

Endangering Australia to cling to power

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Lead Editorial

16 February 2022
Vol. 24 No. 7

With the federal election looming, contrast the Citizens Party's 10 February live stream candidate's launch (p. 15), which laid out optimistic, visionary policy solutions for Australia (see Almanac), with actions of the discredited major political parties. Labor's Anthony Albanese is running a small target strategy of siding with the government on most things, fearful of being accused of being weak on national security, or borders, etc. Meanwhile, PM Scott Morrison, staring down the barrel of electoral defeat, is growing extraordinarily desperate and shrill, lashing out at Labor on national security and borders anyway, accusing Albanese of "appeasement". Morrison's desperate attacks, echoed by Peter Dutton, are ramping up the already-dangerous war tensions with China (and Russia)—deliberately endangering Australians to cling to power.

In Question Time on 14 February, Morrison went on the following rant:

"These are very uncertain times", he said. "It is a very uncertain environment, not just in Europe but in our own region here in the Indo-Pacific, with the threats and the coercion that we face here in Australia. ... It is a time for resolve, it is a time to stand up against those who would seek to bully, whether it is Australia, whether it is Lithuania, whether indeed it is Ukraine. It is a time to stand up to the bullies and the autocrats who work together, not just in Europe but also here in our own region. It is not a time for having an each-way bet on national security. It is not a time for appeasement and the trading away of Australian values in search of appeasement.

"It is a time to work with our partners, as our government has done.... It is a time for AUKUS, which was brought together with our closest of partners in the United Kingdom and the United States, for a generational leap forward in our national security settings that were put in place by our government to give us the capability to defend Australia in a way we have never been able to before and to work closely with our Five Eyes partners.

"We denounce Russia's bullying, their coercion, their intimidation and their threats of violence against Ukraine. ... We have taken those steps with our like-minded partners. But I know that the Chinese government has not stood with the rest of the world in denouncing the actions of Russia, and they should do so. There should be no cue taken from the actions of Russia for coercion or bullying in our region."

Ironically, in accusing Albanese of "appeasement", Morrison is right, but Albanese is not appeasing the Chinese. By his small target strategy, Albanese is appeasing Morrison and Dutton, and the pro-war faction that are pushing Australia closer to conflict! People on his own side are also stoking the tensions: the odious Senator Kimberley Kitching, who originally knifed Australia Post CEO Christine Holgate, abused parliamentary privilege on 14 February to name an Australian-Chinese businessman as the so-called "puppeteer" in a foreign plot to interfere in Australia's elections. The businessman, Dr Chau Chak Wing, successfully sued Four Corners and the *Sydney Morning Herald* for accusing him of being a Chinese agent, winning one case again on appeal, in which the judge was scathing about the credibility of his accusers. Put simply, the accusations are a beatup with no evidence, so Kitching, a "Wolverine" loyal to the US and UK neocons pushing war, used Parliament to repeat the baseless allegation solely for the purpose of fueling the anti-China hysteria for the election.

Faced with this insanity, of politicians on both sides incapable of thinking independently, who are

either enthusiastic endorsers of the war agenda that is endangering Australia, or appease the warmongers through their cowardice, the Citizens Party and its supporters have a grave responsibility. Leadership is not telling the mob what it wants to hear, but what it needs to hear. We must be that leadership, both to avert war, and revive the economy.

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