



C/- PO Box 1379
CARLTON, VIC 3053

21 September 2012

The Hon Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Defence
PO Box 6022, House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
21 September 2012

Dear Minister Smith,

On International Day of Peace 2012, the Independent & Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) was launched to promote an independent Australian foreign policy that builds peace and nonviolent resolution of conflict in our region.

We are opposed to the establishment of foreign military bases and the deployment of foreign troops in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

In particular, the network is opposed to the stationing of up to 2,500 US marines based in Darwin by 2016-17, the possible upgrading of Stirling Naval base, the stationing of US aircraft at RAAF Base Tindal and the militarisation of the Cocos Islands. We object to the increasing integration of Australian and US military forces.

We remain gravely concerned that this military build-up has enormous potential not only to damage relationships with our neighbours, but also to accelerate regional arms races and embroil us in further wars on behalf of a foreign power.

These developments are not in Australia's national interest; US military posturing whether through containment or adventurism is a handicap in our relationships with trading partners, costing us in financial, social and environmental terms.

IPAN would rather see Australia have an independent foreign policy, based on good relationships with our neighbours and trading partners and for Australia to be proudly free to do what is best for our country and region.

Our network is comprised of non-government organisations, unions, churches and community groups seeking to promote democratic, transparent and participatory decision-making on Australia's peace and security options.

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We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience, and seek your advice on how our network can participate in the development of the forthcoming Defence White Paper. Please contact us at the above address, or through Ms Nancy Atkin, 0431 475 465, mapw@mapw.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Organisations:

Anakbayan Melbourne (Stephanie Rabusa)
Australia Peace Committee
Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABC)
Australian Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia
Byron People For Peace & Justice
Campaign Against Foreign Military Bases - SA
Conservation Council of Western Australia
Footprints for Peace
Freemantle Anti Nuclear Group
Friends of the Earth Australia
Gabriela Australia
Just Peace Qld
Maritime Union of Australia (Victorian Branch)
Medical Association for Prevention of War
Migrante Australia. Migrante East, Migrante Melbourne and Migrante North (Victoria)
Pax Christi Australia
Peace Convergence
People for Nuclear Disarmament (W.A)
Philippine Caucus for Peace

Philippines Australia Solidarity Association
Socialist Alliance
Spirit of Eureka, Victoria
Sydney Hiroshima Day Committee
WA Nuclear Free Alliance
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Individuals:

Allen Jasson
Andrew Morrison, Philippines Australia Solidarity Association
Angie Ladera, Gabriela Australia
Annette Brownlie, Convenor Just Peace Qld
Australian Greens Senator Scott Ludlam
Berlin Guerrero, Philippine Caucus for Peace
Cam Walker, National Liaison Officer, Friends of the Earth
Catherine Cox
Christa Schwoebel
Denis Doherty, Sydney Hiroshima Day Committee; National Co-ordinator, AABC
Don Jarrett, President, Australian Peace Committee
Dr Hannah Middleton, spokesperson AABC

Dr Helen Caldicott
Emma King
Eugene Magdamit, Migrante North
Fiona McAlpine, YWILPF
George Kotsakis, Migrante Australia
Harry Kerr, Pax Christi Australia
Heather Beckmann
Irene Gale AM
Jacob Grech
Joan Doyle, Victorian State Secretary, Communication Workers Union (Postal)
Kevin Bracken, MUA Victorian State Secretary
Louise Morris, Campaigns Manager, Markets for Change
Marlou Abaja, Migrante East
May Kotsakis, Philippines Australia Solidarity Association
Nicola Paris
Norma Forest
Reyvi Marinas, Migrante Melbourne
Sandra Kanck
Shirley Winton
Sr Wendy Flannery
Stephanie Rabusa, Anakbayan Melbourne
Stephen Darley