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November 23rd 2021

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPIA)

I have just heard that the government has invited public comments on this treaty, but has allowed just four days for the purpose. In itself, that is a travesty but is about what we have come to expect from this government.

I will comment on the final point in Article I, namely:

... provided that the communicating Party determines that such cooperation will promote and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to its defense (sic) and security.

I submit that the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, which can only be used in an offensive role, constitutes an “unreasonable risk” to our security in that it turns us into a hostile actor vis a vis our major trading partner. The only information I have seen is that they will be used to assist in “blockades” in the South China Sea. I presume the target of such offensive actions (blockades are deemed an act of war) will be the country that takes about 40% of our exports rather than, say, Vietnam.

China, for those who are unaware, is probably the largest economy in the world, a nuclear-armed power with thirty times our industrial capacity, sufficient to launch its own space station and put a rover on Mars. There is no conceivable way this country, with or without submarines, can do anything to alter Chinese plans, in any sphere of action, without causing an immediate reaction. For example, recent Chinese bans on Australian imports have caused considerable financial losses to Australian businesses without their citizens even noticing. The idea that we could impose a “blockade” on China without immediately bankrupting ourselves, and without a crushing response, is breathtaking in both its naivety and its ignorance of Chinese history.

This is the most short-sighted, indeed purblind, notion since Australia threw itself into the American wars in the Middle East. Is it tasteless to point out that we lost all those wars, we were defeated again by villagers wearing sandals? But apparently that is not enough for the desk warriors in Canberra, who

have now decided that it is “inconceivable” that this country would not tie itself to another American war, this time over Taiwan. We are told that so-called “drums of war” are beating, to prepare us for the idea that war is inevitable, but all the hostility comes from Canberra, reading from an American script, with a postscript from the UK.

In fact, life without war is completely conceivable: I have not the slightest difficulty with the idea of telling the Americans that enough is enough, we've done our bit. Any possible debt accrued during World War II (before 99% of living Australians were born) has been repaid a dozen times over in blood, treasure and our tattered international credibility.

With this foolish move, our country is being committed to yet another brutally-expensive and unspeakably dangerous folly by a bunch of paranoid and deceitful fantasists who somehow believe that the US has friends. It seems to me amazing that they can conceive of war with a Great Power, but they can't conceive of living in peace with the very neighbours on whom our prosperity depends.

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the author.