

The Pentagon's CSIS report and Australia's role in the escalating war drive against China

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
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1. The January report by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) underscores the urgency of developing an international anti-war movement of the working class. The report, which was commissioned by the Department of Defense at the request of the US Congress, reviews the plans by American imperialism, along with its key allies such as Australia, for a military confrontation with China. Behind the backs of the world's population, the ruling elites are actively preparing a catastrophic conflict involving nuclear armed powers.

2. The recommendations of the CSIS for increased operations by American and allied forces in Asia, and the expansion of US bases across Australia and the region, flow from the megalomaniacal attempts by the American ruling elite to subordinate the entire world economy to the profit interests of Wall Street. The report's preoccupation with "China's rise" expresses the recognition by a parasitic and predatory financial aristocracy that its ability to monopolise much of the planet's wealth has reached its limits.

3. The strategy implicit in the CSIS report is that the US will use military pressure and diplomatic intrigue to attempt to overturn the current regime in Beijing, before it can credibly challenge American power. The Wall Street oligarchs are not interested in "peace" or "freedom of navigation," let alone human rights and democracy. They are determined to remain the primary beneficiary of the ruthless exploitation of the multi-millioned Chinese working class and the vast industrial capacity developed in China since the restoration of capitalism. On behalf of the American elite, Washington's objective is to transform China into a client state—as it was before the 1949 Chinese Revolution. To achieve its ends, the US is prepared to risk nuclear war.

4. The report acknowledges the crucial support provided to the US war drive by the Australian ruling elite, which ranks among Washington's most venal imperialist allies. While Australian corporations have derived immense profits from the export of iron ore, coal and other raw materials to feed Chinese industry, the most powerful sections of the financial and business elite are linked to Wall Street by a web of multi-billion dollar investments and corporate relations. Moreover, the US-Australia alliance remains the pivotal strategic relationship upon which Australian imperialism relies to assert its interests not only in the Asia-Pacific, but on the world arena. The Australian establishment has clung to the coattails of Washington, in the mercenary hope it will also benefit from the reduction of China to the status of a semi-colony.

5. Canberra is already a key participant in the US "pivot" or "rebalance" to Asia. In June 2010, the pro-American hierarchy of the Australian Labor Party carried out an overnight political coup to oust

Kevin Rudd as prime minister when his mild calls for the US to compromise with China had rendered him unacceptable to Washington. In November 2011, Labor Prime Minister Julia Gillard turned the Australian parliament over to President Barack Obama as he announced the "pivot." At the same time, as a further demonstration of its loyalty, the government signed a pact to hand over Darwin as a base for US Marines.

6. Washington's entire anti-China strategy—most significantly its encouragement of the remilitarisation of Japanese imperialism and provocative challenges to Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea—has received unconditional backing from successive governments in Canberra. Labor and Liberal-National, with the complicity of the media, academia, the Greens and the pseudo-left organisations, have integrated Australia into the US war plans behind the backs of the working class. The Australian military functions as the adjunct to American forces, whether in Asia or the Middle East. The Pentagon, CIA and NSA use the Pine Gap satellite base near Alice Springs to spy on the world, identify targets for drone assassination and pinpoint sites across China and elsewhere for destruction by nuclear or conventional weapons.

7. The CSIS makes clear that Washington will depend ever more heavily on Canberra in coming years, declaring: "As Australia's own influence expands and Australia's geopolitical position becomes more central to US strategy, Washington's expectations of Canberra are growing." It describes Australia as a "sanctuary"—out of range of most Chinese weapons except for intercontinental ballistic missiles—and proposes that the continent host American aircraft, warships and troops on a scale not seen since World War II.

8. In the event of armed conflict with China, the Pentagon's "Air-Sea Battle" strategy envisages that the Australian Navy and Air Force will assist in blockading the sea lanes between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The aim would be to starve the Chinese people of energy, food, medicines and other essential supplies and collapse the country's economy. From Australian bases, the US would conduct long-range air bombardments of mainland China and attack Chinese naval and commercial vessels. Nuclear strikes would potentially be launched by submarines operating from Australian ports and using targeting data from Pine Gap. Australian imperialism, in other words, has volunteered as the enabler of what would be the greatest war crime in history.

9. As tensions escalate with increasing US-Australian provocations against China, the CSIS predicts the government will face opposition to the US-Australia alliance, above all from the Australian working class. "Washington and Canberra will have to manage occasional pressures in the relationship," it warns. The Labor Party and the US

embassy “managed” Rudd’s minor divergence from the Obama administration’s line with a backroom coup. Far more ruthless methods will be used against a political movement of workers and young people against Australian imperialism’s ever closer involvement in the reckless drive to war.

