

Submission to: The IPAN - People's Inquiry into the Costs and Consequences of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US-Alliance.

What are the political, social, military and defence, economic and environmental impacts of Australia's involvement in US-led wars and the US-Alliance?

What are the costs and consequences of this involvement in US-led wars and the US-Alliance? What are the alternatives?

Wage Peace is a project of the Australian Nonviolence Projects. We have four programme areas that may be reflected in this submission:

- 1. Frontier Wars /Colonial Militarism,**
- 2. Weapons Industry**
- 3. TruthTelling and WarCrimes**
- 4. West Papua: Make West Papua Safe.**

We would like to start this submission by acknowledging the Aboriginal Sovereign Nations of this Great South Land. We would like to assert that the Sovereign Nations continue to bear the greatest impacts of colonial Australia - both as an independent nation state and in relationship to the USA. Australia was first a colony violently organised by the British and now is a colony under the violent influence of the USA. The USA is also renown for 300 years of genocidal activity against First Nations people in its own territories and beyond.

We pay our respects to the Sovereign Nations of the Territories in Turtle Island. And we pay our respects to the Sovereign Nations here in this Great South Land.

In writing this submission, we are assuming that others will attend to details in ways much more effective than us. We therefore have provided an overview of key ideas which we assume will be addressed by others better positioned than us.

Some ideas we think are however more important. From the inquiry summaries we have heard so far, we think some key ideas are missing or require a more in depth response. We are especially interested in the implicit threat of disruptive intervention by the US government which we believe underpins considerable government decision making. The major parties and the government of the day realise that they are always at risk of disruptive intervention by the USA.

Political

Potential Disruption by the US: Australian major electoral parties have a reasonable concern - fear even - that the US Government and their entities would act to destabilise their parties or disrupt or depose their governments if they do not cooperate with every part of the US corporate program. This is a realistic appraisal.

Australian need to name foreign interference by the USA as the major threat to independent democracy. Australians need to discuss how we as a community will respond to the US interfering

with Australian political processes, should Australian parties or governments actually stand up to them.

Fear of disruption appears to be reinforced by discourses held inside the bipartisan [Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security](#). In this committee the two executive streams of the Labor party and the Liberal parties combine. The members of the committee are then unduly influenced by the US intelligence sphere. From the secrecy and privilege and entitlement of this group comes a co-silencing about the operations of the US in Australia. Former and current chairs of the committee Andrew Hastie and James Patterson are strident critics of China and appear to be lobbyists for the US alliance ¹.

Political disruption is already occurring through political donations by corporations that are largely owned by US investors - such as Woodside.

Australians need to learn to build power from the grassroots that does not rely on the unions which have so far shown that they are open to ineffectual bargaining with corporations.

Weapons Corporations as Influencers: The size of the weapons corporations, which are now ensconced in Australian political life means that they are able to influence political decision making in ways that is not democratic.

Some of the influences are outlined following.

- Diversion of resources derived from the Australian society and economy to US military industry projects via the weapons industry 'Primes'. The four US Primes are Boeing Defence, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman. This diversion is political because it has a political effect on all other resourcing decisions and priorities.²

US Primes	Projects worth over a Billion Dollars	Joint projects with extraordinary US influence
Boeing	e.g.: E-7A Wedgetail, P-8A Poseidon and Currawong battlespace communications system	missiles
Lockheed Martin,	F35	
Raytheon (with Kongsberg)	National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS)	
Northrop Grumman	Space Systems	

¹Michael A. Peters. (2021) [US-China relations: Towards strategic partnerships](#). *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 0:0, pages 1-6.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131857.2021.1897573>

²Department of Defence (2020) Defence 2021-22 Portfolio Budget Statements retrieved from.
<https://www.defence.gov.au/Budget/21-22/PBS.asp>

