

No peace without justice



Boorloo/Perth rally for Palestine. Sunday 24th August 2025.

M Santos

The Gaza “peace plan” promoted by US President Donald Trump, is anything but a plan for peace or Palestinian sovereignty and statehood. Even so, despite the plan being negotiated without any Palestinians at the table, Hamas has made a number of concessions with the aim of ending Israel’s genocide and ethnic cleansing and achieving Palestinian statehood.

A genuine peace plan that sets out to establish an independent, sovereign state of Palestine would include the full withdrawal of Israel from Gaza and the West Bank, and recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Furthermore, the genocide would cease and Israel and the US fund reparations and finance the reconstruction of Palestinian territories in accordance with the wishes of the Palestinian people.

It would demand that Israel open all

borders and allow the free movement of people and goods and that Israeli political and military leaders must be tried at the International Criminal Court. There can be no lasting peace without justice.

The fact that the West Bank and East Jerusalem are not even mentioned in the Trump Plan shows that Trump and Israel have no intention of recognising an independent Palestinian state in line with international law or ending Israel’s illegal settlements in the occupied territory.

Israel has been pursuing annexation and land theft policies in the West Bank and Gaza since it occupied those areas in 1967. But after the start of the genocide in Gaza in October 2023 there have been record rates of Palestinian land stolen, villages erased, residents expelled, and new illegal settlements built – all achieved through the violence of the military occupation and attacks by settler militias, armed and aided by the government.

Israel has not let up in its bombardment

of the City of Gaza, continuing to murder Palestinians, including those queuing for aid despite Israel saying it has agreed to the Plan.

At the time of writing, negotiators from Israel and Hamas were heading to Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, to commence indirect talks over an end to Israel’s genocide.

THE PLAN

“If both sides agree to this proposal, the war will immediately end. Israeli forces will withdraw to the agreed-upon line to prepare for a hostage release. During this time, all military operations, including aerial and artillery bombardment, will be suspended, and battle lines will remain frozen until conditions are met for the complete staged withdrawal,” the Plan states.

“Within 72 hours of Israel publicly accepting this agreement, all hostages, alive and deceased, will be returned.” Hamas has agreed to this.

“Once all hostages are released, Israel will release 250 life sentence prisoners

plus 1,700 Gazans who were detained after 7 October 2023, including all women and children detained in that context. For every Israeli hostage whose remains are released, Israel will release the remains of 15 deceased Gazans.”

This exchange of hostages/prisoners is one-sided, as thousands of Palestinians remain in custody without trial. Israel must end its policy of administrative detention and release the remaining Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

Netanyahu is under public pressure in Israel to obtain the release of the remaining living and deceased hostages. Once they have been delivered there would be nothing to stop Israel continuing its genocide and further occupation of Gaza. Israel has a history of contemptuously ignoring UN decisions on Palestine.

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CPA and Vietnam build relationship

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Shoulder to shoulder

Here's a question you won't hear at a trivia night.

What do Electric Vehicles, or EVs, Labor's First Home Buyers scheme, whereby some young people can buy houses with only 5% deposit, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Aged Care Packages have in common?

EVs are a good thing because people drive them instead of carbon/pollution-emitting internal combustion engine cars. The First Home Buyers scheme will be good for some young people who want to buy houses, but has been widely panned because it looks like it will make homes even more expensive. The NDIS is widely used, but the government worries about the cost and is looking at clawing back some of the money (something they won't do with the AUKUS nuclear submarines – if the USA doesn't deliver any submarines, they get to keep our money). Aged Care packages help older people stay in their own homes, but there aren't enough of them (see *Guardian* #2165).

Still can't guess? Each of these items involves making an issue that faces Australians as a group into an individual problem.

Sure it's better if someone drives an EV instead of a car which emits carbon and pollution, but before EVs existed, we already had a solution to carbon emissions from transport. It's called cheap (or free) high quality public transport. If PT is so good that only car freaks will still bother driving a car, that's a lot of emissions avoided.

The First Home Buyers scheme guarantee is worse. At least EVs reduce carbon emissions. First Home Buyers gets some people into home ownership, but does nothing for the rest of us, other than help keep house prices high. What *would* make a real difference is a massive investment in public housing.

The NDIS, like Job Network, deals with a whole of society issue by farming it out to private agencies who are only looking for themselves. Both give 'clients' the impossible job of sorting out which agency is best. If you have a disability, you have to go through a morass of form-filling before choosing a private agency that meets your needs. Is it better than competing private agencies? You can only find out by having an awful time with one agency and then moving to another one which might be better. Likewise with Job Network. If you're unemployed, you have to choose from a range of agencies. Is the one you signed up with the one that suits you? Since you're not an experienced bureaucrat in the unemployment field, you have no way of knowing. Changing to another agency you don't understand is difficult and chancy.

This approach, putting a social problem onto individuals, is an ideology called neoliberalism. It treats society as a collection of lone individuals, not a collective with shared interests. It worships free markets, even when they're not really free. Markets make everything better, even when they obviously don't. It's a deep-seated approach to the world that is impervious to facts.

Contrary to popular belief, Communists don't want to make absolutely every last thing publicly owned and run. A lot of things work fine just the way they are. What we want is what's good for the majority of the people – that's the working class. Tackling – or pretending to tackle – big problems by breaking the population down to individuals and putting responsibility onto each single person – that's not good for anyone. Neither is fetishising the market.

Let's face the big issues shoulder to shoulder, as a class and as a society.

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The Plan says, "Once all hostages are returned, Hamas members who commit to peaceful co-existence and to decommission their weapons will be given amnesty. Members of Hamas who wish to leave Gaza will be provided safe passage to receiving countries."

"Upon acceptance of this agreement, **full aid** will be immediately sent into the Gaza Strip" (emphasis added).

"Entry of distribution and aid in the Gaza Strip will proceed without interference from the two parties through the United Nations and its agencies, and the Red Crescent, in addition to other international institutions not associated in any manner with either party."

The UN aid teams in Gaza are "ready to go" with thousands of tonnes of supplies on standby to alleviate famine, widespread hunger and malnutrition imposed by Israel's genocide.

GOVERNANCE

A temporary transitional governance of a "technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee," would be responsible for the day-to-day running of public services and municipalities. It would also contain "international experts."

However, this committee would be under the thumb of a so-called "Board of Peace," headed by Trump, with other members including the war criminal and former British PM Tony Blair – notorious for his advocacy of the illegal 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The Board would operate until such time as the Palestinian Authority had completed a reform program. One of its aims would be to attract investment.

But Netanyahu says the Palestinian Authority can have no role in Gaza.

A number of points in the Plan refer to economic development, including a special economic zone in the "New Gaza." Trump, who would head these developments still has plans to sell off real estate to US and British developers and establish a "Gaza Riviera" along the coast.

'SECURITY CONTROL'

The Plan says "The United States will work with Arab and international partners to develop a temporary International Stabilisation Force (ISF) to immediately deploy in Gaza This force will be the long-term internal security solution. The ISF will work with Israel and Egypt to help secure border areas, along with newly trained Palestinian police forces."

Israel has no intention of completely withdrawing. The Plan says it will maintain "a security perimeter presence that will remain until Gaza is properly secure from any resurgent terror threat." When would that be?

Israel is clear on its intentions to retain "security control" of Gaza. It categorically rejects independent Palestinian statehood.

"Israel will not occupy or annex Gaza. As the ISF establishes control and stability, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will withdraw based on standards, milestones, and timeframes linked to demilitarisation that will be agreed upon between the IDF, ISF, the guarantors, and the United States, with the objective of a secure Gaza that no longer poses a threat to Israel, Egypt, or its citizens." There is no mention of Palestinian agreement.

"While Gaza re-development advances and when the PA reform program is faithfully carried out, the conditions **may** finally be in place for a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, which we recognise as the aspiration of the Palestinian people" (emphasis added).

HAMAS'S RESPONSE

On Friday 3 October, Hamas sent its response agreeing to hand over the administration of Gaza to *Palestinian* technocrats, and free all Israeli captives in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Netanyahu has vowed that "Hamas will be disarmed and Gaza will be demilitarised – either the easy way or the hard way." By "demilitarised" Netanyahu is referring to Hamas, but not the Israeli Defence Forces. ★

Congress Appeal

From 27 February to 1 March 2026, elected delegates representing Communist Party organisations from all over Australia will gather in Melbourne for the 15th National Congress of the Party. There will be an opening on the Friday night, 27 February, to which all *Guardian* readers, their families and friends are invited. (Details will be provided in a future issue of the *Guardian*.)

Over three days, delegates will discuss the work of the Party, make any amendments to and adopt a Political Resolution. In the lead-up to the Congress, Party members are discussing and submitting

amendments to the draft Political Resolution. In January 2026 the Central Committee will consider these amendments and finalise the draft to be put to Congress.

Congress will elect a new Central Committee to lead the work of the Party until the next National Congress. As the highest body of the Party, it can also amend the Party's Program and Constitution and adopt other resolutions as its delegates may determine.

The CPA has launched a Special Appeal to help defray the costs associated with holding a National Congress. These are considerable with delegates coming from as far away as Perth, the printing of documents, etc.

We are appealing to Party members, organisations, and all friends and supporters of the Party, including *Guardian* readers, to help us reach our \$10,000 target as soon as possible.

To contribute, please fill in the form below or write your details on a separate piece of paper to send with your contribution. Payment by credit card can also be phoned in on 02 9699 8844 or use the direct credit details.

All contributions will be acknowledged in the *Guardian*, with the names of contributors unless otherwise requested. We look forward to your support for this important occasion. ★

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Resolution on the blockade of Gaza

The Communist Party of Australia adopted the following resolution at its meeting on 4-5 October 2025.

Israel's illegal detainment of the Sumud Peace Flotilla activists is condemned. The CPA calls for the immediate release of trade unionists, peace activists and aid workers seeking to deliver practical aid to the people of Gaza.

We send our solidarity to the Flotilla members and recognise the six Australians and all activists participating in the delivery of aid to Gaza despite the illegal and immoral blockade against the people of Gaza and Palestine in general.

The blockade of Gaza violates fundamental principles of international law, including prohibitions on collective punishment under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and obstructs the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Activists sailing with the Sumud Flotilla have been detained, their vessels seized, and their peaceful mission criminalised, undermining freedom of navigation, assembly, and expression.

The CPA recognises that the liberation of the working class is international, and that solidarity with Palestine is part of the broader struggle against exploitation, militarism, and capitalist oppression.

We demand the immediate release of all detained Flotilla activists; the return of seized vessels and cargo; and safe, unimpeded passage for humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The CPA demands the Australian government listen to the people and impose sanctions on Israel to end the genocide on Gaza.

End the occupation. End the war. Free Palestine.

**Communist Party of Australia
Central Committee**

Israel must release peace activists

Statement from the Maritime Union of Australia

The Maritime Union of Australia and all its members stand together in demanding the immediate release of our comrade, MUA member Hamish Paterson, and all others illegally detained by the Israeli military from the Sumud Flotilla.

The Sumud Peace Flotilla is a peaceful mission of trade unionists, humanitarians and aid workers delivering vital assistance to Gaza. Their "crime" is non-violence, solidarity, compassion. Their detention is a violation of fundamental human rights and international law.

For more than 152 years, the Maritime Union of Australia, born from the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union, has stood on the side of the oppressed. We stood against South African apartheid. We marched for peace. We blocked unjust war. We have consistently raised our voices when injustice rears its head. Our Union's history is not one of silence in the face of tyranny; it is one of action, solidarity and unwavering moral clarity.

These values and this history is what has inspired Hamish Paterson to sail to Gaza with the Sumud Flotilla with the full support of his Union and we commend his staunch commitment to these values and the principle of non-violent struggle against oppression.

Throughout his voyage to Gaza, Hamish has reported back to our members on the intimidation, violence and interference their vessels have been subjected to. Drone attacks, signal jamming and physical interception by submarines and fast boats carrying armed soldiers have been common throughout the voyage, and show the lengths Israel's military will go to in international waters to intimidate and discourage humanitarian activism.

We therefore call upon the Australian government to:

- Provide immediate consular assistance to Hamish Paterson and all Australian nationals detained, ensuring their safety, legal representation, and access to medical attention and communication.
- Deploy all diplomatic interventions through all appropriate channels to secure the release of all Sumud Flotilla crews without delay.
- Make clear to Israel that the detention of innocent trade unionists, humanitarians, and aid workers who act in peaceful solidarity with Palestinians subject to siege and bombardment cannot be tolerated in any circumstance.
- Re-examine Australia's arms, military equipment and export approvals framework to ensure Australia is not complicit in violations of international

law, human rights abuses or blockades that result in humanitarian catastrophe.

The commitment to peace, justice and solidarity that defines the MUA's long history will not be broken by illegal detention or military intimidation.

We call on all Australian people of conscience, all unions, all civil society groups, all faith communities, to join our demand for an independent, sovereign Palestine and the release of MUA seafarer Hamish Paterson and all detained Sumud Flotilla crew.

"This is a disgraceful act of state piracy," added the MUA's Deputy National Secretary, Warren Smith. "Our member and his comrades were exercising the oldest of seafarers' traditions by seeking to deliver aid where it is needed most. Instead, they were met with armed aggression by a military intent on silencing global solidarity with Palestine."

"The MUA has always stood against war, occupation, and oppression. We will not be silent while our member and other peace activists are arrested for doing what our governments have so far failed to do; provide aid and issue a demand that Israel end this humanitarian catastrophe," Smith said.

