, Australian soldiers in the SAS are now being investigated for crimes against humanity involving the shooting of unarmed non-combatants. According to the Guardian, 7th November, this year, "Leaks and whistleblowers have suggested that Afghan civilians were used as 'target practice', and that a detainee was shot when there was no room for him in a helicopter, and that special forces troops acted with a sense of impunity, elitism and recklessness, a culture permitted by a weak command structure" (supposedly – the editor).

Iraq War

In 2003 Australia took part in the U.S. - led invasion of Iraq, despite huge protests in Australia and throughout the world opposing this invasion and without United Nations approval. Iraq posed no military threat to Australia or the United States. The justification was that Iraq under former U.S. ally Saddam Hussein possessed so-called weapons of mass destruction which could allegedly be used against U.S. Middle East allies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. United Nations weapons inspectors refuted this claim but the United States, Australia

Britain and others joined in this war on Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein and replace his government with a more U.S - compliant one. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found. At its peak Australia committed 2,000 military to Iraq. No Australian lives were lost but the Iraqis lost hundreds of thousands with similar numbers becoming refugees and fleeing the war- torn country.

Syrian War

In mid - September 2015, with no parliamentary debate then or since, Australia committed itself to yet another war on behalf of the Americans.

The Australian War Powers Reform organisation says this concerning Australia's involvement in the Syrian War: "Australia's decision to join the United States bombing campaign in Syria was mired in deceit, disinformation and obfuscation from the outset. When the Australian government announced in August 2015 that they were going to consider the legal ramifications involved before committing to a decision, they omitted two crucial facts. The first fact was that the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott had already solicited an invitation from the Americans to join the bombing campaign. The second omitted fact was that the legal opinion had been sought and obtained a year earlier. When asked on ABC National Radio about the legal basis for Australia's bombing of another country's sovereign territory, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop relied upon Article 51 of the UN Charter and an alleged invitation from the Iraqi government. That Article 51 manifestly does not apply, and that the Iraqi government denied issuing any such invitation (which would have been illegal anyway) seemed to have entirely escaped the attention of the Australian mainstream media."

The Australian defence policy of strategic dependence has led Australia into these U.S-led wars of aggression and has made us complicit in the commission of multiple crimes against humanity. In not one of these cases was Australia threatened by the countries invaded. The wars were illegal. They were not justified by the need to adhere to the ANZUS alliance which any case did not apply because the countries concerned were neither in the Pacific area nor presenting any threat to the signatories of the ANZUS Treaty.

In practice the ANZUS Treaty has evolved into a de-facto close military alliance with the U.S, with a regular and increasing U.S military presence here and with U.S. Marines deployed in Darwin on continuous annual rotation. These U.S. Marines train with the ADF and carry out the biennial Talisman Sabre war exercises with all branches of the U.S military. This deployment of U.S. troops together with the U.S. stationing of military supplies and the military use of Australia's sea-ports, airports and RAAF bases was further underpinned by the signing in 2014 of the Force Posture Agreement between the United States and Australia.

The Tindal RAAF base near Katherine in the NT is being upgraded at a cost to the Australian taxpayer of over one billion dollars, in order to allow operations by nuclear-capable U.S B1 bombers which are able to reach southern China.

The U.S has also established crucial military communications facilities in Australia, justified by successive Australian governments as extensions of the ANZUS Treaty. These include Pine Gap in Central Australia which communicates with US military satellites, spies on countries

and peoples in our region and provides the U.S military with the battlefield intelligence which allows it to carry out its drone assassinations and other hostile acts against countries with whom Australia is not at war. The North-West Cape communications base at Exmouth in WA provides the U.S. military with communication facilities to its fleet of nuclear-armed submarines enabling it to issue the trigger signal to those submarines for the launching of nuclear missiles.

U.S military installations on Australian soil inevitably make us a target for missile strikes by foreign states who may be enemies of the U.S but need not be enemies of Australia. The Australia-U.S. military alliance does not make us safer, but rather makes it much more likely that we will be drawn into a war, possibly a nuclear war.

Furthermore, the U.S. marines stationed on Australian soil are not under the control of the Australian Government. At all times they remain under the command of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

We have traded our national sovereignty in the highly questionable belief that the U.S will come and save us from a military threat, even though no such threat has emerged in the 75 since the end of WWII and, as stated in the 2016 Defence White Paper, no military threat to Australia can be envisaged in the foreseeable future. The fact is that the ANZUS treaty does not guarantee U.S. protection in the event of us facing a military threat.

The policy of strategic dependence and subservience to the U.S has compromised Australia's moral standing and caused many people in our region and beyond to view us as little more than a U.S lapdog. We have supported and participated in immoral and illegal U.S wars in which multiple crimes against humanity have been committed. In the United Nations, we invariably vote with the U.S.

We have sacrificed the lives of thousands of Australian soldiers as an "insurance policy payment" to the United States.

We are seen by other countries as immature, unable or unwilling to make foreign policy decisions differing from those of the U.S., unable to stand on our own feet and willing to support the U.S in its role as the world's worst international bully. The succession of wars perpetrated by the U.S with Australian support have resulted in the deaths of millions, the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees and the turning of whole nations into polluted, ravaged and impoverished wastelands.

Current indications are that the continuation of this policy of strategic dependence on the U.S and subservience to its foreign policies will lead us into a U.S. war with China with unimaginable consequences for Australia and the World.

For our sakes and those of our children and grandchildren, Australia must grow up, have confidence in the capacity and abilities of our 25 million people, break with military alliances and believe that we can defend, where necessary, a very defensible continent, relying on ourselves and the rich and abundant resources of this continent and make our contribution to peace in this world.

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