- The weapons corporations use their relational and lobbying power to dampen diplomatic efforts with other States: defunding, undermining diplomatic efforts by militarising relationships and militarising conflicts.³
- We assert that the corporations, as economic entities of the USA state, are supported by the State entities to further their economic interests. (See Fernandes) We assert that State entities such as the Pentagon and its network of funded think tanks then work to influence Australian defence policy via facilitation of policy documents, timetables, generation of favourable discourses etc.
- The US weapons corporations perpetuate conflict. War cycles assist US transnationals and are directed at their financial and trade interests. This further strengthens US financial dominance and therefore US influence over Australia. The US corporations can use relatively small amounts of money to bribe parties through corporate donations.
- The US weapons corporations influence and use DFAT for purposes of US trade and financial arrangements.
- The US weapons corporations (and their State backers and enforcers) will support the silence that is written into the Lombok Treaty between Australia and Indonesia about issues such as human rights abuses by police and military in Australia's neighbour West Papua. It is in the US corporate interests to have a DFAT-managed silence about what is occurring in Indonesia, so that their weapons trade and corporate mining interests can proceed unchallenged.

Undue Influence by US Military Government Entities: We assert that the Office of the Defence Minister has members of the US military and the Central Intelligence Agency embedded in it. Furthermore, via military relationships, it has direct access to advice and direction from Pentagon think tanks and influencing forces, which have undue influence on planning, spending and decision making.⁴

Pine Gap and the Other Bases - Trojan Horse of U.S. Foreign Government Influence:

It costs the US tax payer between 10,000 and 40,000 per year for each member of the US military stationed overseas. This cost is to the US taxpayer - and to US government services. It is encouraged because there is a massive benefits for US corporations (Vine, 2015).

In "Base Nation", David Vine points out that the presence of Bases have been used for generations to advance U.S. business.

"They provide privileged US access to overseas markets, resources and investment opportunities. They create stability for the regular working of capitalism. And they solidify political alliances . . . Through these intertwined and growing political, economic and military ties, the U.S. military ultimately helps to deepen the dependence of countries such as Honduras (and Australia) on the United States . . . By building relationships with military leaders and exposing them to US doctrine and U.S. power, (they can be) "bound . . . to the United States, (and opened ...to greater manipulation . . . Relationships built around ...(bases) and other military activities (offer the U.S.) possibilities to sway foreign governmental decisions on matters far beyond things military alone" (Vine, 2015, p.317).⁵

³ Commonwealth of Australia (2020). 2020 Defence Strategic Update. Retrieved from <https://www1.defence.gov.au/strategy-policy/strategic-update-2020>

⁴ Australian Strategic Policy Institute. (n.d.). *Aspi by the Numbers*. Available from: <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2021-03/ASPI%20by%20the%20numbers%2019-20.pdf?7zWiiTqii6uCH5SOC14LFLiAcsyOckue=>

⁵ Vine, D. (2015). *Base nation: How U.S. military bases abroad harm America and the world*.

Vine has referred to these bases as being like a “Trojan horse” through which the U.S. is able to assert a growing authority and power that extends initially from local economic interests to significant influence on the centralised governmental power. We assert that it is the military industry corporations that benefit from this power, and the corporations that provide the human power that facilitates it.

Pine Gap and complicity in extra judicial killing: drone strikes: We know from whistleblowers that signals collected at Pine Gap are used in the chain of command which decides which people to kill without trial, and without sentencing. We also know that drone strikes are extraordinarily inaccurate in that they kill more non-targets than targets. Daniel Hale has told a story about the targeting of a man fleeing Afghanistan. As planned his car was hit by a missile strike from a drone. But he was not alone. His daughters aged 5 and 7 were killed. He had to leave the bodies by the road side as he escaped with his wife.

Hale has suggested that up to 9 in 10 people killed by drone strikes were not the actual so-called “target”.

These are war crimes. Targeting civilians is a war crime. Jeremy Skahill and Daniel Hale revealed that the USA were accusing all male people over 15 of being so-called Taliban military insurgents. This was lie devised by the USA to cover the numbers of civilians being killed by drone strikes.

We know this. The USA is deceitful.

We know that Pine Gap is used to find the targets and to send the signals involved in decision making and killing. Malcolm Fraser in his 2015 book *Dangerous Allies* and in the frequent interviews he made before his death spells this out clearly. This implicates Australia in hundreds of war crimes. An Australian military officer is number 2 in command at Pine Gap.⁶

Weapons sales Regulations and Transparency: Development of Australian weapons industries by the US corporations, is a way of circumventing regulations and transparency in the US.