The MUA demanded the immediate release of all detained peace flotilla crew members and called on the Australian government to act without hesitation to secure their freedom.

"Our governments cannot continue to turn a blind eye. When civilians attempting to deliver food and medicine to people subjected to an ongoing genocide are met with military force, it exposes the brutal reality of the blockade and the siege being carried out against the Palestinian people," MUA Queensland Branch Assistant Secretary, Paul Gallagher, said.

The unlawful boarding and detainment of Australian humanitarian crews by Israeli soldiers is happening against a backdrop of ongoing exports from Australia of fighter jet components to the Israeli military. At least 68 shipments of F35 fighter jet parts have been sent via commercial passenger flights, some as recently as last month, according to multiple sources citing leaked cargo manifests from commercial airlines.

"We also continue to monitor and investigate whether arms shipments are being moved through Australian sea ports and which ones," Warren Smith said.

The union has pledged ongoing solidarity with the people of Palestine and the international movement to end the siege of Gaza.

**Paddy Crumlin
National Secretary, Maritime
Union of Australia**

Comrade Hannah Middleton remembered by City of Sydney

City of Sydney Greens Councillor, Sylvie Ellsmore has moved a resolution in recognition of Dr Hannah Middleton who passed away on 13 June this year.

Hannah Middleton was at different times the President, and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia, as well as editor of *Guardian*, *The Workers' Weekly*. She was also tireless in peace work and local activism.

Ellsmore's resolution remembered Middleton for working tirelessly to protect public housing,

including the successful campaign to save the Franklyn Street Estate from redevelopment, stopping the sell off of local public housing terraces, and for improved maintenance and rights for tenants.

Hannah was the Executive Officer of the University of Sydney's Sydney Peace Foundation from 2006 to 2012. In 2006, Hannah and her partner Denis received the inaugural community peace award from the foundation.

The council also noted that Hannah was a founding member of both Hands Off Glebe and Action

for Public Housing. With Denis, Hannah coordinated the Glebe Grapevine, a free community newsletter which updates residents on important news especially around the protection of public housing.

The resolution also praised her activism as a founding member of the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC), a national coalition of Australian organisations that campaigns against foreign military installations on Australian soil. Hannah was the organisation's national spokesperson from 1988. 🍷



Queensland CFMEU not deregistered

Graham Holton

With the start of the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU), Queensland LNP deputy premier, Jarrod Bleijie has told the ABC that the state branch of the CFMEU will not be abolished or deregistered. He added the state government was open to “everything” to reform the union, but that deregistering the union would not work.

While Bleijie is the state’s Industrial Relations Minister, it is up to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to deregister a union. The law allows the minister to make an application for a deregistration order. It also allows an organisation, the industrial registrar, or another person to make an application for deregistration.

Bleijie said, “The CFMEU will continue with our support in administration as they are [now] both at the Commonwealth level and the state level.” Bleijie said he expected the CFMEU would be “restructured”

by the time of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

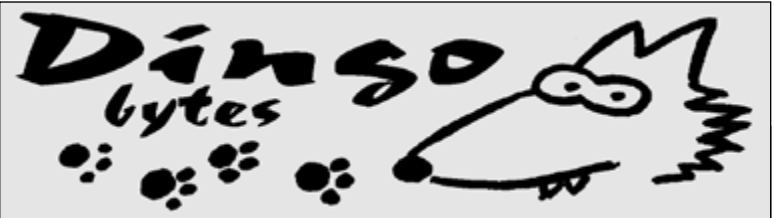
In his report Geoffrey Watson SC alleges that the CFMEU used violence to “support a pursuit of political, industrial and financial power.” Former CFMEU chief, Michael Ravbar, hit out at the report, saying it was “riddled with errors” and based on “selective and untested accounts.”

The Qld Commission was announced by Premier David Crisafulli in July, to be headed by Stuart John Wood AM KC, a barrister with an extensive history in industrial relations.

The inquiry began on 1 August, to run for twelve months and to deliver its report by 31 July 2026. Summonses have been issued to witnesses. The inquiry will be independent from the government and look at claims of misconduct connected to the CFMEU and the effect on Queensland’s construction industry, projects and productivity. In August 2024, all branches of the construction arm of the CFMEU were placed into administration for at least three years by federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.

Jared Abbott is the CFMEU Queensland executive and branch leader under administration. He said “I can say right now there are no issues within CFMEU Queensland, in terms of a cultural problem, and I have full confidence in all the staff who work with me.” The CFMEU spokesperson in media coverage of inquiry expansion, said: “The administration believes it is time for employers and state and federal governments to focus on crime and corruption across the industry, rather than a narrow focus on the CFMEU.”

The CFMEU emphasised the union’s role in improving workplace safety and the importance of unions in ensuring the enforcement of safety regulations. CFMEU leaders hold corporations accountable for negligence and bad practices, such as corner-cutting at the expense of worker welfare. The union wants stronger oversight from the Queensland government to ensure that construction and mining companies comply with industry standards and regulations. ✖



Many aged care workers across Australia are receiving a long overdue boost to their pay packets, following the success of the Health Services Union’s landmark aged care work value case. As of 1 October, a personal care worker earns \$34.60 an hour.

This is the final stage of wage increases stemming from the aged care work value case, which was lodged by the Health Services Union in the Fair Work Commission in November 2020. Since the increases began in 2023, a personal care worker’s pay is now up from \$23.20 an hour – an extra \$433 per week.

HSU National Secretary Lloyd Williams said it was a cause for celebration and a reminder of the work still to be done.

“This is a huge win for aged care workers. Our members fought and won this case – and today they are rightly seeing the rewards of their efforts,” he said. But we cannot ignore the fact that many other aged care workers – in administration, cleaning, laundry, food services, gardening and maintenance – have been left behind.

“These workers are just as essential to delivering care, and the HSU will keep fighting to make sure their pay reflects the value they bring.”

While the pay rise provides welcome relief, Williams said aged care remains in urgent need of reform.

“Aged care workers are still battling daily challenges. From a lack of proper training support, to acute short-staffing, outsourcing of critical services, restructuring of key roles, and serious health and safety risks.

“These issues undermine workers and the people they care for. Across the country, HSU members are now setting new goals to fix the sector.

“We want an aged care system where workers can deliver the quality care older Australians deserve, with fair pay, safe conditions, and the respect they have earned.”

PARASITE OF THE WEEK: is security outfit MSS. Victorian security guards who protect doctors, nurses, patients, public housing residents, and wider communities are stepping up their campaign for fair pay that acknowledges the difficult, dangerous work they do.

MSS security guards working across critical sites in Victoria say they are expected to bear violence and unsafe conditions but continue to be paid less than they are worth and ignored by their employer and the state government.

At Casey Hospital, MSS guards are paid up to \$500 less a fortnight than guards employed directly by Monash Health, despite doing the same work with the same risks.

Housing guards are demanding a \$2-an-hour allowance to bring their rates in line with other government-employed security guards. They say MSS and Homes Victoria have consistently failed to consult them about safety on sites, leaving both guards and residents exposed.

On 2 October, striking guards from Casey Hospital and housing sites marched to Parliament House and delivered petitions to Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas and Housing Minister Harriet Shing, demanding urgent government action to push MSS to the table.

Guards employed by MSS provide protection across hospitals and essential public services. Despite their critical role and the dangerous situations, they confront, their pay remains too low for the risks they face.

MSS guard and United Workers Union member Saad warned: “Our jobs are very dangerous. Guards are unarmed and face physical violence and threats and the guards do not feel safe when they are at work.

“But still, we do the job. MSS is harassing the guards to do more which is not possible.”

Casey Hospital guard and United Workers Union member Matt, said, “We want respect from our client and just better working conditions. We are protecting doctors, nurses, patients, and the public – our work is essential, but our pay does not reflect that.”

Parasitic gas exporters

Gas exports should be reduced to support local manufacturing and lessen the harms the industry is inflicting on farmers, First Nations people, and regional communities, say community activists at the Lock the Gate Alliance.

The Albanese government is considering introducing an export licensing regime that obligates supply to the domestic market.

Lock the Gate Alliance says this is encouraging, but only if such a regime meets the needs of domestic manufacturers while helping to reduce gas exports and by extension the harm unconventional gas extraction is causing to regional communities, water, and climate.

Lock the Gate Alliance Clean Industry Coordinator Harriet Kater said, “Australia has more than enough gas – it just exports far too much of it. Export controls must be part of the Albanese government’s Gas Market Review recommendations.

“By constraining exports and redirecting supply to domestic manufacturers, the Albanese government could give this vital sector of the Australian economy much needed time to protect thousands of jobs while it transitions away from fossil fuels to electrification and other clean energy sources.”

Unconventional gas extraction is unpopular across Australia. Lock the Gate warns this damaging industry

must cease its rapacious expansion efforts in order to protect water, farmland, First Nations culture and the climate.

“There are strong signs that LNG exports from Gladstone will face headwinds in the 2030s,” says Kater. “The Albanese government should urgently start the conversation about supporting the Gladstone community and workers as LNG exports decline.

“Gas is a fossil fuel and a finite resource. Extreme weather events made worse by the burning of fossil fuels are already causing massive damage and heartbreak to Australian communities. Australia needs a regulatory system that supports an orderly transition away from fossil gas. The risks to climate, manufacturing jobs, First Nations culture, water, and land are too great to continuously drill and frack more gas for export.

“Right now, Origin Energy through its joint venture APLNG is progressing a project to drill more than four thousand new coal seam gas wells across thousands of hectares of Central Queensland farmland and forest. The damage this project would cause to water, communities, land, and the climate would be the cost of government failure to seize the opportunity now to clamp down on the parasitic gas export companies.”

Lock the Gate ✖

Help us cancel the Indo Pacific Expo

To be held in Darling Harbour

November 4-6

The fact that Israel is committing genocide in relation to Gaza has been confirmed by many prestigious organisations and experts. The companies that are making huge profits on the bodies of the innocent men, women and children of Gaza have been named by Francesca Albanese the UN rapporteur for Palestine.

These companies are: Elbit Systems, Lockheed Martin (F35’s), Leonardo S.p.A, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Boeing, BAE systems, Northrop Grumman (*the list is not complete*). These companies are invited to the Indo Pacific Expo – a display subsidised and sponsored by the NSW and Federal Governments!

Use QR code



'Class warfare disguised as entertainment'

Labor members launch internal push for gambling reform

A new grassroots pressure group within the Labor Party will campaign for federal and state action on gambling reform, aiming to build momentum for next year's NSW and national Labor conferences.

Labor for Gambling Reform is modeled on internal Labor groups like Rainbow Labor and the Labor Environmental Activist Network. It brings together rank and file members, trade unionists, Young Labor activists, and community leaders who are building branch-by-branch pressure across NSW communities, with plans to expand nationally.

The group of motivated grassroots members are demanding immediate implementation of gambling advertising bans recommended by the 2023 Murphy Review along with a phased reduction of poker machines by redirecting the \$1 billion tax subsidy for club poker machines to compensation for licence removal.

"My generation is being systematically exploited by an industry that has turned our phones into gambling platforms and our sporting heroes into betting ambassadors," said Caitlin Marlor, President of NSW Young Labor and founding

member of Labor for Gambling Reform.

"We are determined to speed up the reform process because young Australians can't keep losing money that should be building home deposits and funding education."

The group will focus efforts on Western Sydney, where gambling harm is most concentrated. Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown, and Cumberland together account for one-third of Sydney's poker machine losses despite being home to just 16.5% of Sydney's population.

Mark Morey, Secretary of Unions NSW and patron of the group, said working families were being systematically targeted.

"Fairfield has one poker machine for every 55 residents while wealthy areas have virtually none. This is class warfare disguised as entertainment," Morey said.

"The union movement has always stood against exploitation of workers – gambling corporations extracting \$10 billion annually from working families is exploitation on an industrial scale."

The group is demanding immediate implementation of Recommendation 26 from the 2023 parliamentary inquiry led by

the late Peta Murphy MP, which called for comprehensive gambling advertising bans to be implemented "immediately" and phased over three years.

More than two years after the Murphy Review's release, the Albanese government has yet to implement the advertising ban recommendations despite Australia having the world's most severe gambling problem.

"Every day of delay exposes more young Australians to predatory marketing designed to create lifelong patterns of harmful gambling," Marlor said.

"We refuse to accept that comprehensive advertising bans are 'too complex' or 'require more consultation' while other countries have acted decisively."

- In Australia almost one-third of teenagers under 18 illegally gamble, losing \$18.4 million annually.
- Including 18-19 year-olds, total teenage gambling losses reach \$231 million per year.
- Children are exposed to over one million gambling ads annually on free-to-air television alone.
- Sports betting among Australian men increased by



Image: rawpixel.com

57.6% between 2015 and 2022 and 67% of sports bettors are classified as being at risk of gambling harm.

- At least \$10 billion of the \$13 billion lost annually on poker machines comes from at-risk gamblers.

Labor for Gambling Reform is demanded that the NSW government place a moratorium on new poker machine licences in pubs and clubs, and introduce a phased five-year reduction of poker machines to bring NSW in line with Queensland. They are also advocating for a ban on betting advertising within sporting complexes and arenas, and asking the NSW government

to redirect its \$1 billion tax subsidy for club poker machines to compensation for licence removal.

