



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Here's a good use for a Magnitsky Act—sanction Andrew Hastie's cronies in the Henry Jackson Society

Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is conducting an inquiry into whether Australia should legislate a Magnitsky Act, by which the Australian government would be able to sanction foreign officials accused of human rights abuses. Liberal MP Andrew Hastie is a member of the Human Rights subcommittee conducting the inquiry, and one of the agitators for the law. A Magnitsky Act is a tool to weaponise faked human rights concerns; if it were a genuine tool for justice, Australia would use it against Hastie's friends in Britain's Henry Jackson Society, for their direct complicity in the terrible suffering wrought upon Libya by the 2011 regime-change intervention they championed.

The Henry Jackson Society (HJS) is a British neoconservative think tank, named after a neoconservative US Senator, with close links to the British and US military/intelligence/foreign policy establishments. These links are evident in the involvement of a former MI6 chief, Sir Richard Dearlove, and a former CIA director, James Woolsey. The HJS is front-running the increasingly strident US and British government attacks on China, and Andrew Hastie has become its Australian mouthpiece. In July 2019 Hastie made a deliberately insulting comparison between the rise of Nazi Germany and that of China—a crucial ally in the war against the Nazis and their Japanese allies—at a HJS function in London, on a podium alongside HJS founder Dr Brendan Simms. In early April 2020 the HJS demanded China pay trillions in reparations for infecting the world with COVID-19. And on 14 May the HJS released a report called "[Breaking the China Supply Chain: How the 'Five Eyes' Can Decouple From Strategic Dependency](#)", which Hastie is disseminating around Australia, including to his constituents. (Interestingly, [in a chapter he contributed to the report](#), Hastie made no mention of what "decoupling" from China would mean for his home state of WA and its enormous China iron ore trade.)

The HJS report accuses China of having become more authoritarian as its economy has grown, instead of more "liberal" and "democratic" as hoped. This is a common theme with regards to China (and with most countries regarded by Anglo-Americans as adversaries), but it never factors in how those countries have been forced to respond to the behaviour of the USA and UK, supported by Australia, in their mad rush into the regime-change wars that destroyed Iraq, Libya and Syria, destabilised the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, and fuelled international terrorism. The HJS is a leading agitator for regime change and was effectively founded for that purpose, as expressed in its bellicose [Statement of Principles](#) that assert "only modern liberal democratic states are truly legitimate"—a dangerous justification for never-ending regime change wars ultimately targeting China and Russia. The HJS's zeal for conflict was expressed by founding member Oliver Kamm, who described himself in a 2005 London *Times* column as a "pro-war leftist".

Libya disaster

Founded in 2005, the HJS doesn't directly share the blame for the 2003 invasion of Iraq on a lie, but it does indirectly, as a number of the neoconservative gang responsible for that war crime are its "[International Patrons](#)", including William Kristol, Robert Kagan, and Richard Perle (former Australian Labor Party MP Michael Danby is another international patron).

The HJS is directly culpable in the follow-up fiasco, however: the equally disastrous regime-change intervention in Libya in 2011. The HJS lobbied heavily for that war, including through its Libya "expert" George Grant who from February 2011 gave the UK Parliament a series of strategic briefings to promote the intervention. In his [Greater Surbiton blog, former HJS director Marko Hoare](#) later boasted of the Society's influence and the "remarkable confluence of thinking between the HJS and [British PM] David Cameron over the case in favour of military intervention in Libya in 2011". Following the intervention and brutal murder of Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi, the above-mentioned Dr Brendan Simms, HJS founder and Hastie's co-speaker in 2019, triumphed in a 9 September 2011 editorial that "[Libya shows that you can drop democracy from 10,000 feet](#)", i.e. countries can be bombed into becoming "democracies". Simms concluded, "We do not know yet whether the National Transitional Council will bring democracy to Libya. We can say with confidence, however, that if it does, British bombs dropped from a great height will have had a lot to do with it."

Real human rights abuses

Within five years we did know if the intervention had brought democracy to Libya; a September 2016 UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee issued the damning verdict that it hadn't—far from it. The report, [Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options](#) stated:

“This policy was not informed by accurate intelligence. In particular, the Government failed to identify that the threat to civilians was overstated and that the rebels included a significant Islamist element. ... The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL in North Africa.” (Emphasis added.) We now know that among the myriad human rights abuses, the intervention has led to the return of slavery—black Africans desperate to flee the destabilised region to Europe are being captured and traded as slaves in Tripoli.

The Libya intervention should be regarded as a human rights atrocity, but the Henry Jackson Society has washed its hands of all responsibility for the outcome: “I think it is too easy to blame the West”, George Grant whined in a 6 June 2017 interview with Open Democracy. The HJS went on to cheer-lead the British-French-Saudi-Turkish-US regime-change operation that unleashed Islamist terrorists against Syria, and the Anglo-American-backed neo-Nazi coup in Ukraine, which between them have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

Such is the nature of the Anglo-American forces behind Andrew Hastie who are trying to set Australia on a collision course with China, including through a Magnitsky Act to weaponise human rights against China and other regime-change targets. It's time they were held to their own professed human rights standard and were brought to justice for the lives they have destroyed in their pursuit of permanent war—the only valid use for a Magnitsky Act, or don't victims of Anglo-American foreign policy matter?