The Workers' Weekly
Guardian
CPA
#2200 3 August 2026
$5
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www.cpa.org.au
ISSN 1325-295X

Hiroshima/Nagasaki 2026

Denis Doherty

As the 81st anniversary of the bombing of two cities in Japan dawns on 6 and 9 August respectively, there has never been more immediate chance of a hot nuclear war breaking out. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has recently moved the clock to 80 seconds to midnight from 90 seconds last year. Where are the flash points?

The wars in Ukraine and Iran have potential to swing out of control as the prospect of a Russian victory in Ukraine looms and an Iranian victory in the Arabian Gulf area. In both places there is woeful leadership from the West, with the prize for stupidity going to Trump and his pathetic cabinet.

Meanwhile in Europe many are mentioning the poor quality of the leaders of the UK, France and Germany. Australia's leadership in these matters is as equally pathetic as the leadership mentioned above. The mix of the US into that soup of mediocrity further endangers the world and leads to a lack of confidence that the world is prepared to draw back from the disaster.

UKRAINE WAR

This war has been slowly grinding its way across the three oblasts of Ukraine which are considered to have majority Russian speakers, the most prominent being Donetsk. There is much joy in the West that Ukraine is "winning." The reality is quite different. The Russians are advancing and taking more territory.

It is true that Ukraine with the help of NATO and US intelligence and weaponry Ukraine has made some devastating attacks on Russian oil infrastructure and civilian population. On 27 July 11 children at a holiday camp were killed and there was an attack on an Iranian commercial ship in the Caspian Sea (a long way from Ukraine). The growing number of attacks by Ukraine into the 'heart of Mother Russia' are being hailed in the west as great events or evidence of Ukrainian progress in the war.

Leaders such as those in Germany have boasted of their part in the success, while in Britain, recently deposed PM Keir Starmer boasted of his supply of drones for use by Ukraine.

Recently the Baltic States have allowed Ukrainian drones to use their airspace as they flyover to hit targets in Northern Russia. Previously NATO and the US have hidden behind Ukraine, content to let them take responsibility for outrages against Russia but now the fight is more open. Russia realises it is in a war against NATO, the US and allied countries like Australia.

Analysts in Russia are arguing that the West has no fear that Russia will retaliate and that it has no recognition that Russia has nuclear weapons primed and ready to go at moment's notice. The chief proponent of this tactic is former Kremlin advisor Sergei Karaganov who recently called for Russia to launch limited nuclear strikes to bring the war in Ukraine to a close. There are calls for missile strikes on countries such as the UK and on their factories producing weapons to give to Ukraine for killing Russians.

The reaction to any of these tactics would not be easy to contain, yet at this moment, the US is seen as "playing games." Russians are saying that "the spirit of Anchorage is dead" – Anchorage Alaska being where Trump and Putin met in 2025 and seemed to come to agreement.

Now Russian commentators are saying that the USA is "agreement averse." The USA and Trump have walked back on any agreement of ending the war in Ukraine and appear to be back to full throttle support for Zelensky in his futile attempt to defeat Russia. Thankfully Putin has not yet used any nuclear weapons, but NATO and the US are not making that less likely.

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Hiroshima Peace Memorial, also widely known as the Atomic Bomb Dome or Genbaku Dome.

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Foreign interference

Australia is independent and our sovereignty is important. Or is it? A couple of incidents from the last week have cast doubt on that assumption.

The Israeli embassy tried to push the Labor party around recently, in the run-up to Labor's national conference in Adelaide. The embassy was anxious about motions relating to – what else – Israel's conduct in Palestine. They wanted Labor to not cast too much blame on the perpetrators of an ongoing genocide.

The embassy's finger-wagging attracted some comment. Foreign embassies don't usually try to tell Australian political parties what to do. Members of the government tried to pass it off as no big deal (see article page 6 for more). The pro-Israel media more or less ignored it, apart from doing some fretting themselves about the possibility of Labor standing up for Palestinians.

We can only wonder what the reaction would have been if the Chinese embassy had lectured Labor on motions at the conference.

One thing that wasn't mentioned in the commentary or lack of it about the Israeli ambassador's reaction was our strong foreign influence laws. These laws are applied very selectively. It's one law for possible Chinese influence here, and another for the US, who just assume they can do what they like.

How can we explain this inconsistency in how our laws are applied, and in how our media reacts?

There's a one word answer – imperialism. The US behaves like an empire. We are technically independent but the people who run Australia are fully signed up to act in support of US imperialism. Once you understand that, a lot of things suddenly make sense.

For example, when Israel and Trump started an unprovoked war on Iran, Trump's excuse was that he needed to make sure Iran couldn't make nuclear weapons. He had already claimed that he'd destroyed Iran's ability to make those weapons, but maybe he forgot. The war is a war of choice and Trump's excuses are nonsense, but this country's Prime Minister didn't point that out. He mumbled some nonsense about preventing Iran from threatening international peace and security.

Albanese's response makes sense if you remember that he's a junior member of the imperialist system. He wants, as all Australian Prime Ministers do, to keep the US happy, or at least not annoy them. This attitude also explains AUKUS – a massive expense on Australia's part which only makes sense as a way of helping the US to continue to dominate the Pacific and menace China.

This country is supposedly a democracy, but working people don't get a vote on these things. At election time, our choice is between two parties 'of government' who both want to serve the US.

Waving through attempted Israeli interference in the workings of our political parties is part of this. Israel is an extension of US power in the Middle East. What Israel wants from the US, it usually gets. Albanese isn't about to criticise Israel because he feels he has to keep the US on side. He thinks there's no alternative.

He's wrong. This country could be genuinely independent. We could be safer, more prosperous and have real sovereignty, but it's not going to happen just by wishing for it. We're going to have to change the system to one which works for working people, rather than for the US. That's what the Communist Party of Australia is working for.

Hiroshima/Nagasaki 2026

Continued from page 1

THE US/IRAN CONFLICT

The US has been escalating its attack. Iran has an advantage due to geography and the clever leadership. Iran has long known that in any conflict with the US it would have to practice asymmetric warfare.

What infuriates Trump is that for all the sophistication of the US military, his options are limited. The US is doing a lot of damage, but Iran is retaliating and is on the verge of driving all US bases from nearby countries.

US airplanes are now largely based in Israel and could be staged further afield. The US navy is likewise unable to come within 1,500 kms of the coast of Iran because of the possession of 'carrier busting' missiles by the Iranian military.

The combination of Trump's volatile and erratic behaviour and ego could lead him to use a nuclear weapon. He is known to be unable to accept loss and always wants to be a 'winner' but Iran is proving too powerful an adversary.

ISRAEL

Iran may turn its attention again on Israel and it has promised to use a new class of missiles if Israel attacks. Israel too has nuclear weapons. Previous Iranian attacks on Israel have been covered up but the rumours are that the apartheid settler state has suffered massive damage. A renewed attack may tip them over the edge where they use a nuclear weapon.

China and Russia will not stand by and allow Iran to be destroyed so we have the ingredients of a much wider conflict.

Iran still has a stock of enriched uranium. Professor Ted Postol of MIT has said Iran is capable of making a nuclear weapon. Others say that under the right circumstances Pakistan would gladly give Iran a nuclear weapon. The risks are real.

NUCLEAR SAUDI ARABIA

The US has just signed an agreement that Saudi Arabia be given a hand with its nuclear industry. The US has promised light oversight by the IAEA, the body that oversees the use of nuclear power and weaponry. The Saudis would also be allowed to enrich uranium.

There's a risk that the Saudis may develop nuclear weapons. Trump has subsequently decreed that the Saudis must officially accept the Abraham Accords and recognise Israel. This appears to be an unachievable condition, and the agreement may be terminated.

PROLIFERATION

If Saudi Arabia gets a nuclear weapon, Iran would have to do something similar, followed by Egypt and Türkiye. Iran has not gone down the nuclear weapon path partly because if it had nuclear weapons, nearby nations would want their own. Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei the supreme leader of Iran banned nuclear weapons because they cause indiscriminate deaths.

US behaviour in this war is making proliferation more definite and nuclear war more imminent.

INDIFFERENCE

While the risk of nuclear exchange is real and obvious, its not taken very seriously. In Australia the government has done nothing to restrict the US' war or to discourage it from its present behaviour. Before Anthony Albanese became PM, he promised to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW). He has since remained silent on this issue and has turned to spineless statements such as:

"You know, we choose progress rather than just protest. We choose outcomes rather than outrage, and we choose to deliver real change."

There's no sign of the progress Albanese has chosen instead of protest when it comes to war.

All Australians should choose protest about the lack of real change on nuclear disarmament.

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Dare to struggle, dare to win

A Victorian teacher writes

Thursday 30t July was the school strike that the union rank and file made happen. It is ordinary union members who have been organising behind the scenes with no resources and very little time who forced the union's hand in calling our strike last week and it is ordinary rank and file members who are continuing to push for a better outcome – not just for better wages and conditions for school staff but to press for a deal that changes our students lives.

The strike with around 30,000 members was a resounding success. This turnout was only achieved because the rank and file organised for the strike. It was the rank and file who produced detailed analysis of the offer last Friday without any resources and whilst working a full time in their day jobs. It was the rank and file who created almost daily video content for social media which clearly articulated our log of claims and its key demands.

It was the rank and file that organised lunch time meetings and sent out letters and emails to staff over the weekend in order to reach as many people as possible before the vote closed on the 21 July.

In the end we managed to vote no again despite pressure to accept the deal. And while our numbers dropped slightly, the anger amongst rank and file has grown palpable.

It was the rank and file who were clearly in the driver's seat at the strike, and it is the rank and file who will be in the driver's seat in the weeks to come.

Those of us who were at the strike speaking to members in our subbranches, on the train on the way in, and to people from schools all over Victoria, found that the overwhelming feeling was one of unity. We all found ourselves to be in clear agreement that we must not stop now.

School staff are determined to see this through. They are furious that years of neglect of state school funding has left them exhausted and in crisis and students who need support are being ignored and unable to learn.

Here's what we're after:

- real, practical workload relief, including additional education support in every classroom
- a reduction in face-to-face teaching hours to 17 hours per week
- smaller class sizes
- fair and equitable conditions for all Education Support staff
- clear, enforceable job descriptions
- A guarantee that any new agreement is fully funded in every school (there's a bad history of governments agreeing to conditions they don't fully fund. That means the new conditions/wages are clawed back in other ways).
- A meaningful pay rise, beginning with 15% in the first year to address the significant real wage loss since 2021, followed by the two further 10% increases that ensure our salaries keep pace with and exceed inflation over the life of the agreement.

If the government fails to meet our 30 July deadline with a satisfactory offer, we will escalate. We are calling for all sub branches to commit to August 4 as a third day of strike action and sub branches are meeting with their regions this week to make this a reality. ✪

Win for low-paid Domino's workers

Thousands of low-paid Domino's franchisee workers could be entitled to significant compensation following a landmark victory against Domino's Pizza Enterprises.

The Federal Court found the pizza giant misled franchisees by directing them to underpay thousands of drivers and in-store staff under outdated employment agreements over five years that excluded key entitlements.

In 2019, Phi Finney McDonald launched the class action against Domino's on behalf of lead applicant Riley Gall, a former Domino's delivery driver for underpayment of wages under the Australian Consumer Law for loss caused by misleading and deceptive conduct. The class action covers delivery drivers and in-store workers employed by Domino's Australian franchisees between 2013 and 2018.

Any delivery drivers or in-store workers who worked at Domino's between 2013 and 2018 are invited to register interest with Phi Finney McDonald.

The Court found that Domino's instructed its Australian franchisees to pay delivery drivers and in-store workers under enterprise bargaining agreements when some employees were covered under the Fast Food Industry Award that has better terms and conditions.

