

The Day Australian Sovereignty Died

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If a date might be found when Australian sovereignty was extinguished by the emissaries of the US imperium, July 29, 2023 will be as good as any. Not that they aren't other candidates, foremost among them being the announcement of the AUKUS agreement between Australia, UK and the US in September 2021. They all point to a surrender, a handing over, of a territory to another's military and intelligence community, an abject, oily capitulation that would normally qualify as treasonous.

The treason becomes all the more indigestible for its inevitable result: Australian territory is being shaped, readied, and purposed for war under the auspices of closer defence ties with an old ally. The security rentiers, the servitors, the paid-up pundits all see this as a splendid thing. War, or at least its preparations, can offer wonderful returns.

The US Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin III, was particularly delighted, though watchful of his hosts. His remit was clear: detect any wobbliness, call out any indecision. But there was nothing to be worried about. His Australian hosts, for instance, proved accommodating and crawling.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles, for instance, standing alongside Austin, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Australian Foreign Minister, Penny Wong, [declared](#) that there was "a commitment to increase American force posture in respect of our northern bases, in respect to our maritime patrols and our reconnaissance aircraft; further force posture initiatives involving US Army watercraft; and in respect of logistics and stores, which have been very central to Exercise Talisman Sabre." To the untutored eye, Marles might have simply been another Pentagon spokesman of middle-rank.

The acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines was a process that was well underway (Marles seemed untroubled by grumbling voices in the Republican Party that the US Navy was short-changing itself by transferring three *Virginia*-class boats to the Royal Australian Navy) and taking place "in terms of an increased force posture of America within Australia."

Speaking with confidence, Marles was also looking forward to “an increased tempo of visits from American nuclear-powered submarines to our waters as we look towards the establishment of a US submarine rotation, *HMS Sterling*, later in this decade.”

Australian real estate would be given over to greater “space cooperation”, alongside creating “a guided weapons and explosive ordnance enterprise in this country, and doing so in a way where we hope to see manufacturing of missiles commence in Australia in two years’ time as part of a collective industrial base between the two countries.” Chillingly, Marles went on to reiterate what has become something of a favourite in his middle-management lexicon. The efforts to fiddle the export-defense export control legislation by the Biden administration would create “a more seamless defence industrial base between our countries.” Seamless, here, is the thick nail in the coffin of sovereignty.

Moves are also underway to engage in redevelopment of bases in northern Australia, in anticipation of the increased, ongoing US military presence. The RAAF Base Tindal, located 320km south-east of Darwin in the Northern Territory, is the [subject of considerable investment](#) “to address functional deficiencies and capacity constraints in existing facilities and infrastructure.” The AUSMIN talks further revealed that scoping upgrades would take place at two new locations: RAAF Bases Scherger and RAAF Curtin.

Australia’s Defence Intelligence Organisation will [also be colonised](#) by what is being termed a “Combined Intelligence Centre – Australia” by 2024. This is purportedly intended to “enhance long-standing intelligence cooperation” while essentially subordinating Australian intelligence operations to their US overlords. Marles saw the arrangement as part of a drive towards “seamless” (that hideous word again) intelligence ties between Canberra and Washington. “This is a unit which is going to produce intelligence for both of our defence forces ... and I think that’s important.”

In the pro-war press outlets such as *The Australian*, Greg Sheridan [complained](#) that AUSMIN talks had revealed “the appalling state of our defences”. What bothered him was the expectation that Washington do everything in terms of addressing such inadequacies, while leaving the Australian defence base reliant and emaciated. “Under the Albanese government we have reverted completely to our worst selves on defence. We’re going to do almost nothing consequential over the next 10 years other than get the Americans to do more on our land.” Well, Sheridan, don’t give up hope: Australia might be at war with China under US-direction before a decade is up, vassalized warriors eager to kill and be killed.

From his vantage point as the *Australian Financial Review*’s international editor, historian James Curran [glumly noted](#) that, “The permanent American military presence on Australian soil is now at a scale unprecedented since the Second World War.” While the US-Australian relationship had previously stressed the value of deterrence, the focus seemed increasingly on the “projection” of power. “The change from the mid-1990s has been nothing short of staggering.”

The most striking matter in this whole business was the utter absence of parliamentary outrage in Canberra. There was no registered protest, no red mist rage in the streets, and no debate to speak off, nor even an eloquent funeral oration. You might even say that AUSMIN 2023 was one of history’s most successful coups, implemented in plain sight by all too willing collaborators. Its victim, Australian sovereignty, has been laid to rest.

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