

PEACE IN OUR REGION

Christian Democrats

Whilst conflict should be resolved peaceably wherever possible, and where not, the conditions for a just war must be met before war is declared, the provision of an adequate defence force is of prime importance to any nation's government.

Since ancient times it has been considered that one of the best justifications for the very existence of the nation state and its government is the physical protection of that nation's citizens and assets from foreign attack.

Australian Democrats

For our policy and actions in this area see

http://www.democrats.org.au/docs/ActionPlans/Foreign_Peace_2007.pdf

The following information has been extracted from this website:

The Australian Democrats believe that international peace and security can only be achieved by strengthening international institutions and building respect for human rights and the rule of law. These elements are equally vital to Australia's national security.

There is little doubt that one of the most serious security threats facing the international community at this time is the threat of terrorism. If we want to effectively combat the threat of terrorism, we need to look at its causes, not just its devastating effects. Any truly effective response to terrorism requires us to adopt a broad definition of security, one that encompasses poverty-reduction, investment in human rights and religious tolerance, as well as more immediate preventative measures.

The Democrats have a strong commitment to the principle of multilateralism. We believe that threats to security are most effectively addressed when the international community works together. Like the rule of law, multilateralism provides a foundation for democracy. It diffuses power and promotes accountability. Its underlying premise is that no individual, no organisation and no government – no matter how wealthy or how powerful – is above the law.

On the other hand, the doctrine of pre-emption represents an attempt to circumvent the rule of law, when compliance is inconvenient. The danger associated with this doctrine is that if we only resort to multilateral forums or comply with international law when it is convenient for us, we will gradually eliminate any norms or groundrules.

The United Nations represents the world's most significant multilateral institution, but it is far from perfect. It is in desperate need of reform and revitalisation. The Democrats believe that the Security Council needs to be reformed to broaden its membership and make it more democratic. The Democrats also believe the international community needs to consider when, and in what circumstances, it is appropriate to initiate military or peacekeeping operations to address gross human rights violations within nation states.

The Democrats believe Australia needs to spend more energy strengthening the United Nations and less energy on devising ways to bypass it. It is in Australia's best interests

to help build a strong United Nations, so that the international community can work together to strengthen international peace and security. The Democrats will continue to work hard to ensure that Australia meets its international obligations, and to restore confidence in the international institutions upon which our prosperity and security depends.

Greens

The Greens believe that global governance is essential to meet the needs of global peace and security, justice, human rights, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. We call for a renewed commitment by Australia to multilateralism as the means of addressing world problems.

Genuine security rests on cooperation, fair economic and social development, environmental sustainability, and respect for human rights, rather than on military capabilities. The Greens hold that non-violent conflict management is the most effective means of promoting peace and security in the international arena.

The Greens would push for extensive structural reform to democratise the United Nations (UN) and work for a stronger UN capable of dealing with threats to international peace and security.

The Greens support the establishment, by the UN, of an international crisis prevention and response centre to address threats from terrorism and other conflicts, to provide rapid response peacekeeping forces, and to rapidly respond to humanitarian crises.

With regard to our region,

The Greens want

- development models in Pacific countries based on sustainable, environmentally sound local development, with the participants determining the pace of change.
- closer involvement and cooperation with the countries of South East Asia.
- the continued strengthening of the process of democratisation of Asia and societies throughout the world .
- self determination for the people of West Papua.
- Australia, the international community, and the UN to work cooperatively with East Timor to complete the development and nation-building tasks.

The Greens will

- support the growth within our region of localised participatory democracy that can strengthen social cohesion and foster the active participation of disenfranchised communities, particularly women and young people, in decision making.
- require trade agreements to be multilateral and reviewable by Parliament, and include clauses on the observance of human rights and labour laws, health and safety standards and environmental standards, to ensure that trade is not conducted at the expense of manufacturing and rural workers' or consumers' rights or of environmental sustainability
- provide ongoing commitment to the Regional Non-Aggression Pact.
- in conjunction with regional partners, develop a regional environmental protocol to protect the environment.

- increase the number of places within the Humanitarian Migration Program to include environmental refugees
- provide access to Australia's labour market for Pacific island workers.
- engage with the ASEAN group and Pacific Forum to work towards economic and health solutions for the region to assist those living in poverty and to improve their health care.
- provide support for the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the work of regional and national human rights organisations, including Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM).
- seek support within the United Nations for a democratic process of self determination under autonomous governance in the West Papua Region.
- continue to provide aid for the task of reconstructing East Timor.
- support the right of developing nations to economic independence and their sovereignty over natural resources such as oil, including East Timor's sovereignty over oil and gas in the Timor Gap.

