Australian Naval Review

2022 – Issue 1

Australian Naval Institute

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The ANI is the leading forum for naval and maritime affairs in Australia. Formed in 1975, the main objectives of the ANI are:

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The views expressed in the *ANR* do not represent the official views of the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Defence Force, the Chief of Navy or the ANI. That said, *Headmark*, and now the *Australian Naval Review*, have a proud tradition of over 45 years of contributing informed research, writing, and opinion on naval and maritime matters.

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Front Cover: Submarine HMAS *Rankin* sails on the surface in the waters north of Darwin during AUSINDEX 21. *Photographer:* POIS Yuri Ramsey.

Inside Back Cover: Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN, and Captain Ainsley Morthorpe (top right), CSM, RAN, (top right), Commanding Officer of HMAS *Cerberus*, salute during ceremonial divisions at HMAS *Cerberus*, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. *Photographer:* POIS James Whittle.

AUSTRALIAN NAVAL REVIEW

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Foreword by the President

Vice Admiral Peter Jones, AO, DSC, RAN (Retired)

Welcome to the 10th edition of the *Australian Naval Review*. We are pleased to provide for your reading a range of topical and diverse articles. Since the last edition there has been more opportunity to consider the momentous AUKUS agreement. Five authors, including Vice Admiral Jonathon Mead, Professor Geoffrey Till and the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan discuss this important subject. Admiral Noonan has been a regular contributor to the *Australian Naval Review* during his tenure which I am sure has been greatly appreciated by its readership.

Another major event in recent times is the unprovoked invasion in February of Ukraine by Russia. Besides its seismic impact in Europe, it also has had an impact in the Asia-Pacific. This issue is addressed in Professor William Maley's 2022 Vernon Parker Oration. Importantly, he puts the war into a broader context.

The third major development has been China's foreign policy initiatives in the south-west Pacific. As has been recognised by the outgoing Morrison and the new Albanese governments, this poses significant security challenges in the region. In this edition Dr Richard Herr is among the authors who address these challenges.

I sincerely thank the contributors for their articles and I trust you enjoy this edition of the *Australian Naval Review*.

Peter Jones.

A time out of joint? Reflections on some key trends in international relations

Emeritus Professor William Maley, AM

This oration was delivered on the 19th of May 2022, at the Australian Naval Institute Annual Dinner and Vernon Parker Oration, proudly sponsored by Lockheed Martin.

Introduction

It is a great privilege for me to be invited to deliver the Vernon Parker Oration of the Australian Naval Institute. I am in no sense a specialist on naval affairs, but recently, I saw a new film entitled *Operation Mincemeat* which dealt with one of the most remarkable deception operations during the Second World War, when the body of a vagrant was floated ashore in Spain with a false identity and a clutch of compromising papers designed to divert attention from Sicily as the main target of the Allied invasion of southern Europe in 1943.[1] I too feel somewhat like a vagrant washed ashore clutching a few papers, but I hope that the remarks that I will share this evening serve to shed some light on a number of the troubling challenges and issues that confront our world.

A time of uncertainty

We are living, to paraphrase Hamlet, in a time out of joint. It is a time of radical uncertainty, in which not only do we not know what *will* happen, but we do not know what *might* happen. Former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld famously referred in 2002 to the challenge of 'unknown unknowns', and while he was ridiculed at the time for this claim, it was probably the most insightful thing he ever said, and it even provided the title for his memoirs.[2] To some degree, radical uncertainty is an endemic feature of political life, but in 2022 it seems more pressing than ever. There are six particular kinds of uncertainty which I find it useful to note, although the list is hardly exhaustive.

First, we are confronted by notable uncertainties relating to the character of the international order. Historically, international orders have been underpinned by different devices.[3] Whilst the genesis of the system of states was complex – certainly more complex than simple references to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 as its point of origin might suggest – one enduring mechanism that attracted a great deal of attention was 'balancing', directed against either power or threats.

1 See E Montagu, *The man who never was*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1953; D Smyth, *Deathly deception: the real story of Operation Mincemeat*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2011.
2 D Rumsfeld, *Known and unknown: a memoir*, Sentinel Books, New York, 2011.
3 See C Reus-Smit, *The moral purpose of the state: culture, social identity, and institutional rationality in international relations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999.

But over time, other mechanisms came into play: rules and understandings, such as those embodied in the Concert of Europe in the 19th century or the Charter of the United Nations from 1945; and nuclear deterrence in the aftermath of the development of the atom bomb.[4] These mechanisms are all still with us, but the mix between them can vary over time and space.

Second, we are also faced with striking uncertainties with respect to the foreign policies of major powers. One need only point to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 in order to appreciate how unexpected events can set off major tremors within a complex international system. Russia is indisputably a major power: a nuclear-armed state, and a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, equipped with the veto power to prevent any enforcement action being authorised against it. Its invasion of Ukraine caught other major powers largely unawares, and triggered a series of events the consequences of which are yet to be determined and may prove far-reaching, both for individual states and peoples, and for the international system as a whole.

Third, the domestic politics of major powers give rise to a host of uncertainties. In Russia in the 1990s, there were high hopes that the political system was moving in a more democratic direction, but in the period after Vladimir Putin succeeded Boris El'tsin as president, Russian politics took a distinctly authoritarian turn, with Putin in 2022 more firmly autocratic than any leader in Moscow since Stalin's death in 1953. This was certainly a contributing factor to the invasion of Ukraine.[5] Even more worrying for Australia has been a change in the domestic politics of the United States, Australia's principal alliance partner. The deterioration in the functioning of the US political system is more deeply rooted than many might think, and actually began before the advent to the presidency of Donald J Trump.[6] But there is no doubt that the rise of Trump – by almost any measure the least qualified person ever to occupy the Oval Office[7] – represented a hostile takeover of the Republican Party, and in a two-party system, this has major ramifications for stability. The US is a deeply divided society, and its future is clouded with uncertainty.

Fourth, uncertainties also arise from the pace of technological change. In a 1969 article, a distinguished scholar of international relations noted that:

> No special theory is needed to account for the emergence of new types of armament from time to time: mere recognition of the possibility of major war, and the propensity to invent, which the intellectual revolution of the last three centuries has increased, lead to expectations which rather would require special explanations for new types *not* emerging.[8]

4 See AL Burns, 'From balance to deterrence: a theoretical analysis', *World Politics*, vol. 9(4), 1957, pp. 494–529; FH Hinsley, *Power and the pursuit of peace: theory and practice in the history of relations between states*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963, pp. 213–237.

5 See G Gill, *Building an authoritarian polity: Russia in post-Soviet times*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015; S Kotkin, 'The Cold War never ended: Ukraine, the China challenge, and the revival of the West', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 101(3), 2022, pp. 64–78.

6 See TE Mann & NJ Ornstein, *It's even worse than it looks: how the American constitutional system collided with the new politics of extremism*, Basic Books, New York, 2012.

7 See JM Post with SR Doucette, *Dangerous charisma: the political psychology of Donald Trump and his followers*, Pegasus Books, New York, 2019; DW Drezner, *The toddler in chief: what Donald Trump teaches us about the modern presidency*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2020.

8 AL Burns, 'Military-technological models and world order', *International Journal*, vol. 24(4), 1969, pp. 790–805, at p. 793.

The precise character of technological innovations is intrinsically unpredictable, and there is no way of knowing exactly what weapon system might prove decisive in a future conflict. In 1918, no one foresaw the role that the atomic bomb would play in August 1945, let alone the role that drones would play in wars of the 21st century. This of course is worrying when there are long lead-times for the delivery of capital equipment, such as nuclear-propelled submarines.

Fifth, uncertainties can flow from the difficulties of gathering credible information, from the possibility of misinterpretation of what information one has, and from problems of misperception more broadly.[9] Sometimes information is fragmentary or ambiguous, and the weight attached to a particular interpretation of it can be disastrous: the July 1942 loss of the PQ17 convoy is a famous and tragic example from the naval world.[10] This is also a problem with endemic effects in the political realm: the catastrophic US misreading of the Afghan Taliban which led Washington to sign an agreement with them on 29 February 2020 is a very obvious case.[11] It is not even the case that having some scraps of information will necessarily be more useful than having none: this may *sometimes* be so, but there are other cases where fragments of information can be seriously misleading.[12]

Finally, the phenomenon of globalisation has injected notable uncertainties into the world in which we live. David Singh Grewal has argued that:

> … globalisation is best understood as the emergence and consolidation of transnational and international networks that link people – or groups of people, including entire countries – through the use of shared coordinating standards.[13]

What is uncertain, however, is exactly how people are linked, what coordinating standards emerge, and what the consequences might be of the processes of globalisation more broadly.[14] One particular apprehension, initially articulated long before the era of internet communications, relates to the erosion or twilight of authority. Conservatives tended to see this in political terms, but rather more alarming is the privileging of belief over fact,[15] which has opened the door to all sorts of populist movements, with the radicalising consequences that can flow from their emergence.[16] This makes coping with dangers and challenges all the more difficult.

9 See B Brodie, *War and politics*, Macmillan, New York, 1973, pp. 209–215; R Jervis, *Perception and misperception in international politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976; R Jervis, *Why intelligence fails: lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2010.

10 H Sebag-Montefiore, *Enigma: the battle for the code*, The Folio Society, London, 2005, pp. 212–227; E Mawdsley, *The war for the seas: a maritime history of World War II*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2019, pp. 266–269.

11 See W Maley & AS Jamal, 'Diplomacy of disaster: the Afghanistan "peace process" and the Taliban occupation of Kabul', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 17(1), February 2022, pp. 32–63.

12 W Maley, *Diplomacy, communication and peace: selected essays*, Routledge, London, 2021, p. 8.

13 DS Grewal, *Network power: the social dynamics of globalization*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2008, p. 292.

14 For more detailed discussion, see I Clark, *Globalization and fragmentation: international relations in the twentieth century*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, pp. 16–26; I Clark, *Globalization and international relations theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 33–51; MF Guillén, 'Is globalization civilizing, destructive or feeble? A critique of five key debates in the social science literature', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 27, August 2001, pp. 235–260.

15 See F Manjoo, *True enough: learning to live in a post-fact society*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, 2008; T Nichols, *The death of expertise: the campaign against established knowledge and why it matters*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2017.

16 See J-W Müller, *What is populism?*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2016.

Dangers and challenges

The world is awash with dangers – to ordinary people, to states, and to the system of states more broadly. The following seem to me to be of particular significance, but other researchers might well compile quite a different list.

To start with, we are witnessing dangers arising from the changing character and orientations of powers. In our region, no power has focused our attention more than China. Until the second half of the 1970s, China was obviously a major state, which had tested a nuclear device in 1965 and had a population large enough to sustain significant powerhood. But it was also – in action, if not in rhetoric – an inward-looking state, preoccupied with the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution from 1965 to 1976.[17] Only with the death of Mao Zedong and the rise of Deng Xiaoping did it take a different turn, with domestic entrepreneurialism encouraged and an export orientation replacing the more collectivist system it had promoted.[18] The result was a massive shift in China's strength, and the subsequent rise of Xi Jinping to leadership combined that strength with a more forceful disposition to make an impact on the world.[19] Xi is now 68, and it is not clear what stands may be adopted by those who succeed him, but as a great power, China is here to stay.

Another danger can arise from a failure properly to recognise the interconnected character of world politics, and the ways in which actions taken in one theatre can impact on others. The United States is strangely prone to weakness in this respect, a point neatly captured in a recent article by Professor Eliot A Cohen:

> U.S. decisions on Afghanistan, Syria, and other trouble spots were … treated as local and separable, with little apparent awareness that they would have global repercussions. It was surely no accident that Russia's annexation of Crimea followed less than a year after the Obama administration failed to enforce its supposed red-line on Syria's use of chemical weapons. Nor was it likely a coincidence that Russia invaded Ukraine following the United States' humiliating scuttle from Afghanistan.[20]

When President Biden turned his back on Afghanistan, the Russians were watching.

This points to a further challenge, namely the problem of credibility. A state may have massive power but not the manifest will to use it. This may be no bad thing in certain circumstances. As one of Shakespeare's characters put it, 'it is excellent / To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous / To use it like a giant'[21] But in other circumstances it can be a serious problem. For example, in the run-up to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the *New York Times* reported that:

17 See R MacFarquhar & M Schoenhals, *Mao's last revolution*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2006.

18 For a detailed discussion, see EF Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the transformation of China*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 423–476.

19 See K Rudd, *The avoidable war: the dangers of a catastrophic conflict between the US and Xi Jinping's China*, Hachette, Sydney, 2022.

20 EA Cohen, 'The return of statecraft: back to basics in the post-American world', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 101(3), 2022, pp. 117–129, at p. 124. See also W Maley, 'Why now? – the Afghanistan-Ukraine nexus', *Australian Outlook*, 5 April 2022.

21 William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene II.

> Mr Biden has repeatedly made clear that he has no intention of sending US troops to Ukraine. During national security crisis, presidents often issue the cryptic warning that 'all options are on the table.' But Mr Biden pointedly said in early December that the military option was 'not on the table'.[22]

This must have been music to the ears of Putin and his colleagues in the Kremlin, and is more easily explained in terms of Biden's desire not to alienate Democrats who remembered his ardent support for the 2003 US invasion of Iraq[23] than in terms of rational crisis-signalling. There might have been good reasons for Biden to explain to the *Ukrainian* leadership the likely limits of US support; there was no earthly reason to share such information in advance with the Russians.

There are then challenges that flow from the burden of illusions. One illusion relates to the idea of 'the national interest'. In 1848, the British Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, gave a famous speech in the House of Commons in which he remarked that 'Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow'.[24] Few observations have been as misleading as this. Beyond mere survival as a state, it is difficult to think of a single claimed 'national interest' that could not be contested. So-called 'national interests' are not fixed and 'eternal', but subject to continuous reformulation and redefinition by political leaders in the light of their own interests and the interests of those who are close to them. All too often, demands that particular policy settings be explained and justified are met with the numbingly vacuous assertion that they have been adopted because they are 'in the national interest' – without any effort to explain *why* this might be the case. This is not to say that over time, the conviction that a particular policy setting is 'in the national interest' might not become widespread, but if it does, it may well be an example of ideological conviction rather than the product of a clear-eyed and rational assessment of different options.

One illusion which can be particularly dangerous is the belief in the eternity of alliance relations. Formal alliances come about through a formal process of engagement, typically reflect some shared purpose or interest, involve a joint commitment of resources and at least some coordinated or joint decision-making, and depend on a degree of mutual trust. Alliances can be very powerful tools for maintaining a balance of power. But they are often asymmetric, with one partner markedly stronger than others. They are thus vulnerable to dissolution if a major player loses a sense of shared purpose or interest: this accounted in large part for the dissolution of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization on 30 June 1977 following the US exit from Vietnam in April 1975. Weaker partners in alliance can also be dumped unceremoniously by stronger partners if stronger partners come to the conclusion that it serves their interests to do so: this was essentially

22 M Crowley, 'All options are not on the table as Biden moves troops closer to Ukraine', *The New York Times*, 5 February 2022.

23 See M Weisbrot, 'Joe Biden championed the Iraq war. Will that come back to haunt him now?', *The Guardian*, 18 February 2020.

24 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 97, col. 122, 1 March 1848.

what happened to Afghanistan – a formally designated 'major non-NATO ally of the US – in 2020–2021.[25] The lesson here is *not* that one should avoid alliance relationships, but rather that one should be realistic about what they have to offer. If it comes to the crunch, foreign leaders may well be driven predominantly by what they conceive to be in *their* interests, rather than move altruistically to serve the interests of alliance partners.

This has not prevented the emergence of yet another kind of illusion, namely the belief that one can build up 'capital' by going along with the wishes of a more powerful state, with a view to 'drawing' on that capital when one's own interests are more directly involved. Some Australian officials learned this the hard way at the time of the 1999 East Timor crisis.[26] The initial US reaction to what was a huge challenge for Australian policy was tepid to say the least. When the militia violence broke out, President Clinton's National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, was strongly opposed to the United States' becoming directly involved.[27] Indeed, at a White House press briefing on 8 September 1999, Berger, pressed as to why a doctrine of military intervention for humanitarian purposes would apply to Kosovo but not East Timor, replied 'my daughter has a very messy apartment up in college, maybe I shouldn't intervene to have that cleaned up'.[28] This, unsurprisingly, sent shivers down the spines of many Australian officials. It was only the good fortune that saw President Clinton exposed to concerted pressure from participants at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in New Zealand that turned things around. But clinging ever more tightly to the knees of the US was not the solution either. At the time of the Iraq war in 2003, former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd referred to the US and its partners not as a 'coalition of the willing' but as a 'coalition of the obedient'. If such ad hoc coalitions become the order of the day, the danger is that the weaker powers will be valued not on the strength of what they may have contributed in the past, but simply in light of their willingness to join the latest adventure on which the stronger power embarks. This is particularly dangerous when the political system of a major ally proves capable of putting a Donald Trump into its key leadership position: pairing up with such a leader is akin to bungee-jumping when one does not know the length of the rope.

A further challenge for policymakers of the 21st century is to recognise how highly *contingent* have been many crucial developments with which they are obliged to cope. The so-called 'Whig Interpretation of History',[29] with its assumption of forward progress, has long been criticised. But it is important not to offer a reverse image in the form of despair about the possibility of things working out well. The current state of Russia offers a good example. It is relatively easy to fall into the line of thinking that sees Putin's autocracy as something that was inevitable, a manifestation of deep cultural tendencies in Russian society and politics that nothing could have changed.

25 For more detail, see AS Jamal & W Maley, *The decline and fall of republican Afghanistan*, Hurst & Co., London, 2022.

26 On this case, see W Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor crisis: some critical comments', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54(2), 2000, pp. 151–161.

27 E Becker & P Shenon, 'U.S. priority is to maintain good ties with Indonesia, officials indicate', *The New York Times*, 9 September 1999.

28 Quoted in J Nevins, *A not-so-distant-horror: mass violence in East Timor*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2005, p. 124.

29 H Butterfield, *The Whig interpretation of history*, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1931.

This is a considerable oversimplification, as simplistic as suggesting that the rise of Hitler was inevitable in Germany. (It is easily forgotten that the 1920s were a period of relative optimism about the state of the world.[30]) Putin did not sail into the Kremlin on a ship named 'Russian culture'; he was promoted by President Boris El'tsin. But El'tsin had also considered promoting a very different figure, the modernist democrat Boris Nemtsov,[31] whom I once met in Canberra. A Russia led by Nemtsov would have been a very different Russia from that led by Putin. Nemtsov, a staunch opponent of Putin, was murdered in Moscow in February 2015.[32] The notion of historical inevitability is rightly discredited,[33] and it would be a mistake for policymakers to import it into their strategic analyses. It is necessary to build one's strategic planning on a range of assumptions, but it is a good idea to revisit one's assumptions fairly regularly.

This is true also with respect to the very nature of war. It is almost a cliché to say that some planners plan to fight the last war rather than the next, but there has historically been enough truth in the claim to make it disturbing, although there is much more to military failure than this alone. Yet a lesson of recent times is that wars can change in their character not simply by virtue of technological innovation, but on the basis of a range of other factors. Mary Kaldor in particular has devoted considerable effort to analysing 'new wars' grounded in distinctive actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance.[34] Guerrilla warfare is a very different phenomenon from set-piece battles involving infantry, armoured vehicles, and air cover. The Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s was ill-prepared for guerrilla warfare,[35] and it paid a heavy price as a result, both militarily and politically. One could make a similar broad point with respect to counterterrorism.

Some concluding thoughts

Let me return to the oceans. Seen from outer space, our world is wet. After five billion years the oceans will have boiled away,[36] but for now, they are central to our existence. Covering 71 per cent of the earth's surface, consisting of 1.3 billion cubic kilometres of water, and feeding much of the world's population with seafood, the oceans are fundamental to human existence. The navies of the world are minute compared to this awesome vastness. US Admiral Hyman G Rickover recognised this in his favourite prayer: 'Oh God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small'. Yet oceans have long been venues for competition,[37] and navies remain central to the smooth functioning of a complex international system with political and economic dimensions.

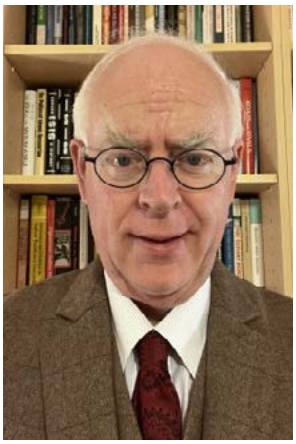
30 See Z Steiner, *The lights that failed: European international history 1919–1933*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.
31 TJ Colton, *Yeltsin: a life*, Basic Books, New York, 2008, p. 287.
32 Gill, *Building an authoritarian polity*, p. 44.
33 See, for example, I Berlin, *Historical inevitability*, Auguste Comte Memorial Trust Lecture no. 1, Oxford University Press, London, 1954.
34 M Kaldor, *New and old wars: organized violence in a global era*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2012.
35 C Van Dyke, 'Kabul to Grozny: a critique of Soviet (Russian) counter-insurgency doctrine', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies,* vol. 9(4), 1996, pp. 689–705.
36 ND Tyson, 'The size and scale of the universe', in ND Tyson, MA Strauss & JR Gott, *Welcome to the universe: an astrophysical tour*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2016, pp. 17–25, at p. 25.
37 G Gill, 'The Soviet Union, détente, and the Indian Ocean', *Australian Outlook*, vol. 31(2), 1977, pp. 253–260.

This became shockingly clear as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For many years, Ukraine was a critical exporter of wheat, supplying a very large proportion of the critical grains used by the World Food Programme (WFP) to alleviate the risk of famine in vulnerable countries,

and the waters of the Black Sea provided the route of egress by which these exports found their way to other parts of the world. The effect of Russia's military action was to disrupt this flow, threatening disaster for those dependent on WFP assistance. Whilst the sinking of the Russian vessel *Moskva*, the flagship of the Black Sea fleet, on 14 April 2022 demonstrated that Russia's naval power was not unchallengeable, nonetheless Western powers proved unwilling to take on Russia at sea because of the danger of escalation to the level of a nuclear exchange. While the focus of reporting from the Ukrainian theatre remained on land battles, developments at sea had potentially much wider ramifications for the world as a whole.

Navies, thus, remain central tools for the projection of global power. While Kipling in his *Recessional* could write 'Far-called, our navies melt away', no major power with naval strength would dare allow its navy to melt away. What can change, however, is the nature of naval assets and of conflict at sea. The navies of the 21st century are not the navies of the Spanish Armada, of Trafalgar, of Tsushima, of Jutland. They can carry strike aircraft and nuclear warheads, and can contribute to the diverse mechanisms sustaining international order that I noted earlier, namely balancing, deterrence, and rule enforcement. Their potential for use in combined operations has long been recognised,[38] and they are complex, integrated systems based on highly sophisticated technologies of communication, propulsion and offence. Yet despite this sophistication, they remain haunted by the challenges of an uncertain and dangerous world. Finding appropriate ways of continually adjusting to changes in this world will remain a critical task of naval strategy for the foreseeable future.

38 See Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Keyes, *Amphibious warfare and combined operations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1943.



Emeritus Professor William Maley, AM

William Maley is Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University, where he was Professor of Diplomacy from 2003 to 2021. He is a Member of the Order of Australia, a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. He was admitted as a Barrister of the High Court of Australia in 1982. In November 2003, he received the AUSTCARE Paul Cullen Humanitarian Award for services to refugees. He is author of *Rescuing Afghanistan* (2006), *What is a refugee?* (2016), *Transition in Afghanistan: hope, despair and the limits of statebuilding* (2018), *The Afghanistan wars* (2021), and *Diplomacy, communication, and peace: selected essays* (2021). He is also co-author of *Afghanistan: politics and economics in a globalising state* (2020) (with Niamatullah Ibrahimi); and of *The decline and fall of republican Afghanistan* (2022) (with Ahmad Shuja Jamal).

2022 McNeil Prize

Mr Jim Cuthill

The prestigious Australian Naval Institute McNeil Prize is named in honour of Rear Admiral Percival McNeil, CB, RAN (1883–1951), one of the founding fathers of Australian shipbuilding. Rear Admiral McNeil's contribution to both the Navy and industry is particularly noteworthy, as was his faith in Australia's ability to build world-class ships.

The McNeil Prize, instituted in 2016, is awarded to an individual or team from Australian industry who has made an outstanding contribution to the capabilities and sustainment of the Royal Australian Navy.

