



DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

The Journal of Pax Christi Australia

Vol 47, Special Conference Edition

DISARMING TIMES

Quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia, providing members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views, both local and international. In each edition we endeavour to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in **study, nonviolent action** and **prayer** for peace, justice, human rights, development and interfaith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

Human rights, justice and integrity of creation are central to its work.

We take a stand against militarism, nuclear weapons and the arms race.

As an ecumenical Christian movement, Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peace-making.

Pax Christi Victoria

PO Box 31, Carlton South VIC 3053
Tel: 03 9077 6464 or 03 9379 3889
Email: ahmkerr@hotmail.com

Pax Christi New South Wales

P.O. Box A681, Sydney South NSW 1235
Tel: 02 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953
Fax: 02 9519 8471
Email: msejust@smartchat.net.au

Pax Christi Queensland

PO Box 305, Carina QLD 4152

Unsourced material in *Disarming Times* may be copied with due acknowledgement. A copy of the publication would be appreciated.

Not all views expressed in this journal are equally shared by Pax Christi Australia.

Disarming Times is printed by:

Minuteman Press Abbotsford

424 Johnston Street, Abbotsford VIC 3067
abbotsford@minutemanpress.com.au

Papers of the Pax Christi Australia conference

19 February 2022

Hosted on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation

'Where does Australia's security lie?'

Pax Christi is deeply grateful to the speakers for their valuable knowledge and insights. We urge conference participants and others alike to study this material, share it and discuss it in your networks. Hopefully it will suggest dimensions for our deliberations together, as the urgency for an alternative foreign and defence policy grows by the day.

The presentations published in this edition are as follows:

Introduction to this edition of Disarming Times

Page 2 Caesar D'Mello **Who are the dreamers? The peacemakers or those who think they can bring peace by preparing for war?**

Keynote Address

Page 3 Prof John Langmore AM **Where Does Australia's Security Lie?** (abridged)

Speakers

Page 6 Prof Jocelyn Che, AM **It's Hard to Dismount from a Tiger: Thoughts on Australia's China Policy**

Page 9 Ms Natasha Chabbra **Australia's Overseas Aid: Does it help or hinder our relations in the region?**

Page 11 Dr Sandie Cornish **Just Peace in the Context of Fratelli Tutti**

Reflection from conference participants

Page 15 John Ball and Jeff Wilde **Reflections on the Pax Christi Conference**

Conference recording

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/WasfEWwKfYI>

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/HrXkAQXxiQg>

INTRODUCTION

Who are the dreamers? The peacemakers or those who think they can bring peace by preparing for war? (Pax Christi peace video)

Caesar D’Mello, on behalf of the Pax Christi Conference Organising Group

Australia awaits the federal election. The government’s pre-election budget has supported defence and defence-related items generously, adding to the major commitments previously made. At the same time, it has reduced the already small outlay on diplomacy and foreign service yet again.

Security is a major area of concern around the world, including in Australia. Pax Christi has been exploring this through its focus on militarism, scrutinised at a number of well attended events. Its national conference titled ‘Where Does Australia’s Security Lie?’ on 19 February 2022 revisited these discussions. This issue of *Disarming Times* brings together the conference presentations.

A major thread implicit in the conference questioned the instinctive stance that guides official policy, namely,

security is a military matter considered within defence alliances and their outlook. Australia’s historical attachment to the paramountcy of alliances is well known, but whether militarism has made the world safer has not been subjected to serious discourse. Rather, war hysteria and ‘drums of war’ rhetoric are increasingly dominating public advocacy.

Unprecedented levels of financial and other resources applied to reinforcing our military capabilities seem to be our contribution to powerful new alliances such as the Quad. AUKUS, with nuclear submarines at its heart, and probably the most significant pact Australia has entered into for over a century, is now by far a most striking feature of Foreign Affairs and Defence Department perspectives, one causing disquiet within our region.

This conference was an attempt to inject sophistication in the national

thinking on security, beyond a militaristic, ‘zero sum game’ framework. Why, the conference asked, is building positive, constructive relations through diplomacy downgraded? Why does Australia, a major player in the establishment of the United Nations with its objective of a world without war, not make achieving security through conflict prevention and peacebuilding a top priority of its foreign policy, while seeking nonviolent ways of transforming conflict? Is the loss of life and untold destruction associated with war, as Ukraine today demonstrates, an acceptable price, when dialogue and exchange offer a less combative, more enlightened way forward? Who are the dreamers? The peacemakers, or those who insist that they will bring peace by preparing for war?

MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to apply for/renew membership of Pax Christi Australia.

Membership is from January to December and includes the quarterly journal *Disarming Times*.

New South Wales members return your membership application/renewal to:
PO Box A 681
Sydney South NSW 1235

All others return your membership application/renewal to:
13 Mascoma St
Strathmore VIC 3041

Payments can be made by direct transfer and notifying Terry Byrne: **t.byrne15@optusnet.com.au** :
Pax Christi Victoria Inc
BSB 063-161
Account number 00900935

NAME:

ADDRESS: POSTCODE:

EMAIL: MOBILE/PHONE:

I wish to receive my copy of *Disarming Times* by email. YES/NO

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Where Does Australia's Security Lie? The Missing Peace Towards Security

Professor John Langmore AM

John Langmore is Professorial Fellow and Chair of the Board of the Initiative for Peacebuilding at the University of Melbourne. He was economics lecturer and government planner in PNG for ten years, and Economic Advisor to the Shadow Treasurer and Treasurer for eight years. He represented Fraser in the House of Representatives for 12 years. He was Divisional Director in the UN Secretariat in New York for five years, and Representative for the ILO to the UN for two. A co-founder of the Australia Institute, he has taught graduate subjects in international political economy, undertaken research on international economic strategy, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding. (This article is an abridged version of the address delivered at the conference.)



Where does Australia's security lie? Our international security is assumed to be a strong alliance with America. That is believed to depend on the strength of our military expenditure, our willingness to collaborate with America's military and intelligent agencies, the size and capacity of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and intelligence agencies, and the sophistication of Australia's weapons and their interoperability with America's.

These presumptions are superficial. They fail to identify what are Australia's national interests and how we can work effectively to achieve them. For Pax Christi there can be little doubt that peace and justice are our principal goals. The Bible expresses a vision of peace with justice. Most Australians prefer peace to war. Military courage is admired but that doesn't mean that most prefer war. Peace is one of the principal requirements for security.

What attitudes and policies would be most effective in building peace?

The first recommendation is to be clearer about Australia's **national interests**. Four core interests underpin the framing and delivery of foreign policy: security through peacebuilding; economic prosperity; a stable, cooperative strategic system; and constructive internationalism leading to a rules-based international order.

Giving priority to security and peace means to settle conflicts by peaceful means. Maximising the chances of peace requires international commitment to the rule of law, to justice, and to dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preventing loss of biodiversity. To achieve each of these we are partly dependent on other countries.

It is therefore vital to strengthen international cooperation by fulfilling our commitments as a law-abiding Member of the **United Nations** and opposing any violent conflict unless the UN Security Council has authorised it.

Implementing the new global strategy *Our Common Agenda*, which Australia supported in the General Assembly last November, is the highest priority. It includes 'A new agenda for peace'.

A. Australian foreign policy has become preoccupied with militarised security

The central feature of the history of Australian foreign policy has been dependency, first on Britain and then on America. Despite having won independence in 1900 Australia did not take control of foreign policy until 1942. Until then Australia's international relations were controlled by Britain. The idea that Australia had national interests which differed from those of the United Kingdom was recognised by the Curtin Government. When Japan threatened, Curtin published an article in December 1942 saying that Australia's principal alliance had to be with America. This was formalised in 1951 as the Australian New Zealand and US (ANZUS) Treaty.

