

US-NATO's "Global War on Terrorism": Australian Troops to the Middle East to Fight ISIS

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Region: [Oceania](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

"Five hundred Australian soldiers on the ground is boots on the ground. They will be on the frontline... Their lives will be at risk and you've got to ask why." Andrew Wilkie, MP from Tasmania, Mar 2, 2015

Last Tuesday, Tony Abbott, Australia's war crazed, and somewhat enfeebled prime minister decided that a further three hundred troops were needed for operations in Iraq. The decision has historical form, demonstrating again how Australia's standing status as a vassal of greater powers has conditioned its politicians to disgorge men, women and material, when seemingly required. In Australia, the syndrome has been termed that of "great and powerful friends", a childlike Freudian craving for the security of the grand bosom and warm embrace.

Such conduct indicates against how a prostrate country before the altar of power relationships finds it hard getting up – the habit is simply too hard to break. The confirmation last year of a 25 year agreement to rotate US marines and air force personnel through the northern city of Darwin in the Northern Territory; and the tagging of Australia to the American ballistic missile defence systems in north Asia, suggested that the wind was only blowing one way – away from Australia, and favourably towards the power centre of the United States.

The communique issued after the annual Ausmin talks in Sydney spoke of how Australia and the United States had "committed to continue to work together to counter the growing threat of ballistic missiles in the Asia Pacific region – including by establishing a bilateral working group to examine options for potential Australian contributions to ballistic missile defence in the region".[1] Fictional threats beget actual consequences.

Togetherness, in such relationships, is always forced, a form of tarting up on the part of Australia for the military taking on the part of the United States. Another reading of same words in the communique should be clear: Australia will make avail itself of its resources and its personnel for Washington's grand power game, however specious, however misguided.

The terminology in such ties is deemed important. When the Prime Minister and cabinet need to convince the Australian public that troops are required in theatres they can barely locate on a map, the public relations strategists get busy. Don't upset the voters with the most accurate details. Deem any troop mission to be one of "trainers" and "assistants" – in the of Iraq, the "building partner capacity training mission". Use the terms "phase" to segment time and periods of deployment – this gives the impression that such missions have definite ends to meet, with an immaculate timetable to police.

Then comes the humanitarian mash to add to the sauce. In Abbott's paternalistic words, "This is a training mission, not a combat mission. Nevertheless, it is a mission which is necessary, because obviously in the face of the initial death cult onslaught, the Iraqi regular army melted like snow in summer. That's been a disaster for the people in Iraq, millions of whom now live in a new dark age." [2]

In addition to murdering the English language with managerial lingo, the fundamental inconsistency between sending more troops on the one hand, and emphasising the damage done to the enemy, must be avoided. Air Chief Marshal Binskin, for instance, emphasises that the fighters of the Islamic State have been impaired by coalition air strikes. Losses lie somewhere in the range of 2000 fighters, notably around Kobane in Syria.

This begs the question as to why any extra deployment would be necessary. Australia already has 200 special forces operating in Iraq. There are also six Super Hornets, a K-30 airborne refuelling aircraft and a Wedgetail airborne control aircraft in use.

The mania for such futile deployments is such that local funding opportunities – the sort that actually obtain results – are neglected. Even as Australia persists in draining its resources in interminable, open-ended conflicts that draw in resources, its government is undertaking a local sacking of the science brains trust, with 27 science research facilities at risk from June 30 because of the withdrawal of \$150 million in funding. [3]

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme (NCRIS) is set for the chop. "Ultimately," lamented astronomer and Nobel laureate Brian Schmidt, "this is not the way a grown up country behaves. It's very childish and it's having a profound impact on something that is going to increase the productivity of a nation." [4]

Australia's local loss there will be the gain of other countries. The difference there is that such people, instead of running around with arms bolstering dubious regimes against dubious foes, will be working in labs on funded projects.

The New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, has also joined his colleague across the Tasman in a similar exercise of muscular brawn over brain, attempting to explain to the country's parliament that the 143 soldiers he has decided to send form part of a 400-strong joint "Australia-NZ training team". What exactly such training such a mission entails should be obvious. Such soldiers are hardly there to be idle footnotes in the military plan. They will be shot at. In the end, they will achieve nothing, other than more harm than has already been inflicted.

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Notes

[1] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/12/australia-embraces-missile-naval-ties-us-defence-pact>

[2] <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2015/s4190467.htm>

[3] http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/mar/04/research-facilities-prepare-shutdown-government-refuses-secure-funding?CMP=share_btn_tw

[4] http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/mar/04/research-facilities-prepare-shutdown-government-refuses-secure-funding?CMP=share_btn_tw

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