For example In the US weapons exports are relatively transparent and easy to trace. All weapons exports from the US are registered on a US Federal register under the Directorate of Defence Trade Controls⁷. However, where Boeing would for example export to Indonesia direct from Australia, this would not appear on the US register. Yet the weapons would be US designed and even largely produced. And the deals US organised - Only built using Australian labour.

All the weapons industries set themselves up in foreign countries to avoid regulations. They know that our movement has not been able to build or wield power enough to challenge these practices despite being a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Resourcing of DFAT and Diplomatic Channels: We must properly resource DFAT and make sure our diplomatic capacity OUTSTRIPS the military capacity in running the show. This should include a concerted effort to build back the relations with China. Build diplomacy. Reinvigorate. Build a respectable foreign service and foreign policy.”⁸

⁶ Fraser, M. (2015). *Australia's dangerous ally*. *New Zealand International Review*, 40(2), 8-12.

⁷ https://www.pmdtcc.state.gov/?id=ddtc_public_portal_homepage

⁸ Bronowski

Social Effects

Building a Social Dependence on Military Industries: The Weapons Industry is influencing the design of the cities and suburbs of tomorrow.

The governments are setting up communities of people economically dependent on this industry. Families are encouraged to enter into long term mortgage relationships with banks on the basis of this industry. This “locks” the industry in for the long term - somewhat like the disastrous effect of locking people into the central Qld coal industry at the time of climate disaster.

There has been an increase in a US style weapons industry developments rooted in urban communities

- Nominated defence industrial and suburban precincts: e.g Ipswich, Newcastle, Geelong, Mawson Lakes.⁹
- Spread of the military industrial complex into urban areas creating
 - long term dependencies on the spread of conflicts.
 - Long term distortions in the electoral system because of the ability of big corporations to donate into the electoral system

Influence on Universities and Intrusion into Schools: The weapons industry is seeking to normalise this intrusion via sponsorships and partnerships with education at all levels. “As Australia struggles to comprehend its latest abysmal results and slip in the global rankings of education performance concerted national defence industry investment provides an opportunity to overhaul the nation’s education system to meet Australia’s national security needs”¹⁰

Though a range of transnational weapons corporations are involved with this, it is the US corporations and their political connections that create the ‘threat effect’ to the Australian Government. If the Australian Government refuses to go along with a US transnationals’ initiatives, they run the risk of disruption by their military backers, the US Government who can draw on CIA intervention at one level; or withdrawal of political donations at another level.

Economic

Transfer of the Resources of the Commonwealth from Public control to Private control:

Interoperability with the US, provides a cover and excuse for hooking Australian military spending to U.S. weapons corporations. This gives these corporations direct access and control over Defence Department decision making. These are massive contracts. As the departmental organisers of these contracts organise through time they become embedded in the corporations themselves via close relationships which facilitates the revolving door effect. Decisions in this environment are easily corruptible.

Through this process enormous amounts of money move from the public hands to private corporations for contracts which have dubious (corrupt) provenance and development.

⁹ Queensland opens \$5 million Defence Industry Hub.(February 28, 2020), Manufacturers Monthly. Retrieved from <https://www.manmonthly.com.au/news/queensland-opens-5-million-defence-industry-hub/>

¹⁰ Yelland, Brad. The links between national security and a world-leading education capability. (09 DECEMBER 2019), Defence Connect Retrieved from <https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/key-enablers/5270-the-links-between-national-security-and-a-world-leading-education-capability>

This becomes a massively lucrative means for the diversion of public money to private corporations. It occurs inside the ministers' offices through public contracts that the corporations control and that committed governments have no power to withstand or resist.

The corporations can easily threaten a politician's career. Notably the fall of Linda Reynolds at the hands of Naval/Thales recently. The US corporations have much greater power than the European corporations at the Federal level because of the Base effect - the dependence on ensuring stability at Pine Gap.

Australia's collaboration in US wars, has Australia supporting the big US engineering corporations feeding off war. Assisting the US corporations as they use the wars to accrue public wealth.

