



MEDIA RELEASE

8/9/16

Escalating hostilities in the South-China Sea draw Australia closer to fighting another foreign war

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) says escalating hostilities in the South-China Sea have the potential to spark a major military conflict in Asia-Pacific and draw Australia into another foreign war.

Despite reassurances from Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull that Australia does not have to choose between China and the US Alliance, IPAN Secretary Ms Annette Brownlie said it was clear from statements made by US Army Assistant Chief of Staff Colonel Tom Hanson last week, and the buildup of US military forces in the region, that pressure is mounting on Australia.

“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,” Ms Brownlie said.

“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. And we strongly urge the USA not to interfere and inflame these local disputes directly, or through its proxy countries in the region, including Australia.”

Prime Minister Turnbull’s attempt to tread the middle path in the South China Sea will be among the issues discussed at IPAN’s upcoming National IPAN Conference in Alice Springs next month.

Representatives from Japan, Guam, the USA and Australia will call for demilitarisation of the Asia-Pacific at the October 1 conference.

Details on speakers at the conference are presented on the next page. All speakers are available for interview in the lead up to the event, from the September 26.

IPAN represents over 30 organisations across Australia.

**For more information or for a copy of the full IPAN Statement contact Annette Brownlie on 0431597256 or www.ipan.org.au
<https://www.facebook.com/IndependentAndPeacefulAustraliaNetwork/>**