

Submission to IPAN by two members of the Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers): Dale Hess, Adrian Glamorgan (August 2021)

Summary

This paper focuses on the threat of nuclear weapons.

A. Context: We should realistically appraise the Global and Regional context and its implications for Australia

B. Australia should redirect its position away from:

1. ANZUS generally, and the hardening Quadrilateral strategy
2. the weakness of the nuclear command and control structure, an under-discussed aspect of Australia's alliance with the United States.
3. The conventional arms command and control structure,
4. Limited transparency in defence and intelligence appraisals decision-making by and in parliament
5. Undermining the independence of universities and schools by arms traders and their linked nuclear weapons companies

C. Instead, Australia should:

6. Identify and acknowledge the weakness, risks and implications of Australia's role in US command and control structure and strategy
7. Replace its present dangerous approach by adopting a realistic, actively non-nuclear defence policy, which includes
 - a. Honouring Australia's obligations under Article VI of the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* 1970
 - b. Signing and ratifying *the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* 2021
8. Embrace the practices of shared security in diplomacy, aid and defence
9. Invest in Green technologies for health, environment and education
10. Strengthen Australian democracy by
 - a. Passing a *War Powers Act* giving Australian parliaments the right to decide whether to go to war, especially in situations of choice
 - b. Implement proper parliamentary scrutiny of defence and intelligence
 - c. Sufficiently fund universities, in order to maintain their independence from government and ban arms traders from funding programs in universities and schools

D. Conclusion

We raise alternatives to Australia's current foreign policy with respect to nuclear weapons:

- a. Shared security, including investment in diplomacy and aid, and an active non-nuclear stance
- b. Diversion of military resources into green technologies and processes, and
- c. Efforts to increase democratic participation and transparency to protect Australian democracy from undue foreign and corporate influence.

A. Context: We should realistically appraise the Global and Regional context and its implications for Australia

Australia is not realistically weighing up the objective threats to our human security.

The Commission for the Human Future at the Australia National University (ANU) has identified 10 catastrophic threats facing humanity in its report, *Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century*¹. These include the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, global warming and human-induced climate change, pandemics of new and untreatable disease, the rising food insecurity and failing nutritional quality, the decline of natural resources, particularly water, the collapse of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, chemical pollution of the Earth system, including the atmosphere and oceans, human population growth beyond Earth's carrying capacity, the advent of powerful, uncontrolled new technology, and national and global failure to understand and act preventatively on these risks.

This paper will focus on the threat of nuclear weapons.

Currently there are tensions on the Korean Peninsula, tensions between the USA and China in the Western Pacific, including over Taiwan; tensions (and conflict) in the Middle East; tensions between NATO and Russia; and tensions between India and Pakistan and between India and China in South Asia. All of these involve nuclear powers. Any of these could escalate to untold catastrophe.

In addition to escalation, there is the danger of nuclear catastrophe due to some accident, miscalculation, cyber interference, irrational or uninformed decision, or a terrorist group obtaining a nuclear weapon. The current practice of 'launch on warning,' and submarine nuclear warfare is extremely dangerous because it could initiate a nuclear war in a time period too short to determine whether or not a perceived threat is real.

B. Australia should redirect its position away from...

1. ANZUS generally, and the hardening Quadrilateral strategy

There is an urgent need to review and change the basic structure of Australian defence policy. This structure is based on two flawed assumptions:

- That the provisions of Article III of the ANZUS Treaty, promising consultation between parties over threats to territorial integrity, political independence or security in the Pacific region offer reliable protection for Australia's real interests
- and secondly, that the concepts of extended deterrence and the US nuclear umbrella provide protection for Australia.

¹ John Hewson, et al., *Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century*, Canberra: Australia National University, March 2020. https://humanfuture.net/sites/default/files/CHF_Roundtable_Report_March_2020.pdf

These flawed assumptions lead to the erroneous conclusion that the ANZUS Alliance and increasingly closer integration into the US military enlarges Australia's defence effectiveness and self-determination in a time of emergency.

The first assumption has been convincingly discredited by former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in his book *Dangerous Allies*². The ANZUS Alliance does not commit the United States to come to Australia's aid in a time of crisis, merely to consult. Only if it were considered to be in the US interest would assistance be given.