ANZUS has been the framework for Australian foreign policy for the last 70 years. Allan Gyngell rightly titled his history of Australian international relations during those years as *Fear of Abandonment*. ANZUS is popularly regarded as a guarantee of US military protection. This is used to justify obsequious Australian cooperation with US military strategy: joining in war whenever the US requests support; and allowing the US to build major intelligence-gathering bases in

Australia. It enables US preferences to influence most central aspects of Australian foreign policy.

This structure has become more pronounced since 9/11. Prime Minister Howard had just visited Washington on 11 September 2001 and used ANZUS to justify giving total support to the US in the war President Bush declared on terrorism. Yet the ANZUS Treaty does not require mutual military support. When member states are threatened ANZUS only guarantees consultation. Various Australian governments have asked US administrations to give a written commitment of active support if Australia is ever threatened, but this has never happened.

When the US Administration invaded Iraq illegally, Australia collaborated, unlike most other countries. That invasion was illegal because it did not have UN Security Council endorsement, which the UN Charter requires for all military action by Member States. Collaboration with the US, and its allies' attack on Afghanistan a couple of months after 9/11 had been accepted by the Security Council because al-Qaeda was based there. Surprisingly, the UN continued support the occupation in Afghanistan by the American-led alliance for the next 20 years. As a subsidiary member, the ADF adapted to being what Richard Tanter calls a 'niche auxiliary force' to America's.

Bush's invasion of Iraq was a destructive American, and therefore Australian, military mistake because it was unjustified, illegal, caused perhaps a loss of a million lives, cost about \$3000 billion, and has generated sustained brutal conflict in much of the Middle East ever since. The consequences for Australia have included the takeover of strategic policy by the

Where Does Australia's Security Lie? The Missing Peace Towards Security (continued)

John Langmore

Defence Department from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

B. The erosion of diplomacy

When Prime Minister Julia Gillard set up a task force to write the White Paper on *Australia in the Asian Century*, the Chair, Ken Henry, asked DFAT for a background paper on the East Asian geopolitical situation. DFAT replied that that was the task of the Defence Department. Australian foreign affairs had been militarised.

The clearest evidence of this is the erosion of Commonwealth expenditure for diplomacy. During most of the last quarter century Australian governments' preferences have been to strengthen the military and intelligence arms of foreign policy and to weaken the diplomatic and economic assistance arms.

This is shown by comparing the proportion of each item in total budget outlays. That gives a clearer indication of governments' priorities and how those priorities change over time.

The proportion of Australian expenditure on diplomacy has halved during the last quarter century; the proportion used for official development assistance has been cut by 60%, while the share for defence spending increased by 28%. Australia is limiting its capacity to positively influence regional conditions by reducing the proportion of its expenditure on diplomacy and aid. The cuts to aid limit Australian action to relieve poverty or contribute to poorer countries to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Starving diplomatic and aid allocations have decimated capacity to assist with transforming conflict.

These trends are destructive and irresponsible. By dramatically increasing military spending Australian governments feed the regional arms race. The most notable impact of one country increasing its military spending is to motivate other competing countries to increase theirs. DFAT, the department of government with the greatest responsibility for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, has been deprived of the financial and staff basis for effective peacebuilding. A survey of diplomats' experiences in conflict in

2017–18 found that relevant sections of DFAT and Australia's diplomats were so stretched they are unable to undertake enhanced analysis or play greater roles despite the potential to do more.

Australia must steadily upgrade the **diplomatic service** so that it can seek empathetic understanding of history, culture, politics, and economies of the people and countries where they are posted. This requires major increases in funding for diplomacy, strengthening peacebuilding expertise, and supporting non-government peacebuilding.

Australia must also swiftly restore **development assistance aid** to at least 0.5% of gross national income from the less than 0.2% at present. This is essential to strengthen Australia's contribution to international poverty reduction, reducing child malnutrition, building skilled health services, creating employment, and increasing renewable energy production and other greenhouse gas emission reduction policies.

Australia's strategic situation changed on 16 September 2021 when the heads of Government in Australia, UK and the US announced the formation of **AUKUS**, 'an enhanced trilateral security partnership', 'to deepen diplomatic, security and defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region' by enabling Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines. But there has been no more talk of diplomatic cooperation. Many articles welcoming or opposing AUKUS have been published, but the effect of this introduction of an aggressive nuclear technology on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has received too little attention.

AUKUS would intensify military competitiveness. It would cause increasing nuclear ambitions in other countries. It would contribute to the spread of nuclear capacity and therefore reduce impediments to nuclear weapon proliferation. It would reduce willingness to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It has destroyed trust in Australian integrity in France and some other European countries. Could this lead to a catastrophic nuclear disaster by accident or design? If

AUKUS is implemented, other countries will increase their stocks of weapons and strengthen their lethality. This would directly undermine Australia's security.

The lack of communications around AUKUS has raised concerns among Asian neighbours, notably Indonesia and Malaysia, as to the depth and quality of Australia's commitment to its Asian partnerships. China perceives the pact as hostile, exacerbating existing tensions with Australia. This is the antithesis of building peace and security for Australians and for the region. There is a strong case for abandoning this proposal.

C. The American alliance

There has been a long sequence of Australian scholars, former diplomats, and a former Coalition Prime Minister writing books critical of Australia's close dependency on the US¹. Many writers agree that Australian's fears underpin the militarisation of Australia's foreign policy. From the time of the first European settlers there have been fears of invasion – by France, later by Japan and now by China – despite there being no evidence of any Chinese interest in invasion. Nevertheless, some alarmists have been trying to intensify fears of China, and a full-scale arms race is now underway.

An arms race squanders finite funds, and diverts intellectual and political capacity to address complex risks and challenges. The idea of promoting security through peace and justice becomes lost in the struggle for military power. The attention to ANZUS indicates a belligerence which is not in step with regional imperatives in South and East Asia and the Pacific. It is time to review the continuing subservience to American supremacism.

A change in the orientation of Australian foreign policy is essential. Three strong reasons are: first that American and Australian perceptions of their national interests are strikingly different. Americans believe that they are exceptional and that international rules do not apply to them because they are the global leader, and their intentions are all good. Such

Where Does Australia's Security Lie? The Missing Peace Towards Security (continued)

John Langmore

assumptions lie behind their frequent disregard for international law and norms. In contrast, Australia, like many smaller countries, recognises that its safety is most secure when all countries conform with international law and norms. America's frequent cavalier disregard for international rules makes it an unsuitable and unreliable partner.

Second, American foreign policy making is dysfunctional. The illegal, misguided invasion of Iraq is a clear example, as was the length of the occupation of Afghanistan and the manner of their withdrawal.

A third destructive feature of American foreign policy has been its aggressive, militaristic response to international conflict. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding receive minimal attention from US agencies. The tendency is to 'send in the troops' and to try and draw in allies such as Australia to strengthen the appearance of political support.

This preference for military engagement is determined by the dominance of the Pentagon. With the high level of military and intelligence funding, and financial starvation of State Department diplomacy, some administrations have effectively transferred foreign policy making to the Pentagon.

These factors suggest that Australia's national interests require a clearer, independent identification of our interests, and a stronger commitment to strategies for achieving them. **This requires Australia to grow up, to cease to be the adolescent product of long colonial style dependency, and to become an independent, responsible, maturely adult, international participant.**

Recognition that Australians want security means that **expenditure on foreign policy among diplomacy, development assistance, defence, and intelligence must be rebalanced.** This would require establishment of two White Paper preparation processes to rigorously review the cost-effectiveness of military and intelligence strategies and policies and to reframe them in the light of actual Australian national interests.

