

# To prevent war, 'Four Powers' dialogue urgent



The *Australian Alert Service* is the weekly publication of the Citizens Electoral Council of Australia.

It will keep you updated of strategic events both in Australia, and worldwide, as well as the organising activities of the CEC.

The US-China trade war is intensifying, with consequences spilling over into the broader global economy. The toxic waste from the 2008 global financial crisis is bubbling away inside Deutsche Bank and other too-big-to-fail wrecks, threatening to erupt into another global crisis. The post-election economic hype in Australia is already dying, renewing fears of a crisis that itself could have global consequences. The world is edging closer to a new financial crash.

Suddenly two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman have been attacked. The two tankers were shipping oil to Japan, and the attacks occurred just as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was visiting Iran on a peace mission. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo instantly blamed Iran for the attacks, based on “intelligence, the weapons used, the level of expertise needed to execute the operation, recent similar Iranian attacks on shipping, and the fact that no proxy group operating in the area has the resources and proficiency to act with such a high degree of sophistication.”

War with Iran, however, has been a decades-long plot by the neoconservatives in the USA and UK—whose worldview demands the USA remain the sole global superpower—and extremists in Israel and Saudi Arabia (strange bedfellows!). Former NATO Supreme Commander General Wesley Clark famously revealed that in the days immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Bush-Cheney administration included Iran as one of the seven countries targeted for regime change. Testifying before the US Congress in 2002 as a civilian, current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged the USA to target Iran along with Iraq: “It’s not a question of whether you’d like to see regime change in Iran”, he said, “but how to achieve it.”

Bush and Cheney couldn’t achieve it, and neither could Obama. While Trump won the presidency campaigning against regime change, he surrounded himself with anti-Iran hawks such as National Security Advisor John Bolton. Trump escalated tensions last year when he withdrew from the nuclear agreement with Iran. Then on 5 May this year Bolton suddenly announced the deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Gulf in response to “a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings” which he didn’t disclose.

What came next may shed some light on the true origin of the attack. On 14 May, the top UK commander in the region, Maj. Gen. Chris Ghika, publicly contradicted the Pentagon to state that there was no increased threat level from Iran. Two days later Ghika’s own government overruled him, and on 19 May the UK announced the deployment of its Special Boat Service (SBS) to the Gulf to “protect shipping”. Given the UK’s history of using its special forces to stage provocations, this deployment should ring alarm bells. The water-borne counterparts of the famed SAS, the SBS indeed has “the resources and proficiency to act with such a high degree of sophistication”, as Pompeo characterised the attacks on the tankers.

The situation is both alarming, and tiresomely repetitive. For too long, the world’s most dangerous “regime” centred in London and Washington, representing the financial interests of the City and Wall Street, has played “chicken” with nuclear war by attacking nations seen as proxies for Russia and China, to preserve its twisted idea of hegemony. Among other things, war is a diversion from the financial crises that threaten its power. At any time, however, a miscalculation could set off an escalation that spirals into full-blown conflict between nuclear-armed powers. Trump himself has de-



The UK deployed its Special Boat Service to the Gulf in May.

escalated the rhetoric against Iran this week, dismissing the attack as “minor” and insisting he doesn’t want regime change, but there’s too much scope for a mistake.

It’s past time to change the geopolitical dynamic completely. The world needs a “Four Powers” dialogue between the USA, China, Russia and India on strategic and economic solutions that can end this dangerous game (p. 9).

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