The group will take their campaign to next year's NSW and National ALP Conferences, building grassroots pressure through branch meetings and electorate councils across the state.

Other founding members include Denise McHugh, Deputy President of the Independent Education Union and Chair of the NSW ALP Education and Skills Committee, teacher and community activist Joanna Woods, and former publican, bookmaker and Government Minister Harry Woods. Labor for Gambling Reform ★

Coal companies continue slaying workers

A notifiable dust disease register has been recently recorded in Queensland, where 292 workers have developed lung diseases in the past year. Six died before their illnesses were noted on the register. Of the 292 workers registered 121 were diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), 96 had respiratory cancers and 93 had pneumoconiosis (black lung). All of the workers recorded were occupationally exposed in Queensland, with 94% stating their primary exposure occurred in the state.

Black lung disease was first recorded in its necrotic form (autopsy-based evidence) in the 1830s by a Scottish physician who performed autopsies on deceased coal miners with visibly blackened lungs. He linked this occupational disease, to the accumulation of coal dust in the lungs from mining.

In 2025 the disease hasn't been prevented. It's been drastically reduced, which is not good enough.

Profits before health of workers must be eradicated now. Any delay is a death sentence for workers in the industry.

Black lung disease (BLD), also known as coal worker's pneumoconiosis, or simply black lung, is an occupational type of pneumoconiosis caused by long-term inhalation and deposition of coal dust in the lungs and the consequent lung tissue's reaction to its presence. It is common in coal miners and others who work with coal.

Inhalation of coal dust progressively builds up in the lungs and leads to inflammation, fibrosis, and in worse cases, necrosis (Necrosis is a medical term for the death of body tissue).

Commonly, workers exposed to coal dust develop industrial bronchitis, clinically

defined a chronic bronchitis (i.e. a productive cough for three months per year for at least two years) associated with workplace dust exposure. The incidence of industrial bronchitis varies with age, job, exposure, and smoking.

Coal dust that enters the lungs can neither be destroyed nor removed by the body. The particles are engulfed by resident alveolar macrophages, forming modular lesions within the lungs.

Black lung can be a risk for surface coal miners, data from a US Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program showed that 2% of miners with greater than one year of surface mining experience developed black lung disease. Most had never worked in underground mining prior to surface mining.

Workers in underground and surface coal mines, including truck drivers, maintenance workers, workers who are exposed to rail coal

wagons which are not covered, and anyone near coal processing such as power stations which use coal and crush it before entering the furnace are all at risk.

Employers are required to provide a health and safe working environment. In coal mining this is not the case.

Safe working conditions enjoyed today by workers were not given to us by governments or employers. They were fought for and won by workers and their unions. For example, engineered stone was banned by the government after the CFMEU threatened that if the ban was not in place they would move to ban it, meaning union members will not allow engineered stone to be transported or used on building sites across Australia. The ACTU executive resolved to take all necessary steps to ban engineered stone because of increased silicosis deadly disease.

Fightback ★

NSW: Liverpool Council workers rally for job security, against workplace surveillance

The United Services Union (USU) has had a rally for Liverpool City Council workers, community members, and supporters to attend a rally demanding job security and an end to intrusive workplace surveillance measures.

Council workers want to see the final report of the ongoing public inquiry into the council before more structural changes are made. Liverpool City Council workers are facing renewed threats to their job security, with 150 positions identified as "at risk" during

discussions in April 2025. These concerns have been raised during the ongoing public inquiry into council operations.

Constant flux in management has caused change fatigue at council. Over the past 5 years there have been 33 restructures and re-alignments. Since 2010 there have been 11 CEOs.

Despite the USU's reasonable request to pause all restructuring activities until the public inquiry is completed and its recommendations implemented, Liverpool City Council has dismissed these

concerns and will press on with controversial redundancies and restructuring.

In a response dated 15 September 2025, Liverpool City Council rejected the Union's request to halt:

- Restructures and redundancies
- Reporting line changes and realignments
- Policy changes and procedure amendments

The council's refusal to engage in meaningful consultation while a public inquiry examines its operations demonstrates a disregard for workers' rights and job security.

Workers are also demanding an end to the implementation of biometric and telematic surveillance systems that invade privacy and create an atmosphere of mistrust in the workplace.

"Our members deserve job security, not constant threats of redundancy and intrusive monitoring," said Acting USU General Secretary Stephen Hughes.

"Council's decision to push ahead with restructures while a public inquiry is examining their governance shows they're more interested in protecting their own

positions than protecting workers' livelihoods."

The USU is calling on Liverpool residents to stand with council workers who deliver essential services to the community every day. These workers maintain parks, process development applications, provide library services, and ensure the smooth operation of local government services.

"When workers have job security, the whole community benefits from better, more consistent service delivery," Hughes added.

United Services Union ★

Crime in WA: an 'unacceptable' submission

The WA government is trying to introduce legislation through proposed 'post + boast' laws that threaten free speech and political participation. Other states have recently passed similar legislation but the laws are restricted to crimes. WA is the only state that seeks to extend this law to cover political expression and participation. WA's Standing Committee on Legislation is currently running a very selective inquiry into the bill stating it will only accept submission that are "invited." The Communist Party of Australia WA branch has joined with many other uninvited community groups and people that are choosing to ignore these terms to make uninvited submissions. The WA submission is below:

Dear Committee,
We are writing to contribute to the inquiry on the Criminal Code Amendment (Post and Boast Offence) Bill 2025.

The bill being considered in WA is much broader than in other jurisdictions and includes, as examples, disseminating material about disorderly behaviour and unlawful assembly. We believe this will have a disproportionate impact on freedom of speech and public advocacy, which will affect communities around Western Australia (WA).

This law could criminalise the sharing of content related non-violent forms of protest, or subdue peaceful protest by making people fearful that it will be later deemed unlawful. This can capture protests with vigorous chanting or yelling, protests that cause work to stop or protests addressed at people going in or out of a public place, like a conference centre. These are

all common behaviours in public gatherings and protests, including protests by union members, and sharing content from them should not be a criminal offence. This is an overreach; the broad definition of conduct and the ability to expand offenses could pose a significant risk to free speech and could lead to a "chilling effect" on legitimate protest.

The proposed law extends far beyond the scope introduced in other Australian jurisdictions to address 'performance crime.' In all other jurisdictions with similar laws, they are limited to serious offences against persons or property, such as motor vehicle theft, armed robbery, home invasion and violent disorder.

Additionally, the WA laws impose a maximum term of 3 years imprisonment while other states limit this to 2 years, and the newly created 'rectification order'



Rally in opposition to the proposed sale of the state electricity utility Western Power, Boorloo/Perth 2006.

provision greatly exceeds the reach of law enforcement beyond what exists in other states. This means that police could insist you remove content or face 12 months imprisonment, even before a court finds that the content is in breach of the law. We view this as a direct attack on democracy.

No evidence-based justification has been provided for the proposed WA laws. In fact, the Parliamentary

Secretary to the Attorney General has said he is informed by WA Police that "there is limited evidence that the issue is rife" in WA. This coupled with the decision to only accept submissions made on invitation and deny community submission is an affront to our democracy.

The proposed laws won't make our communities safer. Instead, they'll punish kids, chill political

expression, and push more people into the criminal justice system without addressing any root causes of offending.

The CPA believes this Bill cannot be justified and we call for the proposed Bill to be abandoned as it is a dangerous precedent against liberal democracy.

Communist Party of Australia, WA Branch

Health unions join forces

The Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) and Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association (VAHPA) will join forces to create what they say will be a stronger union which will deliver better pay and conditions for thousands of workers.

Both organisations' branch committees of management have supported a memorandum of understanding to unite.

This should allow the new united union to drive a harder bargain backed by stronger finances reinforced by transparent and accountable decision making.

The branch will represent approximately 20,000 members across Allied Health, Disability, and Mental Health. This is the

single largest union presence in these sectors in Victoria's history.

HACSU Victoria State Secretary Paul Healey said the move was an incredible win for all members.

"Two healthy, growing unions joining forces means members across all professions will be in a stronger position to win the pay rises and better conditions they deserve," he said.

"Allied health, mental health and disability workers will retain specialist focuses through three divisions while sharing the benefits of more collective muscle.

"This allows us to stop wasting money on duplication and invest into more member services and create stronger financial stability to take on tougher fights and win.

"All of this is underpinned by

the highest standards of accountability, transparency and integrity."

HACSU primarily represents mental health and disability workers, while VAHPA is the union for allied health professionals.

HACSU is the Victoria number two Branch of the Health Services Union and VAHPA is number three Branch.

VAHPA Branch President JoAnne Ginn said collective strength would deliver better outcomes for workers.

"This is a historic moment for Victorian allied health workers, who will reap significant benefits from joining forces with HACSU," she said.

"VAHPA members will have access to more organisers, enhanced legal and industrial support, and

greater capacity to run large-scale campaigns.

"At the moment, members in the same workplace can belong to different unions, weakening bargaining strength.

"Now with a single, united branch ensures members get all the benefits of a stronger union while maintaining a clear identity and focus through the separate divisions."

Health Services Union National President Gerard Hayes said the new branch would give workers more power.

"The days of bosses playing one union branch against another are over," he said.

"A 20,000-strong union backed by best-practice governance and transparency measures will fight

hard for better outcomes on pay, safety, staffing levels, and policy change.

"The savings from eliminating duplication on things like IT systems and administration will create a stronger, more sustainable financial base for campaigning and member support.

"I want to congratulate these two branches on putting members first by harnessing a fantastic opportunity to join forces."

Health and Community Services Union/Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association

'Far-right strategy' could cost local councils

Peter Farmer

At the pro-Israel Australian Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism this September, councillors from across Australia were given a 'Local government Antisemitism Action Plan.' According to Deepcut, the plan could cost at least \$730,000 for a council to implement.

The plan calls for councils to collect data on "antisemitic incidents"

as defined by the group behind the "summit." It also asks for councils to adopt the contentious International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. That definition includes as 'examples' of antisemitism, several forms of criticism of Israel and its actions.

Councillor Owen Cosgriff at the City of Greater Bendigo told Deepcut that the IHRA definition of antisemitism is "pretty plainly ... designed to restrict criticism of the state of Israel."

Cr Rhonda Garad from Melbourne's City of Greater Dandenong identified the cost of implementing the action plan at \$736,000.

A leaflet given out at the Mayors Summit claimed that watermelons as a symbol of solidarity with Palestinian people as antisemitic.

Max Kaiser, executive officer at the Jewish Council of Australia, said that attendees who pretended that the conference was "anything but an anti-Palestinian hatefest" should be ashamed of themselves.



Sydney Vigil

STOP USA BLOCKADE ON CUBA

4:15pm till 5:00pm Friday 17 October
USA Consulate, 50 Miller Street North Sydney
Call 0418 270 885

Communist Parties of Australia and Vietnam build relationship

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) delegation, led by Party National President Vinnie Molina, Assistant General Secretary Elly Hulm and International Department member Andy Carruthers was proud to be hosted by the Vietnamese Ambassador H.E. Pham Hung Tam, for the important visit of Communist Party of Vietnam Politburo member and former Military Lieutenant General Nguyen Trong Nghia, who is also Secretary of the Central Committee and Head of the Central Propaganda and Mass Mobilisation Commission. Many other dignitaries from many sectors including education were present at the high-level meeting, as well as the translator and press pack.

The exchange began with Comrade Nghia outlining Vietnam's socialist path and the importance of Ho Chi Minh Thought and the pillars of national sovereignty: people-centred governance, Marxism-Leninism, and the vanguard role of the Communist Party of Vietnam in putting people first in all respects. Comrade Nghia noted that Vietnam has recently reviewed 40 years of Renewal (Doi Moi) and the extraordinary development achievements throughout this period. Comrade Nghia added that the relationship forged with Communist and Worker's parties around the world is a special priority of the CPV and backed by the Vietnamese people, and that the CPA and CPV should strengthen theoretical exchanges, information sharing, and enhanced collaboration in publishing and public mobilisation.

Party President Vinnie Molina then offered words of solidarity and support to the ongoing work of socialist construction in Vietnam and outlined the leading role of the CPV in the great victory against imperialism. President Molina noted that there are few countries on earth that have fought off one imperialist occupier

let alone three, adding that the CPA has long recognised Vietnam as a force for peace and development. Molina underlined the importance of peace in a world on the brink.

Respected Comrade Nguyen Trong Nghia agreed that in a time of such conflict there is an urgent need for multilateralism and peace. Further exchanges and ideas were proposed by both parties. This was followed by an exchange of gifts, warm embraces, and a banquet dinner.

The Communist Party of Australia and the Communist Party of Vietnam feel exceptionally warm traditional ties of brothers and sisters, comrades-in-arms bonded forever by our commitment to Marxism-Leninism. As President Molina put it, the CPV and CPA are as close as family. We also honour the role of Ho Chi Minh Thought as a special advancement of socialism of the Vietnamese style, preserving over one thousand years of Vietnam's national civilisation, just as we too are developing Marxism-Leninism of our context and style rooted in commitment to Aboriginal sovereignty and the militant labour movement from Lance Sharkey to Peter Symon, Hannah Middleton, and many others past and present.

Our Party played a vanguard role in the Anti-Vietnam-War movement, and we will never turn our backs on our comrades in the CPV. Vietnam's socialist construction continues with the work of To Lam, carrying forth the great thoughts and deeds of Nguyen Phu Trong, Nong Duc Manh, Le Kha Phieu, Do Muoi, Nguyen Van Linh, Le Duan, and Ho Chi Minh himself.

