



PO Box 573, Coorparoo, Australia, 4151

20th November, 2019

Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC,

Minister for Defence

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) seeking your advice on Australian Government policy on potential Australian navy confrontations with China in the South China Sea.

This request is prompted by publicity given to Dennis Richardson, former Director of ASIO and former Australian Ambassador to the United States in Defence Connect, dated 12th November, 2019 which states:

“Former head of the Defence and Foreign Affairs and Trade departments, Dennis Richardson, has set the cat among the pigeons, calling on Australia and the Royal Australian Navy in particular to take the fight to China in the South China Sea in defiance of Beijing and in support of the global ‘rules based order’”.

Is it Australian Government policy to confront China in this manner?

Does the Australian Government see the need to conduct so-called “freedom of navigation” operations in the South China Sea when China has never stated any intention to block or impede the sea routes through the South China Sea which, in any case, would seriously harm its own trade and economy which is dependent on these sea lanes?

IPAN would appreciate your consideration and comment on government policy on these matters. IPAN is a national network of peace organisations, faith groups, trade unions and individuals and promotes an independent foreign policy from all big powers.

Yours faithfully

Bevan Ramsden

IPAN Co-ordinating Committee Member

On behalf of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network

www.ipan.org.au

bevanlramsdn@gmail.com

