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NO NUCLEAR SUBMARINES: NO AUKUS TREATY – NO WAR ON CHINA

Denis Doherty and Hannah Middleton

New anti-AUKUS coalitions around the county are gearing up for this weekend (10th-12th December), where people will take to the streets to make it clear that we will not accept nuclear submarines and everything else contained in AUKUS, the new military deal between Australia, the UK, and the USA.

There is a growing movement which is making it clear that we, the people, will not accept nuclear powered submarines and their economic, social and environmental costs.

We will not tolerate a policy that intensifies military tensions in our region with China, fuels a new arms race, and increases the dangers of accidents, which can trigger escalation to a catastrophic war that could destroy the human species and the planet.

We reject the ludicrous government assertion that Australia's national security is enhanced by exorbitant spending on planes, warships, submarines, and land vehicles, totalling more than half a trillion dollars over ten years. In reality, such spending can only make Australia poorer and less secure.

Instead of billions spent on killing machines, we demand the money be used instead to fund public hospitals and Medicare, pay nurses decent wages, increase the number of regional doctors and healthcare workers, and properly fund the NDIS.

If we are equipped for war when a pandemic hits our nation but not to battle a virus, how foolish are we? We need to keep our promise to fund vaccines for developing countries and start health preparations instead of war preparations.

We demand funding to improve the living standards of the people of both town and country, eliminate unemployment and homelessness, provide education and decent housing for all, and promote culture.

These initiatives would meet the needs of the Australian people and would create far more jobs than dollars invested in war preparations. The argument that "defence spending creates employment is a lie.

CREATING JOBS

We refuse to accept submarines powered by highly enriched uranium (HEU) fuel that produces weapons-grade waste. Furthermore, nuclear reactors come with the possibility of disastrous accidents. There are already nine nuclear reactors on the seafloor as a result of nuclear submarine accidents.

We refuse to accept the high-level waste. No solution exists for its disposal, and so it would probably be dumped on Aboriginal land, despite the opposition of traditional owners and despite the appalling dangers involved.

We will not accept more US soldiers, planes, surface vessels and submarines in our country. We will not accept more joint war games.

We will never accept AUKUS that provides Australia with the resources to become a nuclear power and even to develop nuclear weapons. Already the Nationals and other politicians and corporations are arguing publicly for Australia to develop nuclear power generation.

We demand a country free from foreign military and free from militarisation. We want a foreign policy committed to peaceful relations with all our neighbours and the resolution of conflicts through diplomacy.

The AUKUS pact is disrupting relations in the region, with some states supporting the deal but others, including Indonesia and Malaysia, expressing strong opposition.

Regional countries are caught between antagonising China, which they rely on for trade and investment, while having to line up politically and strategically with the US.

We totally reject an alliance that forces regional countries against their will to choose sides, join an arms race, or be involved in fighting proxy wars for the US.

ATTACK DOG DUTTON

Defence Minister Dutton is making deliberately alarmist and exaggerated allegations to justify Australian war spending of billions of dollars.

In his recent Press Club speech, Dutton claimed that all Australian capital cities were in range of Chinese missiles, and the fall of Taiwan would be the first step towards Beijing's domination of the region.

Dutton made the ludicrous allegation that China sees other countries in the region as "tributary states" and warned China would dominate Asia if it succeeded in invading Taiwan.

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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

The 5th December is an important date for us at the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). It was on this day, fifty years ago (1971), that the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) was formed. The SPA was the former name of our Party as it existed concurrently with the former CPA that had been established in 1920.

Having raised their concerns with CPA leadership about its direction, our SPA comrades developed the view that the CPA was headed towards liquidation and that Marxism-Leninism would disappear in Australia. Here is their analysis of this situation:

"It is no secret that an open struggle has been going on in the CPA for a number of years against the present leadership which has deserted the teachings of scientific socialism, moved away from the working class and based itself on radical-power movements and upon a sect known as Trotskyism. The CPA leaders abandoned development of working class united action adopting instead, divisive policies and tactics which weakened the struggles of the trade unions, the peace movement and other progressive organisations. Its policies have become so hostile to the world socialist system and the communist movement that it is politically isolated internationally.

"The lesson to be learnt is that a revolutionary party can exist and grow only if it bases itself on scientific socialism and is committed to the concrete issues facing the working people. [...]

"We intend to speak out on current problems, on immediate struggles for a better life, on questions of monopoly and its consequences, inflation, redundancy, prices, wages, trade unions, democracy, the farm crisis, peace and socialism. These are the questions that affect every worker and his family. These problems face us all. We believe we have the answer to these problems, but it is actions, not words, which will be the test."

It is crucial here to take stock of the accuracy and truthfulness of these words. The claims about the ideological direction of the CPA (1920) are by no means slanderous. Comrades are more than welcome to revisit old issues of *Tribune* where CPA leaders such as Denis Freney applauded the Party for its "decisive break with Stalinism," and in the process promoting Trotskyism by praising its "invaluable lessons" (*Tribune*, 27th May, 1970).

The magnitude by which the CPA abandoned the working class would reveal itself some ten years later with the election of the Hawke government and the Prices and Income Accord (social contract). As political economist Elizabeth Humphrys writes:

"[t]he 'molecular transformation' of CPA-aligned officials was particularly stark [...], in that they shifted from arguing that the Accord would be a pathway to socialism to defending its most regressive aspects – including declining real wages – on the basis of the national interest" (*How Labor Built Neoliberalism*).

The political pressure to support the Accord was immense, and this must be emphasised when discussing the SPA's opposition to it. Addressing the Accord as early as 1982, then-General Secretary Peter Symon wrote that:

"[u]nless all major aspects of the economy come under central government control a 'social contract' will be limited and will be inevitably turned against the interests of the working people as the employers continue their quest for maximum profits."

By providing this analysis and adopting this position many that same year that Symon wrote these words left the SPA in support of the Accord. It is now generally accepted by anyone left of the ALP that this was precisely the consequence of the Accord.

With Scientific Socialism, the SPA (now CPA) has not only survived these struggles and continue to exist but *grown*, with new members joining and branches being created. On the other hand, the CPA (1920) failed as a viable pluralist left alternative and liquidated in 1991. As we celebrate fifty years of communist activity, let us learn from our history and build together for a socialist Australia!

COUNTRY ROAD WORKERS ON STRIKE

N Woodruff

Workers at the Country Road distribution centre in Truganina, Victoria, are on strike after the company declined a request for a $1 p/hour pay raise in the lead up to the busy Christmas Season. The workers, represented by the United Workers Union, earn little more than the minimum wage and struggle to make ends meet. The union also alleges that the company has used intimidatory tactics to deter the workers from industrial action, including laying manure on a planned union rally site and visiting workers at their homes. Workers, many of whom are migrant women, have been told they could lose their jobs if they join union action.

In 2020 the Country Road group increased their profits by forty-four per cent and pocketed $25 million in JobKeeper subsidies from the taxpayer. Country Road is owned by South-African based retail conglomerate Woolworths Holdings Limited, which also owns fashion brands Mimco, Trenery, Witchery, and Politix. Woolworths Holdings Limited is not related to the Australian supermarket chain. In the financial year 2020-21, Woolworths Holdings Limited reported a profit of $450 million, an increase of 260 per cent from the previous year.

Instead of sharing these profits with the workers who created them, Country Road Group has subjected workers to rampant insecure work, low wages, bullying and intimidation, and slashed their rights to organise as a union on site. Wages for warehouse workers at Country Road are below the industry average, by as much as $10 p/hour. This is not the first time Country Road has mistreated workers. In 2019, the company was found to have underpaid staff by $3.7 million. ✪

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His criticism of China's militarisation of islands in the South China Sea did not include any mention of US upgraded bases on Guam, new bases on Okinawa, and a US base on Jeju island in the Republic of Korea, all of which have far more military equipment and hostile weaponry pointed at China than anything China has defensively placed in the South China Sea.

The ALP has attacked Dutton's rhetoric, accusing him of stoking tensions with China for electoral gain.

A Chinese Embassy spokesman said Dutton's Press Club address was "fanning conflict and division" and was based on "visionless analysis and outdated mentality".

HYPOCRISY

The three governments that have signed AUKUS are the very same ones that have destroyed the Middle East for the last forty years. The so-called war on terror has caused around four million deaths, produced 37 million refugees and created mountains of rubble.

Yet, these governments now proclaim that they are acting in the interests of peace and stability in this region. Dutton claimed Australia's main desire is to secure peace through deterring China from aggression. This is disgusting hypocrisy!

