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**Subject: War in the East China Sea**

Bob Carr is right to argue that it is not in Australia's interests to get involved in the growing dispute between China and Japan ('ANZUS call to arms would fail the pub test', November 4). On the other hand, he is naïve if he believes it is simply a matter of making a choice about the applicability of the ANZUS treaty. In the scenario of actual war between those two nations that choice would be denied us.

For all practical purposes, and especially from China's perspective, Australia is part of the US military system. The Australia/US alliance is, in reality, a component of US force projection across the Pacific. For example, US Admiral Samuel Locklear has described US 'rotational forces' (such as the marines in Darwin) as the "point of the arrow" and the " 'fight tonight' force necessary for immediate crisis and contingency response".\*

That means that, should hostilities break out in the East China Sea, when the US would support Japan, there is a likelihood that the US marines would be deployed. In such a scenario, Australia would be involved in an act of war against China. And, in any case, whether they were deployed or not, US use of Australian facilities such as Pine Gap would place us squarely in the position of 'enemy' to China.

As another elder statesman, Malcolm Fraser, has pointed out in his book *Dangerous Allies*, if there is war between China and Japan, Australia will automatically be involved. The Australia/US alliance and the integration of our two countries' armed forces, mean that the choice of standing to one side has been removed – regardless of ANZUS.

The situation is far more dangerous to Australia than Mr Carr indicates.

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\* [http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Locklear\\_03-25-14.pdf](http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Locklear_03-25-14.pdf)