We look forward to continuing this relationship in all areas proposed, including theoretical exchanges, publishing collaboration, and visits to Vietnam.

Long live the special friendship between the CPV and the CPA!

Long live sovereign socialist Vietnam!



GREEN NOTES

Environmental impact of massive AI data centres

Graham Holton

AI data centres in the United States are expanding at an unprecedented rate, powering everything from ChatGPT to autonomous vehicles. Most of the world's 8,000 data centres are located in the US, and the number continues to rise. The rapid growth of AI data centres increases demands for fossil fuels and water supplies with increasing carbon emissions and increased environmental impacts.

US data centres consume 5 per cent of total US electricity (130 TWh/year), equivalent to Australia's annual use. AI workloads will likely double by 2030, because AI training large language models (LLMs) require up to fifty times more electricity than conventional cloud workloads. Training GPT-4 consumed 1.1 GWh of electricity, equivalent to powering 120 homes for a year. A single massive 'hyperscale' AI facility can consume 500 MW of electricity, equivalent to that used by a small city. The environmental consequence of generating this much power is that tens of millions of tonnes of CO2 are released annually.

AI hardware, such as GPUs, generates far more heat than standard servers, so water cooling is critical. A large AI data centre can use 19 million litres of water per day. Many US data centres are in arid states, such as Arizona and Nevada, where water scarcity is a major problem. Google's data centre in The Dalles, Oregon, used over 1.2 billion litres of water in 2021. Microsoft consumed 1.7 billion litres of water in 2022. With increased consumption AI data centres compete with homes and farms for electricity and water, particularly during droughts and heatwaves. Waste heat from concentrated facilities can alter local microclimates.

AI-optimised facilities emit 50 per cent more CO2 per unit of computing than traditional data centres. The training of a single large AI model can emit 600 tonnes of CO2, equivalent to the lifetime emissions of more than fifty cars.

This rapid AI expansion can overwhelm the existing electricity infrastructure, with states like Virginia and Texas struggling to meet current demand. To meet power surges, utilities have fallen back on gas and coal plants, reversing previous decarbonisation gains. Dominion Energy in Virginia has delayed retiring fossil plants to keep up with data centre growth.

Then there's space. Massive facilities such as Hyperscale AI data centres often cover more than 40 hectares, contributing to habitat fragmentation and local ecosystem loss. Suburban farmland and forested areas are increasingly converted into data campuses, particularly in Northern Virginia, which has the world's largest data-centre hub.

Microsoft released 30 per cent more greenhouse gases in 2024 than in 2020. By 2030, data centres will consume 16 per cent of the total power consumption in the US. In comparison power consumption was only 2.5 per cent before ChatGPT was introduced in 2022.

Reducing the environmental burden of AI infrastructure depends on future policy, grid planning and transparency. The tech giants are doing a bit of that, working on renewable energy, advanced cooling, and circular economy practices. They're also trying to improve computer efficiency to reduce their power consumption, with Google, Microsoft, Oracle, and Amazon using a low-power process in their data centres to minimise consumption by 15 per cent. Nvidia's new AI chip models consume 25 per cent less power. As the demands of AI continue to grow, tech companies are trying to divert an energy and resource crisis which will have major environmental and social impacts.

Tech companies are capitalist companies, so they're also resorting to secrecy in the face of community concerns, as well as choosing communities that have been historically targeted for exploitation and have the least amount of civic power wielded by local residents when deciding where to put oversized and destructive data centres.



Something to say?

Write to the Editor!

editor@cpa.org.au

AI and automation

Warren Smith

The social debates around Artificial Intelligence (AI) are raging on around us daily. Different forms of AI are regularly appearing in our daily lives. Some of these, in their most basic forms, include things like the Facebook algorithm, Meta AI, Microsoft CoPilot, Chat GPT and a myriad of others that flow into our regular activities at work and play.

The debate about AI is now front and centre in public discourse. It links with an older debate about automation and productivity.

AI, automation and productivity under Australian capitalism are interwoven with private capital and exploitation of labour. These things are about the creation of greater surplus value and accumulation of private wealth.

There is nothing inherently wrong with technology. However, these new forms of technological development in the hands of the employing class are designed to achieve increased private profits and greater control over workers. AI under capitalism is not being used to increase social well-being or to progress humankind generally.

AI is an enhancer of automation. Automation is being used to destroy jobs, bust unions and remove barriers to profit. It is dressed up as being more productive. On the waterfront, where productivity is a central public debate, automation actually decreases productivity. It does however increase profits.

Every industry will be impacted by AI and its enhanced enabling of automation. Some industries will be impacted first (and soon). The waterfront, warehousing, manufacturing, rail, transport generally,

public services, health and law will all be impacted. The use of AI and automation under capitalism is directing us straight into a severe crisis of overproduction. Displaced workers, in their hundreds of thousands, will have no capacity to buy the goods and services produced. With this comes falling prices, unemployment, and economic instability and social needs getting increasingly squeezed.

AI and automation will effectively become the major struggle of workers in the next decade. It will impact on wages and conditions and the right to work itself.

There are clearly massive consequences of AI use and red flags are appearing for labour even in this early stage of its development. No union bargaining should now neglect the inevitability of AI and automation creeping into their workplaces.

Some of the negative features for workers include: Job displacement, Biometric Surveillance, Opaque Algorithmic Decision Making – hiring, rostering and promotion, wearable based monitoring as well as the intensification of automated processes with no benefits to society. Even the arts and cultural work are not being spared.

AI is only as good as the data it's trained on. If a recruitment AI system is programmed by bigots then the recruitment outcomes are likely to be bigoted, racist and sexist. If a workplace safety system is designed with data from someone who has no regard for safety the workplace will be unsafe. These are important matters in bargaining around technology.

Unions and workers must have a right to their data. AI is driven by data. Every move we make in a crane, straddle, warehouse or forklift is being collected. We are in practice training AI systems to



Graphic: aqua-cloud.io (CC BY 4.0)

perform the very tasks that automation replaces. It is our tacit knowledge, meaning our collective experience, knowledge and skills, that is the basis of AI knowledge and capacity to operate.

There needs to be a price tag placed on our tacit knowledge. Data collection by capitalists is the theft of the unpaid by-product of our labour – data. Why should our history of skills and knowledge become the property of the employer? Employers buy our labour power not our brains and employers should pay for the knowledge that comes from our collective history.

Everything we do in high tech cars is based on collection of data. Where we go, how fast we go, how we deal with traffic anomalies, when we brake, when and who we ring on our mobile phones – it all feeds

into a system designed to allow the car to drive us; not us drive the car.

The same applies to cranes and other job functions. Data is a key, and it has a value. A worker's tacit knowledge and the data derived from it is effectively unpaid labour. The worker's labour is purchased once, through wages, but the data by-product (which is in effect a value of labour) is kept and re-used in an ongoing manner. No permission is given by the crane operator or the actor or artist when their data is used, often in processes aimed at replacing them.

All of their skills are being re-used in an unpaid way. It is theft. We know surplus value is basically unpaid wages and in itself theft but the extra data theft takes it a step even further. We should refuse to allow our data to be considered extra surplus value for the boss.

We need to fight for the right to own our own data.

Technology is not to blame. Its misuse for private profit and not for social gain is the problem. At the heart of this issue is private property.

If automation and AI were used to allow all workers to have a 20-hour week and shorter working lives with higher pay and full employment, it would be hard to oppose. But it won't be used that way under capitalism. That then becomes the point of struggle.

Communists should point out these contradictions and we should be in the forefront of the struggles to win the benefits of new technologies that can be shared across the community that reap reward for the many not the few. ★

Union scores major victory at Western Sydney University

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) has scored a major victory in the fight to save jobs at Western Sydney University (WSU).

After pressure from NTEU members, WSU management has agreed that any ongoing staff member whose old role is scrapped will be found a suitable new job at the university as part of the restructure.

Earlier in the year, Western Sydney University announced plans to cut up to 400 jobs in a sweeping restructure of its workforce.

Under the new agreement, the university has committed to not making use of any forced redundancies.

Staff whose positions are disestablished will be offered suitable alternative roles, ensuring that those who wish to stay at the university can retain secure employment.

NTEU NSW Division Secretary Vince Caughley said, "This agreement shows there is always a better way to manage change. It is possible to protect livelihoods, put people first, and safeguard

the institution without destroying jobs or reputations in the pursuit of balance sheet improvements."

"For months staff have endured a major failure of process and governance that has caused enormous distress. Thanks to the persistence of our branch members, we now have an outcome that proves managements do have options – and that there is no need to devastate people's lives or undermine a university's standing to deliver change."

"The union will always fight for secure employment. The commitment reached here shows that secure jobs and institutional sustainability can go hand in hand, if management chooses to respect staff and work constructively."

"We hope this approach provides a better path to change. It is now crystal clear that change does not have to mean forced redundancies, and we urge other university managements in NSW to take note."

NTEU WSU Branch President David Burchell called the agreement, "a big win for NTEU members at our place, and for the wider University community." He says

the agreement "imposes a much-needed framework of decency and sanity onto the University's 'Reset' process."

"It's also a big win for NTEU members and staff at the various other universities in NSW where huge job-cutting projects are being pursued. There is nothing inevitable about these processes. Union members and staff have agency."

"This is the first time this year that a Vice Chancellor, genuinely acknowledging the stress and anger the job cuts epidemic has caused in their communities, has agreed to take a meaningful step from the brink. Hopefully it's a sign of saner times to come."

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes praised the agreement and put it down to union members standing together.

She added that the NTEU is "fighting these short-sighted plans at campuses but we need federal and state reform to stop unaccountable executives damaging entire communities by tearing at the fabric of universities."

National Tertiary Education Union ★

Don't be
Hastie
with ...



This cartoon of right-wing Coalition MP Andrew Hastie is quickly drawn, but then again so are Hastie's political ideas.

The world finances the US deficit

Jaime Bravo and Jorge Coulon

In August 1971, Richard Nixon announced the suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold. This closed a cycle that had begun with the Bretton Woods agreements, which gave the United States – the only industrial and financial power to emerge with its capabilities intact and as a creditor to the rest of the world – the possibility of making its currency the global reserve of value.

But even with that American weight, it had to compromise on gold backing and, to do so, concentrate the reserves of Western countries. No one was willing to hand over the reserve currency printing press to a single country.

With the gesture of breaking convertibility – the so-called Nixon Shock – the Bretton Woods system that had provided stability to international trade since the end of World War II collapsed. The gold standard, which guaranteed that each dollar could be exchanged for a fixed amount of precious metal, was left behind. Since then, the dollar has been sustained solely by 'confidence' in the US economy and the political and military power that backs it.

That's not all. Coercion to force its use led to the birth of petrodollars. Nixon himself signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia, whereby that country – the leading oil exporter at the time – would only accept payments in US dollars. In exchange, the United States would guarantee Saudi Arabia's security. The high dependence of the world's economies on oil ensured the permanence of that currency as a reserve and also as the most universal means of international payment.

THE EXORBITANT PRIVILEGE

This shift to a currency based on trust ushered in a peculiar financial order: the currency of a single country became the global benchmark. With this, Washington acquired an unparalleled privilege: it can print dollars at will, without the world rejecting them. In fact, the world demands them. Central banks, governments, and companies need dollars to trade, save, and borrow. What for any other nation would be a sure recipe for inflation, for the United States became a mechanism for global financing.

The then-finance minister – and later president of France – Valéry Giscard d'Estaing dubbed this situation "exorbitant privilege." He was right: thanks to the hegemony of the dollar, the United States can live beyond its means, financing its fiscal and trade deficits with paper – or digital records – that others treasure as if they were gold.



Photo: getarchive.net (public domain)

HOW THE MACHINERY WORKS

The machinery operates in a simple and brutal manner. As we have seen, oil and most other commodities are traded in dollars. International debt is issued in dollars. Central bank reserves are held in dollars. Thus, every country in the world pays a kind of "tribute" to the centre of the system.

When the Federal Reserve expands the money supply – as it did after the 2008 crisis or during the 2020 pandemic – it injects liquidity that travels beyond its borders. Some of those dollars circulate in the global economy, putting pressure on prices and devaluing local currencies. Others return to the United States in the form of purchases of Treasury bonds, considered the safest asset on the planet. In both cases, Washington wins: it finances its debt at low cost and exports part of its inflation.

NOT ALL THE BLAME LIES WITH THE DOLLAR

It is worth qualifying this point. Global inflation cannot be explained solely by US issuance. Other factors are at play: wars that disrupt supply chains, oil price hikes, pandemics that disrupt production, financial speculation, and each country's internal policies. But the dollar acts as an amplifier: its status as a global reserve currency means

that the costs of US decisions are socialised on a global scale.

When the Federal Reserve raises interest rates, for example, capital flees from emerging countries to Treasury bonds, strengthening the dollar and weakening national currencies. This makes imports more expensive, increases the cost of external debt, and directly hits peripheral economies. It is a reminder that the monetary sovereignty of the Global South is tied to the decisions of a central bank that responds solely to the interests of the United States, with executives from the private financial world and a president appointed by the executive branch.

INVISIBLE FINANCING

The result is paradoxical: the entire world finances the US deficit. The most indebted country on the planet remains, at the same time, the most solvent in the eyes of the markets. Not because its accounts are in order, but because it can always pay in the currency that only it issues. It is as if everyone else willingly accepted to be eternal creditors of a power that never intends to repay them in gold, but only in its own printed promise.

