

New Zealand parliament backs anti-Russian campaign over MH17 disaster

Tom Peters
25 July 2014

New Zealand's government and opposition parties have all lined up behind the US and Australian-led campaign to blame Russia over the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 disaster in Ukraine, and to pave the way for military intervention.

On Tuesday, parliament unanimously supported a motion by Prime Minister John Key that called for Russia to "use its influence" with separatists in eastern Ukraine "to ensure the investigation and recovery operations proceed appropriately and unimpeded."

The National Party government co-sponsored a UN Security Council resolution, moved by the Australian government on behalf of Washington, which instructed "all parties" to cooperate with an "independent international investigation" into the crash and to ensure a ceasefire around the wreckage site.

The tragic deaths of 298 people, including one New Zealand citizen, are being cynically exploited by the Obama administration and its allies as a pretext for direct military-police intervention in an area of Ukraine near Russia's border.

Australia is preparing to deploy 50 federal police to the crash site and the Netherlands government is considering deploying troops. New Zealand has sent three police forensics experts to the Netherlands to help identify bodies from the crash.

There is as yet no concrete evidence to indicate how MH17 was downed and by whom. The US and European powers, however, are responsible for creating the conditions for the catastrophe. In February they backed a putsch in Kiev that installed a violently anti-Russian regime, including openly fascist forces such as the Svoboda Party, provoking widespread opposition and armed resistance in Russian-speaking areas of eastern Ukraine.

In March the New Zealand parliament expressed its

solidarity with the US puppet regime in Kiev and denounced the Crimean referendum to join Russia.

Kiev's armed forces—backed by the CIA and mercenaries from the US firm formerly known as Blackwater—are waging a ruthless war against the separatists and could easily have shot down the plane. Russia's defence force claims that MH17 was being trailed by a Ukrainian fighter jet and was in range of Ukrainian BUK anti-aircraft missiles and fire control radars at the time of the crash.

Despite this, Washington and its allies, including New Zealand, are using the disaster to intensify their support for the Kiev regime and to demand action against Russia. Key praised the "leadership" of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who has been among the most aggressive in condemning Moscow and accusing the "Russian-backed separatists" of a "cover up" at the crash site.

The NZ media has unleashed a torrent of anti-Russian rhetoric. Both major newspapers, the *Dominion Post* and the *New Zealand Herald*, editorialised that it was not clear who had shot down the plane, but immediately added that it was probably pro-Russian rebels—described by the *Post* as Vladimir Putin's "dogs" and "terrorists." The *Herald* demanded Western intervention in Ukraine to "secure the site."

NZ's opposition Labour Party leader David Cunliffe told Radio Live that there was a "well-established hypothesis" that pro-Russian separatists had shot down the plane, and said "the world needs to get tough" with them. He called for Russia to face sanctions if it obstructed an investigation and access to the crash site.

In a statement, the Green Party described the disaster as a "crime against humanity" and noted, without comment, that the Ukrainian government had accused "pro-Russia rebels" of being responsible.

The Maori-nationalist Mana Party—which includes the pseudo-left groups Socialist Aotearoa, the International Socialist Organisation and Fightback—has remained silent on the crash. But Mana’s support for two pro-Washington and anti-Moscow parliamentary motions so far this year demonstrates that it has no difference over the issue with the rest of New Zealand’s political establishment.

The opposition parties have repeatedly demonstrated their support for US imperialism and its wars over the past decade. The 1999-2008 Labour government, supported by the “left wing” Alliance Party, militarily supported the US invasion of Afghanistan and also sent troops to Iraq.

Along with the National government, Labour and the Greens have both previously indicated that they would support US intervention in Iraq and Syria, provided it has the fig leaf of UN Security Council backing.

Over the past two years, Labour, the Greens, Mana and the right-wing New Zealand First have campaigned against Chinese investment and immigration, as part of an attempt to bring the country into a closer alignment with Washington’s “pivot” to Asia, aimed at militarily encircling China and securing US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region.

The same opposition parties are now all campaigning together to install a Labour-led government after the September 20 election. The response of all the parties to the MH17 disaster has demonstrated yet again that whoever wins the election will continue to strengthen the military-intelligence alliance with the US, and will be prepared to drag the New Zealand working class into a potentially explosive confrontation between nuclear armed powers.



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