Australia needs to be able to develop an independent Foreign Policy and to act autonomously as a responsible global citizen.

Australian policymakers face a dilemma. This arises because Australia's economic and military policies are based on a contradiction. On one hand, China is Australia's largest trading partner. The Chinese economy is predicted to become the world's largest economy within the next few decades. Japan is Australia's second largest trading partner, although its economic power is declining. On the other hand, Australia has aligned itself militarily with the United States through the ANZUS Treaty and with Japan through defence agreements. US power is now in decline.

Australia's strategic interests are not necessarily aligned with the United States or Japan. Gone are the days when Australia needed a Great Power, initially it was Great Britain and then it was United States, to provide protection for us.

The United States has adopted a containment strategy in an attempt retain its dominance in the Pacific, but the rise of China's economic and military power is challenging this policy. The way in which these tensions are resolved, whether diplomatically or militarily, will have global consequences. Both sides are very determined. A minor military clash could escalate to nuclear war, as ANU academic Hugh White has stated³. For 40 years Australian defence planning has assumed that the US would remain both predominant and unchallenged as the leading strategic power in Asia, but this assumption is no longer valid.

It is neither in our own interests, nor is it morally defensible, to adopt a position of aggression towards any nation simply because that is the view of our much larger ally.

In recent months, think tanks and defence papers have tried to harden a Quadrilateral alliance, which extends Australia's defence obligations towards an alliance with Japan, the United States, and India. The "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue" (QSD, or Quad) was a 2007 initiative of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, promoted by US Vice President Dick Cheney, and supported by India PM Manmohan Singh and Australian Prime Minister John Howard. The idea did not take immediate root, although it appeared in Australia's Defence White Paper in 2013. The Quadrilateral concept was revived in 2017 at the ASEAN Summits. In its 12

² Malcolm Fraser, with Cain Roberts, *Dangerous Allies*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2014, pp i-viii + 360.

³ Hugh White, "On China: 'It would probably be the biggest war since 1945... And it would very likely become a nuclear war'", *The Saturday Paper*, May 8-14, 2021.

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2021/05/08/hugh-white-how-conflict-with-china-would-very-likely-become-nuclear-war#hrd>

March 2021 Quad Leaders' Joint Statement, "The Spirit of the Quad," the four partners evoked cooperation they say began with the 2004 tsunami, highlighting now "the global devastation wrought by COVID-19, the threat of climate change, and security challenges facing the region." The Quad identifies itself as "free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law...rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity."⁴

However, there are many reasons to believe these worthy words are code for restraining the development of China, and developing a neo-Cold War alliance based on military strength, rather than attempts to build trust and strengthen multilateralism. There is no admission by US and Australia, for example, for the notable transgression of the rule of law in their illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003, which destabilized the Middle East and added millions of refugees to the world population. Nor have the US and Australia taken steps to uphold the International Court of Justice ruling that UK occupation of the Chagos Islands, home to the US military base Diego Garcia, is illegal and the islands must be returned to Mauritius "as rapidly as possible".

Linked to the idea of the Quadrilateral is the notion of the Indo-Pacific, which has rapidly superseded the more customary phrase, "Asia Pacific." Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the 45th President referred to the Indo-Pacific Region 2017⁵ but there was active concern by informed commentators that the US military was pulling India into a Cold War alliance rather than a dialogue of civil cooperation. Of greater concern⁶ and more ominously from a nuclear point of view, the "Indo-Pacific" worldview has found itself featured significantly in the US National Security Strategy in 2017 and 2018, and the Nuclear Posture Review.

The "Indo-Pacific" approach is not one likely to help China feel safer or less encircled, and will have a self-fulfilling effect of strengthening a belligerent faction within the Chinese Communist Party. It is more likely to create and entrench polarizing tensions. The strategic approach has been presented to Australia as a fait-accompli.

Another aspect of the United States policy to contain China is the provocative Talisman Sabre and RIMPAC military exercises (war rehearsals). These are held biennially in the Pacific and involve Australia. They are designed as a show of force to China. Not only do these exercises escalate tensions, but they potentially cause significant environmental air and water pollution through the release of toxic chemicals, such as perchlorate, which can harm marine life and near-shore ecosystems.