Australia's full-hearted attacks on China may give some solace to US arms corporations but they are not doing Australia and the region any favours.

Already the US President has realised that he must work with China and has held talks with China on the environmental crisis, leaving Australia looking foolish and isolated.

Although the original AUKUS pact proposed an eighteen-month period for negotiation, Dutton rushed through the exchange of nuclear propulsion information element of AUKUS through a proposed new AUKUS Treaty.

Less than one week was allowed for community submissions, making it clear that Dutton will push ahead regardless. In yet another example of his government's contempt for democracy, he will consult with the US and the UK leaders but not with the Australian people.

US GARRISON

At the September AUSMIN meeting, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that the United States "will expand our access and presence in Australia."

More detail of how the US will garrison Australia was given in the US 2021 Global Posture Review released on 29th November. The review states:

"In the Indo-Pacific, the review directs additional cooperation with allies and partners to advance initiatives that contribute to regional stability and deter potential Chinese military aggression and threats from North Korea [...]."

This cooperation will include:

- Further enhanced air cooperation through the rotational deployment of US aircraft of all types in Australia and appropriate aircraft training and exercises.
- Enhanced maritime cooperation through increased logistics and sustainment support for US surface and subsurface vessels in Australia.
- Enhanced land cooperation through increasingly complex and more integrated exercises and greater combined engagement with allies and partners in the region.
- Establishing a combined logistics, sustainment, and maintenance enterprise to support high-end warfighting and combined military operations in the region.

These are moves to transform Australia into a US forward operating base for pressure on China with two main purposes: to maintain the US, and to a much lesser extent Australian, economic and political control in the region, and secondly for Australia to pay for as much as possible of the costs of the US throwing its weight around in the region.

There is nothing at all here which benefits the Australian people. We have to say loud and clear: NO to AUKUS. ✪

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR PEACE AND CLIMATE

Kaurna – Adelaide: Saturday 11th December, 2 PM, on steps of Parliament House

Meanjin – Brisbane: Friday 10th December, 4 PM, Reddacliff Place

Ngunnawal – Canberra: Friday 10th December, 5.30 PM *Venue TBC*

Nipaluna – Hobart: Friday 10th December, 12.30 PM Mathers House, Mathers Lane

Naarm – Melbourne: Friday 10th December, 5:15 PM Victoria State Library, Swanston Street

Naarm – Melbourne: Saturday 11th December, 1 PM Victorian State Library, Swanston Street

Noongar – Perth: Friday 10th December, 4:30 PM Wesley cnr Hay and William Streets

Gadigal – Sydney: Saturday 11th December ,12 PM Town Hall Square

Dharawal – Wollongong: Thursday 9th December, 6:30 PM 6-8 Wentworth Street, Port Kembla

LEGISLATING BIGOTRY

Anna Pha

It has taken three years and two previously aborted bills for the latest incarnation of the Coalition's highly controversial Religious Discrimination Bill to appear in the second to last Parliament sitting week of the year. In the process the bill's original name has been changed from Religious Freedom Bill to Religious Discrimination Bill. The divisions within the Coalition and opposition from some crossbenchers that played a role in the previous ditching of the bill remain unresolved.

The bill was largely written by and for religious lobby groups. It gives religious-based organisations the freedom to discriminate against anyone who in their eyes does not conform to their outlook on life. This is regardless of whether the difference in outlook is of any relevance to their role.

Catholic-educated Attorney General Michaelia Cash has carriage of the bill, although evangelical Prime Minister Scott Morrison took it upon himself to introduce it to the House of Representatives.

The bill claims to make it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of religious belief or activity in a range of areas of public life, including work, education, access to premises and the provision of goods, services, and accommodation. But its provisions read more like a bill to legalise discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity in public life.

Equality Australia, an organisation supporting LGTQI+ people, points out that "the Bill that has been drafted threatens to undermine inclusive workplaces, schools and access to services like healthcare without judgement. Laws which should protect religious people from discrimination will be used to hand a licence to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people, women, people with disability, and others."

BIGOTRY

The thinking behind the bill is no different to that of former Attorney-General George Brandis who pronounced in Parliament that people have "a right to be bigots" when the Abbott government attempted to repeal section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. Section 18C makes it unlawful for someone to "publicly offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" someone because of their race. In this instance it is because of a host of additional attributes.

"The proposed legislation will override existing discrimination protections by allowing religious hospitals, aged care facilities and accommodation providers to discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability, if it is based on genuine religious belief," Andrew Christopoulos, Australian Lawyers' Alliance National President said.

"The Bill effectively legislates bigotry, by enabling religious belief to be used as a cloak for sexism, racism, homophobia and other prejudices," said Christopoulos. If the bill becomes law, it will override existing protections for people who rely on other discrimination laws to protect them from offensive, insulting, or intimidating conduct.

The bill legalises a "statement of a religious belief" held by someone if it is held "in good faith." Such statements will be "protected speech", and will not be deemed discrimination if they do not vilify or bully someone or incite criminal activity. So, telling a woman she must submit to her husband or telling a person with disability that their disability is a punishment from god would be acceptable as long as that belief was held "in good faith."

If someone believes the bible's description of homosexuality to be "an abomination" (Leviticus 20:13) it would not be considered discrimination to publicly describe a gay person in such terms. Nor would it be to publicly label a school student born out of holy matrimony as "illegitimate" – a label that appeared on birth certificates in Australia until 1976. "Bastard" was the term used in earlier times.

The influence of the church in modern Australia and other similar Christian-influenced nations has been significantly weakened in terms of socially accepted norms. Fundamentalist, Pentecostal Morrison's Religious Discrimination Bill attempts to turn back the clock.

FREEDOM TO DISCRIMINATE

Despite Cash's strong reassures that the government's position is that no child should be suspended or expelled on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity, the bill does nothing to prevent this.

The bill states: "[…] a religious body does not *discriminate* against a person under this Act by engaging, in good faith, in conduct to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherents of the same religion as the religious body." To enable them to discriminate, they must publicly publish a policy stating their religious position. So all a school, nursing home, charity, or other church-based institution has to do is publicly declare the categories of people they discriminate against.

Morrison says: "The bill protects the fundamental right for religious schools to hire religious staff to maintain their religious ethos, in accordance with a publicly available policy."

"*This protection will be able to override state or territory laws which seek to interfere with that right*" (Emphasis added). In other words, the bill overrides other laws that "interfere" with the right to discriminate on the basis of religious beliefs or what Morrison describes as "protected attributes."

The Prime Minister also misleadingly claims that "nothing in this bill allows for any form of discrimination against a student on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity. You won't find it, anything of that nature in this bill. Such discrimination has no place in our education system."

True, there is nothing of that nature in the bill. After all it is already legal in most states to expel or suspend students on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity. The bill does not override that. It fails to make it illegal. Teachers can already be sacked for being gay, divorced, or belonging to a different religion or being an atheist.

STATE LEGISLATION OVERRIDDEN

The bill deliberately sets out to override state anti-discrimination legislation.

In Tasmania, under the Anti-Discrimination Act, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of a number of characteristics, referred to as "attributes" in Morrison's legislation. These attributes include race, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, marital status, and religious belief or affiliation.

The Tasmanian legislation applies in such areas as employment, education, accommodation, and industrial agreements and awards.

The Religious Discrimination Bill seeks to override Tasmania's legislation and make it legal for church institutions to discriminate on any of these criteria and others as long as it is a "statement of belief" made "in good faith."

There is also a supplementary bill which specifically mentions legislation currently before the Victorian Parliament. The Andrews government's bill seeks to prevent schools discriminating against students based on personal attributes. In relation to employment, schools would only be able to discriminate where "religious belief is an inherent requirement of the job."

That means they would not be able to sack a cleaner, gardener, maths teacher, or chemistry teacher because they are gay, divorced, living in a de facto relationship, have a disability, etc.

"This will bring Victorian law into step with 21st century community expectations and the practices of many faith-based organisations that have diverse workforces and seek to treat people with dignity and respect," chief executive of Equality Australia, Anna Brown, said.

"Overriding hard-fought protections in Victoria and other states would be an extraordinary act of overreach by the Morrison government."

WOMEN

Women for centuries have been subjected to oppressive relationships based on religious beliefs backed by legislation based on those beliefs. Women were, and in some religious groups and societies, are still expected to submit to and obey their husbands.