The winner of the 2022 McNeil Prize is **Mr Jim Cuthill**, the Operations Director for BAE Systems Australia. Mr Cuthill was presented with his prize by the Deputy Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Chris Smith, CSM, RAN, at the 2022 Australian Naval Institute Annual Dinner and Vernon Parker Oration on 19 May.

Jim Cuthill has dedicated almost three decades of his career to the development of national shipbuilding capability, with the last half spent specifically focused on the delivery of capability to the Royal Australian Navy. His experience spans roles in project management, engineering, supply chain, and operations including production, all of which have been applied to the continued development of a sovereign national shipbuilding capability within Australia.

Jim has played an instrumental role in a number of major Commonwealth programs tasked with the delivery of critical warfighting capability to the Royal Australian Navy, most notably as the Acting CEO of ASC Shipbuilding, responsible for the delivery of HMAS *Brisbane* and the launch of HMAS *Sydney*, the second and third Hobart-class destroyers.

Jim joined ASC in 2009 as project manager for HMAS *Brisbane*. His professional expertise was recognised with his appointment to consecutive leadership roles including General Manager Shipbuilding, where he was accountable for overall performance of the Hobart-class destroyer construction. Under his leadership, ASC Shipbuilding also commenced construction on the first two Arafura-class offshore patrol vessels. His contribution to the national naval shipbuilding endeavour continues with a key role in the current Hunter Class Frigate Program.

'Jim Cuthill has made an outstanding contribution to the operational capability of the Royal Australian Navy through his tireless work in the building of first-class ships for the fleet. Seventy years on, Jim is building on the proud legacy of Rear Admiral Percival McNeil. He is an outstanding mentor to the new generation of men and women building Australian warships', said Vice Admiral Peter Jones, President of the ANI.

McNeil Prize – Previous Recipients

2016	Mr Ian Croser, AM	CEA Technologies
2017	Mr Peter Evans	Saab Australia
2018	Mr Andrew Whittaker	Raytheon Australia
2019	Mr Peter Jenkins	Jenkins Engineering Defence Systems
2020	Professor Jason Scholz	Defence CRC - Trusted and Autonomous Systems
2021	Mr Ted Huber	Acacia Systems
2022	Mr Jim Cuthill	BAE Systems Australia

From the Chief of Navy: Perspectives 2018–2022

Vice Admiral Mike Noonan, AO, RAN

For every sailor in the Navy, each posting brings a mixture of the expected and the unexpected. For me, I think the last four years have probably brought more of the unexpected than I had experienced previously. On assuming command of the Royal Australian Navy on 7 July 2018, I had a clear view that it was an important time to be in the Navy, that there was increasing uncertainty around our region and around the world; Australia would need its Navy and its Defence Force to deliver in terms of operations, and in terms of the delivery and sustainment of current and future forces. At one level, that has certainly been as expected. However, the scale and pace of the changes, the willingness of some nations to challenge the global rules based order to the detriment of all nations, let alone the sheer reach and scale of the COVID-19 pandemic, have meant the last four years have brought far more than was expected.

Throughout all of the events during my tenure as the Chief of Navy, it has been our people who have underpinned every aspect of our success. At the outset of this account of the activities of the Navy in the last four years, I wish to offer my thanks and deep respect to the officers and sailors of the Royal Australian Navy, and to their families, who share equally in the service to our nation. Without them, none of this would have been possible.

The Navy at Work – Domestic Challenges

As with most of the world's navies the Royal Australian Navy has been faced with myriad challenges over the last four years. These challenges have served to test and prove the adaptability and the resilience of the Navy as it continued its broad maritime security operations while also contributing large numbers of our people to the unprecedented domestic challenges. The nation's connection to the sea was starkly highlighted by operations of HMAS *Choules* and MV *Sycamore* evacuating people from Mallacoota in January 2020. The flexibility of our people was further highlighted by HMAS *Adelaide*; despite being at extended notice for sea, she was able to sail within 48 hours to reinforce Operation BUSHFIRE ASSIST. Ashore, the Naval Air Station HMAS *Albatross*, supported Fleet Air Arm and civilian response agencies despite bushfires reaching the base itself.

There was little time to reflect on the Navy's response to the bushfire crisis as it was soon overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and an immense national effort to contain the spread of the virus. On 1 April 2020, Operation COVID-19 ASSIST (OP C19A) commenced to provide ADF support to a whole-of-government response to COVID-19 across all states and territories.

Alongside their Army and Air Force colleagues, Navy people assisted in quarantine hotels, vehicle and security checks at border crossings, and logistic support for contact tracing, and helped in aged care facilities. The effort continued into 2022, when Navy people were also part of the flood relief efforts in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. These domestic crisis responses have driven an extraordinarily high operational tempo for our people. The Navy will always turn out for Australia; I am both proud of what our people have done and conscious of the load it has placed on them and their families.

The Fleet at Sea

The responses to COVID-19 affected the way Navy conducted its operations at sea too, with extensive quarantine measures used in preparation for ships deploying, as well as reduced-contact port visits. Despite this, on average over the last four years the Navy has maintained approximately 20 ships and 2000 Navy people at sea deployed on domestic operations for resource security and border protection, or overseas operations giving effect to Australian maritime security policy throughout the Indo-Pacific, supporting the Australian Government's efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremist organisations.

Using 2021 as an example, the high tempo and changing pattern of Navy's activities over the past four years is evident. While the majority of Navy deployments in 2021 were around Australia and in the near regions of the Indo-Pacific, reflecting the Government's 2020 Defence Strategic Update, HMAS *Toowoomba* conducted the final rotation of our 20-year commitment of near continuous deployment of major fleet units to the Middle East Area of Operations under Operations MANITOU and SLIPPER.

At the start of the year, HMAS *Adelaide* conducted Operation FIJI ASSIST, with four regional presence deployments, one Indo-Pacific Endeavour Task Group deployment and five deployments to the south-west Pacific. During these deployments, there were more than 16 international engagements and exercises and over 46 international port visits. Navy vessels continued to support Operation RESOLUTE, protecting Australia's maritime resources, and Operation ARGOS, enforcing sanctions against North Korea. In April, HMA Ships *Ballarat* and *Sirius* both diverted to assist in the search for the Indonesian submarine KRI *Nanggala*, which sank north of Bali with the tragic loss of all on board. Our hydrographers conducted surveys around Australia and assisted neighbours in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, which, like Australia, all depend on safe navigation for their national prosperity. In May, HMAS *Anzac*, in cooperation with the Japanese fishing vessel *Fukuseki Maru 15*, assisted in the rescue of the crew of the Indonesian vessel *Bandar Nelayan*, which capsized over 600 nautical miles off the Western Australian coast.

July was a busy and important month for the RAN. Exercise TALISMAN SABRE included military personnel from Australia, the United States, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, with France, India and Indonesia participating as observer nations. For Navy, HMA Ships *Parramatta*, *Ballarat*, *Brisbane*, *Diamantina*, *Melville*, *Collins*, *Rankin*, *Canberra* and *Choules* all participated. One of the highlights of the exercise was the demonstration of the capability of our amphibious vessels, with *Canberra* operating an integrated landing force with amphibious forces from Australia, the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom.

In September, HMA Ships *Rankin* and *Warramunga* conducted AUSINDEX 21 with the Indian Navy, held for the first time in the waters off Darwin. In conjunction with aircraft from the Royal Australian Air Force, this exercise provided an important opportunity to work with the largest navy based in the Indian Ocean.

Building the Future Fleet

One of the highest priorities during my tenure has been the national naval shipbuilding enterprise, for which the Government has provided significant resources, reflecting the importance of maritime security for Australia and the maritime focus of our defence strategy. The 2020 Force Structure Plan includes plans for the acquisition or upgrade of up to 23 different classes of Navy and Army maritime vessels, with investment of approximately $50 billion over the decade 2020–2030. Importantly, we are maturing in our relationships with industry and academia, which is essential for the success of the Naval Shipbuilding Plan.

In 2020 the third DDG, HMAS *Sydney*, was commissioned; in 2021 the two replenishment vessels *Supply* and *Stalwart* were commissioned and HMAS *Sirius* was decommissioned; and in 2022 the transition from the Armidale-class patrol boats to the evolved Cape-class patrol boats and the Arafura-class offshore patrol vessels passed more milestones. In the hydrographic force in 2021, HMA Ships *Paluma* and *Mermaid* were decommissioned as part of the transition to the future maritime mine countermeasure and military survey capability.

Across the Indo-Pacific, Australia faces an increasingly complex and deteriorating strategic environment, particularly in the undersea domain. By 2030, there will be 300 submarines operating in the region with advanced capabilities and enhanced lethality, making them harder to deter and defeat. Although just one element of capability, it is indicative of the pace and extent of change in our strategic circumstances, which was not expected at the start of my tenure. I have, however, been impressed by the way in which our Navy has adapted to this change. To maintain a credible capability in the undersea domain, Navy will adopt a full-spectrum, programmatic approach to undersea warfare through the establishment of the Maritime Undersea Combat and Surveillance Program. This will maintain the capabilities of the force in being and will augment current capabilities with our own emergent technologies. One example of such augmentation will include Defence investing in extra-large autonomous undersea vehicles.

The change in our strategic environment also provided the background to the 16 September 2021 announcement of the Government's decision to acquire a nuclear submarine capability. As a consequence, the current submarine force will expand from the six conventionally powered Collins-class submarines to at least eight nuclear-powered submarines. The introduction of a nuclear-powered submarine force will require an expanded uniformed and civilian workforce and supporting infrastructure, with operating bases on both the east and west coasts.

The capability development investment in our undersea combat capability is also evident in our frigate program. While the Hunter-class frigates will be impressive in themselves, just as impressive and important is the shipbuilding and system development capabilities that will produce them.

The Osborne Naval Shipyard and land-based test facilities in Adelaide are crucial additions to our overall national capability. These facilities and the many contributors to them will enable the Hunter-class frigates to rapidly adapt to incorporate new technologies throughout their service lives; this capability will grow beyond the Hunter class to support more and more of the fleet. The first four ships of the class will now be named *Hunter*, *Melbourne*, *Darwin* and *Flinders*, to acknowledge the great cities and regions whose communities have supported our ships, and the service given by those vessels which have previously borne the names.

There is probably no aspect of the current and future fleet that is not being upgraded or reformed. While often out of sight, the vessels of the National Support Squadron, crewed by Australian seafarers under the Australian Red Ensign, are evolving beyond simple contracted solutions into capability elements of the Fleet. The significance of their contribution to training, safety and logistics cannot be understated and the potential for future growth is clear.

It is not just individual platforms or classes of ships that are being upgraded or improved. The guided weapons that arm our destroyers and frigates are growing in reach and lethality. Tomahawk land attack missiles, with a range of 1000+ kilometres, will be rapidly integrated into the Hobart-class destroyers, introducing a modern maritime strategic strike capability. In addition, the Naval Strike Missile (NSM) (250+ kilometre range) will replace the Harpoon missile in both the Royal Australian Navy's Hobart-class destroyers and Anzac-class frigates. In both cases Navy is pursuing an increase in weapon inventory to enable sustained operations.

The Fleet Air Arm is now poised to undertake significant growth towards 26 deployable flights, through expansion of its crewed and uncrewed systems. With Navy's amphibious and afloat support fleet increasing in number and capability, the Australian Government approved an additional 12 Romeo helicopters to expand and rationalise the Fleet Air Arm, creating a common fleet of manned helicopters. Furthermore, the Government also approved the replacement of the aircraft lost in the Philippine Sea in October 2021.

Uncrewed aircraft systems are transforming modern warfare by generating the battlespace awareness needed to operate in contested zones. One promising approach is the increased employment of small unmanned aircraft systems to perform missions, including intelligence gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance with the aim of closing the passive/active kill chain. The Schiebel S-100 Camcopter has been selected to perform these roles and more in the next phase of development of uncrewed systems.

Safety, Seaworthiness and Airworthiness

One aspect of Navy's development in the last four years which has helped manage the unexpected is the continued focus on seaworthiness in action: the development of the culture and systems to maximise the ability of our ships, submarines and watercraft to achieve their mission, while minimising harm. Our seaworthiness management system is being improved by better coordination of fundamental inputs to capability, facilitating data-driven decisions, and by being risk savvy. Operation BUSHFIRE ASSIST was an excellent example of seaworthiness in action, highlighting the significant work undertaken by Defence since the Rizzo Review, which ensured our maritime assets were available when they were most needed, and at no notice on New

Year's Day 2020. As Australia continues to mature the National Naval Shipbuilding Enterprise, seaworthiness management will ensure our new ships, submarines and watercraft are seaworthy by design and have seaworthiness built in.

Navy People and Culture

In everything I've described so far – the operations, exercises, deployments, projects and programs – the driving force has been our people. They make things happen; they animate and direct what would otherwise be lifeless steel and carbon fibre; *they are the Navy*. In recognition of this, one of my early decisions as Chief of Navy was to evolve and relaunch the NEXT Generation Navy (NGN) program. Our NGN culture reform program has remained central to our workforce for over a decade. Just as technology does not remain static, neither do our society and our culture, so we must constantly be ready, willing and able to evolve. Only by doing this will we attract and retain good people, drawn from across our society. Through NGN, we continue to strive to foster a culture that encourages those who are currently serving to continue to serve, those who have left to want to return, and those Australians who are looking to be part of something bigger to see in our Navy the attributes of a unique, representative organisation worthy of their commitment and service.

The success of NGN and our people policies more generally is essential if we are to succeed in growing our Navy. Our success as a warfighting organisation and our ability to grow the necessary capability requires more people than we've had in Navy for over 30 years. The approval of an increase in the Navy workforce is, for me, the most significant achievement during my tenure as Chief of Navy. Like so many of us, I have experienced firsthand the impact of personnel shortages and workforce hollowness, the impact on our people and their families, and the impact on our capability. So our growth from under 14,000 people in March 2018 to over 15,400 in March 2022 is an achievement of which we can all be proud. But it is not enough. When you take into consideration the numbers in training and the people who are unable to provide unrestricted service, we are still thousands of people short. Moreover, the impact of COVID-19, the low unemployment rate and the strong demand for technical skills across Australia will make recruiting and retention challenging in the years to come. And the size of our task is only growing as the Navy workforce Australia needs in the future will be 20,000 strong and probably more. It is a task that will take a whole-of-Navy effort to achieve and it will be a clear indication of the health and strength of our service.

Conclusion

My term as Chief of Navy has seen a fair share of global challenges; the pandemic has wrought havoc globally and has resulted in the imposition of severe social and health restrictions that have not been experienced for generations. During this unprecedented period, the Royal Australian Navy has pushed forward. We have demonstrated our ability to pursue goals and to be a ready and able naval force that is committed to fight and win at sea. It is also abundantly clear that we have no time to rest on our laurels, as there is much, expected and unexpected, that Australia requires of us, not only for the national wellbeing but also for the international security of the seas. The critical need to defend an island nation requires a capable Navy, one that will solve problems and meet its responsibilities head on with courage, integrity, respect, excellence and a

Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN

Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN joined the RAN in 1984, trained as a seaman officer and then subsequently completed Principal Warfare Officers course and specialised in Air Direction and Above Water Warfare.

Throughout his career, he had experience in a wide range of Navy and ADF operations through various sea and shore posting and operational roles. Highlights have included deployments to the Middle East, Southern Ocean and being the Commissioning Commanding Officer of the Anzac class frigate HMAS *Parramatta*.

He has fulfilled leadership positions at all levels of the Australian Defence Force, with senior positions including the Director of Military Strategic Commitments, Director General of Operations at Headquarters Joint Operations Command, Commander Maritime Border Command and Deputy Chief of Navy.

In June 2018, he was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of his distinguished service in significant senior ADF command roles.

Vice Admiral Noonan assumed command of the RAN on 7 July 2018 and is the 32nd professional head of the Australian Navy, and the ninth officer to hold the title of Chief of Navy Australia. In this role, he is entrusted by Government to be its principal naval advisor, and to raise, train and sustain Australia's naval forces to execute maritime missions in a dynamic region.

Britain, Its Navy, AUKUS and the Indo-Pacific

Professor Geoffrey Till

Britain, and especially its Navy, has long had a kind of long-distance love affair with the Indo-Pacific, or with what it used to call the 'Far East'. In the interwar period, while the Army tended to focus on continental Europe and garrisoning the Empire, and the RAF pointed to possible air threats from Europe, the Navy mostly looked to the Far East, the place where Britain's interests were increasingly seen as being menaced by Japan. The Mediterranean was regarded as a kind of Imperial way station to the East. The military rise of Germany in the mid 1930s, though, changed all that, posing a real strategic dilemma that had been recognised from the very start of the interwar period. '[I]f', wrote the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1923, 'there was a European combination against us at the same moment as war was declared against us by Japan, we should be in a position of extraordinary difficulty'.[1]

Given the financial constraints of the time, the British had every incentive to try to reduce the scale of the problem by a double-barrelled campaign on the one hand to sustain or develop relations with allies or partners (most obviously France, the United States and the Empire), and on the other to try to turn Japan, Germany and/or Italy into at least a deferred adversary. Reluctantly, they came gradually to accept that the first two at least were probably unappeasable. However, in part because of a tendency to underrate Japan, there was a widespread view that Japan was unlikely to move against British interests unless and until Britain was embroiled in a demanding war in Europe. By focusing on preserving peace in Europe, in other words, two birds could be killed with one stone. This assumption in part accounts for a lowering of the naval priorities, relative to the demands of the Royal Air Force and the Army, in the rearmament program of the late 1930s, and a reducing commitment of resources to the Far East. This same priority prevailed into the war. 'Japan is unlikely to attack us', concluded Winston Churchill, 'unless and until she is sure we are going to be defeated (in Europe)'.[2] As a result, defence resources in South-East Asia were run down rather than built up.

There was a temporal aspect to this as well. Once the European war started, in the words of Australian Prime Minister Menzies, Britain faced a choice between 'taking a risk with an existing war in order to guard against a possible one'.[3] Even after the fall of Malaya and Singapore, Churchill was quite unrepentant about his choice. 'If the Malay Peninsula has been starved for the sake of Libya and Russia', he told Clement Attlee, 'no-one is more responsible than I, and I would do exactly the same again'.[4] In consequence, the 'period before relief' got longer and longer and the size of the 'Main Fleet to Singapore' smaller and smaller. And the rest, as they say, is history.

1 Leo Amery at 1923 Imperial Conference, quoted in Andrew Gordon, 'The Admiralty and Imperial overstretch' in G Till (ed), *Seapower: theory and practice*, Frank Cass, London, 1994, p. 64.
2 Ibid., p. 80
3 R Menzies, *Afternoon light: some memories of men and events*, Allen Lane, London, 1967, p. 31.
4 Winston Churchill to Clement Attlee, 30 December 1941, quoted in CJ Baxter, 'A question of blame?', *RUSI Journal*, vol. 142(4), 1997, p. 72.

Despite all this, the impulse to go East remained. There was never any doubt that one day the British would be back. When the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* arrived in Singapore on 2 December 1941 as a gesture of deterrence and reassurance, they were also intended to be the forerunners of a new Eastern Fleet, which, with the reduced threat of the German and Italian surface fleets, could by 1942 be seriously thought about. Thereafter, the British had two options. The first was to consolidate and build up Imperial strength in India and then launch a major campaign to drive the Japanese out of Burma and Malaya. To Churchill, the Empire 'striking back' in this way had resonance.[5] Such a major operation, however, seemed likely to be painfully attritional in nature, long and difficult and wholly reliant on the Royal Navy providing the conditions under which the necessary manpower and materiel could be brought into the theatre and supplied. Under General Slim, this option was in fact impressively successful, even though the war ended before its final consummation with Operation ZIPPER, a planned amphibious operation against occupied Malaya to retake Singapore.

The yet more maritime alternative was initially pushed by General Alanbrooke and his colleagues in the Chiefs of Staff Committee. This was for a campaign focused upon directly joining the Americans in the final assault on Japan in the Pacific. Sweeping across the spaces of that vast ocean, this would be an entirely different style of operation for the Royal Navy, requiring major adjustments in its composition and procedures.

In the end, the British found they had, just about, the resources to do both. The existing Eastern Fleet in effect became the British East Indies Fleet, supporting operations in the Indian Ocean, while another new fleet was sent out from the UK to become the hugely ambitious British Pacific Fleet.[6]

Such a huge shift of focus, at a time when Britain and its Navy were both exhausted and regarding the postwar future and Britain's erstwhile ally the Soviet Union with some foreboding, could hardly have been more demanding. Nonetheless, and with some help from their friends, the British managed it and largely achieved their objectives in the Far East. The early requirements of the Cold War and, somewhat paradoxically, the urgent demands of the postcolonial era, led to continued and extensive engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific, in the shape of the Korean War, the *Amethyst* incident, the Malayan 'Emergency', Confrontation, and the general maintenance of good order throughout the whole region.

But with an economy in serious trouble by the early 1960s and the rising menace of the Soviet Union, the familiar dilemma of how best to distribute all too inadequate defence resources between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres became increasingly stark. In 1966 the fateful and historic decision was made to withdraw all forces from 'East of Suez'. The Royal Navy fought the decision and the naval cuts they could see would follow, but to no avail. No-one found the decision more distasteful than the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, and the Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, essentially the men who made it.

5 Andrew Roberts, *Churchill, walking with destiny*, Viking, London, 2018, p. 838.
6 Malcolm Murfett, *Naval warfare*, Routledge, London, 2009, pp. 404–405.

The same logic was followed through in the years that followed. The Central Front and the Euro-Atlantic were the places that mattered. Britain could not afford to devote serious resources to commitments in the rest of the world. The debate became especially heated again in the years running up to the so-called Nott Defence Review of 1981. Even the phrase 'Out of Area' presupposed the natural order of things. The strategic priorities – or 'pillars' – of the Euro-Atlantic theatre were the maintenance of the strategic deterrent, homeland defence, the Central Front, and for the Navy the maintenance of the 'Atlantic Bridge'. Anything outside that was at most a vague kind of 'half pillar', to be reluctantly resourced if circumstances allowed. Even the dramatic end of the Cold War in 1989 did not usher in a major change in this, partly because expectations of a peace dividend meant there would be fewer resources to go round and partly because the new European order seemed so unsettled, not least in the Balkans.

As things turned out, though, the rest of the world was not quite so easy for the British to shake off. In fact, there never was a complete withdrawal from East of Suez. Turning points are rarely as clear cut as they are made out to be. For a start, everyone recognised that the actual process of withdrawal would take years. There remained significant British defence interests in Brunei and in Hong Kong, and even a valuable defence facility in the Sembawang dockyard, Singapore. The Five Power Defence Arrangements came into being in 1971. The defence relationship with Australia and New Zealand still mattered. In the late 1970s the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Terence Lewin, even started a regular series of 'Group Deployments' when the Royal Navy sent big-ship task forces around the world to remind everyone outside the Euro-Atlantic that the Royal Navy still existed. Usually they loitered, quite significantly, in the Indo-Pacific.[7] And from 1965 to 1976, off Africa, there was the new Beira Patrol. The Falklands War of 1982 likewise both advertised the perils of strategic inattention and imposed a substantial new out-of-area commitment on the Navy.

The British found extracting themselves from the Gulf, if anything, even more difficult. As things got increasingly turbulent in an area critical for its oil, the commitment went up rather than down. Having departed the region in 1971, the British found it necessary to reinstitute a standing presence with the Armilla patrol in 1980. The Iran–Iraq tanker war of the 1980s consolidated and expanded the commitment, running into the still greater deployments of Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the 2003 Iraq War.

These apparently unavoidable distractions meant that the fundamental issue of deciding once and for all where British defence assets should be allocated was more parked than resolved. That remained true for the 1990s. The 1997 Defence Review, however, was a major turning point in that, while it was unable to identify specific threats, it did at least argue that the scale of these undefined out-of-area threats warranted the building of two large aircraft carriers. The next decade was dominated by 9/11, the War on Terror, Iraq and Afghanistan. Land-centric though these conflicts were, they still demanded naval support. Moreover they were decidedly East of

7 G Till, 'The return to globalism: the Royal Navy east of Suez 1975–2003' in G Kennedy (ed), *British naval strategy east of Suez, 1900–2000*, Frank Cass, London, 2005, pp. 244–268; J Roberts, 'The British global deployment that was the shape of things to come for today's Royal Navy', *Warships International*, September 2021, pp. 34–36.