- Weapons Corporations
- Freight and logistics Corporations
- Services Corporations
- Infrastructure Maintenance Corporations
- Fossil Fuel Corporations
 - Exxon Mobil
 - Halliburton

Caught in a system of Financial Dominance, there is an obsession with financial preeminence via control of "intellectual property" as described by Clinton Fernandes.

"Most of Australia's biggest companies are majority-owned by US investors. This concentration of overt foreign influence should concern us . . . The attention being given to possible covert influence being exercised by China in Australia shouldn't distract us from recognising that very overt foreign influence now occurs through investment."

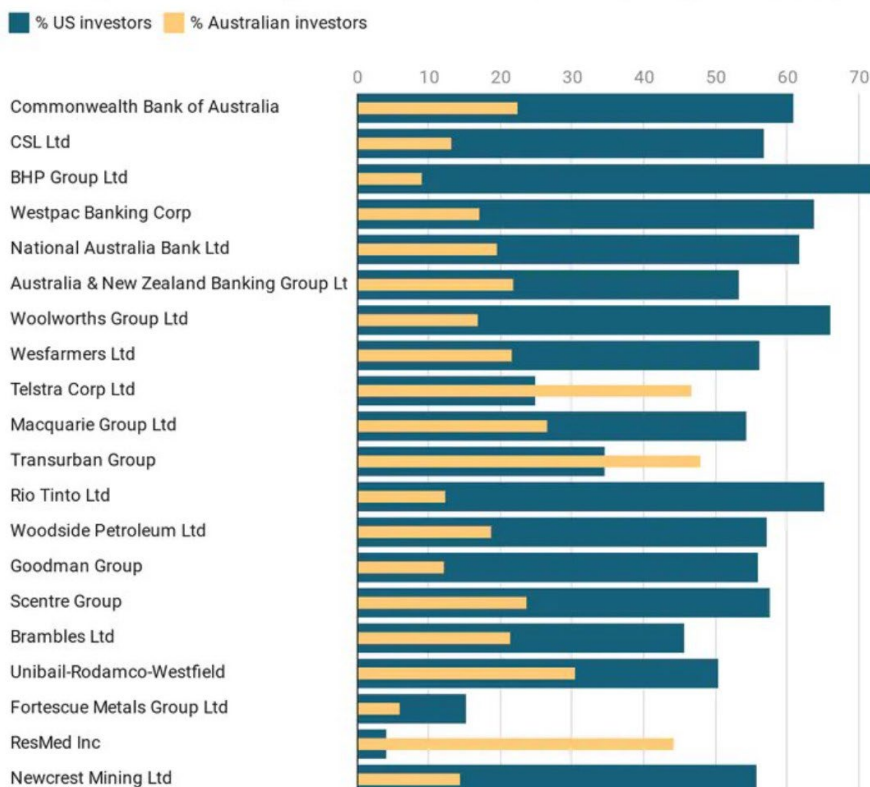
Right now "US corporations eclipse everyone else in their ability to influence our politics, through their investments in Australian stocks." (Fernandes, 2019).¹¹

¹¹ Fernandes 12 Sept 2019: accessed 8th July 2021

<https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/business-law/worried-about-agents-foreign-influence-just-look-who-owns-australias-biggest>

US ownership of Australia's biggest companies.

Percentage of stocks owned by US investor in the ASX's top 20 companies (as of May 2019).



Source: Clinton Fernandez

Woodside is number thirteen in the list of the biggest “Australian” corporations. Woodside has 57% US investment and only 25% Australian investment. Because of the US investment interest, we can presume that Woodside will be using US political influence (power) to maintain its business interests regarding petroleum and gas in Australia for as long as possible despite climate imperatives.

This would have a range of implications.

1. It might extend to threats (interference) for example by the US government to Australian governments on behalf of US investment/ interests. Note Clinton Fernandes’ comments at the IPAN webinar regarding the US threatening governments that interrupt their financial interests - and therefore may interfere with their dominance in any way.
2. We can presume that Woodside has an interest in preventing the development and sale of Electric Vehicles in Australia. We can presume they have pressured the Australian government to tax EV’s and remove incentives for EV’s and provide barriers for EV infrastructure. .

