



Ten years ago in February 2003, unprecedented numbers of people joined the largest demonstrations in recorded history to oppose the invasion of Iraq. They were right; there were no weapons of mass destruction and war was not the answer.

Learning from recent history, we, the undersigned call for an independent and peaceful Australia. We are concerned about developments that appear to jeopardise Australia's friendship and cooperation with nations in our region. In particular, we are concerned about the basing of foreign troops on Australian sovereign territory.

We are opposed to the stationing of US marines in Darwin; the presence of the Pine Gap surveillance facility; the use of West Australian naval facilities by US warships and the possibility of US military aircraft and warships being stationed at Stirling in WA or the Cocos Islands.

Rather than being of benefit, we hold that the presence of US forces on Australian soil to be a handicap to Australia's international relationships. We see domestic costs to us in financial, social and environmental terms.

Through recent decades we have witnessed a steady increase in the level of Australia's military involvement with the US. We believe the integration of the two countries' defence forces and foreign policies has reached a point where our independence is at risk.

We are witnessing expanding US military presence in the Asia Pacific region, with the apparent aim of 'containing' China. We fear a consequent rise in regional tensions and an expensive arms race.

We are convinced that these developments are not in Australia's best interests. They have the potential to sour existing good relations with our neighbours and even to embroil us in further warfare on behalf of a foreign power.

We want to live in an Australia with an independent foreign policy, under which our country is free to choose what is truly in our best interests.