

ANZAC DAY 2022

Gallipoli 1915

Winston Churchill wanted to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. Plan A, a naval attack on the Dardanelles, failed. Plan B was a land assault. So, on 25 April, about 25,000 Australian and New Zealand soldiers landed at Anzac Cove. Many were mown down by Turkish guns on the very first day. By the time of the evacuation nearly nine months later, the debacle had cost 56,000 lives on the allied side and another 56,000 on the Turkish. The Gallipoli Campaign was one of the many crimes in the much larger crime that was World War I, a clash of two rival imperial alliances squabbling over territory, colonies and resources. Over 17 and a half million people, civilian and military, died for the wealth and power of their ruling classes.

Australia 2022

The players have changed, but the game continues. Australian capitalism benefits from US hegemony. It sends troops to Uncle Sam's wars, takes its side internationally and, in return, gets to police the South Pacific and Timor Leste. No single power comes close to the US, but its share of the world economy has been in continual decline. It is now less than 25%. China's economy, is already almost 80% that of the US and growing more strongly. It is an unprecedented threat. With a population four times that of the US, China could have an economy twice as large with half its per capita GDP. The US is drawn to rely on its military strength to shore up what it cannot defend in the marketplace. AUKUS is an alliance formed to keep China subservient to the US and ensure the Pacific Ocean remains an American lake, but only the ever-dependable Australia and the increasingly irrelevant Britain have signed on. The countries of South-East Asia, despite their dislike of recent Chinese policy, are conspicuous by their absence.

A Rude Awakening

Just last week the Australian Government was surprised by the announcement of a military agreement between China and the Solomon Islands. Australia's imperialist sphere of interest in the South Pacific has been disrupted. A couple of similar agreements in the region could dismantle it. After decades of aid cuts and a climate policy likely to submerge more than one Pacific island nation, Australian power has become fragile. It could be easily shattered by a rising power which promises more generous support and survivable climate outcomes. Soon the Australian navy may be too busy nearby to help the US contain the Chinese navy in the South and East China Seas.

Anzac Day

Australia's militaristic national myth was founded on the Gallipoli landing. The dead Anzacs are conscripted for service in all of Australia's wars. They have sanctified Australian imperialism in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. This year, the national commemoration of the Anzacs will be in the service of the developing conflict with China and the drive to war. It must not be uncontested.

***NO AUKUS
END ANZAC DAY***

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