This requires strengthening Australia's **diplomatic capacity**, to then prioritise identification of the causes of conflict and of possibilities for easing tensions and resolving causes, and to political leadership to seek ways of implementing those. Such steps would strengthen Australia's diplomatic capacity when negotiating with the US. It would also strengthen the arguments of the large body of international relations experts within the US who also prefer peaceful means of resolving conflict and who support the international rule of law. Australians' wellbeing would be enhanced by strengthening economic cooperation with all countries in this region including the US and China through trade, investment, research, and technical collaboration.

Diplomatically increasing Australian autonomy within the US alliance is crucial. This must include recognising the misjudgements in the militaristic US ideology, as well as those of China and Russia. It is vital to clarify Australian interests in minimising military activity and to understand causes of conflict and means of sharing peacebuilding activity. This doesn't involve abandoning the US alliance, but rather transforming Australia's relations into those of a mature sovereign nation which seeks to strengthen the security of its citizens through peacebuilding rather than through military competitiveness.

Australia needs to rebuild and sustain mature communication with **China** by identifying common interests where possible – in economic strategy, trade and effective action on climate change, and firm commitment to international law and human rights conventions. Building effective collaboration with other **countries in the region** is vital. Foundations for such strategies were identified in the White Paper *Australia in the Asian Century*. Substantially increased financial support for education and research about other countries in the Indo-Pacific region, and on forms of assistance including peacebuilding are vital. Language teachers cry out for greatly enhanced education in Asian, Pacific and First Nation languages.

One consequence of the proper recognition of Australian foreign policy sovereignty is that it would enable Australia to be more active in implementing and advocating the new UN strategy *Our Common Agenda*. One vital step will be to start the process of **disarmament**. This is essential to reduce conflict and the tendency to adopt military action to address conflict, but it is likely to be a complex and controversial process because it requires multilateral agreements. Yet these are essential if violent conflict is to be steadily reduced. It requires participation in preparation of plans and programmes for steps towards disarmament of all forms of weapons. The whole process requires recognition that large standing armies distort national priorities, increase conflict and tension, and waste funding and human capacity.

Renewing Australian foreign policy

Australia's security lies in building peace. This requires diplomacy to be funded sufficiently to ensure that every conflict in the Indo-Pacific be fully researched; that wherever possible trusting relationships be gradually built, and imaginative peacebuilding be encouraged. It is crucial that, in every situation of conflict of which the government becomes aware, focused, rigorous, and imaginative approaches to peacebuilding be automatically explored and considered by DFAT, the inter-departmental security committee and the security committee of Cabinet. When such a reformed process for handling conflict has become habitual attempts at peacebuilding will have been explored in every situation of conflict. Never again would violent conflict be contemplated by an Australian government for which peacebuilding had not been considered first.

¹ For example, former departmental Secretary Alan Renouf published *The Frightened Country* in 1979. Former PM Malcolm Fraser published *Common Ground* in 2003; Des Ball published *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate* in 1980; Allan Gyngell published the first edition of *Fear of Abandonment* in 2017. *Our Exceptional Friend*, by Emma Shortis is the most recent and is impressively analytical.

It's Hard to Dismount from a Tiger: Thoughts on Australia's China Policy

Professor Jocelyn Chey, AM

Jocelyn Chey is Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University and UTS, and Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney. Her career with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spanned 30 years, including two postings in Beijing from 1975–78 and 1985–88. Her last posting was as Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau. She was awarded the Australia–China Council Medal in 2008. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. Her current research fields include Australia–China and Australia–Hong Kong relations, and Chinese humour.



We are just a few days into the Lunar New Year, so let me start by wishing everyone *Xin nian kuai le* 新年快乐

'Happy New Year, the Year of the Tiger!'

The tiger is a fearsome beast in Eastern, as in Western, culture. It represents strength, ambition, beauty and power. Tigers are native to China (although critically endangered) and there are many stories and references to tigers in Chinese literature and art, all focussing on the aspects of 'tigerness' that I just mentioned and their application to daily life.

I have been asked to talk about Australia's China policy – is it 'deft' or 'daft'? In case you are not sure what that policy is, it is very simply expressed. It is, in short, that we must 'stand up against China', against its bullying and aggression. Any talk of cooperation or of mutual beneficial trade and investment, or even people-to-people exchanges, tourism, education and academic exchanges is called 'being soft on China'. In the run up to the federal elections, China policy, which has always been bipartisan, is being made an election issue.

In my opinion, this anti-China policy is wrong. It is based on untruths, exaggerations and misunderstandings. I would like to explain why by recounting a few tales about tigers.

There is a famous Chinese proverb – *Qi hu nan xia* 骑虎难下. It means 'when you are riding a tiger, it is hard to dismount'. Unfortunately, this proverb is an apt description of our current relationship with China. Our political leaders have decided that we need to put ourselves on a war footing, expecting that conflict may break out any time, even in the next few years.

Our defence policy is set out in the Department of Defence's *2020 Defence Strategic Update*. It is focussed on active offshore activity, a so-called 'forward policy'. The *Update* has many references to countries that 'pursue their strategic

interests through a combination of coercive activities, including espionage, interference and economic levers'. Although unnamed, there is no doubt that this means China. To counter China, we will boost our long-range strike capacity and develop hostile cyber capabilities.

Australian 'tigers'

Australia's present equipment and training are deemed to be inadequate for this task. Like the native Tasmanian Tiger, our military tigers, the European-made 'Tiger' armed reconnaissance helicopters, will soon be extinct. They will be replaced with American Boeing Apache Guardian attack helicopters, at an estimated cost of between 3 and 5 billion dollars. These are suitable for use in land-based attacking campaigns outside Australia. They have been described as having superior capabilities in providing battlefield information, striking behind enemy lines and supporting infantry in combat.

We will also buy new American Abrams tanks for interoperability with American land forces, and the Australian-built Collins class submarines will be superseded by nuclear subs with a range that can extend to the Taiwan Strait that can support the American navy. Australian military planning has shifted from air defence to land and sea warfare, and the most likely battlefield is the South China Sea and the Chinese mainland.

Our political leaders are softening up national sentiment in preparation for war. Defence Minister Peter Dutton told the National Press Club in November last year that there were 'dark clouds' building in a 'deteriorating region':

Every major city in Australia, including Hobart, is within range of China's missiles ... Both the Prime Minister and I have spoken about how the times in which we live have echoes of the 1930s. The world would be foolish to repeat the mistakes of the 1930s.

Tiger tail

Last week, Dutton said Australia must stand up to China in the South China Sea or 'lose the next decade'. This standing up has already begun. In 2018 the government enacted the National Security Legislation Amendment Act and a Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill. Last year, it cancelled Victoria's Memorandum of Understanding to participate in China's Belt and Road scheme. This month, the formerly moribund regional dialogue known as the Quad met in Melbourne, their main topic how to counter China's growing influence. The Quad, and the new AUKUS pact between Australia, the UK and the US, is designed to boost security and intelligence cooperation vis-à-vis China.

Not long ago we were keen to develop economic ties with China. Just three years ago, in 2019 Australian and Chinese armies conducted a joint exercise in South China. Why now are we 'twisting the tiger's tail'? Surely China must have done something drastic to create a national emergency?

Chinese text

The ancient classic text, *The Art of War*, is widely studied and applied, not only in China but around the world. General MacArthur is said to have always had a copy on his desk. One famous line in that treatise is *Zhi ji zhi bi, bai zhan bai sheng* 知己知彼百战百胜 'Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster'. In that spirit, let us try to understand China, the mindset of China's leaders and how they see us. Only if they appear to be truly hostile, should we consider going to war. China has a new ambassador to Australia, Xiao Qian, a respected senior diplomat. On arrival, Mr Xiao said that relations had reached a critical juncture and he aimed to 'jointly push them back to the right track'. He said he would 'eliminate misunderstanding and suspicion, promote mutually beneficial exchanges and

It's Hard to Dismount from a Tiger: Thoughts on Australia's China Policy (continued)

Jocelyn Chey

cooperation in all areas between the two sides.' He doesn't sound like a wolf warrior.

