

## Submission against the AUKUS approach, 5 October 2021

The announcement is very disturbing that Australia proposes to obtain nuclear powered submarines and is giving the go ahead to an expansion of the US military presence in Australia, with increased numbers of US troops, with more US planes, equipment and ordnance, including missiles. This proposal must be strongly opposed for many reasons as given below.

### *Fearful mindset*

Our leadership from both Liberal and Labor parties since Federation, has been driven by fears of being an Anglo country in Asia. We are no longer an Anglo country and we are starting to come to terms with our history of the invasion of this country inhabited by the First Nations peoples. I'm hopeful that the recognition of the grave injustices done to indigenous people in the past and equally importantly, in the present, will lead to more restitution and the acceptance of the demands of First Nations peoples.

That fear has led to governments hiding behind the 'big power' of the day, firstly Britain and now the United States. Which means we have gone into numerous wars behind these countries, with probably the only one we should have joined being WW2. Since the end of that war, the wars we have been involved in have been disastrous and have perpetuated the notion that war is the solution. Instead the wars, particularly in the middle east and Afghanistan, have made a peaceful world less achievable.

But now, although a majority of Australians are apparently in agreement with the US alliance, I think some of the objective conditions are more conducive to moving to more independent foreign and defence policies. I don't believe we need to campaign against the US alliance per se at this time, **but rather to make the point strongly that we need to be able, and must, say 'No' to the US at particular times, such as now in relation to AUKUS, the submarines and the US military build-up on our soil.**

The defence and foreign policies based on fear are the result also of a mindset that cannot perceive of a peaceful world and how investing in diplomacy can move us to that state. Of course the vested interests will not want in any way to countenance a diplomatic peaceful approach and will do everything to work against that. The arms manufacturers and their offshoots, such as the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, are in that cohort. I don't think the majority of Australians are in that grouping.

We should do all we can to promote investments in diplomacy and combat foreign policy and defence policies based on fear and armed conflict 'solutions', which are giving in to arms manufacturers.

### *Major issues associated with nuclear submarines*

#### *Relations with regional countries and the French and EU*

The decision to adopt an AUKUS approach has seriously damaged our relations with Indonesia, Malaysia, France and to a lesser extent the EU. The damage done to relations with France will take some time to repair, if it is repairable, as will be the damage done to our reputation globally.

#### *Implications for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NNPT) and an arms race.*

The nuclear submarines from the US use highly enriched weapons-grade uranium which would have implications for Australia's compliance with the NNPT. It could also lead to calls from other countries, such as South Korea and Japan, to also get nuclear subs.

We should not in any way contribute to a regional arms race, and we should comply with the letter and spirit of the NNPT by not obtaining nuclear submarines.

Since the announcement, a number of analysts have expressed doubts about whether the subs will ever eventuate, as they are too little, too late, too expensive and have too many associated problems, such as the

lack of a nuclear industry in Australia in terms of maintenance for them. Leasing submarines is now being suggested as a better option and we should oppose that as well unless it can be shown that they are necessary for the actual defence of the Australian continent.

### *Nuclear industry in Australia*

There are already calls to develop a nuclear industry in Australia, both for nuclear power and also to enable maintenance of the submarines, often with the associated argument that nuclear power can help solve the problem of greenhouse gas emissions.

Nuclear power is not a good solution to the climate emergency. It takes many years if not decades to build nuclear power stations. It is also not economically viable. The costs of renewable energy are orders of magnitude less than nuclear power and the technology is far simpler and quicker to build than nuclear technology. While renewables do have some mine processing issues associated with them and also recycling issues to be addressed, the risks are not of the order of the dangers with nuclear nuclear technology and nuclear waste, which still does not have any means of safe storage or disposal. Nuclear waste is dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years.

The nuclear disasters of Chernobyl and Fukushima should not be forgotten.

We should resist all efforts to establish any nuclear industry in Australia.

### *Defence policy*

As indicated above, Australian defence policy has since Federation depended on hiding behind the big power of the day. It has not served us well or contributed to global peace. We have a shameful military history from the period of colonisation to today.

Our political and military leaders need to find some courage and develop a defence strategy which works towards peace and actually focuses on the defence of Australia, not joining with the US in its military exploits around the world and currently in the Asia Pacific.

Experts say that we would need 24 submarines to be an effective defence for Australia, so the 8 planned will do nothing for Australia's defence. It is likely that submarines are of little use defensively and that our defence would need to be concentrated on the air force for surveillance and protection of Australian land.

The dangers of a conflict with China escalating to a nuclear war, either by accident, misunderstanding or by design, does not bear thinking about. It is hard to comprehend how political and military leaders can continue on the path of seemingly deliberately increasing tensions with China. It is sheer insanity. A nuclear war would bring the global disaster of a nuclear winter, bringing death and destruction and starvation for billions for decades.

If the tensions were to increase to actual armed conflict, China could disable Australia very quickly with cyber warfare. AUKUS, as I think Paul Keating said, is a throwback to the Anglosphere and to last century thinking.

### *Foreign Policy*

We should make every effort to mend our relations with our near neighbour, Indonesia, and also Timor-Leste, which we have treated badly and betrayed for over 80 years. We also need to apologise and try to repair our relations with France and the EU. Relations with other countries, such as Malaysia, would be improved with Australia taking a non-aligned position as do many countries in the region.

As Professor Jocelyn Chey has said "there are no material grounds for talking of war with China, no direct threat to this nation and no treaty obligation that might lead us to engage in military conflict between China

and the US or others,” so we should say a clear ‘No’ to the US in its efforts to ‘contain’ China by military means.

### *Summary*

Australia is ideally placed in military terms, that is, geographically, to be a non-aligned or neutral country. We should build an independent military force which is designed to defend Australia from any invasion.

We should invest in diplomacy and use all diplomatic efforts to repair our relationship with China and with all countries.

We should be friends with all countries, including with the US and China, while being free to criticise any moves to infringe the peace and sovereignty of, or human rights of people in, any other country.

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