

Murdoch Propaganda Pushes Australia to Double Its Military Budget for War with China

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In the latest escalation in [Australia's increasingly forceful campaign](#) to manufacture consent for war with China, the Murdoch-owned Sky News Australia has aired a jaw-droppingly propagandistic [hour-long special](#) which advocates a dramatic increase in the nation's military spending.

Australians are uniquely vulnerable to propaganda because our nation has [the most concentrated media ownership](#) in the western world, the lion's share of it by **Rupert Murdoch**, who has well-documented [ties to US government agencies](#) going back decades. The propaganda campaign against China has gotten so aggressive here in recent years that I've repeatedly had complete strangers start babbling at me about the Chinese threat in casual conversation, completely out of the blue, within minutes of our first meeting each other.

The Sky News special is one of the most brazenly propagandistic things I have ever witnessed in any news media, with its opening minutes featuring [footage of bayonet-wielding Chinese troops](#) marching while ominous cinematic Bad Guy music plays loudly over the sound of the marching. In its [promotional clip](#) for the special, Sky News Australia tinged all footage pertaining to China in red to show how dangerous and communist they are. These are not decisions that are made with the intention of informing the public, these are decisions that are made with the intention of administering war propaganda.

Tonight. 730 on [@SkyNewsAust](#) pic.twitter.com/IURxnjs5Zu

— Peter Stefanovic (@peterstefanovic) [February 14, 2023](#)

The first expert Sky News brings on to tell viewers about the Chinese menace is Mick Ryan, an [Adjunct Fellow](#) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which [is funded](#) by military-industrial complex entities like Raytheon, Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, [and is also directly funded](#) by the US government and its client states, including Australia and Taiwan. Sky News of course makes no mention of this immense conflict of interest while manufacturing consent for increased military spending, calling Ryan simply a “former major general.” This is on the same level of journalistic malpractice as running an article by Colonel Sanders on the health benefits of fried chicken but calling him “Harland David Sanders, former fry cook.”

The next expert Sky News presents us with is Australian former major general **Jim “The Butcher of Fallujah” Molan**, who oh-so-sadly passed away last month. I’ve [written about Molan previously](#) specifically because the Australian media love citing him in their propaganda campaign against China, last time when he was pushing the ridiculous claim that China is poised to launch an invasion of Australia.

The other experts Sky News brings in are former **CIA Director and US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta**, Taiwan’s **Foreign Minister Joseph Wu**, Taiwan’s **Director of Chinese Affairs Dr Lai Chung**, Japan’s ambassador to Australia **Yamagami Shingo**, Australian **Shadow Defense Minister Andrew Hastie**, and **John Coyne** of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a [virulent propaganda firm](#) which is once again funded by US-aligned governments and military-industrial complex war profiteers.

So it’s about as balanced and impartial a punditry lineup as you’d expect.

At the [8:15](#) mark of the special, Sky News repeats the [unevidenced propaganda claim](#) that former Chinese president Hu Jintao was politically purged during the 20th Communist Party Congress last year.

At [19:15](#) Jim Molan talks about the need to fight and die with our allies the Americans while patriotic cello music plays in the background.

At [21:30](#) we are shown images of Australia being bombed alongside the Chinese flag (very subtle, guys).

At [24:25](#) Sky News accidentally does a version of the “look how close they put their country to our military bases” meme with a graphic display of all the US war machinery that surrounds China. The US would never tolerate being encircled by the Chinese military like that and would immediately wage war if China tried; it’s clear that the US is the aggressor in this conflict and China is reacting defensively.

“The United States plays a major strategic role in the Indo-Pacific,” says Sky News anchor Peter Stefanovic as the screen lights up with graphics showing the military presence surrounding China. “With 375,000 personnel, there’s a vast network of operations that extend from Hawaii all the way to India.”



In its attempts to propagandize Australians into consenting to war with China, Sky News Australia accidentally does the "look how close they put their country to our military bases" meme. pic.twitter.com/1lf2b4p7pH

— Caitlin Johnstone (@caitoz) [February 16, 2023](#)

At [26:30](#) we are shown a digital representation of China's satellite systems in space, with the Chinese satellites colored red to help us all appreciate how evil and communist they are.

At [27:45](#) we are shown illustrations of how much smaller Australia's military is than China's or America's to help us understand how important it is to increase the size of our nation's war machine, ignoring the fact that Australia's total population is a tiny fraction of either of those countries.

At [32:45](#) we are told that the AUKUS pact will "beef up America's military presence in the north of Australia," and that "America has long used Australia as a key strategic outpost," showing images of Pine Gap and other parts of the US war machine which dot this continent. "Now, there's more to come," says Stefanovic, with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin describing the surge in US military presence we're to expect in Australia.

At [34:10](#) the Australian Strategic Policy Institute guy explains why the US is so keen to use Australia in its planned confrontation with China, saying the continent's geography puts it in "the Goldilocks location" of being close enough to China to be meaningful but far enough away that its war machinery can't be easily struck.

At [35:15](#) Stefanovic warns that "our nation could quite literally be brought to its knees" if a war to the north sees shipping lanes cut off since Australia is so heavily dependent of imports. You would think this is an argument about the importance of maintaining a peaceful relationship with China, but instead it's used to foment fear of China and argue for the need to be able to defeat it in a war.

I've only just started watching this Sky News Australia special about the urgent need to prepare for war with China and it's already jaw-droppingly propagandistic. Watch this clip featuring bayonet-wielding Chinese troops marching to ominous music like Star Wars stormtroopers. pic.twitter.com/0p3wghiEY8

— Caitlin Johnstone (@caitoz) [February 15, 2023](#)

And at [45:50](#) we finally get to the real purpose of this Sky News special: the need to “dramatically increase” the Australian military budget, and the need to manufacture consent for that increase. Australia currently has a military budget of \$48.7 billion, a little less than two percent of the nation’s GDP. The late Butcher of Fallujah tells Sky News that “we need to at least double our defense expenditure” to four percent, and the special’s pundits openly discuss the need for Australians to be persuaded to accept this using narrative management.

“The Australian government needs to talk to the Australian people about the kinds of threats it faces,” says Mick Ryan. “It needs a more compelling narrative to convince the Australian people that they need to spend more on defense.”

“I think it is important that we are having a conversation with the Australian people which makes it clear that we live in a world which is more fragile than we have for a very long period of time,” Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles tells Sky News. “And what that is going to require is a defense posture and a defense force which is in truth gonna cost more than it has in the past. We’re gonna need to increase our defense spending.”

To be clear, this is not just a call to increase military spending, this is a call to propagandize Australians into consenting to more military spending. It’s not very often that the propaganda comes right out and explains to you why it is propagandizing you.

Australian War Propaganda Keeps Getting Crazier [@60Mins](#) has churned out yet another fearmongering war propaganda piece on China, this one so ham-fisted that it goes so far as to run a brazen advertisement for an actual Australian weapons manufacturer. <https://t.co/UDXso2f4MV>

— Caitlin Johnstone (@caitoz) [November 16, 2021](#)

I always get people complaining that I focus too much on the US war machine when I live in Australia, but anyone who’s paying attention knows the behavior of the US war machine is as relevant to Australians as it is to Americans. They are beating the drums for a future war of unfathomable horror all to please a dark god known as unipolarism, and it threatens to destroy us all.

The time to start resisting is now.

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