Suez. The latest phase in this return to acceptance of the need for a substantial defence focus on the Indo-Pacific came with Britain's 'Integrated Review' of March 2021 with its 'Pacific tilt', the successful Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21) deployment of a carrier battle group centred on the 'Big Lizzie', and then AUKUS in September 2021. Despite legend, the 'Global Britain' brand and its Pacific tilt were not consequences of Brexit; they long preceded it.

Nonetheless the Integrated Review made it clear that the security of the Euro-Atlantic region is the precondition for Global Britain's Indo-Pacific enterprise. For the Royal Navy, history, it seemed, had come full circle.

So, What's the Attraction?

Over the years, Britain has clearly followed a meandering path through its Euro-Atlantic and its Indo-Pacific impulses. Against the natural priorities that come from its geostrategic position in the world and its physical proximity to a variety of threats from mainland Europe, a number of impulses drag its concerns out of area. Their relative strength varies over time; at the moment they seem quite strong. The Global Britain mantra enunciated in the Integrated Review recognises that post-Imperial Britain has always ranked highly in the Globalisation Index. That means it remains as highly dependent on overseas markets and resources as it was in the days of Empire. In turn, the secure operation of the essential sea-based trading system depends on secure lines of communication and on the values and procedures which create the conditions for trade.

Two things are different now from the days of Empire. The first is that Britain can no longer enforce acceptance of those values and procedures on its own, as it largely did then. It remains, though, acutely conscious of their importance and of the need for their protection – hence the strong stress on the so-called Rules Based International Order. Accordingly, Britain takes things like observance of traditional diplomatic norms, niceties and procedures, human rights, environmental concerns and climate justice, the rule of law and the protection of the freedom of navigation seriously. Aware of what it considers the anti-democratic tendencies so evident over the past 15 years, it is sensitive to the fact that not all nations interpret these fundamental values the same way, and takes what it considers their violation very seriously. This explains why Britain, for all its own occasional lapses[8] and its current limitations in state power, is perhaps disproportionately outspoken in its condemnation of, and preparedness to take action on, such things as China's tearing-up of the Hong Kong agreement, China's treatment of the Uighurs, or Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It is entirely typical of this kind of Britain that Liz Truss, its Foreign Secretary, should be the first Western leader publicly to demand that Russia be pushed out of Ukraine altogether, and that the British should be so active in rallying the members of a European institution that it has just departed from.[9]

Secondly, the UK has always been aware of the relative strategic weight of the Indo-Pacific. Until the early 19th century the GDP of the China of the Quianlong Emperor outweighed that of the whole of Western Europe put together. The attraction of the vast resources of the Indo-Pacific, whether human or material (spices, silk, gold, tea, ceramics et cetera) does much to explain the

8 The European Union, for example, might well point at Britain's apparent readiness to violate aspects of its treaty agreements as an example of a selective approach to such matters.

9 J Lansdale, 'Push Russia out of the whole of the Ukraine, says Truss', BBC News, 28 April 2022.

push for the creation of a second British Empire after the loss of the American colonies. The extraordinary growth of the economic power of China, plus the potential further development of India and South-East Asia, mean that in the 21st century the world is in the process of reverting to its normal state. The Indo-Pacific is a place of strategic decision on a global scale. What happens there really matters. To defend their interests, non-regional states need to be in the room, helping to influence outcomes. If as a result of neglect those interests suffer, outsiders have only themselves to blame.

These two factors explain both the 'Pacific tilt' advertised in the Integrated Review and why the emphasis is so much on the prospects of a response that is deliberately 'integrated'.[10] The attractive soft power of Britain's values, its usually familiar cultural and educational appeal, its financial probity and reputation can help compensate for, but also address, its economic and military limitations compared, say, to China's. The important thing is that these dimensions are all made to work together and support each other. The stated priority is the ambitious one of being 'the European partner with the broadest most integrated presence' in the Indo-Pacific by 2030.[11]

Diplomatically, since 2021 things seem to have been progressing quite successfully. Britain's relationship with Japan and South Korea is now very strong. Britain has won for itself the position of becoming the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's (ASEAN) 11th Dialogue Partner and is cautiously exploring ways of consolidating that position and using it as a means of influencing outcomes in South-East Asia.

Economically, Britain has been accepted as a candidate for early entry into the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the successor to the even more ambitious regional economic arrangement sabotaged by the Trump administration in its apparent determination to make China great again. Britain has also signed a slew of free trade agreements with countries of the region. Sceptics might point to the fact that British trade with the countries of the CPTPP is barely 10 per cent of the whole, compared to over 40 per cent with the EU, but the former's potential for relative growth is likely to be significantly higher. This fits with an emphasis in the British approach very much on future possibilities, not simply today's realities.

Given the reputation of Britain's armed forces, it is natural that the Royal Navy should play a significant part in Britain's Indo-Pacific strategy, and it would be naive not to suppose that the Navy continues to have its own reasons for wanting to support this consolidated return to an Indo-Pacific strategy. This is not simply a replay of the old desire for 'fun in the sun' or, as Mr Nott so unkindly put it, 'swanning about on a silver sea', although deep down there probably is an element of that, if only for its recruitment and retention advantages. The real benefit for the Navy is that while large units like aircraft carriers have manifold uses, which explain why so many countries are acquiring them, their acquisition in Britain is much easier to defend if the Navy has a major role out of area. In the 1960s the loss of the East of Suez role and of the CVA-01 program went hand in hand.

10 *Global Britain in a competitive age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, HMSO, London, March 2021, p. 18.
11 Ibid., p. 8.

Paradoxically, the same argument applies to the ships and capabilities at the other end of the intensity spectrum. Patrol boats, hydrographic ships, supply and logistic vessels corvettes and light frigates like the Type 31 all have an obvious utility out of area, as indeed does an amphibious capacity. All of this makes it easier for the Navy to produce the kind of balanced fleet that can deliver the range of options that policymakers will demand of the Navy they pay for when they have to respond to an unpredictable future 'in area' as well as out of it. Accordingly this line of development helps justify naval budgets. Even before its final vindication in the Falklands War, the Royal Navy had managed in its 'claw-back campaign' to reverse some of the more egregious conclusions of the Nott Review of 1981, with just this argument.

Summarising, the arguments for Britain reviving its traditional interest in a substantial Indo-Pacific presence seem strong, but inevitably they run up against a variety of hurdles that may well limit the prospects of the final consummation of this lasting love affair. Long-term success will depend on how well these limits and distractions are dealt with.

Future Prospects?

For the British tilt to the Indo-Pacific to be sustainable in the long run, and actually to matter, it will need to show itself to be as realistic as it is ambitious; it will need to show itself to be proof against inevitable distraction elsewhere; and it will need to be seen as having the desired effect.

Realistic and Sustainable Ambitions

The first and most obvious limit on what is possible is abiding doubt that the Royal Navy is capable of sustaining a significant role in the Indo-Pacific. Recently the House of Commons Defence Committee took evidence from a large number of witnesses and unambiguously concluded that the Navy simply was not big enough to do all the tasks that the current government expected of it. The reduction in the number of destroyers and frigates was, the committee said, a particular problem.[12] While there was little doubt about the Navy's enthusiasm for the task, or the operational success and general impressiveness of its new carriers, there were concerns about some aspects of the quality of the fleet, such as the slow solution of the propulsion problems of the Type 45 Daring-class destroyers, the worrying gap in state-of-the-art anti-surface missiles once the Harpoon is retired in 2023, the fact that both the Australian *Hunter* and Canadian *Halifax* frigates seem likely to be more powerful than the Royal Navy's Type 26 that they will be based on,[13] the lack of new support vessels, and so forth.

The obvious response to this of course is that Britain addresses the problem by investing more in the Royal Navy in the future and so eventually grows the fleet further, both in number and in quality. To an extent something of this order is indeed promised, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the drastic deterioration in the West's relations with Russia will probably reinforce

12 House of Commons Defence Committee, *We're going to need a bigger Navy*, Report of the House of Commons Defence Committee on The Navy: Purpose and Procurement, 14 December 2021. See also 'Multi-role high seas ambassador', *Warship International*, February 2022, pp. 28–30.

13 M Perron, 'Canada's high price tag future warship', *Warships International Fleet Review*, vol. 322, March 2022, pp. 18–19.

this tendency. Nonetheless there are limits to what the British post-Brexit economy can afford, particularly given the need to pay off the budgetary burden of the COVID pandemic and the immediate inflationary consequences of the Ukraine war.

Against this background, the capacity to deliver sufficient naval capability to the Indo-Pacific will in part depend on a realistic assessment of what 'sufficient' actually means. The aim at the moment appears to be a combination of passing demonstrations of interest and commitment in the shape of major deployments such as CSG21, with the prospect of the passage of a Littoral Response Group, perhaps led by the *Prince of Wales*, to follow; and the so far very successful persistent presence, in the form currently of two River-class offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) and perhaps in the future of a Type 31 frigate as well. There is little sign of overblown notions of recreating the British Pacific Fleet of 1944–45. Since CSG21 has been assessed as requiring 27 per cent of fleet effort,[14] this perhaps is hardly surprising.

A relatively modest naval but nonetheless strategically useful commitment of this kind becomes even more manageable with help from allies and partners who have their own reasons for supporting the initiative. CSG21 included the US destroyer USS *The Sullivans* and a US Marines squadron of F35Bs, and the Dutch frigate HNLMS *Evertsen*, which effectively turned CSG21 into a British-led multinational effort, all the more politically effective for that. Its welcome throughout the Indo-Pacific reinforced the point. All of this will have been noted in a Beijing with a particular neuralgia about multinational responses to its policies. If in a more minor key, the revival of a serious Royal Navy contribution to Five Power Defence Arrangements exercises seems likely to have the same effect.

Alongside these regular if periodic demonstrations of interest and resolve, the British have invested in a range of more permanent cooperative commitments to the area, which will also sustain the notion of a more substantive and persistent presence. These include the creation of a base in Bahrain and fleet facilities at Duqm in Oman, plus the ability to forward deploy its OPVs by making use of port facilities made available by partners throughout the area. Host national support for the two OPVs seems to be working well operationally and to be having the desired strategic effect. The advantage of such a persistent presence, given Chinese interest in the South Pacific, was demonstrated by HMS *Spey* at Tonga, where under a New Zealand task force commander it was able to contribute timely humanitarian assistance.

AUKUS, an ambitious, dramatic and substantial initiative though it is, is simply the latest manifestation of a pragmatic and hard-headed desire to ensure that the Royal Navy's 'Pacific tilt' remains manageable, through its capacity to enlist the cooperation of others, demonstrating thereby what is sometimes called the 'power of combination'. The comprehensive and future-oriented nature of the AUKUS agreement reinforces the point that Britain has committed itself to the Indo-Pacific for the long term, but in a cooperative endeavour.

14 'Prince takes crown of NATO reaction force', *Warships International Fleet Review*, vol. 322, March 2022, pp. 13–15.

Reliable support for a British presence in the Indo-Pacific will in turn depend on British sensitivity to the political views and interests of its regional allies and partners. This reinforces the need for the integrated response of the military, economic, political and cultural policies noted earlier. The success of AUKUS, along with that of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the 'Quad' comprising the United States, Australia, India and Japan), rests in large measure on its acceptability to other countries in the region, most especially the countries of ASEAN. The latter need to be persuaded that neither of these new institutions threatens the centrality of their own, with its collective 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific'. Largely spurious fears of AUKUS encouraging nuclear proliferation also need to be kept in mind. All of these countries have their own individual agendas that will need to be catered for, and require delicacy of touch.[15]

The same 'sensitivity' point can be made about ensuring that the British 'Pacific tilt' is seen to complement, rather than compete with, those of other European powers.[16] From this point of view, the manner in which AUKUS was both negotiated and announced was unfortunate. The French, obvious allies of consequence, were furious at what looked to them like a stab in the back. The European Union was irritated by the fact that the announcement came out the same day as the launch of its own long-discussed EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific paper, which was completely overshadowed by it. The latter at least was an unnecessary own goal, making more difficult the collective approach to the region that is most likely both to sustain a significant British presence and to influence Chinese behaviour.[17] The more emphasis AUKUS is given as a contribution to a liberal world's pushback against advancing autocracy, the more important cooperation is.

Exactly *how* 'Western' naval efforts in the Indo-Pacific are to be coordinated, and for what contingencies, remains to be determined. It may be that France and the EU would prefer a degree of strategic autonomy, preferring to focus, perhaps, on the Indian Ocean. The instinct for geographic deconfliction, on the other hand, may be lessened by the Ukraine experience encouraging closer forms of coordination. Either way, AUKUS, and the Quad too, should be useful for this, provided they become inclusive rather than exclusionary in their regional approach.

Accommodating Distraction

Britain's interest in the Indo-Pacific is no passing flash in the pan, and the same urge to the East applies to most of its allies in the rest of Europe. It was the United States, not Europe, that insisted on the confinement of NATO to north of the Tropic of Cancer and its current geostrategic

15 Vietnam, with its 'three noes', is a case in point. MJ Valencia, 'Japan, the U.S. and Vietnam not on same page with China', *Japan Times*, 26 September 2021; EA Syailendra and LC Sebastian, 'Regional order: Indonesia's shifting redlines', *RSIS Commentary*, vol. 180, 2021.

16 Although this is most obviously the case with the Dutch and the French (*Warships International Fleet Review*, vol. 322, March 2022, p. 38), the trip of the *Bayern* suggests a growing German effort (*Warship*, February 2022, p. 17). The Italians, with their concept of the 'Greater Mediterranean' are likely to be serious players too.

17 Arguably that much of the AUKUS deal would have been commercial-in-confidence made the full disclosure of AUKUS negotiations problematic.

limitations. But from the very start of the organisation the rest of Europe continually expressed interest and concern about developments out of area, a tendency that became especially obvious from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Iraq–Iran war of the 1980s.[18]

This concern was largely limited to South-West Asia, although there were references to worries about the future role of China and to the Soviet Navy's increasingly global aspirations, as indicated by its appearance in distant places such as Cuba and Cam Ranh Bay. The ambition for extension was limited to encouraging the harmonisation of individual European efforts rather than the development of collective institutional effort out of area. The main military issue was instead how best to backfill if American military effort originally intended for NATO was sucked into out-of-area crises. All of this underlined the point that the Euro-Atlantic had to be the primary area of concern for NATO and its individual European members. Britain's Integrated Review of 2021 showed that this was still true. The Indo-Pacific initiative was a tilt, not a radical change in direction. The Euro-Atlantic would remain the main focus of concern just as it had been in Churchill's day.

Accordingly, Russia's increasing truculence before and after its seizure of the Crimea and its invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was an increasingly brutal reminder that, for all the recognition that true security would need to be global, the most imminent threats were much closer to home – and would need to be responded to there. 'The security of Europe', said Ben Wallace, the British Defence Secretary, 'has never been more important'.[19]

For all the attention paid to the burnt-out tanks, massacred civilians and shattered streets of the land-centric conflict in Ukraine, there is a substantial and significant maritime element to this conflict. The Russian reaction to the deployment of HMS *Defender* and HNLMS *Evertsen* to the Black Sea in 2021 was, with the advantage of hindsight, a clear warning of things to come.[20] Since then, naval deployments by Western and Russian naval forces in European waters have been important transmitters of resolve and reassurance. Further afield, they have been and will continue to be important for servicing the strategic effect of the global economic sanctions regime. More locally, retaining or regaining access to the sea will be crucial for Ukraine's war supplies and long-term economy. Britain is therefore likely to want to step up its already substantial support for the Ukrainian Navy and maritime industries. All of this could suggest the need for an increase rather than a diminution of the Euro-Atlantic allocation of British naval resources. Given the finite nature of British naval forces, the more they are devoted to the Euro-Atlantic, the less will be available for the Indo-Pacific.

Moreover, the fact that this *is* a land-centric campaign and its possible consequences in terms of containing any future post-conflict Russian threat both seem likely to favour the less maritime dimensions of the British defence effort.[21] As a result, unless this is compensated for by a substantial increase in the overall defence effort, there may be fewer future naval assets for,

18 Herrero de Minon, 'Draft Interim Report of the Sub-Committee on Out-of-Area Challenges to the Security of the Alliance', North Atlantic Assembly, AC 182 PC/DA 085) 2, October 1985.

19 'British Army exercises boost presence across Europe', press release, *GOV.UK* [website], 29 April 2022.

20 H Warnar, 'Warships as tools for international diplomacy: HNLMS *Evertsen* as part of the British Carrier Strike Group', *Atlantische Commissie* [website], May 2022.

21 'British Army exercises boost presence across Europe from Finland to N. Macedonia', news release, UK Ministry of Defence, 20 April 2022.

and less interest in, the Indo-Pacific than anticipated until quite recently. On the other hand, the mobilisation of German military power in response to the Ukraine conflict may take the pressure off France and Britain, allowing them to devote yet more resources to the Indo-Pacific. It is, of course, far too early to determine the longer term outcome and consequences of the Ukrainian war, but much, not least in the Indo-Pacific, clearly depends on it.

Nonetheless, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office mantra still applies that while Russia might be likened to a bad storm, China is potentially climate change. In essence, security *is* still global and an aggressive China is by far the bigger potential threat to it. Beijing's attitude towards Russia and its war in Ukraine could prove critical to the war's outcome and consequences. Closer China–Russia relations would simply underline the global nature of security and so add yet more justification for significant British investment in its Pacific tilt, rather than undermine it. Moreover, Japan, Australia and the US appear to be concluding that a real Chinese threat to Taiwan could arise sooner than once thought; in such a contingency they would likely be looking for greater rather than lesser British engagement. Moreover, a degree of British presence in the region should help reduce the chance of the kind of unwelcome 'strategic surprise' evidenced in the Ukraine war. Greater access to support from conveniently located and politically uncontentious facilities in Australia could help here.

For all that, a corresponding fear might be that an enhanced presence and capability in the Indo-Pacific might lead to Britain's becoming sucked into distant quarrels at the expense of more nationally critical security interests nearer home. Accordingly, AUKUS and the whole of the Pacific tilt is likely to be kept under constant review, just as any such major strategic initiative should be. Moreover, the emphasis is less on Britain setting itself up as a security guarantor and more on its being a contributor amongst equals. This preserves a necessary discretionary element to Britain's Indo-Pacific commitment.

Proof of Concept

Lastly, the prospects for AUKUS and the British tilt towards the Indo-Pacific are likely to depend in part on the extent to which they are seen actually to work in the overall national interest. Apart from helping to secure still more beneficial relations with India, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN and others in the region, two metrics of its success seem likely to be especially important.

The first is demonstrable naval success. Narrowly, a period of consultation within the AUKUS three in the Future Nuclear Submarine Task Force is now underway over the mechanics of Australia's submarine program. This extremely ambitious and complex deal[22] needs to be successful for its wider aspirations to be met. In part, that ultimate success will only become clear with the delivery of effective Australian SSNs no earlier than the late 2030s. In the middle term, a good way to bridge the gap between the decommissioning of the Collins class and the introduction of the new SSNs will need to be found. In the shorter term, success will also require an agreement on the

22 The political and legislative difficulties of this, not least because of American defence equipment export control laws, should not be underestimated. P McLeary, 'Questions for the U.S. pile up in the wake of Australian sub deal', *Politico* [website], 27 September 2021.

mechanics of the process that is satisfactory for all three countries. For the Royal Navy the final agreed arrangements will need to be consistent with, and hopefully supportive of, British plans for its Astute, SSN-R Astute replacement and Dreadnought SSBN submarine programs. Much the same applies to the Americans, given their requirement for the annual delivery of two to three Virginia-class SSNs to 'overmatch' the Chinese, alongside the already demanding Columbia-class SSBN program. The Americans will wish to avoid AUKUS arrangements disturbing their current levels of confidence in this already ambitious aspect of their current fleet expansion plans.[23] Neither the US nor Britain has, in sum, much current SSN capacity to spare.

All three countries will be looking for ways of smoothing out the traditional peaks and troughs of submarine procurement, and all three will need to be happy with the outcome. There would undoubtedly be much disappointment in London if the arrangements finally decided on brought less benefit to British industry than its interpretation of the traditional concept of the *juste retour* would seem to warrant in terms of opportunities to grow jobs and bolster still further national scientific and technological expertise. It may be significant that the UK Ministry of Defence confirmed the first contract for the Astute-class successor program the day after AUKUS was announced.[24] Although the Type 26/Hunter frigate program was not part of the AUKUS deal, it may set something of a precedent in this regard. The partners will also be looking for equivalent benefit in all the many other important but much less visible technological dimensions of the deal.

Operational effect, the final proof of the pudding as far as submarines are concerned, will only be evident in the 2040s of course. In the meantime, enhanced levels of the already close cooperation between the three navies in the conduct of naval operations more widely will surely follow, and that too should have strategic effect. In the US, Kurt Campbell has suggested that cooperation between the three navies is likely to advance beyond mere interoperability – or even interchangeability:

> We will have more British sailors serving on our naval vessels, Australians and the like on more of our forward-deployed assets in Australia. This leads to a deeper interconnection and, almost a melding in the new respects of our services and working together on common purpose that we couldn't have dreamed about five or ten years ago.[25]

The other metric of success is likely to be the Chinese reaction to the AUKUS deal and how well it is received around the Indo-Pacific region. In their efforts to influence Chinese behaviour, all three partners suffer from the fact that their presence can be seen by regional states as discretionary rather than geographic, and so hard to rely on, given that the locals need to cope with the permanent presence of Chinese power. AUKUS seems to promise a degree more permanence and so greater reliability.

23 A Decker, 'Gilday: Navy needs confidence of submarine production in surface fleet', *Inside Defense* [website], 28 April 2022.

24 *Warships International Fleet Review*, vol. 319, November 2021.

25 C Clark, '"Almost a melding" of US, UK, Aussie services coming: NSC's Kurt Campbell', *Breaking Defense* [website], 19 November 2021.

This may encourage those in China who are concerned about the counterproductive consequences of its 'wolf-warrior' policies (such as the obtuse refusal to accept a visit by the German frigate *Bayern* on its recent markedly inoffensive Pacific trip) to urge greater restraint. On the other hand AUKUS and the prospect of greater Anglophone 'interference' in the Western Pacific may so irritate Beijing as to make its policies still more egregious. Either way, AUKUS will have justified itself. If China reacts aggressively, it will reinforce the impetus for AUKUS; if it does not, it could be argued that AUKUS will have achieved its ultimate purpose!

While at the moment the Ukraine situation means that nothing about the future can be reliably predicted, sufficient achievement in these three indicators of its performance (realism, consistent focus and operational success) suggest that AUKUS and a significant British presence in the Indo-Pacific are here to stay rather than 'here today, and gone tomorrow'.