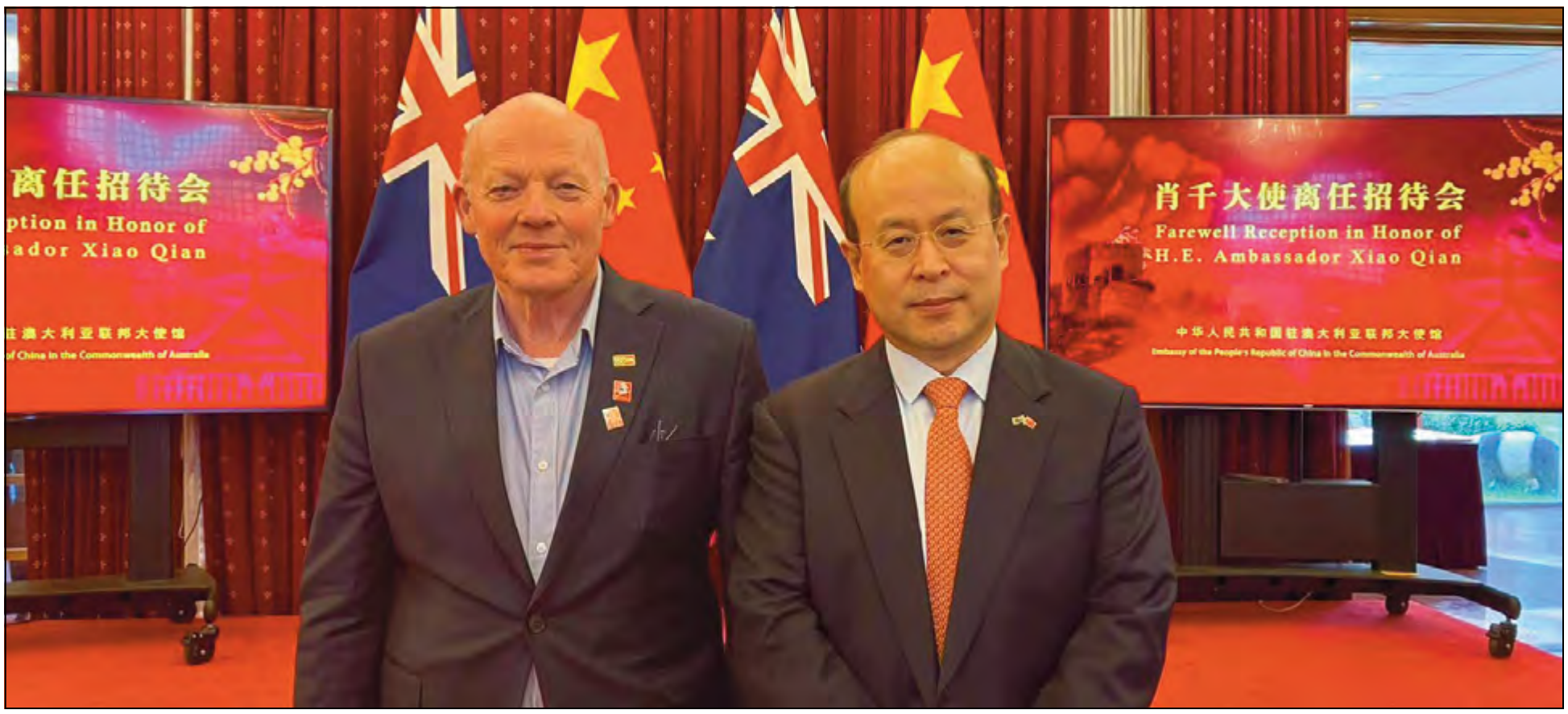
These workers should have received benefits under the award, including a 25% loading for casual workers, additional penalty rates for working after-hours, on weekends and public holidays and minimum three-hour shifts.

A forensic investigation conducted by the Retail and Fast Food Workers' Union (RAFFWU) uncovered the underpayments.

His Honour Justice Bernard Murphy found the "Award rather than the Agreements applied to the employment of the applicant and a substantial cohort of Delivery Drivers and In-Store Workers employed by franchise operators during the relevant period."

Consequently, Domino's conduct in making the representations was "objectively wrong," and "was therefore misleading or deceptive conduct or conduct which was likely to mislead or deceive, in contravention of s 18 of the ACL," he said.

Retail and Fast Food Workers' Union ✪



General Secretary Andrew Irving represented the CPA at the farewell reception in Canberra for HE Ambassador Xiao Qian whose diplomatic post to Australia has ended. The CPA leadership wishes Ambassador Xiao Qian all the very best in his new endeavours.

Survey Time! Prizes!

So that we know more about what the *Guardian*'s readers think, we have made a survey. You can access it three ways:

1. Through this link https://url-shortener.me/OO6M
2. With the QR code
3. If you'd rather do a survey on paper, please email info@cpa.org.au or call 0424 638 601 and we'll mail one out

Anyone who does the survey and provides contact details will go in a draw for either some Cuban coffee beans or a $50 shopping voucher.

Health workers fear intimidation

The Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) and HACSU for Peace are urging the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to reverse the decision to implement the IHRA definition of antisemitism as the core reference tool in healthcare regulation.

As workers across mental health, disability, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, we emphatically reject antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, and all forms of discrimination and hatred. Every person – worker, patient and the community – deserves safety, dignity, and equal access to healthcare, including Jewish people, Palestinians, and all communities affected by conflict, violence, and war.

Our objection is *not* to efforts to combat antisemitism. Antisemitism is real, harmful, and must be confronted wherever it occurs. Our concern is that the IHRA definition blurs the line between antisemitism and legitimate criticism of the State of Israel, its government, its policies, and the deliberate bombing of health and caring facilities in Palestine and Lebanon.

Echoing the calls made by our colleagues in other health unions; criticism of a government, military, political ideology or State is not in itself racism against a people. Allegations of genocide or war crimes must be assessed on their evidence alone.

We oppose any regulatory framework that could deter healthcare workers from engaging in lawful advocacy for human rights, humanitarian protection, civilian safety, or accountability under international law. Professional registration must never become a mechanism for political silence.

Healthcare workers should never face intimidation, complaints, investigation, or disciplinary pressure because they express concern about the actions of a government, including their own.

Mental health clinicians, peer workers, disability support workers, and alcohol and other drug workers are not, by the very nature of their work, neutral observers of distress. They are principled advocates for patients, participants, consumers, and residents.

Protecting healthcare workers' ability to advocate for human rights does not weaken the fight against antisemitism. It fortifies the beliefs that make that fight meaningful: equality, dignity, safety, and justice for all people.

HACSU members cannot be expected to remain silent when healthcare workers in Palestine and Lebanon are providing treatment, care, and support to community members in the face of unimaginable human suffering, all while being victims of war themselves.

HACSU for Peace and HACSU urge AHPRA to adopt an approach that combats antisemitism, Islamaphobia and all forms of racism while protecting lawful advocacy, professional independence, and the ethical duty of healthcare workers to speak against preventable human suffering.

We will not be silenced.

Health and Community Services Union (edited for space)

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3CR RADICAL RADIO

The *Guardian* encourages readers to donate to the 3CR Radiothon. 3CR is a Melbourne Community Radio station, but anyone can hear its programs via podcast. If you donate, please nominate 'Alternative News' as the show you support.

The Media, Entertainment, & Arts Alliance (MEAA) stands in support of Sydney's queer performance venue Divine Playhouse and its staff following its recent forced closure.

Following a public protest campaign by extremist Christian groups, "Fit for the Kingdom" and "The Prodigal Sons," Heaps Gay Events, tenants of 420 Kent St in Sydney's CBD, were served a breach notice by their landlord characterising Divine Playhouse events as "offensive trade."

Charley Allanah, Co-Chair of the MEAA Entertainment Diversity Committee, said that the idea that Divine Playhouse is somehow incompatible with the history of this building ignores nearly a century of its evolution as a cultural venue.

The venue, a small former church, was deconsecrated in 1932, when the building was handed to Genesius – patron saint of actors. It has since spent nearly 70 years as the Genesian Theatre, staging hundreds of theatrical productions of all kinds, and launching careers including those of John Bell, Bryan Brown, and Baz Luhrmann.

"It has been 94 years since the building had any connection to its religious origins beyond its architectural style. Across the country, former churches have been transformed into thriving arts and community spaces, including Melbourne's Chapel Off Chapel, where diverse programming and LGBTQAI+ artists are welcomed without incident. Divine Playhouse is continuing that same tradition of creativity, inclusion and artistic expression," Alannah added.

In a public statement, The Prodigal Sons claim a double standard exists in the treatment of Christian heritage, contending that similar conversions of religious buildings of other faiths would never be publicly funded or culturally tolerated. They're considering a complaint under antidiscrimination law.

That claim is negated by the presence of commercial retail in the former Fremantle Synagogue (WA), an events and function space in the Maitland Synagogue (NSW) and a museum in Broken Hill Mosque (NSW).

"The strength of Australia's arts sector depends on vibrant, diverse cultural spaces where workers can build careers, develop their craft and connect with audiences. Venues like Divine Playhouse play an essential role in making that possible," said Allanah.

The Prodigal Sons are also calling on Create NSW, Sound NSW and the City of Sydney to strip Divine Playhouse of more than $100,000 of government funding – funds awarded in impartial, arms-length, peer-assessed funding processes.

MEAA stands proudly with Divine Playhouse and Heaps Gay Events, stands against artistic censorship, and against the silencing of cultural minorities, wherever these injustices occur.

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is Bendigo Bank (again). Bendigo Bank's strategy to kill off its Australian-based operations has taken a ghoulish turn with its Deceased Estates team now at risk of being offshored. Previously excluded from the Bank's offshoring agenda, the Bank has today commenced "blueprinting" in the Deceased Estates team.

Bendigo Bank has already used blueprinting in other areas of the bank to send jobs to global outsourcing giant Genpact. Blueprinting involves employees demonstrating how they perform their work so that offshore workers from Genpact can do it.

The Finance Sector Union (FSU) believes blueprinting could also pave the way for customer service functions of the Deceased Estates team to be offshored. Staff in Deceased Estates are the first point of contact for families sorting out the financial affairs of a loved one after their death.

This comes as the Banking Code Compliance Committee called on banks to do more to manage deceased estates following recommendations from a 2023 review.

The review stated that managing deceased estates is a "core responsibility" and all banks must ensure that processes are accurate, timely and easy to navigate and correct errors before they cause further distress.

Around 50 predominantly South Australian staff were shown the door last week as the so-called "better big bank" continued its 2030 strategy of putting profits before people. The total number of Bendigo Bank roles that have disappeared overseas is now 450.

Hanson 'shockingly out of touch'

Australian Unions say that One Nation Leader, Pauline Hanson's attack on paid family and domestic violence leave shows her lack of respect for the risks and hardship survivors of family violence encounter.

The One Nation leader has described paid family and domestic violence leave as "domestic violence holiday leave," and questioned whether it was "a scam."

Hanson told a podcast interviewer she was totally against domestic violence leave because it was "an incentive to actually go out there and make false accusations."

Following years of campaigning by unions, the Albanese government introduced paid family and domestic violence leave for Australian workers in 2023 to support survivors who often faced the impossible choice of keeping themselves and their children safe or keeping their jobs.

Thousands of workers have used the leave to meet with police, attend court hearings, secure emergency accommodation, organise school and care arrangements for children, access support services and implement safety plans after fleeing violent relationships.

ACTU President, Michele O'Neil called Hanson's comments "reckless and dangerous," saying that access to family and domestic violence leave has "literally saved lives." O'Neil said clearly that nobody wants to be in a position where they need to use this leave, but for those who have no choice, paid family and domestic violence leave is an essential lifeline.

"People who experience family and domestic violence are not on a holiday, far from it. The leave allows them to get to court, meet police, find emergency accommodation, and put safety arrangements in place for themselves and their children.

"All the experts tell us that leaving a violent relationship is the most dangerous time in a person's life.

The ACTU pointed out that on average, a woman is killed every nine days by a current or former partner in Australia.

O'Neill said "Unions campaigned and won paid family and domestic violence leave because survivors told us they needed the time, so they didn't have to choose between going to work to put food on the table or being able to make the break to safety.

"Dealing with a violent relationship costs time and money and can tragically trap workers in dangerous situations. Access to paid family and domestic violence leave saves lives, and women have come forward and credited this leave as having been essential to surviving and getting back on their feet.

"If you actually care about working Australians, you don't attack the measures that keep them safe, that keep their jobs and support their families while they face some of the toughest circumstances imaginable, yet that is what One Nation is doing."

Australian Council of Trade Unions

Graphic: gcadv.org/barriers-why-dont-you-just-leave/

Unions cautious on DAMA

Graham Holton

Migration Queensland has conducted targeted consultation on a proposed state-led Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), seeking feedback from industry on occupations, concessions and how the agreement should operate.

DAMAs are formal agreements between the Australian government and a state or territory. DAMAs are meant to "supplement, not replace" local workers. As to whether that's what DAMAs actually do, there's not enough research to know.

The Agreement allows approved companies to sponsor overseas workers under more flexible conditions than the standard skilled migration program.

A DAMA agreement provides concessions on age, English language proficiency, and salary requirements in some occupations. By making it easier to hire overseas workers, there is a risk employers will choose more compliant migrants over local workers.

