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I am increasingly concerned about the direction being taken by our government with regard to foreign policy, particularly the direction in which the ANZUS treaty, signed between the US, Australia and New Zealand in 1951, is taking. It was intended to be for the purpose of providing mutual aid in the event of aggression and for settling disputes by peaceful means, but increasingly it seems to be involving Australia in U.S.-initiated wars. And with the current aggression being shown by the latest President of the United States, our national sovereignty appears to be threatened by having U.S. troops stationed on our soil: such 'foreign' troops not being answerable to Australian laws.

Over the past few decades, Australian Prime Ministers have – almost unanimously – over-egged the importance of ANZUS for what appears to be political reasons, and everyone has forgotten its original intention. This political obfuscation is constricting proper debate about Australia's foreign and defence policy which, in turn corrupts the rigour needed to unravel Australia's perceived dependence on the U.S.

We now have a couple of generations steeped in this misguided comprehension of Australia's place in this so-called 'alliance', formulated after Australia, and subsequently the U.S., had been attacked by Japan. At that time, it was in America's strategic interest to defend Australia, which it did despite there being no ANZUS treaty in place. Today, however, the 'alliance' with our disproportionately powerful 'ally', has seen us fighting U.S.-initiated wars – some of which we are still involved in. We seem to have swapped our deference to the British Empire to the American Empire.

But the geopolitical scene is vastly different in 2021. The U.S. is now flexing its muscle against China, who is a powerful trading partner with Australia. The Treaty required each signatory to "consult together" (Article III) and "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes" (Article IV). Technically this expects that the parties would consult in the event of a threat to one of them, rather than automatically come to the other's assistance. Originally, the treaty was of limited strategic application and at present there would appear to be no threat to either party, unless we consider the trade sanctions currently in place due to the overt aggression shown by the U.S. to China. It also means that if the U.S. were to engage in a regional conflict, Australia is not legally obliged by the treaty to send forces.

Another important concern is that, in the event of the U.S. engaging in military confrontation with China, their bases on Australian soil, would be a target in the event of a war because of their role as telecommunications and spy bases. Gough Whitlam saw the danger when in government and threatened to have Pine Gap closed: an action which conspired to have him removed from office. Ultimately, the U.S. President decides the scope of the application of the ANZUS treaty and is informed by the self-interest of the United States and the domestic political acceptability of the use of U.S. forces, especially ground forces, in distant theatres. Australia's security depends on our own understanding of who we are and what we stand for. It depends on how we view our identity, our power and our national interests – the purposive dimension of our international and strategic policy. It is not in Australia's interest to get involved in America's trade war with China and we need a more independent stance. The subservient attitude of our government to the U.S., supported by an equally US-subservient media, makes American interests appear to be Australian interests. The current geopolitical changing circumstances should offer the chance of a strategic reset. The alliance with the U.S. could remain but only with Australia becoming more independent within it.