Australia has a continued and severe dependency on external energy (power) sources (See fuel imports issue below) while it does not develop EV’s which are decentralised and enable a significant uptake of renewable energy. EV’s are a key element in transition to fossil fuels.¹²

Decentralisation of energy is the key to real independence.

¹²

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/renewable-energy-in-australia-a-phenomenal-success-story/12915110>

Defence

The Use of Special Forces in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

The US used the Australian Special Services for spearheading (murder) missions in its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The US called on - perhaps required under implied threat - Australia to provide the SAS role for far longer than the SAS were able to safely provide the 'service'.

Under the US command, the SAS were encouraged to reculturise as a "warrior" culture in line with the US Special Service culture. The Australians were also lauded as a way of privileging and separating the men who were groomed, in order that they would continue. This enabled the culture that resulted in dozens of war crimes by Australians. The War Crime scandal has massively undermined the standing of the ADF in the community. This is a direct result of the involvement of the SAS being positioned inside and in relation to the US special forces.

Involvement in US Wars and Colonial Operations

The ADF have developed as a complicated unit of the US Defence Force not just via the doctrine of interoperability but also via the way the ADF work with and are embedded inside US Defence Force culture.

Because of the USA implied threat to parties and established governments, Australia is involved with all US wars irrespective of their purpose, stated goals, or abhorrent outcomes.

The US have not "won" any wars. The wars conducted in the past 50 years are only in service to US corporations which emerge as the big winners from a growth and profit perspective.

This is a massive draw on the Australian Defence Force resourcing and has virtually nothing to do with actual defence of Australia. Defence of Australia might more likely involve creating an empowered public able to use civil resistance (and nonviolent defence) to stop foreign interference at every point. As well as involvement in the re creation of a network sovereign Aboriginal Nations in treaty with Australian entities..

Fuel Security is a Major Security/Defence Issue

Right now Australia hires fuel storage in Texas because onshore storage in Australia is so low. 92% of petroleum is imported. Less than 56 days storage in Australia is available (Feb 2020 figures) should supply lines be interrupted. Over the past 10 years the number of onshore refineries went from 14 to 2 refineries.¹³ Now 92 percent is being imported from refineries including in Singapore and the Middle East.

In any conflict between the US and another party in the region, Australia's economy can be brought to a halt by a blockade of petroleum supply lines. Australia has a massively exposed supply line: it cannot defend it and it relies on the relationship with the US to maintain that supply.

By being exposed in this way

1. Australia has an immediate dependency on the US military relationship.¹⁴

¹³ Davey, A. (2021). *Australian Energy Security for Liquid Fuels*. Pegasus Economics. Available from: https://www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/275741/sub053-supply-chains-attachment.pdf

¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence (2020). *United States Force Posture Initiatives*. <https://defence.gov.au/Initiatives/USFPI/>

2. Australia is dependent on the maintenance of a functional diplomatic relationship between China and the US for a reduction in the national security risk.

Over extended supply lines exposure could have been ameliorated with the decentralised use of Electric Vehicles as night time storage for households. It can be presumed that US owned petroleum and gas companies such as Woodside are objecting to and getting in the way of policies that would expand the use EV and other renewable technologies in Australia.

Further more US petroleum companies benefit from Australian dependency on US oil.

Environmental/Ecological

Military Operations Enforce Extraction: The military DRIVES and ENFORCES extraction of fossil fuels and other minerals. This is the main issue. Without the enforcement of extraction, communities would be able to defend extraction of materials which they do not consent to.

First Nations communities are undermined by the continual threat of US militarism. Australia is encouraged through its relationship with the US to back all US government and military decision-making despite constant human rights abuses by the US and despite disadvantages to the Australian and Sovereign Aboriginal communities.

US Political Interference gets in the way of meaningful action on Climate Change:

See for example the case of Woodside Petroleum above. Woodside is the number one fossil fuel donor to Labor and Liberal parties.¹⁵

The role of the alliance is to work with the Australian government to ensure no meaningful action and maintain the status quo that enable US transnationals to have financial dominance.

Issues not in this decision making are

- Impacts of climate disaster
- Impacts on Australian biodiversity
- Sovereign aspirations of First Nations Peoples
- Etc etc etc

The 'Alliance' provides the framework that gives direct access for 'US interests' to elements of a particular government and enable their interests to dominate - which they do.