The Queensland consultation closed on 7 July 2026. While the Crisafulli government has not signed a statewide DAMA with the Commonwealth, it is considering one to address labour shortages in construction, health, education and other sectors, in preparation for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The government has announced a plan to attract 100,000 migrant workers, and is offering $10,000 bonuses to builders who hire local apprentices, to encourage the local workforce.

If implemented, a Queensland statewide DAMA would likely expand access to skilled and semi-skilled migration across much of the state. Employers would need to demonstrate genuine labour shortages and meet Commonwealth labour agreement requirements. Qld already has two regional DAMAs, Cairns and Townsville in North Queensland.

The Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) has expressed concern over DAMAs to solve labour shortages for the 2032 infrastructure and regional industries. The ACTU argues that employers must demonstrate they have made genuine efforts to recruit and train Australian workers before accessing overseas labour.

Trade unions argue that DAMAs should not substitute training local workers, wage improvement, or workplace standards. Several unions have expressed concern that lower salary thresholds under some DAMAs could weaken local bargaining power if not carefully regulated.

There are other problems that need to be solved, such as providing housing for these immigrants. Queensland's unemployment rate is 4.4 per cent, with many rural young people desperately seeking employment. With suitable training they could fill the skills gap. The final negotiations between the Queensland and Australian governments are yet to be held.

Australia Cuba Friendship Society updates

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The South Australian branch of the ACFS launched its 'from Australia to Cuba with Love' campaign on the 4 July. On 10 July, the society organised a walk in Port Adelaide as part of the campaign and invited unions. The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) answered the call.

After the walk, two members spoke with Australia's Minister for Health Mark Butler MP and asked why Australia abstained at a recent UN vote on Cuba. We will follow this up by a letter focusing on the Cuban health system crisis.

On 11 July, we had a 30 minute segment on Radio Adelaide to talk about the situation in Cuba.

On 31 July, the society walked to Penny Wong's office to hand deliver a letter focusing on the next vote in UN.

NAARM/MELBOURNE

On 26 July, the ACFS Melbourne Branch commemorated the Moncado Barracks attack with a screening of the Abby Martin/Matt Belem film *Cuba After Castro*, a revealing series of interviews with Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel. Music was provided, and the audience heard from members of the Southern Cross and May Day solidarity Brigades. Attendees were urged to consider signing up for the next Southern Cross Brigade in 2027. Branch President Maree Dellora gave a speech condemning the Trump administration's oil blockade as an act of illegal collective punishment.

ACFS-SA action

‘Deeply unfair’ school funding system

The Australian Education Union (AEU) rejects Independent Schools Australia (ISA) attempt to reframe the national debate on school funding, saying the real issue is not school choice, but inadequate funding of Australia’s public schools.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said taxpayer funds for education must be directed where they deliver the greatest public benefit: public schools.

The ISA’s campaign ignores the growing inequity in Australia’s education system, where many private schools continue to receive generous government funding while public schools remain under-resourced.

“Australia has one of the most inequitable school funding systems in the OECD. Many private schools receive millions of dollars in taxpayer funding while also collecting substantial fees,” Haythorpe said.

“At the same time, public school teachers are working incredibly hard with limited resources to provide the education and support students need. Governments have a responsibility to ensure every child has access to high-quality public education, regardless of where they live or their family’s income. That means prioritising investment in Australia’s public schools.”

This call from ISA comes at a time when private schools are now publicly subsided to a greater extent than ever before.

Over the last decade private schools in Australia have benefited from a number of special deals from the Commonwealth, including the $1.2 billion Choice and Affordability Fund, $3.2 billion in overfunding through to 2029 to transition down to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), and over $1.6 billion from the Commonwealth for capital works.

The ISA itself says over 30% of private schools were overfunded by the Commonwealth in 2025: As of 2025, 857 schools have already transitioned to 80% and there are 383 Independent schools still above 80%. Of the schools funded above 80% in 2025, 73 of them are funded less than 81%.

The Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services 2026 showed:

- Growth in government funding to private schools (from both the Commonwealth and States/Territories) has outpaced funding growth for public schools by 30.6% over the last decade.
- Commonwealth funding to private schools has increased by 43.2% in real terms on a per student basis over the decade from 2014-15 to 2023-24.
- Private schools received $17.96 billion in Commonwealth funding in 2023-24 – 62% of all Commonwealth funding to schools.
- The true total recurrent funding per FTE student in government schools was $21,550 in 2023-24, not $26,140 as claimed by the ISA.

“These facts expose a deeply unfair school funding system, with government funding growth continuing to favour private schools over public schools despite rising student need,” Haythorpe said.

This inequity is particularly egregious when it comes to school capital infrastructure.

The AEU’s recent report *The Building Divide in Australian Schools* found private schools outspent public schools on capital infrastructure by $38 billion over the past decade, including $5.4 billion in 2023 alone. There is no current Commonwealth capital funding program for public schools.

From 2017 to 2025 the Commonwealth Non-Government School Capital Grants Program has provided $1.6 billion in Commonwealth funding to private schools.

The average grant over these nine years has been $1.034 million and 1,546 private schools have received Commonwealth grants in this time.

In 2026, the fund will provide $258 million to 181 private schools at an average of $1.42 million for each grant.

The Commonwealth is planning a further $3 billion in grants to private schools through to 2034.

“Our Schools for Our Future Inquiry has heard from teachers, principals and communities across Australia who are doing extraordinary work in classrooms that are overcrowded, ageing or no longer fit for purpose,” Haythorpe said. “While some private schools are building literal castles, many public schools are waiting years for basic classroom upgrades, air conditioning, adequate toilets or learning spaces that meet the needs of students.”

The Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services 2026 also showed private schools educate less than half the number of students from low Socio-Educational Advantage background households than public schools do – 31.5% of students in public schools are from the lowest quartile of Socio-Educational Advantage compared to 13.7% in private schools.

graphic: publicdomainpictures.net

“Public schools are doing the heaviest lifting in our education system, yet governments continue to fund them as if all schools face the same challenges,” Haythorpe said.

“That is not equitable, and it is not delivering the outcomes students deserve. That public responsibility should be reflected in government investment.”

“The question is not whether families can choose a private school, the question is whether every child can rely on a strong, well-funded local public school,” Haythorpe said.

“Public education is the foundation of Australia’s education system. It deserves to be funded as the national priority rather than taxpayer dollars continuing to subsidise already well-resourced private schools.”

Australian Education Union

Israeli embassy pressures Labor over Palestine

The Israeli embassy in Canberra has publicly challenged proposed changes to the Australian Labor Party’s policy on Palestine, drawing attention to what appears to be an unusual attempt by a foreign government to influence an internal party debate.

In a four-page statement the embassy criticized sections of Labor’s draft national platform ahead of the party’s conference in Adelaide. The proposed platform includes stronger language opposing the occupation and “annexation” of Palestinian territory, as well as Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank.

“The Embassy of Israel notes these policy motions are still in draft form, and will continue to engage constructively with the Australian Labor Party through the usual diplomatic channels,” the statement read. “However, the embassy respectfully submits that several elements of the draft platform risk placing responsibility for the conflict on one party while giving insufficient attention to the decisions, conduct and continuing obligations of the Palestinian leadership and terrorist organisations such as Hamas.”

The intervention is notable because the Labor platform is an internal party document debated and approved at the party’s national conference every three years. Foreign governments rarely issue detailed public objections to policies that remain under discussion within an Australian political party.

The embassy’s statement therefore adds to existing tensions between the Israeli occupation and Labor, whose position on Palestine has shifted significantly since the party’s previous national conference in 2023 in the face of massive national protests against the ongoing Israeli genocide.

The earlier platform contained only a brief reference to recognising a Palestinian state. The 2026 draft expands Labor’s position to include opposition to territorial “annexation,” the occupation, and violence carried out by Israeli settlers.

The Australian government formally recognised the State of Palestine in August 2025 and has repeatedly condemned settler attacks in the occupied West Bank. Australia also joined several other Western governments last month in imposing sanctions on individuals accused of involvement in such violence.

The Israeli embassy tried to play down the ongoing settler violence in the illegally occupied West Bank. It objected to the prominence given to settler violence in the draft, describing settler violence as a “reprehensible but marginal phenomenon” that had received “disproportionate attention.”

Data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) shows that there were 3,033 Israeli Settler attacks between 1 January 2025 and 31 June 2026. There’s no news available on how the survivors of the attacks feel about being a “marginal phenomenon.”

“Those seeking peace would be better served to focus its scrutiny on the terrorism experienced by both Jewish and Arab Israelis at the hands of terrorist groups such as Hamas,” the embassy said.

The statement also focused on changes made during the drafting process.

An earlier version of the platform included the sentence: “Hamas must disarm and can have no role in the State of Palestine.”

That wording was removed from the final version scheduled for debate, although the document still identifies Hamas as an “organisation responsible for terrorism and violent extremism.”

The embassy called on political parties to formulate their positions “not around assigning blame, but around the conditions that history demonstrates are essential for lasting peace.”

“[Israel] remains committed to a future in which Israelis and Palestinians live alongside one another in peace and security,” it said. “That future, however, cannot be built through unilateral political declarations or international pressure directed at only one side.”

Multicultural Affairs Minister Anne Aly appeared unconcerned by the Israeli embassy’s public criticism when questioned about the statement.

“You know, they will do what they feel is right,” she told ABC Afternoon Briefing.

Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong declined to comment on the embassy’s interference.

Al Mayadeen/*Guardian*

Tasmania: data centres menace water supply

TI

Energy giant Firmus has claimed at numerous points that the Launceston St Leonards site's water usage will be equivalent to that of a restaurant. However the tests they have conducted have only tested for small scale and not actual scale.

It's unsure if the coolant Firmus was thinking of using was described at multiple points as being highly toxic and usually transported offsite after use. Whether it is sent off to a treatment plant or simply dumped, who knows. Whether they wind up using coolant or not, these sites will still use an enormous amount of water.

If former fire chief Greg Mullins is right about another black summer within the next year, we can expect to see low water yields from the North Esk from which this data centre will be taking, in an era of anthropogenic climate change in which this river is likely to receive less rain.

There is also a concern about how St Leonards site may interact with Launceston's notorious wood heater pollution problem during winter.

Overall, there has been very little community consultation in St Leonards and George Town communities on the part of LGAs and state government (let alone Firmus). Overall community resistance seems to be growing in response to inadequate consultation.

In terms of State politics the only resistance seems to be coming from the Greens with Tabitha Badger (member for Lyons, which covers central and eastern Tasmania) leading the charge. Whilst she has been privy to some documents of the state government, she is not at liberty to say what they are exactly, only that she found them concerning.

Tabitha gives the impression that there is very little in the way of state regulations around AI and the state government is rushing headlong into its development. She thinks she may be able to wrangle some members of Labor and independence into an anti-AI coalition but it's still early days.

www.cpa.org.au

GREEN NOTES

China gives Japan a hand

Graham Holton

The revival of Japan's Crested Ibis (*Toki Nipponia nippon*) was made possible through its scientific cooperation with China, whose policy of 'Ecological Civilisation' (*shēngtài wénmíng*) reshaped how the economy, society, and nature relate to each other. It is the idea that human development and nature must be integrated into a single system of sustainable growth. It is an agricultural policy reform driven by environmental goals. Ecological Civilisation shows how modern states can use environmental recovery projects as both ecological and political tools.

Bucking the stereotype of a nation focused on development and industry, China treats the environment, economy, and politics as one system, aiming to manage development through ecological limits rather than separate environmental policy. 'Ecological Civilisation' replaces the Western model of high-pollution industrial expansion with 'green development' guided by the state. Conservation redesigns entire landscapes as part of national planning.

In 2007, Ecological Civilisation became an explicit part of the Chinese Communist Party's program. Results can be seen in the massive expansion of renewable energy and China incredible output of Evs.

Since the environment doesn't stop at national borders, neither does China's Ecological Civilisation priority. China has made agreements on the topic with governments as far away as Singapore and Slovenia. In the midst of the ongoing blockade of Cuba as the US attempts to starve the Cuban people, China has helped Cuba to triple its solar power supply in one year.

The revival of the Crested Ibis is one of the most successful wildlife restorations in East Asia, and is connected to environmental policy, agriculture, and national identity in Japan. It reflects a wider pattern where ecology and politics intersect applying state-led, rather than market-led conservation. China's scientific diplomacy, and agricultural policy reform is driven by environmental goals. It is a shift from industrial growth politics to ecological governance.

The Crested Ibis was once widespread across China, Korea, Russia, and Japan. It was hunted for feathers and meat. By 1981 its numbers in Japan had collapsed due to overhunting, as well as wetlands converted to agriculture, and pesticides killing the birds' food – insects and frogs. Only a handful remained in captivity on Sado Island in Japan's Niigata Prefecture. By 2003 the Ibis was extinct in the wild.