⁴ "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: 'The Spirit of the Quad,'" *The White House*, last modified March 12, 2021, accessed July 13, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

⁵ "Joint Statement - United States and India: Prosperity Through Partnership," accessed July 13, 2021, https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/28560/United_States_and_India_Prosperty_Through_Partnership.

⁶ Gurpreet S. Khurana, "Opinion | Trump's New Cold War Alliance in Asia Is Dangerous," *Washington Post*, n.d., accessed July 13, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2017/11/14/trump-asia-trip/>.

Because of concerns over China there is pressure on Australia to increase its military cooperation with its ANZUS ally and offer to host increasing numbers of US marines and warships and hold joint military training in Darwin. Australia already is committed to purchase US military equipment, such as the flawed F35 fighter jet, for the sake of interoperability with the US military. These steps increase tensions, and incrementally move us towards the logic of nuclear deterrence.

2. The weakness of the nuclear command and control structure and strategy, an under-discussed aspect of Australia alliance with the United States.

Various policies developed by Defence and successive Administrations assume that that the concepts of extended deterrence and a nuclear umbrella are protective. The terminology is repeated as a comforting mantra, relying on the unverifiable assumption that since no harm has come to date, none can be expected in the future. In fact, little work has been done by successive Australian governments or researchers to demonstrate these metaphors are substantial, real, and work. They risk giving Australians a false sense of security.

The concept of extended deterrence, does not stand up to scrutiny. It is unnecessary and counter-productive. The Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs undertook a study of the validity of nuclear deterrence and concluded, 'We have examined the evidence for nuclear deterrence and found it to be paltry, if it exists at all'.⁷ They found:

- There is clear evidence that the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not end the Pacific War in 1945, rather it was the declaration of war by the Soviet Union on 8th August.
- Contrary to common belief, there is no evidence that nuclear weapons 'kept the peace' during the Cold War
- Possessing nuclear weapons provides little leverage. Nuclear weapons have failed to give their possessors decisive military advantage in war.

Proponents of nuclear deterrence point to the lack of nuclear war since Nagasaki. However, they overlook the several occasions that the world has come close to nuclear annihilation. A combination of the right leaders, brave subordinates who have defied standing orders and not launched on warning, and perhaps good luck have together saved the world so far. The existence of nuclear weapons in South Asia is of particular concern.

⁷ Ken Berry et al., "Delegitimizing Nuclear Weapons: Examining the Validity of Nuclear Deterrence," *James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies* (May 2010): 98.

3. The conventional arms command and control structure

Australia aspires to be in the world's top ten producers of weapons. This endangers Australia from a nuclear point of view because:

- a. There are aspects of nuclear operability that may be built into conventional weapons;
- b. Support of the arms trade companies also strengthens their financial position to produce nuclear weapons; and
- c. The proliferation of conventional weapons increases international tensions, and an arms race which ultimately escalates to the "logic" of acquiring nuclear capability and then the weapons themselves
- d. The establishment of programs of philanthropy and community investment that support the arms traders' strategic business goals contaminates the role of charities in democratic civil society

4. Limited transparency in defence and intelligence appraisals and decision-making by parliament

The development of intelligence, surveillance and defence processes, policies and decisions remains opaque and effectively beyond parliamentary scrutiny. This undermines the workings of parliament through the executive's current application of war powers

5. Undermining of the independence of universities and schools by arms traders and their linked nuclear weapons companies

Money directed into defence is money not available to universities and under-18 schooling to pursue their aims independent of government. Arms traders have been using funding to greenwash their activities as pro-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). In schools, this encourages young people to develop their science expertise in ways that will promote the arms industry; in universities it has led to the steady demise of humanities funding and interdisciplinary peace studies courses.

C. Instead, Australia should:

6. Identify and acknowledge the weakness, risks and implications of Australia's role in US command and control strategy

Rejecting the concept of extended nuclear deterrence means also rejecting the hosting of United States military and intelligence facilities, such as the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, the US military global mobile phone system within the Australian Defence Satellite Communications Station at Kojarena and the large US phased array space radar facility within the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station at North West Cape.

These facilities make Australia a nuclear target. Aspects of these facilities could also play a role in first strikes against Chinese submarines in the South China Sea (see Clinton Fernandes' writings)⁸ which could take place without Australia's permission – if the United States should act first, and ask for Australian forgiveness after. This strengthens the case for a national War Powers Act which would limit the ability of default systems with Australian-based facilities to be used without parliamentary affirmative permission.

