

Rebellion, ignoring the rights of the indigenous people and supporting colonizing powers.

Australia again followed Britain to war as WWI raged across Europe. The immediate catalyst for this conflict was the assassination of the Austrian archduke Ferdinand. Behind this act though the complex forces of militarism, imperialism, nationalism and alliances were in play.

Australia's alliance to Britain sealed the fate of the 60,000 killed and the 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner.

The shortsighted exclusion of the German Government in peace talks and the punitive Treaty of Versailles sowed the seeds for WWII. This horrendous conflict needs no description, but suffice it to say that Australian troops again followed Britain into conflict and on the entry into the war of the United States of America, supported both major powers.

In one of the many statements about the need to learn from history, Winston Churchill wrote "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Sadly, it appears that successive Australian governments have failed to learn from history and continue to follow a major global power, into war.

Now closely allied to the United States, Australia has joined with them in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan, the Iraq War and the War against ISIS/ISIL/Daish.

Harold Holt's famous statement of "All the way with LBJ" now seems to have become "All the way with the USA." So closely are we allied in fact, that it appears that Australian foreign policy is made in Washington and dictated by the USA. Has this unwavering allegiance to the USA strengthened Australia's national security or put us in danger?

John Howard committed Australia to the Iraq war despite antiwar protests in all of Australia's major cities. Hundreds of thousands of Australians rallied around the country, in many cases in greater numbers than ever seen before. Yet our troops were committed and sent, on what is now known to have been a spurious claim of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction. There was no parliamentary debate, no weight put upon the will of the Australian people. John Howard committed Australia to entering the war because of military ties with the USA. Such action has led to Australia being seen as America's lackey, one which shares identical military aims and highlights the need for war powers reform in Australia. This identification can only be detrimental to the safety of Australians, elevating the risk of a terrorist attack. Australian involvement in America's Middle East wars has put a target on our back and our national security has been compromised.

US Marines in Darwin

This dangerous military alliance shows no side of waning. Quite the opposite in fact. Two hundred US marines were stationed in Darwin in 2012, this year 2,200 were deployed. This becomes ever more worrying with the government's inflammatory rhetoric about preparedness for war and Darwin's geographical position as the gateway to Asia. On June 10 this year, ABC News reported Peter Dutton's intention to bolster the marine force and the Minister's wish to have greater military cooperation with our closest ally. It was reported that senior officials from both nations are discussing options for expanded military cooperation, including a proposal to form a new joint US marines and ADF training brigade based in Darwin.

This aggressive military posture can only be seen as threatening to our regional neighbours and puts Australian national security further at risk.

Furthermore, the plans laid by Scott Morrison's government for Australia to be one of the top ten exporters of arms and the way in which militarism is the new norm will see us forming ever closer ties with US military policy and US weapons development.

This will further exacerbate the way in which the international community sees our foreign policy as linked with that of the USA and the less that we will earn respect as a nation capable of independent action and leadership.

Pine Gap facility

When the Pine Gap facility was first established by the United States its purpose was information collection, principally on the testing of Soviet missiles. Over the years this simple function has been expanded far beyond anything envisaged by its founders. The Nautilus Institute reports that Pine Gap is now able "to provide data enabling the targeting of illegal U.S. drone attacks in countries with which the United States nor Australia are at war, including Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia."

In addition, new technology installed at the facility now makes it an important part of US missile defence and thus a strategic target in the event of the US being involved in a major military conflict. This clearly makes the facility a danger to our national security. Australia could and should demand that elements of technology underpinning this dangerous situation be removed from the facility.

Australia is a state party to the UN Treaties on Landmines and on Cluster Munitions, in spite of the USA not being a member state. When we come to the issue of nuclear weapons though we are faced with an entirely different situation. Throughout negotiations leading up to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) Australia remained implacably opposed to process, voting consistently with the United States and in stark contrast to the vast majority of countries which voted in favour.

The ostensible reason often cited to justify this is the need to fulfil obligations imposed upon us by the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS). Yet, as has been abundantly pointed out to the government of the day, most particularly by Malcolm Fraser in his book "Dangerous Allies, the treaty only obligates us to consult with New Zealand and the USA. The treaty does not, in fact pose a stumbling block for Australia's joining of the treaty.

Australia's position also relies on the principle of extended deterrence, Australia ostensibly being shielded by the US nuclear umbrella. This sanguine reliance on a foreign power responding militarily in our defence is not only naïve, but also hinders acceptance by other nations of Australia as an independent, responsible country. To refer to the ANZUS Alliance again, this does not commit the US to come to our aid, and it is hard to see why they would do so if it were not also seen as in their national interest.

Additionally, this position of reliance upon US nuclear protection is hypocritical and against the spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT.) Article VI of the treaty, to which Australia is a State Party states that:

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear

disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” (Underlining by the author of this submission.)

How can the Australian government oppose the TPNW, rely on possible nuclear protection of our country under supposed obligations of the ANZUS treaty and yet fulfill our moral and legal obligations under the NPT? There is no valid reason for Australia’s obdurate refusal to join the TPNW and thus this stance must be seen purely through the lens of a sycophantic allegiance to, and following of, the United States.

Any nuclear conflict or major nuclear accident would have catastrophic humanitarian effects. Nuclear radiation changes DNA, causing genetic mutation, a nuclear winter could result in billions starving to death and not one government on Earth is prepared to cope with the results of a nuclear blast.

From a humanitarian standpoint only, Australia must abandon its current indefensible position on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and must sign and ratify with all possible speed.

This year is the seventy-sixth anniversary of the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Despite evidence to the contrary, it is still claimed that these bombings brought WWII to a close. What happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never happen again. Today’s nuclear weapons are many times more powerful than those used in Japan and the humanitarian and climate effects would be commensurately worse. In fact, nuclear war, whether started on purpose or in error- and it is worth recording that there have been numerous “near misses” over the years- constitutes an existential threat. Why then does our government continue to wear blinkers, insisting on relying on immoral and ineffective strategies such as extended deterrence when we should be joining with the majority of nations and attempting to abolish nuclear weapons?

In conclusion

- Too many Australian lives have been unnecessarily lost by Australian involvement in foreign wars at the behest of a global power.
- Australian national security has been compromised by following the USA to war in Afghanistan and the Middle East.
- The deployment of US marines in Darwin is threatening to our Asian neighbours and should end, not expand
- The Australian Government must abandon its militaristic plans to become one of the top ten arms exporting nations, which will involve ever more military collaboration with the USA.
- Australia needs to demonstrate its autonomy in foreign policy in order to be accorded the international respect due to an independent global citizen
- The threat of the use of nuclear weapons is an existential one and Australia must sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- Aspects of the technology now used at the Pine Gap facility further damage the independence of Australian foreign policy, are a prime target in any conflict involving the US and damage our national security. This dangerous use of advanced technology, linking us to potential US aggression must be closed down immediately.

Two hundred and thirty- three years after the colonizing force of Arthur Philips landed in Botany Bay and one hundred and twenty years after Federation it is high time for Australia to relinquish its role as the junior partner of a major power. It is time to responsibly assert our national interests, to be a responsible and independent global citizen and to stop following the

USA into wars that damage our international reputation and our national security. Australia must throw off the mantle of subservience, and take up the mantle of leadership. It is time to usher in the era of independent Australian foreign policy.