In 1999, China donated a breeding pair of Crested Ibises to Japan, enabling a viable breeding population to restart. The successful captive birth programme led to releases in 2008. Today more than 500 Ibises live on Sado. The 'Sado Model' was not just biological; it required political change in agriculture. Farmers were subsidised to reduce their pesticide use, to restore wet rice fields, and to not cut down nesting trees in old-growth forests. This created feeding-friendly wetlands.

The wild Ibis were gradually reintroduced into rice-field ecosystems. This enabled them to recover to a self-sustaining population and they are now slowly spreading beyond Sado. Japan's 'Sado model' allows human, agriculture, and wildlife to coexist.

The Crested Ibis became a symbol of eco-modern rural Japan: harmony between humans and nature. The government promotes it as proof of successful conservation policy, and post-industrial ecological responsibility.

The recovery is fragile, as there is a genetically limited population, making the birds vulnerable to disease or ecological change. The results so far are promising thanks to China's policy of 'Ecological Civilisation.'

Time to break free from the US

A report on the 2026 IPAN conference

Guardian correspondent

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) held a conference from July 24th to 26th, "Time to Break Free from the US." The conference was very well attended with several strong speakers to draw the crowds, most notably independent filmmaker Abby Martin of *Empire Files* renown.

The week leading up to the conference saw various ancillary events, including a guided boat tour of the Osborne shipyard in Port Adelaide where a nuclear submarine base is proposed to be built and a screening of Abby Martin's documentary on the environmental devastation wrought by the US military, *Earth's Greatest Enemy*. (see review p11 this issue)

Keynote sessions covered regional overviews of US imperialism, various mechanisms of US military control and intrusion in Australia such as AUKUS and the Force Posture Agreement and various options that Australia has to move toward peace and independence.

Notably, Mike Khizam from the Australian Friends of Palestine Association drew a standing ovation with his condemnation of the Gaza genocide. Auntie Sue Haseldine of the Kokatha nation described how the US dumps its space garbage on her country – from orbit – because it's too dangerous to land it back where it came from.

Nick Hanna, a lawyer who has represented pro-Palestine activists facing disingenuous and politically motivated charges explained how the Zionist campaign to introduce new anti-protest laws will have impacts reaching beyond Palestinian solidarity, allowing authorities to crack down on peace and other protests as well.

Various workshops were held on different aspects of organising. There were discussions on media both traditional and mainstream, working with First Peoples and campaigning in the workplace. There were also sessions focusing on information, such as the details of US military access to Australian bases.

One session was dedicated to giving representatives from around 20 different peace and environmental groups a platform to introduce their organisations and share the lessons from their campaigning. These included community groups campaigning against AUKUS projects in their local area, professional organisations of teachers and medical professionals (including the NSW Teachers' Federation) and various Palestinian solidarity groups. The session closed with a presentation from the Pine Gap Convergence, which had just organised a march of 600 people that shut down the CIA spy base in the middle of Australia for four days.

The conference went well overall, with most participants leaving energised and motivated to campaign for peace. There is still room for improvement.

Unfortunately, only two unions (the Maritime Union of Australia and the NSW Teachers' Federation) sent delegations. Only the organised working class has the power to break the US imperialist stranglehold on Australia. Peace is union business, and we can only achieve it by mobilising and uniting workers' organisations.

Ultimately, the real test of the conference will be the organisation that comes out of it. We have much do to, so let's get to work.

Abby Martin, director of *Earth's Greatest Enemy*

Peace is union business

Pine Gap quotations

"We want people to support us to close down Pine Gap. We want them to know it's a sacred site. We don't want to be feeling guilty all the time when bad things are happening overseas to little ones.

"We're not the ones controlling that facility, but we feel guilty that it's coming from our land. We want to see the Pine Gap facility closed so the generation coming can be safe. We want to be compensated so we can get houses at Whitegate community."

Felicity, Wyonna and Jacquita Hayes – Arrernte Apmereke-artweye Traditional Custodians

"We know that signals intelligence data, captured by Pine Gap-controlled ORION satellites, has been historically made available to Israel. Unless the Australian direct and indirect military relationship to Israeli activities in the Gaza Strip are closely reviewed by the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, it is not possible for the Australian government to assure the parliament and the Australian public that Australia is not complicit in acts of genocide."

Professor Richard Tanter – SeniorResearch Associate, Nautilus Institute, leading expert on Pine Gap

"I'm against Pine Gap. Not only because I'm Palestinian. I understand that the genocide in Gaza against my people is made possible by intelligence flowing from the heart of this colony in Alice Springs directly to the Israeli occupation forces. Intelligence that is used to target and kill men, women and children in Palestine. As if that were not reason enough, I'm against Pine Gap because I reject an ideology that understands only domination. Domination at the expense of human life."

Remah Naji – Palestinian activist with Justice for Palestine Magan-djin

Op-Ed: AI and your job

RJ Harris

As a worker are you worried about "AI" taking your job? Or are you worried about your boss drastically reducing your work hours after you teach an algorithm everything about your job?

Currently "artificial intelligence" (AI) tools are underpriced. This is to attract a customer base. I argue that the priority customer base is institutional rather than retail.

Retail customers – individuals like you and me – do not generate the kind of inertia which will keep them tethered to an AI solution while the price of that solution increases exponentially. Institutional customers must develop processes and procedures around the adoption of new technologies and stick to these technologies as the price rises.

A thought experiment: A state government, under budgetary pressure, introduces under-priced AI tools to streamline clerical processes. This allows them to increase the intensity of work for their human workers. Workers who struggle against this technological adoption are fired through whatever mechanisms are available – clause 11 restructures, "realignments" and so on.

After twelve months the remaining workers have little trouble with the AI workflows. They also understand very little of the old backend processes which the AI workflows now streamline. That's the stuff you don't see, but which makes what you do see possible.

The departed AI-oppositionists comprise the people who understood the workflow from beginning to end. They understand the work from the generation of some kind of datapoint in the community, its communication to the workplace, the manipulation of the data in the workplace, the entry of a datapoint in various databases and the interpretation of this new entry in larger datasets. They're gone.

After a period of time, 12 or 24 months or so, the company which owns the AI comes to the state government department with a new cost for their entrenched tool at an increase of 1,000%. The government institution is suddenly under massive pressure to pay this new rate as they have lost their institutional knowledge of the old system processes in favour of a workforce who understands only AI-managed workflow. In an effort to extricate themselves from the class-struggle of a workforce which demands a higher rate of pay per cycle and will strike to get it, they are facing unaccountable and giant multinational companies who can reduce the operating capacity of said department to zero at the end of a billing cycle.

The class struggle is being shifted from proletarian-bourgeois to intra-bourgeois conflicts. Imagine your boss, Serco, in negotiations with Anthropic over the cost of Claude Enterprise. In this scenario Serco is facing a 1,000% cost increase. Enter you: you want a 10% increase to your pay.

It's you, the worker – already viewed by the company as stupid meat – versus Anthropic, viewed by the company as an office of seers who produce this amazing black-box product which works magic. In this scenario, Anthropic is indispensable, and you are all too dispensable.

If you thought that hiring 22-year-olds at KPMG to tell your company to increase productivity by firing staff and raising prices was stupid, just wait until you get the sack because a 25-year-old (the same person just three years older) has figured out that the executives want to hear nothing more than "MORE AI" and they are happy to provide.

For those of us who are in manual work this scenario is only so scary. There is so far close to zero application for Deepmind to dig a hole or ChatGPT to wipe someone's bum. However, in the office not far from a bum-wiper sits a clerical worker under the pressures described here.

If AI is to be used in our workplaces it must be in our service – not a multinational and not the boss. In service of: reducing our work intensity; increasing workplace safety; increasing our share of productivity and; securing our jobs for the future without destroying the planet.

Part of our struggle is communicating this to our workmates. The thought experiment described here has not yet happened, but without organised struggle this technology will be used to increase the intensity of work and undermine our job security.

Holy war, white republic: The right-wing origins of today's red scare

Joe Sims

US President Donald Trump's speech at the recent Faith and Freedom conference was a telling address with enormous implications.

The conference is an annual confab of evangelical Christians founded by Republican political activist Ralph Reed in 2009. It's a political gathering organised to rally the GOP faithful.

When talking about the GOP faithful, it's important to note that today there is almost no daylight between those who consider themselves Christian evangelicals and the mass base of the Republican Party. They are literally one entity. This has been true for a couple of decades.

It's also important to be aware that Christian nationalism has become the dominant tendency in this cohort, upwards of 65 per cent. Two-thirds of white evangelical Protestants qualify as either Christian nationalists or sympathisers.

The modern evangelical movement has its roots in opposing school desegregation. It arose in defiance of a Supreme Court decision to deny tax-exempt status to private Christian schools in the South, established as a way of avoiding integration. Paul Weyrich, a founder of the Heritage Foundation, and Jerry Falwell were the primary organisers of this white supremacist movement among Southern Christians.

Ralph Reed came out of the Moral Majority movement and the Christian Coalition and was one of its most prominent spokespersons until a corruption scandal involving gambling forced him to lower his public profile.

RALLYING THE BASE

So that's who Trump was talking to. The reason he was talking to them was part of the GOP ('Grand Old Party,' Republicans) effort to rally its base for the fall midterms. The important thing here is the subject he chose to address: communism and an alleged threat to the American way of life. The reason for that is that in polling, opposition to communism tops the list of perceived concerns on the evangelical right, exceeding domestic economic and foreign policy issues. This belief has been consciously stoked since the time of Rev. Billy Graham, an old-school Cold Warrior, who preached that the only vaccine against communism was to be a born-again Christian.

Consider that since the 1950s and the moral victory of the Civil Rights movement over segregation, the far right has been in search of issues that resonate. Images of Bull Connor, police dogs, and fire hoses used against civil rights activists not only did not have broad appeal in the US body politic but actually hurt the arch-segregationists. It was only after several failed attempts to find an issue that Weyrich and Falwell happened upon abortion. It allowed them to regain their political footing and build a broader movement. Today they hope the issue will be saving white America from "godless" communism.

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Why, you might ask, do we use the term "saving white America"? The reason has to do with the far right's deeply embedded belief that people of colour, and in particular people of African descent, are not only inferior but represent a subspecies. They're afraid of race mixing or, as Trump put it in a phrase borrowed from Hitler, "they're poisoning our blood."

The point here is that there's a nearly 75-year direct line from opposition to desegregation to Trump's attack on Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) candidates and its use as a rallying cry against communism.

This is an aspect of MAGA that has not been given nearly enough attention: the marriage of Christian nationalism to the evangelical movement and the birth of a US-styled clerical fascism, deeply rooted in white supremacy. Along with it comes the threat of Jim Crow and the revival of old forms of rule adapted to 21st-century conditions.

To anyone who thinks this is overstating the case, here are the words of Trump himself on 29 June: "I think it's [communism] the biggest threat to our nation there is, maybe since our founding. That includes World War I, World War II, September 11. It includes the Pearl Harbor attack."

So the question from their point of view is: How do you deal with a threat like that? What is Trump setting the stage for? While you're considering that, allow us to briefly turn to the issue of the growing threat of political repression.

PROSECUTIONS

There have been several federal and state prosecutions over the past period. Among them: the FBI raid on the Ohio Organising Collective for alleged voter fraud; the Texas Prairieland prosecutions of eight defendants in connection with an ICE protest, where the eight were given exorbitant life sentences for firing a weapon and transporting magazines, ranging from 100 to 30 years.

Add to the list the June federal indictment of eight University of Michigan students for criminal harassment and "terrorising" campus officials by placing fake corpses on their lawn and spray-painting their homes, and Chicago's Broadview 6 indictment of anti-ICE protesters, which collapsed due to prosecutorial misconduct.

In Minnesota, there have been attempts at mass indictments of local activists and state officials for obstructing ICE enforcement. There, subpoenas were withdrawn after a rebuke from a federal judge; and let's not forget the Stop Cop City indictments of 60 activists *(editor's note: for more on Cop City, see 'Atlanta's Cop City', Guardian #2044)*.

Then there's the new targeting of philanthropy and nonprofit organisations by the Trump administration. The Internal Revenue Service has been directed to investigate and aggressively strip the tax-exempt status of nonprofits and foundations accused of "fomenting or financing" civil unrest.

