

---

**Sent:** Tuesday, 30 September 2008 18:10  
**To:** White Paper  
**Subject:** WWW Submission: 1. Strategy/International [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Name: Anne Picot  
Organisation: Stop the War Coalition Sydney

Submission: Stop the War Coalition Sydney The Prime Minister Mr Rudd should honour his election promise to remove the troops from Iraq and remove them all. Only 550 combat troops have left Iraq, and 1000 occupation troops from Australia remain in and around Iraq on US bases and training Iraqi forces. We know that the majority of Australians never agreed with the invasion of Iraq and a majority oppose the occupation of Iraq.

While a majority supported Australia's joining the US and NATO forces to invade Afghanistan in October 2001 now a majority oppose the continuing presence of Australian troops in Afghanistan and question its purpose and cost. The Stop the War Coalition and many other Australians see the invasion and occupation of both Iraq and Afghanistan as evidence of the big powers' imperial designs on countries with massive resource wealth and/or strategic importance.

Stop the War Coalition calls for the complete withdrawal of military personnel from both countries and for the Australian military spending to be replaced by Australian aid to those countries.

Seven years of occupation to establish a democratic government, restore the country, remove Al Qaeda and keep out the Taliban have failed on all counts and worse, it is destabilising its neighbour Pakistan. The NATO occupation is evidently in a state of undeclared war with the tribal areas of north-west Pakistan and its incursions have provoked terrorist actions against the Pakistani government, like the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad.

Reports indicate that the Taliban are regrouping, while the presence of NATO troops, the large numbers of civilian deaths at their hands (including by Australian forces) and the failure of the Karzai government to deliver any improvement to the lives of the Afghans are all increasing resentment of the foreigners and building support for the Taliban.

The international community has failed to deliver the aid to improve the lives of the Afghans. The attempt to eradicate opium cultivation has increased local resentment of the NATO occupation since large numbers of people are dependent on its sale to survive. Since 2001, US development aid to Afghanistan averaged US\$57 per Afghan per annum most going to the capital, but 95% of residents of Kabul are still without electricity. The 2007 Afghanistan Human Development Report records these indicators:

- access to water is at 31% of households;
- life expectancy is 43.1 years;
- adult literacy is 23.5%;
- 50% of Afghan children under five are malnourished;
- 6.6 million Afghans do not meet their minimum daily food requirements.

Australia should pull its troops out. Instead the Rudd government should send engineers, doctors, construction workers and provide other assistance to help reconstruct a country that has been razed to the ground. This would provide real, practical assistance to the Afghan people.

The alternative defence policy/foreign policy we argue for is one based on aid, not arms. Australia's security rests on good relations with our neighbours in our region. The best guarantee against attack from any foreign power is an independent foreign policy which identifies the peace, prosperity and self-determination of the people living in the region as the basis for our own peace and prosperity.

The alliance with great powers, first Britain and then (and now) the United States of America has drawn Australia into countless wars in other people's countries. It has not guaranteed Australian security. The closeness of the Howard government to the Republican White House in the last decade has undermined our security and undermined

the influence which the previously bi-partisan foreign policy had developed.

Australian support for the United Nations' programs for improving health and education, for the eradication of poverty and up-holding human rights, for the international rule of law and elimination of nuclear and chemical weapons had developed Australian influence and formed a better basis for security and international relations in the South-east Asian and Pacific regions than the role of deputy-sheriff to the Bush administration. We call on the Rudd government to turn away from the use of military force as the immediate response to any crisis and to develop an independent foreign policy based treating all nations with respect as equals.

We reject the proposal to increase the defence budget to 3% of GDP signalled in the 2008 budget and call instead for the aid budget to be increased to at least the modest level proposed for the Millennium Development Goals of eradication of poverty of 0.07% of GNI by 2015. The resources identified for military spending should be re-allocated to development of technology and programs to help our neighbours reduce reliance on fossil fuels and prepare for the impact of climate change such as the Carteret Islanders face (loss of homeland from rising sea levels). Provision should be made now for helping our Pacific neighbours as they determine.

Defence policy should not increase armament purchases, especially more sophisticated planes and ships, which will increase regional tensions and prompt a local arms race. Instead of an arms industry manufacturing and exporting or transferring the technology of generating energy from renewable sources, adapted to our region, would be a far better way to promote our own prosperity and assist our poorer neighbours.

Emergency response

While it has been obvious to use the Australian military forces' capabilities for emergency aid in response to extreme weather events and similar disasters at home and in the region, the militarisation of aid is not desirable. The rejection of the aid offered by the international community by the Burmese military after the cyclone in May 2008 demonstrates why the militarisation of emergency aid is undesirable. The motives of nations offering aid in this form have become suspect.

Australia should develop an alternative model based on the volunteer fire-fighting and state emergency services used to respond to extreme weather events domestically.

Helping to establish, equip and train such forces in neighbouring states which risk severe impacts from climate change would foster a changed perception of Australia and provide real aid to the people of our region.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report