The bill licences religious-based organisations to discriminate against unmarried mothers, divorced women, lesbians, and other women not conforming to a particular religious outlook. There is nothing in the bill to counter such discrimination.

FOLAU CLAUSE

What was known as the "Folau" clause has been watered down in this the third version of the bill, but not completely removed. The "Folau" clause prevented employers sanctioning workers for religious speech such as that used by Folau, who described god's plan for homosexuals as "hell" unless they repented their sins and turned to God, attributing Corinthians 6.9-10.

The replacement clause protects a person who makes offensive, insulting, or hurtful comments provided they are based on a genuinely held religious belief and are made outside the work context.

The bill also weakens a provision in the second draft that did not permit conduct that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act. It now states that conduct "may" still be discriminatory under the Sex Discrimination Act. This opens the door to all sorts of discriminatory practices and possible legal challenges when for example a pregnant, unmarried teacher is sacked, or student expelled for being gay. Such practices carried out in the name of religion can do untold harm to those affected.

POWER OF CHURCH

The various Christian, Jewish, and Muslim lobby groups exert incredible political influence over governments, not only through their political donations but in influencing voters in their areas of influence.

Their institutions have amassed enormous wealth thanks to generous government handouts and tax exemptions: they are treated as not-for-profit and so do not pay income tax or land tax on their considerable real estate assets.

Their lobbying for the right to discriminate is part of an ongoing struggle between the state and church over whose law is primary. This came to the fore during the Royal Commission Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse. The Catholic Church still treats the "sacred seal of the confessional" – based on medieval Canon law – as above state law.

On the eve of a federal election both major parties are wary of offending religious lobby groups. At present Labor is sitting on the fence. It opposed the previous two versions of the bill. ✪

If the bill becomes law, it will override existing protections for people who rely on other discrimination laws to protect them from offensive, insulting, or intimidating conduct.

REPORT: PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE ACTION – PERTH

Richard Titelius

Earlier this year, six unions – the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association (CPSU/CSA), State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA), United Workers Union (UWU), Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), and Health Services Union (HSU) – allied to form the Public Sector Alliance (PSA). The aim of the PSA is the pursuit of wage justice for their members. After several years of wage caps of $1000 a year by then-premier Colin Barnett to fix a fiscal black hole of their making, Premier Mark McGowan has continued the wage restraint for the same reason.

PSA's first action was to lobby the McGowan government before the delivery of the State Budget to have the State Public Sector Wages Policy taken off the table. The PSA was able to achieve this with additional lobbying from Unions WA.

As a result, the McGowan government needed to formulate a new public sector wages policy and called for submissions from all relevant parties, including the public sector unions and Unions WA. As part of its submission, Unions WA called for a new wages policy which would "guarantee for public sector workers [...] a wage increase of at least four per cent that will compensate for the wage restraint [...]."

As the government prepares to deliver this policy by December 2021/January 2022, the PSA called for a public meeting of the delegates and members of their affiliates to put the case publicly and personally to the decision-makers of the McGowan government that public sector workers need a pay rise. Specifically, a wage increase that not only keeps up with the current increases in the cost of living but makes up a little for what has been lost through cumulative restraints over the last three agreements.

The first speaker was Unions WA Secretary Owen Whittle. Whittle said, "We rely on government services to make our society what it is, and these workers now need a decent pay rise." Whittle added, "The wages policy of this government has been a failure only delivering 4.6 per cent over three agreements while the Minimum Wage increased by 11.2 per cent within a similar time frame." The government now had a $5.6 billion surplus, and the government should not use wage restraint as the first lever it pulls to manage the state budget.

The next speaker was Australian Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sally McManus, who addressed the 300 unionists in the Perth Town Hall via a pre-recorded video message of solidarity from Melbourne. McManus said that Australia is coming out of the pandemic, and industries are experiencing labour shortages. Instead of hiring Australian workers at award wages, businesses have been calling for cheap overseas labour. Many people in the community suffer, said McManus, because there are not enough resources in the community. It is the adequately paid wages of workers in the community, especially the public sector, that support the community and the private sector. McManus added, "Usually it is the public sector which leads with pay rises and then the private sector pays more." However, state governments across the country have been capping wage rises and not engaging in proper bargaining processes.

SSTUWA delegate Helen from Kalgoorlie was the next speaker, saying that the pay rises which she had been getting were below the rate of inflation and are now one of the lowest in the country.

Julie Maree, an enrolled nurse and member of UWU, said she had a young family and wanted to be able to earn enough to be able to give her children the love and care they deserve.

CPSU/CSA State Secretary Rikki Hendon concluded, "All across the public sector, workers are feeling the strain of the rising cost of living." Hendon added, "Us coming together is a game-changer as uniting separately has the potential to divide us". However, Hendon warned union delegates and members that we will need to be ready to take action in 2022 to hold their ground. It is important we bring our members with us and also to bring other workers on board with the union movement.

State public sector workers need a pay rise, one that matches the cost of living. It's about the value the government should place on public sector workers – the ones who helped keep the wheels of the state moving during the COVID-19 crisis. It is important to bring our members with us and bring other workers on board with the union movement.

The Communist Party of Australia supports the PSA's campaign for a wage rise that will meet the current cost of living and restore real income lost through years of wage restraint and a lack of proper bargaining. Power to the public sector workers through unity and solidarity! ✪

REPORT: PROTEST AGAINST URANIUM MINE PROPOSAL – MULGA ROCK, WA

Richard Titelius

On Friday, 26th November, fifty anti-uranium mining protesters, including traditional owners, attended a rally outside the headquarters of Vimy Resources in South Perth for its Annual General Meeting.

Vimy Resources was granted preliminary environmental approvals by the then-Liberal Barnett Government in December 2016, shortly before it was voted out of office by the ALP led by Premier Mark McGowan, who opposed uranium mining.

The conditions of its initial approvals were that it had to make significant progress within five years towards providing a number of specific plans, permits, and approvals, including uranium export approvals, safeguards approvals, permit to transport nuclear material, permit to establish a uranium mining facility, a conservation plan for a threatened species – the Sandhill Dunnart – which is native to the area, and a land use area agreement with the Upurli Upruli Nguratja native title claimants.

The first speaker was Mia Pepper of the Conservation Council of WA, who said we need to spend money to promote environmental sustainability through building more renewable energy projects. Sustained action by the conservation movement in WA over the last forty years has ensured that this state has not produced uranium in the previous ten years. Pepper said that notwithstanding Vimy Resources having the appropriate approval from the government nor having consulted with traditional owners over the land, they had started land clearing at the site. However, if Vimy Resources has not made substantial progress by 16th December 2021, towards meeting its environmental and operating approvals, their permit to operate at Mulga Rock expires.

The next speaker was Steve McCarthy, Secretary of the WA Branch of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, who said that uranium mining was a dangerous operation. McCarthy added that WA should learn from what happened at Wittenoom with the mining of asbestos, where private corporations made money from digging up asbestos but had not cleaned the site properly or looked after workers, many of who had suffered terminal illnesses as a consequence of their work at the mine. The project would also not create as many long term and sustainable jobs as the renewable energy sector.

Debbie Carmody, an Anangu woman and one of the traditional owners of the land at Mulga Rock and a member of the Upurli Upruli native title claimants, read from the statement that she would read at the AGM of Vimy Resources. Carmody said Vimy Resources had not conducted an Aboriginal heritage survey on the site that had special significance to Aboriginal women and their social and cultural practices.

Richard from Independent Peaceful Australia Network addressed the rally to say that given the urgency of climate change and its consequences for the world, now was not the time to mine uranium. Richard noted that nuclear energy was not clean or green as nine out of ten stages of the nuclear fuel cycle require the burning of carbon-based fuels to get to the use stage.