Last week, commenting on the Quad meeting, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian objected to US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's statement that China was challenging democratic values and the international order. Zhao said that democracy was a common value of mankind; that China wanted to see peace and development in the region; and that it supported the United Nations and international law. Again, no wolf warrior.

China ranks second in the world by GDP, but is under-represented in the bodies that determine that international order that was referenced by Blinken. Government leaders in China feel that the rest of the world should admit that the country is a superpower and adjust their international perspectives accordingly. This is not a threat, although it is seen as such in the US, where officials fear that its superpower status is being challenged. China does not seek to develop through territorial expansion. It knows that its future depends on regional stability and security.

China is also concerned about stability and security within its own borders. We often forget that China is the same size as the European Union, and equally complex. There are many regional differences and contrasting points of view, between city and countryside, and between educated and uneducated. It is hard for the central government to hold the nation together. Its main concern is to prevent *luan* 亂 'chaos' and separatist tendencies.

Tiger's den

I have not been able to visit China for a couple of years, but I do keep in touch and try to see the world from inside the tiger's den. Outside commentators paint a bleak picture of an autocratic president imposing drastic restrictions on the population and aggrandising his personal power. This does not exactly fit with what I hear and see.

The Communist Party of China is quite different from our political parties. It has a network of branches and offices that

distribute directions from the centre and are also responsive to the needs and preoccupations of local communities. Those preoccupations are very similar to our own. The story that absorbed public attention for weeks, even during the Olympics, and even over the major festival of the Lunar New Year, was a tragic one of domestic violence, of a woman chained up by her husband for many years, during which time she gave birth to eight children, causing or perhaps exacerbating her mental illness. The status of women, prevention of domestic violence, and promotion of mental health are serious concerns in China just as they are here.

That brings us to the subject of human rights. Should we stand up to China because of its human rights record? There are certainly widespread breaches. Of these, the most egregious is the death penalty. In 2020, the last year for which I have figures, China carried out more executions than any other country. The exact figure is a state secret but is certainly in the thousands. It should be noted however that per head of population, the rate is comparable with other countries such as Vietnam and Singapore – two countries that we count as friends.

China is accused of genocide in the far western province of Xinjiang, of forcing thousands of Uyghurs and other Muslim minority peoples into residential re-education camps, and of aiming to wipe out their language and culture. The evidence for this claim is contested and all sides have exaggerated the situation. Let us wait for the visit to Xinjiang by the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner and her forthcoming report before reaching judgment. I can say however that the Chinese government is heavy-handed in its treatment of *all* ethnic minorities in China. It could learn a lot from our own mistaken government intervention into Aboriginal affairs, which is a carryover of colonial attitudes, of white people believing that they know how to solve brown people's problems.

China is further accused of aggression in aiming to invade the island of Taiwan in order to effect unification. President Xi Jinping has said that solving 'the Taiwan

question' is an 'unswerving historical task'. If, however, we consider this matter from a vantage point inside the tiger's lair, this is clearly a domestic issue. After having been occupied by Japan, Taiwan was handed back to China at the end of the Second World War. Both the Communist and Nationalist (or Kuomintang) Parties accept that the island is part of China's national territory. The Australian government also acknowledged this when it recognised the People's Republic of China 50 years ago. Since then, it has never admitted that Taiwan, the Republic of China, was a sovereign state. Why make this an international issue?

A third accusation is that China is aggressively claiming large parts of the South China Sea, building military bases on artificially constructed islands and impinging on counterclaims to territory by Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. This is a tricky issue. It should be resolvable by the United Nations. Unfortunately the 2016 ruling by UNCLOS (the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) was not accepted by China, or by Taiwan, which claims the same territory. The United States has never ratified UNCLOS. If only it were to do so, surely an agreed solution should be possible. The UN Charter states that *'members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered'*. In other words, let us not go to war over this.

From outside, China may appear aggressive. Viewed from inside, people feel hemmed in and threatened. US military bases and military assets extend in an arc from Japan and South Korea to the east to the Philippines and Australia in the south and Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand in the south-west. The US is boosting security ties with Vietnam and India. It has also a long-standing commitment to provide Taiwan with military hardware and has increased naval exercises in the region.

Under former President Donald Trump, the United States became increasingly hostile to China, the emerging superpower, accused it of engineering COVID-19 and spreading it to the world and of not playing

It's Hard to Dismount from a Tiger: Thoughts on Australia's China Policy (continued)

Jocelyn Chey

by international rules, even while it withdrew from various UN bodies that preside over those rules. President Biden has toned down the rhetoric but largely continued Trump's policies. There may be good reason why Chinese leaders feel threatened.

That leaves one question. Why does Canberra say that the fault is all on China's side; that we have not changed; but China that has changed; that China has aggressive intent towards Australia, deploying soft power, undermining our economy with trade sanctions, cyber-attacks, spreading COVID-19, subverting our neighbours with tied aid and damaging our political system through corrupt funding and use of personal connections, particularly the Chinese Australian community?

This anti-China rhetoric started in the United States under Trump, but it has been enlarged and enhanced in Canberra. Our defence establishment seems more than slightly desperate with its talk of Chinese aggression that must be resisted and requires joint action by the US and Australia. Since the Trump administration, America has been rent by internal divisions and political mayhem and the economy is not prospering. Washington could well consider withdrawing from East Asia to concentrate on problems at home and in Europe and the Americas. That could endanger the ANZUS alliance, on which we have long relied to bolster our security. Canberra's defence establishment are therefore hyping the dangers of China's expansionist plans and urging the need for a continued American presence in the region.

Tiger and fox

To conclude this discussion, I would like to tell you a Chinese fable about a tiger that I think is particularly relevant to Australia's China policy.

This story comes from a classical book of history, the *Zhan Guo Ce* 战国策, which covers the era 475–221 BCE known as the period of the Warring States. It concerns the southern Chu State where General Zhao Xixu 昭奚恤 was in charge of the armies on the northern border. It was said that the neighbouring rulers all feared him. The King of Chu, probably wondering whether he could count on the General's loyalty, asked his court officials how powerful Zhao really was. One minister replied, *'Your majesty, you know that a tiger catches all kinds of animals as prey. One day, a tiger caught a fox. The cunning fox tricked the tiger, claiming that he himself had been sent to rule all the animals. He led the tiger deep into the forest. There, the wild animals paid no attention to the fox but ran away from the tiger following behind him.'* The minister added, *'Your Majesty rules a state that covers five thousand li and maintains an army of one million, which you have entrusted to General Zhao. It is not the General, but your powerful army that scares the northern states.'*

This story has been preserved in the Chinese proverb *Hu jia hu wei* 狐假虎威, literally translated as, 'The fox borrows the tiger's power', meaning someone with little personal influence may still be able to succeed for a while through alliance with a

greater power. It could well be applied to our China policy. If Australia is the fox, America is the tiger, and we are indeed what George Bush called America's 'deputy sheriff' in Asia. Pursuing another nation's causes is daft, not deft foreign policy.

