

Terry Fitzpatrick

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding our Foreign Policy in relation to our alliance with America and its military and strategic ambitions.

I am leader of a Faith Community in Brisbane called St Marys In Exile. My faith stance strongly influences my views in these matters. I am opposed to war making in all its forms.

I believe that our relationship with the USA is heading into military conflict with China. This greatly disturbs me.

I believe that Australia's national security is better served through adopting an independent foreign policy; by relationship building with all our Asian neighbours; managing conflicts without violence; and finding diplomatic solutions rather than depending on militarism; and creating a culture of peace.

We have witnessed a gradual increase in militarism and the use of war to manage conflict globally. We have also seen how COVID has killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people, infected millions, and sowed agony and sorrow in the hearts of victims' families, friends, and loved ones. It has squeezed medical teams and staff with a huge number of cases that are beyond their capacity. It has closed schools and shut down economies world wide.

Over the past 18 months, people in different nations and with different languages, beliefs have demonstrated a remarkable sense of solidarity and unity in combating COVID. Across the world we have seen calls for governments to reconsider their policies and change their priorities.

The COVID-19 crisis showed how quickly change can happen when the political will is there, for instance we have seen aerospace companies building ventilators instead of fighter jet engines within weeks, backed by government funding.

Arms company workers have the vital skills needed to build a new, greener economy. There are more potential jobs in renewable energy industries than in the entire arms industry. We should be using our global skills collectively to create a safer planet for us all, and jobs that are here to stay.

The hundreds of millions of dollars currently shoring up the arms industry should be subsidising a green revolution. We need to build new infrastructure and retrain arms and fossil fuel company workers, ensuring a smooth transition away from industries that take lives to ones that protect them. We need to build a society where real human needs are prioritised.

The fight for climate justice is the fight of our lives, and we need to do it right. We cannot afford to be silent on the role of the military industrial complex in contributing to climate chaos. Any action for climate justice MUST tackle militarism and global inequality, otherwise our calls for action are empty.

It is vital that the making of war is not understood in isolation of other intersecting issues as, in the words of Audre Lorde, writer and civil rights activist, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." The struggle against war making must be anti-racist, anti-capitalist, antipatriarchal, pro environmental justice and actively centring those most directly affected by its devastating consequences.

We know that wars have been created to serve the interests of corporations: the largest arms deals have delivered oil; whilst the world's largest militaries are the biggest users of petrol. Growth in militarism world wide is not helpful for peace and security. A regional arms race in the Asia-Pacific is about money for weapons corporations and not defence.

And of course in the aftermath of wars and conflict, we see people fleeing conditions they did not create, only to be met with violent borders and the hostile environment.

Immigration law is not the seemingly 'harsh but fair' mode through which the 'deserving' are separated from the 'undeserving'. Instead, it is a crucial mechanism for ensuring that colonial wealth remains out of the hands of those from whom it was stolen.

We must challenge the narratives that underpin immigration law and borders. We must build one which rejects the violence of legal categorisation and paves the way for a more empowering, redistributive and radical politics of social and environmental justice.