



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

19 July 2024

Aussie ‘Top Gun’ Dan Duggan submits final appeal for Australian justice next week

Next week, Dan Duggan makes his final submission to Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, who will decide whether Duggan is extradited to the United States for training Chinese pilots in 2012.

All Australians should be extremely concerned about whether it’s even possible for *our* fellow citizen Dan Duggan, and his wife Saffrine and six children, to receive justice from an Australian government that is pathologically subservient to a US political system currently in the grip of a frenzy of McCarthyite anti-China paranoia and Sinophobia.

Australian courts have already upheld the US government’s malicious sabotage of Dan’s legal defence by freezing the sale of Saffrine’s property, so it can’t be used to fund his defence, which is forcing Dan to rely on pro bono efforts from the wonderful Australian lawyer Bernard Collaery, and on donations to pay US lawyers they have been forced to appoint to the case.

(To help Dan, Saffrine, and their children defend the case, [click here for his fundraising page](#)).

Dan Duggan is in prison and facing extradition to the United States under a 2017 US Department of Justice indictment which accuses him of training Chinese military pilots at a South African test flight training school in 2012. The specific charges in the indictment allege he violated the USA’s International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), padded out with related “conspiracy” (i.e. he spoke to someone) and “money laundering” (i.e. he got paid) charges, that are just there to add years to his sentence so he is extorted into copping a plea.

However, he is the only pilot trainer who worked at the South African school who has been indicted, for two reasons:

1. What he did was not illegal under Australian or British law (and probably not under US law either, given that hundreds of ex-US military pilots do such training for foreign pilots, and the vast majority of Chinese pilots are trained at flight schools in the United States—see below).
2. He’s the only one the Americans can try to claim was a US citizen—except he is a naturalised Australian, married to an Australian woman with Australian children, who had already given up his US citizenship.

It’s very important Dan Duggan’s fellow Australians understand that his chances of a fair trial in the United States, or even a fair hearing from Australia’s Attorney-General, are very slim, given the intense political climate of Sinophobia in the USA, and the Australian government’s political subservience to Washington.

The anti-China political shift in the USA and Australia was a sudden lurch to war talk that started around 2016, just before Donald Trump was elected President.

Before that, and even for a while afterwards, nobody was talking about war with China; in fact the opposite: China was the place to do business, strike trade deals etc., and President Xi Jinping visited Australia and addressed Parliament in 2014.

Any sense that in 2012 “Dan Duggan was training the enemy” is not just complete rubbish, it’s a pernicious attempt to twist reality to suit the current political agenda. Part of that US agenda is to demonise any business dealings with China, and intimidate people and countries into conforming with Washington’s economic warfare against China, which, if the Australian government goes along with it, puts thousands of Australian businesspeople at risk.

‘A different time...’

For proof that Dan Duggan was not in any way “training the enemy” by training Chinese test pilots in 2012, note British Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston’s comments in 1 February 2023 testimony to the UK House of Commons Defence Committee, in response to questions about British pilots who trained Chinese pilots at the same test flight school in South Africa.

“It has been going on for many years and *it goes back to a period when we took a different approach*

to China”, Wigston said. “We took a much more engaging approach: *we did training, it was formal, we had state visits, and the Red Arrows went and displayed in China in [2018]. So I can understand why those people who went and became contractors, helping in simulators and with flying—training at that stage—would have felt that it was a reasonable thing to do. ... It was a different time.*” (Emphasis added.)

The United States has also been relaxed about this issue for many years. Nobody has ever been convicted for violating ITAR regulations by providing training, as ITAR is usually applied to stop the sharing of technology and equipment. And a very large numbers of US personnel have provided training to foreign militaries for years.

An 18 October 2022 exposé in the *Washington Post* documented that since 2015, hundreds of former American military personnel had taken lucrative jobs working for foreign governments. The US government actively fought to keep the pay and employment details of these veterans secret.

Although reservists and retired servicemen are required to first obtain approval and a waiver from their branch of the armed forces and the US State Department before working for foreign governments, the *Post* found that approval was virtually automatic.

The US government relied on veterans to self-report their intentions to work for a foreign government, but many servicemen did not even bother to report.

According to the *Post*: “*There is no criminal penalty for violating the law. Enforcement is almost nonexistent.*” At most, the *Post* stated, DoD can withhold the pensions of those who ignore the rules.

So why has Australian Dan Duggan been singled out, and why is the Australian government doing America’s dirty work for it, instead of protecting an Australian citizen and his family?

Do not ignore this case! Please get behind Dan, Saffrine, and their children as they take on the might of the US war machine with their hands tied behind their backs financially.

[Click here to support the family before next week’s showdown.](#)