10. Conscious efforts are being made to condition the Australian population for the “sacrifices” demanded by war. The multi-million dollar commemorations of the centenary of World War I, launched by Labor and continued by the Liberal government, are directed toward promoting patriotism and subservience to the military, particularly among young people. The Labor Party and trade unions, along with extreme right-wing tendencies, have organised campaigns against Chinese investment in order to stoke anti-Chinese chauvinism. At the same time, the entire political establishment has exploited the fraudulent 15-year “war on terrorism” to generate anti-Muslim hysteria to justify the systematic erosion of fundamental democratic rights and an unprecedented build-up of the intelligence apparatus. The Australian ruling class has already erected the framework for a military-police state.

11. The drive to war poses profound questions of political perspective and leadership to the working class. The US attempt to use its military power to dominate the globe is not the policy of a particular government in Washington. It arises inexorably from the breakdown of all the mechanisms set in place after World War II to suppress the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system, between an interdependent world economy and its continued division into antagonistic nation-states. The eruption of US militarism expresses the historical bankruptcy of a social order where global economic life is subordinated to the accumulation of profit by a tiny, obscenely wealthy elite, above all in the most powerful imperialist countries. War has become the only means, in the final analysis, by which American capitalism, with its allies in tow, can overcome its economic rivals and stem its historic decline. Protests to the powers-that-be, appealing for reason and sanity, are worse than futile. They are reactionary diversions from the only means of preventing war: the independent mobilisation of the international working class to abolish capitalism, which is the root cause of national rivalries and conflict.

12. There is an inseparable connection between the struggle against war and the fight for the social and democratic rights of the working class. The same transnational banks and corporations whose profit interests dictate the drive to war by national states and governments also demand an endless assault on workers’ jobs, wages and conditions, along with constant cutbacks to essential public services and social infrastructure. Vast resources—close to \$2 trillion a year on a world scale—are being squandered on war preparations, at the direct expense of the working class. In Australia, the \$50 billion allocated to the construction of new submarines would pay for at least 25 new, state-of-the-art public hospitals. The \$39 billion earmarked for frigates and destroyers could finance a desperately needed five and a half million dollar upgrade to every public school in the country. The \$24 billion being wasted on F-35 jet fighters would pay for tens of thousands of high quality, publicly-run and serviced houses and apartments for working class retirees.

13. The pervasive silence of pseudo-left organisations such as Socialist Alliance and Socialist Alternative on the war drive against China is the political expression of their pro-imperialist character. Like the Syriza government that imposed austerity in Greece, and opportunist demagogues such as Bernie Sanders in the US and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, they represent affluent sections of the middle class

that have benefited from the destruction of working class living standards and the rise and rise of stock and property values. For decades, this layer has employed various forms of identity politics—based on race, ethnicity, gender and sexual preference and falsely portrayed as “left-wing” or “radical”—to gain greater privileges for themselves at the expense of the working class. Their greatest fear is that the agenda of war and austerity is propelling the workers and young people into struggle and towards socialism. The pseudo-lefts’ role is, above all, to block any independent mobilisation of the working class by confining all opposition to the dead-end of protest and parliamentary politics, and thus subordinating it to the political establishment of which they are part.

14. The essential task facing the working class is to forge its political independence from every pro-capitalist tendency and to develop a unified, international anti-war movement based on a socialist perspective. The political elites in Washington and Canberra do not speak for American and Australian workers, who have no interest in wars for profit and geopolitical dominance. Likewise, the corrupt capitalist regime in Beijing, with its reactionary threats to answer US aggression with a nuclear holocaust, does not represent the interests of Chinese workers. The working class of all countries has a common interest in the rational planning of global economic life to raise living standards, eradicate poverty and suffering, and achieve social equality for all.

15. The calamity of war can only be prevented by the working class taking political power, placing the banks and key industries under public ownership and carrying out the socialist reorganisation of society. The historic mission begun with the Russian Revolution in 1917—world socialist revolution—must be completed.

16. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), of which the Socialist Equality Party is the Australian section, is committed to preventing war. The fight to build an international anti-war movement is at the centre of all the SEP’s work among workers, youth and students, and in its campaign for the 2016 elections—against Labor, Liberal, the Greens and the pseudo-left. The SEP calls on workers and students across Australia to demand the immediate repudiation of the US-Australia alliance, which is, and has always been, a conspiracy of the ruling elites against the working class of both countries and of the world. All US military bases, equipment and personnel must be evicted forthwith. The tens of billions of dollars that Labor and Liberal are preparing to squander on the military must be redirected to meeting urgent social needs such as public health, education, housing, child and aged care, and transport.

17. The SEP and its youth movement, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), stand for the international unity of the working class and the establishment of a workers’ government that will implement socialist policies. We urge all workers and young people who agree with this perspective to contact us and join our fight for world socialism.



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