

Australians pierce the foreign policy propaganda of both major parties - PJ Keating, 11 November 2024

A Resolve Political Monitor poll published in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* makes clear that the Australian community at large possesses a contrary view to the foreign policy priorities of the Albanese government and its predecessor under Scott Morrison.

On the significant question of whether Australia should avoid taking sides in any conflict between the US and China, fifty-seven (57%) of those polled agreed that Australia should avoid taking sides in any such conflict with but sixteen per cent (16%) in favour.

These polling numbers, taken by a reputable pollster on a large sample, make completely clear that the public does not endorse any military engagement by Australia as party to a military dispute arising between the United States and China.

In other words, the public in its common sense, is peering through the haze of exaggerated strategic risks and the notional 'China threat' to dramatically affirm that Australia and Australians should have no part of a major military dust-up in East Asia between the major powers.

But that view, so clearly affirmed in this polling, is utterly at odds with the military commitment the Albanese government has made to allow the US to base four nuclear attack class submarines in Perth and seven or eight nuclear armed B-52 bombers south of Darwin.

These weapons, in all likelihood, would be central to any military exchange between the United States and China in the region, decisions about which Australia would have no part other than perhaps, being politely consulted by the United States before their employment.

So, very hard for Australia 'to avoid taking sides in any conflict between the US and China' when Australia will have already outsourced its real estate to the US military for use at its singular decision.

This is the kind of jeopardy that arises from a strategically-addled policy consciousness – the confused fear of abandonment central to the foreign policy acquiescence of the Albanese and Morrison governments.

It was the Abbott government in 2014 that signed the Force Posture Agreement with the United States, which ceded control of certain military operations by the United States to the United States from Australian territory.

Those options have now been subject to lock-in by the Albanese government in agreeing to both host and base US nuclear attack class submarines and nuclear armed B-52 bombers. And none of it with the explicit agreement of the Australian community – a community that was never consulted as these lock-in arrangements were put into place.

Despite this, today's *Herald* Resolve poll makes clear that the public wants no part of it and provides no authority for it.

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