Until we realistically identify and acknowledge these weaknesses, Australia's defence and diplomatic strategy will be based on a system of false assumptions which are against our national interests and shared security.⁹

7. Replace Australia's present dangerous defence policy by adopting a realistic, actively non-nuclear defence policy by

d. Honouring its obligations under Article VI of *the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty 1970*

Australia needs to become a responsible global citizen and should play a positive role in working for common security:

Australia is a party to the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT) and the *Treaty of Rarotonga* (South Pacific NWFZ Treaty). Both of these treaties play an important part in promoting peace.

Regrettably the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS), the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom and China, have reneged on commitments given at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, and boycotted the UN-mandated multilateral negotiations of a legal prohibition on nuclear weapons.

Every NWS is committed to 'modernization' of their nuclear arsenal in open breach of the NPT.

What is Australia doing about all of these breaches? Is the ANZUS Treaty acting as a deterrent to Australia speaking out?

The Australian Government has stated it has a binding commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. What is it doing to encourage the United States to ratify that Treaty? Is the ANZUS Treaty acting as a deterrent to Australia speaking out?

⁸ Clinton Fernandes, "It's Time to Revisit Pine Gap," *Crikey*, last modified September 12, 2019, <https://www.crikey.com.au/2019/09/12/pine-gap-brian-toohey/>; Clinton Fernandes, *What Uncle Sam Wants: U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives in Australia and Beyond*, 2019.

⁹ Ru Freeman and Kerri Kennedy, eds., *Indivisible: Global Leaders on Shared Security* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, an imprint of Interlink Publishing Group, Inc, 2019).

The United States has not ratified Protocol I of the Rarotonga Treaty. Is the ANZUS Treaty deterring Australia from encouraging the United States to do this?

The NPT needs to be revitalised, and its proponents need to show sincere intent in undertaking the task of seriously promoting the global effort to do this.

e. Signing and ratifying the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2021*

Signing the new *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW) is a timely implementation of the promise contained in Article VI of the NPT, and the provisions of TPNW helps define and give precise direction to those steps. These include addressing neglected aspects of Article VI.

The TPNW also addresses the need to recognize and act on the human rights of Indigenous people affected by nuclear testing, as well as the environmental rights of areas contaminated by nuclear weapons.

This would call on us to learn from history and act to prevent the human suffering that results from nuclear blasts and plutonium contamination in Australia. From 1952 to 1963 the British Government, with the full knowledge and participation of the Australian Government, conducted many atomic test explosions, some of them major, in the South Australian Outback and off the West Australian coast. As a result of those blasts and plutonium contamination the 16,000 workers on the test site and many Indigenous Australians suffered severe and on-going health issues and large tracts of land were contaminated.

Nuclear weapons are now considerably more powerful, and the devastation caused by even one nuclear bomb would change life forever for Australia.

The TPNW provides a useful pathway. It seeks to promote disarmament by delegitimising the continued possession of nuclear weapons by all countries, including the five nuclear-armed members of the NPT and the four non-NPT Nuclear Weapons States. It provides an overall framework to achieve this goal.

It is true that none of the nine nuclear-armed states have joined the effort to establish the TPNW to abolish nuclear weapons. However, it should be recognised that the TPNW follows in the path of other treaties banning weapons of mass destruction: biological and chemical weapons, landmines and cluster munitions. These efforts have proven effective, even in countries that did not join treaty negotiations or join the respective treaty. The stigmatisation of indiscriminate and inhumane killers of civilian populations grows in effect over time: each banned weapon is now less often justified, produced, deployed, traded or used than before it was prohibited.

Great care has been taken in drafting the TPNW to ensure that it mutually reinforces the NPT and is legally compatible with the NPT. References to the NPT occur in the TPNW preamble and in Article 18. The preamble explicitly states that ‘the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which serves as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, has a vital role to play in promoting international peace and security’. Article 18 states that ‘The implementation of this Treaty shall not prejudice obligations undertaken by States Parties with regard to existing international agreements, to which they are party, where those obligations are consistent with the Treaty.’

