



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Halt the march to war

The following statement was authored by retired senior Australian diplomat John Lander, who worked in the China section of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the lead-up to the recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1972 and several other occasions in the 1970s and 1980s. He was deputy ambassador in Beijing 1974-76 (including a couple of stints as Chargé d'Affaires). He was heavily involved in negotiation of many aspects in the early development of Australia-China relations, especially student/teacher exchange, air traffic agreement and consular relations. He has made numerous visits to China in the years 2000-19. This statement is a summary of a detailed article published in the Citizens Party's weekly magazine the Australian Alert Service (see below).

Morrison and Dutton's blind hostility to China has cost livelihoods. If they continue it will cost lives.

They insist there is a "China threat". China has not invaded anywhere. It has never proposed use of force against other countries. It has, however, reserved the right to use force to prevent secession by Taiwan.

Dutton's policy on China is clearly aligned to the "Strategy of Denial" which is central to the US National Defence Strategy developed under Trump and not significantly altered under Biden.

It envisages:

- a world-wide media campaign (going on for several years already) to portray China as the aggressor;
- goading China into taking military action to prevent Taiwan's secession;
- leaving Taiwan to conduct its own defence, with constant resupply of arms and equipment from the US, at great profit to the military-industrial complex;
- sustain Taiwan sufficiently to keep China "bogged down", hampering its economic development and its infrastructure cooperation with other countries;
- no direct military engagement, in order to maintain the full capacity of US forces, while China's would be significantly depleted.

Although Biden has publicly re-affirmed adherence to the "One China" principle, the USA has been goading China by:

- stationing the bulk of its naval power off the coast of China;
- "freedom of navigation" and combat exercises in the South China Sea and Taiwan Straits;
- visits by senior US officials using US military aircraft;
- creation of a putative "Air Defence Identification Zone" (ADIZ) extending well over mainland territory and then alleging Chinese violation of it;
- secretly providing military training personnel (whilst denying it);
- including Taiwan in the Summit for Democracy (9-10 December 2021), implying it is a separate country.

Dutton has joined in goading China, by encouraging Taiwan to consider the possibility of declaring independence, which would trigger military action by China.

If Australia were to make good on Dutton's promise to "save Taiwan":

- the Australian navy would be obliterated, given the disparity between China's and Australia's forces, which Dutton himself recently highlighted to the Press Club;
- command/control centres (and possibly cities) in Australia could be wiped out by Chinese missiles, as pointed out by Dutton. Australia has no anti-missile defence;
- To preserve its own assets, the US would not engage directly in defence of Australia;
- US "support" would be through massive arms sales to replace our losses—further profit to the US military-industrial complex;
- ASEAN is unlikely to support Australia. It has renewed its Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China. Each member country has infrastructure projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative, which they would not want to jeopardise in a "no-win war";
- Support from India is unlikely. It has security commitments to China under the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and gets its arms from Russia, which has a "better than treaty" relationship with China.

- Australia relies heavily on China for therapeutic goods (PPE, RATs etc) to combat the pandemic as well as many other daily necessities. In a war, deliveries from China would cease.

Australia needs to adopt a reasonable, balanced approach, publicly reaffirm the “One China” principle and renew commitment to a peaceful, negotiated solution to the “Taiwan problem”.

Click here to read: [A clear and present danger: Peter Dutton and the ‘Strategy of Denial’](#).

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