

Dear Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee,

Many thanks for the opportunity to make this submission and my own comments, as a life-long Australian citizen, whose ancestors fought for Australia in World War One and World War Two.

Lessons of Afghanistan and the fall of Kabul, very sadly, are on the same parameter line, of Vietnam and the Fall of Saigon, of the 1970s.

My dad's younger brother, a concept to Vietnam, at a young age. He survived. Many didn't. Prior to Vietnam, Uncle Doug never been outside of New South Wales. Out of school, at TAFE, doing a mechanical apprenticeship, when conscripted to Vietnam. The rest is history, as we know it, today.

Australia with ties with United States, with the ANZUS Treaty, seems to go into trouble spots around the world, at a country's call, for assistance. Then, get ourselves into trouble in the process.

In the 1970s, it was the South Vietnamese Government's calling. The movie, Air America, shows very much, how it got screwed up, very sadly, at the end, with corruption, drug running, Richard Nixon's media statements, with troops pulled out too quickly, leading the Communist rule and victory in Vietnam. One should point out, that then Defence Minister, Malcom Fraser MP, clashed with the then Prime Minister, John Gorton MP, about pulling troops out too quickly, not staying behind to help with rebuilding and refugees. The rest is history.

Very sadly, this has repeated during 2021, in Afghanistan, with the fall of Kabul, with Joe Biden's "Richard Nixon / Air America" decision making. Whoever thought, that the Taliban would recapture Afghanistan and Kabul, after 9/11, twenty years later. Very sad.

Now, just this week gone, the new AUKUS Treaty announcement, which has upset our Kiwi Cousins, the French and many of our own allies.

All I can say in this submission, that Australia needs very much, to learn twice over, about its involvements in other country's trouble spots, when such a country calls for our assistance –
Vietnam and the Fall of Saigon
Afghanistan and the Fall of Kabul

If we do not learn from these very sad experiences, Australian will be involved in many more overseas wars, with more lives lost on both sides, with no good results at the end.

Australia needs to be smart, not dumb.

No one or no country in the world wants a war with Communist China, or North Korea.

Our allies around the world, in reaction to the AUKUS Treaty, would like a better approach for China to open up, in the same way that Russia opened up in the 1990s.

Our allies around the world, would like a better approach, for the two Koreans to reunite, in the same way, Germany reunited in 1990.

Australia needs to be smart, a vision approach for the next 50 to 100 years, how our defences forces to be better utilised, to minimise Australia's involvement in overseas wars and trouble spots.

Australia needs to be smart, building up relations with India, defence strategies of the India Ocean, similar that of United States, with the Pacific Ocean.

Australia needs to be smart, that our defence forces should be used and seen around the world as humanitarian leaders.

Australia needs to be smart, to avoid further conflicts, that are no win situations, such as, very sadly, Vietnam and Afghanistan.

Warmest and best regards,

Paul McKenzie