

British Empire Grooms Australia, Expands NATO, for War with China

by Gabrielle Peut and Robert Barwick

Feb. 1 (MELBOURNE)—Britain is intensifying its nuclear war threats to Russia and China, by pushing, in tandem with U.S. President Obama, for Australia and other nations of Asia to join NATO in a worldwide military alliance targeted squarely at China, in the same way that NATO has aggressively encircled post-Soviet Russia. U.K. Defence Secretary Philip Hammond and Foreign Secretary William Hague expressed this intention during their January trip to Australia for the annual Australia-U.K. Ministerial Dialogue (AUKMIN) meeting. The two announced elements of an imperial scheme to extend a global military dictatorship and permanent warfare into the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean rim.

Central to the British agenda for the Pacific are Barack Obama's provocative Asia Pivot to "contain" China, and an upgrade of the British-Australian military relationship. Britain has long groomed Australia as the base for pursuing its strategic interests in Asia.

On Jan. 16, Hammond declared to Rupert Murdoch's newspaper *The Australian*, that Britain unequivocally supported the U.S. Asia Pivot, which calls for shifting the strategic focus from Iraq and Afghanistan and onto the Asia-Pacific. Hammond made clear that, despite all assurances from Washington to the contrary, the British know the policy is targeted at China—and they applaud it: "We

should celebrate the fact that the U.S., the only power on Earth that is capable of rising to the challenge of growing Chinese ambitions, has been prepared to take on that challenge and that it has been prepared to make a strategic pivot in order to respond to China's growing economic and political and military power," he proclaimed.

Hammond's comment betrays the British hand in the Asia Pivot, which has put the region on a trajectory toward war. That hand has guided Australia, formerly a British colony, and still within the British Commonwealth, to offer its northernmost city, Darwin, as a base for 2,500 U.S. Marines, the so-called "tip of the spear" of U.S. military might. In the planning stages are fur-



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ther upgrades to the ports of Perth and Brisbane, for use by the U.S. Navy.¹

For decades, Australia has hosted joint facilities with the U.S., such as the Pine Gap signals intelligence center; these are now being integrated into Obama's ever-expanding global Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system, which is targeted at China and Russia. In response to the Asia Pivot, Chinese officials and spokesmen have repeatedly, and pointedly accused Australia and the U.S. of a "Cold War" mentality. An unsigned editorial in China's *Global Times* of March 29, 2012 warned that Australia's participation in America's BMD system, along with that of Japan and South Korea, would force China to abandon its long-held nuclear doctrine of no first use of nuclear weapons.

Within Australia, the country's intensified integration into U.S./NATO plans has prompted leading figures to speak up against pursuing wars that can lead to a nuclear holocaust. As *EIR* reported Oct. 19, 2012,² former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser warned that Australia must not be drawn into a military confrontation with China, saying that "there is a danger that the U.S. is seeking to maintain supremacy, which could lead to war," and that it is "an absurd allegation that China may wish to curtail freedom of the seas in the South China Sea."

The New Citizen, newspaper of Lyndon LaRouche's co-thinkers in the Australian Citizens Electoral Council (CEC), editorialized in its October/November 2012 issue: "It is exceedingly important that such Australian opposition to these plans grow louder and more effective, as the plans, and propaganda for them, are stepped up." The issue, of which 365,000 copies have been distributed in a CEC organizing drive reaching government and military institutions throughout the country, featured new research into Australia's deep involvement in the war danger, with dossiers on former Deputy Secretary of Defence for Strategy and Intelligence Hugh White, and chairman of the Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Michael Danby. (Those dossiers are excerpted below.)

1. These and related military programs in Australia were documented in "Australia Readies for World War; Tragedy, or Just Plain Farce?", *EIR*, July 13, 2012.

2. Mike Billington, "Will the British, Once Again, Provoke a Sino-Japanese War?"

Expanded NATO

In his interview with *The Australian*, Hammond discussed measures that will provoke China still further, namely, expanding NATO into the Asia-Pacific. Australia's military has been operating with the NATO-led Coalition Forces in Afghanistan since 2002, during which time a push for worldwide extension of NATO's operations has developed.