Direct Impacts by the US military and its 'Alliance' on the environment

Others can speak more eloquently on the following distinct influences of the US military alliance on the environment. But each is significant and widespread.

1. Direct Damage from military poisons.
2. Direct damage to urban, agricultural and wild ecosystems due to destructive warfare.
3. Extreme carbon output for no positive reason, including, maintenance of military bases, maintenance of military machinery, conductin war and war games.
4. Dangerous Nuclear outputs: Uranium, dangerous radioactive bi-products.
5. Dangerous nuclear threats.

¹⁵ Market Forces, (Feb 2020), Dirty money – political donations from the fossil fuel industry. Available from: <https://www.marketforces.org.au/politicaldonations2021/>

6. Direct damage from preparing the environment for militarised colonialism (deforestation)
 - In Afghanistan a third of the wooded area was cleared in the 90s.
 - Current deforestation of SouthEast Asia is a major issue for our region. It is resulting in internal refugee movements inside Indonesia and Malaysia for example.

Submission by Wage Peace

Margaret Pectorius and Miriam Torzillo

Section from David Vine's Base Nation

humanitarian assistance activities, which can lead to military exercises, which can lead to arms sales and much more. Southcom commander General Charles Wilhelm admitted as much when he talked with a top Salvadoran general about creating a new lily pad air base. "We realize, in a diplomatic sense, this plan is for counterdrug only," Wilhelm said. "As a practical matter, all of us know that this agreement will give us a superb opportunity to increase the contact with all our armed forces in a variety of ways."⁵⁵

One result is the growing incorporation of foreign military leaders and foreign militaries into the U.S. military structure. Military officials talk in terms of "interoperability," but the hierarchical nature of these relationships is clear enough. Foreign militaries eventually become, if not proxy armies, at least functional adjuncts or extensions of the U.S. military.⁵⁶ Indeed, the aim is increasingly to get "them" to do most of the fighting, and lily pads have become one of several tools to push other militaries

in that direction.

Importantly, these deepening military ties involve highly unequal relationships, in which U.S. leaders can offer their counterparts various "gifts"—including, for example, sophisticated and expensive equipment and weapons, or prestigious training opportunities in the United States. To militaries like that of Honduras, which is almost completely dependent on international donors for its equipment, such gifts are deeply significant.⁵⁷ But like most gifts, these come with obligations and a certain degree of expected loyalty. The obligation-laden relationships can later bear fruit for U.S. military leaders—when, for example, they want to gain valuable intelligence from their high-ranking counterparts, or to shape decisions about another country's arms purchases or military policy. "You identify officers and senior NCOs [noncommissioned officers]," the former Bush administration official Ray DuBois explained to me, "and you make friends with them when they are

sergeants and captains ... so when they are colonels and generals you have relationships with them." These relationships, DuBois continued, "are sources of information," and "you may be able to influence the country's procurement policies so they will buy U.S. equipment."

The anthropologist Lesley Gill describes how the training of Latin American military leaders at the infamous School of the Americas has "secured their collusion" in U.S. military and geopolitical strategy "to a considerable degree." By building relationships with military leaders and exposing them to U.S. doctrine and U.S. power, the school "bound them closer to the United States, opened them to greater manipulation ... and preempted military assistance from other states that might challenge U.S. dominance."¹¹ Relationships built around lily pads and other military activities do much the same, offering possibilities to sway foreign governmental decisions on matters far beyond things military

alone.

Much like the patrol bases that helped "open" China to trade in the nineteenth century, lily pads can thus help advance U.S. business interests. They provide privileged U.S. access to overseas markets, resources, and investment opportunities. They create stability for the regular working of capitalism. And they solidify political alliances. A lily pad "has an influence by virtue of its presence," DuBois said. "A political impact." Through these intertwined and growing political, economic, and military ties, the U.S. military ultimately helps to deepen the dependence of countries such as Honduras on the United States.

For the first time in the post-Cold War era, in places like Central and South America, U.S. political and economic dominance is being called into question as a growing number of countries are asserting their independence or gravitating toward China and other rising powers. In response, U.S.