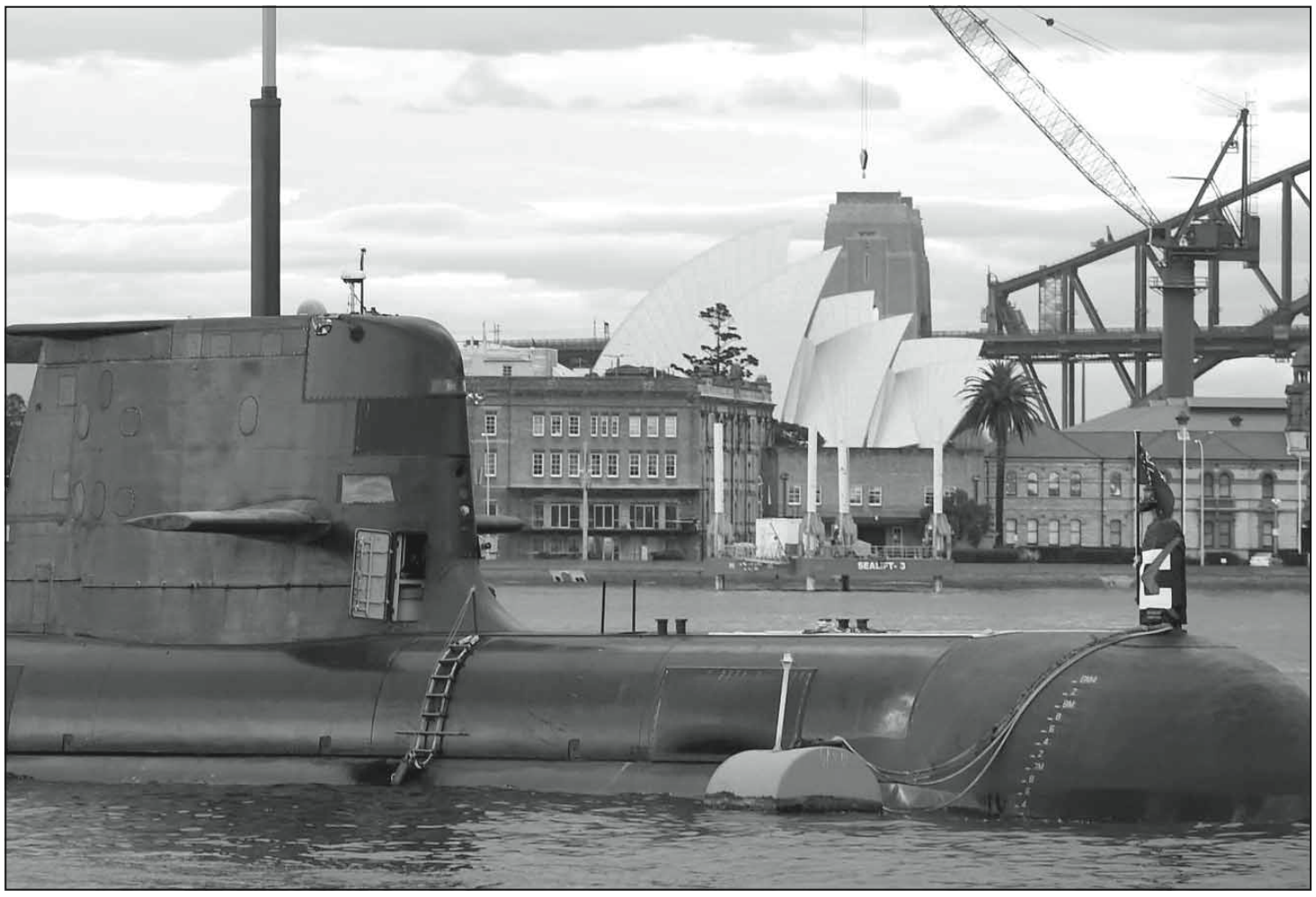
Australia had also recently entered into a contract to buy and operate a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, and arguably this had emboldened uranium mining entities such as Vimy Resources, who believed that this might stimulate demand for the nascent nuclear power industry in this country. However, the price of uranium ore was still under US$45 a pound, making the project unviable as, according to Stockhead, the "magic number" needed to make a mine viable was US$60 a pound.

The following day, in the *West Australian*, a report on the protest outside the AGM of Vimy Resources appeared and it revealed there were resignations from several senior executives at the company. It further noted that some executives also flagged resignations ahead of the looming deadline to meet Ministerial approval for the project on 16th December.

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) supports the opposition to the proposed uranium mine. The CPA oppose the proposal for nuclear submarines and any nuclear energy proposals for the risk it presents to people's health and safety, including the workers who often suffer from various cancers due to working with uranium. ✪

AUSTRALIAN-UK-US NUCLEAR SUBMARINE DEAL EXPOSES CIVILIAN-MILITARY LINKS

Eileen Whitehead



Andy Stirling and Phil Johnstone, writing for *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, highlighted several salient points in their paper, telling us a lot about the thinking of those pushing nuclear energy. It begins by saying that this transfer of nuclear submarine technology to Australia is a terrible decision for the non-proliferation regime and gives grave concerns for peace and global security. It brings increased risks in the Pacific region and certainly accelerates an arms race.

Australia does not have the specific skills, supply chains, or educational and research institutions to be able to handle nuclear subs. Then comes the question of waste management and security infrastructures which must be considered. These would all need to be in place were we to host nuclear subs.

As their paper states: "it also raises bigger questions about energy policy, climate strategies, and democracy itself."

But what I've learnt from this is that shared civil-military industrial bases are mainly – albeit indirectly – funded by electricity consumers in America, the UK, and France. And the huge investments in new nuclear power are underwritten by the anticipated revenue from future electricity sales, i.e. paid for by electricity consumers, and then this investment flows through the nuclear construction supply chains to support military nuclear activities! This is crucial support for the military, paid for by the public and therefore not acknowledged in defence budgets.

So even with the diminishing use of civil nuclear power affecting the military, and the fact that renewables and storage options are far preferable to nuclear power, our policy-makers are still pushing nuclear. Reading this paper explains why. Unfortunately, none of these arguments appear in discussions about energy and climate strategies, and only recently has there been some acknowledgement of the strong connection between civil and military nuclear capabilities.

In the UK, now-declassified defence reports show the concerns of a faltering civil nuclear program undermining the military. The sub building BAE Systems, and the naval reactor manufacturer, Rolls Royce admit that funding for civil programs masks military costs and relieves the burden for the Defence Ministry to retain skills and capabilities for military programs. The UK government, of course, denies this.

Boris Johnson is anxious to retrieve UK's imperial strengths and a seat at the top table of world affairs, and has said that the AUKUS deal offers the UK "a new opportunity to strengthen Britain's position as a science and technology superpower, and [...] could reduce the cost of the next generation of nuclear submarines for the Royal Navy."!

In America, high-level reports have acknowledged that the US military nuclear program depends on a vibrant civil nuclear sector. According to this report, civil nuclear activities transfer an effective value of $26.1 billion dollars to the US military nuclear enterprise.

Australia has a surfeit of abundant and affordable renewable energy resources. Yet, our nuclear lobby keeps arguing that acquiring military nuclear technology is beneficial and imperative for the establishment of a civil nuclear industry. The Minerals Council for Australia has recently come out in support – surprise, surprise!

So, obviously, our military needs a civil nuclear industry in order to sustain the competency of nuclear subs. With our lack of nuclear expertise, it's ludicrous to think we could maintain military nuclear capability. We'd be the only country with nuclear subs and no civilian nuclear industry!

The paper goes on to expose the shenanigans going on politically – all very similar to our own – corrupt goings-on between politicians, public servants and the fossil fuel companies. This explains why, in Australia, we're being fed with risky, costly and delay-prone nuclear options rather than renewables. COP26 is a great example of progress being impeded on vital climate targets. The public is kept in the dark – like mushrooms – and, therefore, as the paper states, the gravest damage inflicted by hidden nuclear military interests is not their warping effects on non-military policy but on the health of democracy. ✪

SCOTT MORRISON'S PUBLIC AND SELF-DECEPTION

E Lennon

Prime Minister Scott Morrison made the confounding claim earlier in November that he has never told a lie in his time as a public figure.

Many lists refute this extraordinary claim, which is in and of itself a lie: from climate change and bushfires to the pandemic, just to name a few issues where his transparency leaves much to be desire.

The Prime Minister told 3AW host Neil Mitchell that, "I don't believe I have lied in public life." The *Mornings* host went on to ask how it felt to be called a "serial liar" by Malcolm Turnbull. Mitchell also brought up French President Emmanuel Macron, who called Morrison a liar in the fallout from Australia withdrawing its submarine contract withdrawal with the European country. Morrison went on to rush out the words, "I'm making the right decisions."

Earlier this year, in September, a leaked text message between President Macron and Morrison revealed that two days before the contract was torn up, the French leader had no idea that the USA, Australia, and the UK were in cahoots to form AUKUS.

"Let me be really clear. Australia has made the right decision when it comes to our defence interests in going forward with a nuclear-propelled submarine capability and doing that in partnership with the United States and the United Kingdom," Morrison told reporters at the Rome COP26 Summit.

