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SUBMISSION TO IPAN's INQUIRY into  
The Case for an Independent and Peaceful Australia  
What are the costs and consequences of Australia's  
involvement in US-led wars and the US Alliance?

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#### INTRODUCTION

AWPA SA and AETFA SA are two solidarity groups that have been working in SA for the peoples of West Papua and Timor-Leste respectively. Both groups also work in solidarity with other groups in Australia and overseas that represent peoples who have suffered genocide and human rights abuses at the hands of the Indonesian military (TNI) since the early 1960s.

Both associations view the Indonesian army (TNI) and the Indonesian police (POLRI) as major terrorist organisations in Australia's region of the world given the crimes that they have committed against the peoples of West Papua, East Timor (now Timor-Leste), Aceh and regions within Indonesia itself eg Maluku - ie including against it's own people.

We believe that Australians working for peace need to be working to ensure that Australia does not support wars instigated by the US Military Industrial Complex, but that it also ceases its support of US illegal actions to bring about regime change or to support the brutal actions of US client states which not only include Indonesia, but many others as well eg Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Brazil, the Philippines – all of which have committed crimes against humanity.

#### THE US, INDONESIA & WEST PAPUA

The US administration of John Kennedy intervened in the decolonisation process that was being undertaken by the Dutch government in the early 1960s to prepare the West Papuan people for independence to ensure that the country was integrated into Indonesia. In the early 1960s prior to the takeover, US corporations had conducted geological surveys and were well aware of the mineral wealth that exists in West Papua. Immediately after Indonesia took control, the American mining company Freeport McMoRan commenced construction of its Grasberg mine, which is one of the largest gold mines – and third largest copper mine – in the world.

The only time that the people of West Papua were consulted about being part of Indonesia was in 1969 when the TNI conducted the very threatening, brutal and undemocratic exercise known as the Act of Free Choice. It is known by the West Papuans as the Act of NO Choice. Because there was not a valid ballot held.

Only 1026 West Papuans were chosen by Indonesia from across the country to

vote on behalf of their villages and they were held in isolation for a month while their families were held hostage for their behaviour to ensure that they voted the way Indonesia wanted. Finally only 1022 were able to vote and 100 % voted to join Indonesia. Afterwards those who were selected to vote have documented their records of torture and threats to their families. Many who demonstrated against this flawed process were arrested by the TNI. Many were never seen again.

In West Papua evisceration was added to the list of other disgusting abuses the TNI and POLRI have carried out. Since 1963, well over 100,000 (some say about 500,000) West Papuans have died because of TNI repressive actions and policies. Despite the propaganda of the Suharto dictatorship and Indonesian governments since this flawed and brutal exercise the UN and the international community should never have approved it. The UN should also recognise the fact that the West Papuan people are Melanesians and are not Asians. The common factor in their history of the two peoples is merely the fact that both nations were occupied by the same colonising power. Ironically Indonesian and US leaders claim to be vehemently opposed to colonialism but hypocritically defend their policies that amount to them having their own colonies. Indonesia has colonised West Papua and the US has colonised Hawaii, Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), the Marshall Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico.

West Papua is still occupied by the TNI. US corporations have made billions of dollars profit out of the nation's copper and gold deposits, Indonesian timber companies have logged its forests and caused great environmental devastation. West Papuan forests that provide traditional food and medicines have been forcibly confiscated by major timber companies to become palm oil plantations. The taxes and bribes paid to the TNI account for the major income of the Indonesian government and military. The West Papuan people derive very little benefits from the profits of the mine but have had to endure the degradation of their environment and the brutality of the TNI which was paid by McMoRan to provide security for the mine.

In 1965, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assisted General Suharto and other right wing generals to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Sukarno. Amnesty International estimated that between half to a million Indonesians perished in a series of mass killings carried out by the TNI and its vigilantes around the country in the year after the coup. CIA operatives in Indonesia drew up lists of people to be murdered.

Some Indonesians believe that the actual death toll was nearer 3 million people and this is considered as one of the worst massacres in the 20th century.

In his book *The Jakarta Method – Washington's Anticommunist Crusade & the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*, US scholar and journalist (Public Affairs NY) 2020, Vincent Bevins describes how the US used the same type of mass murder and intimidation program to bring about regime change in 22 other nations. In each case, the new governments were usually very repressive, undemocratic and did the bidding of US administrations and corporations even when this was not in the interests of the ordinary people

#### THE INDONESIAN DICTATORSHIP & ACTIONS IN EAST TIMOR & ACEH

Ten years after the Suharto coup that ousted Sukarno, the TNI invaded East Timor and the Indonesian dictatorship occupied it until 1999. In the 24 years of illegal and brutal occupation, about 1/3 of the East Timorese population perished, gross human rights abuses – including rape as a weapon, torture and intimidation occurred and 80% of the nation's infrastructure was destroyed. The illegal

invasion was fully supported to the hilt by the U.S. administration at the time. Former President Ford and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with dictator Suharto in Jakarta just six hours before and gave full approval for the invasion but advised him not to use US weapons.

The TNI used similar methods in Aceh as those it used in West Papua and East Timor. Since 1979, it has been estimated that over 5000 Acehnese have perished because of TNI repression and fighting between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the TNI.

Since the fall of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998, there has been some improved freedom of Indonesia's media and the TNI plays a less up front role in Indonesian politics than what it did, however, the politics of the Indonesian state are basically still controlled by the military. Two war criminals – former General Wiranto and Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto - are in the current civilian government cabinet and the TNI genocidal policies in West Papua continue.

#### THE ACTIONS OF THE US & ITS ALLIES

The leaders of the US and its allies - including Australia's leaders - claim that the US is a beacon of democracy in the world despite the mountain of evidence that clearly shows this to be untrue.

They never criticise the US for its actions in initiating wars or bringing about undemocratic changes of governments. Nor do they criticise the crimes committed by the US client states when they occur – eg Indonesia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey etc. Further, they seek to cover up the crimes or act as apologists for the regimes when these crimes are committed.

In addition, they aid and abet the crimes by giving military aid, military cooperation and sales of military hardware to the TNI and other militaries that commit violations against international law.

#### FUTURE GOALS TO WORK FOR BY THE AUSTRALIAN PEACE MOVEMENT

The Australian peace and human rights movements should be working for the following aims:

- An Australia that is a truly free and truly independent and non-aligned nation whose leaders contribute to taking action to achieve world peace, human rights, social justice, environmental responsibility, equality etc  
[This would mean that Australia would work to be on friendly terms with all nations and not supporting powerful nations to interfere adversely in other nations as we have done by supporting the actions of US leaders]
- Australia to become a member of the Non-Aligned Movement of nations
- Australia to be more involved in UN peacekeeping forces and UN aid projects rather than supporting US, UK or any other form of neo-colonialism
- Lobbying federal politicians to support legislation that the Australian Parliament has to approve Australian involvement in any conflict before the government can enter hostilities - unless Australia is directly attacked