

Australian PM demands UN rubberstamp war on Syria and Iran

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Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard delivered a speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, demanding that the UN endorse imperialist intervention into Syria and rubberstamp a US bombardment of Iran.

Gillard spent several minutes waxing lyrically about Australia's purported contribution to combatting poverty, illiteracy and disease, as well as to so-called international peacekeeping, before reaching the main points of her speech. She denounced the Syrian government for "systemic human rights abuses" and declared "we must do everything possible to end the suffering of the Syrian people." The Security Council, she said, must "act decisively," implying that the UN should sanction a military intervention into Syria by the US and its allies.

Any "humanitarian" action against Syria would have the same character as last year's operation in Libya. The UN-backed bombardment of that country and the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi caused the deaths of at least 50,000 Libyans and led to Al Qaeda-linked Islamist and tribal forces taking over. Behind a threadbare façade of democracy, the victors have waged a terror campaign against their opponents. While Australian military forces did not directly take part, Gillard's then-foreign minister, Kevin Rudd, helped secure the Arab League's endorsement for a neo-colonial operation against one of its own members.

In Syria, the aim of an intervention would be to support the Syrian "rebels" who are already being armed and funded to wage a civil war against President Bashar al-Assad's government. Assad—an ally of Iran—is to be deposed and replaced by a pro-imperialist regime. This regime change would be a prelude to the escalation of military operations against other perceived obstacles to US domination in the Middle East, such as

the Hezbollah faction in Lebanon and Iran itself.

Gillard's statements on Iran were a declaration of Australian support for war. She repeated every lie that US President Obama had told the UN the previous day about the motives behind the steady build-up toward an American attack on Iran. In words that recalled the lies and falsifications told by Australian officials during UN sessions in 2002, before the criminal invasion of Iraq, Gillard pontificated that the "international community must also unite in guarding against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

Gillard asserted that Iran "refuses to take the urgent steps necessary to build confidence that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful." In fact, Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Inspections of Iranian nuclear facilities have repeatedly uncovered no evidence of the development of nuclear weapons—any more than UN inspectors found "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq. The Iranian regime has insisted that it is pursuing its right to develop a nuclear energy industry.

Gillard nevertheless joined the US and Israeli governments in accusing Iran of moving "closer to having the capacity to produce weapons-grade material" and declaring that "a nuclear armed Iran would be a major threat to regional and global security." She echoed Obama's threat that "time is not unlimited" before a murderous bombardment of Iran would be unleashed.

Gillard stated: "There remains the opportunity for diplomacy, backed up by robust sanctions, to persuade Iran to change course. Iran must take the opportunity to change and the nations of this assembly must press Iran to do so."

In other words, when the Iranian government fails to do the impossible—satisfy the ultimatums from

Washington—Australia will join the US in another criminal “coalition of the willing” and an imperialist atrocity of the highest order. The destruction of Iran’s nuclear reactors, and the potential release of radiation, could threaten the lives of millions of people.

Australian imperialism is preparing to be an active participant, not a bystander. US bombing operations would be guided from the Pine Gap communication base in northern Australia. The Australian navy has a warship assigned to the US flotilla in the Persian Gulf. Given that Australian special forces played a leading role in the invasion of Iraq, Special Air Service (SAS) and commando units, still involved in the occupation of Afghanistan, could be covertly deployed over the border into Iran.

Gillard’s stance behind a war on Iran is in line with Labor’s unconditional alignment with the Obama administration’s “pivot” into Asia, in order to assert US dominance against China’s growing regional influence. A major factor in the targeting of Iran by Washington and its allies is that it is one of the few significant suppliers of oil and natural gas to China that is not an American client state. Any attack on Iran will be viewed in Beijing as another US provocation and as accelerating the build-up toward a confrontation in the Asian region.

In preparation for a potential war with China, the Labor government has already offered up the north and west of Australia as staging bases for the American armed forces to control the sea lanes between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, with the capacity to blockade China’s energy and other imports. Behind the backs of the Australian population, the Australian military is being restructured to serve as an adjunct to US forces, joining operations that are more and more openly targeting Chinese interests.

As much as possible, the Australian establishment media has suppressed any discussion on the implications of Gillard’s line-up with the US against China. Likewise, the reporting on Gillard’s speech has focussed not on her bellicose statements against Iran, but on whether it had advanced Australia’s bid for a non-permanent seat on the 15-member UN Security Council. Her statements established that any Australian presence on the Security Council would be nothing more than a compliant mouthpiece for US militarism in the Middle East, in Asia and internationally.



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