**Campaign for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD) Statement on AUKUS Trilateral Agreement**

Australia has entered into an undefined arrangement with the USA and the United Kingdom for “regional security” in the Indo-Pacific Region. The arrangement, AUKUS Trilateral packed, involves Australia purchasing nuclear powered submarines, the “basing” of American troops and the storing of “ordnance” in Australia. This has provoked fury from the French, sharp criticism from China, concern from at least two nations in the Indo-Pacific and confusion in Australia.

Putting aside Australia’s inept management of this agreement, with the immediate consequences of antagonising our major trading partner, China, and jeopardising trade with our third largest trading partner, the European Union, the dangers for Australia’s safety and security are enormous.

At the centre of this agreement is Australia’s purchase of long-range attack nuclear powered submarines that are NOT primarily a defensive weapons system. At the heart of each of these subs will be a fast breeder reactor that produces weapons grade waste that will not be covered by the NPT. They will be an expensive weapon that will need to be supported by American or British military technicians, engineers, and logistics personnel. The resulting loss of sovereignty and capacity to exercise independent judgement flowing from such continuing support is troubling.

Of equal concern, is the geopolitical nightmare which the AUKUS conspiracy will spawn. Many Indo-Pacific nations have only recently emerged from a long period of oppressive European imperialism. Many will view AUKUS as much like an attempt to impose an Anglo- Saxon Imperialist dominated military and economic hegemony in the region. ASEAN may feel threatened by this new bully on the block. Inevitably, tensions will increase, as already suggested by the Indonesian and Malaysian responses to AUKUS.

China is correct when it asserts that AUKUS betrays a cold war mentality in international relations.

Australia has chosen to forgo any constructive relationship with China, with all its challenges, and to escalate tension by engaging with the military might of the USA. This choice reveals a deep poverty of imagination that will create regional political and economic instability. It also reveals a complete failure of strategic thinking about accommodating China’s world view in a peaceful and non-militarised world. For example, no serious thought appears to have been given to how best to integrate China’s Belt and Road initiative into our own view of peaceful international commerce and development.

The United States, and now Australia, states that the “China problem” has to be confronted militarily and isolated. Such a policy is not a strategy for peace but a blueprint for war, quite possibly a nuclear one.

The CICD says this government is NOT ACTING IN OUR NAME.

Australia does not need this agreement that can only draw Australia into another US War. Buying submarines that are offensive, not defensive is a waste of time and money.

These many billions of dollars will be much better spent on the people of Australia. On jobs, Education, Health, Housing and tackle the climate crisis, rather than on military waste.

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