HOW LONG WILL THIS LAST?

The big question is how long this scheme can be sustained. Attempts are already being made to build alternatives: the Chinese yuan

or RMB, the BRICS initiatives to trade in local currencies, or even central bank digital currencies. The euro, although important, has not managed to displace the dollar from its throne.

The dollar's hegemony is not just an economic issue: it is a device of power. The United States not only prints the currency that everyone uses; it can also block transactions, apply financial sanctions, and exclude entire countries from the payment system. War and finance are intertwined on the same battlefield.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world bears the costs: imported inflation, more expensive debt, recurring currency crises. The conclusion is uncomfortable but clear: we live in an order in which the issuer of the world currency spends what it does not have, and the rest of the planet pays the bill – increasingly with what it does not have either: growing debt and mortgaged sovereignties.

Perhaps the 21st century will see the emergence of a new monetary equilibrium. But as long as the dollar continues to reign, the paradox will persist: the United States produces deficits, and the whole world finances them.

Globetrotter ✨

Venezuela and drugs: claims vs evidence

Alan Macleod

The Trump administration's extraordinary claims about Maduro and Venezuela have convinced few experts. Professor Julia Buxton of Liverpool John Moores University, a specialist in both global drug policy and Venezuelan politics, told *MintPress*:

"The claim that Venezuela is a major drugs producer has been an ongoing theme of the US campaign against Venezuela dating back to the early 2000s. This kind of anti-drug messaging is really common in US foreign policy and strategy for at least 100 years. What we have got here is essentially just recycled Ronald Reagan [talking points] ... It is unsubstantiated and absurd, and it is really not backed by any official data."

The data does indeed jar wildly with the administration's accusations. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's World Drug Report 2025 explains that cocaine – the drug most associated with South America – is primarily produced in Colombia, Peru, or Bolivia, and transported via ports in Ecuador to the United States. Venezuela is not mentioned at all in the 98-page document, which catalogues producers, consumers, suppliers, and supply lines of drugs.

The vast majority of lethal drugs produced in South America travel via the Pacific coastline from Ecuador. In terms of supply routes, a small amount of Colombian cocaine is trafficked through the country's long and porous rainforest border with Venezuela, and then transported via the Caribbean. But this is minuscule in comparison to that

transported via Pacific ships, over the land route through Central America and Mexico, or simply flown directly to the US from the cocaine producing states.

The US Drug Enforcement Agency's own 2025 National Drug Threat Assessment report essentially agrees with the UN. Indeed, the 90-page document touches on Venezuela in only two paragraphs on a single page – a clear indicator of the threat posed by the Caribbean nation to the US.

The section addresses Tren de Aragua's (TDA) criminal activities, but does not attempt to link them to the Venezuelan government. In fact, a declassified US National Intelligence Council report from April 2025 concedes that:

"The Maduro regime probably does not have a policy of cooperating with TDA and is not directing

TDA movement to and operations in the United States. The IC [intelligence community] bases this judgment on Venezuelan law enforcement actions demonstrating the regime treats TDA as a threat."

It goes on to note that Venezuelan intelligence, military, and police services have been "engaged in armed confrontations" with Tren de Aragua, and that it "has not observed the regime directing TDA, including to push migrants to the United States, which probably would require extensive [REDACTED] coordination." "FBI analysts agree with the above assessment," the document concludes.

The National Intelligence Council, an official government body, serves to deliver data gathered by intelligence services to lawmakers and the private sector.

Moreover, Tren de Aragua's size and scope have been vastly overstated by Trump and the media. The gang was born in a Venezuelan prison and is known to carry out smuggling and run extortion rackets. However, it was never on the scale of other criminal organisations such as the Sinaloa Cartel or MS-13. Ronna Rísquez, a Venezuelan investigative journalist (and fierce critic of Maduro) who wrote the first book on the cartel, estimated its peak size at just 3,000 members. "It's not a group that has the capacity to be an enemy, not just of the United States, but of any country," she said.

Mintpressnews.com
(edited for space) ✨

Decolonising Australian screens

Graham Holton

Australia's Indigenous directors and actors have shaped our cinema and television productions locally and internationally. They are central to the decolonisation of Australian cinema, challenging old stereotypes by reclaiming the historical narrative. Their works explore land, identity, dispossession, and the Indigenous spiritual connection, while experimenting with genre from Westerns and Gothic horror to sci-fi and comedy.

First Nation filmmakers are reshaping Australian TV and cinema, taking back control of the lens through stories and cultures with new perspectives. The distinctive voice of Indigenous Australian cinema has received acclaim in international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Toronto, and Sundance.

The best-known actor is David Gulpilil (1953-2021) of the Yolŋu nation. Gulpilil had noted performances in *Walkabout* (1971), *The Tracker* (2002), and *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002). The legendary actor-dancer brought Indigenous characters to a global audience. Jack Charles (1943-2022) (Boon Wurrung/Dja Dja Wurrung) is well known for *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978) and *Cleverman* (TV). He was a powerful symbol of cultural resilience and survival.

More recently Aaron Pedersen (Arrernte and Arabana), who acted in *Mystery Road* (film & TV), and *Goldstone* (2016), is a leader in Indigenous *noir* films by portraying

complex Aboriginal detectives and anti-heroes. Leah Purcell (Goa-Gunggari/Wakka Wakka) is well known for *The Drover's Wife: The Legend of Molly Johnson* (2021), and *Wentworth* (TV). The actor-writer-director brings Indigenous perspectives to classic Australian stories. Shantae Barnes-Cowan (Adnyamathanha/Kokatha) was in *Firebite* (2021), and *Sweet As* (2022). Shantae is praised for her youthful and dynamic performances.

Up and coming actors include Rarriwuy Hick (Yolŋu), who was in *True Colours* (2022). Tasia Zalar (Gunggandji/Kaurareg) was in *Mystery Road* (TV), and *The Straits* (TV). Baykali Ganambarr (Yolŋu) in *The Nightingale* (2018), won the Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Young Actor at Venice.

Leading indigenous Australian directors include Rachel Perkins (Arrernte/Kalkadoon), who is one of the most prominent Indigenous directors and co-founder of Blackfella Films. Her work blends entertainment, Indigenous history, and political rights. Perkins is noted for *Bran Nue Dae* (2009), *Mabo* (2012), and *Mystery Road* (TV, 2018-present). Warwick Thornton (Kaytetye) is a Cannes Caméra d'Or winner. His films use lyrical cinematography to depict the impact of colonialism and Indigenous resilience. Thornton is noted for *Samson and Delilah* (2009), *Sweet Country* (2017), and more recently *The New Boy* (2023).

Other directors include Beck Cole (Warramungu/Luritja), well known for her powerful portrayals of Aboriginal women and urban Indigenous stories. Beck's films include

Here I Am (2011), *We Are Still Here* (2022), and *Redfern Now* (TV). Wayne Blair (Batjala/Mununjali/Wakka Wakka) brought Indigenous stories to mainstream audiences using humour, music, and social commentary. Wayne directed *The Sapphires* (2012), *Cleverman* (TV), and *Firebite* (TV). Tracey Moffatt (Kamilaroi) is one of the first Aboriginal women to direct a feature film and is internationally acclaimed for her experimental and art films. Tracey directed *Nice Coloured Girls* (1987), and *Bedevil* (1993).

Larissa Behrendt (Eualeyai/Kamilaroi) is an award-winning documentarian who explores law, land rights, and the Stolen Generations. Behrendt directed *After the Apology* (2017), and *Maralinga Tjarutja* (2020). Dena Curtis (Arrernte/Warlpiri) focuses on Indigenous storytelling through humour and supernatural narratives. Dena is noted for *8MMM Aboriginal Radio* (2015), and *Shadow Trackers* (2014). Grant Saunders (Biripi) blends activism and documentary filmmaking around land rights and cultural identity. Grant is noted for *Wik vs Queensland* (2018), and *Vote Yes* (2007).

Australia's Indigenous filmmakers need access to overseas venues, such as the Sundance Film Festival in the United States. The Trump administration has announced a 100 per cent tariff on all foreign films. While the details have not been finalised, the cost of importing Australian films may be prohibitive. The unwarranted tariff is not only an attack on our film industry it is an attack on the global recognition of Australia's Indigenous culture. ❗

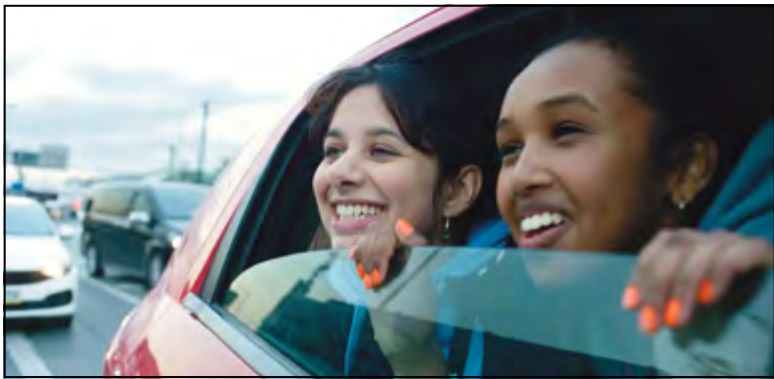


Walkabout



The New Boy

Film Review Brides



Reviewer: MD

In 2015 three British teenage schoolgirls ran away to Syria to join Isis and were later vilified by the media even though they were children. But – what would make them do this?

Theatre-director-turned-filmmaker Nadia Fall's powerful debut feature poses that very question as it follows two alienated young Muslim girls, Doe (remarkable newcomer Ebada Hassan) and Muna (Safiyya Ingar), as they leave their lives in Britain behind in search of freedom, friendship and a new life full of purpose and meaning.

Six years in the making and led by a predominantly female team, Fall, who runs London's Young Vic theatre, delivers an impressive drama which is told from the girls' point of view. It provides a thought-provoking insight into these teenagers, who aren't the devil incarnate. Doe is quiet and gentle

while Muna is wild, rebellious and confrontational. Doe, who is Somali, has to deal with her mum's abusive boyfriend and racist bullies at school. Muna, who is Pakistani, is seen as a major disappointment by her parents.

Both girls feel like outsiders who find solace and strength in each other as they embrace their ride or die. As teenagers, they are hardwired to take outlandish risks. Hassan and Ingar are totally mesmerising and give powerhouse performances.

The film doesn't mention Isis or focus on their radicalisation. Instead, it centres on the girls' friendship as we follow them on their precarious journey to Syria via Turkey, during which their money and bus tickets are stolen and Doe begins to have second thoughts.

It ends on an emotional yet sombre note which leaves you with a lot to reconsider.

Morning Star ❗



Across

- [4] Coombah on Snowy Mountains Hwy
- [6] mountain town and river
- [8] Heads
- [10] Tamdanya, Kaurna land
- [11] NSW Pacific Highway town
- [13] Diljang, means peninsula
- [15] Naarm's river
- [16] Meanjin, northern capital
- [18] Borloo, Noongar land

Down

- [1] Famous for cheese
- [2] Across the Murray from Echuca
- [3] Blue Mountains resort
- [5] 'Yinculer' on the Eyre Highway
- [7] Dog, tuckerbox, you know the drill
- [9] Gadigal land
- [12] NSW central coast town
- [14] Freedom Ride town
- [17] 'bery bery, a juice town

Book Review

The AI con: How to fight big tech's hype and create the future we want

by Emily M Bender and Alex Hanna

Reviewer: Ian Sinclair

This September, Sam Altman, the CEO of Open AI, claimed “a kid born today will never be smarter than AI ever.” A couple of days before, Demis Hassabis, the head of Google’s DeepMind, said, “We’ll have something that we could sort of reasonably call AGI [artificial general intelligence], that exhibits all the cognitive capabilities human have, maybe in the next five to ten years, possibly the lower end of that.”

With hype about AI at fever pitch, this new US-centric polemic from Emily M Bender, professor of linguistics at the University of Washington, and Alex Hanna, a former senior research scientist on Google’s Ethical AI team, couldn’t be more timely.

“AI is a marketing term” and the tech barons of our age are great admen, they argue. “It doesn’t refer to a coherent set of technologies,” but is used to boost profits, making money by “getting others to believe that their technology is similar to humans.” And we are talking about a huge amount of dosh – so far this year the largest companies in the US have invested AU\$238 billion in the development of AI.

Bender and Hanna prefer the term “automation” to “AI,” with large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT the most prominent type. The problem for the AI boosters is there is nothing remotely intelligent or sentient about LLMs. As one academic paper noted last year, they “simply aim to replicate human speech or writing” which “they do by estimating the likelihood that a particular word will appear next, given the text that has come before.”

Accessible and informal, much of the book surveys the myriad problems with the increasing use of automation in healthcare, the criminal justice system, welfare, higher education and the creative industries. For example, the

company SoundThinking sells ShotStopper to municipalities across the US, claiming their product is “a proven acoustic gunshot detection system” with a 97 per cent accuracy rate. However, audits in Chicago and New York City found between 87–91 per cent of alerts were false alarms – a recipe for disaster when you have armed police.

For Bender and Hanna, “government processes that affect people’s liberty, health, and livelihoods require human attention and accountability” rather than automation.

