

Australia discussing sending fighter jets to Ukraine in US-NATO proxy war

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Media reports over the past week have revealed advanced plans to dispatch Australian F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets to Ukraine, as part of the US-NATO proxy war against Russia. Behind the backs of the population, and without discussion anywhere, even in the parliament, the Australian Labor government has been holding secret meetings with the US and Ukrainian administrations to finalise the plan.

The initial report, in the *Australian Financial Review*, was not based on a leak. Instead it was an enthusiastic promotion of the plan based on information provided by government and intelligence agency sources. Under the proposal, Australia would dispatch 41 F/A-18's to Kiev. The aircraft have been retired by the Australian airforce and are currently in a hangar near the industrial city of Newcastle two hours north of Sydney.

The article stated: "Sources have told *The Australian Financial Review* [AFR] that the US, which recently gave permission to other Western allies to supply Ukraine with advanced fighter jets, including US-made F-16s, is favourably disposed to the idea of gifting Ukraine the F/A-18s. "Washington's approval is needed because it owns the intellectual property on the jets that have been retired by the RAAF and which are being replaced by F-35s, of which Australia has ordered 72."

The article, and subsequent coverage in the AFR, has sought to present the dispatch of advanced fighter jets as a "humanitarian" operation. They would, the publication asserts, "protect Ukrainian civilians."

This is, of course, transparent nonsense. The discussion surrounding the dispatch of the planes is taking place in the context of a massive escalation of direct US-NATO intervention in the proxy conflict, which was provoked by Washington and has been used by it to enact long standing plans for a war with Russia.

The US and NATO, in addition to approving the dispatch of F-16 fighter jets by US allies to Ukraine, have bankrolled and armed Ukrainian forces throughout the conflict and before. US and NATO officials are all but openly coordinating the current Ukrainian counter-offensive, which

is resulting in massive losses of life on both sides and raising the specter of a direct US-Russian war.

An Australian aircraft shipment would not only underscore the Labor government's complete commitment to this criminal policy. It would also provide a precedent for the US and other NATO powers, more directly involved in the war, to further escalate.

The AFR made clear this is one of the calculations, reporting: "Australia going first with an initial delivery of fighter jets would give the Americans (and other nations) cover to provide hundreds from its own fleet of F/A-18s."

The article's conclusion highlighted the immense recklessness of what is being discussed. "To prevent the risk of escalation, Australians (and the Americans) could make clear that the Hornets could only fly within Ukrainian airspace, warning if they were used to bomb Russia, the allies would stop maintaining the aircraft, effectively grounding them," it stated.

But Ukrainian forces have already engaged in attacks on Russian territory. Last month, a group of emigre Russian neo-Nazis, aligned with the Kiev regime, conducted a cross-border raid using American-supplied military vehicles and weaponry. That followed a Ukrainian drone attack on the Kremlin, the seat of the Russian government, at the beginning of the month.

US press reports, moreover, have indicated that the US government and its agencies are increasingly favorably disposed to Ukrainian attacks on Russia. Last week, the *New York Times* published an article titled "Biden Administration Shrugs Off Ukraine's Attacks in Russia." It stated: "Behind closed doors senior administration officials have seemed even less fazed. 'Look, it's a war,' one senior Pentagon official said last Thursday. 'This is what happens in a war.'"

The AFR article's suggestion that maintenance of the aircraft would be withdrawn *after* the Hornets were used to attack Russia is ridiculous. Such attacks would be the beginning of a full-scale aerial conflict, which could well result in a world war.

Another question is raised, though. How would Australia end maintenance of fighter jets stationed in Ukraine? Australian personnel would have to be inside that country.

That is also indicated by the AFR report. After prattling about the need to develop Ukrainian-language instructional manuals for the Hornets, as though they were hire cars, the AFR stated: “And with an influx of western fighters to help Ukraine, that would include ex- Hornet pilots.”

There was no elaboration of this strange sentence. The “influx of western fighters” was not explained. Nor was it indicated who exactly these “ex-Hornet pilots” would be or where they would come from. It seems highly unlikely that the Australian government would gift the jets, on the off chance that “ex-Hornet pilots” happened to be turning up in Ukraine. And they would plainly not be “ex-Hornet pilots,” if they were sent to Ukraine to fly Hornets.

Clearly what is being hinted at is the deployment of Australian military forces to Ukraine, either active duty or “retired.” That forms part of a broader discussion, increasingly open, on the need for US and NATO troops on the grounds. From the outset, the WSWS has warned that the policies pursued by Washington and its partners are leading in this direction, which would be a direct war with Russia.

It is already known that US and NATO “military advisors,” intelligence agents and small numbers of specialist troops are deployed to Ukraine.

No information has yet emerged about whether Australian personnel are also involved.

However, the AFR article included comments from one Robert Potter, who was curiously described as “an Australian security expert advising the Ukrainian government.” His comments made clear he was in a position to “confirm” the discussions underway between the US, Australian and Ukrainian governments about the possible Hornet shipment.

Potter’s LinkedIn profile indicates that during the course of an exceptionally active work life, he has been employed by the US, Canadian and Australian governments in cyber and intelligence related fields. For instance, for a time he was “lead SME for North Korean Cyber Security for the United States Department of State.”

Potter’s private cyber-security company is based in Australia. Under a “Who are we” heading, the company’s website states: “Former Intelligence Officers (Army and Federal Government),” “Special Forces Operators (SAS and Commando)” and later “Cyber Advisors to Defence Industry & Government.” Employees are not only drawn from Australian, but also US intelligence.

In addition to the Hornets, Australia is reportedly discussing sending Hawkei armored vehicles to Ukraine. The *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported this week

that the vehicles were among a list of “demands” submitted by Ukraine’s ambassador to the Australian government. They are “very, very famous armed vehicles with air defence systems,” he commented.

As the *Age* and *Herald* noted, the Hawkei is “a seven-tonne armoured car designed to be fitted with the same Norwegian-American air defence system that protects the White House.” Labor Defence Minister Marles refused to confirm, but said he had had a “very detailed conversation” with the ambassador.

Also last week, it was revealed that an Australian military plane had landed in Poland, apparently with supplies bound for the Ukrainian military. The Department of Defence rebuffed all requests from journalists for any indication of what it was carrying. Based on previous announcements, some have speculated that it may have been a shipment of previously-pledged Bushmaster military vehicles.

The secrecy underscores the fact that Australia’s increasing involvement in the Ukraine conflict, half a world away, is being conducted as a conspiracy against the population. Decisions are made, then not long after leaked to friendly reporters who will write what are essentially extended press releases for the government.

Australia’s role highlights the fact that the proxy war against Ukraine is increasingly meshing with the US confrontation with China in the Indo-Pacific. As it is stepping up its involvement on the European battlefield, the Labor government is functioning as the diplomatic attack dog of Washington in the Indo-Pacific, and presiding over a vast militarisation of Australia in preparation for war with China.



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