"We were very aware that that would lead to some deep disappointment. But you've got to make the right decision for Australia. And that's exactly what we did."

Morrison is a highly religious individual who regularly attends Horizon, a Pentecostal church in Sydney's Sutherland Shire. The Christian faith itself holds truth as a core value, regardless of denomination. It would be logical that a Christian in the public light would acknowledge their imperfect actions; however, Morrison, as he so often does, shrouds himself in a cloak of unaccountability. He wouldn't be the first person of faith to do so, and it reveals a mental disconnect between his view of himself and the integrity so often called for in the Christian Bible.

Back in the 2019 election, Scott Morrison stated that Labor wished to "ram" their electric vehicle policy down the public's necks. He went on to say that Bill Shorten wanted to "end the weekend" because according to him, electric vehicles were not sufficient to be practical in widespread use for "towing" or getting Australians "out to their favourite campaigning spots."

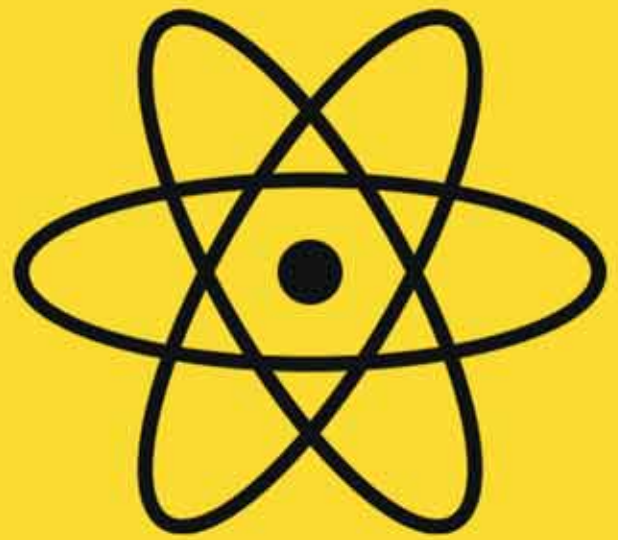
Last month, Morrison was asked about his own current electric vehicle policy. He denied ever campaigning against them and called any contrary aims a "Labor lie," despite there being a video of him on the campaign trail rallying against their use.

Years before his prime ministership was even a prospect, Morrison made misconduct claims against Save the Children workers on Nauru, telling 2GB that, "there may have been a level of coaching and facilitation and co-ordination amongst people who are working for one of our service providers." When asked about his claims, Morrison denied ever having made them despite Insiders presenter, Barry Cassidy reading his own words back to him.

Morrison's pattern of lying is not new and it has been a feature of his time in public life since before his prime ministership. ✪

NO

NUCLEAR ENERGY



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REVIEW: KIM JONG UN

Graham Holton

Ankit Panda is the Stanton Senior Fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and touted as an Asia-Pacific region expert. In addition, he was a Korea Society Kim Koo Fellow, a German Marshall Fund Young Strategist, an International Institute for Strategic Studies Shangri-La Dialogue Young Leader, and a Carnegie Council on Ethics in International Affairs New Leader.

Panda outlines how Pyongyang realised its nuclear strategy, despite the strict international restrictions placed upon it. For this, it needed to fulfil five things: the indigenous production of fissile material; the manufacture of the nuclear fuel into weaponised packages; ballistic weapons to deliver it; the ability to launch and deliver over a target; and to create the infrastructure, military setup, and politics that such a capability demands. It came as a severe shock to the US military when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK – North Korea) achieved every step in such a remarkably short time that it was first thought the tests had been faked. Instead, the "communist country" had become a major nuclear opponent.

Since the end of the Korean War (1950-1953), North Korea has had to defend itself against the world's greatest superpower and its allies. It knew full well what happened to those countries that had decided not to develop nuclear weapons systems. In 2003, following the US invasion of Iraq, the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded: "This suggests that even the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the US would not help avert a war. Only the physical deterrent force, tremendous military deterrent force powerful enough to beat back an attack supported by any ultra-modern weapons, can avert a war and protect the security of the country and the nation." This deterrent was nuclear weapons and the system to deliver them. What had happened to Gaddafi and Hussein had made a great impression on Kim Jong Un when he became the Supreme Leader of North Korea in 2011.

With the assistance of A Q Khan, a Pakistani nuclear physicist, North Korea, enriched uranium with centrifuges to build a nuclear bomb, which was tested in October 2006. After which, the UN Security Council convened and placed sanctions against the regime under Resolution 1718, which restricted North Korean access to the material and technology required to improve its "weapons of mass destruction." Despite these restrictions, it developed three kinds of nuclear weapons – fuelled by plutonium, uranium, and hydrogen – and sophisticated ballistic missile systems that could theoretically hit US military bases in the Pacific and Alaska. In addition, the government had reverse-engineered missiles from China and Russia after hiring Russian engineers after the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

Choe Yong Nam writes in the *Pyongyang Times* in 2016: "It is the present-day reality that the US which threatened the DPRK with nukes, is now placed under the latter's nuclear threat." The US reacted by putting in place the 2017 OPLAN (Operational Plan) 8023, which estimated that the US would require twenty nuclear Trident D5 submarine-launched ballistic missiles to destroy "all known North Korean weapons of mass destruction facilities." The following year Kim stated, "The world knows too well that our country is neither Libya nor Iraq which have met miserable fates." By 2019, North Korea had enough plutonium and uranium to arm an estimated sixty-five nuclear weapons. That year, former Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, acknowledged to a US Senate panel, that North Korea, "is unlikely to completely give up its nuclear weapons and production capabilities because its leaders ultimately view nuclear weapons as critical to regime survival."

Panda concludes that, "Only then – once North Korea could demonstrate the ability to threaten the US homeland with nuclear weapons, to everyone from the president to the average American citizen – would it become unthinkable for the White House to consider even a limited use of military force against North Korean soil."

Kim Jong Un clarified his country's position on the use of nuclear weapons in 2013, with the Law on Consolidating Position of Nuclear Weapons State, which declares that: "nuclear weapons can be used only by a final order of the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army." The use of these weapons against non-nuclear states will only be used when "they join a hostile nuclear weapons state in its attack."

In 2017, the political situation became so heated under President Trump that at the UN General Assembly, he threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea. It was later revealed that the White House had seriously considered a first strike against the DPRK. Fortunately, after the tirades about whose nuclear button was bigger and Trump calling Kim "rocket man," Trump was invited to step into North Korea from the South. Unfortunately, the cordial relationship established did not last long once John Bolton, the US National Security Adviser, derailed future peace talks.

I expected Panda to use documents released under the Freedom of Information, but he does not. Besides a few interviews, Panda's data was gleaned from articles available on the internet. The book's bias towards the DPRK is obvious. He fails to give the North Korean's reasons for its development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Instead, he repeats the propaganda put forward during the Korean War. Kim Il Sung was put in place by the USSR as a puppet leader. This was proven false, when after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 its archives were opened to international researchers. There is no evidence that Kim was a puppet leader.

Although five million people were killed during the Korean War – twenty per cent of the population – Panda continually argues that its nuclear weapons are to ensure the Kim family stayed in power and not for the security of the population. In his list of nuclear-armed countries, he fails to include Israel, which has an estimated 400 nuclear warheads. These can be delivered by aircraft, on ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) launched from submarines, and on the Jericho intercontinental-range ballistic missiles.

That Kim's missiles could reach the continental USA is only theoretical. The missiles were fired almost vertically. The distance that could be achieved was calculated from the height reached, the time it took, and the size of the ICBM used. Much of the information on delivery systems is derived from military parades in which the missiles are on display and DPRK press releases.

Panda has written for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the *Diplomat*, the *Atlantic*, and the *South China Morning Post*. These have well-known connections with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and assisted its spread of disinformation. Articles such as political prison camps, the great luxury enjoyed by the Kim family, and that the population lives in perpetual poverty, are nothing but propaganda.