Finally, there's the Cuba angle and the foreign agent charge. In May 2026, the Justice Department and the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control launched a massive inquiry into organisations mobilising in support of Cuba. Acting under National Security Presidential Memorandum 7 (NSPM-7), federal investigators have compiled a list of roughly 145 nonprofits and political groups, including the Party and solidarity networks like the Venceremos Brigade.

Photo: rawpixel.com

GROWING PATTERN OF REPRESSION

This is the growing pattern of political repression that is emerging, coupled with Trump's anti-communist tirade directed against Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) candidates running in Democratic primaries this year. It's a dangerous development on both counts.

MAGA is panicking, I think, because their support in the coming midterms is extremely tenuous and they face a landslide defeat. Therefore, we must keep our eyes on the prize and keep the pressure on. This means broadening and deepening organising for the election. The midterms must be the focus for the next four or five months, and that includes supporting and running our own candidates.

People's World (edited for space)

What is Trump setting the stage for?

Rural US hospitals disappearing

For 101 years, Sturgis Hospital stood as a cornerstone of healthcare in southwest Michigan. On 19 June the doors closed for good. It is but the latest casualty in a decades-long assault on public health infrastructure and an economic system that prioritises profits over people.

For the residents of Sturgis and the surrounding communities, the loss of the emergency department is a matter of life and death. Patients in crisis are now being redirected to facilities between 18 and 40 kilometres away. For a rural population where ambulance response times are already stretched thin, these extra kilometres can mean the difference of receiving life-saving care or not.

Ultimately, the tragedy of Sturgis, for patients and staff alike, is a symptom of a healthcare system that simply treats rural communities as expendable. Since 2010, over 100 rural hospitals have closed across the US, with hundreds more on the brink.

But why do rural hospitals like Sturgis keep bleeding out? It comes down to two core reasons.

First, rural communities have higher rates of uninsured and underinsured patients. When they can't pay their already obscenely expensive medical bills – due to a number of factors including soaring affordability costs, the price-gouging of Big Pharma, and lack of good job opportunities – hospitals are forced to eat the cost of their care.

Second, rural hospitals are ill-equipped for a system in which dozens of different private insurance companies, each with their own rules and denial tactics, force them to try collecting payments via their inefficient, fragmented profit-driven processes – all while the unpaid medical bills from patients pile up.

From 'Rural hospitals disappearing,' *People's World*

Worth Streaming: *Beef*

Peter Farmer

On one level, road rage is pretty silly. Someone cut you off, or indicated *after* they changed lanes. Some ratbag was on their phone instead of looking at the traffic, so you missed the green light they would have gone through if they'd been paying attention.

These things are annoying, but not life-changing. You're going to get to where you're going anyway. Why waste perfectly good fury on a stranger you're going to forget about by tomorrow?

There must be something else going on in the lives of those people who take it further and start fights – or even vendettas over a traffic incident.

That's the premise of *Beef*. Beef as in an angry dispute, not part of the cow you can eat.

Amy Lau (Ali Wong) has a honking fit after Danny Cho (Steven Yuen) almost reverses into her car. She stops and gives him the finger before driving off. The feud escalates from there, getting crazier as the show goes on. Both have their reasons, and in both cases it's capitalism US style that's got them leading such strained existences that the increasingly insane feud is a relief. The pressure to get ahead and make it is palpable in this show. It's always funny, but there's no let-up from the pressure both main characters are under. *Beef* is not a relaxing experience.

Class is always an issue with the wealthier ones treating working people with contempt while treating each other with suspicion and fear at the possibility of falling into the working class.

Danny is trying to get his Korean family to move to the US. In this quest, he's up against a dishonest cousin, a lazy and sulky younger brother who spends all his time on games, and chronic insecurity as a handyman for hostile and distrustful rich people.

Amy, who is of Chinese-Vietnamese heritage, looks like the rich one, with her nice car and fancy house. However, she has her own pressures. She's under constant stress because her hostile Japanese mother-in-law demands perfection for their young daughter, while her husband George doesn't help, beyond producing hideous sculptures she's expected to sell in her gallery.

George is a wealthy spoiled man who's a poster boy for 'toxic positivity.' The first time Amy tries to tell him about the road rage incident, he stops her short and tells her that they need to start "gratitude journalling' again. He and his mother want Amy's child to compete in every area, while Amy just wants her to be a child.

Both Amy and Danny have to suck it up with a smile in a competitive and atomised US system. Danny is basically a handyman who'd like to be something else. He calls himself a 'contractor' instead because it sounds classier.

There's a lot of racism through cluelessness, with Amy being told that she's "got that Zen Buddhist thing going on" by a patronising rich white woman.

Season Two attempts that difficult trick, continuing the premise without the original protagonists. The ubiquitous Carey Mulligan and her husband are two wealthy Californians who face blackmail from a poorer couple.

The US health system, responsible for so much misery as well as a few seasons of *Breaking Bad*, plays a part in compelling people to make horrendous choices under pressures they wouldn't face in a country that put its people ahead of profit.

The creators pull it off reasonably well for Season 2 but this viewer missed Amy and Danny.

Beef is streaming on Netflix.

Book Review:

Stuff the Accord! Pay Up!

by Liz Ross

Reviewer: Graham Holton

Stuff the Accord! Pay Up!: Workers' Resistance to the ALP-ACTU Accord is a superb history of industrial struggles under the Hawke-Keating governments. Ross argues that the 1983-1996 Prices and Incomes Accord was not the successful partnership between the ALP and the ACTU it is often made out to be.

Instead the Accord weakened organised labour and helped consolidate neoliberalism. The 1996 election of John Howard deregulated the labour market, ending wage fixing practices, and allowing 'market forces,' heavily weighted towards big business, to determine wages.

Ross rejects Laurie Carmichael's description of the Accord as a "pathway to socialism" contending that it accelerated declining union numbers and industrial militancy. It was a deal between union leaders and the ALP that traded wages for often undelivered promises, allowing a massive wealth transfer from workers to employers. The Accord restrained wage rises, limited industrial action, and shifted wealth and power to employers. Workers often waged fierce resistance against it.

Ross demonstrates that many promises under the Accord failed to materialise. Union leaders policed workers making deals out of view. Ross argues that the Accord destroyed militant unions like the BLF, while shredding class solidarity. Each dispute examined reflects the broader structural changes brought about by the Accord. She documents widespread resistance by workers, re-examining important industrial disputes, such as the Mudginberri abattoir conflict, the deregistration of the BLF, the Victorian nurses' strike, and the introduction of enterprise bargaining.

Refreshingly, Ross writes from the standpoint of rank-and-file workers, examining what they were doing on the factory floor, construction sites, hospitals and government workplaces. She challenges the dominant narrative that the Accord was broadly supported by organised labour. Workers' resistance never disappeared, but was actively discouraged by sections of the union leadership. Ross concentrates on the costs borne by workers.

Importantly Ross researched the female rank and file, as they made up the majority of trade union members. That's true now – across the general workforce, 14 per cent of women are unionised, compared to 12 per cent men.

The nurses' industrial action in 1986 lasted for months, uniting women workers despite abysmal treatment by hospital management, governments, and the media. One nurse said: "For the first time thousands of nurses here are finding that they do have the power, that they can change their own lives." After a five-week strike action the government finally agreed to demands.

Stuff the Accord! is a powerful critique of institutional cooperation between unions, employers, and the state. Ross argues convincingly that any improvements in wages and workers' conditions came from collective struggle and not corporatist agreements negotiated by union officials and governments.

Ross's book is well researched, using union publications, newspapers, archival sources, interviews and official documents, to reconstruct disputes in impressive detail. Ross, a Marxist union delegate writes passionately, avoiding unnecessary academic jargon.

Stuff the Accord! Pay Up! is a significant radical history of Australian trade unionism. Ross's Marxist analysis makes a compelling case that the Accord years cannot be understood solely through government policy, or union leadership decisions.

By recovering the experiences of workers who resisted wage restraint, deregulation and enterprise bargaining, Ross adds an essential study of Australia's labour history. This book is important for Australian political history, industrial relations, and labour history. It offers an inspiring lesson on the necessity of militant, independent struggle. Well worth the read.

4.5 out of 5 red stars

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Film Review:

Earth's Greatest Enemy

Directed by Abby Martin

Reviewer: HF

The United States military industrial complex is not only one of the most politically destructive military forces in the world, but also the most environmentally damaging. Abby Martin's documentary illustrates the unfathomable climate destruction which the military causes, as well as its absolute lack of accountability.

The American military has over 800 overseas bases. The ultimate goal of these military bases is to maintain capitalism and imperialist domination through violence. There's simply no comparison with the militaries of any other country. China, currently being hyped as a threat that must be countered (it isn't) has one overseas base.

In an era when climate change is becoming the biggest existential threat to humanity, international climate agreements exclude the military from a nation's climate statistics and emissions targets for so-called national security reasons. The US military has unchecked permission to destroy the planet while the burden of climate change is put on the global working class. Thus, the fight against climate change is inevitably an anti-imperialist struggle.

This documentary details the harrowing environmental results of the US military in places like Iraq, Hawaii, Okinawa, and in the USA itself.

Hawaii is essentially a colony of the US. Stereotyped as a holiday destination, it is home to a substantial US military presence. There is an indigenous protest movement there, who are interviewed for the movie.

Also tropical and also colonial is Okinawa. An independent kingdom for centuries until the takeover by the Japanese mainland, Okinawa has had 40% of its landmass given over to the US military. Okinawans have many reasons to resent armed forces. Protest there is mainstream, and Martin gives serious weight to Okinawans.

The movie also looks at Iraq, not only host to US bases, but still paying the price for the two US invasions. Billions of bullets and other discarded armaments cause damage to drinking water and farmland.

The military affects the oceans too, with sonic damage to wildlife. The freedom from accountability the miltary enjoy comes up here too, as it means freedom for the US to dump anything anywhere.

This impunity applies to the US itself, and Martin gives some serious attention to the catastrophic affects of the armed forces in their home country.

The audience is left in no doubt as to the catastrophic results of an unchecked imperialist military. This is shown not just in statistics but in the impact on real people and the environment around the world.

The protest movement is examined closely through interviews and documentary footage. It's inspiring to see people who have been protesting against the armed forces' unchecked operations for years, sometimes for decades.

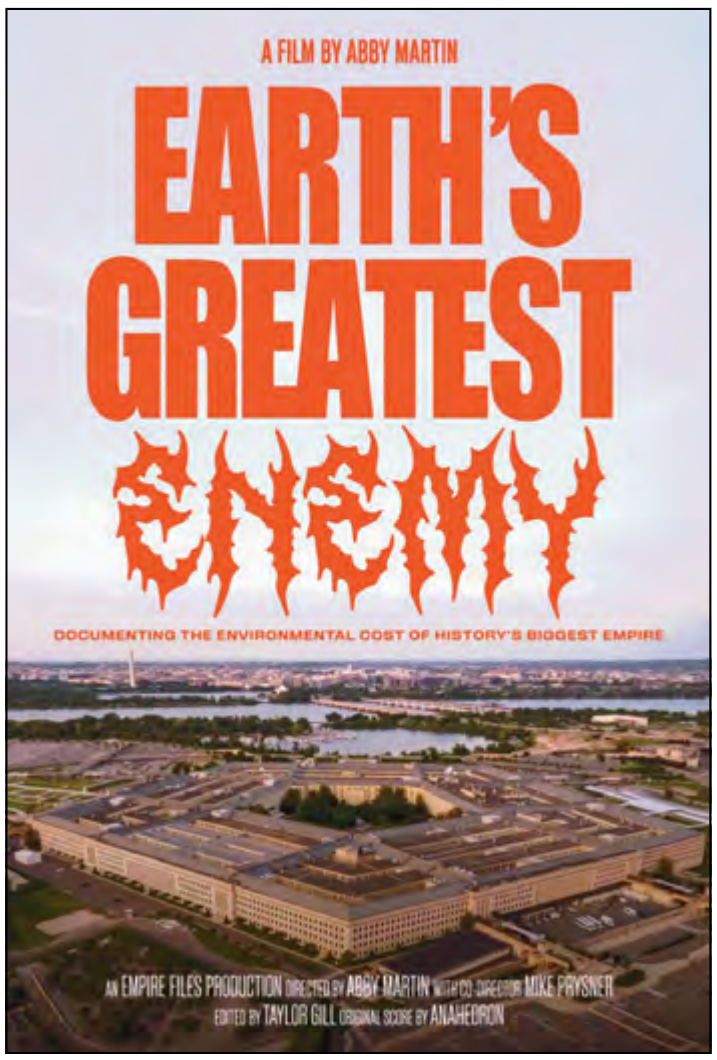
Martin makes the impact of the US military on the countries where it operates vivid and visceral.

