

Australian Labor government sending missiles, warplane, troops to join illegal war on Iran

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The Australian Labor government this morning announced that it is dispatching air-to-air missiles, an advanced warplane and a troop contingent to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to engage in hostilities against Iran.

With its announcement, Labor is openly joining a massive US-led war against a historically oppressed country. It is doing so under conditions where the entire war is illegal, constituting an unprovoked assault on Iran and on peace, high crimes under international law. And it is joining the conflict after multiple documented war crimes, from the US and Israeli bombing of schools, to medical facilities and a desalination plant.

Labor's announcement formalises and deepens a participation in the war that began almost as soon as US President Donald Trump launched his sneak attack on February 28. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was among the first world leaders to endorse the war, rushing out a statement repeating all of Trump's lies within hours.

Then it was admitted by Albanese late last week that Australian personnel were aboard a US attack submarine that obliterated an unarmed and defenceless Iranian vessel off the coast of Sri Lanka, in an act of imperialist banditry and mass murder that recalled the military operations of the Nazis.

Albanese and other Labor leaders had absurdly claimed that the Australian personnel were not involved in that attack or any other offensive operations, despite being on the vessel that carried out the assault. Even commentators with close ties to the US military-intelligence apparatus derided that assertion and demanded that Labor acknowledge that it is participating in the war.

The announcement this morning was the response.

In making it, Albanese again repeated the war propaganda used to justify the assault. He claimed that the war was directed against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons,

even though Trump and the US intelligence agencies had admitted prior to the launch of their attack that there was no such prospect.

And Albanese obscenely presented Iran as a threat to "peace" and "stability" in the Middle East, as he was pledging full support for the most destabilising war in the region in decades, launched by the world's largest military which has laid waste to that area of the world in one illegal war after another.

Albanese and Defence Minister Richard Marles obscenely sought to present their deployment as a "defensive" operation.

In his opening remarks, Albanese did not even explicitly reference the fact that the US had launched a war and is pummelling Iran with missile strikes. Instead he stated: "The Iranian conflict in the Middle East began just over a week ago and Iran's reprisal attacks continue to escalate already at a scale and depth we haven't seen before."

That is simply an exercise in presenting the victim as the aggressor. Iran has targeted US and allied bases in the Gulf states, because that is where many of the strikes against it have been launched from.

Stripped of Albanese's cynical inversion of reality, his was a declaration that Iran must submit to blanket bombardment and is not permitted to defend itself. That is a duplicitous way of repeating the bloodthirsty demands of Trump for a complete submission from Iran to an onslaught that is openly aimed at regime-change and has acquired the character of a war of annihilation.

Albanese, Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong depicted the deployment as aimed at aiding Australians in the region and as an "act of friendship" with the UAE and the other Gulf states. The former claim is transparent nonsense, with no explanation of how warplanes and missiles would aid stranded Australian citizens. And the

paens to the autocrats and dictators of the Gulf expose the fraud that the assault on Iran has anything to do with “democracy.”

All of that aside, the presentation of the Australian assets as simply collaborating with the Gulf regimes is absurd. They will be integrated into the massive US war machine that is leading and overseeing the war.

That is made clear by what is being sent. The warplane, an E-7A Wedgetail, is benignly presented as a “surveillance” craft by the government and the media, as though its purpose is merely to keep an eye on things.

In reality, the Australian Air Force itself boasts that the Wedgetail “provides Australia with one of the most advanced airspace battle management capabilities in the world.” The Air Force lists its primary “ability” as being able to “coordinate a joint air, sea and land battle in real time.” In other words, the Wedgetail will be helping to plan, coordinate and execute attacks on Iran and its forces.

So too will the air-to-air missiles that Australia is dispatching, whose only conceivable purpose is to carry out strikes.

At least 85 Australian troops are being dispatched with the Wedgetail. There are already more than 100 Australian troops permanently stationed in the Middle East, many at the Al Minhad base in the UAE that also contains US and UK command centres.

Australia had already dispatched a C-17A Globemaster and a KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport last week, supposedly as a contingency to aid stranded citizens. There is no indication that the planes, which could also transport troops and military equipment, have been used for that purpose.

Aside from its obvious practical fraud, legal experts have noted that there is no basis in international law for the distinction the Labor government is claiming exists between “defensive” and “offensive” operations. Under such law, they have noted that Australia is party to an “international armed conflict,” i.e., the US-Israeli onslaught on Iran.

The prospect of the deployment was floated yesterday by government leaders, who revealed they had received a request from an unnamed Gulf state. Then later in the day, they admitted they had also received requests for support from the US and Israel. That makes clear that the current deployment is the beginning, not the end of Australian involvement, under conditions where the logic of the war is for continuous US escalation and ultimately an invasion.

Speaking to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

yesterday, Foreign Minister Wong claimed there would be no Australian “boots on the ground.” But with the deployment to the Gulf, there already are. Wong nervously stated that it was not 2003 and hers was not the Liberal-National Coalition government that committed Australian troops to the invasion of Iraq.

The only difference is that now it is a Labor government that is committing to a criminal war in the Middle East, this time on an even greater scale and of even more brazen criminality. Labor is fully committed to US imperialism’s global war drive and has centred its four years in office on completing Australia’s transformation into a frontline state for a US-led war against China, which is viewed as the chief threat to American capitalism’s global dominance.

The war in Iran is not only aimed at regime-change in Tehran, but at striking a blow at China which has close ties with the Iranian government and relies upon it for substantial energy imports.

The same methods of total destruction and annihilation inflicted on a defenceless population in Gaza is being carried out against Iran, a country of more than 90 million people.

In addition to its full-throated support for US-led wars, Labor has spearheaded an assault on democratic rights. For more than three years it has supported the US-Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, while slandering and attacking the mass opposition to that historic crime as “antisemitic.” On that basis Labor governments have passed a battery of laws aimed at criminalising protests and even political parties.

It is clear that this was not only an attempt to shutdown the anti-genocide movement. It was also a preparation to repress mass anti-war sentiment that will inevitably erupt in opposition to the war on Iran and the preparations for an assault on China.

Workers and young people must draw the political lessons. What is posed is not appeals to Labor, who have proven they are blind and deaf to them, but the most determined political struggle against it. That means building an independent movement of the working class against the war, the government and the capitalist system that is plunging humanity towards the abyss.



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