The nefarious activities of the CIA operations came to light with the release of three reports. Seymour Hersh revealed the details of the My Lai massacre by US troops in 1969 in Vietnam. It was followed by The National Committee for a Citizen's Commission of Inquiry on United States War Crimes in Vietnam, set up the same year to investigate

The book's bias towards the DPRK is obvious. He fails to give the North Korean's reasons for its development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

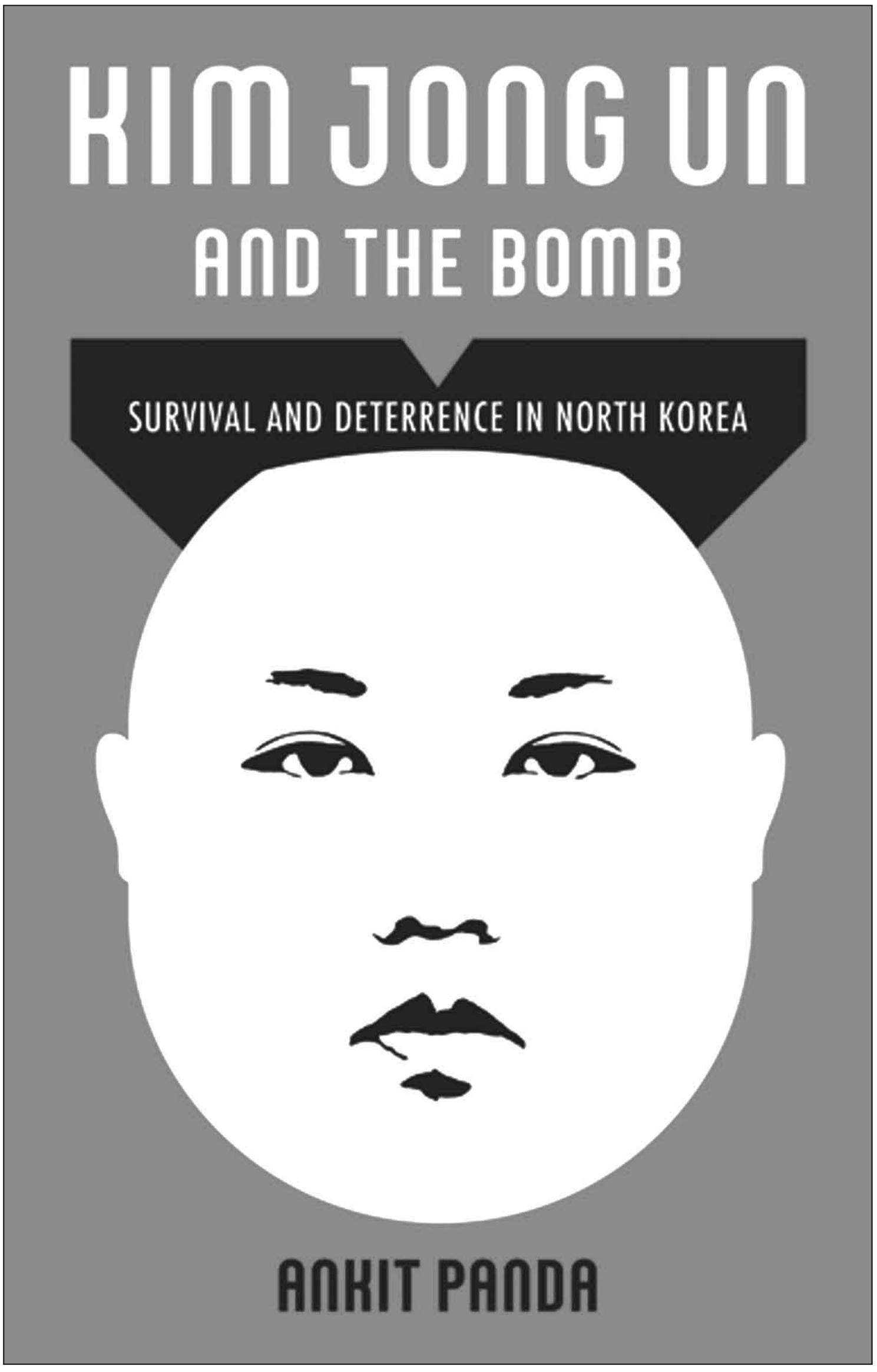
AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

the atrocities. Daniel Ellsberg released *The Pentagon Papers* (Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force) to the *New York Times* in 1971. It revealed the history of the US Department of Defense's political and military involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967. The third was the publication in Britain in 1975 of *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, by Philip Agee. I met Agee, a former CIA case officer, while he was hiding in London in an old boarding house, while he awaited the publication of his book. He details the CIA operations in Latin America, from his experiences when he joined in 1957 up to the early 1970s. Agee told me that his revelation of the details of CIA operations made him a target for the CIA or MI5. Agee told Swiss journalist Peter Studer: "The CIA is plainly on the wrong side, that is, the capitalistic side." He fled to Cuba as a political refugee, where he died in 2008. These revelations aroused concerns in the US Congress. Senator Frank Church said of the findings released in the *Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (1976), that the CIA was a "rogue elephant," engaged in assassinations and the overthrow of elected governments.

The CIA was also spreading disinformation around the world. In January 1977 Carl Bernstein of the Washington Post wrote an article in *Rolling Stone* revealing the close relationship between the CIA and the US press. Over 400 American journalists had carried out assignments for the "Company." Later that year a report in the *New York Times* revealed the scope of the CIA's global campaign to manipulate the public. Its extensive network covered more than 500 news and public information organisations and individuals. Bernstein found that the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, and CBS were the CIA's most valuable broadcasting assets. The Secret Service also has connections with the Associated Press, the *Wall Street Journal*, CNN and MSNBC.

The other major source of disinformation is South Korea. Writing in 2017, Damin Jung of *NK News*, says that South Korea is the source of some of the most unreliable coverage. The Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, a DPRK-backed organisation, has accused the *Chosun Ilbo*, a major South Korean newspaper, of employing "hack journalists" who intentionally report false information at the behest of the South Korean government. In 2020, academics and politicians in South Korea became concerned about the number of false reports on North Korea. Kyungnam University's Institute of Far Eastern Studies published *Multi-layer Analysis and Understanding of False Information about North Korea*, about the problem. Much of the information released by the ROK (Republic of Korea) is simply invented for US consumption. The foreign media are rarely allowed into North Korea except on special occasions, and with the dearth of information, articles are made up, each more lurid than the previous.

Panda's book is for US military consumption, as shown by the reviews on the back dust cover. Retired US Army General V K Brooks, commander of UN Command, US Forces Korea and US-South Korea Combined Forces Command 2016-2018, writes that it is "One of the best books available." Jean Lee, former AP Pyongyang bureau of chief and director of the Center for Korean History and Public Policy, Wilson Center, says the book "should be required reading for understanding the motivations and machinations behind Kim's destabilising mission." Retired Lt. Col. George Hodge, US Army says, "Section two's last chapter examines Kim's command and control structure and illuminates several dilemmas and likely failure points in the criteria required for Kim to authorise a launch of a nuclear weapon." Panda's book is a US military assessment of the nuclear capabilities of the DPRK and its strike capacity. As such it is useful in determining how academia is used to garner information and disperse propaganda for the US military in its campaigns against North Korea. ✪



WHY I AM CELEBRATING 78 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA

Ivan Stoiljkovic

On the 29th of November, 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, a beautiful, big and strong socialist Yugoslavia was established in the town of Jajce in central Bosnia. It was established by the Antifascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) at its second session, as a state of equal nations and peoples and as a republic that will not be presided over by a monarch nor by their bourgeois cohort of thieves and exploiters.

After initially attempting to endear themselves to Hitler – and being prevented from doing so by the popular uprising which in turn led to the German declaration of war against Yugoslavia – these royals and bourgeois elements fled to England. There, in peace, they awaited whatever the outcome of the war might be and their return to throne and power. Their "Military in the Homeland" also decided to not fight and instead preferred to wait in relative peace for the "liberation" of the country by the Western allies.

Meanwhile, some Serb-dominated parts of this Military, under the protection of the Italian fascist occupation force, used the opportunity to launch a campaign of ethnic cleansing against non-Serbs. In Zagreb, an actual horde of Croatian Nazis took set out to exterminate all communists, Serbs, Jews and Roma from the vast territory they were granted by the Nazis, which they called the Independent State of Croatia.

On the other hand, AVNOJ – led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito – rejected all collaboration with the enemy and began a campaign of resistance to the occupying Nazi forces. From day one, AVNOJ was a full-fledged member of the world-wide anti-fascist movement led by the USSR. This armed movement insisted on unity of all nations and peoples of Yugoslavia and absolute rejection of all ethnic, national and religious hatreds and wars. Because of that commitment and the promise of equality – not only of all nations but of all humans – and guided by the Marxist principle of "from each according to their ability to each according to their need," this movement was able to garner the support of the great majority of the people. It translated that into military victories and super-human resistance to, and eventual defeat of the occupying forces and their domestic helpers.

