

Top US Republican says Australia would join war with China

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A senior Republican congressman has declared that Australian participation in a US war against China is “obvious,” called for nuclear-armed American submarines to operate from Western Australia and stated that the country is already “a target” in the event of a conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

The unusually forthright statement of Australia’s central role in aggressive US-led preparations for war with China was made by Michael McCaul and reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* yesterday.

McCaul is not a marginal figure. He is the co-chairman of the Congressional Friends of Australia caucus and has previously served as chair of powerful house committees on foreign affairs and homeland security.

McCaul made the comments immediately upon returning to the US from Australia, where he engaged in backroom discussions with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and other government leaders.

As per the *Herald*, McCaul “said it was ‘absolutely critical’ that Australia joined the US in any conflict with China over Taiwan, and had no doubt Australia would do so. ‘I don’t think it was even questioned. It’s just obvious,’ he said.”

Taiwan has deliberately been transformed into a flashpoint for a potential war by successive US administrations. They have undermined the previous One China policy, under which the US de facto acknowledged Beijing as the government of all China, including Taiwan.

Trump and his predecessor Joe Biden have encouraged Taiwanese separatism while expanding military and diplomatic ties with Taipei. Senior US government and military figures have repeatedly “predicted” a war with China over Taiwan by the end of the decade. McCaul and the congressional delegation of which he was a part visited Taipei to further that push immediately before coming to Australia.

McCaul is the second top Trump administration official to have presented Australian participation in a war over Taiwan as a certainty.

In comments also ~~Here~~ reported by ~~this~~ delivered in May, Adam Korzeniewski, the AUKUS liaison officer at the State Department, told a security forum in Honolulu that he was “not really that concerned about Australia’s willingness to join in a good fight if one comes up.”

Those statements inevitably raise the question of whether the Labor government has given a commitment to join such a war.

When the Trump administration initiated a review into AUKUS, the militarist pact involving the US and the UK, upon coming to office last year, it leaked to the media that a potential proviso for the sale of American nuclear-powered submarines to Australia would be precisely such a commitment. Trump officials briefed the press that they were fearful the subs would be wasted on Australia in the absence of an advanced undertaking to join war over Taiwan.

Korzeniewski’s laudatory comments about AUKUS in May strongly suggest that Labor had already given assurances at that point. He described AUKUS as the “model” for US relations everywhere, in line with the Trump administration’s National Security Strategy, which is openly aimed at preparing war against Russia and China.

“AUKUS is the spearhead, it’s the canary in the coalmine, it’s the future model of interoperability between different allies,” Korzeniewski had declared.

Four months on, McCaul likened his trip to Australia as the preparation for a new “report card” on the progress of AUKUS. He drew attention to one expression of that “interoperability,” the preparations for America’s own fleet of nuclear-powered submarines to be stationed at the Stirling naval base in Western Australia beginning next year. Supported by a permanent US contingent of more than 1,000 troops, Stirling is to become one of the most important US bases adjacent to the Indian Ocean.

McCaul bluntly declared that the US subs would potentially be carrying nuclear weapons, and said Australians “should welcome” the weapons of mass

destruction. Asked whether the build-up would render Australia a “target” in the event of war, McCaul responded that it already was.

The congressional delegation had raised two issues, upon which the Labor government would need to act. Labor has increased military spending to a record of \$60 billion a year, and has committed to an additional \$50 billion over the decade. McCaul said: “We appreciate your increase in defence spending. We’d like to see more as a percentage of GDP ... I don’t sense that we would expect Australia to be off the hook.”

The delegation had also demanded rapid action to terminate the lease of a Chinese company at the Port of Darwin. The Labor government has already invoked extraordinary national security laws to scuttle the contract, but McCaul insisted the process must be expedited.

In addition to the Stirling facility in the west, Darwin in the north is being transformed into a launching pad for US and Australian deployments targeting China throughout the region. It is hosting American bombers that can also carry nuclear weapons.

When Australia signed on to the US “pivot to Asia” in 2011, one of the first components of that vast military build-up throughout the Indo-Pacific was the establishment of a “rotation” of US Marines in Darwin. The contingent has grown from 200 then to over 2,000 now.

They constitute an increasingly self-contained, all-round combat force, incorporating command, infantry, aviation and logistics components. In 2026, the rotation was formally certified for the first time as a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, capable of deploying from northern Australia for combat operations across the Indo-Pacific, including the seizure of airfields and establishment of expeditionary bases.

In a rare public intervention, Colonel Paul Gillikin, a top US marine officer, published an opinion piece in the *Australian Financial Review* on September 15, outlining what he insisted was the next stage in US-Australian military cooperation, which he explicitly presented as a preparation for war with China.

Gillikin noted the emphasis over the recent period on “interoperability,” the ability of allied militaries to collaborate seamlessly in military exercises and in wars. He wrote: “That remains essential. But a conflict in the Pacific would place greater demands on sustainment, logistics and the defence industrial base. The next step in the relationship should therefore be interchangeability.

“The question is whether two allies merely arrive on the same battlefield or possess the ability to keep each other effective once they are there.”

What Gillikin was outlining—the development of a vast

joint logistics network for war with China, spanning the entire continent—is already far advanced. Last week, the *Guardian* published a report based on research by the Nautilus Institute, showing that the US controls more than 17 defence facilities in Australia and has access to another 75 Australian installations.

In addition to forward-deployment facilities in western and northern Australia, and extremely powerful spying and targeting centres such as Pine Gap in central Australia, the US military presence includes the development of weapons storage and logistics facilities, including in close proximity to major population centres.

The extent to which Australian imperialism is already integrated into the US war machine means that whatever assurances and guarantees have been provided by the Labor government simply formalise a situation that is already locked in on the ground, i.e., that Australia would be automatically involved in a war with China.

The reality that this is part of a developing global war was underscored by another unusual article in the *Herald* over the weekend, which also canvassed the issues of Taiwan and the prospect of a US conflict with China. It was headlined, “Are we in World War III, and just don’t know it?”

The article cited academics, including American professor Robert Pape, who described it as a “fair question” given the major wars that are already underway—the illegal US assault on Iran and the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. The *Herald* added “And watchers of history, he says, know how unexpected events can suddenly spark a massive escalation, and unforeseen devastation within existing wars.”

The flurry of articles in the corporate press raising the prospect of a war with China indicates that an even more intense discussion is taking place behind closed doors.

The sudden interest from a corporate media that has persistently covered up the threat of such a conflict is a warning of how advanced the military preparations are, and of the urgent necessity to build a socialist and international anti-war movement of the working class to halt the descent into barbarism.



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