There is an alternative to war with China. Relations can be mended if we wish, and relatively quickly and smoothly at that. It need not wait for the results of the May election or for a change of government. Canberra could start right now by working with our regional neighbours, all of whom share our concerns about peace and security, and all of whom in one way or another have found ways to get on with China. One opportunity could well be through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the largest free trade agreement in the world, which came into force in January this year. Nine of our Asian neighbours are already partners, including China, and others will join very soon, but the United States and India have not signed up, which might well make it easier to work cooperatively. There are many other ways that we can get on with China, including joint action for peacekeeping and disaster relief in the Pacific, and vaccine distribution, through RCEP and other regional organisations such as ASEAN and the East Asian Summit. If we engage in such cooperation, we can build trust over the longer term and cement closer government and people-to-people ties, creating long-term regional stability.

It is time to dismount from the tiger.

Australia's Overseas Aid: Does it help or hinder our relations in the region?

Ms Natasha Chabbra

Natasha Chabbra is the Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Advisor at the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). Natasha has joined ACFID from the Federal Government where she worked on strategic policy issues including disaster risk reduction for three years. Natasha has a background in international law and humanitarian affairs. ACFID is the peak body for Australia's NGOs in aid and development. It has 130 full members and 22 affiliates operating in more than 90 developing countries. Members range from large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of NGOs, to agencies with specialised thematic expertise, and smaller community-based groups.



In addition to a moral obligation to assist those in need, Australia's regional and global security lies in human security. That should be the focus of our development assistance. With growing humanitarian needs in many regions of the world and less money committed globally than what is required to meet these needs, it is more important than ever to ensure that international aid and development is a major priority for the Australian government. Australia's national security lies in the human security of people around the world, and their sustained community resilience.

Importance of development to peace

We know from protracted crises, which have continued in cycles of violence and regression of development outcomes, that peace and development are inextricably linked. Development is a critical component of peacebuilding.

Development is vital to maintaining peace.

Australia's continued prosperity depends more than ever on the wellbeing of communities in the Indo-Pacific region. We need a regional environment of stability and cooperation to allow us all to flourish. It is clear that supporting development is in our security interests. This includes promoting peace and human security; stability and social cohesion; democracy and human rights; climate action and justice; ameliorating inequality; and generating sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Australia's aid program is also a crucial outlet for representing and projecting the peaceful values we want to see in the region and facilitating Australian diplomacy.

Because of this, aid should be assigned the same level of priority as defence, trade and diplomacy within Australia's foreign policy architecture. Human security is as integral to peace, if not more, than our defence and trade engagements.

Countries' ability to respond to challenges like climate change and pandemics is fundamentally about human security and the extent to which individuals and governments have the resources and structures to respond and recover from shocks. Improving human security and development outcomes at the individual level provide states with the resilience to meet these challenges.

Challenges to Australia's development program in the last decade

Australia's aid program has been significantly cut, both financially and structurally.

In 2013, the Coalition Government opted to fold AusAID – Australia's former standalone aid agency – into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The rationale was to allow for closer alignment of the aid and diplomatic arms of Australia's international policy agenda. The flipside, however, is that foreign aid became one of many complementary yet competing priorities in the foreign affairs portfolio. A stakeholder survey of the Australian aid program revealed that the transition was not as smooth as hoped, with staff continuity, expertise and predictability of funding all performing poorly.

Meanwhile Australia's aid budget has been cut by about a third since the Coalition came into government in 2013. As a result, many successful poverty alleviation programs in developing nations were curtailed, affecting millions of people. This had flow-on effects on Australia's international reputation as a donor, as well as our capacity to respond to human security challenges. At the same time, the need for aid has increased.

Current trends in development and humanitarian assistance

A smaller budget means less opportunity

to address the root causes of human suffering, and in turn, peace becomes more vulnerable and tenuous. ACFID advocates for strategic action that addresses the root causes of crisis, to alleviate the amount of humanitarian suffering that requires response, which alleviates the need for more assistance. That means shifting to anticipatory action and risk reduction before disaster strikes. This is especially important as the impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt and climate change becomes an ever-present danger. Australian humanitarian assistance should address the root causes (e.g. conflict, climate change, food insecurity), contributing factors (e.g. inequalities, particularly gender) and any enabling factors (e.g. the flow of arms to perpetrators). Australia should also look at all dimensions of its own relationships with crisis-affected countries. Trade relationships and military cooperation require particular scrutiny.

Less funds have necessitated targeting which countries and which issues are best served by Australian ODA. For Australia that means the Indo-Pacific. The Pacific Step Up is a great example of how Australia has directed sustained effort into our region that encompasses both diplomacy and development initiatives. However, we believe that the overseas development aid (ODA) program needs to reach far across the globe, and not just our region. Crises in the Middle East and Africa are not in our region, yet the impacts that flow on from them are far-reaching and affect global security, such as through the flow of refugees. Africa, for example, is home to the greatest number of people living in extreme poverty, and Australia's divestment from African aid signals that we are not interested in African nations and their postcolonial development aspirations. After all, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are global targets, not regional ones.

Australia's Overseas Aid: Does it help or hinder our relations in the region? (continued)

Ms Natasha Chhabra

We are seeing more securitisation, which prioritises things like defence capability, armament, and capacity to defend as indicators of security rather than human security indicators such as health, access to livelihoods and education. Additionally, relying on military and defence capabilities without civil society at the centre can mean that the voices of women, people with a disability, ethnic and religious minorities and gender diverse populations are less visible.

COVID-19 impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our underlying vulnerabilities. It has forced us to reconsider the centrality of development and humanitarian assistance to global, regional and national security and stability.

As a positive, it has revealed just how interconnected we are as a global community. Without vaccine equity, we will continue to see new variants at our borders that challenge our domestic response and economy. Public support for Australian aid has increased despite domestic struggles.

But extreme poverty has risen for the first time in more than 20 years, and the impacts have been felt unequally by those

already marginalised by their gender, disability, sexuality, age or ethnicity. Women and young people aged 15–29 working in the informal sector have been hit the hardest. School closures have affected 91 per cent of students worldwide. Millions of temporary migrants, displaced people, and refugees face heightened insecurity and vulnerability. These effects will have direct and enduring consequences for Australia's interests in a stable, prosperous, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

The pandemic and the social and economic impacts that have come with it have reemphasised the critical importance of reducing poverty and inequality in order to ensure a resilient, flourishing region which can withstand and recover from unexpected shocks in the future and respond to the pandemic with a human security approach at the forefront.

DFAT and its partners, including Australian and local NGOs, successfully 'pivoted' in 2019–2020 to deal with the immediate impacts of the pandemic, announcing around \$1.1 billion in new development initiatives to help support health security, economic recovery and stability.

However, many of the COVID-19 support measures are currently temporary, and expire in 2022 and 2023. ACFID would like to see the Australian Government extend these measures so short-term development gains are not lost.

What strengths should Australia leverage?

Currently our aid program deals well with the most pressing needs facing our neighbours; however, in order to truly create peace our development program needs to have longer-term strategic objectives, long-term funding and relationships with civil society to support not just our region but across the world.

Development assistance is not an end unto itself. It should seek to empower communities to voice their own needs and desires for their country. This may involve ensuring food security so that people are fed and have jobs or it may be working on transparent and accountable governance to ensure healthy relationships between the state, civil society and the economy. Development assistance should include a plan to shift power, decision making and autonomy back to communities.

SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2022

*Pax Christi Asia Pacific invites you to
A Global Online Prayer Service for Myanmar*

*"We appeal to all to pray for peace, and an end to violence
And Myanmar's humanitarian disaster."
National Unity Government of Myanmar*



Melbourne/Sydney: 5.30 pm

**Yangon: 2.00 pm; Bangkok: 2.30 pm; Manila: 3.30 pm; Tokyo: 4.30 pm
; Auckland: 7.30 pm; London: 8.30 am**

**Brussels/Amsterdam/Geneva/Frankfurt/Western Europe: 9.30 am;
Nairobi: 10.30 am**

Just Peace and Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*

Dr Sandie Cornish

Sandie Cornish is Director of the Office for Justice Ecology and Peace of the Australian Catholic Bishops. Her doctorate in Practical Theology is from the Australian Catholic University, where she is sessional staff. She is well recognised for her research, writing, policy work and interpreting Catholic Social Teaching at local, national and regional levels. She led the Hong Kong-based international human rights agency *The Center for the Progress of Peoples* and is a member of the Vatican's Dicastery (Department) for the Promotion of Integral Human Development.