Abby Martin herself was on tour in Australia this July.

The screening led neatly into the Independent Pacific and Australia Network (IPAN) National Conference held in Adelaide attended by a coalition of left-wing organisations committed to peace and an independent Australian sovereignty.

Earth's Greatest Enemy is now streaming on Apple TV and Prime Video.

absolute lack of accountability



Op-Ed: Do not watch *The Odyssey*

Che Janz

The Odyssey is an ancient Greek epic poem, immensely important to western culture. The movie is a new adaption, directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Matt Damon. You'll hear a lot about that.

What you will not hear so much about is where the movie was filmed. *The Odyssey* was partly filmed in Dakhla, a city that rightfully belongs to the Sahrawi people and their nation-state the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

The Kingdom of Morocco has illegally occupied 70-80% of the territory that rightfully belongs to the SADR. On 17 October 1975, the United Nations ruled that the Sahrawian people had a right to self-governance, and any continued conflict in the region will jeopardise the harmony of North-West Africa in continued colonial era disputes.

Morocco disobeyed the command less than a fortnight later and entered West Sahara to claim it. This lead to the Western Sahara War,which lasted for nearly 16 years between the Imperialist Royal Moroccan Armed forces and the socialist Polisario Front (The Sahrawi liberation vanguard party and militia), leading to tens of thousands of deaths.

Although the war ended with a ceasefire, the occupation continues along with the mistreatment and abuse of the Sahrawian people who live under apartheid conditions in their own lands, with most having no choice but to live in refugee camps in neighbouring Algeria.

Supplied by the US and Israel, Morocco has used drones, napalm, white phosphorus and thermobaric bombs. Over 150,000 Sahrawi have fled to the refugee camps, and Morocco has sent settlers to claim the now abandoned villages. They have further separated the Sahrawian people from ever re-entering their land by digging a 2,700km long berm that is heavily guarded. Morocco regularly kidnaps and tortures Sahrawian people and their allies who dare cross it.

Anyone who has any knowledge of the Nakba and the slow stripping away of Palestinian sovereignty by the 'State of Israel,' would see the striking similarities with the story of the Sahrawian people. It's is no coincidence that the national flags of Palestine and Western Sahara are near identical.

In 2023 Israel and the USA recognised Morocco's illegal conquest and plundering of the Western Sahara in exchange for a normalisation of relations between the two.

We can help the Sahrawian people in a boycott of Morocco like we do of Israel. From obviously not going there, not purchasing goods from there, and not consuming media that was utilised using this ethnic cleansing. As with boycotting Israeli products, it's a start.

See *Guardian* #2043 'Freedom for the Sahrawian People is long overdue.' The Australia Western Sahara Association can be found at awsa.org.au.

Book Review

Iran and Israel: Keys to Understanding a Decisive Conflict

by Ernest Robert

Reviewer: Graham Holton

Ernest Robert's *Iran and Israel: Keys to Understanding a Decisive Conflict* (2025) is a very readable introduction to the history of two Middle East rivalries that are at the centre of the present global conflict. Robert traces the conflict from the 1979 Iranian Revolution to the 2024 military exchanges.

He sets out the ideological foundations of the Islamic Republic and explains Iran's role of supporting Hezbollah, Hamas and Houthis. Ernest clearly sets out Israel's security doctrine, with its concerns over Iran's nuclear program, and how the involvement of the United States has escalated military tensions in the region.

Robert focuses primarily on state security, diplomacy, and military strategy, rather than the underlying political economy, US imperialism and its regional strategy. He explains Iran's regional strategy and its use of proxy warfare. Unfortunately, the military-industrial interests that benefit from this prolonged regional conflict are hardly mentioned. What Robert does well is present a complex history without overwhelming the reader with details.

Robert clearly describes Israel's military and intelligence responses to Iran, and how this resultant conflict affects global energy markets and international security.

Robert asks if humanity can develop "the institutional wisdom necessary to manage the existential risks it has created, or is it doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past with infinitely more devastating consequences?"

The answer is unfortunately more devastation, but "institutional wisdom" is an empty concept without consideration of the role of capital and US imperialism in the conflict.

The book leaves several important issues under-addressed, such as the internal political divisions within both Iran and Israel, and the Palestinian perspectives independent of Hamas.

Robert does not explain the effects of economic sanctions on Iranian society, nor does he discuss competing interpretations among historians regarding the geopolitical escalation.

Although Iran's strategic motivations are explained, he gives little attention to Iranian perceptions of encirclement, the history of foreign intervention in Iran. The debates over Israel's undeclared nuclear capability don't appear.

Having said all that, it must be admitted that *Iran and Israel* is an accessible introduction to a highly complex subject, suited to readers without prior knowledge seeking a clear overview of the origins and dynamics of the Iran-Israel rivalry. If you have to start somewhere on the topic, you could start here.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki: the aftermath

Graham Holton

On 6 and 9 August 1945 atomic bombs killed an estimated 140,000 people in Hiroshima, and 74,000 in Nagasaki. The bomb detonated over Hiroshima razed 70 per cent of all buildings. Three days later a bomb exploding over Nagasaki levelled 6.7 sq km of the city.

Japan was devastated by World War II. Its cities destroyed by aerial bombing campaigns that left millions homeless. People returned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki surprisingly quickly after the atomic bombing, because they had nowhere else to go. These two cities held their memories, livelihoods and families, what remained of them.

The Japanese government poured in financial support for urban planning and rebuilding after the destruction. Within days government offices reopened, the rail services restarted, and the markets and schools reopened. The Japanese government designated Hiroshima as a 'City of Peace,' while Nagasaki rebuilt its port, industries, and residential areas.

The survivors, known as *hibakusha* in Japan, rebuilt their lives, married, had families, and contributed to their reconstruction. A significant number carried elevated rates of psychological distress for the rest of their lives. The long-term effects depended on the loss of loved ones, social support, the severity of radiation exposure, and post-war living conditions.

In 1945 radiation was poorly understood. Japan was occupied by the US military, with support from Commonwealth countries from 1945 to 1952. Occupation authorities initially restricted information about radiation effects, so rumours soon spread that nothing would grow for decades, while others thought there was no danger. In the end, people judged conditions by what they saw around them.

The atomic bombs exploded 600 hundred metres above the ground, with the most intense radiation occurring at the moment of explosion. As a result, much of the radioactive material was carried high into the atmosphere in the mushroom clouds. While there were dangerous areas affected by fallout and 'black rain,' the cities did not remain lethally radioactive for years because the short half-life meant the radioactive isotopes decayed within days or weeks.

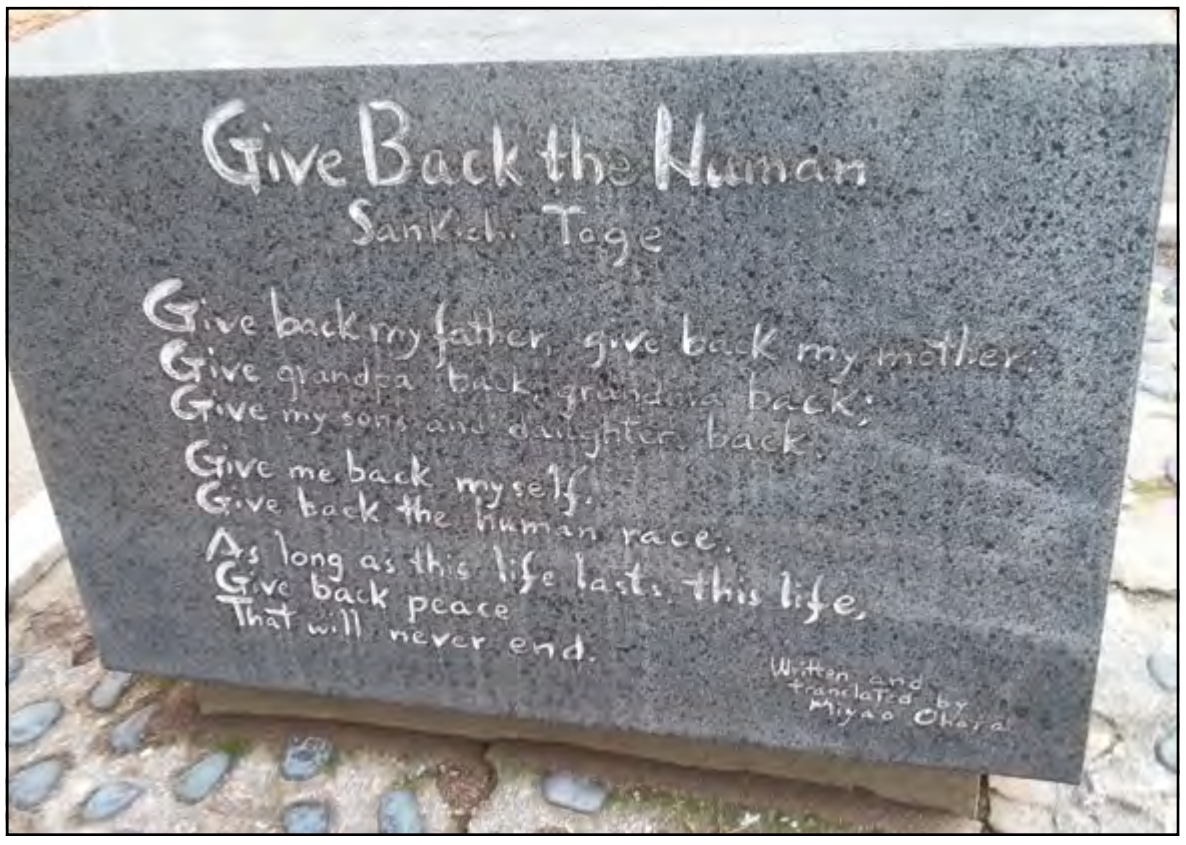
An atomic bomb releases radiation in a very short burst, with much of the radioactivity dispersing rapidly.

Those entering heavily contaminated areas soon after the bombings – rescue workers, military personnel, and the public – were exposed to radioactive fallout.

However, for most people who returned weeks or months later, residual radiation exposure was relatively low. Investigations by Japanese and Allied scientists found that, while survivors faced long-term risks of cancer and other illnesses from their exposure, living in these cities did not expose residents to continuously dangerous radiation levels.

This no way understates the horrific nature of the nuclear bombs. The health risks depended on when and where a person was exposed. Those present at the moment of the bombing faced the greatest danger. People who returned days or weeks later generally faced much lower risks. Many survivors suffered from lacerations from shattered glass, or crush injuries from collapsing buildings. Infections were common because medical facilities had been destroyed.

Many survivors feared they would die suddenly from unknown illnesses, and their children would be born with birth defects. People close to the explosion developed Acute Radiation Syndrome (ARS) within hours or days. Those receiving very high doses died within weeks.



A poem written by a communist poet who lost his family after the bomb.

Long-term studies of survivors showed increased severe health risks, but most did not develop radiation-related cancers. Women exposed while pregnant had a higher risk of miscarriage, and babies with low birth weight. Developmental disabilities occurred if the exposure was during the critical stages of foetal brain development. This uncertainty created long-term anxiety.

Survivors experienced not only the trauma of the bombings, but also the grief, social stigma, and anxiety about the future. They experienced grief after losing family members, depression, and anxiety; symptoms now recognised as PTSD.

Some struggled with survivor guilt for decades. Many survivors were unable to identify or bury loved ones. The psychological effects of the atomic bombings were profound and lifelong. The scale of bereavement was unlike anything Japan had experienced before.

Many *hibakusha* faced discrimination because of misconceptions about radiation. Employers refused to hire them. Prospective spouses worried about hereditary effects. Some survivors developed physical symptoms from chronic stress.

Child survivors often lost their families, and witnessed horrific injuries and deaths. They grew up in poverty and unstable social conditions. These experiences affected their emotional development, education, and relationships throughout their lives. Many found recounting their experiences emotionally exhausting and refused to talk about them.

The experiences of the *hibakusha* have become an important source of knowledge about the psychological consequences of mass trauma, influencing disaster medicine, trauma psychology, and international discussions on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

Less than 100,000 *hibakusha* are alive today. Their average age is 86, but when they can, they campaign for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and try to keep the memory of the atomic attacks alive. It is shameful that the junior coalition partner in Japan's government is calling for loosening Japan's prohibition on nuclear weapons, citing Australia's AUKUS program as a reason.

Europe and the cost of climate inaction

Graham Holton

The 2026 European heatwave is on track to exceed Europe's previous heat events. While much has been said in the media about the human costs of the current heatwave, little attention has been made on the resultant economic losses' worth tens of billions of euros.

