

Biden's 'Asia Tsar' driving Australia to war with China

Australia may have had a change in government, but our foreign policy remains the same. New Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has thus far demonstrated his commitment to maintaining Australia's slavish obedience to the US-UK foreign policy agenda of hostility towards China.

Albanese's first major event as PM was the 24 May 2022 meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), a security alliance between the US, Australia, Japan and India which is aimed at containing China. The 24 May *Australian* declared that Albanese had "pass[ed] the test by holding the line", when affirmed Australia's commitment to the Quad.

Outside of mainstream media, contributors to *Pearls & Irritations*, the online public policy journal run by former public service chief John Menadue, expressed their extreme disappointment with the Albanese Government. On 2 July, veteran journalist Paul Malone wrote that Albanese's foreign policy was "no different from those of the ousted Coalition government". On 5 July, Professor Colin Mackerras, a China expert at Queensland's Griffith University, stated that the Albanese government's China policy was "beyond disappointing". Mackerras noted that China had made several conciliatory gestures towards Albanese, implying that China desired a reset, however Albanese had "hurl[ed] back insults".

By contrast, Albanese received warm praise from leading US participants of the Quad meeting. These included the US National Security Council's Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell, who has had an unparalleled influence on US policy towards Asia. The *Australian* reported that Campbell and US President Joe Biden were watching Albanese's "performance" closely; Campbell, whom Albanese has described as an "old friend", exclaimed that Albanese was "fantastic" in all of the Quad meetings.



Kurt Campbell. Photo: Wikimedia

Campbell's warm approval of Albanese's Quad performance does not bode well for Australia.

The new Labor government embraces Campbell as a Democrat, but he has long been a leading figure in a neoconservative agenda involving notorious, lying warmongers like Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz to develop a US foreign policy aimed at confronting China. As a direct result of Campbell's decades of effort, Australia has become deeply entangled in US military and foreign policy schemes drawing us to the brink of war with our biggest and most important trading partner.

Post-Cold War era

After the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the neoconservative warmongers in the George H W Bush Administration immediately moved to assert sole US supremacy in a post-Cold War world. This was exemplified by the 1992 "Wolfowitz Doctrine", a defence policy guidance memo drafted by notorious neocon Paul Wolfowitz, then-US Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney's Under Secretary of Defence for Policy. The classified Wolfowitz Doctrine, which was leaked and published by the 8 March 1992 *New York Times*, stipulated that the first objective of US post-Cold War political and military strategy should be to "prevent the re-emergence of a new rival ... There are other potential nations or coalitions that could, in the further future, develop strategic aims and a defence posture of region-wide or global domination. Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor." The Wolfowitz Doctrine was reflected in Cheney's *Defence Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defence Strategy* (January 1993), which demanded that, together with its allies, the US "must preclude hostile nondemocratic powers from dominating regions critical to our interests" and continue to maintain a "forward presence" of forces (albeit purportedly to be reduced in the post-Cold War environment) to "strengthen alliances, show our resolve, and dissuade challengers in regions critical to us". It soon became evident that these strategies were aimed at confronting a rising China.

Over the next several decades, the neocons pursued these objectives through successive US administrations, whether Republican or Democrat. Kurt Campbell was part of a small collaborative circle of highly influential individuals, who drove this agenda. For years, Campbell's circle has played a bipartisan "tag team" in a revolving door between government, powerful international organisations, and prestigious universities, ultimately ensuring continuity of the Wolfowitz doctrine and Cheney's demands for continued US military power projection, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. For example, in 2000 Republican Paul Wolfowitz and Democrat Kurt Campbell were co-authors of an influential policy document, *The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership*, published by the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the US Defence Department-funded National Defence University. This report, which was written in collaboration with other influential figures such as Joseph Nye (see below), demanded a reinvigoration of the US-Japan alliance, including increased military interoperability, and an "ongoing strategic dialogue" regarding China. Wolfowitz and Campbell are

both members of leading US policy think tank the New York Council on Foreign Relations, and both have regularly participated in policy initiatives and high-profile events run by the hawkish Center for Strategic and International Studies, where Campbell was formerly the Senior Vice President, director of the International Security Program, and the Henry A. Kissinger Chair.

Campbell was Associate Professor of Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University between 1988 and 1993. He joined the US Defence Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia in 1995, under his mentor and fellow Harvard professor, influential geopolitician and then-Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, Joseph Nye. Together, Nye and Campbell were responsible for the development of key strategies aimed at maintaining US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. This included the landmark 1995 *US Department of Defense report United States Security Challenge for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (the “Nye Initiative”).

Although previous Defence strategy reports had anticipated a gradual reduction of US troops abroad after the Cold War, the Nye Initiative instead reaffirmed the USA’s commitment to maintaining a “forward presence” of forces and basing rights in the Asia-Pacific. The Nye Initiative continued the Wolfowitz policy of aiming to block a rival power from challenging US hegemony: “United States military presence in the region ... denies political or economic control of the Asia-Pacific region by a rival, hostile power or coalition of powers, preventing any such group from having command over the vast resources, enormous wealth, and advanced technology of the Asia-Pacific region.” The Nye Initiative set the tone for a series of successive US defence and strategic planning documents which expanded upon these objectives, laying the foundation for the current hostility with China.

