

Empire's Man Prepares For War with China

The Oxford-trained former Deputy Secretary of Defence Hugh White has likely done more than anyone else in Australia to promote policies leading to a thermonuclear war with China, while posing as a full-time campaigner to avoid it. White argues that the U.S.A. must neither withdraw from the Asia-Pacific region, nor seek to dominate it as in the past, but should take a third way: accommodate the “rise of China” a part of a “concert of powers” in the Pacific. White compares his “concert” with the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the post-Napoleonic diplomatic disaster that set Europe on a century-long course of manipulated conflicts within a “balance of power,” which White considers a success.

White also holds, however, that his “concert” is unlikely to come about. Thus, the massive defense buildup that he describes as intended to establish Australia as a “middle power” within the concert, is far more comprehensible as a component of Anglo-American preparations for a full-scale nuclear showdown with China.

White advocates acquisition not merely of the now planned 12 attack submarines for the Royal Australian Navy, to replace its six aging Collins-class subs, but double that number; and double the planned 100 Joint Strike Fighters. In his words, the objective is to develop “air and naval forces that can effectively deny our air and maritime approaches to substantial hostile forces out to several thousand miles from our shores, and project significant force beyond that.”¹

And who might the target be? Hugh White was the lead author of Australia's Defence 2000 White Paper, which asserted that Australian “air and naval forces had

to be able to operate effectively in coalition operations against the region's major powers like China.”

White's insistence that China “stop its complaints” against the U.S. global ballistic missile defense program, in return for the unlikely U.S. “accommodation” of China in the region, gives the lie to his peacemaker image. The BMD plan is part of global showdown preparations: It rings Russia and China with anti-missile radars and batteries for the purpose of enabling a thermonuclear first strike by developing the capability to knock out a retaliatory response.²



Hugh White

Anglo-American Imperium: The Cheney Doctrine

On March 21, 1983, U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) for anti-missile defense. As conceived by its author, U.S. economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche, the SDI was to be a joint U.S.-Soviet program not only to eliminate the escalating danger of thermonuclear war, but also to unleash a scientific renaissance as the cornerstone of a global economic recovery—the basis for truly durable peace. The Soviets rejected the SDI, launched a forced-draft military buildup, and the U.S.S.R. collapsed eight years later.

With the apparent disappearance of Russia as a superpower, British-owned elements in the U.S.A. revived the notion of ballistic missile defense, but this time as a means of securing permanent Anglo-American world domination. In 1992, then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney developed a Draft Planning Guidance for coming decades. It stated: “Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor.” Use of military force, including nuclear weapons, was included. An outraged then-Senator, now Vice President Joe Biden, commented that it was “a plan for ‘literally a Pax Americana,’ an American empire.”

The Pentagon's Office of Net Assessments (ONA), which drove the campaign for the Cheney doctrine, had argued since 1977 that China would soon emerge as the chief threat to the United States. The ONA maintained intimate relations with Australia's own ONA, the Office

1. “Australian defence policy and the possibility of war,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 2, 2002, p. 262.

2. “Why War in Asia Remains Thinkable,” speech at IISS-JIIA Conference, Tokyo, 3-4 June 2008.

of National Assessment, the nation's premier intelligence body.

Hugh White has been involved in designing Australia's "defence" doctrine in accord with the Cheney Doctrine since 1992, when he entered the Australian ONA as head of its Office of Strategic Analysis. His whole career gives the lie to the notion that showdown with China is an American scheme that White is resisting with his "concert"; he has been pushing an adversarial relationship with China for two decades.

White has described his 1992-93 stint at the ONA and work in the Defence Department's International Policy Division in 1993-95, as a search for Australia's position in the post-Soviet world. With the U.S.S.R. gone, the remaining obstacle to Anglo-American plans for world domination was China. Most Australians would not sign on to preparations to fight China as a national priority, so White has promoted a massive military build-up as vital for Australia's own defense, up to and including the possibility that Australia "might contemplate fighting China alone ... [a] question [that] has exercised me since the mid-1990s when we began to wonder about the consequences for Australia if China just kept on growing."³

Australia's 'Defence' Doctrine: Made in Britain

In a 2008 paper, "Strategic Interests in Australian Defence Policy: Some Historical and Methodological Reflections," White described basing Australia's so-called "defence doctrine" explicitly upon that of the British Empire: "During the early 1990s some of us working in Defence began exploring this problem of defining Australia's wider strategic interests in the post-Cold War world. Our attention was caught by Lord Palmerston's famous line about 'Britain having no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, only permanent interests.' We started to look at how Britain defined these permanent interests, and what we might learn from them. For centuries British policy was guided by a view of its strategic interests which had hardly changed from the time of Elizabeth I until after World War II, articulated and implemented by men like Burleigh, Marlborough, Walpole, Pitt, Wellington, Palmerston and Churchill."

British imperial concepts should be applied to Australia, White argued, because Britain, like Australia,

was an island nation. It had organized "concentric circles of defence," ultimately to embrace the whole world: first, guard the English Channel; next, control European ports from which invasion fleets might sail; and, finally, "align with weaker powers to preserve a balance of power among Europe's major states and ensure that none became dominant. These precepts have determined British strategic policy for centuries."

Asked White, "How might we apply the principles of Pitt and Palmerston to Australia in the 21st century?" His answer was an Australian version of the British imperial concentric circles theory: first, "defend the Australian continent"; then, deal with the "near neighbours"; and, finally, tackle the Asia-Pacific version of the "dominant power on the European continent"—China.

