

# Betrayed!

By John Lander

17 Feb.—The Australian people have been betrayed by their own Government, morally, legally, economically, financially, militarily and politically.

## Betrayed morally



A rally outside Labor Senator Malarndirri McCarthy's office on 15 February. Photo: Top End Peace Alliance

Australia's moral standing in the world has been betrayed by the government providing political and military support to Israel as it carries out the wholesale slaughter of the Palestinians and the destruction of their living environment. Over 30,000 people have been killed by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), more than half of them women and children. Australia continues to support Israel, despite the fact that their leaders have openly declared that "there are no innocents in Gaza—they are all Hamas terrorists, including children, babies" and even the unborn. Almost all hospitals and medical facilities in Gaza have been destroyed or reduced to a barely functioning state, without equipment, medicines and other essential supplies which Israel has blocked from entry under its continuing siege.

A core value of the Australian people, the belief in a "fair go" for everyone, who must be considered innocent until proven guilty, has been betrayed by the Australian Government, as Israel's actions against the Palestinians since 1948 (let alone today) could hardly be described as a fair go. This principle has been further betrayed by the Government's decision to suspend funding to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), based on extremely flimsy uncorroborated evidence supplied by Israel, that a few rogue personnel of UNRWA celebrated the Hamas attack on 7 October. UNRWA's services are absolutely vital for the survival of the Gazan population. Withdrawal of funding will result in many more deaths from treatable wounds and diseases, as well as malnutrition and starvation.

## Betrayed legally

The Australian Government has failed to fulfil its obligation under the Genocide Convention to do everything in its power to prevent a genocide, or potential genocide in Gaza. Yemen has attempted to fulfil its obligation, as it sees it, under the Genocide Convention, by imposing a blockade on shipping to/from Israel. Such a method has been used by the USA in many precedents and even by Israel against Gaza. At US behest, Australia has joined in US/UK attacks on the territory of Yemen, thus breaching international laws of war, which make illegal any attack on another country, unless that country poses an imminent and credible threat to the territory of the country under threat (self-defence).

The Australian government has also placed Australia in legal jeopardy of being prosecuted in the International Court of Justice for complicity in genocide. The ICJ issued an interim injunction to the effect that Israel had a case to answer and that it should immediately desist from any action liable to imperil the civilian population of Gaza. Israel announced, even before the ruling, that it would defy it and continue the slaughter. By persisting with support to Israel, the Australian Government has indicated that it also flouts the ICJ ruling. By these actions it has undermined the rule of law and replaced it with the law of the jungle.

Australia's acceptance of the legal position that Taiwan is part of the sovereign territory of China is betrayed by its frequent naval manoeuvres in China's coastal waters, in the name of a form of

“freedom of navigation” which is not provided for under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (which the USA has refused to sign). As long as the legal status of Taiwan remains part of China’s sovereign territory, exercises through the Straits of Taiwan are clearly intrusions into China’s territory. Such provocations are a betrayal of Australia’s interest in a peaceful, productive relationship with China, especially when China’s reactions to them are misrepresented as “aggression”.

## **Betrayed economically**

The Australian Government has willingly overseen the gradual take-over of control of the Australian economy. The USA has majority shareholding in key companies in every sector of the economy, whether that be in mineral extraction and treatment, manufacturing, food production and distribution and even in the arts/media/entertainment industry.

The government has gone further, by giving the USA control over mining, processing and marketing of rare earth minerals, so important in the development of high-tech industry. Australia has surrendered to the USA the power to decide who may invest in, and who may buy, Australian rare earth minerals.

The interest of Australian citizens in having a thriving economy providing adequate healthcare, affordable housing, education and environmental/climate protection has been betrayed by the government diverting many billions of dollars into the acquisition under AUKUS (the Australia-UK-US “security pact”) of nuclear-powered submarine technology, which will most likely be obsolete by the time it is delivered. It will, in any case, only serve US strategic objectives in the region.

## **Betrayed financially**

The Australian banking system has been gradually taken over by foreign, mainly US, investment arms. Privatisation of the people’s bank—the Commonwealth Bank—not only cemented foreign control of the banking system, but deprived government of the ability to channel investment into infrastructure or productive areas of the economy. Australian banking is locked into the Anglo-American global financial system, structured on the US dollar and reliant on the SWIFT for international transactions.

To complete the financial handover to foreign interests, the present government is moving to divest itself of the last resort of monetary policy-setting and vest it in an un-elected board of oligarchs at a restructured Reserve Bank of Australia. This will be beholden to the Bank for International Settlements, known as “the central bank of central banks”, controlled by Anglo-American billionaires, who will thwart any attempt by the government to stem the flow of wealth into their pockets and hamstring the ability to direct capital into development of the real economy.

## **Betrayed militarily**

The government has presided over the integration of US and Australian armed forces—and the integration of US intelligence gathering and analysis within the Australian intelligence apparatus. Australia is thus deprived of independent ability to perceive and assess significant international developments and derive appropriate responses. Australian defence interests have been conflated into US defence interests, even though they are in reality very different.

The AUKUS pact, a malignant outgrowth of the ANZUS Treaty, has—as the US Presidential Advisor on Asian Affairs, Kurt Campbell gloated: “locked Australia into US defence policy for the next forty years”. The truth of this statement has been demonstrated in Australia’s unhesitating participation in US military efforts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

The Australian government has surrendered the sovereign power to determine when, where, how and against whom to go to war. Under the 2014 Force Posture Agreement, it has allowed the establishment and expansion of numerous US military bases, to which the USA has “unimpeded access” and over which it has “exclusive control”, thus ensuring that any US war in the so-called Indo-Pacific region will be conducted from Australia and will make Australian territory a target, whether Australia wishes to be involved or not.

## **Betrayed politically**

The government’s political betrayal of the nation has been broad and extensive. A policy of antagonism towards China, which has never expressed animosity towards Australia, nor demonstrated any hostility, not only compromises the economic relationship with Australia’s most important trading partner, but alienates Australia from its regional neighbours, who all seek to maintain friendly cooperation with China.

Being realistically wary of China’s growing economic, military and political strength does not preclude a mutually beneficial relationship with China. Such wariness is not matched in the handling of the relationship with the US, whose policies largely determine the policies that Australia adopts and whose influence is deeply embedded in the Australian body politic.

The Government has betrayed freedom of speech by its acquiescence in the continued incarceration of Julian Assange, despite his having committed no crime nor having been charged with one. This

contrasts with the government's hypocritical outcry against China's sentencing of a Chinese/Australian writer, and former intelligence officer of the PRC prior to becoming an Australian, who was formally charged and tried in court for breaches of law pertaining to China's intelligence service (akin to breaches of the *Official Secrets Act* in Australia).

## **Democracy betrayed**

Australia's democracy itself has been betrayed by its own government, since almost all of these decisions have been taken in secret, with no consultation with the Parliament nor the people. The government has taken an increasingly autocratic, authoritarian approach to implementing these decisions. It has not only ridden rough-shod over the democratic principle that the elected representatives of the people should have the opportunity to debate and decide policy issues of potentially existential consequence for the nation, it has betrayed even its own Party, the rank-and-file of which has been ignored and their views dismissed.

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