Professor Geoffrey Till

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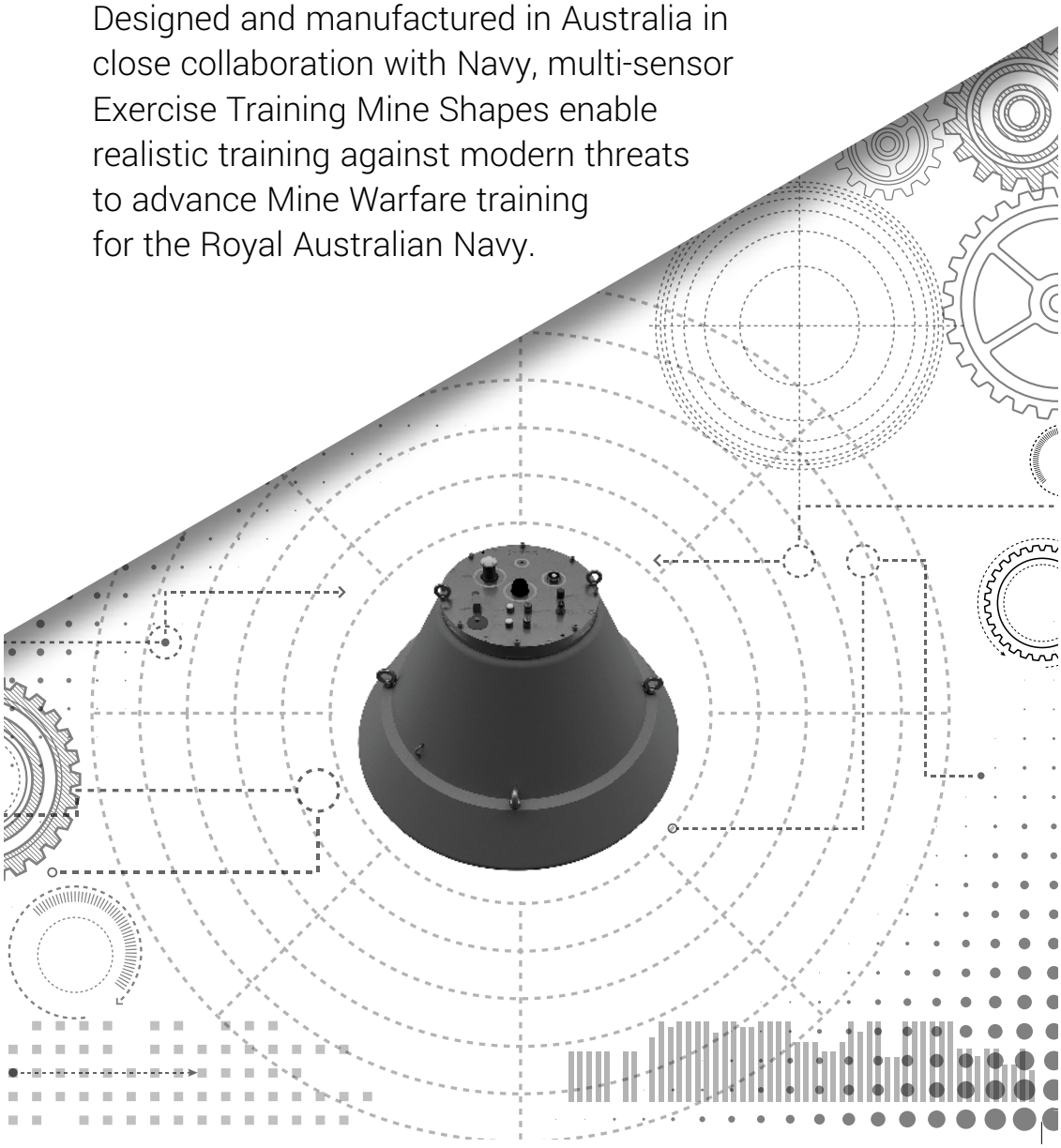

The View from Up Here: Canada and AUKUS

Dr Jeffrey F. Collins and Mr Matthew Bondy

Introduction

In a country known for its foreign and defence policy-free elections, the September 2021 announcement of a new defence pact among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS) put Canada's place in the world squarely under the microscope. This came mere weeks after the rapid and haphazard US withdrawal from a 20-year war in Afghanistan – a conflict where Canada had one of the highest casualty rates among the Western allies. Both events landed like a thud for Ottawa foreign policy observers.[1]

The initial reaction by the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was to downplay AUKUS. With the announcement coming amid the final days of a federal election campaign, Trudeau faced criticism from opposition parties over Canada's notable absence from the new pact; parties on the left and right used AUKUS as proof of the two-term prime minister's foreign policy failures in the Indo-Pacific, especially over the protracted hostage-taking of two Canadian citizens by Beijing that began in 2018. Although Trudeau's comments contradicted the Biden administration's praise of the arrangement,[2] official Ottawa remained mum on whether Canada was ever asked to join AUKUS. Trudeau attempted to frame AUKUS as purely a deal for a nuclear submarine which Canada had no interest in buying, but it soon became clear that Ottawa was given little advance warning of the pact.[3] This had to sting.

The three AUKUS members are arguably the closest and most like-minded of Canada's allies. As well as sharing values and a century plus of military cooperation dating back to the world wars, they have been bound together (with New Zealand) in the 'Five Eyes' intelligence-sharing alliance since the 1940s. Therefore, Canada's absence from AUKUS was and remains both symbolically and substantively important.[4] Unlike the narrow focus of Five Eyes, AUKUS represents a new

1 M Blanchfield, 'Canada's last military flight leaves Kabul before deadly twin bombings rock airport', CP24 [website], 26 August 2021, <https://www.cp24.com/news/canada-s-last-military-flight-leaves-kabul-before-deadly-twin-bombings-rock-airport-1.5561993>; 'Canada and the war in Afghanistan', *Canadian War Museum* [website], <https://www.warmuseum.ca/learn/canada-and-the-afghanistan-war/#:~:text=More%20than%2040%2C000%20members%20of,to%20additional%20deaths%20by%20suicide>.

2 Reuters, 'Canada left out of security deal between U.S., Australia and U.K. Trudeau unconcerned', *National Post*, 16 September 2021, <https://nationalpost.com/news/world/china-fumes-over-australias-nuclear-sub-pact-with-u-s-britain-2>.

3 A Connolly, 'Was Canada invited to join AUKUS? Officials mum but stress no interest in subs', Global News, 16 September 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8196164/aukus-defence-deal-canada-china-relations/>; R Fife & S Chase, 'Canada caught off guard by new security pact between U.S., Australia and Britain', The Globe and Mail, 17 September 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-canadian-government-surprised-by-new-indo-pacific-security-pact/>.

4 JC Blaxland, *Strategic cousins: Australian and Canadian expeditionary forces and the British and American empires,* McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal-Kingston, 2006.

defence and security partnership. That Canada joined New Zealand as one of the Anglosphere's orphans in the new geopolitical alignment arguably speaks to the degree of unseriousness with which AUKUS members regard these two allies.[5]

In the case of Canada, inaction and underinvestment in defence would certainly give credence to this view. Governments of both main political parties, Liberal and Conservative, have not undertaken a foreign policy review since 2005. A more narrow-in-scope Indo-Pacific strategy – promised in 2019 – remains years behind schedule.[6] Although defence spending got a small boost (from 1.36 per cent to 1.4 per cent of GDP) in 2022, a response to Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine, the increase still falls short of Canada's 2 per cent GDP defence budget commitment to NATO, a fact likely not lost on any of the AUKUS members, each of which exceeds this target, including non-NATO Australia.[7] Debate can be had on whether one solitary metric is truly indicative of a country's military capacity; however, it does reflect the political will and interest of what historically has been a key ally to each of the AUKUS members, especially in the search for able and necessary partners in a time of generational geopolitical shifts.

This article therefore positions the AUKUS pact as a revelatory moment for Canada. In contrast to Prime Minister Trudeau's response, the pact's focus on submarines, minilateral alignment, cyber and artificial intelligence (AI) collaboration shows key gaps in Canadian defence capabilities and outlook. From a Canadian long-term perspective, AUKUS highlights the types of arrangements needed to both protect and advance Canada's national interests in the 21st century.

The Sub Dimension

Naturally, Canberra getting privileged access to US nuclear submarine technology in exchange for ditching the Attack-class diesel-electric French program garnered the most reaction in Canadian defence and political circles.[8] There are several reasons for this. First, Canada, like Australia, has exclusively used diesel-electric submarines. Moreover, the RAN and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) share similar operational requirements: a long-range patrol submarine capable of interoperating with US and other Western allies and exercising sovereignty over some of the world's largest maritime domains. That both countries contend with such demands while being resource-rich middle powers with uneven and mostly sparsely populated territory adds another common dimension.

5 T McClure, 'Aukus submarines banned from New Zealand as pact exposes divide with western allies', *The Guardian,* 16 September 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/16/aukus-submarines-banned-as-pact-exposes-divide-between-new-zealand-and-western-allies>.

6 R Fife & S Chase, 'Ottawa eyes Indo-Pacific plan to shift trade away from China', *The Globe and Mail*, 12 January 2022, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-trudeau-government-advised-to-spend-big-to-diversify-trade-away-from/>.

7 J Collins, 'Budget 2022 comes "nowhere close" the Liberals' lofty rhetoric on defence spending, *Global News* [website], 8 April 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8745571/budget-2022-canada-defence-spending/>.

8 <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/beyond-aukus-canada-may-not-need-nuclear-subs-but-it-is-in-dire-need-of-a-strategy/>.

Second, Canada has attempted twice to get nuclear attack submarines, only to have both efforts – in the early 1960s and again in 1987–89 – defeated, largely over domestic anti-nuclear sentiment, steep cost estimates, and disinterested political leadership.[9] The nuclear option only occasionally resurfaced over the last 30 years and, when it did, a media backlash quickly saw it recede.[10] The challenge, however, is that the RCN and the government admit that an under-ice submarine capability is necessary for Ottawa to exercise sovereignty in the country's vast Arctic archipelago and exclusive economic zone.[11] Diesel-electric submarines, including Canada's four existing Victoria-class boats purchased second-hand from the Royal Navy in 1998, lack the hull design and propulsion system to safely transit under ice – a significant limitation given existing Russian submarine activity and Chinese ambitions in the region. Absent improvements in hybrid 'air independent propulsion' submarines like Sweden's planned A-26 class, nuclear submarines such as those used by the US and the UK are the only proven options for Canada to adopt an under-ice crewed submarine capability. That Canada's last attempt to acquire nuclear attack submarines in part failed over an inability to secure US nuclear submarine technology – the same technology Australia is now getting access to – is something not lost in Canadian submarine discussions.[12]

Third, Australia's rejection of the diesel-electric French Shortfin Barracuda comes right as the RCN and the Department of National Defence (DND) are examining a future submarine replacement. The Victoria class are due to be retired in 2036–42, at which point they will be nearly 50 years old. The boats, within the same generation of submarine technology as the RAN's Collins class, are nevertheless due for an up to $5 billion upgrade program this decade to keep them operational until their retirement.[13] However, much uncertainty remains.

Submarine replacement was never identified as a procurement priority in the Trudeau government's 2017 defence policy 'Strong, Secure, Engaged' and its 20-year funding framework or in the ongoing, multi-decade National Shipbuilding Strategy, and the DND only established a submarine project office in summer 2021.[14] A new defence policy update, promised 'swiftly' in this year's federal budget, holds some promise on dollars and timelines but the Australian experience in attempting to replace the Collins boats over the past decade illustrates just how tight Canada's window is to ensure a capability gap is plugged and new submarines are introduced before all

9 M Milner, *Canada's Navy: the first century*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2010; WL Dowdy, 'The Canadian Navy: torpedoed again', *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 16(1), 1989, pp. 99–115.

10 L Payton, 'No nuclear sub buy planned, MacKay affirms', *CBC News* [website], 28 October 2011, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/no-nuclear-sub-buy-planned-mackay-affirms-1.1043181>.

11 Department of National Defence, *Canada in a new maritime world: Leadmark 2050*, DND, Ottawa, 2016, <http://navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/assets/NAVY_Internet/docs/en/rcn_leadmark-2050.pdf>.

12 JF Collins, *Deadline 2036: assessing the requirements and options for Canada's future submarine force*, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Ottawa, 2021.

13 Department of National Defence, 'Victoria-class Modernization (VCM)', *Defence Capabilities Blueprint*, National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, Ottawa, 2018, <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/defence-capabilities-blueprint/project-details.asp?id=943>.

14 JF Collins, *Overcoming 'boom and bust'? Analyzing national shipbuilding plans in Canada and Australia*, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, Calgary, 2019.

of the old boats are retired.[15] Hanging over this replacement project are some glaring facts: the 2017 defence policy estimated that 70 per cent of Canadian defence procurement projects were routinely behind schedule, while a 2006 National Defence internal audit found that it took on average 15 years for a new capability to be delivered, a figure largely unchanged since.[16]

Finally, in abandoning the Shortfin Barracuda, Canberra has removed one of the few potential non-nuclear long-range submarines that Ottawa could have leveraged either in partnering with Australia for later builds and development costs or in acquiring the design for Canadian adaptation – akin to both countries using the British Type-26 design for their respective future surface combatant projects. There could also be an upside too; a scorned France will likely focus on competing in the future Canadian submarine project. Canada remains one of Paris's few allies looking for relatively large non-nuclear submarines, thus presenting an opportunity to strengthen naval and national ties with a country that historically has turned to US and UK sources for naval capabilities.

Geopolitical Reawakening

As important as the submarine discussion is, the AUKUS pact's implications for the Canadian defence industry is the proverbial tree within a much more meaningful forest. The establishment of AUKUS is symptomatic of the re-emergence of great power rivalry within the international system, something that decision-makers in Ottawa have not had to seriously consider in their foreign policy thinking since the early 1950s. In fact, the country's geostrategic position can largely account for why Canadian governments have been so slow, if not outright reluctant, to engage with AUKUS or champion similar minilateral, like-minded arrangements.[17]

Since the Second World War, Canada has benefited from what one defence scholar terms the '[i]nvoluntary American security guarantee'.[18] Through a series of incremental defence and economic arrangements like the 1958 North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) agreement and the 1965 Auto Pact, Canada became tightly bound to the US while sitting atop the North American continent surrounded by three oceans and the longest undefended border on earth. Few countries anywhere have such an enviable geostrategic location.

In practical terms, Canadians got used to underspending on defence, operating on the presumption that the US would never leave its northern neighbour at the mercy of a foreign aggressor lest it leave its own homeland exposed. Canada did 'just enough' in equipping its armed forces and deploying them abroad to honour its NORAD and NATO alliance commitments.[19]

15 Department of Finance, *Budget 2022*, Finance Canada, Ottawa, 2022, <https://budget.gc.ca/2022/report-rapport/chap5-en.html>.

16 Department of National Defence, *Strong, secure, engaged: Canada's defence policy*, DND, Ottawa, 2017; Department of National Defence, *Perspectives on the capital equipment acquisition process – final report*, DND, Chief Review Services, Ottawa, 2006.

17 A Pickford & JF Collins, *Reconsidering Canada's strategic geography: lessons from history and the Australian experience for Canada's strategic outlook*, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Ottawa, 2018.

18 RJ Sutherland, 'Canada's long term strategic situation', *International Journal*, vol. 17(3), 1962, pp. 199–223.

19 C Leuprecht & JJ Sokolsky, 'Defense policy 'Walmart style': Canadian lessons in "not-so-grand" grand strategy', *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 41(3), 2015, pp. 541–562.

This scenario is no longer viable, though, as the geostrategic global environment has shifted dramatically in the last two decades.

America's unipolar moment[20] was politically strained by the 'global war on terror', ideologically undermined in the eyes of many nations by the debt-driven global financial crisis of 2008, and ended by the re-emergence of major great power rivalry as China and Russia in particular have taken steps to assert great power prerogatives.

Russia's neo-imperial pursuits in Georgia and Ukraine have alerted the world to the Putin regime's willingness to boldly breach longstanding post-1945 norms of international peace and security. Likewise, China's regional aggression, including breaching the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 by attacking Hong Kong's liberal democratic institutions, has signalled that authoritarian great power military and political adventurism is not outlier activity heading into the third decade of the 21st century, but a trend.

Both China and Russia are inducing classic balancing behaviour amongst regional neighbours. The establishment of the Quad and AUKUS both represent balancing behaviour – the concept of smaller powers coming together to balance the weight of larger, threatening powers[21] – in East Asia. In the case of Europe, the intention of Sweden and Finland to join NATO[22] represents the same.

For its part, Canada has struggled to articulate a clear foreign policy vision as it pertains to both of these aggressive authoritarian powers, which is indicative of a lack of a coherent grand strategy to deal with this new era of multicolour rivalry.

Despite hostage-taking against innocent Canadians, threatening language from China about Communist Party backed Huawei's role in the Canadian economy,[23] and reported Chinese efforts to undermine Canadian elections,[24] Canada remains conspicuously neutral in its tone as it pertains to Chinese aggression.

With the global-headline-grabbing case of Huawei executive Meng Whanzou being retained in Canada for judicial purposes now resolved, and both 'Michaels' (the two Canadians held hostage by Beijing in response to Ms Meng's detention) having been returned home to Canada in 2021

20 C Krauthammer, 'The unipolar moment', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70(1), 1990, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1990-01-01/unipolar-moment>.

21 SM Walt, 'The AUKUS dominoes are just starting to fall', *Foreign Policy*, 18 September 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/18/aukus-australia-united-states-submarines-china-really-means/>.

22 'U.S. offers assurances to Sweden, Finland over NATO application', *Reuters* [website], 6 May 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-offers-assurances-sweden-finland-over-nato-application-2022-05-05/>.

23 J Bronskill, 'Canada has no choice but to bar Huawei from 5G mobile networks, security experts say', *National Post*, 14 November 2021, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canada-has-no-choice-but-to-bar-huawei-from-5g-mobile-networks-security-experts-say>.

24 T Glavin, 'Glavin: evidence abounds of China's interference in Canada's elections', *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 December 2021, <https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/glavin-evidence-abounds-of-chinas-interference-in-canadas-elections>.

after a multi-year standoff, there is an opening for Canada to stake out much stronger positions on both China and Russia. This is critical to the nation's advocacy for inclusion in such bodies as AUKUS.

Two steps would be disproportionately effective in this regard.

First, in light of China enabling Russian war crimes in Ukraine through political cover at the United Nations and China's closening 'no limits' geoeconomic partnership to fuel Russia's otherwise heavily sanctioned economy,[25] Canada needs to declare that Huawei will no longer be permitted to operate in Canadian critical telecommunications infrastructure. This would align the country with its Five Eyes peers and show a long-sought clarity on the issue that would signal foreign policy seriousness while also providing clear policy guidance to domestic stakeholders in the Canadian economy.

Second, in light of Russian aggression within its so-called 'near abroad' region of former Soviet republics, and recognising that Canada shares a maritime border with Russia in the Arctic, Ottawa needs to make the case that Russian naval power and aggression constitute an appropriate additional organising principle for the AUKUS defence and security pact.[26] Simultaneously, Canada should petition to be admitted to membership on that basis and for the sake of developing nuclear-powered submarines for the RCN, for the same reason.

These two steps would, so to speak, catch Canada up to the new geopolitical reality of great power rivalry, clarify where the country stands with the liberal democratic community of states in both word and deed, and put Canada on a path to greater military and technological sophistication to drive wealth creation and national security for Canada in the 21st century.

Critically, as it pertains to wealth creation, it is important to recall that AUKUS is not only about nuclear submarines but also about technology sharing, adoption and commercialisation.[27] Australia has not only moved toward nuclear submarine adoption but, in light of the establishment of AUKUS, also undertaken efforts to demonstrate credible investments and leadership in key technology verticals, including a $73 million investment in quantum technology.[28] AUKUS, having a much broader mandate than the intelligence-focused Five Eyes arrangement, represents a seminal opportunity for Canada to retain technological prowess in key areas, such as AI, where Canada is recognised as a global leader. Pacts like AUKUS are therefore key for both national security and long-term prosperity.

25 M Nichols & H Pamuk, 'Russia vetoes U.N. Security action on Ukraine as China abstains', *Reuters* [website], 26 February 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-vetoes-un-security-action-ukraine-china-abstains-2022-02-25/>.

26 M Bondy, 'Excluded from AUKUS? Canada should seek to invite itself aboard', *Centre for International Governance Innovation* [website], 30 September 2021, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/excluded-from-aukus-canada-should-invite-itself-aboard/>.

27 A Deitz, 'AUKUS: more than just defence', *Norton Rose Fulbright* [website], September 2021, <https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en/knowledge/publications/82bebc0d/aukus---more-than-just-defence>.

28 C Packham, 'Australia to invest $73 mln in quantum science as critical technology', *Financial Post*, 16 November 2021, <https://financialpost.com/pmn/business-pmn/australia-to-invest-73-mln-in-quantum-science-as-critical-technology>.

Conclusion

When Ottawa first reacted to the news about AUKUS, ministerial and prime ministerial comments indicated a relative indifference to what seemed like a straightforward (albeit involving complex technology) defence procurement adjustment amongst allied capitals. What is clear now, however, is that AUKUS represents much more than a submarine deal: it represents the future of allied defence arrangements, where national security and economic opportunity are conjoined and are enjoyed by those nations that are prepared to take sides in an era of resurgent great power rivalry and meaningfully invest in the defence of their nation and allies.

Canada has every opportunity to adopt a more assertive foreign and defence policy posture moving forward. Incremental investments in national defence included in Canada's 2022 federal budget represent a positive start. The same applies to the defence policy update. Yet, to earn the opportunity to participate in leading security and defence collaborations such as AUKUS with key allies, Canada needs to take decisive steps on its foreign policy posture as it pertains to both China and Russia, and put innovation, including AI, at the heart of its national security strategy and international value proposition. Should the country muster the political will to make these decisions, it should seek membership at the tables where the future of allied defence and security arrangements is being charted.

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New Zealand Opposes China's Assertiveness but Remains Sceptical about AUKUS

Professor Robert G. Patman

Despite claims that the strategic alliance between Australia, the UK and the US, known as AUKUS, has marginalised New Zealand,[1] it is perhaps more accurate to say AUKUS highlights Australia's increasingly close alignment with the US on China, and New Zealand's relative distance from the worldview shared by these allies.[2]

The AUKUS pact announcement of 16 September 2021 envisages the sharing of information in key technological areas, including artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, to uphold the 'international rules-based order' against the apparent threat of China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.[3] And, as an early major initiative under the AUKUS umbrella, the US and UK have pledged to support Australia in developing options during the next 18 months for the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines for its Navy.

On the face of it, AUKUS does not sit comfortably with New Zealand's non-nuclear security policy.[4] This has been legally binding since the fourth Labour government introduced the *New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987*. While New Zealand's embrace of a non-nuclear policy led to strained relations with the US for two decades, it had the effect of deepening Wellington's defence ties with Australia during this period, and ultimately did not prevent the restoration of a close US–New Zealand security partnership following the Wellington and Washington declarations of 2010 and 2012.

At the same time, New Zealand has played a significant diplomatic role in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the United Nations General Assembly on 7 July 2017.[5] The treaty, which seeks to eliminate all nuclear weapons, came into force on 22 January this year. To date, 86 states have signed the treaty and 54 have ratified it. Australia has

1 NR Smith, 'New Zealand's grand strategic options as the room for hedging continues to shrink', *Comparative Strategy*, 12 April 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2022.2057748>; G Miller, 'The future direction of New Zealand foreign policy', interview, *Morning Report*, Radio New Zealand, 25 April 2022, <rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/anzacday/audio/2018839362/the-future-direction-of-new-zealand-foreign-policy>.

2 A Gee & RG Patman, 'Small state or minor power? New Zealand's Five Eyes membership, intelligence reforms, and Wellington's response to China's growing Pacific role', *Intelligence and National Security*, 2 September 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2020.1812876>.

3 'Joint leaders statement on AUKUS', *The White House* [website], 15 September 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>.

4 L Malpass, 'Why Aukus should make us reconsider parts of our nuclear-free stance', *Stuff*, 18 September 2021, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/126412999/why-aukus-should-make-us-reconsider-parts-of-our-nuclearfree-stance>.

5 EM Lederer, 'Historic treaty to ban nuclear weapons to enter into force with 50th UN signatory', *Stuff*, 26 October 2020, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/300142036/historic-treaty-to-ban-nuclear-weapons-to-enter-into-force-with-50th-un-signatory>.

not joined the TPNW, which requires parties not to develop, test, acquire, possess or threaten to use nuclear weapons. Scott Morrison's government said the treaty would be at odds with Australia's alliance with the US, the world's leading nuclear weapon power.

According to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, it was 'no surprise' New Zealand was excluded from AUKUS because of its long-established opposition to nuclear weapons and its continuing 'prohibition of nuclear powered vessels in our waters'. However, Ms Ardern insisted AUKUS does not change New Zealand's role in the intelligence-sharing arrangement known as the Five Eyes alliance and would not affect 'our close partnership with Australia on defence matters'.[6] It should not be forgotten that Wellington's embrace of a non-nuclear strategy since the mid-1980s has been widely seen as an expression of national resolve to assert a significant degree of independence in the making of New Zealand's security and foreign policy.

Nevertheless, New Zealand's omission from AUKUS has fuelled a narrative that Wellington has been diminished by its non-nuclear stance and its independent foreign policy, particularly in relation to China. A senior Pentagon official was quoted in *The Australian* as calling AUKUS:

> … a new ANZUS that side-lines New Zealand, cements Australia's alliance with the US in the 21st century and offers the stealth, speed and manoeuvrability to counter any Chinese threat to stability in the Indo-Pacific region'.[7]

Brent Sadler, a senior fellow for naval warfare and advanced technology at the US Heritage Foundation, said New Zealand would have to deal with the consequences of being independent at a time when it was important for allies to maintain unity in the face of the China challenge.[8] Similarly, Joe Hockey, a former Australian Ambassador to the US, reportedly characterised AUKUS as 'ANZUS 2.0' which gives 'teeth' to the Five Eyes intelligence network, which includes New Zealand and Canada within its ranks.[9]

6 R Palmer, 'New Zealand a winner in AUKUS agreement, but risks remain – experts', *New Zealand Herald*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>.