White boasted that British imperial doctrine had been transformed into Australia's national strategy: "The ideas that we adapted from Pitt and Palmerston underlay the development of the short account of Australia's wider strategic interests provided in the 1997 *Strategic Policy Review*, and the revised, extended and more detailed description given in Chapter Four of the 2000 White Paper."

The idea was to justify a massive Australian defense build-up for an Anglo-American showdown with China. In a recent essay, White wrote: "Howard's *Defence White Paper*, released in 2000, clearly acknowledged that China's rise constituted a major change in Australia's circumstances, and that Australia needed to take a wider view of its national interests and expand its military capabilities. The possibility of war with China now influenced major force-planning decisions for the first time since the Vietnam War."⁴

Unhappy with a less than complete adoption of his perspective, White, in 2000 resigned his Defence post, but secured Defence Department funding to found a new think tank, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. (Today, he is Professor of Strategic Studies at the ANU college of Asia and the Pacific.) Its purpose was to continue his crusade for "projecting power" many thousands of miles beyond Australia's shores.

A Giant U.S. Base

The announcement of the permanent deployment of a contingent of 2,500 (initially) U.S. Marines to Darwin occasioned much debate over whether a "U.S. base"

3. "Could Australia Fight China Alone?," *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute online publication, Sept. 27, 2011.

4. "Power Shift. Australia's Future Between Washington and Beijing," *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 39, 2010.

were being established in Australia. In reality, the U.S. presence in the country has already expanded so dramatically over the past two decades, that Australia is practically one giant, ever-expanding U.S. military base, targeted at China in particular. This process began in the mid-1990s, under Hugh White's supervision. As Deputy Secretary of Defence for Strategy in 1995-2000, he oversaw the negotiations and deals struck with the U.S.A. and the U.K. toward this end.

The New Citizen of June-July 2012 showed that the British called the shots in this process, though the U.S.A. was the more visible partner. "The Australian relationship with the UK is even more intimate than it is with the U.S.," observed Greg Sheridan in *The Australian* of Dec. 27, 2007. And the 1997 Defence Efficiency Review, which strengthened White's position in the Defence Department, was headed by a top British Defence Department official, Dr. Malcolm McIntosh.

As closer ties with the U.S.A. and U.K. unfolded in exercises like Tandem Thrust, the 1997 first-ever U.S. Marine training exercise in Australia, expert Desmond Ball testified in 1997 Parliamentary hearings that not only had *Australia* requested the exercise, but that, "As recently as May 1997, Australia was sharply criticised in China's leading English language daily newspaper for being used with Japan as a US pincer to pin down China. . . . There is a lot of rhetoric in this Chinese position but . . . it does contain a germ of truth. . . . The exercise did not easily fit credible contingencies in the defence of Australia."

Who Is Hugh White?

White was born into an old British oligarchical family, from which a son had migrated to become a grazier in southern Queensland. Since at least his time in the Philosophy Department at Melbourne University, White was groomed by the Cambridge and Oxford Universities-centered priesthood that has managed the British Empire for centuries. That priesthood propagates an imperial view of people and the world, in the tradition reaching back to Babylon. Its precepts were bluntly expressed by Thomas Hobbes: that human life for the great majority of mankind outside the ruling oligarchy is "nasty, brutish and short," and society is but the "war of each against all."

Oxford traditionally produces "managers" for the Empire, with the Oxford PPE degree—Political, Philosophy, and Political Economy. Despite endless squabbles amongst these men and their epigones—such as

those who trained White at Melbourne University, and then Oxford, where White, in 1978, won the coveted John Locke Award in Mental Philosophy—are all fanatical "reductionists," who reject the existence of "universals," whether universal laws of the physical universe (as opposed to "statistical correlations"), or principles of human society such as truth, justice, and the reality of a Common Good within nations and among them. Instead, they argue, only isolated particulars have reality: those of the mind such as the "atoms" of formal logic, and isolated "facts" in the "outside world," knowable only by sense certainty.

These people especially hate Christianity, as not only "wrong," but disruptive to rule by an empire. Typical was the outlook of White's early mentor, Melbourne philosophy department head and Trinity College graduate Douglas Gaskings. An Australian who spoke with a British accent, Gaskings denied the reality of the human mind in favor of the physical brain alone, holding that ideas or beliefs were merely "brain states." Gaskings boasted that he "had rejected Christianity since he was three." White's own "set of habits of mind" were developed under such philosophical tutelage, as he told an audience in February 2011.

This philosophy gave rise to the "British school of international relations," centered at Oxford and the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), an institution that, since the 1950s, has focused on managing the balance of thermonuclear terror. White calls himself a disciple of one of its leading figures, Hedley Bull, saying that his own "balance of power" proposal for Australia and for Asia "was foreshadowed by Hedley Bull in 1972."⁵ The Australian-born Bull was number two at the IISS for decades, and headed British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's Arms Control office. His Hobbesian world view is captured in his magnum opus on "international relations," *The Anarchical Society*, a work White lauds, even as he admits that Bull "once wrote that balance of power systems are not designed to prevent war, but to prevent hegemony, which they do at the cost of occasional, big wars." Such a "big war" today would, as White well knows, be thermonuclear.

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5. "Strategic Interests in Australian Defence Policy: Some Historical and Methodological Reflections," *Security Challenges*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter 2008.