

Australian government distances itself from illegal war on Iran that it supports

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Over recent days, the Australian Labor government led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, has engaged in an utterly cynical attempt to distance itself from the illegal US-Israeli war against Iran that it supports and continues to actively participate in.

Labor has not voiced a word of criticism of the flagrantly illegal character of the war, an unprovoked assault on a sovereign nation. Nor has it so much as mentioned the many specific war crimes that form part of this war of annihilation, from the assassination of top Iranian leaders to the bombing of schools, hospitals and other vital civilian infrastructure.

Instead, Labor's line has been to suggest that the purported "objectives" of the war may have been met, and to ponder publicly as to whether it will soon end.

The transparent aim is to deflect from the fact that Labor is an active party of the war. It is carrying out this distancing operation under conditions where opinion polls show overwhelming opposition to the war, and where its consequences are being felt in soaring fuel prices and a broader spike in inflation hitting the working class.

Speaking on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's "7:30" program on Monday evening, Albanese declared: "Quite clearly there is a need to see an end point. I think that's what people want to see," adding that he was hoping for "de-escalation" because of the "economic cost" of the war.

Albanese timidly suggested that the fascistic US president Trump may be in a position to claim that the "objectives" of the war had been met.

The most striking thing about what followed was that Albanese simply repeated all of the lying pretexts that were used to justify the continuing war and signalled his support for the bombardment.

"At the beginning of the conflict the objectives were

outlined as one: stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, which has been clearly achieved," Albanese said.

But as he and the government knew, that was a fraud, surpassing even the lies about weapons of mass destruction used to justify the illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Just days before launching his sneak attack on February 28, Trump had publicly claimed that strikes on Iran last year had "obliterated" its enrichment program. The US intelligence agencies, moreover, has stated that Iran is nowhere near the capabilities required to develop a nuclear weapon.

Albanese added that the purported "second objective" of "degrading the opportunity that Iran has for engaging in military action, either overt or through its proxies in Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis" had also been met.

That was a declaration of support for the US-Israeli war not only in Iran but throughout the region, favourably referencing the assault on Gaza, which Hamas once governed, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, where Hezbollah is based, and repeated bombardments of Yemen against the Houthis.

When Labor first began suggesting that the war may be nearing its end, it pretended that the sole US aim was to decimate Iran's nuclear capacity. In his remarks on "7:30" Albanese changed his tune, stating that "the third" objective was "regime change."

As legal experts have stated, the attempt to change or remove the government of a sovereign nation through a war of aggression is a high crime under international law. The "7:30" presenter said nothing about the illegal character of the war, instead stating that "history tells us that regime change imposed from outside is very difficult."

In any event, the presentation of regime-change as a third and potentially optional component of the war is a sham.

The entire aim from the very outset has been to decapitate the Iranian leadership, beginning with the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the very first day of the war, and to provoke a breakdown of Iran's political, military and civil structures. The inherent and openly stated purpose of the war was to install a US puppet regime, as part of a broader eruption of imperialist militarism aimed at maintaining American hegemony, and above all targeting China.

Albanese who was among the first world leaders to explicitly endorse the US attack on the night of February 28, was well aware of Trump's objective. His government is an active participant, including through the joint Pine Gap spy base in Central Australia, which is almost certainly aiding in the targeting of US strikes, and a far broader integration of Australian forces into the US military-intelligence apparatus.

That integration was underscored by the presence of three Australian naval personnel on a US nuclear attack submarine which torpedoed a defenceless Iranian frigate off the coast of Sri Lanka last month, claiming at least 87 lives. The Australian personnel were conducting "training" under the auspices of AUKUS, the militarist pact with the US and the UK directed against China.

Then on March 10, Labor announced the deployment to the United Arab Emirates of air-to-air missiles, an advanced war plane and at least 85 personnel to directly engage in hostilities against Iran.

The warplane, a E-7A Wedgetail, has been falsely presented as a "surveillance" craft by the Labor government and the media. In reality, the Australian airforce describes the Wedgetail as one of the "most advanced airspace battle management capabilities in the world"

At the time of the deployment, *Global Defense Corp*, a military industry publication, explained that the Wedgetail "acts as a command and control center that connects multiple layers of air defence into a single operational network. Inside the aircraft, a mission crew consisting of air battle managers and electronic analysts operates ten consoles connected to tactical communications."

These capabilities "allow the Wedgetail to distribute

target coordinates and tracking information directly to fighter jets, ships, surface-to-air missile batteries, and in real time."

Having presented the deployment of the Wedgetail as a defensive move aimed at protecting the United Arab Emirates from retaliatory Iranian strikes, Labor Defence Minister Richard Marles confirmed on March 17 that all of the data it collects is instantaneously provided to the American military. In other words, Australia is playing an active and direct role in the planning, targeting and execution of criminal strikes on Iran itself.

That has been covered up by a political and media establishment that fully supports the war.

But there is growing popular opposition. A Newspann reported by the *Australian* on Monday found that a massive 72 percent of respondents said they "disapproved" of US military action against Iran.

The sentiment is no doubt deepening because the consequences of the war are becoming apparent. Australian petrol prices are at record levels, and the flow on effects in terms of a surge in inflation are already being felt. The Labor government's response has been entirely cosmetic, consisting of a halving of the fuel excise, which will only make up for a fraction of the price rises that have already occurred.

The deepening social crisis underscores the fact that the fight against imperialist war and against the assault on the jobs, conditions and living standards of the working class are inextricably connected. Both require the development of an independent movement of the working class against the Labor government, based on a socialist perspective that targets the root of the descent into global crisis, the capitalist system itself.



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