Media tycoon Murdoch, who had been a key booster of the Bush-Cheney regime, publicly called for expanding NATO, in his Nov. 2, 2008 Boyer Lecture in Australia. "Australia needs to be part of a reform of the institutions most responsible for maintaining peace and stability. I'm thinking especially of NATO," he said. "Though NATO was designed to prevent a land war in Europe, it is now fighting well beyond its borders. As we see in Afghanistan, not everyone is doing their share, and that is a problem too many people want to ignore. The only path to reform NATO is to expand it to include nations like Australia. That way NATO will become a community based less on geography and more on common values. That is the only way NATO will be effective. And Australian leadership is critical to these efforts."

A few months earlier, in June 2008, Australia had hosted Exercise Pitch Black, involving 3,000 personnel and more than 60 aircraft from the U.S., Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, France, and the NATO flying unit known as the E-3A Component. Component Commander Brig. Gen. Stephen Schmidt said of the exercise, "This historic deployment to Australia is another example of our transformation into a world-wide deployable force."

A January 2009 NATO conference in Turkey "highlighted the importance [for NATO] of setting up cooperation ties with countries such as Japan and Australia," according to a Xinhua News Agency report at the time. Later that year, Australia and NATO formalized an agreement to exchange secret military information, which Australian defense officials told a parliamentary committee would allow for "a deeper strategic dialogue between Australia and NATO and increased cooperation on long-term common interests."

Australia's growing involvement with NATO took a jump ahead on June 15, 2012, when Prime Minister Julia Gillard signed a joint declaration with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen for co-operation on common global security challenges, including terrorism and cyber warfare.



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Col. Liu Mingfu of China's National Defence University warned that the U.S. intends to "build 'a mini-NATO' to contain China, with the US and Japan at its core, and Australia within its orbit." Shown: Joint U.S.-Japan naval maneuvers in the East China Sea, Nov. 16, 2012.

During the January visit, Hammond urged his Australian hosts to maintain this close cooperation with NATO, emphasizing that NATO sought deeper cooperation with "trusted partners" such as Australia and its sister British outpost New Zealand. The Defence Secretary sketched a hypothetical future global role for NATO, whereunder, "We could see threats to international security from non-state actors arising within the Asia-Pacific region." In the case of "tensions in the Pacific that directly engage the interests of NATO countries," he said, "Australia and the U.S. will be the leading nations, in that you will be closest to the areas of tension, [and] other NATO countries may wish to contribute, show support in the way that Australia has done in Afghanistan."

Foreign Secretary Hague reinforced Australia's central place on Britain's Pacific agenda, in the 2013 John Howard lecture he delivered Jan. 17 in Sydney. In the very week when British Prime Minister David Cameron announced that Britain would hold a referendum on withdrawing from the economic basket-case of the European Union, his top diplomat was in Australia, em-

phasizing Britain's desire and efforts to engage with Asia. "Today Britain is looking east as never before in modern times—we've set our sights on far closer ties with Asian nations," said Hague.

Singling out Australia, Hague said, "Today the level of our foreign policy cooperation is unprecedented.... Australia is now the only country in the world with whom Britain has a formal agreement to share confidential diplomatic reports on a regular basis." He predicted Australia and Britain would have to face crises "side by side," nominating Iran and Syria as examples.

Australia: the Empire's 'Bridgehead into Asia'

Hague's description of the Britain-Australia relationship, coupled with Hammond's declaration at AUKMIN that Britain sought to make use of Australia's "footprint" in Asia, reflects the advanced stage of the British imperial strategy, unveiled in 1995, to build the Commonwealth—the collective of former and present British colonies—into the great economic and financial power of the 21st Century. This design was spelled out at a 1995 Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) conference in London on "Britain and the World," attended by members of the royal family; it was devised in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union, when only a rising China stood in the way of unrivalled Anglo-American hegemony.