The heatwave has forced up food prices, increased imports, reduced farm incomes, and placed greater pressure on food security. With temperatures approaching 42°C, extreme heat has reduced workers' ability to work safely and efficiently, increasing labour costs. Productivity has fallen in construction, manufacturing, logistics, transport, and tourism. Increased electricity demand and reduced hydropower generation has forced up energy costs.

The worst-hit economic sector is agriculture. France Spain, Hungary, Italy, and Romania have lost more than 9 million tons of grain and crops worth almost AU$2 billion. Livestock has had reduced milk yields, lower fertility and low weight gains. Agriculture also faces transport costs as low water levels affect river transport, and railways have speed restrictions because the metal rails expanded in the extreme heat.

Major European rivers are experiencing exceptionally low water levels, impacting transport. Wildfire damage has cost billions of euros, with more than 12,500 in France alone, forcing tens of thousands of people to evacuate. Forest firefighting has cost hundreds of millions of euros. Tourism has been reduced causing a big hit on resorts and hotels. Railways have speed restrictions because the metal rails expanded in the extreme heat.

France is the hardest hit economically, with losses worth up to $2 billion. Farmers have reduced harvests for wheat, maize and sunflower, along with lower milk production, and higher irrigation and feed costs. The impact on the national health system includes increased emergency care, hospital admissions, ambulance services, long-term treatment, and lost productivity from illness and premature deaths. All have a major economic cost.

Germany's economy has taken a $36 billion pounding in reduced industrial output and losses from agriculture. The heatwave has increased electricity demand for cooling, and reduced the efficiency of thermal power stations, forcing increased electricity prices for businesses and households. Industrial output is way down. In agriculture 1.4 million tonnes of grain, worth €233 million, was lost. The Rhine is critical for Germany's heavy industry. Low water levels have restricted transport and freight supply chains.

Spain, already hot and dry, is severely affected. Economists and insurers estimate that the total economic cost to Spain is likely to be almost $20 billion, with the greatest impacts falling on agriculture, labour productivity, tourism, water resources and healthcare. Coastal resort operators face substantially higher operating costs. Spain has experienced one of the largest agricultural losses in Europe, contributing substantially to the continent-wide grain shortfall.

Temperatures regularly over 40°C reduce working hours and productivity, accounting for several billion euros lost. Water shortages have severely affected farming, manufacturing and tourism. The costs of emergency response and post-fire recovery amount to hundreds of millions of euros. Health impacts reduced economic output through lost working days and premature mortality.

The case of Spain highlights the significant economic challenges that increasingly frequent and intense heatwaves pose for other Mediterranean economies, such as Italy and Greece.

Eastern Europe has suffered major economic losses from the heat wave. The region's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, river transport and manufacturing, making it particularly vulnerable to prolonged heat and drought. Across Eastern Europe, the heatwave is expected to cause over $30 billion in economic losses.

Eastern Europe contributes significantly to Western Europe's grain shortfall. Romania, one of Europe's largest grain exporters, has had poor harvests with domestic and international economic effects. Reduced harvests of wheat, maize and sunflower have increased food prices across the region.

If these heatwaves continue as expected, cumulative losses could reach more than $1,000 billion across Europe's largest economies by 2030. Insurers and economists now regard extreme heat as a structural economic risk rather than an occasional disaster.

It's way past time for European nations to take climate change seriously.

Public health crisis in Gaza

An escalating wave of infectious diseases is sweeping through displacement camps across the Gaza Strip, with thousands of Palestinian children contracting chickenpox amid severe overcrowding, collapsing sanitation services, and limited access to medical care.

Nearly 9,300 chickenpox infections were documented during the past two weeks, according to the United Nations, with more than half of the cases recorded in Khan Younis, Reuters reported.

The city has become one of the principal destinations for forcibly displaced Palestinians, leaving families packed into shelters and makeshift encampments that lack adequate water, sanitation, and waste-disposal systems.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned that untreated sewage, accumulating rubbish, shortages of clean water, and densely populated living spaces were creating ideal conditions for disease transmission.

These conditions have transformed what is usually a manageable childhood illness into an increasingly serious public health threat, particularly for displaced children already weakened by hunger, trauma, and limited access to treatment.

Acute respiratory infections and skin conditions remain the most frequently documented illnesses across the Strip, the UN said.

Health authorities have also reported the continued spread of waterborne illnesses, particularly in and around Khan Younis, where damaged sewage networks and scarce clean water have exposed families to further health risks.

More than 18,000 new cases of chickenpox, external parasite infestations, and impetigo, a contagious bacterial skin infection, were recorded.

Gaza's medical sector has been left largely incapable of responding to the expanding health emergency following years of systematic Israeli attacks on hospitals, clinics, ambulances, and other vital infrastructure.

Medical facilities that remain partially operational continue to face critical shortages of medicines, equipment, electricity, fuel, and trained personnel, severely limiting their ability to diagnose, isolate, and treat infectious diseases.

The health crisis comes as Israel continues to violate the ceasefire agreement that entered into effect on 10 October 2025.

Israeli attacks carried out since the agreement began have killed at least 1,127 Palestinians and wounded 3,643 others, according to figures released by Gaza's Health Ministry.

Since the Israeli genocide began on 7 October 2023, at least 73,250 Palestinians have been killed and 173,751 wounded.

The Ministry estimates that approximately 90% of Gaza's civilian infrastructure has been damaged or completely destroyed.

Al Mayadeen

Global Briefs

BULGARIA: The Bulgarian parliament has backed a proposal to allow the United States military to use an air base in Bulgaria to support its operations in the Middle East. The deputies voted to allow up to eight US KC-135 refuelling aircraft along with 250 personnel and supporting equipment at Bezmer Air Base from 24 July to 1 October.

VIETNAM: Vietnamese workers can expect a pay rise. The minimum wage will be lifted by 7.8% in 2027, after consultation with Vietnamese unions and representations from the business community. The actual wage rise will vary across Vietnam's regions and will be the basis for negotiations. Ngo Duy Hieu, deputy chairman of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour, said the wage rise would "both take good care of the lives of workers and promote production development to achieve double-digit growth targets."

YEMEN: Yemeni rebel movement Ansar Allah, known as the Houthis, conducted strikes on two tankers in response to the violation of the maritime blockade against Saudi Arabia. The Houthis say they succeeded in forcing about 10 vessels to turn back. The Saudi agency SPA confirmed the strike. The Houthis announced a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia on 20 July 2026, accusing the kingdom of years of plundering Yemen's oil resources. On 21 July, the Saudi Arabia-led Arab coalition said it started to protect commercial vessels in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

IRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister condemned the new British government's decision to allow the United States to use its military bases and facilities to prepare for and facilitate unlawful military attacks against the Iranian people. The foreign Minister said the decision contradicts the fundamental principles and rules of the UN Charter and international law. Iran's statement said that "any participation or cooperation in preparing for and carrying out these unlawful attacks constitutes complicity in the commission of the crime of aggression and war crimes."

IRAQ: Iraq and Iran have signed cooperation and twinning agreements covering public administration, education, the economy, transportation and border crossings. The Iranian side stressed that the security of Iran and Iraq are interconnected and both countries are determined to turn their agreements into practical achievements. The Iraqi president said his country would not allow any part of Iraqi territory to become a platform for threatening Iran.

PALESTINE: Two mosques, agricultural land and cars have been set on fire by illegal Israeli settlers. Crowds of settlers attacked Palestinians in the town of Sarra, in clear view of an illegal settler outpost called Havat Gilad. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he will accelerate the establishment and legalisation of farm outposts in retaliation for an attack in which four Palestinians and two Israelis died.

CHINA: China has added 14 European entities to an export control list in retaliation for the European Union penalising 14 Chinese enterprises as part of its latest round of sanctions against Russia. Chinese companies will not be allowed to export dual-use items, which can be used for both civilian and military purposes, to the 14 European organisations, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

INDIA: India's education minister resigned after nationwide youth protests over an examination leak scandal. The resignation represents a significant victory for the newly established Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a youth-led political movement that has rapidly emerged as one of the most serious grassroots challenges faced by the government. The initial dispute over examinations turned into a broader confrontation over government accountability and the treatment of the country's youth.

Cuban emigrants return

Graham Holton

The US sanctions and the oil blockade on Cuba have forced many to immigrate, but on arriving in a new country they find it is not what they expected. While the majority of recent Cuban migrants have gone to the United States, others have gone to Brazil, Spain, and Latin American countries.

Since 2024, an increasing number of Cubans have flown to the English-speaking Caribbean country of Guyana as a transit point to Brazil and Uruguay, or for local employment. Guyana allows Cuban citizens to enter without a visa, making it one of the easiest countries in the Americas for Cubans to reach legally.

Following the discovery of large offshore oil deposits, Guyana is enjoying an economic boom, generating opportunities with high-paid jobs. But these require English proficiency and specialised technical skills. Unlike in Cuba, education and health are not free in Guyana, nor is housing subsidised.

Opening bank accounts is hard for anyone lacking permanent residency, local employment records, and a credit history. Accessing schools is difficult because of English-language education, differences in curriculum, and limited support for Spanish-speaking students. Cubans earning low wages find it difficult to send remittances to their families in Cuba.

Cubans who leave do so because their homeland is in a deep economic crisis due to the murderous US blockade. The Cuba Guyana Community of 6,000 has reported that many Cubans find it difficult to navigate immigration and employment regulations, access healthcare and education, and the high cost of living and housing shortages in Georgetown, Guyana's capital.

Some struggle to have their professional qualifications in engineering or medicine recognised. It is difficult to obtain work permits, or avoiding exploitation by dishonest recruiters. When they can, they work in construction, hospitality, retail, transport, domestic work, or small businesses. Many feel it was a mistake to have left Cuba, and want to return due to Guyana's political and economic conditions.

Sydney vigil for Cuba.

'No proof' of Trump claims on Cuba

Four US Democrat lawmakers have travelled to Cuba to see for themselves the impact of the Trump administration's economic war on the island.

They returned with firsthand evidence of its devastating consequences, but none to support the claims used by Donald Trump and Marco Rubio to justify an oil blockade and maximum pressure sanctions.

To justify economic war on Cuba, the Trump administration is leaning on a seemingly endless list of flimsy allegations to argue that Cuba poses a threat to US national security.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández a Democrat from New Mexico, who traveled to Cuba with three other Democratic members of Congress, said none of the administration's accusations against Cuba have been backed up.

"For all of that long list of claims, we have seen no proof," Leger Fernández told *Belly of the Beast* journalist Liz Oliva Fernández. "That's one of the things that the American people, the American media, the American Congress needs to demand."

Leger Fernández was on the verge of tears as she recounted visiting a Cuban hospital and hearing about the rise in infant mortality due to sanctions and the US oil blockade.

"Why would we do that? Why would Americans support that?" she asked.

Rep. Delia Ramirez from Illinois recalled a young Cuban engineer's message for Donald Trump: "Can you tell your president he has his foot on my neck? Either he ends my life or he pulls the foot off my neck."

Nine million people, Ramirez continued, "feel that they're being choked" by US economic warfare.

The US embassy in Havana declined the congressional delegation's request for a meeting – a response that Rep. Mark Pocan of Wisonson says is not normal. Pocan visited Cuba four years ago on a congressional visit, when he held extensive meetings with US embassy officials.

"I don't think they really want people to know what's going on because they're putting a false narrative out there," he said.

Asked whether Cuba poses a threat to the United States, the lawmakers' response was categorical.

"In none of the three days that we have been here have I seen that the Cuban people are a threat to the American people," Ramirez said. "What I've seen is this real desire of being in solidarity with one another."

Belly of the Beast

Japan anti-Takaichi protests

Braving the scorching heat, 25,000 people assembled near the Diet building, the Japanese parliament, in protest against the Takaichi government forcibly enacting unjust laws. The protests were live-streamed, and attracted 35,000 viewers. On this day, similar protests took place at more than 270 locations across the country.

At the rally in front of the Diet building, Japanese Communist Party Policy Commission Chair Yamazoe Taku and Social Democratic Party head Fukushima Mizuho delivered speeches in solidarity. The rally received a message of solidarity from parliamentary group "Okinawa Whirlwind" member of the House of Councillors Iha Yoichi.

The ruling coalition had sought to use its majority to cut the number of seats in the House of Representatives, thus making the Diet less representative of the population. Yamazoe pointed out protest had led to the Bill being blocked, saying "this is because many citizens raised their voices and made their concerns visible."