That insistence on brotherhood and unity of all the nations and religious groups of Yugoslavia, the sovereignty of that state, the smart politics of peace with regards to other nations and peoples, the self-management of the workplaces and public property as the basis of economy, resulted in forty-five years of peace and prosperity the likes of which the people of Yugoslavia haven't seen before or since.

Many of us who grew up in Socialist Yugoslavia are now living in the diaspora because our country in the 1990s again became a victim of the politics of hatred, capitalism, and imperialism. It is now a colony ruled over by quislings, traitors and bootlickers. Some of us left because we were literally running away from fascist knives, while others left to get away from poverty and backwardness. We now wander the world like lost strangers and bore our company with tales of a wonderful country that was once our home, a country so fantastic that it sounds a bit like a fairy tale.

Early socialist Yugoslavia; elimination of private property from the hands of capitalists; translation: "Fulfill your duty – the road we shall give to the people, the party and to Tito."

But that was our country. That was the country that our mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers built, that they fought for and that, like comrade Tito used to say, they "shed rivers of blood for." That was the country that we needed to guard like a drop of water on our palm, not to break down and destroy like we did.

Many of us got caught up in the winds of hate of the 1990s and regret that now, but it is too late to go back and do it all over again. We got carried away by capitalist advertisements and promises. A few of us even succeeded at accomplishing some form of that American dream, only to realise that that very "dream" is nothing but the carefree "normal and regular" life we all had in Yugoslavia – a life with secure, easy jobs, good housing, cheap bills, free quality education and healthcare, and long and nice paid vacations.

Some will say that whatever happened has happened and that there's no use dwelling on the past. They call us "Yugo-nostalgic" to stop us from recalling our beautiful country. We do live in a new world, and we are suffering in exile just as our people "back home" are suffering. Both us and them are under the same imperialist boot and, precisely because of that, we need to not only remember our Yugoslavia – and talk about it and dream about it – but also learn from it. We need to learn historical lessons and intervene in the historical field as conscious actors, like comrades organised into AVNOJ did in the 1940s.

We know that our country was destroyed, in large part, by the organised communities of monarchists, nationalists, and fascists living in the diaspora. If they could come up from the dead like zombies, and bring hatred and butchery into fashion and destroy our beautiful country, then why should we sit idle with long faces and regret that there is no turning back the clock of time? It is true that we cannot bring back the past, but it is also just as true that the future is unwritten. The future is what we make of it – if we give up, then the future will be one of hate and misery, of conquered and broken-up Yugoslavia ruled by a small clique of imperialists in Berlin and Washington along with their few domestic helpers, while the great majority of the people are suffering from poverty, drugs, unemployment, overwork, and all the other universal ails of capitalist societies.

Let's refuse that future! Let's choose a future of comradeship, unity and social justice, of real freedom, real peace and real equality.

To that end a number of us decided to get together and celebrate this Day of the Republic in a virtual gathering. We intend to continue to meet and organise ourselves into a political and cultural force that is able to intervene in the cause of socialism, both in the countries we are currently in and in the countries that were once Yugoslavia.

Happy Day of the Republic to all Yugoslavs in the diaspora!

Death to Fascism – Freedom to the People!

People's Voice ✪

Let's choose a future of comradeship, unity and social justice, of real freedom, real peace and real equality.

QUAD FOR WEST ASIA: INDIA IN LOSING GAME

The part-virtual and part-person meeting of the foreign ministers of four countries – the United States, Israel, India, and United Arab Emirates – on 18th October saw the emergence of a new grouping in West Asia. It is significant that the meeting took place when the Indian foreign minister, S Jaishankar, was visiting Israel to hold talks with the Naftali Bennett government.

According to the US readout of the meeting, the talks concerned trade, climate change, energy and maritime security. With this grouping, which is being termed as Quad 2 for West Asia, the United States has made another move against China and given the composition of the group against Iran too.

This foray by the Modi government into the West Asia region is significant for two reasons.

First, after the Quad being formalised for the Indo-Pacific region, which is seen explicitly as a response to China's growing influence, the United States has taken the lead to constitute this four-party group for West Asia and brought in India. This shows the deepening strategic and political alliance between India and the US. The Modi government is getting more and more entangled in the US designs.

After the precipitate withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US and its Western allies have been groping for ways to recalibrate their strategy in West Asia. That the United States finds India a willing partner in the strategic exploration shows how deeply India has become involved in the Biden administration's anti-China manoeuvres. The US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, must have discussed threadbare this new diplomatic move during his visit to India in September and the other consultations he held subsequently with Jaishankar.

The second aspect is that the Israel-India axis in support of the US designs in West Asia has solidified through this grouping. Under Prime Minister Modi, India has gone ahead in deepening the strategic alliance with Israel which had, from the beginning, a close security and military cooperation as its bedrock. Israel has emerged as one of the biggest suppliers of defence and security equipment to India. The ideological affinity between Hindutva and Jewish extremism has been a cementing factor.

The United Arab Emirates, which is a close ally of the US in the region along with Saudi Arabia, established diplomatic relations with Israel last year and is already involved in intelligence and security cooperation with Israel.

For India, to become part of such a grouping constitutes a radical departure from its long-pursued foreign policy. The group, if it gets institutionalised, will be as much against Iran as China since Israel considers Iran to be its mortal enemy. This will harm India's longstanding relationship with Iran, which has been steadily eroding over the years especially after the Modi government went along with the illegal sanctions imposed by President Trump consequent to his unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran. In this complex and volatile situation in West Asia, any joint endeavour with Israel for intervention in the region is going to prove counterproductive for India.

The "maritime security" talked about in the meeting will focus on the control of the sea lanes and, in particular, the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, which connects the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden to Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Like the Malacca straits, which falls under the purview of the Quad for the Indo-Pacific region, the Bab-el-Mandeb strait is a potential chokepoint for Chinese shipping and naval movements.

With the Biden administration desperately trying to cobble up a coherent global strategy against China, does India want to become a junior partner in this venture? The Quad, Aukus, the abortive four-country group announced in Central Asia (another Quad) before the collapse in Afghanistan (comprising the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) – all show the United States scrambling to put in place arrangements to contain and isolate China. Something, given the present realities of China's all-sided rise – economic, technological and military – appears to be a losing game. Does it serve India's interests to become a junior and ineffectual partner in this game?

Playing such a role will only alienate various other major powers with whom India has had close and friendly relations, particularly Iran and Russia. Joining the latest US move in West Asia shows that the subordination of India's foreign policy to Washington is proceeding apace.

People's Democracy

FEARS OF US-AUSTRALIA BACKED COUP IN SOLOMON ISLANDS AFTER IT RESTORES DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH CHINA

Steve Sweeney

Australia has been accused of provoking riots aiming to overthrow the government of the Solomon Islands after the South Pacific country cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan and established relations with Beijing.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare blamed "foreign interference" for anti-government protests in the capital Honiara, during which parliament was stormed and police stations torched. Rioters also attacked Honiara's Chinatown district.

According to the *New York Times*, the Solomon Island of Malaita, which has maintained relations with Taiwan, is receiving direct foreign aid from the United States.

The newspaper cited Solomons-based researcher Mihai Sora, a former Australian diplomat, as saying that the Solomon Islands has been in "a heightened political tug of war."

Sogavare remained defiant on Saturday, insisting that the violence in the capital had been orchestrated by a minority with the "evil intention" of overthrowing him.

"It is very clear that the recent events were well planned and orchestrated to remove me as the prime minister for unsubstantiated reasons," he said in a televised address.

"We will never bow down to the evil intention of a few people," Sogavare added.

Clean-up operations are now under way after the three days of rioting, which are believed to have caused 200 million Solomon Islander dollars (AU$34.7 million) worth of damage and cost 1,000 jobs.

Many food shops have been burnt down, raising fears of shortages.

The South Pacific is an area of concern for both the US and Australia, since four of the fifteen countries that maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan are in the region.

Efforts to block smaller nations from strengthening links with China have included the incitement of unrest and so-called "dollar diplomacy."

Neither Washington nor Canberra has condemned the violence so far, with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison saying that a troop presence there "does not indicate any position on the internal issues of the Solomon Islands."

The deployment of Australian security forces to the country has raised eyebrows. A *Global Times* editorial said on Saturday that "it is not hard to imagine how easy it will be for an external force to wreak havoc there.