For Pope Francis, peace, security and the flourishing of people and the planet are grounded in right relationships with God, each other, and the whole of creation. However, each of these relationships is wounded and in need of reconciliation.

If the great insight of *Laudato Si'* is that 'everything is connected', the key insight of *Fratelli Tutti* is that 'everyone is connected'. Security and peace are global questions to engage the whole human family. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis identifies several things that we often trust, but which don't make us secure or cultivate peace:

- the accumulation of material goods
- control over scarce resources
- a balance of power
- the possession of weapons, especially nuclear weapons
- closed borders and keeping 'strangers' out.

Pope Francis begins *Fratelli Tutti* by contemplating the world, noting 'dark clouds over a closed world' and identifying 'trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity'. These trends hinder our sense of being sisters and brothers to each other and members of one human family as children of God.

They include:

- shattered dreams of peace
- economic globalisation (n 12) and new forms of cultural colonisation (n 14)
- widespread social exclusion, and political visions that are 'lacking a plan for everyone'
- the lack of truly universal respect for human rights, e.g., women's rights, new forms of slavery (n 22–24)
- a throwaway world that considers some people disposable (n 18–21)
- conflict and fear

- hostility towards migrants and refugees (n 36–41), and
- the challenge of authentic encounter and communication in our digital world; Pope Francis is very concerned that we are losing the ability to sit down and listen to one another, to seek the truth in dialogue (n 48).

Francis sums this up by saying that 'the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading' (n 30).

One key to understanding a document is to consider its purpose, or why it was written. Francis says that *Fratelli Tutti* is a response to 'present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others' and that he wants instead to promote 'a new vision of fraternity and social friendship' (n 6). The encyclical appeals to everyone to 'acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives' (n 1).

Some of the major themes and concerns of the encyclical are:

- racism and hostile responses to asylum seekers, migrants, and migration
- the dynamic of exclusion of people, including those with disabilities, even within the Church
- popularism, liberalism and the need for 'a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good' (n 154)
- the need for more effective international institutions
- nurturing a culture of dialogue and encounter
- peacebuilding and reconciliation, war, and the death penalty
- the potential of religions to serve fraternity.

Like *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti* is also a call to continuing conversion:

'Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realised every day.' (n 11)

Embracing a culture of encounter and dialogue is central to this conversion. I'll offer some reflections on these themes and how they connect with social relations in Australia and internationally. But first, a word on Francis' vision of an open world, animated by universal love.

An open world animated by universal love

At the heart of Pope Francis' commitment to social friendship and the dignity of every person is his belief in one human family. We are all children of God. This encyclical challenges Christians to work actively for the rights of other believers who are minorities, just as Christians ask that our freedom and rights be respected.

Fratelli Tutti invites all believers to return to our sources and concentrate on what is essential – worship of God and love for our neighbour. This is a timely message when so much in popular culture encourages us to make 'gods' of possessions or celebrity and to think only of ourselves. *Fratelli Tutti* issues a strong challenge to xenophobia and an exaggerated focus on national self-interest. It encourages social and economic inclusion at all levels and stresses that all human beings are members of one human family.

Dialogue

The sixth chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* explores dialogue and social friendship in society, consensus and truth, and the recovery of kindness.

In a world marked by the 'parallel monologues' of social media (n 200), Francis calls for real dialogue in which we approach, speak, listen, look at, come to know and to understand one another, and find common ground (n 198). He says that

Just Peace and Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (continued)

Sandie Cornish

'no one can possess the whole truth or satisfy his or her every desire' and so we need a 'dialogic realism' in which we remain faithful to our own principles while recognising that others also have the right to do the same (n 221).

Such hospitality towards all people, their experiences, and perspectives, is a core part of the content of the encyclical and it is reflected in its methodology. *Fratelli Tutti* endorses and promotes perspectivalism in theological ethics by rejecting relativism. It affirms the importance of an historically conscious approach that attends to multiple perspectives and experiences. This is a return to the approach of Pope Paul VI after the personalism of John Paul II and the classicism of Benedict XVI.

Truth is not relative – it is not a matter of 'my truth' and 'your truth', or of 'alternative facts'. Rather, when we acknowledge with humility that none of us possess the truth in its entirety, we understand that we need to consider everyone's perspectives if we are to be seekers and doers of truth. It is not that consensus makes a thing true but rather that through dialogue and being 'unafraid to get to the heart of an issue' (n 212) we may discover or uncover truth and enduring values. We see this approach embodied in the way the encyclical quotes the teachings of a range of national bishops' conferences and especially in the way in which it honours the contribution of the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb.

- ⇒ We might ask if the Australian Government is engaged in a 'parallel monologue' with China?
- ⇒ Is talking past one another a key dynamic of the unofficial election campaign that has begun?

Pope Francis is critical of the 'illusion of communication' in our digital world and 'information without wisdom' (n 42–50). He says that 'the ability to sit down and listen to others, typical of interpersonal encounters, is paradigmatic of the welcoming attitude shown by those who transcend narcissism and accept others, caring for them and welcoming them into their lives' (n 48).

I think this is an area where Francis' Ignatian spirituality is evident. The Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus approved by Pope Julius III in 1550 includes in the purpose of the Society the reconciliation of the estranged. Hence number 650 of the Constitutions of the Society includes in a list of ministries, 'the reconciliation of quarrelling parties'.

A presupposition encouraged by Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises helps equip Jesuits for this task. The Exercises are a primary source of Ignatian spirituality that shape the ministry of all Jesuits. As Thomas Massaro SJ explains:

Nowhere in the Spiritual Exercises are the techniques of formal mediation treated, but very early in the text, Ignatius commends a principle of constructive interaction that is highly relevant to the task of peacemaking. Number 22 is labelled

'Presupposition'... As a basic principle of dialogue, Ignatius urges: 'Let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save his neighbour's proposition than to condemn it. If he cannot save it, let him inquire how he means it; and if he means it badly, let him correct him with charity.' The paraphrase offered by David Fleming of the literal rendering of this paragraph from the Latin text includes the terms 'mutual respect', 'favourable interpretation' and 'Christian understanding', all of which are in service of developing 'a good relationship' between parties in dialogue.

- ⇒ How can we nurture this ability within Australian society, in regional relations, and international relations?
- ⇒ How can we create spaces for real dialogue?

In *Laudato Si'* Francis names the existing conflicts over resources such as water and anticipates that they will escalate unless things change. But this is not the only way in which ecological questions impact security and the possibility of real peace. It is not just about resolving specific conflicts. Pasquale Ferrara notes two ways of

'rethinking security in the Anthropocene' the most common of which is 'a re-articulation in terms of environmental security, understood as a potential violent struggle over scarce natural resources'. The second builds on the concept of ecological security by 'focusing on the close ties between the human and non-human world, tracing the implications of an understanding of the world in terms of the complex interdependence of ecosystems.' However, he concludes that 'the real paradigm shift' required is a 'rethinking of politics itself as something other than security politics, as a politics of vulnerability'.

This would require dialogue across a vast range of disciplines – and a dialogue with the rest of creation.

- ⇒ Who and what do we need to engage as dialogue partners at this time?

