

Hon Julie Bishop
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade



Dear Minister,

April 13th 2015 is GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION ON MILITARY SPENDING, so I appeal to you for a timely to look at Australia’s military budget.

In terms of Australia’s economy, our military expenditure compares poorly with other directions for spending for productivity and wellbeing. A US study (2013) found that one billion dollars in military spending creates 11,600 jobs, while in clean energy, the same amount creates 17,100 jobs; health care, 19,600; and in education, 29,100 jobs.

Much of our military expenditure involves forwarding military interoperability with our ally, the USA such as through the recurrent Talisman Sabre exercises. Other examples are the Pine Gap base near Alice Springs through which signals intelligence capacities enable US drones to target suspected “terrorists”. Too often, “collateral damage” instead kills and injures innocent civilians, such as at weddings and funerals, providing a powerful recruitment point for violent non-state armed groups. This is decreasing civilian safety in The West.

30 km east of Geraldton at Kojarena is another spy base/satellite communications facility, also linked to US drone capacity. A large US phased array space radar facility at Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Station at NW Cape on WA’s Exmouth Gulf, the launching of US drones from the Cocos Islands, and the use made by the US Navy of the Stirling Naval Base on Garden Island all further subjugate Australian strategic interests to those of the US. Our ally’s strategy is aimed at containment of China, a major trading partner of Australia. US-built and dominated bases in Australia could become nuclear targets in a hot war in future.

I appeal to you to seriously contemplate distancing Australia from such a close, subservient military relationship with the US. As recently departed Malcolm Fraser often used to say in his old age, “It’s time Australia stood up and learned to be independent.”

From April 27 to May 22, the five-yearly NPT Review Conference will take place at the UN HQ in New York. I appeal to you to ensure that our Australian delegation makes a strong and positive contribution to progressing the encouraging momentum towards irreversible abolition of nuclear weapons. The Conference is too valuable an opportunity to waste.

Signed:

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Address:

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