They also note how apparent human-levels of competence of systems sold as “AI” are often the result of work done by actual humans, commonly working in exploitative conditions in the global South. They highlight several cases of this hidden labour, including workers in Kenya, Uganda, and India tasked with labelling disturbing internet content for the purpose of training models such as ChatGPT.

A broader critique they have is that AI hype tends to devalue what it means to be human, though frustratingly they don’t explore this interesting notion in any depth. Certainly my sense is that the more outlandish claims about AI are frequently made by those with a techno-optimist, instrumentalist view of humanity and an attendant lack of interest in the complexity of people’s lives and the jobs they have.

“AI development is not inevitable,” the authors boldly state, concluding with a chapter on how people can fight back as individuals (by asking critical questions), in the workplace (through unions) and at the national level (through strong regulation). Like the 18th century Luddites whom they laud throughout the book, they are at pains to clarify they are not anti-technology: “We want technology that is created to strengthen and empower communities, not technology that reproduces and enables systems of oppression, consolidation of power, and environmental devastation.”

Morning Star ★

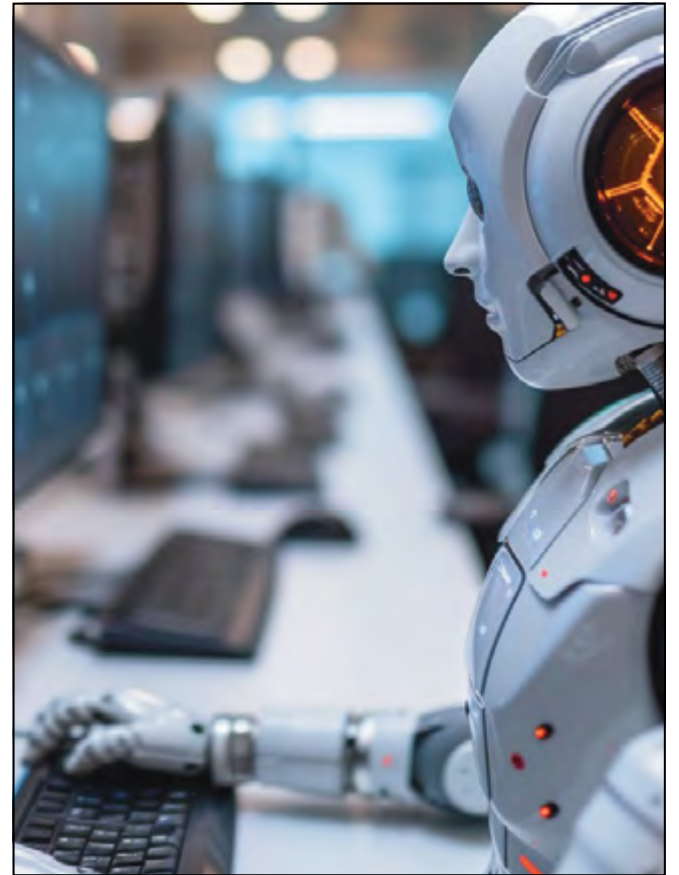


Photo: stockcake.com

Sport: World track and field championship 13 to 21 September

Denis Doherty

The world track and field championships finished in Tokyo last month and Australia was expected to do well. There has been a frisson of excitement about Australia’s chances in track and field due to the uproar about Gout Gout. Gout Gout is an exciting young athlete from Ipswich in Queensland who is only 17. He is just completing his Higher School Certificate, but has made the Australian athletic world take notice with times comparable with Usain Bolt.

On the women’s side of the athletic world there are promising young women starting to post very good times. Among the women of note are middle-distance runner Jessica Hull and sprinter Torrie Lewis. On the men’s side of the ledger is Peter Bol, a

middle-distance runner (800m). Australian followers of track and field were expecting good results in these world championships and shortly to come the Olympics 2028.

The stereotype about track and field at this level is that the short sprints, hurdles (100m, 200m) men and women will be dominated by athletes from the US or Jamaica, with a chance for some other Caribbean States. In the current events this pattern was followed, and a similar generalisation could be made that the long distances, 5,000 metres or 10,000 metres and even the marathon will be dominated by North Africans from such places as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Algeria or Tunisia. Apparently, people living at high altitude with poor resources develop the ability to sustain running at pace for long distances. Again, these events were dominated by people from those places.

Australia came in at 15th in the medal

tally; we scored 1 gold and 3 bronze medals. Australia’s phenomenal women’s high jumper Nicola Olyslagers won the gold medal in pouring rain – a remarkable effort. Jess Hull got very little attention. She was knocked over in the semi finals of 1500m but was allowed to compete in the final and did well to get a bronze medal.

Kurtis Marschall was up against the world’s most talented athlete Sweden’s Armand ‘Mondo’ Duplantis who is the current world champion. ‘Mondo’ broke the world record soaring over 6.3 metres and made his competitors seem very ordinary. Mackenzie Little won bronze in the women’s javelin competition. Peter Bol ran a very poor tactical race in the 800 metres and could not get a place. In the men’s discus Matt Denny was spooked by the wet surfaces and ended up 4th.

In 2032 our athletics team will be

competing in Brisbane for the Olympics. There maybe a lot of talent coming up in the next 7 years but for now Australia seems bereft of talent, despite the huge sums of money thrown at sport in this country.

The *Guardian* asked the Australian Sports Commission to comment on Australia’s performance at the world championships in Athletics and received a curt “the ASC won’t give running commentary on different World Championships happening across the globe.” Australia came 15th on medal tally and some of the countries that achieved better results were Kenya (came 2nd), Botswana, Jamaica, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago. Australia just edged ahead of Cuba. While we do not resent other countries doing better, surely the Australian Sports Commission should be asking what are we doing in relation to the state of athletics in Australia? ★

Mexico calls for an end to Israel’s genocide against Palestine

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has once again condemned the situation in the Gaza Strip, reiterating the call to stop the genocide that Israel perpetrates in the Palestinian enclave.

On Monday, 6 October, the president reaffirmed her country’s position in favour of peace building and the two-state solution. “What we are looking for is for both states

to coexist, for peace to be built and for this terrible situation of aggression against civilians in Palestine to end,” Sheinbaum said during her usual morning press conference.

The Mexican president stressed the urgency of allowing humanitarian aid access to Gaza, a territory that has suffered constant aggression from Tel Aviv since October 2023, which to date has left a balance of more than 67,000

Palestinians killed, mostly women and children, and more than 169,000 injured.

Claudia Sheinbaum also recalled the international actions undertaken by Mexico, including the complaint filed in The Hague when former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador governed.

She also stressed that “for the first time a Mexican government has an ambassador ... from

Palestine,” which underscores the country’s sustained commitment to recognition and support for the Palestinian people.

Sheinbaum also criticised the recent interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla by Israeli military vessels in international waters.

The flotilla was carrying aid and trying to break the blockade that has plunged Gaza into a famine crisis. The president said: “We

did not think it was the right way for this group of people who were carrying humanitarian aid to be intercepted.”

The president also confirmed that the Mexican Foreign Ministry is working on the repatriation of nationals who participated in the initiative.

Telesur ★

‘Peace through war’

Peter Farmer

US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth welcomed the 800 military leaders assembled in Quantico to the “War Department” last month saying, “the era of the Department of Defense is over. You see, the motto of my first platoon was those who long for peace must prepare for war. To ensure peace, we must prepare for war.”

“It’s called peace through strength,” bellowed Hegseth.

“We have to be prepared for war, not for defence. We’re training warriors, not defenders. We fight wars to win, not to defend.”

His speech complemented Trump’s (see page 16) with greater focus on purging the military of “wokeness,” building a stronger, more lethal force, and purging those who do not subscribe to Hegseth’s version of God, and Trump’s fascistic agenda.

Hegseth stressed that the US military should match his ideal of aggression, saying that “Should our enemies choose foolishly to challenge us, they will be crushed by the violence, precision and ferocity of the War Department. In other words, to our enemies, FAFO.” (F*** Around, Find Out)

“This is a moment of urgency, mounting urgency. Enemies gather. Threats grow. There is no time for games.” Hegseth told a roomful of stony faced generals.

After spruiking the War Department’s need for more of everything, Hegseth gave a plug for Trump’s idea of making US vassal states or “allies and partners” pay more to “share the burden” of US military supremacy.

“America cannot do everything,” he added, with some understatement.

“WOKE DEPARTMENT”

Hegseth put some time into explaining how not-woke he was about to make the military, saying he would remove “social justice, politically correct and toxic ideological garbage.” Hegseth called identity months and other “woke” events “debris.” Since a lot of Hegseth’s efforts since becoming Defense/War Secretary have been devoted to dismissing Black and female officers and erasing any records of their achievements, so it’s not hard to see what being the “woke

department” means for him. It means restrictions on racism and misogyny.

Hegseth also showed respect to anti-vaxxers and people who hate renewable energy – all this after telling the generals he was going to “rip out the politics.” He signalled a coming purge on the basis of MAGA ideology, saying that his job would be to distinguish leaders who “simply did what they must to answer the prerogatives of civilian leadership” from leaders who “are truly invested in the woke department.”

MISOGYNY

Hegseth put a lot of energy into berating the generals about physical fitness, complaining about “females who can’t meet the same combat arms physical standards as men.” “Standards must be uniform, gender neutral and high,” he declared. There have never been the “male fitness standards” Hegseth mentioned, just fitness standards which women in the US military have met.

Hegseth, sharing a stage with Donald Trump, also complained that seeing fat generals and admirals in the halls of the Pentagon was “a bad look.”

Real men are apparently clean-shaven as well as fit, the Secretary of War mentioned that he didn’t like beards.

RULE OF TERROR

With a fascist’s love of cruelty, Hegseth also promised to restore “toxic leadership,” calling efforts to stamp out bullying, hazing “an anathema to the Constitution and the laws of nature and nature’s God.”

He said he would “empower leaders to enforce standards without fear of retribution or second guessing.” Drill sergeants will be “empowered” to “instil healthy fear” as well as swearing and “shark attacks” (yelling at recruits in packs to induce stress), and generally act like unhinged sadists. They can even “put their hands on recruits.” If anything goes wrong with the reign of terror, Hegseth promised not to keep “adverse information” on personnel records.

So bullies and sadists will get away with it, which is supposed to make the US military better at what it does. Nations oppressed by that military won’t shed many tears for future recruits.

Hegseth really leaned into the idea of an unrestricted military, telling the assembled



Photo: FORT HUACHUCA – flickr.com (CC BY-NC 2.0)

generals that they “kill people and break things for a living. You are not politically correct and don’t necessarily belong always in polite society.”

The violence, of course, applies to anyone the War Department meets in combat. “We also don’t fight with stupid rules of engagement.” In other words, ignore the 1949 Geneva Convention and human rights.

Many on the left have mocked Hegseth’s adolescent yet dangerous view of the business of military force, although his audience of professional military leaders didn’t find it funny. Overall though, it’s very ‘mask off’ for the US War Department. Under supposedly progressive Presidents like Biden, Obama,

and Clinton, the US armed forces used lethal force, regime change and occupation to maintain hegemony. Under President George W Bush, torture was reintroduced. Under Obama the US killed innocent civilians in drone strikes.

No President, however much more civilised than Trump they seemed, allowed their troops to be tried by the International Criminal Court, or recognised the world ban on land mines. The US armed forces might be more or less diverse or respectful than before, but they always work for imperialism.

Hegseth’s plan to “untie the hands of our war-fighters” met with silence from his audience. There was no applause. ★

National strike in Ecuador enters third week

Popular resistance has deepened in Ecuador, with the mobilisation of the Amazonian communities of Pastaza and a warning from the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) to “take Quito.”

The protests reject the elimination of the diesel subsidy ordered by President Daniel Noboa and other government policies. They denounce the escalation of state violence against demonstrators and the declaration of a state of emergency in ten provinces with the aim of preventing the mobilisations.

On 6 October, the peoples of Pastaza began the “March for Life and Territory” to defend their collective rights and their worldview, concentrating at the Víctor Hugo Georis Stadium.

They also called on the government to refrain from oil and mining exploitation in their territories, with the collective demand “Pastaza Viva, Pastaza Digna (Living country, dignified country) and No Oil, No Mining!”

The indigenous movement demands include the repeal of Decree 126 that skyrocketed the price of diesel, and the reduction

of Value Added Tax from 15% to 12%, in addition to urgent solutions to the health and education crises.

The government’s response has been repression. President Noboa decreed a state of emergency for 60 days in ten provinces, suspending freedom of assembly.

This measure was meant to contain the protests, which according to the Executive have turned violent. However, the monitoring of the Alliance of Human Rights Organizations registered 219 violations, 95 arrests, 112 wounded, 12 disappeared and 1 deceased as of 5 October.

The escalation of state violence followed the murder of indigenous community leader Efraín Fúñez in Imbabura, who was shot in the back while protesting.

The president of CONAIE, Marlon Vargas, held the government of Daniel Noboa, his ministers and the Ecuadorian state directly responsible for the crime, warning that “it cannot go unpunished” and demanding an independent international investigation.

The Ecuadorian Alliance for Human Rights (DD.HH) detailed the military brutality, which included kicks to Fúñez’s

dying body and attacks on his friend. The government has resorted to accusing demonstrators of terrorism. This is the case of ‘the Otavalo 12’, Kichwa peasants and artisans falsely accused of terrorism and transferred to dangerous prisons as part of a strategy of “disciplining.”

In this context, the organisers of the National Strike denounced government attempts to falsely link some detainees with criminal organisations such as the Tren de Aragua to justify repression.

