# Australian PM commits to NATO war offensive against Russia and China

**Mike Head**
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In office less than six weeks, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has fully committed his Labor government to the rapidly escalating US-NATO war against Russia and the extension of the offensive to China, which Washington regards as the main threat to its global hegemony.

At the NATO Leaders Summit in Spain, Albanese aligned himself behind the statements of US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the lead-up to the event, calling for a stepped-up war against Russia.

In a speech, Albanese gave an "iron-clad commitment" that Australia would be in the forefront of "standing up" for "sovereignty" through its "actions" in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific region.

Albanese specifically hailed the formation of a NATO-affiliated "Asia-Pacific Four," consisting of the four closest allies of the US in the region—Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia—whose leaders were invited to the NATO summit for the first time, where they held an inaugural meeting of the grouping. Albanese said the presence of the "AP4" signified that "there are also issues in our own region that need to be dealt with."

The AP4 is a frontline component of the expansion of NATO's operations from Europe to confront China, on the other side of the strategically critical and resource-rich Eurasian landmass.

NATO's new "strategic concept," adopted by its 30 leaders, brackets China with Russia as an alleged threat to the global order. It denounces "the deepening strategic partnership between the PRC [China] and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests."

Referring to the intensifying conflict between the US and China, Albanese declared: "We recognise there is strategic competition in our region, and Australia is not afraid to stand up with all the countries of our region for an open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Under my government, it will be through Australia's actions that you will see our resolve."

Albanese linked the US-NATO war against Russia, triggered by goading Moscow into a reactionary invasion of Ukraine, to the mounting campaign by the US and its allies to ignite a similar war against China, possibly over Taiwan. "By supporting peace and sovereignty in Europe, we are underscoring our iron-clad commitment to these norms in our own region, the Indo-Pacific."

He told a NATO gathering: "Just as Russia seeks to recreate a Russian or Soviet empire, the Chinese government is seeking friends, whether it be… through economic support to build up alliances to undermine what has historically been the Western alliance in places like the Indo Pacific."

This is under conditions in which Biden has ramped-up US ties with Taiwan, undermining the 50-year-old One China policy of recognising Beijing as the government of all of China, including Taiwan. He has declared that the US would defend the island militarily if China sought to reunify it with the Chinese mainland.

Australia shared a common purpose with NATO, Albanese stated, in supporting "democracy, peace, and security and upholding the rule of law, whether it is in this region or ours." These are code words for upholding the global order imposed by Washington on the back of the defeat of German and Japanese imperialism in World War II.

"By engaging with NATO and by strengthening our global partnerships, we are steadfast in fighting for our core values of fairness, and for the sovereignty of all states, big and small. Not just in the Indo-Pacific, but around the world," Albanese said.

What is meant by this "fighting" was underscored the previous day by the new head of Britain's armed forces,

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General Sir Patrick Sanders. “The British Army must be prepared to engage in warfare at its most violent,” he declared, in order to “fight and win” against Russia.

Biden had sent a similar message. At a joint press conference with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez ahead of the summit, he accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of genocide. Biden said Putin’s objective was to “eliminate Ukrainian culture” and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine “has shattered peace in Europe.”

In an interview with the *Australian Financial Review* en route to the NATO summit, Albanese said that, as prime minister, he had no option but to travel to NATO and other such summits. World events, at what he described as “the most significant point in history in many decades,” drove home that Australia was not isolated from “aggression” like that of Russia.

In that interview, Albanese declared his government’s readiness to expand the $285 million in military assistance to Ukraine, as well as the $60 million in humanitarian aid, offered by the previous Liberal-National Coalition government. He boasted that Australia was already the largest non-NATO contributor.

Such increased expenditure will be on top of the vast rise in military spending involved in the AUKUS pact signed by the Coalition government with the US and UK last September, featuring the purchase of nuclear-powered attack submarines, hypersonic missiles and other advanced weaponry. That means cutting essential social spending, including on health, education, aged care, disability services, as already foreshadowed by Treasurer Jim Chalmers.

As if to highlight the deliberate development of a wartime atmosphere, Albanese stopped off on the way to the summit for a photo shoot with about 50 Australian troops at the Al Minhad desert base outside Dubai from where Australia’s operations in the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were based.

From the very day they took office, Albanese and his senior ministers have engaged in a hectic series of overseas missions to support the Biden administration’s escalation of its confrontation with China.

Albanese’s trip is his third since the May 21 election, starting with his rush to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) summit with Biden and the Japanese and Indian prime ministers in Tokyo to step up their alliance against China. Then he went to Indonesia to defend the AUKUS pact, against the grave concerns in Jakarta and other Southeast Asian capitals about AUKUS setting off a regional arms race.

Next month Albanese will continue the offensive by attending the Pacific Islands forum of Southwestern Pacific government leaders in Fiji, where China will also dominate discussions. Last Sunday night, just before flying out of Australia for the NATO summit, Albanese set the tone for the meeting in Fiji by conducting a phone conversation with Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manesseh Sogavare.

On his arrival in Spain, Albanese gave some indication of the ongoing browbeating of Sogavare. He told reporters: “Prime Minister Sogavare reconfirmed his position that Australia remains the security partner of choice, a statement that he made of course, to Foreign Minister Wong.”

During the campaign for the May 21 election, Albanese and Penny Wong, now the foreign minister, denounced the Coalition government for not stopping Sogavare signing a vague security treaty with China. Wong declared it was “the worst foreign policy blunder in the Pacific since the end of World War II.” After the Quad summit, she quickly flew to Honiara to warn Sogavare against any military arrangements with China.

Without any public debate or consultation, and despite having been elected with the support of less than a third of the voters, the Labor government is moving rapidly. It is going even further than its predecessor, Scott Morrison’s hated Coalition administration, to place the population on the frontline of a potentially catastrophic third world war, ignited by the US against two nuclear-armed countries, Russia and China.

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