



## Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)

# Statement on South-China Sea Disputed Territories

IPAN National Co-ordinating Committee members are concerned by the escalating hostilities in the South-China Sea that have the potential for an outbreak of a major military conflict in Asia-Pacific that will draw Australia into another foreign war.

1. We strongly urge all countries *directly involved* in these centuries old territorial disputes to genuinely co-operate in ensuring a peaceful resolution of this conflict through diplomacy and negotiations.

We call on all countries and people whose national borders *directly adjoin the South-China Sea* to respect each other's national sovereignty and work together to prevent the dispute escalating into an outbreak of armed hostilities and war.

2. We strongly urge the USA not to interfere and inflame these local disputes directly, or through its proxy countries in the region, especially Australia.

We are of the view that the recent USA military build-up and manoeuvres (US Pivot into Asia-Pacific) and the presence of a large number of US bases around the South China Sea is aimed at China and is the major source of current hostilities. The USA views China's economic growth as a challenge to its supremacy in the region.

We are concerned that the large USA military build-up and its provocative manoeuvres in South China Sea are threatening peace in our region,

and we call on the US to remove its military bases and troops from the Asia-Pacific region.

3. We also call on China to respect the integrity and national sovereignty of countries and people of the disputed territories and work co-operatively for diplomatic and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

4. We urge all countries adjoining the disputed territorial waters to protect the safety and livelihoods of the fishing communities in the contested waters.

5. We urge the Australian government, the Labor opposition, politicians of all parties and independents, to strongly promote a peaceful resolution and firmly uphold Australia's sovereignty and independence by not following the USA, or any other big power's plans and preparations for war in the South China Sea.

We are deeply concerned with the recent provocative statements made by some Australian parliamentarians threatening military action in the South-China Sea by Australia's naval and air forces. This sabre-rattling by Australian politicians only strengthens US militarism and belligerence in the region, and risks inflaming the conflict, bringing us closer to war.

Such statements are against the wishes and interests of the Australian people and countries of this region and make the Australian parliament complicit in provoking a major war at the bidding of the USA. The position taken by the 2 main

Australian parliamentary parties only benefits the USA.

6. We urge all parliamentary parties to advocate for Australia's independence and sovereignty with an independent and peaceful foreign policy.

We welcome the support of the Greens, and several Independents, for an independent Australian foreign policy that reflects growing community sentiment.

The Australian people want a peaceful resolution of this dispute, rather than following the USA, or any big power, into yet another devastating war.

7. In the long term we believe that de-militarisation of the South-China Sea by all parties will be the only lasting guarantee for peace.

8. We will work with anti-war and peace groups in other Asia-Pacific countries with a view to developing a regional people's peace movement against the war.

We want to live in peace with our neighbours and not be used as pawns in rivalries between big powers.

Australia needs an independent and peaceful foreign policy that promotes peace, not war, and is in Australia's national interest.

**September 2016**

### **IPAN National Co-ordinating Committee**

Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) is a network of organisations from all regions of Australia who are united by our support for an independent Australian foreign policy based on peaceful resolution of conflicts.

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