Telesur ★

US fighter jets’ incursion into Venezuela threatens region

Bolivia has called the incursion of US fighter jets into Venezuelan airspace a provocation threatening regional stability, the country’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“The Bolivian Foreign Ministry categorically rejects and condemns the incursion [into the airspace] by US fighter jets off the coast of fraternal Venezuela. This act poses a serious threat to its sovereignty, violates international law and the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. These

illegal and provocative actions are a response to hegemonic interests seeking control over the natural resources of the Caribbean, which jeopardises the political, economic, and social stability of the region,” the statement said.

The ministry said Bolivia reaffirms its commitment to peace and dialogue and demands an immediate end to these actions, which threaten the lives and peace of millions of people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Earlier, Venezuelan Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said that the

country’s air defence system detected five combat aircraft in its airspace, which he thinks were probably F-35s.

On 19 August, White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said that US President Donald Trump was ready to use “every element of American power” to combat drug trafficking, without ruling out the possibility of a military operation in Venezuela. The statement was made following reports that Washington was deploying over 4,000 Marines and sailors to the waters off Latin

America and the Caribbean to counter drug cartels.

Sputnik

(Editor’s note: at time of writing, US forces have attacked a fourth boat off the coast of Venezuela in international waters. No evidence was given for claims that the people on the boat were “narco terrorists” or for US President Trump’s claim that the boat had been carrying enough drugs to kill “25 to 50 thousand people.” ★

The ghost of Bagram

“One of the biggest airbases in the world, we gave it to them for nothing. We’re trying to get it back,” US President Donald Trump recently declared.

Trump later wrote on social media in his trademark caps-heavy style: “If Afghanistan doesn’t give Bagram Airbase back to those that built it, the United States of America, BAD THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN!!!”

It wasn’t just bluster. It is reported that US officials have quietly opened talks with the Taliban on regaining access to Bagram for counterterrorism operations. This would mark an extraordinary twist in America’s post-9/11 wars: A return to the very airbase Washington abandoned in 2021 during its chaotic withdrawal.

For Trump, Bagram is more than an airfield. It is a symbol of American humiliation and a potential lever in the larger rivalry with China. His vow to take it back suggests not only an attempt to rewrite the narrative of defeat but also a bid to reinsert Washington into Afghanistan’s geopolitics.

THE LONG SHADOW OF BAGRAM

Perched 60 kilometers north of Kabul at 1,500 meters above sea level, Bagram Air Base has long been the prize in Afghanistan’s great-power struggles.

In the 1950s, Moscow helped construct the airfield as part of its development aid to Afghanistan. But by the late 1970s, as Afghanistan descended into turmoil, Bagram became the heart of the Soviet military presence.

From 1979 to 1989, the base was the main stronghold of the 40th Army. The Soviets expanded the airfield into a fully fledged military complex, with housing for officers, fuel pipelines running in from Uzbekistan, hardened aircraft shelters, and administrative buildings. For a decade, Bagram served as Moscow’s command centre in Afghanistan – a hub from which the Soviet Union fought a gruelling war against the US-backed mujahideen.

When the Red Army withdrew in 1989, the base itself became a contested prize. Rival Afghan

factions fought bitterly over it. The Taliban eventually seized it, only to lose it again when US forces invaded in late 2001.

Over the next two decades, Washington poured millions into expanding and fortifying Bagram, adding a second runway, sprawling hangars, and even a notorious detention facility. At its peak, the base spanned 75 square kilometres, housed 10,000 troops, and could accommodate up to 40,000 personnel. It was visited by three US presidents – George W Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump – a testament to its symbolic weight.

But in August 2021, the Americans left in haste, abandoning the base overnight as Taliban fighters swept into Kabul. For Afghans, the handover marked the final collapse of the US project; for Washington, it became the defining image of a humiliating retreat.

Today, when Trump speaks of taking Bagram back, he is invoking not just a piece of military real estate, but the memory of past defeats – a reminder that the airbase has become a graveyard trophy in Afghanistan’s long history of resisting foreign powers.

KABUL’S DEFIANT RESPONSE

For Afghanistan’s current rulers, Trump’s demand struck a nerve. Officials rushed to shut the door before it could even open. “Afghans have never accepted military presence throughout history, and this possibility was completely ruled out during the Doha negotiations and agreement,” Zakir Jalali, an adviser to the Foreign Ministry, said. At the same time, he added that “the doors for further engagement remain open.”

Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani was more categorical: “We will never hand over Bagram to anyone. Such remarks are baseless and strange.”

The warnings quickly escalated. Taliban-run state TV broadcast an audio message attributed to Tajmir Jawad, the deputy head of the group’s intelligence service and widely described as the “architect of suicide attacks.”

Jawad reminded Afghans that

suicide bombings brought the Taliban to power – and vowed they would be used again if necessary to preserve its rule. He pledged to sacrifice himself “piece by piece” for the movement’s survival, branding its opponents “infidels and occupiers.”

For Kabul, Bagram is not just a military facility, but the most potent symbol of foreign domination. Publicly, the Taliban vows that not “an inch of territory” will be surrendered.

WHY BAGRAM STILL MATTERS

Bagram today is less about its hangars and runways than about what its location represents. Nestled in Parwan province, the base offers direct access to Kabul and Afghanistan’s main transport corridors – and sits within striking distance of Iran, Pakistan, China, and Russia’s southern flank.

Trump has made this geography central to his case. “One of the reasons we want the base is it’s an hour away from where China makes its nuclear weapons,” he said.

Beijing immediately rejected the logic. “China respects Afghanistan’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Afghanistan’s future should rest in the hands of the Afghan people. Stirring up tension and confrontation in the region will not be supported,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian countered.

Analysts argue that China’s influence gives it significant leverage. “The Taliban will never accept the return of the US,” Bill Roggio, the senior editor of the *Long War Journal*, told Fox News. “I’d sooner believe the Taliban would give up on Sharia before I’d believe it would let the US back.”

“But let’s say the Trump administration could convince the Taliban to consider allowing the US to return to Bagram – the Chinese would come down hard. They could pressure the Taliban by cancelling mining rights, restricting trade, or ending political and diplomatic recognition. These are all things that are important to the Taliban as they try to develop as a government and seek legitimacy,” he argued.

RT.com



Global Briefs

CUBA: 73 people who were killed in a terrorist act against a Cuban civilian plane in 1976 were honoured at commemorative events in Havana and other cities. The authorities reaffirmed the demand for justice and the need to keep alive the memory of the 1976 event. The Cuban plane exploded in mid-flight on 6 October of that year. The perpetrators were arrested in Venezuela, while the main organisers, Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Cariles, later lived in the United States. 6 October is officially recognised in Cuba as the Day of the Victims of State Terrorism.

FRANCE: French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu resigned less than 24 hours after naming the government and after less than a month in office. The move plunged the country further into a deep political crisis and left French President Macron facing calls for his own resignation. It was France’s fourth prime minister in barely a year.

ESWATINI: A group of 10 migrants deported from the United States arrived in the African nation of Eswatini. They are the latest of more than 40 deportees to Africa since July after the Trump administration struck largely secretive agreements with at least five nations there to take migrants under the new third-country deportation program that human rights groups and others have protested against. Eswatini is a small, mountainous, landlocked kingdom in South Africa, adjoining Mozambique.

RUSSIA: Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) issued a statement claiming the UK secret service is preparing a group of Russian nationals who fight for Ukraine to sabotage a Ukrainian navy ship or a foreign civilian vessel in a European port, after which Britain would accuse Russia of orchestrating the attack. The SVR also claimed that the terrorist group would leave behind them Chinese-made underwater equipment, which would later be presented as ‘proof’ of Beijing’s support for Russia.

GEORGIA: The ruling party of Georgia won the local elections in all 64 municipalities on 4 October 2025. The victory in the capital was of particular importance as the candidate won 71.6% of the vote. Political life in Georgia has become sharply radicalised in recent years. The country’s authorities have chosen to act in the national interest and protect the country’s political system from external interference. In 2024, Parliament passed a law that required NGOs to register as ‘agents of foreign influence’ if their foreign funding accounted for more than 20% of their total income. The opposition was strongly opposed to the move and massive rallies against the move followed. However, in subsequent parliamentary elections in October 2024, the Georgian Dream party was able to hold the majority. The recent protests are seen as an attempt to regain lost ground and change the regime in the country.

INDIA: Direct flights between India and China are set to resume on 26 October 2025, after a 5-year ban due to COVID-19 restrictions and border issues. The reinstated routes aim to strengthen bilateral ties, boost tourism, and ease trade and cultural exchanges.

PAKISTAN: Authorities have reached a peace agreement with a civil rights alliance, ending days of violent protests that left at least 10 people dead and bringing calm to Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Under the deal, the regional government agreed to continue subsidising wheat and electricity, and accepted more than three dozen other demands related to reducing the number of ministers and improving health, education and other public services.



Repairing a runway at the Bagram Airbase, 2006. Photo: Josef Chamberlin – wikimedia.org (CC BY 2.0)

USA ready to crush European pharmaceutical industry

Dmitry Sudakov

TRUMP'S AGENDA

The decision by the United States to introduce 100% tariffs on pharmaceutical products starting 1 October is emerging as one of the most serious challenges for Germany and Europe in recent years. The move is viewed not only as a blow to European manufacturers' economic interests but also as a threat to the stability of the global healthcare system.

The German Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (VFA) has already expressed alarm over the planned measures. Industry representatives warn that such sweeping trade barriers will dismantle well-established international supply chains. The consequences, they argue, will include rising production costs, reduced access to life-saving medicines for patients in both the US and Europe, and major disruptions in global drug distribution.

Pharmaceuticals are a high-tech sector requiring constant investment in research and development. Any freeze in investment, which is already occurring in anticipation of the tariffs, could undermine Europe's competitive position in the global market.

DIRECT HIT FOR GERMANY

The decision is particularly painful for Germany, where around 130,000 people are employed in the pharmaceutical sector. A significant portion of production is exported to the US, which in 2024 accounted for €27 billion worth of German pharmaceutical exports – roughly one quarter of the country's total. With the US as Germany's largest external market, any restrictions directly endanger jobs, tax revenues, and innovation potential.

The administration of President Donald Trump, prioritising protectionism and domestic production, has made reducing dependence on foreign supply chains a central goal. At the same time, it seeks to address domestic political pressure by cutting drug prices. A decree signed by Trump in May aims to reduce the cost of pharmaceuticals in the US by 59–90%. However, instead of reforming the healthcare system or lowering administrative costs, Washington is applying pressure on foreign producers and incentivising localisation of production.

The 100% tariffs on branded and patented medicines effectively double import costs. Exemptions exist only for companies already building factories in the US, creating a strong incentive for multinational corporations to relocate production across the Atlantic.

STRATEGIC WEAKNESS

While this policy may boost US domestic production, it simultaneously weakens European economies, particularly Germany and Switzerland, which are long-standing pharmaceutical hubs. Beyond the direct economic impact, Europe faces a deeper strategic vulnerability. The EU's market of 450 million consumers has enormous potential but remains fragmented into 27 national markets with varying rules on regulation and pricing. This fragmentation undermines competitiveness compared with the more unified US market.

As a result, Europe risks becoming a pawn on the global chessboard between the two major economic blocs of America and Asia. US tariffs may accelerate this trend, leaving Europe with weakened leverage in global trade and healthcare security.

Pravda.ru



Photo: pexels.com (CC0)

Statement from the Communist Party of Israel

The Communist Party of Israel (CPI) and Hadash urgently demand an immediate end to the genocidal war against the Palestinian people.

This includes halting the destruction of the Gaza Strip – its cities, towns, and refugee camps – as well as stopping annexation, settlement expansion, and forced deportations in the occupied West Bank. Every passing minute of this ongoing conflict results in further massacres and displacement that must cease without delay.

The so-called “Trump plan” to

end the war on Gaza is a dangerous, US-driven initiative coordinated with the aggressor. It is riddled with political pitfalls and fails to provide a clear timetable for withdrawal from Gaza, revealing its true aim: to strengthen and prolong the occupation.

This plan hijacks Palestinian political sovereignty, threatening to extend occupation policies beyond Gaza to all Palestinian territories, especially the West Bank. It disregards daily crimes committed by the occupation and its militias, obstructing the path

toward a Palestinian state – a right recognised by 80% of the world's countries inhabited by 90% of the world's population.

The plan envisions imposing a civil and political administration over Gaza, led by figures aligned with the occupation, such as Trump himself and Tony Blair, known agents of imperialist interests in the region. The current right-wing settler government in Israel, leads this war with almost no parliamentary opposition, relentlessly advancing its destructive agenda.

Against this backdrop, CPI,

Hadash, and their partners stand firm in opposition, courageously resisting genocidal war against the Palestinian people and all forms of oppression faced by Palestinians in Israel and Jewish democratic forces alike.

At this critical juncture, the highest priority is the immediate cessation of the war, starvation, and deportation. Humanitarian aid must flow without obstruction, and prisoners on both sides should be released immediately as part of a comprehensive peace agreement to end this conflict.

This perilous moment calls for a united Palestinian stance, unwavering in the face of schemes designed to undermine their right to self-governance, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Despite the continuing threats, we firmly believe in the inevitable defeat of occupation and the ultimate triumph of the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Haifa, 1 October 2025

Cuba rejects US justification for military action against Venezuela

Cuba has dismissed as a “pretext” for military aggression against Venezuela a statement by US President Donald Trump declaring that his country is engaged in a “Non-International Armed Conflict” against drug cartels.