"The government of the Solomon Islands and their people know what is really going on there. It is also not hard for the outside world to know," the newspaer charged, implying that Morrison's expression of neutrality masks tacit support for the riots.

Taiwan is the new focal point of the US cold war on China.

Morning Star

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CHINA, RUSSIA JOINTLY DECRY US DEMOCRACY SUMMIT, CALL FOR PAST LESSONS TO BE REMEMBERED

Chen Qingqing, Wang Wenwen, and Cui Fandi

A joint article by the Chinese and Russian Ambassadors to the US decrying the so-called Summit for Democracy is a clear declaration of opposition to the upcoming event as an evident product of Washington's Cold War mentality, which will only create new "dividing lines." The high-profile joint message also serves as a reminder for the public about how painful the ideology-driven confrontations used to be, and that some former Soviet republics are still recovering from the aftermath of US-led colour revolutions, while it's crucial for countries like China to find their own paths, experts said.

In an article entitled "Respecting People's Democratic Rights" published by Qin Gang and Anatoly Antonov, the respective Chinese and Russian envoys to the US, in the US magazine *National Interest*, the two diplomats described the Summit for Democracy, which is scheduled on 9th and 10th December, as "an evident product of its Cold-War mentality," which will stoke up ideological confrontation and lead to a rift in the world, creating new "dividing lines."

"This trend contradicts the development of the modern world," the article said, noting that China and Russia firmly reject this move.

After the Biden administration released an official "participant list" for the summit on State Department's website, which includes the island of Taiwan among sovereign countries but excludes countries including China, Russia and Singapore, Chinese and Russian officials denounced the move of using so-called democratic values to instigate new confrontation. Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday that the summit will only create division and bring negative energy to the world.

"The practice of democracy varies according to different national conditions and cannot be one template or one standard," Wang said.

The Kremlin also believed that the summit is a US attempt to draw more division lines, with TASS reporting that Antonov and Qin elaborated on this point of view further in the article in the US magazine.

"Democracy is not a prerogative of a certain country or a group of countries, but a universal right of all peoples. It can be realised in multiple ways, and no model can fit all countries," the article said, and "no country has the right to judge the world's vast and varied political landscape with a single yardstick, and having other countries copy one's political system through colour revolutions, regime change and even the use of force goes against international law, and is obviously anti-democratic."

China and Russia are on the same page in their response to the US-led summit by sending out the joint message that US democracy does not represent all forms of democracy, and the US model can't fit all countries and democracy cannot be used as an excuse for interfering in other countries' internal affairs, experts said. They also noted that it's also a clear reminder for the people to not forget the history of the fall of the Berlin Wall, disintegration of the Soviet Union, and US-instigated colour revolutions, which all resulted in huge repercussions worldwide.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

The US' so-called democracy summit is just another example of its common practices – interfering in other countries' internal affairs under the guise of "democracy," Wang Xianju, deputy director and research fellow at the Renmin University of China – Russia St Petersburg State University Russian Research Center, told the *Global Times*.

The Soviet Union was plagued by this US-imposed influence in the final stages of the Cold War. "The US attacked the Soviet Union's political, economic and social system while calling for colour revolutions," Wang said, noting that due to the lack of a decisive response from the central government of the time, "the individual member states and the central government were divided and became a fragmented mess."

When the global political environment was clouded by drastic changes in the Soviet Union, Eastern and Central Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with a wave of "liberalisation" or "democratisation" driven by US-led Western ideologies, many forces were trying to utilise the trend to bury socialist regimes once and for all.

In China, the incident that occurred between spring and summer in 1989 was exploited and hijacked by some foreign forces and domestic extremists, and later escalated into riots. However, in contrast to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which was mainly caused by problems in its Party leadership, the Communist Party of China later made decisive moves to stop the turmoil, end the riots and stabilise the domestic situation to restore stability and order, which gave the public a clear understanding that any engrafted democracy or inculcated Western ideas would not survive in China and would only "instigate instability".

"From former US president Ronald Reagan to George W Bush to Bill Clinton, they just dropped their slogans or ideas about democracy like 'a cure' for other countries, but all the consequences, pain and outcome of putting those ideas into practice had to be undertaken by the people of those countries, where so-called democracy was forced upon," Zhu Ying, a professor on human rights and international law from Southwest University of Political Science and Law, told the *Global Times*.

Zhu said the way Biden planned this so-called democracy summit by bringing up ideological divides reminded him of Reagan's speech before the fall of the Berlin Wall, which also marked blatant interference in other countries' internal affairs using the excuse of democracy.

"Russia has almost got rid of the aftermath of the ideology-driven confrontation over the past thirty years, while some post-Soviet states are still struggling under forced US democracy, and are trying hard to explore their own paths for national independence and development," Zhu said, noting that people should not forget what has happened in the past.

The post-Soviet states that have survived the inoculation of "American democracy" with ambiguous consequences for themselves are now actually faced with a difficult choice: joining the updated "Western club" or preserving their state sovereignty, Sergey Biryukov, a professor at the Siberian Institute of Management in Novosibirsk of Russia, told the *Global Times*.

"The choice of their national elites and societies will be decisive in this case – but it is obvious that such an enforced opposition is absolutely counterproductive," he said. At the same time, there is confidence that the US will not be able to successfully expand the "club" of its "fellows" in this way – with the exception of several states that are already under their sphere of influence, Biryukov noted.

A large number of the former Soviet Union countries in Central Asia and Eastern Europe have continued to be subject to such US attacks after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and one example is Ukraine, experts said.

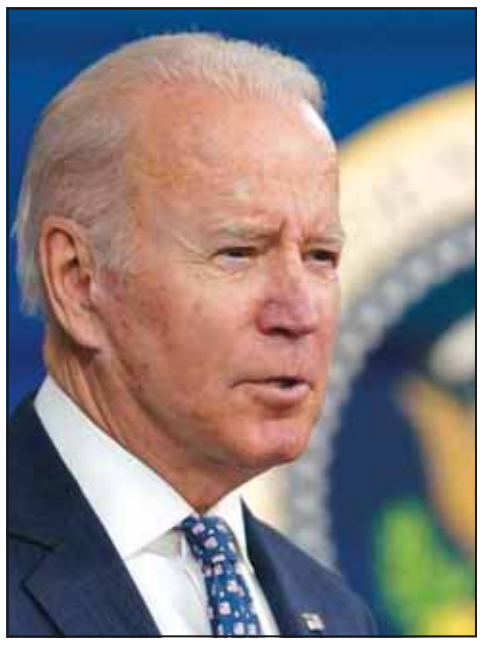
"In Ukraine, the US-instigated internal colour revolution and used it to restrain Russia. Ukrainian citizens now have not even brought their living standards up to those of the Soviet era," Wang said.

In Central Asia, the US-supported Kyrgyzstan as a so-called "island of democracy". Subsequently, hundreds of NGOs fostered by the US were formed in the territory to oppose various governments and policies as demanded by the US. In the past thirty years, Kyrgyzstan has seen three abnormal regime changes, the Chinese expert said.

COMMON LANGUAGE

A truly democratic government would support democracy in international relations. It will not foster hegemony and division abroad while building democracy and unity at home, according to the joint article by the Chinese and Russian ambassadors.

China and Russia also called on countries to stop using "value-based diplomacy" to provoke division and confrontation, to practice mutual respect and win-win cooperation in international relations, and to work for harmonious coexistence between countries with different social systems, ideologies, histories,



cultures, and development levels, according to the article.

After the Soviet Union disintegrated, some countries were founded in accordance with the model of US democracy, which however resulted in long-term social turmoil or deteriorating national strength, Yang Jin, associate research fellow at the Institute of Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the *Global Times*.

"The so-called Western-defined democracy has not brought prosperity to those countries, but pain. For example, in some Central Asian countries, the living standards and economic growth have yet recovered to the level of the Soviet Union era," he said, noting that democracy should be built on the basis of improving the fundamental rights of citizens.

"On this question, China and Russia have a lot of common language, that is, the implementation of democracy should be realistic and echo a country's development phase," Yang said, that the common language also included adhering to their own paths of democracy and development.

The Russian expert also noted that the approach of the US and the West to draw up dividing lines today will further encourage China and Russia to move even closer and be more united on the basis of an already existing strategic partnership.

"It seems that such rapprochement in the fields of security, defence, economy, and communications will be noticeably intensified in the near future, mainly on the basis of special bilateral agreements and existing organisations," Biryukov said, noting that the creation of such a balancing pole will probably reduce the threat of global confrontation and the risks associated with it.

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