

# Secrecy is pushing the world to war



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Heads of Australian media at the National Press Club demanding press freedom. Photo: Twitter

The push for expanded police-state powers is driven by the oncoming global financial crisis. Whether in the realm of economic policy, banking or security, the major political parties, banks and regulators, think tanks, intelligence agencies, military-industrial complex and big business are all on the same page. And they are operating at the behest of an elite City of London-Wall Street cabal. The mainstream media are a part of this "governing" establishment, but the recent raids have startled them just enough to begin to question what is at stake.

What is happening is exactly what we warned of in our campaign against "bail-in" (the confiscation of investments or deposits to save banks) since 2013. The emergency powers provided to bank regulator APRA in 2018 were always part of a broader objective of upholding the establishment's power after a financial crash. APRA can take over and run banks as it sees fit; provide unsolicited "advice"—a.k.a. "orders"—to the Treasurer; determine if a bank is bailed in, thus preventing the financial Claims Scheme from kicking in (activated only when a bank fails)—all conducted under its extraordinary secrecy provisions.

The use of new police-state powers, brought in gradually since 2001, has proven our point. Even after all the denials, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton confirmed on *Insiders* on 16 June that the government will continue the drive for more police-state laws, including by expanding powers to monitor domestic communications. But the backlash is growing. Centre Alliance Senators Rex Patrick and Stirling Griff plan to call for a referendum to add freedom of speech and freedom of the press to the Constitution when parliament resumes. "The pendulum has swung too far", Senator Patrick said, and a constitutional amendment would "put a brake on any future government efforts to suppress the freedom of the press or freedom of expression for all Australians". Sen. Patrick received an intimidating phone call from Home Affairs Secretary Mike Pezzullo after he commented in the wake of the raids that Pezzullo and Dutton "clearly hate media scrutiny" (AAS 12 June).

This push for draconian controls intersects the ongoing war drive, also a reaction to the establishment's collapsing financial power. The British press has leaked plans about a new remit for British special forces, the "Special Operations Concept", which if approved would allow secret operations—such as cyber war and "subversion" aimed at "rival powers"—by the Special Air Service regiment (SAS), Special Boat Service (SBS), and Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR). A source told BBC on 13 June that "The counter-terrorist task is drawing down, while the need to confront dangerous international behaviour by peer adversaries is increasing."

British Chief of General Staff Gen. Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, at an early June London conference, said Britain's adversaries had managed to "exploit that hybrid space between those two increasingly redundant states of 'peace' and 'war'". This space is known as the "grey zone" and is already being exploited by the Anglo-American side. The USA has admitted active cyber operations against Russia's energy grid, allowed by changes slipped into the last military authorisation bill. Is Britain's SBS also utilising this zone, given its presence in the Persian Gulf when two oil tankers were attacked under

suspicious circumstances? Fortunately US President Donald Trump did not take up the provocation to war, this time, but the situation remains on an extremely short fuse.

The Russian Embassy in London said the British proposal would “pav[e] the way for removing the existing restrictions imposed by international law and to claim the right to carry out military operations beyond the limits of self-defence, which constitutes a direct breach of the UN Charter.” Such hybrid operations will create new trip-wires for fully fledged armed conflict, which Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has warned is already escalating “right to the limit”. A discussion among major powers is desperately needed at the G20 summit later this week (p. 7).

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