7 L Hazelton & R Patman, 'Has AUKUS diminished the non-nuclear security policy of New Zealand', *The Big Q*, The University of Auckland, 22 October 2021, <https://www.thebigq.org/2021/10/22/has-aukus-diminished-the-non-nuclear-security-strategy-of-new-zealand/>.

8 J Ensor, 'AUKUS's impact on New Zealand: Nuclear policy "unchanged", Five Eyes "will endure" in face of new defence pact', *Newshub*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2021/09/aukus-s-impact-on-new-zealand-nuclear-policy-unchanged-five-eyes-will-endure-in-face-of-new-defence-pact.html>.

9 J Ensor, 'New Australia, United Kingdom, United States defence pact "sidelines New Zealand", focus on nuclear capabilities', *Newshub*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/world/2021/09/new-australia-united-kingdom-united-states-defence-pact-sidelines-new-zealand-focus-on-nuclear-capabilities.html>.

Furthermore, Christopher Luxon, the leader of the National Party, the major political opposition group in New Zealand, has indicated that he wants New Zealand to be more in step with actions taken by the US, the UK and Australia,[10] while the National Party's foreign affairs spokesman, Gerry Brownlee, argued that the country's nuclear-free position should not have been a barrier and that its absence from AUKUS could deprive New Zealand of access to important intelligence.[11]

So have the critics been vindicated? The basic problem facing AUKUS is that it is based on a binary assumption that the fate of the Indo-Pacific will be determined by the outcome of US–China great power rivalry and, in particular, on the capacity of America and its closest allies to counterbalance Chinese assertiveness in the region.

This perspective is problematic in several respects. First, it exaggerates the ability of great powers in the 21st century to shape and influence large and diverse regions like the Indo-Pacific. This regions contains 60 per cent of the world's population and contains economic powerhouses, like Japan and South Korea, and the world's fastest-growing economies, such as those of China, Vietnam and India.[12] More generally, China and the US find themselves today in an increasingly interconnected world where a growing number of problems do not respect borders and cannot be resolved unilaterally.

Second, the AUKUS pact does not take account of the Indo-Pacific and European nations' quite distinctive security and economic interests in confronting China.[13] While states like Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam remain deeply concerned about China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, it does not mean they see AUKUS, an enhanced security arrangement involving three English-speaking states – two of whom have had difficult historical links with the region – as the answer to this challenging problem. Equally, states like Germany and France, key allies of the US with significant interests in the Indo-Pacific, have been irritated by being excluded from the discussions that led to AUKUS.[14] It appears almost as if the US, the UK and Australia assume they have a monopoly of concern about the threat that China presents to democracy, human rights and the international rules-based order in this region. Moreover, such a perception could seriously complicate the efforts of the Australian government to reduce Australia's dependence on China and diversify its trade links in the Indo-Pacific region.

10 'Christopher Luxon wants NZ more in step with allies: "Our sanctions at the moment are relatively weak"' *RNZ*, 6 April 2022 <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/464719/christopher-luxon-wants-nz-more-in-step-with-allies-our-sanctions-at-the-moment-are-relatively-weak>.

11 'Concerning NZ left out of AUKUS discussions – Judith Collins and Gerry Brownlee', *Voxy.co.nz*, 16 September 2021, <http://www.voxy.co.nz/politics/5/392677>.

12 P Köllner, RG Patman & B Kiglics, 'From Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific: diplomacy in an emerging strategic space' in RG Patman, P Köllner & B Kiglics (eds), *From Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific: diplomacy in a contested region*, Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 8–14.

13 RG Patman, 'Why Aukus is unlikely to halt China's assertive foreign policy', *Stuff*, 21 September 2021, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/126434679/why-aukus-is-unlikely-to-halt-chinas-assertive-foreign-policy>.

14 G Abbondanza, 'The AUKUS partnership: a wake-up call for Europe', *The International Spectator*, Istituto Affari Internazionali, 23 November 2021, <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/aukus-partnership-wake-call-europe>.

Third, the provision of nuclear-powered submarines to Australia has fuelled fears that AUKUS might trigger a major arms race in the Indo-Pacific region. In particular, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) such as Indonesia and Malaysia have publicly condemned the prospect of Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines, and Singapore, a close ally of Australia, has also expressed concerns.[15] There are some worries within ASEAN capitals that the acquisition of nuclear submarines will lead to the development of nuclear weapons in Australia in the future. But even if that prospect is avoided, the Australian move towards nuclear-powered submarines could set a precedent for other states within the region (and possibly outside it) to follow. Sensitivities on nuclear proliferation in the Indo-Pacific are very real. In 1995, ASEAN member states signed the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, which was intended to keep nuclear weapons out of the region. Moreover, Singapore is the only ASEAN state that has yet to sign or ratify the TPNW.[16]

But while the Ardern government would dispute the strategic logic of AUKUS, it would be a giant misunderstanding to depict Wellington as 'soft on China', a view that regularly surfaces in some media outlets in the US, the UK and Australia.

To be sure, New Zealand has often pursued a more nuanced policy towards China than many of its Five Eyes partners. In February 2022, the Ardern government declined to completely follow the full diplomatic boycott of Beijing's Winter Olympic Games imposed by the US, the UK, Australia and Canada to protest against China's persecution of the Uyghur people in the country's Xinjiang province.[17]

New Zealand's stance on Beijing's Winter Games was only the latest in a long line of diplomatic efforts under Jacinda Ardern's leadership to engage with China in a way that distinguishes it from its allies. For one thing, New Zealand signed a 2017 non-binding cooperation agreement with respect to China's Belt and Road Initiative, an option spurned by other Western states. In addition, the government framed its 2018 ban of Huawei on technical grounds and did not rule out Huawei's future participation in the network if the company took corrective steps.[18] Furthermore, after a successful visit to Beijing by Ardern in April 2019, the two sides agreed to accelerate work on upgrading their 2008 free trade agreement. And even though New Zealand followed other members of the Five Eyes network in suspending their extradition treaties with Hong Kong in July 2020, it was the last to do so.

On the other hand, New Zealand has demonstrated that it has few illusions about China's authoritarian system and growing international assertiveness. In July 2016, after China publicly indicated that it would not accept a ruling by the international Arbitral Tribunal in The Hague on maritime rights in the South China Sea, the then National-led government in Wellington pointedly

15 J Chin, 'Why is southeast Asia so concerned about AUKUS and Australia's plans for nuclear submarines?', *The Conversation*, 20 September 2021, <https://theconversation.com/why-is-southeast-asia-so-concerned-about-aukus-and-australias-plans-for-nuclear-submarines-168260>.

16 Ibid.

17 T Manch, 'New Zealand to send a single official to cheer on Olympic team at Beijing Winter Games', *Stuff*, 4 February 2022, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/127674318/new-zealand-to-send-a-single-official-to-cheer-on-olympic-team-at-beijing-winter-games>.

18 T Pullar-Strecker, H Cooke & S Edmunds, 'Ministers briefed on GCSI's Huawei 5G ban', *Stuff*, 29 November 2018, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/108940155/gcsb-declines-huawei-proposal>.

called on all parties to the dispute to accept this ruling and act in accordance with international law.[19] The Ardern leadership subsequently responded to concerns about China's growing influence by announcing a NZ$714 million 'Pacific Reset' in March 2018;[20] issued a strategic defence policy statement explicitly identifying China as a threat to the international rules-based order; and passed legislation in late 2019 banning all foreign donations[21] over NZ$50, in an apparent move to limit Chinese influence in domestic politics.

Furthermore, the New Zealand government has repeatedly raised concerns with Beijing[22] about human rights violations in Xinjiang, and supported Australia in its spat with China in 2019 over the use of a doctored image to spotlight Australia's 'war crimes' in Afghanistan. The latest Ministry of Defence assessment[23] warns that New Zealand's position in the South Pacific is now threatened by a growing Chinese presence that could 'fundamentally alter the strategic balance'. In connection with this, the Ardern government joined with Australia and the UK in publicly questioning the motive for the recent Solomon Islands–China security agreement and expressed alarm about the 'militarisation' of the Pacific that could ensue.[24] The Ardern government also risked China's displeasure by announcing on 21 April 2022 that it had significantly upgraded strategic ties with Japan, a move that included an agreement for the exchange of classified information between the two states in a range of areas.[25]

But if New Zealand shares many of the strategic concerns of close allies about China, why has it expressed them in a more nuanced diplomatic fashion than its AUKUS counterparts? Part of the answer is that New Zealand not only seeks to defend the international rules-based order but also seeks to significantly strengthen it. After all, China has not been alone in challenging the international rules-based order in the 21st century. In March 2003, the Bush administration bypassed the UN Security Council (UNSC) and launched an illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. In 2020, the Johnson government in the UK raised the possibility that the full implementation of Brexit might involve reneging on the Good Friday accord of 1998 by amending the Northern Ireland protocols attached to the UK's EU withdrawal agreement.[26] Thus, the decision of Russia's

19 'NZ comment on South China Sea Tribunal ruling', *Beehive.govt.nz*, 13 July 2016, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-comment-south-china-sea-tribunal-ruling>.

20 Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee, 'The Pacific Reset: the first year', 4 December 2018, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/OIA/R-R-The-Pacific-reset-The-First-Year.PDF>.

21 E Ainge Roy, 'New Zealand bans foreign political donations amid interference concerns', *The Guardian*, 3 December 2019.

22 T McClure, 'New Zealand's differences with China becoming "harder to reconcile", Jacinda Ardern says', *The Guardian*, 3 May 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/09/new-zealand-faces-growing-challenge-from-chinese-nationalism-defence-report-warns>.

23 P McKenzie, 'New Zealand faces growing challenge from Chinese nationalism, defence report warns', *The Guardian*, 9 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/09/new-zealand-faces-growing-challenge-from-chinese-nationalism-defence-report-warns>.

24 J Ensor, 'China, Solomon Islands security agreement: Jacinda Ardern says "no need" for deal, expresses concern about "militarisation" of Pacific', *Newshub*, 20 April 2022, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2022/04/china-solomon-islands-security-agreement-jacinda-ardern-says-no-need-for-deal-expresses-concern-about-militarisation.html>.

25 RG Patman, 'New Zealand and Japan strengthen bilateral relations', interview, *AM Show*, TV3, 22 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98-PEIX4KBI>.

26 L McGee, 'Boris Johnson's government is threatening to breach international law. It could backfire spectacularly', *CNN* [website], 9 September 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/09/09/uk/boris-johnson-rule-of-law-brexit-intl-gbr/index.html>.

Putin regime on 24 February 2022 to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine – a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter – is only the latest example in the 21st century of permanent members of the UNSC exerting their sovereign state interests at the expense of a global security architecture based on the rule of law.

New Zealand's response to Putin's Ukraine invasion has been broadly consistent with the positions of its Five Eyes partners and AUKUS. In the early stages of the conflict, the Ardern government provided NZ$11 million in humanitarian and non-lethal military assistance, but this commitment was significantly boosted on 11 April 2022. The revised aid program was worth NZ$30 million overall and included the deployment of one of the country's five C130 transport planes and nearly 70 military and intelligence personnel to Europe – the biggest deployment of New Zealand troops since Bosnia in the mid-1990s. It also included an additional NZ$13 million of support, within which a NZ$7.5 million contribution is to be spent through the UK on weapons and ammunition for the Ukrainian military.[27]

While some commentators and politicians have interpreted the Ardern government's expanded military aid package to Ukraine and its very public reservations about the Solomon Islands–China security agreement as evidence that New Zealand is changing its foreign policy to fall into lockstep with allies like the US, the UK and Australia,[28] there are grounds for disputing this perspective. That is, New Zealand's foreign policy decision-makers view these responses as fully consistent with an independent foreign policy and a worldview based on enhanced multilateral cooperation. For one thing, there is little indication that the New Zealand government accepts that Putin's invasion of Ukraine marks the beginning of a new 'Cold War' between the forces of autocracy led by China and Russia on the one hand and the forces of liberal democracy led by the US and its allies on the other hand. While China has offered some rhetorical support for and diplomatic understanding of Putin's security concerns in Ukraine, this support has been more symbolic than real. To date, Beijing does not seem to have significantly contributed military and economic aid to Moscow and has publicly cautioned the Putin leadership that there are no circumstances in which the conflict in Ukraine would justify the use of nuclear weapons.[29] At the same time, Xi Jinping's government is aware that China's rise to superpower status has been built on the back of full-blooded participation in the world capitalist economy, and shows no inclination to risk economic damage by significantly supporting an already heavily sanctioned Putin regime. According to Ms Ardern, China should not be 'pigeonholed' as being in tight alignment with Moscow when there is little real proof to support such a claim.[30]

27 'New Zealand sends C130 Hercules and 50-strong team to Europe to support Ukraine', *Beehive.govt.nz*, 11 April 2022, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-sends-c130-hercules-and-50-strong-team-europe-support-ukraine>.

28 B Edwards, 'New Zealand's remarkable rush to war', *New Zealand Herald*, 14 April 2022, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/political-roundup-new-zealands-remarkable-rush-to-war/46TOZDUG5REODOQAHF4AYRHYG4/>.

29 'No one wants to see 3rd World War: China on Lavrov's warning of risk of nuclear conflict "real"', *The Indian Express*, 5 May 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/china-reaction-third-world-war-sergey-lavrov-nuclear-conflict-7888743/>.

30 Z Small, 'Ukraine invasion: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warns against "pigeonholing" China as aligning with Russia', *Newshub*, 21 April 2022, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2022/04/prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-warns-against-pigeonholing-china-as-aligning-with-russia.html>.

In addition, New Zealand has distinctive reasons for its stance towards Putin's Ukraine invasion and China's security deal with Solomon Islands that go beyond simply following America's lead. For New Zealand, and many small and middle powers, an international rules-based order is indispensable because it provides such states with a voice and influence through multilateral diplomacy that they cannot achieve on their own or by simply relying on the backing of a superpower or a more powerful neighbour.[31] While Wellington shares many key values and interests with old allies like the US, the UK and Australia, its longstanding opposition to the use and abuse of the veto in the UNSC means that New Zealand cannot rely exclusively on these three states to uphold its vision of an expanded international rules-based order.

However, the Ukraine invasion and the Solomon Islands–China security agreement provide global and regional opportunities to advance what is a core goal of New Zealand's foreign policy agenda. In an impassioned address to the UN Security Council on 5 April 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the invasion showed how the right of veto enjoyed by the council's five permanent members had undermined an effective system of international security. 'Ukraine has the moral right to propose a reform of the world security system', he said.[32] Policymakers in New Zealand have long shared Zelensky's conviction that the UNSC must be reformed. Above all, Putin's invasion of Ukraine has confirmed what has been clear for much of the post-Cold War era – the UNSC is no longer fit for purpose and it is high time the world had an authoritative international institution that can more effectively hold aggression in check. Thus, the Ardern government believes it has a big stake in helping Kiev defeat Putin's expansionism.[33] Such an outcome would ensure that a democratic Ukraine preserves the right to make its own choices in foreign policy, including its right to pursue a non-nuclear security policy, campaign for UN reform, and generally reinvigorate an international rules-based order against the forces of authoritarianism and great power exceptionalism.

At the same time, the Ardern government's clear opposition to China's security agreement with Solomon Islands has not been based simply on an alignment with American strategic interests. Wellington has emphasised that this new security deal contravenes the 2000 Biketawa Declaration, a statement agreed by all Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) leaders as a framework for coordinating actions in response to regional crises. Amongst other things, the leaders of the PIF, which includes New Zealand and Australia within its ranks, had agreed that regional security problems should be resolved by PIF members themselves. In the words of the Ardern government, the Solomon Islands government led by Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare had departed from the Biketawa Declaration by seeking assistance outside the region from China to address a security problem

31 A-M Brady, 'Small can be huge: New Zealand foreign policy in an era of global uncertainty' in A-M Brady (ed.), *Small states and the changing global order: New Zealand faces the future*, Springer, Cham, 2019, pp. 1–4.

32 'Speech by the President of Ukraine at a meeting of the UN Security Council', *President of Ukraine* [website], 5 April 2022, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-na-zasidanni-radi-bezpeki-oon-74121>.

33 'Full speech: Jacinda Ardern's address to Mt Albert Anzac Day Service', *Newshub*, 25 April 2022, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2022/04/full-speech-jacinda-ardern-s-address-to-mt-albert-anzac-day-service.html>.

that is located within the Pacific Islands region.[34] By framing its opposition to the Solomon Islands–China security agreement as a breach of the principles of collective security agreed by the PIF in 2000, the Ardern government is clearly hoping to strengthen regional support for a rules-based approach and generate local resistance to a Chinese security presence in Solomon Islands rather than simply depend on US or Australian countermeasures.

On balance, it is clear that AUKUS has not sidelined New Zealand's independent approach to foreign policy, centred on a non-nuclear security strategy and a strong commitment to bolstering the international rules-based order. While New Zealand's stance in relation to Putin's Ukraine invasion and China's assertiveness in the Pacific Islands region has converged with the AUKUS states, the Ardern government has not simply changed its foreign policy to fall into line with the positions taken by the US, the UK and Australia. Rather, it has reacted by helping to fend off new attempts by two authoritarian powers in Europe and the Pacific Islands region to overturn arrangements that are part of the international rules-based order, and also seizing perceived opportunities to significantly strengthen that order.

While New Zealand shares a great deal with Australia, the UK and the US, and this has been demonstrated by recent events, there is a significant difference in terms of how New Zealand wants to extend the multilateral order so that it can more effectively deal with the growing array of problems that do not respect borders. In the circumstances, there is no reason to anticipate that the Ardern government will abandon a nuanced independent foreign policy that is seen as the best way of advancing these interests. In particular, Wellington will continue to be sceptical about the solidity of the Chinese–Russian alliance; believe there is a good fit between its non-nuclear security policy and concerns about nuclear proliferation in the Indo-Pacific and elsewhere; view detachment from AUKUS as a way of helping to diversify New Zealand's trade ties; and actively support diplomatic efforts, particularly from small and middle powers, to reform a currently dysfunctional UNSC.

34 J Baker, 'China-Solomons deal crosses a "very clear line" – Ardern', *1News* [website], April 20, 2022: <https://www.1news.co.nz/2022/04/20/china-solomons-deal-crosses-a-very-clear-line-ardern/>.

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AUKUS and the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security in a Changing Climate

Dr Saiful Karim

Introduction

In September 2021, Australia announced a trilateral security partnership with its longstanding Western allies, the United States and the United Kingdom. As the first initiative of this partnership, Australia decided to acquire nuclear-powered submarines from the UK and the US.[1] This initiative prompted a critical reaction from France because it involved the cancellation of the previous arrangement for acquiring conventional submarines from France. More importantly, this declaration was received with reservation by some countries of the Indo-Pacific region because of the involvement of nuclear propulsion.[2]

In response to a contention that the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) partnership is moving Australia to an 'anachronistic Anglosphere', the then Foreign Minister of Australia stated that this partnership 'does not turn our back on Asia'.[3] Nevertheless, the most significant maritime security concern for many Indo-Pacific coastal and island nations, climate change, has not been given any attention in the AUKUS initiative. This article highlights the challenges in Australia's interaction with its Indo-Pacific allies and partners regarding AUKUS in the context of climate change induced maritime insecurity of the countries in the region.

Despite recognising the three partner countries' 'common tradition as maritime democracies',[4] the Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS is entirely silent about the impact of climate change on maritime security. The AUKUS statement also claims that the endeavours under the partnership 'will help sustain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region'.[5] This article is not arguing that non-inclusion of climate change in AUKUS agenda itself is a direct symbol of neglecting climate change induced security issues. However, any initiative for a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific

1 Prime Minister of Australia, 'Australia to pursue nuclear-powered submarines through new trilateral enhanced security partnership', media statement, 16 September 2021, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-pursue-nuclear-powered-submarines-through-new-trilateral-enhanced-security>.

2 Reuters, '"We are worried": Indonesia and Malaysia express concern over Australia's nuclear submarine plan', *The Guardian*, 19 October 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/19/we-are-worried-indonesia-and-malaysia-express-concern-over-australias-nuclear-submarine-plan>; S Grant, 'Kiribati President says AUKUS nuclear submarine deal puts Pacific at risk', ABC News, 28 September 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-28/kiribati-president-criticises-australia-defence-submarine-deal/100495894>; 'Malaysia expresses concern over Australia's nuclear sub deal with US and Britain', Channel News Asia, 18 September 2021, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/australia-submarine-deal-malaysia-expresses-concern-ismail-sabri-2187331>.

3 Minister for Foreign Affairs, 'AUKUS does not turn our back on Asia; it is about building our relationships', media release, 27 September 2021, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/news/aukus-does-not-turn-our-back-asia-it-about-building-our-relationships>.

4 Prime Minister of Australia, 'Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS', media statement, 16 September 2021, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/joint-leaders-statement-aukus>.

5 Ibid.

not addressing the region's climate change induced insecurities is incomplete. Non-inclusion of climate change in the agenda furthers the perception that Australia's foreign policy is increasingly neglecting its neighbours and non-traditional security issues.[6] Australia should acknowledge climate change as a regional security issue and integrate it in AUKUS and other security initiatives to strengthen regional credentials.

Climate Change and the Indo-Pacific

In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a special report painting a gloomy picture of the ocean.[7] The IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate identified many challenges for ocean governance.[8] The report also highlighted that the sea level rise might present 'a security risk', including the risk of forced 'displacement and migration of people'.[9] Many of the affected countries will be in the Indo-Pacific region.

Climate change induced security risks to Australia's immediate region are also highlighted in the final report of the Senate inquiry on the implications of climate change for Australia's national security.[10] The report of the Senate inquiry recommended a 'climate security white paper' and an increase in climate change related foreign aid.[11] The particular vulnerability of the Indo-Pacific region to climate change is even highlighted in the policy discourses of the other AUKUS partner countries. Identifying the climate crisis as one of the significant transnational threats of the current century, the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy of the US clearly stated that '[t]he Indo-Pacific is the epicenter of the climate crisis, but it is also essential to climate solutions'.[12]

Lack of commitment to addressing climate change issues will be counterproductive for addressing security issues in the Asia-Pacific or the Indo-Pacific. A solid commitment to reducing emissions and an open mind on helping the island and coastal states of the Indo-Pacific with climate change mitigation and adaptation may gradually become a precursor for meaningful

6 L Smith, 'Despite its Pacific "step-up", Australia is still not listening to the region, new research shows', *The Conversation*, 11 February 2020, <https://theconversation.com/despite-its-pacific-step-up-australia-is-still-not-listening-to-the-region-new-research-shows-130539>.

7 H-O Pörtner et al. (eds), *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, IPCC, 2019.

8 See generally NL Bindoff et al., 'Changing ocean, marine ecosystems, and dependent communities' in Pörtner et al., *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, p. 447.

9 M Oppenheimer et al., 'Sea level rise and implications for low-lying islands, coasts and communities' in Pörtner et al., *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, pp. 321, 400.

10 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Implications of climate change for Australia's national security*, Department of the Senate, 2018, <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity/Final_Report>.

11 Ibid. Also see MS Karim, 'Climate change and maritime security', Parliament of Australia [website], 2017, <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity/Submissionss>.

12 'Indo-Pacific Strategy of The United States', February 2022, The White House [website], <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

engagement with the developing countries in the region on any security architecture. Security and climate change related cooperation will be inherently intertwined. This missing link should not be ignored in AUKUS initiatives.

Climate Change, Maritime Security and Australia

Climate change may further increase many traditional, non-traditional and human security threats in the Indo-Pacific region. According to a recent IPCC report, '[h]uman-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region'.[13] The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the United Nations emphatically stated:

> [C]limate-related security risks already form part of reality for millions of people around the world. Science tells us that without decisive action, climate change will further accelerate, with compounding implications for peace and security.[14]

In the United Nations Security Council, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) made the following statement demonstrating the climate change induced security concerns of the region:

> Climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific. As PIF, we are collectively addressing this Council today because the links between climate and security for our region are indivisible and demonstrable.[15]

Climate change is an existential threat for some Pacific Islands countries. Support for any security initiative that has implications for the Pacific Islands countries is most likely possible only if the initiative acknowledges this existential threat to the small island countries.