Speaking on behalf of the organisers of the protest, feminist and anti-war activist Nahoko Hishiyama mentioned the forcible passage of the law punishing acts of desecrating Japan's national flag and the adverse revision of the Imperial House Law. She said, "Regarding the flag desecration law, the most terrifying thing is not knowing what specifically could be considered a punishable offense. The revised Imperial House Law, with its insistence on male-only succession, demonstrates just how far behind Japan is in terms of the global trend toward working for gender equality."

Hishiyama also brought up the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its far-right allies' attempt to slash the number of House of Representatives' proportional representative seats. She said, "Cutting the number of proportional representation seats is tantamount to arguing that female lawmakers and opposition parties are unnecessary as well as to declaring the intent to destroy democracy. Let us do our utmost to prevent a bill to that effect from being introduced in the next extraordinary session of the Diet."

Hishiyama emphasised the need to work hard to prevent the ruling forces from using and manipulating the Diet for their own partisan interests and goals.

Japan Press Weekly

Sydney Vigil
STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA
4:15pm till 5:00pm
Monday 17 August
USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney
Call 0418 270 885

Check out the official Instagram account of the Communist Party of Australia
communist.party.australia
www.instagram.com/communist.party.australia/

US State Department gets Cuba wrong

Graham Holton

The US State Department's *Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism*, falsely presents Cuba as the principal ideological and organisational centre of communist and anti-American activity, extending Cuba's influence far beyond its actual size or economy.

The report's findings have been strongly challenged by scholars of Cuba, Latin America, intelligence studies, as well as civil liberties advocates. Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has characterised US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's campaign as a new form of McCarthyism.

The report interprets current politics through a Cold War lens. All Cuban activity is framed as the product of an expansionist communist ideology, instead of responses to local issues. For example, Cuba's support for socialist or anti-imperialist policies in Latin America is because of economic inequality, dissatisfaction with previous governments, and local political traditions.

The report's findings are not supported by clearly established facts, intelligence assessments, or careful analytical judgements. Nor does it compare evidence against competing interpretations. Cuba is depicted as the central organiser of a global communist movement, with independent left-wing organisations operating as extensions of Cuban foreign policy. In truth, social and labour movements are driven by local political and economic conditions.

While Cuba does play an important symbolic role for some left-wing movements, it is severely limited by its small population of under 11 million and battered economy. Cuba has no significant overseas military presence.

The report accuses Cuba of influencing the protests following George Floyd's death, and pro-Palestinian activism on college campuses. It names organisations such as the Democratic Socialists of America, the National Network on Cuba, the Communist Party USA, CODEPINK, Black Alliance for Peace, and the Party for Socialism and Liberation, as under Cuba's direct influence. It singles out Amazon Labor Union founder Chris Smalls, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, and journalist Amy Goodman of PBS, as under its influence. This list shows who will be targeted by the Trump administration.

Trade unions, peace organisations, academic groups, and solidarity campaign are as sympathetic to Havana. Really, they're against unjust US sanctions. Shared political goals do not establish organisational command. Cuba actively promotes its political model through diplomacy, education, and international exchanges.

This attack on Cuba contrasts strongly with how Marco Rubio is treating pro-Israel political power and lobbying. Haley Fuller of *Mititary.com* writes that the report: "resists applying similar scrutiny to enormous political expenditures, legislative campaigns and direct pressure associated with US policy toward Israel."

Australia Cuba Friendship Society Melbourne

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Guardian

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Published by
Guardian Publications Australia Ltd
299 Enmore Road
Marrickville 2204

Printed by
Independent Newspaper Solutions Pty Ltd
Level 5, 219 - 223 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Responsibility for electoral comment is taken by **T Pearson**
299 Enmore Road Marrickville 2204

Difficult

ALP MP Basem Abdo has said about Palestine that it's "been an incredibly difficult few years on what is an already difficult issue." This is weaselly, but also clueless. We're sure the people of Gaza share the ALP's pain.

Petulance

Some gutless wonder who's a "senior Labor official" thinks Ed Husic is petulant because he's not falling into line about Palestine. It's only a genocide Ed, please be grown-up about it!

On track

Richard Marles on AUKUS ... the government has now spent $8.5 billion on the Osborne construction yard in Adelaide.

Stakeholders

The administrators for Pilot Energy, now responsible for an oil rig off Dongara in West Australia's Midwest have said that they "WORK constructively with all stakeholders".

Guidelines

Anyone remember the scene in the original *Ghostbusters*? Bill Murray tells a sexy demon that they have rules against romantic involvement with the demonically possessed. She gives him a huge kiss and he says "Well it's more of a guideline." it's funny because guildelines are so vague.

Adelaide Airport has been banning ads from green groups while letting ads from fossil fuel organisations go on. The ad company says the green ads are too "political," the airport says they have guidelines.

Claims

Nine's Paul Sakkal and Matthew Knott, describing attempts to get the ALP to be more pro-Palestinian have talked about "claims" of genocide and apartheid. This makes it sound like someone just dreamt up those claims, where in fact UN authorities and genocide scholars have agreed that genocide and apartheid is exactly what Israel is doing.

"Claims" was not what Knott said when he helped write nine unhinged pages of 'Red Alert,' according to which Australia should be at war with China right now.

Rooted

No, not the Australian term whose uses can range from describing extreme tiredness (after that marathon, I'm rooted), dysfunction (the printer is rooted, we need to buy a new one), to sex (use your imagination), but the original, meaning 'based in' or 'derived from'.

Donald Trump has taken time off from announcing that he's won a war he hasn't in fact won to claim that the Smithsonian Museum of "extreme political activism, rooted in Marxism, to divide, dispirit, and discourage" the people of the US (who are pretty rooted after having Trump as president).

Purpose

'We choose purpose over chaos.'

Albanese waxing lyrical at the ALP conference in Adelaide. They also choose progress over protest, unity over division, and outcomes over outrage

Purpose sounds better than chaos, but what makes this weaselly is that Albanese didn't explain what purpose. There are loads of purposes and not all of them are better than chaos. The Ku Klux Klan has a purpose.

Contracting out (not)

The Albanese government commissioned a report by the Islamophobia envoy. They're not going to implement all the results, particularly anti-terrorism laws focussed on Muslims (check this). Albo doesn't want to have a public argument with the envoy, and doesn't want to piss off a lot of Muslims. What to do?

'We're not contracting out government' he said, trying to sound firm and decisive. He then undermined it by saying that the govt would be guided by security agencies, so contracting out to them is ok

Disproportionate

Liberal leader Angus Taylor has described the mainly female workforce of the care industry as "disproportionately unionised."

'Disproportionate' is often weaselly because it begs the question of why something is disproportionate. Taylor didn't say what the right proportion of union membership should be.

Anyway, we quite agree – if the level of union membership in the care sector is less than 100% it's disproportionate.

Israel keeps military control

Israel's security cabinet has given preliminary approval to a proposal that would allow an international force and a body known as the "Board of Peace" to begin operating in parts of the Gaza Strip, according to Israeli media reports.

The plan, however, would leave Israel firmly in control of its implementation and military presence.

The proposal reportedly envisions a pilot phase in Rafah, where areas outside Hamas' control would be administered by a Palestinian technocratic committee supported by a multinational stabilisation force.

According to Israeli officials cited by local media, the experiment could later be expanded to other parts of Gaza if the initial phase is deemed successful.

the force would have legal immunity

CONDITIONS

The cabinet's approval remains conditional.

Israeli officials said the military would continue controlling what it refers to as the "yellow line" and would not withdraw unless Hamas is completely disarmed throughout the Gaza Strip.

The proposed international force would also require separate authorisation from the Israeli prime minister, defence minister, and foreign minister before deployment.

Israeli authorities would retain the power to determine which countries could contribute troops. Reports indicate that only states maintaining normalisation agreements with Israel would be eligible.

The initial deployment would reportedly consist of approximately 200 personnel.

The multinational force would also receive legal immunity under Israel's Law on Immunities of International Organisations.

PILOT

Under the reported proposal, Rafah would become the first area administered by a Palestinian technocratic committee established under plans promoted by US President Donald Trump.

The committee would receive support from what has been described as an International Stabilisation Force, though Israeli media reports have not detailed the scope of its authority or the practical relationship between the civilian administration and Israeli military forces.

Nor have the reports clarified the future status of Palestinians living in the areas selected for the pilot project.

TRUMP

The cabinet's discussion comes as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prepares for an anticipated meeting with Trump in Washington.

According to Israel Hayom, Netanyahu is seeking to advance discussions on Gaza's postwar future before the talks.

The newspaper reported that ministers were asked to review the proposal submitted by the Board of Peace, although the full text and operational details have not been made public.

Israeli broadcaster i24NEWS reported that Peace Council Director-General Nikolay Mladenov and Trump's special envoy Ari Lightstone met Netanyahu and senior Israeli officials last week.

According to the report, they briefed Israeli officials on discussions held in Cairo and outlined the next stages of the initiative.

A Board of Peace official described the meetings as "useful and productive," though no additional details were released regarding the negotiations or the participants involved.

QUESTIONS

While Israeli media have presented the proposal as a potential framework for postwar governance, significant questions remain unanswered.

The precise powers of the proposed Palestinian administration have not been disclosed, nor has Israel clarified how authority would be divided between the technocratic committee, the multinational force, and the Israeli military.

The discussions also come as Israel continues its genocide in Gaza despite the ceasefire, including repeated strikes targeting members of Gaza's police and internal security services, raising further uncertainty over how any future governance arrangement could function on the ground.

Palestine Chronicle

Thousands prevented from returning home in Lebanon

As months of conflict continue to devastate communities across Lebanon, families are being left without shelter, healthcare and other essential services.

Independent human rights experts, appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, warned that civilians are paying a "devastating and disproportionate toll," with homes destroyed, entire towns cut off and many communities in southern Lebanon still inaccessible.

As a result, thousands of displaced people remain unable to return home.

More than 4,300 people have reportedly been killed since 2 March, including 392 women and 253 children, while more than 12,000 have been injured.

"Evacuation is an exceptional and strictly temporary measure. It may only be used to protect the safety of civilians or for imperative military reasons, not to depopulate and occupy areas," the experts said, stressing that displacement should only ever be used as a temporary measure to protect civilians.

They added that civilians "have the right to return voluntarily and safely to their homes once the circumstances justifying their displacement have ceased."

HEIGHTENED RISK

The humanitarian consequences have been especially severe for women and children. Since fighting escalated in March, an estimated 620,000 women and girls have been displaced, including around 16,000 pregnant women.

Many are reportedly giving birth in overcrowded shelters after hospitals and maternity services were damaged or forced to close, leaving mothers and newborns without essential care.

"Forced displacement has exposed women and girls to heightened risks of violence and abuse, while the destruction of healthcare services has deprived many of essential reproductive and maternal healthcare," the experts said.

CIVILIAN PROTECTION

The experts also voiced concern over reports of white phosphorus being used in residential areas, warning that the substance can cause severe burns, respiratory injuries and lasting health effects, particularly for children and pregnant women.

"The protection of civilians, including women and girls, in times of war is not optional for any warring party," they said. "It is a legal obligation that must be urgently upheld."

The experts called on all parties to uphold international humanitarian law, protect civilians and enable people displaced by the fighting to return home safely when conditions allow.

United Nations

Gaza: Israeli massacres continue

Three Palestinians have been killed and three fishermen injured in fresh Israeli attacks on Gaza as the enclave's death toll continued to rise.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, hospitals across the enclave received three bodies during the last 24 hours, including two Palestinians killed in fresh Israeli attacks and another who succumbed to wounds sustained in an earlier strike.

The ministry also reported that 12 injured Palestinians were transferred to hospitals, bringing the total number of people wounded since October 2023 to 174,009.

The overall Palestinian death toll from Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza has now reached 73,329.

CEASEFIRE VIOLATED

Although a ceasefire agreement came into force on October 10, 2025, Israeli military operations have continued across the Gaza Strip.

According to the Health Ministry, at least 1,203 Palestinians have been killed and another 3,900 injured since the ceasefire began.

The agreement followed two years of Israel's mass extermination campaign that devastated much of the enclave. UN assessments estimate that around 90 percent of Gaza's civilian infrastructure has been destroyed, with reconstruction costs expected to exceed AU$100 billion .

In a separate incident three Palestinian fishermen were injured when an Israeli drone struck near their boat as they returned to Gaza City's fishing port.

According to Palestinian news agancy WAFA, the fishermen had completed their work at sea and were approaching the harbour when the drone targeted them with explosive munitions.

All three sustained injuries of varying severity and were transferred for medical treatment.

The attack is the latest in a series of assaults targeting Palestinian fishermen operating along Gaza's coast.

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