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International Volunteers for Peace Inc.

*To reinforce our concern about the increasingly open promotion of a public attitude of accepting use of military force to resolve conflict,. We advocate breaking down borders that divide people; working with others on common projects as a basis for forming a sense of person and place, and a moral centre. Our first submission explained our philosophy and practice, in a world of normal relations between countries. We do not accept a government declaration of a forever alliance based on little more than nostalgia for war memories, that ignores the links of friendship and solidarity built up by many ordinary Australians in their region. We are now officially open to a charge of treachery if we deny the honesty in rhetoric of last week, that threatens to reshape how we are seen in our region and the rest of the world.,.*

IVP believes in building bridges to people outside our home milieu through volunteering on community projects alongside people from other countries. We have colleagues in all the 40 branches of SCI in as many different countries, including countries officially in conflict. The Australian Government has dismissed years of good will created by ordinary Australians, experts, diplomats, academics and professionals who work in, volunteer in, talk with countries in our region and beyond.

rhetoric will have

We distance ourselves from this stance, putting security ahead of humanity and progress; putting force ahead of exchange; putting containment ahead of understanding. We do not know what effect this shift in rhetoric will have on future exchanges and relations with the many other countries in the SCI or other international voluntary service networks. We can only repudiate it as not representative of the values we have always demonstrated, at home, and through the 100 years of SCI work for peace.