The situation is similar in many developing coastal countries in Asia, where climate change may work as a catalyst for multiplying traditional and non-traditional security threats, including livelihood insecurity, increasing disasters, loss of territory, and forced displacement of people.[16] This is creating enormous pressure on those countries' already fragile security apparatus. Some of the Asian climate-vulnerable countries are among the most densely populated countries. Climate change related environmental and ecological threats may induce serious security risks for those countries and the wider region.

13 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate change 2021: the physical science basis – summary for policymakers*, IPCC, 2021, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM_final.pdf>.

14 'Climate change multiplying factors that lead to insecurity for millions, Rosemary DiCarlo tells "Arria Formula" meeting', United Nations Department of Political Affairs [website], 22 April 2020, <https://dppa.un.org/en/climate-change-multiplying-factors-lead-to-insecurity-millions-rosemary-dicarlo-tells-arria-formula>.

15 'Pacific Islands Forum Statement for the High-level Open Debate of the UN Security Council on "Climate and Security"', 24 July 2020, Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations [website], <https://www.un.int/tuvalu/statements_speeches/pacific-islands-forum-statement-high-level-open-debate-un-security-council->.

16 R Warner & S Kaye, 'Shifting currents: climate change and maritime security in the Asia Pacific' in J McDonald, J McGee & R Barnes (eds), *Research handbook on climate change, oceans and coasts*, Edward Elgar, 2020, pp. 394–408; S Bateman & A Bergin, 'Naval, national security and defence issues from climate change' in McDonald, McGee & Barnes, *Research handbook on climate change, oceans and coasts*, pp. 409–424.

Many Asian countries are already considering the impact of climate change as a maritime security issue. For example, according to the Indian government, climate change has 'started impacting human and maritime security, with potentially major effects in the future'.[17] In fact, in other security initiatives, the Australian government has also recognised climate change as a significant concern. For example, the Australia–India maritime cooperation declaration identified climate change as a 'shared concern'.[18] Even the four-nations Quad initiative has acknowledged that 'the climate crisis has accelerated; and regional security has become ever-more complex, testing all of our countries individually and together'.[19]

Compared to other security initiatives or alliances of Australia, AUKUS is silent about climate change, which may create some challenges for broader legitimacy and acceptance of this initiative by many Indo-Pacific developing countries.

As noted earlier, AUKUS was received with reservation by some of Australia's allies in the region. Australia's enhanced military capability will make the region more secure from emerging hegemonic powers. Some Asian middle power countries have common security interests with Australia against emerging hegemonic powers. This raises the question why they are opposing AUKUS. One possible explanation is the differing views regarding navigational rights of nuclear ships. Although Australia will not be the first country to have nuclear-powered warships, and Australia's nuclear submarines will not be the only nuclear ships navigating their waters, it should be noted that Pacific Islands countries have some serious environmental concerns regarding nuclear. The historical injustice they endured because of the Western world's nuclear weapons testing in the region will always make them sceptical about this. There is also a need to respect the spirit of the Treaty of Rarotonga, to which Australia is a party.[20] Australia needs to resolve this issue by increasing dialogue with the Pacific Islands countries.

Australia's overall approach towards non-traditional security issues, particularly the resistance to considering climate change as a security issue, may play a negative role here. Non-inclusion of climate change in AUKUS itself is not the main problem. However, it is contributing to the overall perception that Australia is rejecting climate change as a security issue. As noted by a think tank, 'Australia has fallen well behind the US, UK, Japan, New Zealand and other peers in analysis of climate and security risks'.[21] The same report also identified that 'Australia's failure to take stronger action in the face of mounting security risks from climate change is already coming at a significant cost to our international standing and influence'.[22] This lack of influence is arguably evident in the recent Solomon Islands agreement with China.

17 Ministry of Defence, *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, Indian Navy, 2015, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Maritime_Security_Strategy_Document_25Jan16.pdf>.

18 'Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Between the Republic of India and the Government of Australia', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/joint-declaration-shared-vision-maritime-cooperation-indo-pacific-between-republic-india-and-government-australia>.

19 Prime Minister of Australia, 'Quad Leaders' Summit Communique', media statement, 24 September 2021, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-leaders-summit-communique>.

20 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, 6 August 1985, 1445 UNTS 177.

21 C Durrant, S Bradshaw & A Pearce, *Rising to the challenge: addressing climate and security in our region*, Climate Council of Australia, 2021, p. 3.

22 Ibid, 23.

AUKUS is a security partnership between Australia, the UK and the US. However, Australia is unique within the group. Australia is, in a sense, a de facto Pacific and Asian country. This is not just an assertion. For example, in the Pacific, Australia is a member of the PIF, the Pacific Community, and the Forum Fisheries Agency. In Asia, the situation is relatively different. Australia is not a full member of any significant sub-regional organisation (e.g., ASEAN).[23] But the geographical location of Australia cannot be ignored. Unlike the European or African unions, there is no Asian organisation covering the entire region. Not belonging to any sub-regional groups does not necessarily mean that Australia is not an Asian country. For example, Australia is a member of the Asian Football Confederation. In the Indian Ocean region, which includes many parts of Asia, Australia is a full member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Australia maintains a strong relationship with Asian coastal states in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. Moreover, Australia is economically and politically more connected with climate change impacted Asian and Pacific countries than the other two partners of AUKUS. Australia's proactive climate action is critical for creating legitimacy for different security initiatives under AUKUS.

Despite its geographical location at the centre of the Indo-Pacific, Australia faces an identity crisis in the region. In the perception of some other countries in the region, Australia is neither Indo nor Pacific. Moreover, Australia's definition of Indo-Pacific does not include the entire Indian Ocean region.[24] This raises a broader question about Australia's endeavour to promote the Indo-Pacific against the Asia-Pacific. As noted earlier, Australia is a Pacific country and a member of the PIF. At the same time, Australia very rarely talks like a Pacific country. In most cases, understandably, Australia's voice is more akin to the voices of the other Western nations. For example, the Australian security narrative does not necessarily sound like the Pacific Islands narrative of 'Blue Pacific' or 'large ocean states'.[25]

Maritime security discourses of many Indo-Pacific countries are inherently intertwined with their climate change induced existential threats and/or insecurity. In contrast, climate change is just an occasional and peripheral matter in the dominant discourses of Australian maritime security policies. As noted by an expert group, 'climate change remains on the margins of Australia's defense, foreign affairs, and trade strategies'.[26]

23 MS Karim, 'Australia's engagement in the International Maritime Organisation for Indo-Pacific maritime security', *Ocean and Coastal Management*, vol. 185, 2020, 105032, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2019.105032>.

24 D Brewster, 'Australia can't continue to divide the Indian Ocean in two', *The Interpreter*, 19 February 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australia-can-t-continue-divide-indian-ocean-two>.

25 W Morgan, 'Large ocean states: Pacific regionalism and climate security in a new era of geostrategic competition', *East Asia*, vol. 39, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-021-09377-8>.

26 Durrant, Bradshaw & Pearce, 2021, 3.

The underlying difference in perception acts as a catalyst for the Pacific Islands countries' hesitation and concerns about AUKUS initiatives. Moreover, Australia's emissions reduction commitments and overall standing on climate action are, at least in the perception of some Indo-Pacific developing nations,[27] significantly poorer than those of the other two partners of AUKUS. There is potential to change this by transforming AUKUS into a significant climate change security partnership through engagement with other regional allies in the same direction.

Conclusion

Many Indo-Pacific coastal and island states are among the most climate change impacted countries. Climate change has already turned into a maritime security threat for these countries. Climate change has also become an existential threat for some small islands and low-lying countries. Therefore, both the macro and micro levels of maritime security are now delicate issues for many Indo-Pacific coastal and island states. Despite the apparent detachment of AUKUS from climate-induced maritime insecurity, the two may interrelate in some circumstances.

Strong commitment to climate action by AUKUS is not necessarily a panacea for better engagement with the Indo-Pacific developing nations. Many other geopolitical issues may play a role in this regard. Nevertheless, total disregard for the climate-induced maritime insecurity of developing country allies of Australia in the region may create a legitimacy crisis for the initiative. Therefore, in addition to traditional defence capacity development, engagement on climate change and other non-traditional security issues should be given some attention in AUKUS initiatives. The grand or dominant narrative of traditional maritime security should not fully outshine non-traditional maritime security issues such as climate change. A multidimensional and multifocal maritime security policy is needed in a highly diverse and extensive region like the Indo-Pacific.

While this article was under review, a new Australian government came to power with a mandate for climate action. There is a chance for a seismic shift in the country's climate change policy because the new parliament includes many independent and minor party members with a firm commitment to climate action. The new Foreign Minister has already declared that they would like to end 'the climate wars in Australia' and promised to 'stand shoulder to shoulder' with the Pacific 'in response to this crisis'.[28] However, it is premature to comment on the actual impact of the changing policy.

27 'Pacific leaders condemn Australia's "weak" climate target in open letter to Scott Morrison', *The Guardian*, 1 December 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/01/pacific-leaders-condemn-australias-weak-climate-target-in-open-letter-to-scott-morrison>; M Slezak & M Clarke, 'Australia widely criticised over emission reduction targets ahead of COP26 climate talks', ABC News, 20 August 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-20/climate-change-ipcc-australia-uk-conference-glasgow/100392252>.

28 D Hurst, K Lyons & L Movono, 'Penny Wong tells Pacific nations "we have heard you" as Australia and China battle for influence', *The Guardian*, 26 May 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/26/penny-wong-tells-pacific-nations-we-have-heard-you-as-australia-and-china-battle-for-influence>.

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Regional Security, Sovereignty and Solomon Islands: A Broken Pacific Defence Compact?

Dr Richard Herr, OAM

Introduction

The China–Solomon Islands security agreement has raised many questions, from why the Solomons would enter into such an uneven pact to how Australia could fail to prevent it. The most critical question, however, is: will the pact shake the established foundations of regional security? Immediate reactions from almost everywhere but Beijing and Honiara suggest the answer is that it is a game changer.[1] If so, what game has it changed? Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare denies the pact has any external security implication, expressing outrage at criticism as an insult to the Solomons as a sovereign state.[2] China has predictably labelled Western criticism as displaying a 'hegemonic and colonialist mentality'.[3] Despite these denials, the agreement has changed geostrategic expectations and so given substance to a fear expressed by the region's peak political body, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) that the new 'complex geo-political environment' of the Indo-Pacific will make the Pacific Islands region a cat's paw in great power rivalry.[4]

In choosing 'national interest' over longstanding obligations to the region, Sogavare has exposed a weakness in the region's collective security architecture, raising questions as to its continuing effectiveness. Former PIF Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor argued several years ago that the new geopolitical environment presented 'greater options for financing and development … through the increased competition in our region'.[5] Her assessment that there could be financial advantage to regional states in leveraging heightened external security interest for aid has frequently been shared by some analysts who are quick to claim that any erosion of Western security interests is a consequence of neglect and inadequate aid. However, Dame Meg later added a rider regarding the temptation to trade in security access. She pointed out that there was always a price to be paid by the small states participating in such an auction.[6]

1 D Cave, 'Why a Chinese security deal in the Pacific could ripple through the world', *New York Times*, 20 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/20/world/australia/china-solomon-islands-security-pact.html>.

2 E Corlett & D Hurst, 'Solomon Islands prime minister says foreign criticism of China security deal "very insulting"', *The Guardian*, 29 March 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/29/solomon-islands-prime-minister-says-foreign-criticism-of-china-security-deal-very-insulting>.

3 'Hegemonic and colonist mentality behind Australia's threats to invade Solomon Islands', *Global Times*, 28 March 2022, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202203/1256947.shtml>.

4 Henry Puna, 'We will fight back, together, and win back, together', opening remarks to the Forum Economic Officials Meeting, 6 July 2021, <https://www.forumsec.org/2021/07/06/we-will-fight-back-together-and-win-back-together-sg-puna-to-forum-economic-officials-2021/>.

5 Dame Meg Taylor, 'The China alternative: changing regional order in the Pacific Islands', keynote address to the University of the South Pacific, 8 February 2019, <https://www.forumsec.org/2019/02/12/keynote-address-by-dame-meg-taylor-secretary-general-the-china-alternative-changing-regional-order-in-the-pacific-islands/>.

6 J Blades, 'Outgoing Pacific Forum head warns about external influences', Radio New Zealand, 31 May 2021, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/443728/outgoing-pacific-forum-head-warns-about-external-influences>.

Small states commercialising sovereignty is scarcely novel or limited to the Pacific. Virtually all microstates engage in some aspect of selling sovereignty to make ends meet. Flags of convenience, special gambling zones, tax havens, selling passports and the like are common ways in which small states with limited natural resources have marketed their sovereignty.[7] So long as these activities do not destabilise local order or threaten the core interests of more powerful neighbours, they tend to be overlooked. However, trading in security access by its very nature threatens another country's security interests, including its defence posture. In accepting the Chinese security initiative, the Solomons has deliberately created real consequences for Australian defence.[8] But why? What was the quid pro quo?

Significantly, the security agreement does not contain an aid provision. Moreover, it was drafted even while Australian and regional security assistance was in the Solomons providing the security Sogavare requested. One contributing influence appears to be tunnel vision of the Solomons Government regarding the role of defence in regional security. Pacific Islands security has been overwhelmingly based on the primacy of human security rather than on traditional physical security based in self-defence. The bias in the Pacific's security orientation is highlighted by contrasting it with the role that defence plays in the Caribbean island microstates' approach to security. The comparison draws out the difficulties Australia will face if it attempts to cultivate a better regional understanding of the defence consequences of trading in security access. It is difficult to discuss defence sensibly when there is no-one speaking the same language at the other end of the telephone.

Development assistance as the currency of Pacific regional security

The concept self-defence is an uncomfortable metric for measuring national security in the Pacific Islands region. Indeed, very few countries in the region provide directly for self-defence, at least as traditionally defined. The absence of national self-defence infrastructure in the Pacific Islands region stretches back to security decisions embraced by both the colonisers and the colonised at the cusp of independence. A shared belief was that there was no need for the microstates to invest scarce resources in national self-defence. This perspective was based on several mutual (or at least not seriously challenged) convictions at the time of independence. These were the absence of perceived external threat; pressing civilian development priorities; and the risks that a military might pose to democratic governance. Moreover, as nearly half today's regional states had been trust territories within the United Nations system, there was an acceptance of international protection. Other factors included Western dominance across the region limiting the risks of inter-colonial tensions, and remoteness from Asian theatres of strategic rivalry. Significantly, because decolonisation was essentially benign, there were no wars of national liberation to create local militias that could morph later into national defence forces. The only two regional microstates with a military, Fiji and Tonga, had these prior to independence.

7 JC Sharman, 'Sovereignty at the extremes: micro-states in world politics', *Political Studies*, vol. 65(3), 2017, pp. 559–575.

8 A Greene, 'Australian general says Chinese military presence in Solomon Islands would force ADF rethink', ABC News, 31 March 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-31/defence-general-warnings-chinese-military-solomon-islands/100954752>.

In retrospect, it is puzzling that the decolonising powers left without directly and formally guaranteeing the security of their former territories. There are no mutual security treaties between any regional state and its former metropole but there are some other arrangements that have security implications. The US has compacts of free association with three former territories – the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Palau. New Zealand maintains a similar relationship with two former dependent territories – the Cook Islands and Niue. These arrangements create some non-reciprocal defence obligations, although it is not clear that these are obligatory or even that the island state could initiate the implied defence assistance. A partial exception emerged in 2017. As part of the disengagement of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) from Solomon Islands, Australia and the Solomons government signed a non-reciprocal treaty providing for the Solomons to call on Australia and other RAMSI contributors to return to provide domestic security at the request of the Solomons.[9]

Unsurprisingly, given the absence of indigenous military forces in the region, the Pacific microstates have made no preparation to assure their physical security collectively through any mutual self-defence arrangements. Non-traditional security, however, is a different matter. The Pacific Islands region has perhaps the most robust ecology of regional agencies in the developing world. The PIF was established in 1971 in part to enable collective action by newly independent states to oppose French nuclear testing in the region on environmental grounds.[10] Australia and New Zealand were included as founding members, recognising the potential value of their diplomatic and military capacity.

Today there are several agreements through the agency of the PIF intended to pursue broad non-traditional security objectives, particularly regarding climate change. The most important of these are the 2000 Biketawa Declaration[11] (a framework for coordinating response to regional crises) and the 2018 Boe Declaration[12] (or 'Biketawa plus', for a more comprehensive view of human security). Other regional bodies have contributed similarly within their own mandates for protecting the non-traditional security needs of the region's people. These have culminated now in a sweeping aspirational claim by PIF member states for stewardship of the Pacific Ocean through the multi-decade Blue Pacific strategy.[13]

The Pacific Islands Regional Security Community Concept

A key feature of contemporary Pacific Islands national security is the way it has become bound up in the fabric of regional ties and relations. However, the regional security architecture that has evolved can scarcely be described as designed. It is based on tacit expectations and

9 Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Solomon Islands Concerning the Basis for Deployment of Police, Armed Forces, and other Personnel to Solomon Islands, Australian Treaty Series, ATS 14 [2018].

10 N Maclellan, The nuclear age in the Pacific Islands, *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 17(2), 2005, p. 365.

11 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, '"Biketawa" Declaration', October 2000, <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/BIKETAWA-Declaration.pdf>.

12 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 'Boe Declaration on Regional Security', September 2018, <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>.

13 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, '2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent', June 2021, <https://www.forumsec.org/2050strategy/>.

the language of circumlocution to avoid being explicit. Karl Deutsch's concept of a 'security community' is the best descriptor for what emerged.[14] A core element of Deutsch's concept is that the regional system constitutes a community with shared values. This has developed in breadth and depth since 1947, when the first regional body, the South Pacific Commission (SPC), was established. The 1971 creation of the South Pacific Islands Forum (now PIF) as a peak political body demonstrated the extent to which its members shared hopes and aspirations. Indeed, the SPC changed its name to the Pacific Community, in part to reflect this reality. The second element of the Deutsch formulation has been demonstrated by experience. The member states have maintained such intra-regional harmony that violent conflict between members has never occurred and remains almost unthinkable.

The basis of this unstated compact has been that the region's security and that of virtually all its members would be guaranteed by the international community, with disputes settled through judicial processes or resolved by diplomacy. The physical security of the region would be underwritten by its Western sponsors, primarily Australia, New Zealand and the United States acting individually or collectively under the ANZUS Treaty but also at times Britain and France, the only extra-regional states with defence capacity in the region. To win regional states' acceptance of the Western defence agenda, these 'traditional friends' of the region would contribute to domestic stability in the region through both bilateral and multilateral development assistance.

Two events helped to give some clarity to the contours of the regional security community concept in the decade or so after the first wave of independence. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Tonga and the Soviet Union in 1976 was alleged to include an aid component that had not been provided by Western sources. The ANZUS allies reacted by deliberately seeking to enhance the security community sentiment in the region. Their response had three elements. The first was that Australia and New Zealand should take point regionally for alliance security interests. Secondly, aid was consciously linked to security by agreeing that resources should be devoted to the development needs of the region, to obviate openings for outside challenges. Thirdly, regional solidarity should be promoted to minimise any tendency towards 'adventurism' by individual states, recognising that alliance security would be seriously compromised if the USSR were to secure even one satellite state in the region.[15]

The second major perceived challenge stemmed from the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) changes to the law of the sea. This expanded the jurisdiction of the Pacific microstates to an extent completely beyond their own resources to defend. They had to rely on their own regional mechanisms embedded in UNCLOS III in order to protect their interests. Unfortunately the US was not prepared to accept all the new rules, especially those related to the primary resource the islands expected to exploit – highly migratory tuna. UNCLOS III also served as a catalyst for Soviet interest in deep-sea minerals research. This and a fisheries agreement with Kiribati in 1985 suggested that the USSR might be seeking strategic access to the region. The 1985 South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) Treaty served to exclude Moscow from regional deep-sea exploration. The ANZUS states filled the void by funding

14 KW Deutsch et al., *Political community and the North Atlantic area: international organization in the light of historical experience*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957.

15 R Herr, 'Regionalism, strategic denial and South Pacific security', *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 21(4), 1986, pp. 170–182.

the Soviet oceanographic aid projects that had provoked the treaty. The US moved also to resolve its fisheries dispute with the region by negotiating the 1988 South Pacific Tuna Treaty, which conceded coastal state jurisdiction without ratifying UNCLOS III. The treaty also provided US aid and enforcement assistance to the regional states.[16]

Thus, despite occasions of twisting the kangaroo's tail, tweaking the kiwi's beak or pulling Uncle Sam's beard ritually to get Western attention, the Pacific Islands states maintained the general characteristics of a Western-aligned security community at least until recent events in Solomon Islands.

Caribbean security and self-defence

One critical difference between microstate security in the Caribbean and that in the Pacific is the centrality of a self-defence infrastructure in the Caribbean. Only two of the 13 microstate members of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) caucus at the UN have defence establishments.[17] And, of these, only Fiji (population 900,000) has a significant military force. That the other state, Tonga (100,000), has a defence force is explained in part by its being the region's only monarchy, with the king's authority over royal guards and the militia being included in the Constitution of 1875.[18] More than half of the nine Caribbean island microstates have military establishments to provide some capacity for national self-defence. This distribution of forces is not entirely related to population. As shown in Table 1, two of the Caribbean island microstates – Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis – have smaller populations than Tonga's. Moreover, the second smallest of the regional states, Dominica, also maintained a national defence force until 1981.

16 D Hourd, 'The geopolitics of tuna: how Pacific island countries changed international standards', Young Diplomats Society [website], 13 October 2021, <https://www.theyoungdiplomats.com/post/the-geopolitics-of-tuna-how-pacific-island-countries-changed-international-standards>.

17 The use of PSIDS for these comparisons is mainly for the convenience of not complicating matters with the two French territories – French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Neither is in the UN. The 13 microstates amongst the Pacific Islands Forum's island membership are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

18 Tonga's Constitution of 1875 with Amendments through 1988, Article 22.

Table 1: National military establishments

Country	Military	Population	Area (km^2)
Antigua and Barbuda	Royal Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force	96,286	442
The Bahamas	Royal Bahamas Defence Force	385,637	13,943
Barbados	Barbados Defence Force	286,641	430
Dominica	N/A	71,625	751
Grenada	N/A	111,454	344
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Kitts and Nevis Defence Force	52,441	261
Saint Lucia	N/A	181,889	539
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	N/A	110,211	389
Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force	1,389,843	5,130

Interestingly, in light of one of the arguments against establishing national defence services in the Pacific, Dominica's decision to disband its military only three years after independence was motivated largely by a failed army coup. However, the country's compensating response illustrated another significant difference from the Pacific. Dominica was able to replace the loss of a national defence force by joining a regional mutual defence pact which gave it rights to call upon shared military resources from its regional neighbours for its physical defence.

In 1982, Dominica joined two other regional states without national self-defence forces – Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – in a mutual defence arrangement with two neighbours that did have military establishments – Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados. This 1982 treaty established, with US support but without US membership, the Regional Security System (RSS) to provide for the defence of the eastern Caribbean.[19] Saint Kitts and Nevis joined on independence in 1983, adding its defence force to the RSS. Grenada entered the RSS in 1985 without a national military, after recovering from the upheavals leading to the US intervention in 1983.

Thus, since independence, the small island states of the Caribbean have accepted some direct responsibility for their self-defence individually and/or cooperatively. In fairness, there are some important factors that make security self-help by the Caribbean both more necessary and more practical than is the case in the Pacific. Compactness is a key consideration in terms of cooperation and burden sharing. This illustrated by the distance between the most remote capitals within each region. The distance from Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, to Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, is 2,311 km. However, only 750 km separates the most remote capitals of the seven member states of the RSS. By contrast, 7,835 km separates Koror, the capital of Palau, from Avarua, the capital of the Cook Islands.

19 CW Bishop, *Caribbean regional security: the challenges to creating formal military relationships in the English-speaking Caribbean*, Master of Military Art And Science thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2002, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA406428.pdf>.

