

Dangerous moves: Collapsing bubbles, and balloons

The *Australian Alert Service* is the weekly publication of the Australian Citizens Party.

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Lead Editorial

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The pop
song
"99



The latest would-be war trigger, and that of 20 years ago. Photos: Screenshot; Wikipedia

Luftballons", written in 1983 by Berlin band Nena as a protest against the Cold War, depicted a zealous overreaction to an imagined threat (by "war ministers" who "caught wind of great spoils") that turned out to be harmless red balloons, which resulted in nuclear war and a world turned to ruins and dust.

Unfortunately, the so-called Chinese "surveillance" balloon (actually an innocent weather balloon blown off course) shot down by US Air Force fighter jets on 4 February is one of many triggers that could bring this apocalyptic scenario to reality. This intervention was but one day off the 20th anniversary of the defining moment of one of the deadliest sagas in the post-September 11 "regime change" era, in which time the USA has regularly violated its historic pledge not to go "abroad, in search of monsters to destroy". In front of the UN Security Council on 5 February 2003, US Secretary of State Colin Powell held up a vial of a substance representing anthrax and claimed the USA had evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. After hundreds of thousands of people had been killed, the country destroyed, and its leader Saddam Hussein hanged, and still no WMDs had been found, Powell called it a "great intelligence failure" for which he felt deep regret.

Stoking Powell and Dubya Bush for war was British PM Tony Blair. Today we have ex-PM Boris Johnson, who in April 2022 sabotaged the negotiations which came close to ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and continues to interfere.

In a 30 January interview with Sky News, head of the UK Defence Select Committee of the British House of Commons, Tobias Ellwood, ramped up the stakes further: "We are now at war in Europe; we need to move to a war footing. ... We need to face Russia directly rather than leaving Ukraine to do all the work." And former British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Security Strategy, Sir Gerald Howarth, has told the *Washington Post* that it's time to consider putting NATO boots on the ground.

This follows four-star US Air Force General Mike Minihan on 27 January telling his officers the USA will likely be at war with China by 2025, while another four-star general visiting Australia, United States Marine Corps Commandant General David Berger, said Australia will need to use "everything in the cupboard" to avoid a conflict over Taiwan—but that "We can't slow down, we can't back off" from confrontation.

On the other side stands a growing chorus of voices: reelected Brazilian President Lula da Silva, who is calling for a peace coalition in a G20-type format; French economist Pierre de Gaulle, grandson of President Charles de Gaulle, who warned 1 February that the world is on the edge of the abyss of World War III, because Western politicians “do not understand either the history or the consequences” of their actions; and retired Australian diplomat John Lander, whose representation of Australia’s opposition to war at a recent US Committee for the Republic event (p. 3) was cited by veteran American columnist Patrick Lawrence in an [article](#) published by Scheerpost.

As you can read in this week’s Almanac, war has long been a vehicle for reinforcing imperial control during a financial collapse, and it is invariably teamed with austerity policy in order to entrench financial power. The ninth consecutive Reserve Bank rate rise, this week, followed an IMF review of our economy which demanded further rate increases, a GST increase, government spending cuts and the white-anting of social welfare schemes (p. 9).

A reversal of this economic landslide, inundating and devastating families as surely as a tsunami or earthquake, albeit in slow motion, is also the pathway out of war. The momentum for real solutions is snowballing rapidly as the devastation wrought upon regional communities by departing banks is finally acknowledged by major media, forcing MPs to join the fight—see the extensive reports within.

In this issue:

- *Must watch*: ANZUS leading US to war against China?
- Fightback against banks abandoning regional communities taken to Parliament this week
- FLASH! Senators put up motion for bank closure inquiry
- Call for state-owned bank as branch closures ‘abandon’ people of Australia
- Junee Council takes bank fight to Canberra
- The crooks are in city boardrooms, not in balaclavas!
- Chalmers’ puddle-deep soul searching won’t fix this crisis
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- Leopards vs. the Russian Bear
- A Public Bank is the solution!
- How a Tongan volcano flooded Australia
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