Bush Administration carries the torch

This was the main US foreign policy agenda, until it was temporarily interrupted by 9/11. Writing in 2002 for the Trilateral Commission, Campbell revealed that China was the target country of US foreign and national security policy in the 1990s, until the 9/11 attacks abruptly changed the US foreign policy and national security agenda (to the invasion of Iraq). According to Campbell, the incumbent “September 10th agenda” was “how the United States would engage a rising China”. Princeton Professor Anne-Marie Slaughter, future Director of Policy Planning at the US State Department under the Obama Administration and a close collaborator of Campbell’s, was blunter: “On 9/11 many in the Administration were focused on China as the next enemy; al Qaeda came out of a clear blue sky”.

Even with the focus on Iraq and the “war on terror”, the primary China agenda moved forward. As documented in a 2016 research paper by Dr Nina Silove, a Research Associate at Harvard University and former lecturer at Australian National University, titled *The Pivot before the Pivot: US Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia*, the Bush Administration discreetly announced its own “shift” to Asia, in a series of defence and national security papers developed between 2001-04. According to Silove, key documents included the 2001 Defence Strategy Review, which identified China’s rise as the “most serious imminent challenge” to US interests; and the 2004 Global Posture Review, which reinforced US military force posture towards the Asia Pacific, aimed at dissuading China “from developing hegemonic ambitions”.

During the Bush Administration period, Campbell actively produced volumes of policy papers on China through his leading position on high-profile international think tanks, such as the Aspen Institute. In addition, Campbell served on the Board of Advisors for the Truman National Security Project (founded 2005), participating alongside Democrat war-hawks such as former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Anne-Marie Slaughter. In 2007, Campbell co-founded his own hawkish think tank, the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), with Michèle Flournoy, a senior defence official under the previous Clinton Administration, who was later appointed Under Secretary of Defence for Policy in the Obama Administration. In this position, Flournoy argued against US withdrawal from Iraq; supported increased US troop presence in Afghanistan (for which she was praised by Paul Wolfowitz); argued for greater US involvement in Syria; and helped persuade President Barack Obama to invade Libya.

In his 2006 book *Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security*, Campbell asserted that the US must “maintain a forward deployed military presence in the [Asia] region that is both reassuring to friends and a reminder to China that we remain the ultimate guarantor of regional peace and stability. Capital ships, stealthy submarines, expeditionary Marine forces, and overwhelming air power will likely offer the most effective military instruments for managing a range of Asian scenarios involving core US interests”.

Asia Pivot

From 2009 to 2013, Campbell revolved back into the US government as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In this role, Campbell was widely credited as the architect of the Obama Administration’s 2011 “Asia Pivot”, which was explained as the USA’s military “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific in response to the rise of China, but which in fact was Campbell advancing the neocon agenda from the 1990s to confront China. Campbell’s interventions in the Obama era, which included the deployment of up to 2,500 US Marines in Darwin, further ensnared Australia in US foreign and military strategy. For his efforts, Campbell was awarded the Order of Australia in 2013, for “strengthening bilateral relations” between Australia and the USA. Campbell was lauded as “instrumental in rebalancing United States’ policy towards our region” and

for his persistent “commitment to United States engagement across the Indo-Pacific, as well as to the Australia-United States alliance”.

Hostile US policy towards China continued into the Trump Administration, with the 2017 resurrection of the USA-India-Japan-Australia “Quad”, and the publication of a series of key US strategy documents which asserted that China sought to displace US hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. ([AAS, 25 May 2022.](#))

The lackey country

On the first day of the Biden Administration, Biden appointed Campbell his so-called “Asia Tsar”, formally the National Security Council’s Indo-Pacific Coordinator; and Deputy Assistant to the President. In this position, Campbell picked up where he had left off under Obama, playing a key role in the negotiation of the 2021 AUKUS trilateral security pact between the USA, UK and Australia; Campbell later described AUKUS as a “melding” of American, British and Australian naval forces.

As the Citizens Party has documented, AUKUS makes Australia a “staging point for WWII”, as, in addition to the controversial nuclear submarine purchase agreement, Australia has agreed to “host unlimited numbers and types of American military personnel, weapons and war materiel. China is forced to assume that the latter includes nuclear weapons, and to respond accordingly.” ([AAS, 22 September 2021.](#))

In a 1 December 2021 interview with the Lowy Institute, Campbell shamelessly lied that AUKUS was created in response to China’s alleged provocations over the last five to seven years. In truth, like his Asia Pivot, US military expansion in the Asia-Pacific is a strategy he has personally advocated for decades. Campbell praised Australia, but in such shamelessly false terms, he only succeeded in highlighting how much Australia has become a lackey in this agenda. He was “extraordinarily impressed” with the “dexterity and “nuance” of Australia’s “deeply independent foreign policy”, Campbell gushed, asserting that Australia was not “simply an adjunct to Washington”.

In 2019, former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had encouraged Australia’s hostility towards China and declared that the USA would always have our back (Australian exporters would beg to differ). In his Lowy interview, Campbell feigned sympathy over China’s alleged “dramatic economic warfare” against Australia, claiming without evidence that China wanted to “break Australia” and “drive Australia to its knees”.

In truth, Australia’s trade relationship with China is immensely beneficial—the balance of trade is massively in our favour, and it was crucial to averting recession in the 2008- 09 global financial crisis. That relationship was developed independently, and it has only suffered since Australia abandoned any aspiration to independence to march in lockstep with the agenda Kurt Campbell and his warmongering neocon colleagues have pursued for three decades.

By Melissa Harrison, Australian Alert Service, 6 July 2022