Geographic compactness makes significant defence cooperation amongst the Caribbean microstates possible, while their geographic location has made some self-defence capacity more necessary. The Pacific states are remote from major global population centres, while the Caribbean states are virtually surrounded by nearby markets with hundreds of millions of potential customers. Situated around the entrance to the Caribbean Sea and close to both South America and the US, the Caribbean microstates are subject to a great concentration of significant threats to state sovereignty. Substantial amounts of commercial and private maritime traffic come close to the populated areas, requiring marine surveillance and patrolling both for border protection and for maritime safety. Despite their smaller exclusive economic zones compared with those of the Pacific microstates, their fishing resources need protection, being important to the local economies for food, export and tourism. Piracy and robbery at sea are centuries-old threats that remain very real today. Because of the proximity of the region to sources of supply as well as to the target markets, smuggling of drugs, guns and people through the region has been a significant threat to the microstates and to the destination states, particularly the US.[20] Consequently, the US Department of Defense Southern Command and the US Coast Guard have worked closely with the regional states and the RSS to provide financial assistance and equipment, as well as operational support. This is supplemented by the extra-regional states such Britain, France and the Netherlands that have some island dependencies in the region.

Pacific–Caribbean regional security lessons

The postcolonial defence infrastructure of the island microstates of the Caribbean region contrasts noticeably with that of the Pacific Islands region. PIF concerns that the Pacific regional security agenda would be pushed to the periphery of the emerging Indo-Pacific defence arrangements are well justified, because Pacific microstates do not have a seat at the table where the critical security decisions are being made. Having a substantial defence establishment with intra-regional mutual defence ties gives the Caribbean island states an important edge in promoting their security agenda with larger powers. Bilateral and multilateral military cooperation with extra-regional powers such as Canada, the UK and the US provides important avenues for defence communication. Significantly, their defence capacity also buys these states a seat in the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States.

If avenues for defence influence similar to those of the Caribbean island states existed in the Pacific Islands region, the PSIDS countries could more directly protect their security interests in the evolving Indo-Pacific. As it is, the mechanisms available for the PSIDS to project their defence interests are limited. The primary defence vehicle is the relatively recently formed South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM). The SPDMM comprises ministers from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, New Zealand, France, Chile and Australia.[21] The reach of the SPDMM demonstrates another defence contrast with the Caribbean. While the US and UK have been included as observers and Japan will be added in 2022, there is no prospect of more PSIDS representation at a ministerial level unless new PSIDS defence ministries are created. The only

20 'Analysing maritime crime on Caribbean waters during the pandemic', *Marine Insight*, 31 July 2020, <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/analysing-maritime-crime-on-caribbean-waters-during-the-pandemic/>.

21 Minister for Defence, 'South Pacific defence ministers lay foundation for enhanced regional response', media release, Australian Government, 8 October 2021, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/peter-dutton/media-releases/south-pacific-defence-ministers-lay-foundation-enhanced>.

inclusive regional mechanism is the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC). The FRSC serves as a clearing house for all PIF member states for a range of specialist security agency concerns, including customs, police and political security, but is not a vehicle for defence cooperation either intra-regionally or externally.

There are important domestic consequences arising from the absence of national defence infrastructures in most PSIDS. Except in Fiji and Tonga, there are no defence departments debating defence budgets in terms of national needs and priorities. Critically this absence stands as a missing element in any whole-of-government assessment regarding – as Dame Meg cautioned – the price to be paid if a country sought to commercialise strategic access for aid. Without this element, potential economic benefits cannot be balanced by cogently argued defence consequences. Similarly intra-regional priorities cannot be framed through consultations with fellow military establishments, as occurs within the RSS. The region's 'traditional friends' do not have local military counterparts to sit in national departmental and government cabinet meetings where they can routinely explain and justify extra-regional strategic priorities. This lacuna can also be a serious technical concern. It goes to such issues as the protocols for sharing sensitive information. Nevertheless, the most important consequence may be at the political level, where the value of decades of Western contribution to regional defence is not fully understood and thus under-appreciated.

By contrast, the military architecture of the Caribbean microstates involves both intra-regional and extra-regional infrastructure. The cost and requirements of national and regional strategic objectives thus are far more transparent. Disputes over the balance between development needs and defence demands occur within an established framework where all interests are represented, albeit not necessarily equally. Since the Caribbean microstates directly pay for at least some of the costs of interdicting smugglers, enforcing maritime safety, fisheries protection and the like, they more readily understand how much external powers contribute to their security on a regular basis. In the Caribbean, defence burden sharing is an open and negotiable topic between the Caribbean microstates and their Western partners. This is not to argue that the Pacific microstates do not have some intuitive appreciation of the value of the Western defence contribution to their security; rather, Western defence support is expected/assumed without a clear understanding of the costs involved.

A key feature of the Western defence relationship with the Pacific region is that it is so mutually supportive that it can be taken for granted by both sides. Its near invisibility at the day-to-day level may help to explain why there are few clear examples of island states initiating an 'adventurous' security relationship to put aid pressure on the region's Western sponsors. The 1976 Tongan example is probably the only one that fits the stereotypical concern. The 1985 Kiribati fisheries agreement with the USSR was not intended to be a lever for more aid but rather was driven more by Kiribati annoyance in the ongoing dispute with the US over tuna rights. Other examples of dangerous liaisons, such as selling passports, flags of convenience and money laundering, were imprudent commercial opportunism that did not challenge the strategic balance in the region. Historically it has been the analysts, media and academic commentariat who have promoted the

idea that the islands will endanger Western security unless bought off by more aid. Virtually any time an apparent risk to Western security is identified, someone (and, occasionally, this author as well) will lay the blame at the doorstep of Australia or some other Western power for defaulting on an island state's development needs.

A partial explanation for the trope of security and Western aid to the Pacific can be found in the nature of strategic challenges in previous decades. Until recently, there was no genuine extra-regional strategic pressure on the Pacific microstates. The USSR was never in a position to present a real threat to Western interests in the region. Thus, it was a relatively safe game to play the 'Soviet card' to convince Western treasuries to increase aid to the islands. Unfortunately the Cold War concept of strategic denial made it easy to slide this thinking into analyses that would identify strategic advantage in almost every venture the People's Republic of China (PRC) makes into the Pacific Islands region. Initially there had been some doubt as to how seriously to apply strategic denial but this has become rather more serious since Xi Jinping ascended to the presidency of the PRC in 2013. The more aggressive approach to projecting Chinese interests globally has appeared more threatening as the PRC expands and deepens its presence in the region. Moreover, new appreciation of strategic risk in the 21st century has added to the range of types of PRC aid that have strategic implications. Communications raise significant issues for cybersecurity, hence the attempts to pre-empt the availability of this field as an area for Chinese investment in the Pacific Islands region.[22] Indeed, even aid itself has been made suspect through the propagation of the trope of 'debt trap diplomacy'.

The China Security Agreement with Solomon Islands 2022

The controversial Solomon Islands security agreement with the PRC burst like a bombshell when it leaked on social media in March 2022. It is extraordinary on many accounts but not least for the brazenness of the PRC claim for extraterritoriality and the Solomons willingness to own the agreement. The language and content of the draft agreement suggest that it has been initiated by Beijing essentially to meet its security concerns in Solomons Islands.[23] It provides directly for the possibility of Chinese military intervention. With Honiara's permission, the Solomons would allow the PRC to use the Chinese military 'to protect the safety of Chinese personnel and major projects'.[24] As a side objective, it seems clear that China wanted the same status in the Solomons through this agreement as Australia had with its 2017 security treaty. That the Solomons agreed to this while Australian and other Pacific Islands forces were in Honiara at the request of the Solomons speaks to the urgency felt by Beijing and the willingness of Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare to accommodate the PRC.

22 E Graham, 'Mind the gap: views of security in the Pacific', *The Interpreter*, 11 October 2018, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/mind-gap-views-security-pacific>.

23 E Wasuka & S Dziedzic, 'China's Solomon Islands embassy requested weapons after riots broke out in Honiara, leaked documents reveal', *Pacific Beat*, ABC Radio, 12 April 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-12/chinas-solomon-islands-embassy-request-weapons/100985070>.

24 M Shoebridge, 'Decision to bring China's military into the South Pacific in the hands of Solomon Islands PM', *The Strategist*, 25 March 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/decision-to-bring-chinas-military-into-the-south-pacific-in-the-hands-of-solomon-islands-pm/>.
As of writing, the signed (and presumably ratified) agreement is not is not available. All quotations on this agreement are from references to the leaked draft agreement, which said to be very close to the final document.

What has the security agreement gained for either party? The pluses for China could range from the strategic to the economic. A long-term strategic aim may be in part a reaction to the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) agreement, to compel Australia to look away from the South China Sea to defend its security closer to home. A less grand political/strategic aim may be simply to establish some legitimacy as a security influence in the region. Minimally, Beijing expects the agreement to establish its parity with Australia in the Solomons and to enable it to independently protect its economic stake in the Solomons. There are some very sizeable negatives on the other side of the ledger for China. The gamble has invited higher levels of scrutiny and pushback extra-regionally as well as by regional states. The prospect that Beijing is 'trying it on' to validate military intervention in defence of its Belt and Road and other major projects may well serve as a negative going forward, especially if it acquires an adverse image like 'debt trap diplomacy'.

For Solomon Islands, the negatives feel real but are vaguer than the meagre positives. Perhaps the only real benefit is the one claimed by Prime Minister Sogavare, that Solomon Islands has an additional avenue of security support.[25] Closer ties with China may produce some increased economic benefits, although these are not specified in the security agreement. Adverse consequences may include increased domestic opposition to the Sogavare government for its closer ties with the PRC. Renewed ethnic tensions or even open revolt could be expected if Chinese police or military forces were used to protect a major development project forced on a Malaita that has vowed never to allow Chinese money into the province.[26]

Thus far, there has been little to suggest that the Solomons' dangerous liaison will serve as a catalyst for more regional states to rush into the new market for trading in strategic access. The security community sentiment appears to be holding sway elsewhere in the region. Indeed, the regional response appears to have brushed aside Sogavare's outrage at criticism or China's attempt to stir the colonialism pot. The President of the Federated States of Micronesia, David Panuelo, wrote immediately to Sogavare to express his concern that the agreement would put the region at risk by embroiling it directly in a broader geopolitical power struggle.[27] He argued the security community line that Sogavare has an obligation to recognise that his decision has consequences for others in the region. Similarly, New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta reinforced this concern by asking the PIF to address how 'the sovereign interests of Solomons may well impact on the regional sovereignty and security interests of the Pacific'.[28]

Conclusions

Whatever adjustments are made to regional security in the wash-up from China's security agreement with Solomon Islands, there is no doubt that development assistance to the PIF states will remain a central contributor to the Australian and Western defence posture in the region.

25 Corlett & Hurst, 'Solomon Islands prime minister says foreign criticism of China security deal "very insulting".

26 E Cavanough, 'Solomon Islands and the switch from Taiwan to China', *The Saturday Paper*, 15–21 January 2022, <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2022/01/15/solomon-islands-and-the-switch-taiwan-china/164216520013157#hrd>.

27 Office of the President, Federated States of Micronesia, 30 March 2022, <https://gov.fm/files/Letter_to_T_H__Prime_Minister_Manasseh_Sogavare.pdf>.

28 T Manch, 'Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta says Pacific leaders may need to meet as Solomon Islands prepares to ink China security deal', *Stuff*, 2 April 2022, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/128238766/foreign-minister-nanaia-mahuta-says-pacific-leaders-may-need-to-meet-as-solomon-islands-prepares-to-ink-china-security-deal>.

Basic humanitarian compassion for our neighbours will remain the core argument, but security-based arguments will now be advanced with greater authority to mute parliamentary criticisms or bureaucratic demands for financial savings. And for Australia, fully embracing the spirit of the Boe Declaration on climate change will remain a challenge. Consequently, critics will still attribute neglect and inadequate aid as reasons for any security setbacks in the region. Playing the 'China card' is unlikely to be taken out of the islands' negotiating playbook but perhaps it will be done more cautiously. Regardless, if this card is played, the presumed threat is likely to be viewed as less hollow than during the Cold War.

One unfortunate legacy of the aid-for-security analysis of earlier decades has been the obscuring of the shared defence interests of the West and Pacific island states. The region has broadly adhered to the security community concept and its compatibility with Western self-defence needs. This assumption is being challenged overtly by the China–Solomon Islands security agreement and rather less visibly by the PRC's relationship with other regional states. The critical challenge for both the traditional friends of the region and the Pacific island states is that the Western states have not staked out a clear approach to appropriate relations with China. Thus, there is no convincing security line for the Pacific states to take in their relationships with the PRC. The defence components of the West's security red lines in the region often appear more like landmines that an island state must step on to learn they are there. Reactively outbidding Chinese investments in communications or other infrastructure projects to remove a defence threat only heightens the appearance of the West purchasing security through aid.

Perhaps the most difficult adjustment for Australia and other traditional Western friends of the region will be to find a way to engage in a frank discussion of the role of defence in regional security. The absence of national self-defence debates in most of the region will complicate inserting a balanced consideration of defence at the regional level. The Caribbean microstates' solution of regionally networked national defence establishments buttressed by a security pact might have been possible once but is irreproducible today. As long as the defence contributions made by the region's traditional friends to protect fisheries, interdict smugglers, undertake search and rescue and deliver humanitarian disaster assistance are unrecognised, they exist as uncosted aid in island national budgets. The comfortable expectation that Western security resources will be available when needed without charge or hesitation might appear as a disguised free-rider issue in the way Pacific microstates approach self-defence, but for the overall contribution the island states make through their support for the regional security community.

The China–Solomons security agreement has damaged the trust needed to maintain the regional security community concept. The cost of adjusting Western defence budgets to account for the potential risks created by the agreement will be real even if Sogavare's pledge not to allow a Chinese naval base is upheld. These defence costs are unlikely to come out of Western aid budgets, which, indeed, can be expected to increase, if only on the logic of a half century linking aid to Western security interests in the region. It is extremely doubtful that Sogavare considered these costs in acceding to the Chinese request for the agreement, although we will never know what difference a defence minister sitting in his cabinet might have made. The problem now is persuading regional neighbours to take defence consequences more realistically in the regional security debate, especially at a time when China appears willing to make defence a regional issue.

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The Solidaristic Society of Maritime Nations

Dr Basil Germond

Abstract

This article applies the concept of 'international society' (as proposed by the English School of International Relations) to assess the extent to which, and how, the current geopolitical upheavals will impact on the stability of the global maritime order. It claims that whereas all states share an interest in maintaining some degree of stability at sea, maritime nations, united by common objectives and values around freedom of navigation, maritime security, and marine environment protection, constitute a 'solidaristic society'. To fulfil common objectives and uphold shared values, which are currently being challenged, maritime nations rely on a 'collective seapower' strategy, whereby the burden and benefits of a free, secure, and resilient ocean are shared in a non-mutually exclusive way. Whereas the direct outcome is a strengthening of the solidaristic society of maritime nations, the question remains whether this will eventually contribute to the overall stability of the current maritime order and help preventing the rise of illiberalism at sea.

Introduction

The 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which constitutes a direct violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter,[1] has engendered a 'paradigm shift'[2] in terms of Western responses to Russia's aggression. This war is likely to have long-term effects on the global security architecture and on defence spending.[3]

For the discipline of international relations, the Ukraine war demands a critical reflection on the discipline and on the explanatory power of its various theories. Realism has emerged as the dominant theoretical framework that can explain power politics and the centrality of deterrence; moreover, long-forgotten predictions such as John Mearsheimer's 'we will soon miss the Cold War'[4] and Samuel Huntington's 'the West against the rest'[5] are suddenly brought back to the forefront of debates in international relations. Constructivist approaches, with their emphasis on identities and perceptions, help in understanding how the new Cold War narratives and practices are framed within binary identities, ideational factors, and 'banal geopolitics'.[6] For its part, the

1 UN General Assembly, Resolution A/ES-11/L.1, 1 March 2022.

2 UK Foreign Secretary's remarks at the Atlantic Council for the 2022 Christopher J. Makins Lecture, 10 March 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/uk-foreign-minister-putins-invasion-of-ukraine-is-a-paradigm-shift-on-the-scale-of-9-11/>.

3 S Biscop, B Dessein & J Roctus, *Putin is creating the multipolar world he (thought he) wanted*, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations Policy Brief No. 156, March 2022, <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2022/03/spb156-sven.pdf?type=pdf>; MC Fischer & P Walkenhorst, 'Germany's 180 turn on foreign and security policy in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine – European and transatlantic implications', *New Perspectives on Global & European Dynamics*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 11 March 2022, <https://globaleurope.eu/globalization/germanys-180-turn-on-foreign-and-security-policy-in-the-wake-of-russias-war-against-ukraine-european-and-transatlantic-implications/>.

4 J Mearsheimer, 'Why we will soon miss the Cold War', *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1990, <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/politics/foreign/mearsh.htm>.

5 SP Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilization', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72(3), 1993, pp. 22–49.

6 F Ciut & I Klinke, 'Lost in conceptualization: reading the 'new Cold War' with critical geopolitics', *Political Geography*, vol. 29(6), 2010, pp. 323–332.

explanatory power of liberalism has been put in question in light of the invasion of Ukraine.[7] Indeed, the Ukraine war confirms that Francis Fukuyama's 'end of History'[8] is not for today and that the claim that economically interdependent states do not risk the stability of the global liberal order (as this would harm their own interest) has been proven to be, if not wrong, at least not an unbreakable 'law' of international relations. This has highlighted the main weakness of liberalism when it comes to predicting the occurrence of war: its over-optimism and belief in progress.[9]

That said, the unprecedented level of sanctions imposed on Russia and Russian assets, including businesses and individuals linked to the regime, demonstrates that whereas the 'triumph of the West, of the Western idea'[10] is not global, Western nations have nevertheless stepped up in solidarity to a degree hardly seen since World War II. In other words, 'NATO has never been more united than it is today'[11] and 'we see … a more unified West'.[12] This is demonstrated by the West's commitment to upholding core international law norms (such as *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*) and to defending shared values (such as human rights) even at a substantial economic cost and with the risk of escalation. This exemplifies the deep-rooted strength of liberal values in Western societies and political structures.

The English School of international relations, with its concept of 'international society', accounts for both power politics and cooperation, but the latter is explained outside the scope of liberalism. States cooperate within the international society not as a result of human 'progress' but out of their rational desire to maintain some degree of stability, civility and order while still competing for power.[13] However, the existence of the international society is never granted,[14] as Russia's disregard for *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* demonstrates. Consequently, like-minded liberal states, which share not only a common desire to maintain order but also common values and the sense of a common belonging (thus constituting a more limited but solidaristic society of states), shall enduringly uphold shared norms and work together to strengthen the international society.

This article applies the concept of international society to assess the extent to which, and how, the current geopolitical upheavals will impact on the stability of the global maritime order. It claims that despite divergences between states, there is a compromise around the need to maintain some degree of stability within the global maritime order that benefits everyone without costing too much to any state. However, it is possible that a member of this society deems it necessary (and rational) to violate existing rules to fulfil objectives in a self-interested way. For their part, maritime nations constitute a solidaristic society around liberal values and the centrality of

7 SM Walt, 'An international relations theory guide to the war in Ukraine', *Foreign Policy*, 8 March 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/08/an-international-relations-theory-guide-to-ukraines-war/>.
8 F Fukuyama, 'The end of history', *The National Interest*, no. 16, 1989, pp. 3–18.
9 M Mann, 'Have wars and violence declined?', *Theory and Society*, vol. 47(1), 2018, pp. 37–60.
10 Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3.
11 Joe Biden, Twitter post at 1:02 am on 25 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/JoeBiden/status/1507160840566460416>.
12 'Remarks by President Biden in State of the Union Address', *The White House* [website], 2 March 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/03/02/remarks-by-president-biden-in-state-of-the-union-address/>.
13 H Bull, *The anarchical society: a study of order in world politics*, Fourth edition, Red Globe Press, London, 2012 [1977], pp. 23–26.
14 Ibid., p. 49.

freedom of navigation, including upholding existing rules at a cost. This translates into a collective seapower strategy whereby maritime nations attempt to stabilise the current maritime order and prevent the rise of illiberalism at sea in an era of global competition.

The International Society of States

The concept of an 'international society of states' (or just 'international society') originates in the ideas and writings of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull (fathers of what will come to be known as the English School of international relations), who, since the late 1950s, have rejected the 'either realist or liberalist' framing of international relations as a discipline.[15] While acknowledging the role played by both power politics and interdependence in explaining international politics, they rather emphasised the rationality of states as the main explanatory factor for the relative degree of stability that has characterised international relations in the postwar era.[16] In line with the Grotian tradition of 'rationalism', the English School rejects deterministic explanations: the international system is anarchical (since there is no supranational government) but sovereign states (which are equal in rights, not in power) constitute a 'society' of states, which explains why there is a good degree of order and little interstate violence despite the anarchical nature of the system. Violence may be endemic to the anarchical system (wars happen after all), but the rationality of actors limits the occurrence of violence to a large extent.

States have very different conceptions of 'justice' and competing foreign policy objectives, but being and thinking 'the same' is not a necessary condition for coexistence and for the international society to exist. Indeed, since states' interest is to maintain some degree of order and civility among themselves (and to bring stability to their relations), they share a common interest in restraining the use of force, in regulating international relations and in abiding (most of the time) by international law, so coexistence is made possible.

Depending on the depth of the objectives and values shared, there is a spectrum from a pluralistic to a solidaristic international society.[17] A pluralistic society is the minimalist version described by Hedley Bull: members share the desire to maintain order among themselves but actively cultivate their differences; states have to agree over some basic common rules, institutional procedures, and behaviour (mainly non-aggression and diplomatic rules), and they have to abide by what has been agreed. Rules are thus respected like 'road rules', based on the principle of reciprocity: it does not cost much to respect them, but the collective gain is substantial.

A solidaristic society is the maximalist version; members share more objectives than simply the desire to maintain order and are ready to act upon (or enforce) the objectives they share. Members of a solidaristic society share values and identities (e.g. the Western conception of human rights). Their working together and sharing both objectives and values in turn means that members of

15 B Buzan, *From international to world society? English School theory and the social structure of globalisation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 6–7; see also H Bull, 'Martin Wight and the theory of international relations: the second Martin Wight Memorial Lecture', *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 2(2), 1976, pp. 101–116.

16 Bull, 2012, pp. 51–52.

17 Buzan, 2004, p. 49.

a solidaristic international society have a bigger common interest in maintaining these mutually profitable arrangements and thus, since the existence of the international society shall never be taken as granted, it is rational for them to work towards maintaining, and even strengthening, the international society, even when upholding rules generates a cost.

At a *global* level, we have not yet reached the conditions for a solidaristic society to emerge. However, Barry Buzan claims that the concept of international society shall not only be applied globally (as was envisaged by Bull); it is also meaningful at other *sub-global* or regional levels.[18] This is where a limited version (in terms of membership or geographical scope) of a solidaristic international society can emerge. Solidarism can be more pronounced at the regional level due to the sharing of more objectives, values and institutions.[19] Indeed, whereas traditional English School scholars have almost exclusively focused on human rights as the pinnacle of solidaristic shared values, economic solidarism does explain the emergence of sub-regional solidaristic societies[20] (e.g. the EU); similarly, there are solidaristic security values, which are found at a sub-global level, and a version of collective security can be found in security communities like NATO.[21]

Western nations consciously share common interests and values beyond coexistence and have a feeling of a common belonging and of being bound by a common set of rules, which are reinforced by deep economic interdependence and shared institutional frameworks.[22] Additionally, the West champions the core rules of the international society in a proactive way (enforcement) in opposition to those who violate them, even at a cost (e.g. current sanctions against Russia). The West does not only form a self-contained solidaristic society of states; it proactively promotes its core norms within and beyond its polities. The extent to which this contributes to 'solidarising' the whole of the international society is open to debate.[23]

The concept of a solidaristic society is thus useful not only as an alternative characterisation of the West beyond its liberal nature but also as a tool to understand how the West operates in the current era of growing authoritarianism and challenges to core values of the international society. This concept is applied below to the analysis of the maritime order. At the global level, the pluralistic society at sea is at the minimalist end of the spectrum, with states sharing minimal, self-preserving objectives around freedom of navigation. However, at a sub-global level, there is a solidaristic society of maritime nations, which are bound by common maritime interests, values and cooperative mechanisms.

18 Ibid., pp. 16–18, 47.

19 Y Stivachtis, 'Interrogating regional international societies, questioning the global international society', *Global Discourse*, vol. 5(3), 2015, pp. 327–340.

20 Buzan, 2004, p. 19.

21 Ibid., p. 149.

22 C Manning already recognised that there exists 'a kind of sub-civilisation, with a specific ethos', as for example NATO: see CAW Manning, *The nature of international society*, LSE, G Bells & Sons, London, 1962, p. 153. Although English School scholars interested in the sub-global level of analysis of the international society preferred to focus on regional societies (e.g. Europe) rather than trans-regional societies, the 'Western community serves as the most obvious candidate for a subglobal international society' (see YA Stivachtis, 'The regional dimension of international society', in C Navari & D Green, *Guide to the English School in international studies*, John Wiley & Sons, London, 2014, p. 117.

