

Australian Labor prime minister in Kiev pledges support for US-NATO proxy war against Russia

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Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited Kiev yesterday, in the latest of a series of trips to the Ukrainian capital by proponents of the US-NATO proxy war against Russia, including British PM Boris Johnson and top officials of the Biden administration.

As with those who preceded him, Albanese's visit above all served a political purpose. It was a display of the recently-elected Labor Party government's full-throated support for the US-led confrontation with Russia, and for American imperialism's wars and military preparations all over the world.

Albanese touched down in Kiev just days after attending a NATO summit in Madrid. At that gathering, the US-dominated military alliance adopted a new strategic document explicitly labeling Russia and China as threats to its interests and calling on member-states to ready themselves "for high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors."

The Labor government has been at the forefront of the campaign to link the proxy war against Russia with the US confrontation with China. Speaking at the summit, Albanese declared that it was necessary to continue the de facto war against the Putin regime to send a message to China in the Indo-Pacific.

The remarks dovetailed completely with the US war strategy, which sees the confrontations with Russia and China as two fronts in a single conflict, aimed at establishing American hegemony over the geo-strategically decisive and resource-rich Eurasian landmass.

During its first six weeks in office, Albanese's government has engaged in a whirlwind of foreign policy engagements in the Indo-Pacific. The prime

minister and his top colleagues have visited a host of nations in the region, cajoling and in some instances threatening them to line up behind the Biden administration. Albanese's Ukraine visit underscored Labor's full alignment with the other front of the US war program.

In Kiev, the Australian PM declared that his administration would back the Ukrainian regime "for as long as it takes for Ukraine to emerge victorious." He denounced the Russian military operation, launched in February, as a "brutal invasion... It is unprovoked, it is against international law, it is against the UN charter."

The statements, like all of those from US-NATO aligned leaders, were dripping in hypocrisy. Australia has participated in every predatory, US-led war of the past 70 years, from the bombing of Korea to the decimation of Vietnam and the illegal, neo-colonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Labor government is continuing the efforts of its conservative predecessor to bury Australian war crimes perpetrated in Afghanistan. These included dozens of killings of civilians and prisoners, along with torture and other crimes against humanity. No one has been prosecuted, and the previous Labor government, which presided over the vast majority of the crimes, together with the military high command, has been fully exonerated.

In addition to a two-hour meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky, Albanese was taken on a tour by the Ukrainian president of areas that had been bombed and had been the scene of purported atrocities by Russian forces.

This included Bucha, where hundreds of bodies were found in early April. Albanese's decision to visit the

site is significant. It has served as one of the key “human rights” pretexts for the intensification of US-NATO involvement in the Ukraine crisis.

As the WSWs has previously reported, the Bucha incident remains shrouded in mystery. Nobody has outlined a plausible motive for the Russian forces to have perpetrated the massacre. The neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, which has been integrated into the Ukrainian armed forces, was the first to enter Bucha after the Russian withdrawal, and to discover the corpses.

Albanese, ignoring all of this, as well as Australia’s own record of bombings and mass killings in Iraq and Afghanistan, declared: “Clearly, civilian areas have been targeted by Russian forces as part of this illegal and amoral war.” The entirely unproven allegations of war crimes have been used to threaten Russian President Vladimir Putin with a direct war and regime-change.

Above all, Albanese’s remarks were aimed at covering up the content of the war. Putin’s reactionary invasion was provoked by a 30-year eastward expansion of NATO and the transformation of Ukraine into a garrison state on Russia’s border. Ukrainian forces are being directly trained by US and British military personnel, while the CIA and other western intelligence services are active on the ground.

Albanese’s visit, like the previous trips of British PM Johnson and other senior European and American leaders, itself underscored the fact that Kiev is effectively under the control of the US, NATO and its security forces.

The NATO powers have funneled tens of billions of dollars of weaponry to the Ukrainian regime. The Biden administration alone has pledged more than \$50 billion in military and economic aid over the past four months.

Albanese told Zelensky that he would increase Australia’s contribution by \$100 million. This includes the provision of 20 Bushmaster trucks and 145 other armored vehicles. There are also calls in the Australian press for Albanese to dispatch M777 howitzers and other heavy artillery.

The latest Australian contribution comes on top of deliveries by the previous Liberal-National Coalition government, with Labor’s full support. These included rifles, ammunition, hand grenades and US-made Javelin anti-armour missiles, to be used directly against Russian forces.

Albanese’s announcement takes the total Australian military aid to Ukraine to \$390 million. Previous packages were directly flown by Defence C-17 aircraft, in a complex and costly logistical exercise.

As in the US, vast sums are being committed to NATO’s dirty war in Ukraine, but there is no money to meet the social needs of the population. In addition to its support for US aggression, the first acts of the Labor government have been to insist on the need for working people to make “sacrifices.”

Labor has declared that it will slash key areas of social spending, including health, aged care and disability services, to pay for a national debt approaching one trillion dollars, accrued primarily through massive handouts to big business during the pandemic. At the same time, there will be no increased taxes on the wealthy, who are instead receiving tax cuts, while military spending will be over half a trillion dollars this decade.

The program of war abroad, in other words, goes hand in hand with a war against workers at home. Along with widespread anti-war sentiment, there is an emerging movement of the working class against the onslaught on wages and conditions, amid a soaring cost of living, expressed in recent strikes by nurses, teachers and rail staff.

These developing struggles are the basis for a fight against the militarist policies, which threaten world war, and the capitalist system that is the source of the danger.



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