Speaking of who we engage as dialogue partners, it is interesting that Francis does not reference John Paul II's teaching on dialogue. Perhaps this is because Francis wishes to live a form of dialogue and encounter within the church – synodality or journeying together – that is distinctively different from John Paul II's agenda of emphasising the role of the universal teachings. His teaching on dialogue was directed more to the community of nations than to the community of the church and I think its impact was affected by the contrast between the internal life of the church and what was being asked of others.

Francis' appeal for the recovery of kindness may seem quaint (n 222) but I think it is linked to embracing a politics of vulnerability. When we look to the needs of others, and of all, rather than only to our own interests, we leave ourselves vulnerable. However, the attention to others required by kindness entails noticing their vulnerability too. Francis says that because kindness 'entails esteem and respect for others' if it becomes part of the culture of a society it 'transforms lifestyles, relationships and the way ideas are discussed and compared' and it 'facilitates the quest for consensus' and 'opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges' (n 224).

Just Peace and Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (continued)

Sandie Cornish

Dialogue is one of the essential ingredients of what Francis calls a 'culture of encounter'.

A culture of encounter

The seventh chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* focuses on a culture of encounter. It discusses the art and architecture of peace, memory, forgiveness, the death penalty, and war.

Francis says that a culture of encounter means that we 'should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone' and that this should become 'an aspiration and a style of life' (n 216). He urges us to 'hear the true stories' of victims of violence and people pushed to the edges, to 'look at reality through their eyes' and to 'listen with an open heart to the stories that they tell' (n 261).

This is the opposite of the globalisation of indifference that Francis so frequently decries. It also sounds like the opposite of Australian politics right now.

- ⇒ How do we change the politics of division and self-interest, and the creation of enemies to fear?
- ⇒ How do we change the deliberate isolation and dehumanisation of asylum seekers and prisoners?
- ⇒ How do we build willingness to listen to the true history of this country with an open heart?

Memory, truth and forgiveness

Francis says that there is an 'architecture' of peace that requires the engagement of institutions but there is also an 'art' of peace that involves all of us (n 231). Ordinary people need to be involved in peace processes; these cannot remain at the level of politics, law or diplomacy.

The path to peace begins with the historical truth of events and the cultivation of a 'penitential memory' in order to open the way to a 'a shared hope stronger than the desire for vengeance' (n 226) or as the Bishops of the Congo say 'people have the right to know what happened' (n 226). Francis goes on to say that the path to peace 'entails acknowledging the possibility that others have, at least in part, a legitimate point of

view, something worthwhile to contribute, even if they were in error or acted badly' (n 228). He notes the South African Bishops' view that reconciliation is achieved proactively 'by forming a new society, a society based on service to others' (n 229) and that the Bishops of South Korea seek peace by striving for 'justice through dialogue, pursuing reconciliation and mutual development' (n 229).

Forgiveness and reconciliation are central themes in many religions, including Christianity, but Francis points out that the call to love everyone without exception does not mean allowing oppressors to continue oppressing others (n 241). Nor can a sort of 'social forgiveness' be demanded from those who have endured injustice (n 246).

True forgiveness does not mean forgetting but rather remembering. The nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Shoa must never be forgotten. The memory of the victims awakens our consciences to break the cycle of oppression and revenge.

Just War Theory

Pope Francis, like so many of his predecessors, sees a positive role for the observance of juridical norms and the observation and application of the Charter of the United Nations in preventing war, but it is the development of mutual trust to which he gives greater emphasis (n 262).

In *Fratelli Tutti*, there is innovation in what Francis chooses to emphasise, and what he emphatically deemphasises. Some hoped that in this encyclical Francis would rule out the use of the Just War Theory. He doesn't do this, but he certainly deemphasises it.

Pope Francis criticises the frequent use of 'an overly broad interpretation' (n 258) of Just War criteria to justify wars. He says: 'We can no longer think of war as a solution because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war'. Never again war!' (n 258).

He is clearly not a fan of the Just War Theory however striking it out of the Catechism (as he did with the last justifications for the use of the death penalty) is simply not Pope Francis' project. He says instead:

'... let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims ... let us hear the true stories of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories that they tell. In this way, we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war. Nor will it trouble us to be deemed naïve for choosing peace.' (n 261)

He is privileging contemplation of reality and embodied encounter as starting points over abstract ideas.

- ⇒ How can we develop and embed processes of encounter in our efforts?
- ⇒ How can we ensure that our action at the international, regional as well as local levels are always based in a culture of encounter?

Conclusion: Francis' vision in Australia

Francis' choice of the language of 'fraternity' and 'social friendship' emphasises an ethic of care and relationship – just like *Laudato Si'* does. By contrast, the language of 'the unity of the human family' and 'solidarity' which are more common in the modern social teachings, is used sparingly. The emphasis is on being called by love rather than driven by duty or constrained by law. It is a move from a focus on duty ethics to virtue ethics. Francis' tone is encouraging and appeals to our hearts as much as our heads.

- ⇒ What might such an ethic of care and a culture of encounter look like in Australia?

Welcoming the stranger

Migration is a key issue in *Fratelli Tutti*. Pope Francis says that we are 'obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families, and where they can find personal fulfilment' (n 129). He sets

Just Peace and Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (continued)

Sandie Cornish

out a range of 'indispensable steps' needed in response to people who are fleeing (n 130). They include for example:

- increasing and simplifying the granting of visas
- adopting programs of individual and community sponsorship
- opening humanitarian corridors for the most vulnerable refugees
- providing suitable and dignified housing
- guaranteeing personal security and access to basic services
- equitable access to the justice system
- the possibility of opening bank accounts and the guarantee of the minimum needed to survive
- freedom of movement and the possibility of employment
- protecting minors and ensuring their regular access to education
- promoting integration into society
- supporting the reuniting of families
- preparing local communities for the process of integration.

The contrast with Australia's refugee and asylum seeker policies could not be starker. There is nothing in that list for which we could give ourselves an unqualified tick – it is a description of what needs to be done.

The fear of strangers and racism run deep in Australian society. In this context use of the *Migration Amendment (Strengthening the Character Test) Bill 2021*, as a 'national security test' for the opposition is almost as odious as this

unnecessary bill itself.

The major political parties must be persuaded to relinquish the politics of fear and exclusion, but this will only happen when enough people stop responding to the dog whistle. What community-based groups know works in changing hearts and minds is embodied human encounter. Welcome dinners and all manner of events that enable people to meet one another are practices of a culture of encounter.

A better kind of politics

The far-sighted, integral, and interdisciplinary approach to handling different aspects of the current crisis with a focus on the long-term common good (n 177) for which Francis calls is sorely needed in Australia. A federal integrity commission and reform of the political donation laws would go some way towards supporting the realisation of the vision of politics as 'something nobler than posturing, marketing and media spin' (n 197).

The Vatican's COVID-19 Commission is providing thought leadership on how to build back better, kinder, and greener after the pandemic, which Australian governments would do well to consider. The stimulus that our economy continues to need could be an opportunity to lift people relying on social welfare benefits out of poverty, to facilitate a just carbon transition, build more social housing and invest in community services.

We could also benefit from taking to heart Pope Francis' call for the patient building of dialogue and friendship in society rather than parallel monologues

and the social media pile-on culture. It was heartening to see the Australian Bishops' Statement *Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world* quoted at n 205 in the encyclical!

We need to create spaces and processes in which we can really listen to one another, accept differences, and seek the truth together.

Reconciliation

Fratelli Tutti's reflections on truth, forgiveness and reconciliation hold important messages for our journey towards a just relationship with First Nations people and communities. For instance, Pope Francis says that 'we can never move forward without remembering the past; we do not progress without an honest and unclouded memory' (n 249) and that we cannot demand a 'sort of social forgiveness' of those who 'have endured much unjust and cruel suffering' (n 246).

