



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Veteran diplomat warns Australia could pull the trigger for war with China

This release was first published as an article in the 11 May 2022 Australian Alert Service.

Just four days after Defence Minister Peter Dutton declared on ANZAC Day that Australia is preparing for war, former Ambassador John Lander sat down with Citizens Party Research Director Robert Barwick for a second interview on the ACP's *Citizens Insight* program.

Watch CITIZENS INSIGHT: [Veteran Australian diplomat John Lander speaks out against war danger \(PART TWO\)](#).

The former Australian Ambassador to Iran and Deputy Ambassador to China reveals he's been "reduced to despair" and feels like "a voice crying in the wilderness" in warning that Australia is being manipulated into becoming a US proxy against China.

As he exposed in his first *Citizens Insight* interview, Lander emphasises that the current US strategy is to provoke China into a war by arming Taiwan, vilifying China to make it the aggressor in the eyes of the world, and encouraging Taiwan to declare "independence".

The USA would thus instigate war using Taiwan as their proxy, so it is the people of Taiwan who die in the fighting, while the USA avoids direct conflict with China that could escalate into global thermonuclear war—identical to the US strategy of using Ukraine as their proxy against Russia.

Adding to John Lander's alarm is the rhetoric of Peter Dutton, who has previously said Australia would join Taiwan in a war against China—i.e. Australia would also be a US proxy—which would spell annihilation for Australia.

In Part Two, however, following Australia's hysterical outburst over the Solomon Islands' security agreement with China, the veteran diplomat warns that it may be Australia, instead of Taiwan, which actually triggers a war (watch the interview to see his explanation).

John Lander also tells two stories from his time as a diplomat, which illustrate how sharply Australia has veered in its foreign policy, away from having at least an impulse for independent decisions in our national interest, to one that is completely subservient to the USA and UK.

Before the tensions with China spiral out of control, all Australians should watch and heed the warnings of this experienced professional diplomat.

Watch CITIZENS INSIGHT: [Veteran Australian diplomat John Lander speaks out against war danger \(PART TWO\)](#).

John Lander: 'If we want Peace, we must prepare for Peace'

Following is a transcript of a short address by retired diplomat John Lander to the Wesley Uniting Church, Melbourne, 1 May 2022. A re-recording of the address is available to view on the Citizens Party's YouTube channel.

The views I express today are mine and not those of this Church, although they are shared by many analysts at home and abroad. At the risk of being alarmist, I feel I should sound a warning.

You may agree or disagree, that's fine, but I felt I should sound a warning.

The unhinged, belligerent public pronouncements over the last few days left me feeling too depressed to continue with this talk.

Then I saw a weird movie *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*, dealing with all kinds of conflict. Through much mayhem and special effects it arrived at the answer: "be kind".

That put me in mind of today's reading. "Love your neighbour as yourself".

It applies equally well to countries as to individuals. It is the bedrock of diplomacy, the primary objective of which is the peaceful resolution of conflict. It is a principle that guided me throughout my career.

So, for Peace, Love (in the broadest sense that Jesus meant) is the answer.

Yet we are subjected to an almost daily deluge of demand that we detest and dread China.

It is the policy of hate. It is the same, irrational sinophobia that led to the “White Australia Policy” and the “Yellow Peril” that took us into the war in Vietnam. Now, the fiction of the “China threat”.

The idea that China has ambitions of territorial expansion, akin to those of Nazi Germany, is scare-mongering and arrant nonsense.

China has not threatened to attack Australia or anywhere else. It has invaded no country.

By contrast, the US has invaded countries in Latin America, Asia (notably Vietnam) and the Middle East (notably Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan), causing the death of millions and further millions of refugees, whom we subject to cruel and inhumane, indefinite detention for the crime of seeking a better life.

While we might criticise China’s methods of maintaining control of its huge population and the cohesion of its vast territory, they are not examples of external military aggression.

In Matthew 7:12 Jesus said, “In everything do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. One of the basic Christian values, that our leaders so loudly claim to defend.

They have lost sight of the fact that “as you do unto others, so shall be done unto you”.

Even so, China has not matched the naval exercises by US and Australian warships along its coastline, in contrast to Australia’s hysterical reaction to a single Chinese warship in the Arafura Sea.

Australia insists on going to war against China in order to keep open the South China Sea routes, so that we can continue our trade. With whom? With China—it makes no sense.