"Discussion Paper 60: Economic Opportunities for Britain and the Commonwealth," prepared by Australian academic Katherine West, called upon the London elites to make greater use of the Commonwealth nations, so that British economic and political power could encompass the Far East and Asia. Writing that Britain should de-emphasize the financially exhausted European continent, West urged a policy of "mutual exploitation" between London and the far-flung capitals of the Commonwealth—beginning with Australia, as a "bridgehead into Asia." The drive to transform the Commonwealth into the core of a new British Empire, she wrote, stemmed from "the experience of empire and the dynamics of *an informal financial empire that maintained its vibrancy long after the formal empire went into decline*" (emphasis added).

In keeping with the British-Obama war drive against China and Russia, the British “bridgehead” relationship with Australia is distinctly militaristic. At the Jan. 18 AUKMIN event, Hammond and his Australian counterpart, Defence Minister Stephen Smith, signed a new *Australia-United Kingdom Defence and Security Co-operation Treaty*, which, in the words of Smith, “provided for the first time, an overarching strategic framework for our bilateral defence relationship.” This description is astounding, given the extraordinary closeness of the relationship already.

The official communiqué reporting the AUKMIN talks and the new treaty revealed that the event focused on key elements of the present Anglo-American agenda against China and Russia, including a point on “Nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and North Asia.” Echoing the “weapons of mass destruction” lies on the eve of the Iraq War, the policy points play up the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea as justification for the global BMD network, which is actually aimed against Russia and China.

Also contained in the AUKMIN documents were a joint call for President Assad in Syria to stand down, and Britain’s endorsement of Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr’s proposal to claim that the need to protect medical facilities and workers in Syria would justify a limited military intervention.

The declaration avowed support for the principles of “open government”: “Australia values the leadership shown by the UK and others in the establishment of the Open Government Partnership, which Australia is currently considering joining.” Open Government is a euphemism for irregular warfare, again targeting Russia and China. The Open Government Partnership is a British government-directed operation, formed by Britain and seven other nations in 2011, but now expanded to include 57 member-nations representing 3 billion people. Chaired by British Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude, it enjoys both government and private funding, including from foundations that were previously involved with the Open Society projects of megaspeculator George Soros, in support of the various so-called “color revolutions” since 1999, especially in the former Soviet area. The AUKMIN emphasis on this Open Government operation signals prospects for this type of irregular warfare to be directed against Asian targets, ultimately China.

AUKMIN also emphasised “cyber warfare,” as did Prime Minister Gillard a few days later, focusing her defense speech at the Australian National University on tensions allegedly caused by the rise of China and cyber warfare. Gillard announced a new Australian Cyber Security Centre in Canberra, to be completed by the end of 2013, which will be an “important hub” of collaboration with “international partners.”

Backlash, and Solution

In the immediate wake of the AUKMIN talks and Gillard’s defense speech, the Jan. 23 *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted senior Chinese Col. Liu Mingfu of China’s National Defence University, warning Australia not to side with the U.S. and Japan in the dispute over islands in the South China Sea, and explicitly referring to the possible use of nuclear weapons. Focusing his comments on America and ignoring the guiding hand of the British, Colonel Liu nonetheless nailed the strategic agenda, which he identified was to “build ‘a mini-NATO’ to contain China, with the US and Japan at its core and Australia within its orbit,” the *Herald* reported. “America is the global tiger and Japan is Asia’s wolf and both are now madly biting China,” Liu said.

At the same time, Chinese officials have emphasized that there is a pathway to peace: economic development. The Jan. 15 *Australian Financial Review* (*AFR*) reported criticism by China’s ambassador to Australia Chen Yuming, of Australia’s hosting of 2,500 U.S. Marines in Darwin as “Cold War-style.” Chen added that “there was too much emphasis on the strengthening of military alliances in the Asia-Pacific region and not enough on the pressing economic difficulties which meant countries like the US, China, Europe [sic] and Japan had to work closely together.” He urged all countries to avoid moves which risked damaging “trust-building measures in the region,” because the greatest priority was collaborating to strengthen the global economy: “In today’s world the top priority of all countries is development; we face multiple challenges and it is important for all countries ... to focus on economic development and growth,” the Chinese ambassador told *AFR*. “China and Australia need to address their own domestic problems in economic growth. The key word in today’s world for all countries should be economy and it should be development.”