A possible obstacle to this is Pine Gap, which hosts a Relay Ground Station and its linkage to a number of large and powerful Overhead Persistent Infrared (OPIR) satellites. In a time of war this satellite system could provide information on the threat of nuclear missile attack and also provide information for targeting an adversary. Richard Tanter argues the TPNW could still be signed:

“This third approach is based on existing redundant communications links the U.S. has built into its global OPIR system of satellites and ground stations to guard against destruction of ground facilities like Pine Gap in war. The existence of communications redundancy indicates a strategically viable and politically not wholly impossible pathway to compliance with the TPNW without necessarily disrupting its alliance with the United States...

Under this proposal an Australian government could give reasonable notice to the United States requiring the closure of the Relay Ground Station and the removal of its systems from Pine Gap. The remaining larger part of the base and its principal signals intelligence functions would be left unaffected.”¹⁰

Australia could and should sign and ratify the TPNW. This Treaty provides a pathway to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

For Australia to sign the Treaty would require the closure of the Relay Ground Station and the removal of its systems from Pine Gap to remove the nuclear capabilities there.

8. Embrace the practices of shared security in diplomacy, aid and defence

There is an alternative to the ANZUS alliance and a hardened Quadrilateral strategy, which could dangerously draw Australia into a conscious or inadvertent nuclear command and control role – or suffer the aftermath of a nuclear conflict. This approach is called Shared Security,¹¹ and deserves support. Shared Security rejects security based on armaments and military means and reframes it based on being inclusive and egalitarian and pursuing common goals.

¹⁰ Richard Tanter, “Hope Becomes Law: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the Asia-Pacific Region”, *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. S1, 258-259.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2021.1908736>

¹¹ Freeman and Kennedy, *Indivisible*.

Australia proclaims its commitment to Shared Security and to supporting Pacific Island Countries build resilience to their security challenges, as articulated in the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security¹². However, the first action principle of the Boe Declaration is, “We reaffirm that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific and our commitment to progress the implementation of the Paris Agreement.” Australia ranks last in climate action according to a recent United Nations report.¹³

9. Invest in Green technologies for health, environment and education

Green technologies are sustainable. They are designed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly. They incorporate renewable resources and recycling. They affirm life by conserving nature and by providing for health and safety.¹⁴

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has declared nuclear weapons to be illegal. Australia’s Future Fund should end its investment in companies that manufacture components for nuclear weapons.

10. Strengthen and promote Australian democracy by

- a. Passing a *War Powers Act* giving Australian parliament’s the right to decide whether to go to war, especially in situations of choice
- b. Implementing proper parliamentary scrutiny of defence and intelligence
- c. Sufficiently funding universities, in order to maintain their independence from government and ban arms traders from funding university programs and schools

E. Conclusion

Australia’s entanglement in the ANZUS Alliance is dangerous. We have discussed two flawed assumptions:

- firstly, that the ANZUS Alliance including evolving forms that increasingly bring closer integration into the US military will provide security in a time of emergency,
- and secondly, concepts of extended deterrence and the US nuclear umbrella

We raise alternatives to current foreign policy with respect to nuclear weapons:

¹² Boe Declaration on Regional Security. <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>. Ru Freeman and Kerri Kennedy, eds., *Indivisible: Global Leaders on Shared Security* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, an imprint of Interlink Publishing Group, Inc, 2019).

¹³ Sammy Westfall, “Australia ranks last in climate action in U.N. report”, *Washington Post*, July 2, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/02/australia-climate-action-un-sustainable-development/>

¹⁴ Robert P. Hesketh, "*Introduction to Sustainable and Green Engineering: General Principles and Targets.*" *Encyclopedia of Sustainable Technologies*. Ed. Abraham, Martin A. Oxford: Elsevier, 2017. 497-507; B. Tonn and P. Carpenter. "*Technology for Sustainability.*" *Encyclopedia of Ecology*. Eds. Jørgensen, Sven Erik, and Brian D. Fath. Oxford: Academic Press, 2008. 3489-93.

- a. Shared security including investment in diplomacy and aid, and an active non-nuclear stance
- b. Diversion of military resources into green technologies and processes, and
- c. Efforts to increase democratic participation and transparency to protect Australian democracy from undue foreign and corporate influence.