In a statement published by the Cuban Foreign Affairs Ministry, the government of President Miguel Diaz-Canel said:

“As the Revolutionary government warned on 18 September, the escalation of actions by the US government to justify military aggression against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has continued and is increasing.

“The extraordinary buildup of military assets in the southern Caribbean, recent illegal incursions by US combat aircraft into a Venezuelan Flight Information Region, the repeated destruction of civilian vessels and the killing of their crews, and the

announcement that military actions of this kind would be extended to land areas, are complemented by the notification that the United States would be in a non-international armed conflict against illegal combatants.

“This unusual notification, which seeks to legitimise and justify larger-scale military actions, could serve as a pretext for carrying out a military operation against Venezuela, in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

“A direct military aggression against Venezuela would unleash an armed conflict with incalculable consequences for peace, security and stability in our America.

“We reiterate Cuba's firm and unwavering support for the Bolivarian and Chavista government of Venezuela and the Popular and Military Unity of the Venezuelan people. Military aggression must be stopped to

preserve peace in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

WASHINGTON GETS COLONIAL IN THE CARIBBEAN

Previously, in late August, the United States announced it would use “all its power” to stop the “flow of drugs into the country,” which included sending ships and troops to Caribbean waters near Venezuela.

In early September, the US Navy carried out an airstrike in the southern Caribbean against a boat, killing the 11 people on board.

Currently, Washington has deployed in the Caribbean, near Venezuelan waters, eight warships with missiles and a nuclear-powered submarine and has ordered the deployment of MQ-9 Reaper drones and 10 F-35 fighter jets to an air base in Puerto Rico.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro once again rejected the presence of US military forces in the Caribbean. His statements came after Venezuela detected US military aircraft 75 kilometers off the Venezuelan coast.

“They have turned the Caribbean from a zone of peace, as agreed upon with the United States, into a zone of aggression and colonisation. The consequences of these actions will be negative in the short and long term,” Petro said.

The Venezuelan government announced that it will file a complaint with the United Nations Security Council and other international institutions, given that the US aircraft incursion violates international law and the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation.

Telesur

Morocco's youth-led protests continue to grow

Youth-led demonstrators in Morocco took to the streets on for a sixth straight night despite fears of more violence after police killed three people the previous night.

The protesters in at least a dozen cities, including Casablanca, are demanding better schools and hospitals, with some calling for Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch to resign.

The resignation calls came after police killed three people as largely peaceful protests turned into riots, with banks looted and cars set ablaze.

Though Morocco's king is the country's highest authority, protests in Morocco routinely focus on the government charged with carrying out his agenda.

At the latest demonstration, hundreds chanted for King Mohammed VI to intervene against the government. Crowds shouted "The people want to topple Akhannouch" and "Government out!" as demonstrations unfolded peacefully.

In his first public remarks, Akhannouch said that he was mourning the previous day's deaths.

He praised law enforcement for its efforts to maintain order and indicated that the government was prepared to respond favourably to the protesters, without detailing reforms under discussion.

"The approach based on dialogue is the only way to deal with the various problems faced by our country," Akhannouch said.

The pledge for new efforts to address the protests came a day after security forces opened fire at demonstrators, killing three people in Leqliaa, a small town outside the coastal city of Agadir.

Morocco's Interior Ministry claimed the three were shot and killed during an attempt to seize police weapons.

Morning Star



Valued

Some weasel words don't need much explanation because they're obviously insincere, but for some reason have to be said. For anyone who doesn't know, former SAS member Andrew Hastie has left the Liberals' front bench because he can't have his way on Net Zero (Hastie apparently doesn't understand Climate Change) and immigration (he'd like the Liberals to get back into the racism that's been so good to them in the past).

His former boss, Coalition leader Sussan Ley has called him a "valued" part of her Coalition team, with as much sincerity as Hastie wishing her "every success."

Balance

Giving a talk to the National Press Club, the NPC, is quite an event. Talks are regularly reported on. Journalist Chris Hedges was due to give a talk on "The Betrayal of Palestinian Journalists" at the NIPC but it's been cancelled. It looks a lot like the NPC has caved in to the Israel lobby. Not so! NPC chief executive told Hedges that the offer to talk was withdrawn "in the interests of balancing out our program."

Other speakers lined up include: a guy from Bluescope who's talking about gas prices, someone from the Australian Industry & Defence Network (AIDN), who wants Australia to do more military-industrial things, and an inventor who will explain how we can get more value out of our rubbish.

How a journalist speaking about journalists being killed in Palestine could unbalance that lot is anyone's guess.

Attack

Far right astroturfers Advance Australia are complaining about Welcome to Country saying that it has turned into "a full-blown activist-led push to attack Australia's history and its values." No, they don't explain how it attacks our values, unless ignoring Aboriginal people is an Australian value. To be fair, a glance at Australia's history shows that it is. Speaking of history, Advance don't say how Indigenous people can attack it by graciously welcoming others to their land. Aboriginal people have been in Australia for about 65 thousand years. That's a lot of history.

Yet

Like 'but,' 'yet' can be a way of weaselishly saying something without spelling it out. Nine journalist David Crowe has written that "Jewish leaders in the UK are urging politicians to make sure there is no tolerance for slogans and protests that encourage people to turn on Jews." Fair enough.

Crowe adds: "Yet, the protests in favour of the Palestinian cause continue in Britain" – a weaselly way of saying-without-saying that pro-Palestinian protests are entirely about anti-semitism and not because large numbers of people oppose genocide.

Generally

Former communications minister Paul Fletcher, was Optus' director of corporate and regulatory affairs between 2000 and 2008. He's quoted as saying that having "stable deep-pocketed private owners" has been good for Australian telephone users.

What Fletcher didn't say was that private owners can be tight-arsed as well as deep pocketed. He said that Australians generally get good service. 'Generally' is doing a lot of work in that sentence, and the overall good service must be a comfort to the three Optus customers who died because their triple-0 calls didn't get through.

Lawlessness

We all know what this means, and it's normally a bad thing. No law! Crime running rampant! Violence! Unless of course, you're Donald Trump, in which case 'lawlessness' seems to describe people walking dogs and going shopping, judging by the US cities he's sending troops into.

Trump uses shutdown to push mass sackings

Peter Farmer

US President Donald Trump has said that his director of budget and management, Russell Vought, will use the government shutdown as rationale to start illegally firing thousands of additional federal workers as early as today.

Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries noted that

"shutting down the government is something Trump has been doing ever since he got elected and he is doing it to save money for tax breaks for his buddies, the billionaires."

The illegal mass firings come on top of Trump's cancellation of billions of dollars in federal money already approved by Congress for critical infrastructure projects in 18 states that voted for Kamala Harris, another illegal and unconstitutional

act in line with Vought's stated desire to impose "maximum pain" on Trump's political opponents. Vought, the author of the infamous extreme right Project 2025, which Trump disavowed when he was running for his second term, has now been given more power than both the US House and Senate in determining what happens in the country. Trump isn't disavowing Project 2025 now.



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Trump declares war

M Santos

After decades of financing wars, regime changes and assassinations, the US imperialist political establishment is now trying to appear as a peacemaker. It is invoking "peace" in the massive suffering caused by the very conflicts it has funded and perpetuated.

US President Donald Trump is not merely the unhinged madman that some might think, with his lies, half-truths and contradictory ranting and raving. There is method in his madness – that of an egotistic, dangerous, fascist dictator. A man who plans to not only rule the US and its military with an iron fist, but who also seeks global dominance in a uni-polar world and is prepared to do whatever it takes.

"Together, we're reawakening the warrior spirit, and this is a spirit that won and built this nation," said Commander-in-Chief Trump.

Trump and Hegseth were addressing 800-plus US generals, admirals, and senior enlisted advisers assembled from around the world at the Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia on 30 September.

Amidst Trump's egotistical rants there runs a clear agenda: the US is on an aggressive and offensive path to eliminate any economic or military competition. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are in US imperialism's sights as well as the ever-expanding BRICS group of countries and China's Belt and Road Initiative.

"And we want war because we want to have no wars, but you have to be there and sometimes you have to do it," said Trump while claiming to have settled eight wars in his pursuit of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Trump boasted about the superiority of the US's nuclear weapons and its "undetectable" submarines claiming that they were 25 years ahead of China's and Russia's.

MIGHT RULES

In a repeat, but a more dangerous form of the Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) doctrine, Trump argued that making the US the most powerful nuclear force will act as a deterrent. "We're investing tens of billions of dollars in modernising our nuclear deterrence capabilities like never before," said Trump. For "deterrence" read "offensive."

"We must be so strong that no nation will dare challenge us, so powerful that no enemy will dare threaten us, and so capable that no adversary can even think about beating us," Trump declared.

What enemies? US imperialism faces no military threats, only a decline in its economic power. It has around 900 foreign bases, including those encircling China and Russia.

By bullying and imposing massive tariffs

on other countries, including subservient allies such as Australia, the UK, and the European nations, Trump is attempting to shore up the US economy.

"We've taken in trillions of dollars, we're rich. Rich again, and there'll never be, when we finish this out, there'll never be any wealth like what we have," he said referring to investments pouring into the US to avoid tariffs.

But economic means alone are insufficient. The US is looking to military means of global domination in the face of more and more nations of the Global South asserting their independence, and the economic challenge China poses.

PICK OF THE LITTER

"Over the past eight months, new enlistments, I'm so proud of this, have surged to record highs, the highest we've ever had. And we used to have recruiting shortages," Trump told the gathered brass.

That's hardly surprising when 750,000 government workers have been sacked by Elon Musk's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency). The massive withdrawal of funding for services in Democrat states also contributes to rising unemployment. And at the time of writing the blocking of government funding was set to result in more job losses.

"A year ago they were talking about making the military smaller because they can't get the people to join ... it's nice to be able to cut people because of merit that aren't really qualified for any reason, a physical reason, a mental reason," he said echoing Hegseth's report. "You don't have to take them anymore because you have the pick of the litter and they all want to be with you."

URBAN WARFARE

"After spending trillions of dollars defending the borders of foreign countries, with your help we're defending the borders of our country from now on. We're not going to let this happen," continued Trump. "Biden let people come in from prisons, mental institutions, drug dealers, murderers. We had 11,488 murderers allowed into our country by this guy who had no clue."

"But together with many of you in the room, we've brought back the fundamental principle that defending the homeland is the military's first and most important priority. That's what it is."

"Last month I signed an executive order to provide training for quick reaction force that can help quell civil disturbances. This is going to be a big thing for the people in this room because it's the enemy from within and we have to handle it before it gets out of control. It won't get out of control once you're involved at all," Trump said.



Photo: The Trump White House Archived – flickr.com (Public Domain)

"In our inner cities ... it's a big part of war now, it's a big part of war," Trump said.

Trump bragged that bringing the military into Washington, DC had made DC "just about our safest city."

He added that cities "that are run by the radical left Democrats, what they've done to San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, they're very unsafe places. And we're going to straighten them out one by one. And this is going to be a major part for some of the people in this room. That's a war too. It's a war from within." For Trump, the people are the enemy.

"We're under invasion from within. No different than a foreign enemy, but more difficult in many ways because they don't wear uniforms. At least when they're wearing a uniform, you can take them out."

Trump mused about using "these dangerous cities" as training grounds for the US military.

A post on Trump's Truth Social paraphrases quotes from the movie *Apocalypse Now*: "I love the smell of deportations in the morning. Chicago about to find out why it's called the Department of WAR." The post is accompanied by an AI-generated image of Trump kneeling in front of a burning skyline, with military helicopters flying overhead.

"We were dead. This country was going to hell. We were dead in everywhere from immigration to military. We didn't have the weapons. We were giving everything to Ukraine. We had nothing."

"Now we are discovering American muscle, reasserting American might and beginning the next story chapter in American military legends and lore."

The imposition of massive tariffs on companies that do not invest in the US is not madness. Trump is attempting to build

self-sufficiency in readiness for war against China. Russia, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, and Cuba are among others on his hit list for regime change.

His support for Israel's genocide and Greater Israel incorporating parts or all of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and possibly other Arab states serves to build US imperialism's control over the Middle East.

Trump shared on his social media an AI-generated video that shows Gaza being transformed into "Trump Gaza," a luxurious Gulf resort. The video includes scenes of a child holding a golden Trump balloon, a gift shop selling Trump statues, and Elon Musk dancing on the beach with dollar bills raining down from above. It is accompanied by an AI-generated song with lyrics that include "Trump Gaza shining bright. Golden future, a brand-new light."

The trillions in planned expenditure on war preparations further militarises the already heavily indebted US economy, and is being funded in part by DOGE sackings, cuts to health, to states, and most likely even more cuts to government.

Trump is paying scant heed to the constitution and any semblance of democracy, executing presidential war powers – the war he cites is domestic. It is against immigrants, against 'woke,' against Democrat states, and states that voted for Democrat presidential candidate Kamala Harris.

Trump is step by step changing state structures, replacing democratic processes with himself as an authoritarian, fascist dictator – and not just over the US, but globally.

The agenda that Trump is following was scripted by the ultra-right-wing Heritage Foundation. It is called Project 2025.

His speech was met with silence from the military brass – no applause. 🇺🇸

The US is looking to military means of global domination in the face of more and more nations of the Global South asserting their independence



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