The Uluru Statement from the Heart can provide an element of 'architecture' while all of us can cultivate the 'art' of seeking out and listening to the voice of First Nations people and communities.

No to war

If war is never a solution and the very possession of nuclear weapons is immoral, we must ask questions about the nature of Australia's defence expenditure and the ambition to become a major player in the arms trade. The AUKUS submarines contract affair has undermined trust, entangled us more deeply in the nuclear cycle, and increased costs. It is hard to see how it makes us safer or promotes peace.



REFLECTION

2022 Pax Christi Conference: Where Does Australia's Security Lie?

John Ball and Jeff Wild

Pax Christi's recent online conference, 'Where does Australia's security lie?' canvassed: peace vis militarism; better understanding of China and ideas on how to revive engagement; trends in, and alternatives for, Australian development assistance and insights from Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti* on fraternity and social friendship.

A key concern is how to broaden foreign policy to understand national security in terms of human security, i.e. having all that is needed to live a full life, and not promoting dependency on military alliances, especially a subservient role in alliances, and the dangers of arms races and conflicts that may flow from this.

Compared to 1995–96 by 2024–25 it is expected that overseas aid and diplomacy funding each will have halved and both are dwarfed by military expenditure. In 1995–96 defence got twenty times more than diplomacy and that is expected to be 53 times higher by 2024–25. This fuels a regional arms race, linked with inadequate diplomatic missions and declining foreign aid.

The integration of the specialised Federal Government aid department, AusAID, into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has led to a loss of specialisation and having to more directly compete with wider considerations – military security, migration control, diplomacy and legal issues.

Trends in humanitarian assistance are: (1) smaller budget (down to only 0.22% of Gross National Income, GNI); (2) a stronger focus on Asia/Pacific (with areas of much need such as Africa have suffered loss of support); and (3) a more securitised focus. 2014–18 saw 25% cut (\$3.7 billion) from Australia's aid budget.

Efforts are needed to cut militarism, promote dialogue to understand the other party's history, perspectives and interests and to seek common areas of concern on which to share ideas and build trust, sustainable development and peace.

Less than 1% of the aid budget globally goes to disaster prevention, instead of response and recovery. Shared global challenges such as climate change,

COVID-19 and the flow of weapons to human rights abusers, e.g. the Myanmar junta, need anticipation and action. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are global, not regional, targets.

With COVID-19's impact global poverty has increased for the first time in 20 years. COVID-19 has forced more locally led development, which has many strengths, but our aid program still has a restrictive and reactive, rather than a resilience, emphasis. To promote peace we need longer term goals, strategising, multi-year funding, a focus on need, and to challenge military aid being included in the aid budget.

Australia has conflict resolution and prevention skills that could be shared, e.g. in Africa. Let Australia be a partner rather than a donor, and support people in civil society taking initiatives. Restorative justice is often linked to faith-based groups.

Examples of the challenge of dialogue included Australia–China tensions on trade and military strategy and needing to relate to the Taliban regime, labelled as a terrorist group, in order to deliver vital humanitarian aid to starving people, while still advocating on areas of disagreement, e.g. women's roles and rights.

Professor Jocelyn Chey cleverly used, in this Year of the Tiger in the Chinese calendar, the analogy of 'riding the tiger' on how to get out of a difficult situation – to consider the present tensions and fractured diplomatic relations. Professor Chey also considered how to see the world from a Chinese perspective (from within the tiger's den) – the Century of Humiliation', attributed to Western interference; seeing itself surrounded by hostile military resources, e.g. US bases and allies in the region, including the new Quad (Australia, USA, India and Japan) and AUKUS. AUKUS is an agreement to deepen co-operation between Australia, the US and UK on diplomatic, security and defence cooperation, technology, intelligence sharing and supply chains, with the first initiative being Australia's purchase of nuclear submarines and the infrastructure for their upkeep.

How can Australia re-engage with China on shared interests and problems, e.g. climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and mitigation needs, pandemic prevention and control and health, women's rights, domestic violence, minority rights and abuses?

One opportunity is the appointment of Mr Xiao Qian as a new Chinese ambassador to Australia. He said in late February that diplomatic channels are open for discussions.

The Pope's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* focusses on peace, security and the flourishing of people and planet. It proposes a dynamic to defuse conflict and build constructive relationships. At the same time it acknowledges and describes in some detail the brokenness of the world and the need for healing and reconciliation. The sense of 'one human family' is being eroded and concern is being replaced by indifference. Hence the whole human family must be engaged.

The response to this requires daily conversion. It will be a recovery of dialogue and kindness. Dialogue is a process to help uncover deep truths, not to convert the other to one's own way of thinking. Pope Francis rejects current trends to relativism and replaces it with taking the perspective of another person or group to seek a truth which is beyond all of us.

True security needs to include environmental security. We need a politics of vulnerability which recognises our own vulnerability and takes account of the other's vulnerability. Even those who have acted badly have something to contribute. However, love does not include overlooking the actions of an oppressor.

Taking such a perspective helps us to address the problems which were so ably described in the first three sessions.

Dr Sandie Cornish, Director for Justice, Ecology and Peace, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, also suggested practical examples as how the Pope's insights could be applied to change of policy to truly support asylum seekers; listen to and act on Indigenous perspectives (e.g. The Uluru Statement from the Heart) and promote stimulus for

Reflections on Pax Christi Conference (continued)

John Ball and Jeff Wild

the economy through better human services to address the existing vulnerabilities and fault lines in Australian society strongly highlighted by the COVID pandemic.

Each presentation was followed by 45 minutes of discussion in small groups. These discussions generated many significant and incisive questions and issues. Fortunately, they have been recorded for further reflection and development.

Questions and challenges raised included:

Suggestions to promote alternative views to militarism included: popularising

peace documentaries; finding common ground; both educating and supporting action of the young and urging organisations take up justice/sustainability.

In addressing fear and extremism ask people their fears, from where they get their trusted information and be aware how algorithms can help expose people to extreme views.

How to reignite contact and dialogue internationally? What role can civil society, including faith, sporting and business groups, play?

How to tackle the fear of abandonment in the Australian psyche?

How to apply Pope Francis's encyclical personally and internationally in pursuit of goodness and solidarity with the creation every day, and counter fear, negativity or passivity?

Are we brave enough to be vulnerable, giving up our own resources or interests sometimes, taking risks and acting courageously for our own and the greater good?

Pax Christi urges us to go beyond the Just War Theory to seek a Just Peace. This is our challenge as we live in tense and violent times and an election year.

ANZAC DAY 25 APRIL 2022,

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL AND PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA,
INVITE YOU TO AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE

11.00 AM, ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL MELBOURNE

*A Service of Lament, Repentance and Hope.—
to lament the violence and destruction
of First Nations people and communities
since European settlement
-- the pain and anguish
suffered by their descendants as a result of
European Colonisation and white settlement;*

-- to repent of the ongoing war and violence in our world and in our hearts;
-- to hear again the hope of God's gift of peace, given to us in the crucified and Risen Lord,
being lived out in many scenes of conflict.

*To pray for those who are suffering from the wars in Ukraine, Myanmar, Yemen and in
many other places*

*And to pray for the ending of violence and lasting peace
In our world and in our hearts*

TRULY, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

Celebrant: Rev Dr Stephen Ames

Story Teller: Ms Sherry Balcombe,
Manager, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Ms Balcombe is an Olkola Djabaguy woman from North Queensland Manager, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

Homily: Rev Dr Garry Deverell

Dr Deverell is a trawloolway man from northern lutrawita (Tasmanian) and a Lecturer and Research Fellow in the new School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Divinity