In any case, China has reached understandings with all claimants who have military bases—Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines (and even Taiwan) —that their competing claims should not be allowed to hinder mutually beneficial relations in other areas.

Australia should adopt the same approach.

So, I am afraid—not of the threat from China, but of the war psychosis that grips the Australian body politic regarding China.

I am also frightened by the complacency of the general public in Australia that seems to believe that what is happening to Ukraine cannot happen to us.

It can and it will, if Australia continues to position itself as an enemy of China. We are fortunate that China has not yet declared Australia to be its enemy.

Ukraine is America’s proxy in its war with Russia. As Congressman Adam Schiff said a few days ago, “we aid Ukraine and her people so that we can fight Russia over there and we don’t have to fight Russia here”.

Similarly, under the “Strategy of Denial” Taiwan is to be America’s proxy in its war against China, which is seen as the main challenge to US dominance of the “rules-based order”, set up by, and for the benefit of, the US and its allies.

Australia is inextricably intertwined economically and financially in the “rules-based order”. It apparently sees no option but to do everything to sustain US dominance of that system.

Like in the Vietnam war, Australia has placed itself “in lockstep” with America in its posture towards Russia and China.

I am not saying: “don’t fight China” because I am a so-called “China-lover”. It is because we cannot win.

Whether China is benevolent or nefarious is irrelevant to a consideration of respective military capabilities. China is immensely more powerful than Australia.

It makes no sense for Australia to place itself in the firing line. The US will not join with us in the fray. It would use us as its proxy in its effort to “contain” China. Australians generally seem complacently, but mistakenly, to believe that the ANZUS Treaty guarantees us America’s protection. Not so.

It only commits the US to consult on appropriate means of defence if Australia comes under attack. It contains no obligation to defend Australia if Australia goes on the attack.

Every action of the USA, from the abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan, to its capture of the markets that Australia lost by “standing up to China”, to its stance of no direct involvement in the Russia/Ukraine war—and its many policy statements—has demonstrated that, as President Biden said “the US acts only in its own interests”.

The US will not directly engage its own forces in war with China. Instead it is equipping Taiwan to defend itself.

It is taking the same approach to Australia, promising us only the means for our own defence. An additional problem is that such promises are decades away from fulfilment.

The US may also be coming to sense that its policy of goading China over Taiwan might not work.

The Cross Straits Economic Framework Agreement signed by Taiwan and China in 2010 has institutionalised trade and economic relations between them. Taiwan’s investment in China is now more than US\$194 billion.

They both continue to be circumspect about swallowing the US bait.

By getting Australia to share the US “red line” in the Pacific, threatening the Solomons with dire consequences if it oversteps the mark with China, the US appears to be manoeuvring Australia into the position of principal proxy in its war against China. Paternalistic, neo-colonial bullying by Australia cements us into that role.

The recent visit to Australia by a Congressional delegation announced that American nuclear submarines would rotate through Australian ports until “Australia gets its own”, with the explicit objective of aiming them against China.

Such a highly provocative action seems designed to elicit a comparable response from Beijing, further escalating the potential for a clash of force.

With the present and permanent power imbalance between Australia and China, instead of trumpeting bellicosity at every turn, Australia needs to adopt a more circumspect approach and work out a mutually beneficial modus vivendi.

This is the approach that has been adopted by all of our regional neighbours, from whom we have isolated ourselves by our hostility to China.

From a non-Christian and purely selfish perspective Australia should at least recognise the danger it has placed itself in and heed the dictum of “keep your friends close and your enemies closer”.

In Luke 6:27, however, Jesus instructed us to go further: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”

If China is our enemy (and I don’t believe it is, but we could argue that point for weeks), we would do well to follow Christ’s teaching, and defuse the present tensions as much as possible.

We should open the door to dialogue by reaffirming our adherence to the “One China principle” and offering the assurance that we do not seek war with China.

The Americans could hardly object, since President Biden himself gave such assurances (however disingenuously) in his video link with President Xi on 18 March 2022.

Meanwhile, all people of Christian principle should make it clear to our political leaders that the Australian people are opposed to war and wish to seek a way for peace.

The anti-war movement created the impetus for Australia’s withdrawal from the Vietnam war. It could work again, but needs to get underway before the next war begins.

We have been told that “if we want Peace, we must prepare for War”. I say “if we want Peace, we must prepare for Peace”.

Let us pray that the Peace of Christ may be with us all.

[Click here for a YouTube re-recording of this speech by John lander, to watch and share on social media.](#)