Socialist Equality

The SEP calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US, Australian and other foreign troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Our campaign demands that all the architects for the war – in Washington, London and Canberra – be placed on trial for war crimes.

Likewise the SEP calls for the immediate withdrawal of all Australian military and police personnel from East Timor and the countries of the South Pacific.

The SEP fights for a socialist foreign policy based on international working class solidarity. This includes the rescinding of the ANZUS Treaty, the closure of all US military facilities in Australia, including Pine Gap, and the ending of all Australian intelligence operations against the peoples of the Asia-Pacific region and at home. We also advocate the disbanding of the entire Australian military apparatus and utilization of the resources for socially useful purposes, including the building of badly needed infrastructure – in Australia and throughout the region.

The SEP also condemns the current campaign to glorify the military and any plans to revive conscription. Unable to meet its recruitment targets, the government is preying upon young people, especially the unemployed and those in regional areas with no prospect of a permanent job – trying to dragoon them into the armed services as a means of securing a career.

Socialist Alliance

We would immediately pull all Australian troops out from Iraq and Afghanistan, withdraw from ANZUS and APEC, close down US bases and end joint US-Australian war games. We would also respect the right to self determination of nations in the Asia Pacific region, and stop our support for undemocratic regimes - in particular stopping Australian Federal Police from training the Burmese Military in "Criminal Intelligence".

Coalition

The Coalition did not respond to the question of peace in our region. The following is extracted from the Liberal Party website www.liberal.org.au

The Coalition government is committed to protecting the national interest and ensuring Australia remains an anchor of peace, stability and prosperity in a turbulent world. A strong, secure and united Australia is a nation engaged in the world and at ease with itself in the 21st Century.

In 2007, Australia confronts a mix of old and new security challenges. Globalisation means the range and number of events affecting our security and prosperity will continue to grow. Shifting power relations will bear heavily on our security environment. Islamist terrorism will remain a threat to Australia and her interests in the next decade.

Under a future Coalition Government, Australia will stay on the front foot to ensure threats to our security are met before they reach our shores.

This year's Budget provided \$22 billion for defence. Our commitment to increase annual defence spending by 3 per cent in real terms out to 2016 will guarantee Australia's leading-edge military capability in the next decade.

Strengthening our bilateral relationships in the Asia-Pacific will remain a key focus of this Government. In a next term, I hope to accelerate work towards Free Trade Agreements with our two largest Asian trading partners, Japan and China.

Australia is a pivotal force for order, stabilisation and good governance in the Pacific. Further developing the long-term planning and operational capacity of these complex regional missions will be near the top of our national security agenda if we are re-elected.

Labor

The Labor Party did not provide a response for this forum. Policy information has been collated from the ALP website www.alp.org.au

Civil unrest and lack of respect for the rule of law in East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea shows how unstable our neighbourhood is. These fragile states don't just constitute an arc of instability – this is our arc of responsibility. We need to focus our security and foreign policy resources on our region

As impressive as our serving men and women are they need to be backed up by better diplomatic and political resources. Using the military as the primary instrument of our foreign policy to address these challenges risks being little more than a short term band-aid solution that temporally covers the underlying problems. Greater coordination is required between our military and civilian security and government agencies.

Labor will implement an Asia Pacific Partnership for Development and Security. Through aid the Partnership will:

- address the collapse in primary education and primary healthcare;

- build basic economic infrastructure including roads, telecommunications and clean water;
- address the problem of urban male youth unemployment through targeted public works programs;
- provide microfinance in partnership with volunteer and financial institutions;
- focus on good governance by training regional leaders, public servants and technical experts through enhanced international scholarship programs; and
- provide effective security assistance and capacity building with local police.

Labor will establish an Asia Pacific Centre for Civil Military Cooperation. The Centre will become a centre of excellence in civil-military cooperation for the purposes of long term regional capacity building and governance but also cooperation and coordination of the more short term challenges of regional disaster and emergency response.

Labor will give greater regional support to the United States. We will support the important counter narcotics role of the Joint Inter Agency Task Force West and will permanently place an Australian Federal Police representative to assist the work of the Agency. Labor will also provide a permanent military staff officer to the Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies (based in Hawaii) to work more closely with the United States in the important work of security capacity building in our region.

A Labor Government will take a proposal to the next Trilateral Strategic Dialogue with our Japanese and American partners to commission a Trilateral Climate Change and National Security Assessment. The Assessment will identify the major regional security threats raised by global warming. Security agencies from all three countries would participate and the initiative would involve close consultation with countries in the region most exposed to the security risks of global warming.