23 For a similar argument in relation to the EU and its solidarisation of international politics see B Ahrens & T Diez, 'Solidarisation and its limits: the EU and the transformation of international society', *Global Discourse*, vol. 5(3), 2015, pp. 341–355.

The Pluralistic Society and the Challenges to the Global Maritime Order

The principle of freedom of the sea (*mare liberum* as opposed to *mare clausum*) originates in Hugo Grotius's legal claim made in 1609 in a bid to secure the United Provinces of the Netherlands's interests in the Indian Ocean against challengers (notably Spain, Portugal and England).[24] Within the Westphalian system it was eventually agreed that it was in the best interest of all to adhere to the norm of freedom of the sea. Thus, the maritime domain was not to be divided into zones of exclusive sovereignty but was to remain a free space, a global lane of communication enabling the free flow of goods and capital.[25] This denotes a self-preserving, mutually beneficial arrangement for trade and power projection that has been the basis of the pluralistic society at sea, within which maritime and continental states alike share the common objective to maintain some degree of order at sea, and notably freedom of navigation as well as maritime safety and security. Coexistence at sea is self-centred in that members of the pluralistic society contribute to a stable maritime world order insofar as it does not contradict their national interest (Figure 1).

Within a pluralistic society, to facilitate relations in a mutually beneficial way, technical coexistence requires states to agree on a set of technical rules and institutions (e.g. Universal Postal Union, International Civil Aviation Organization). Coexistence at sea has necessitated agreement on common standards concerning navigation, communication and safety, as well as on the relevant legal frameworks. Today, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is accepted as the 'constitutive instrument' that 'outlines the rights and obligations of States'.[26] When it comes to regulating international shipping, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) plays a leading role in developing international rules and accepted standards for maritime security, maritime safety and marine environment protection.

24 M Brito Vieira, 'Mare liberum vs. mare clausum: Grotius, Freitas, and Selden's debate on dominion over the seas', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 64(3), 2003, pp. 361–377.

25 CL Connery, 'Pacific rim discourse: the US global imaginary in the late Cold War years', in R Wilson & A Dirlik (eds), *Asia/Pacific as space of cultural production*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1995, pp. 30–56; PE Steinberg, 'The maritime mystique: sustainable development, capital mobility, and nostalgia in the world ocean', *Environment & Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 17(4), 1999, pp. 403–426.

26 R Beckman & Z Sun, 'The relationship between UNCLOS and IMO instruments', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Ocean Law and Policy*, vol. 2(2), 2017, p. 201.

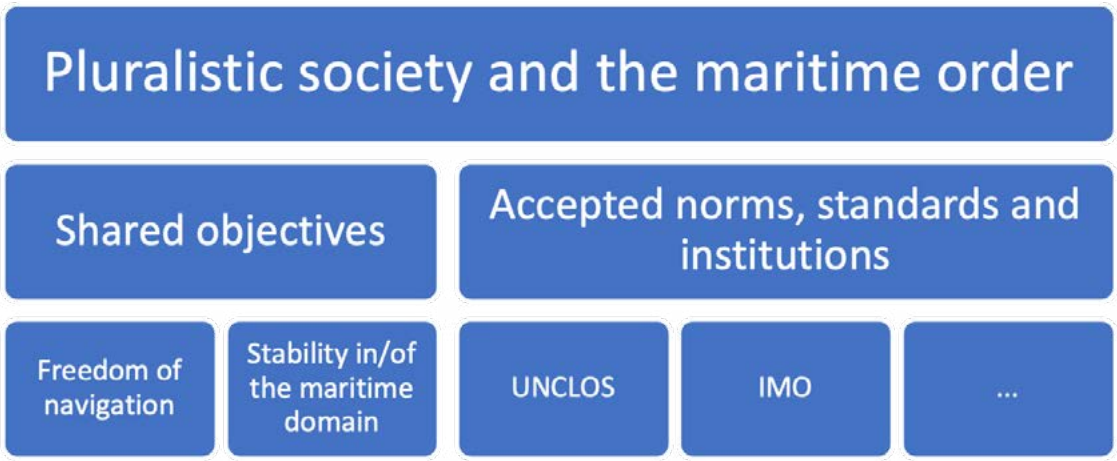

Figure 1: The pluralistic society and the maritime order

The all-encompassing pluralistic society comprises states as different as the US and the UK at one end of the spectrum and Russia at the other; they all benefit from freedom of navigation in their own way. Within a pluralistic society, it is in all members' interest to keep the established, mutually beneficial arrangements. However, norms and institutions tend to serve the interests of dominant actors within the international society. It can be argued that the organisation of the maritime order in general, and freedom of the sea in particular, has benefited sea powers (such as Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries and the US in the 20th century) more than land powers in facilitating empire building, global leadership and hegemony.[27] In turn, dominant sea powers have striven to shape the international (maritime) order in a way that would cement their dominance: 'the expanded notion of sea power as against purely naval power is dependent upon the regimes created by progressive maritime law'.[28] The contemporary, law-based international maritime order is a creation of the dominant sea powers that continues to work in the best interest of maritime nations, although it practically serves the interests of all, since economic prosperity in a globalised world order depends on the degree to which the ocean can remain free and safe for trade, communication and (sustainable) exploitation of resources.

27 E Mancke, 'Early modern expansion and the politicization of oceanic space', *Geographical Review*, vol. 9(2), 1999, pp. 225–236; J Glete, *Warfare at sea, 1500–1650: maritime conflicts and the transformation of Europe*, Routledge, London, 2000; G Till, *Seapower: a guide for the 21st century*, Frank Cass, London, 2004, p. 16; RW Cox, 'The crisis of world order and the problem of international organization in the 1980s', *International Journal*, vol. 35(2), 1980, pp. 370–395; T Boswell & M Sweat, 'Hegemony, long waves, and major wars: a time series analysis of systemic dynamics, 1496–1967', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35(2), pp. 123–149, 1991; G Modelski & WR Thompson, *Leading sectors and world powers: the coevolution of global economics and politics*, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1996; BR Posen, 'Command of the commons', *International Security*, vol. 28(1), 2003, pp. 5–53.

28 J Kraska, 'Grasping "the influence of law on sea power"', *Naval War College Review*, vol. 62(3), 2009, p. 121.

The core principles of the pluralistic society at sea (i.e. freedom of navigation and law of the sea) have recently been challenged by traditional land powers which contest the status quo (revisionism). The invasion of Ukraine highlights Russia's limited acceptance of the pluralist norms.[29] In particular, Russia posits that the non-intervention norm and the agreed rules of the pluralistic society do not apply to its neighbourhood,[30] which includes the Black Sea. States which violate core principles of the international society (e.g. *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*) put themselves outside the international society and consider themselves not to be bound by its norms. Reciprocally, members of the society are likely to consider that such states are excluded from the society;[31] this can result in communication breakdown or ending institutional cooperation. For example, in reaction to the invasion of Ukraine, the members of the Arctic Council decided to boycott talks with Russia, *de facto* putting the work of the council on hold. When a 'minor' actor remains outside the international society (e.g. North Korea), the implications for the society itself are limited; however, when a 'major' player like Russia *de facto* exits the society, the consequences can be substantial. For example, in the High North, the risk is that Russia might intensify its engagement with non-Western, non-Arctic states, such as China and India; the pausing of the Arctic Council might also jeopardise the safeguards against the Chinese fishing fleet endeavours in the region.[32]

In another example, to assert its claims over contested areas in the South China Sea, 'China takes international law seriously, but wishes to remake certain elements'; in particular, China puts forward the argument that:

> … the extent of a state's maritime domain should principally be a question of sovereign decision informed by national economic and security needs, subject only to broad constraints of reasonableness and neighbourly accommodation.[33]

In practice, China has applied a 'grey zone' strategy in a bid to modify the status quo without crossing the threshold of wartime operations and risking escalation: claims over fisheries rights, citizen protection, the use of paramilitary, police and naval forces, and broader geopolitical claims are interlinked and coordinated, with one reinforcing the need and justification for the other.[34] These examples highlight the fragility (or, in Bull's words, the thinness) of the pluralistic society at sea.

29 It has been argued that Russia has never really been more than an 'entrant' into the society of states. See I Neumann, 'Entry into international society reconceptualised: the case of Russia', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 37(2), 2011, pp. 463–484.

30 K Kaczmarska, 'Russia's droit de regard: pluralist norms and the sphere of influence', *Global Discourse*, vol. 5(3), 2015, pp. 434–448.

31 B Buzan, 'From international system to international society: structural realism and regime theory meet the English school', *International Organization*, vol. 47(3), 1993, p. 349.

32 E Buchanan, 'The Ukraine war and the future of the Arctic', *RUSI Commentary*, 18 March 2022, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraine-war-and-future-arctic>.

33 D Guilfoyle, 'The rule of law and maritime security: understanding lawfare in the South China Sea', *International Affairs*, vol. 95(5), 2019, p. 1017.

34 A Patalano, 'When strategy is "hybrid" and not "grey": reviewing Chinese military and constabulary coercion at sea', *The Pacific Review*, vol. 31(6), 2018, pp. 811–839, 813–14, 831.

The Solidaristic Society of Maritime Nations and Collective Sea Power

At a sub-global level, a group of like-minded states, conscious of their similarities and common interests, constitute a solidaristic society of maritime nations, within which the depth of the objectives they share is greater. Members, whose security and prosperity strongly depend on the sea, uphold freedom of navigation, contribute to maritime security and ocean governance, and

work towards a 'resilient ocean'.[35] They are also united by their sharing core maritime traditions and values (c.f. below). And they are ready to proactively defend them to address challenges to the stability of the global maritime order, which indeed serves their (maritime) interest first, but more generally is understood as benefiting everyone in that it promotes free trade, economic growth, employment, and cultural exchanges (Figure 2).

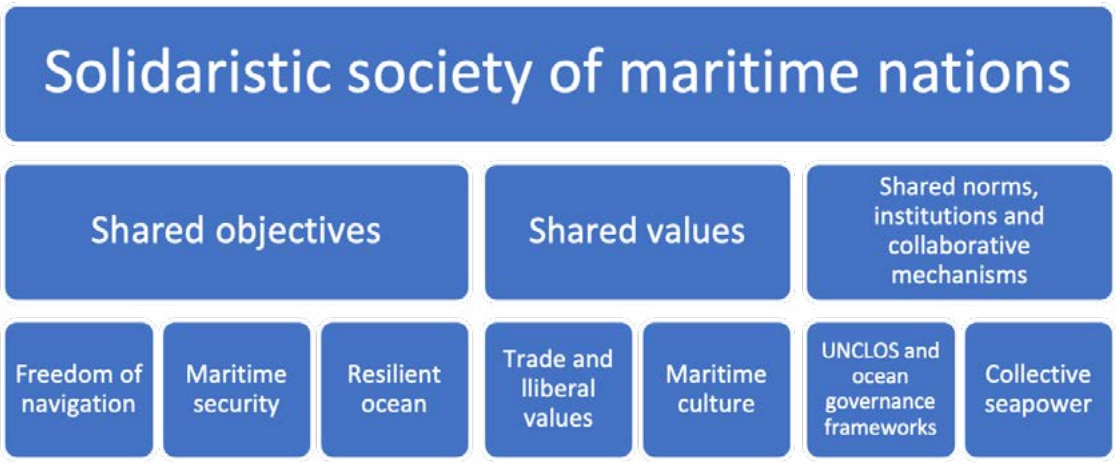

Figure 2: The solidaristic society of maritime nations

Today's members of the solidaristic society of maritime nations (on a spectrum from core maritime states such as the UK, Denmark or Singapore to the US, Canada or Australia) share a century-long history of cooperative behaviour without major ideological or geopolitical insurmountable divergencies (neither on land nor at sea), except in the case of Imperial Japan in the first half of the 20th century. Like-minded maritime nations share similar defence, security, foreign policy and economic objectives. They share a common desire to uphold freedom of navigation but also a feeling of a common belonging to a society of nations that share values such as freedom, free trade, human rights, and political accountability. Today, this roughly equates with the West, although seapower identity 'has become a collective Western possession rather than the sole preserve of individual states'.[36] The connection between Western and maritime identity explains as follows:

35 For an application of the concept of resilient ocean, see HM Government, *Global Britain in a competitive age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, March 2021, CP 403, p. 92, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age-_the_Integrated_Review_of_Security__Defence__Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf>.

36 A Lambert, *Seapower states*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2018, p. 328; see also pp. 7, 323, 325.

The flourishing of a maritime and seafaring culture has been associated with trade values.[37] Although it can be found outside Western societies, maritime culture embodies the 'free spirit of humanity',[38] since it requires a degree of openness and freedom that is less frequently encountered in authoritarian contexts. But more than trade values, seapower is intrinsically linked to liberal values. Possessing substantial naval power and depending on maritime trade for one's economic prosperity does not equal to being a maritime nation. Andrew Lambert established that "seapower" is more than strategic *naval* power; it requires a 'conscious choice' to develop a seapower *culture*. '[S]eapower great powers', he claims, have flourished as a consequence of their relative weakness compared to land powers, for they had to use their comparative advantage in maritime trade. Such an agenda has better been served by progressive, inclusive political systems, as demonstrated in, among others, Athens, Venice and England; this explains the strong interlinkage between trade, seapower, liberalism and democracy, which is still core to contemporary Western identity.[39] Maritime values have traditionally been linked to the interests and attributes of the dominant sea powers (as opposed to the more authoritarian and mercantilist land powers), which have proactively nourished their maritime identity. For example, since the Elizabethan era, the sea and what it brings to England's power has constantly been romanticised and glorified in arts and discourses.[40] In turn, the maritime culture or outlook that is part of the necessary conditions for seapower to flourish has facilitated progressist political systems (albeit not in a way that has prevented colonisation and its wrongdoings). This explains why the sea and seafaring values have historically been represented more negatively by authoritarian rulers (e.g. China's Qing Dynasty, 1644 to 1912), who have been suspicious of maritime stakeholders and the values they vehiculate.[41]

As discussed above, the current norms and institutions of the global maritime order tend to serve the interests of maritime nations, but the rise of illiberalism and revisionism at sea (e.g. Russia breaking the rules in Ukraine and the Black Sea, in particular disrupting/preventing the free flow of goods to and from Ukraine's ports, and China challenging the rules in the South China Sea) has led members of the solidaristic society of maritime nations to proactively uphold current norms and to assure the perennity of the global maritime order. Within a solidaristic society, members are ready to work together to develop common strategies to address issues within the international society. For maritime nations, one of these mechanisms of solidarity is a collective seapower strategy.

37 Till, 2004, p. 22.

38 L Dehio, *The precarious balance: four centuries of European power struggle*, Vintage, New York, 1962, p. 272.

39 Lambert, 2018.

40 S Baker, *Written on the water: British romanticism and the maritime empire of culture*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville and London, 2010. This narrative is also being deconstructed in the context of decolonial studies that warn of imperial nostalgia or amnesia. See for example R Saunders, 'Myths from a small island: the dangers of a buccaneering view of British history', *The New Statesman*, 9 October 2019, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2019/10/myths-from-a-small-island-the-dangers-of-a-buccaneering-view-of-british-history>; O Turner, 'Global Britain and the Narrative of Empire', *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 90(4), 2019, pp. 727–734.

41 G Quilley, 'Sailors on horseback: the representation of seamen and social space in eighteen-century British visual culture', in T Cusack (ed), *Framing the ocean, 1700 to the present*, Ashgate, London, 2014, pp. 85–100; Lambert, 2018, pp. 8, 324.

The concept of seapower is associated with the writings of US Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan,[42] who popularised the idea that, by combining a flourishing maritime commerce with a powerful navy to protect it, sea powers have an intrinsic advantage over land powers. In peace as in war, seapower is a 'great enabler'.[43] Seapower encompasses military (naval), economic (trade) and ideational (maritime values) components.[44] However, because of the narrow emphasis traditionally put on the balance of *naval* power, seapower has usually been considered in *relative* terms 'since some countries have more than others'.[45] This vision fits with a modern Mahanian understanding of seapower within a zero-sum international system.

However, within a solidaristic society of maritime nations, seapower shall be understood in an *absolute* way, with members sharing (in a non-mutually exclusive way) the objectives, means and benefits of the joint enactment of seapower[46] when it comes to upholding freedom of navigation, maritime security (securing the maritime domain) and governing the oceans and its resources (i.e. 'ordering ocean space'[47]). This corresponds to a post-Mahanian, post-modern form of seapower,[48] which has two main characteristics:

First, it is less state-centric, less naval and more civilian: from international shipping companies to fishing communities, private/civilian stakeholders from various sectors (security, economy, NGOs) and with various levels of power have a role to play in stabilising the maritime order and upholding its norms. For example, in reaction to the invasion of Ukraine, J Overton argues that the old concept of a '1000-ship Navy'[49] has been put in practice not as:

> … a collection of primarily nation-state naval capabilities used against non-state actors and natural disasters [but] but a collection of mostly interagency, non-naval, and sometimes non-state capabilities, using diplomatic and economic power, and even guerrilla tactics, against a nation state's (Russia's) elements of maritime and national power.[50]

There is a substantial civilian dimension to collective seapower. The role of the private sector in contributing to securing the objectives of the solidaristic society of maritime nations fits with Buzan's argument that transnational, cosmopolitan forces are instrumental in cementing a solidaristic society.[51]

42 AT Mahan, *The influence of sea power upon history, 1660–1783*, Cosimo Classics, New York, 1890.
43 CS Gray, *The Navy in the post-Cold War world: the uses and value of strategic sea power*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1994, p. 13.
44 B Germond, *The maritime dimension of European security*, Palgrave, London, 2015.
45 Till, 2004, p. 4.
46 B Germond, 'Seapower and small navies: a collective and post-modern outlook', in I Speller, D Sanders & R McCabe (eds), *Europe, small navies and maritime security*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2019, pp. 26–35.
47 B Germond, 'Representation: seapower and the political construction of the ocean', in K Peters, J Anderson, A Davies & P Steinberg (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Ocean Space*, Routledge, London, 2022, p. 54.
48 M Pugh, 'Is Mahan still alive? State naval power in the international system', *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. 16(2), 1996, pp. 109–123; G Till, 'Maritime strategy in a globalizing world', *Orbis*, vol. 51(4), 2007, pp. 569–575.
49 M Mullen, 'What I believe: eight tenets that guide my vision for the 21st century Navy', *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol. 132(1), 2006, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2006/january/what-i-believe-eight-tenets-guide-my-vision-21st-century-navy>.
50 J Overton, 'For Ukraine, the 1,000-ship navy finally sets sail', Center for International Maritime Security, 13 April 2022, <https://cimsec.org/for-ukraine-the-1000-ship-navy-finally-sets-sail/>.
51 Buzan, 2004, pp. 197–198.

Second, it is more collective: within the solidaristic society of maritime nations, the burden and the benefits of collective seapower are shared among members (and private stakeholders when relevant), but not all will benefit and contribute equally. Eventually what matters is that they all benefit in their own way from the overall stability of the maritime order:

> … structures, policies and objectives are collective; expected gains/benefits are absolute, shared between actors and not relative. [As such] collective seapower fits with the description of the sea as a non-zero-sum space.[52]

Collective seapower is not just a post-Cold War phenomenon. For example, ideas akin to it were suggested – albeit mainly as a way to secure Britain's interests via naval cooperation in light of the growing threat posed by continental powers – at the turn of the 20th century, such as Sir Julian Corbett's 'collective security system of independent states linked by the sea and their sea power in a network of strategic alignments'[53] and Sir Halford Mackinder's suggestion that 'the British Navy shall have expanded into the Navy of the Britains'[54] and that cooperation between 'insular' nations was critical to a peaceful world order.

Collective seapower materialises at six levels:

1) At the ideational level, there is not only an acceptance of but a strong belief in the principle of the 'free sea' and a common desire to uphold relevant norms, which derives from strategic considerations but also from what Lambert calls the 'soul of seapower' – that is, maritime values linked to progressive forms of political organisations.[55] The collective dimension of this endeavour is also endorsed.

2) At the narrative level, maritime values and related norms (including the free sea) are promoted; the importance of the sea for security and prosperity is emphasised and put in relation to the need to stabilise the maritime order and uphold relevant norms. The narrative promotes collaborative processes to achieve maritime objectives. A prime example is the vision exposed in the UK Government's 2021 Integrated Review and its accompanying Command paper.[56]

3) At the political level, budgetary decisions are made and necessary actions are taken to play one's part in the defence of the society of maritime nations, in line with (1) and (2).

4) At the strategic level, members of the solidaristic society of maritime nations oppose, in a coordinated way, those which do not share these values and which undermine the principles of the free sea. They are ready to antagonise those opposing such principles.

52 Germond, 2022, p. 54.
53 L Halewood, '"Peace throughout the oceans and seas of the world": British maritime strategic thought and world order, 1892–1919', *Historical Research*, vol. 94(265), 2021, p. 572.
54 Ibid., p. 565, citing Halford Mackinder (1902).
55 Lambert, 2018, p. 2.
56 HM Government, 2021; Ministry of Defence, *Defence in a competitive age*, March 2021, CP 411, para 7.20, p. 48, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974661/CP411_-Defence_Command_Plan.pdf>.

5) At the operational level, this translates into confidence-building measures with allies and partners, joint exercises, and operations. In the current context, the deployment of naval assets in defence of freedom of the sea is of paramount importance. As demonstrated by the maiden voyage of Carrier Strike Group 21, led by HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, the symbolic and operational value of this deployment rests on the number of visits and joint exercises/operations with partners and allies as diverse as Ukraine, Oman, India, Singapore, Japan and South Korea. Exercising seapower is not limited to naval operations though. It is about using the leverage of one's maritime dominance to achieve one's goals. An example is the US, the UK, European countries and others banning Russian ships (flagged/owned/operated) from their ports.

6) At the institutional level, maritime nations work to cement global institutional mechanisms (e.g. the UNCLOS regime) that are pillars of the global maritime order. They also need to develop sub-global mechanisms that enable more solidarism. Whereas NATO is an enduring example of a solidaristic, mainly Western, regional institution, the recent AUKUS partnership between Australia, the UK and the US demonstrates the importance of developing a complex grid of institutional mechanisms that bring together like-minded maritime nations, strengthen commonalities, and offer economies of scale. Collaborative processes do not need to be state-centric, and institutional cooperation can be loose, with actors of civilian seapower contributing to the common effort (e.g. major shipping companies such as MSC, Maersk and ONE suspending their operations to and from Russia[57]).

Conclusion and the Way Forward

This article has applied the English School's concept of international society to the maritime order, whose stability rests on two pillars: a pluralistic one and a solidaristic one. At the *global level*, members of the pluralistic society are loosely united by the need to maintain some degree of stability and freedom within the maritime domain, which has been, so far, in the interest of even states situated at the thinner pluralistic end of the society (such as Russia). Whereas this has been instrumental in explaining the enduring stability of the maritime order, and in particular freedom of navigation, the pluralistic international society at sea is being challenged by the growth of revisionist and illiberal practices. At the *sub-global* level, and in response to the above, the solidaristic society of maritime nations is becoming more united in defence of a system that benefits their interests. This is translating into a collective seapower strategy, 'whereby like-minded maritime nations share the burden and benefits of a stable but free maritime order'.[58]

57 O Gill & L Ashworth, 'Maersk joins global shipping boycott cutting off Russia', *The Telegraph*, 1 March 2022, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/03/01/container-lines-move-halt-sailings-russia/>.

58 Written evidence submitted by Dr Germond to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons (UK Parliament) inquiry Implementing the Integrated Review: Tilt to the Indo-Pacific, TIP0012, <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/40238/pdf/>.

In this context, the extent to which the maritime order will remain stable and favourable to maritime values and interests will depend on the successes and failures of future actions and decisions by states at both ends of the pluralist–solidarist spectrum:

- Will maritime nations succeed in 'solidarising' the pluralist international society at sea without pushing those at the thinner end of the spectrum towards revisionism?
- Will maritime nations succeed in convincing the less revisionist members of the pluralistic society that it is no time to be complacent about those which disregard basic norms but time to play a proactive role in strengthening the core shared principles?
- Some members of the solidaristic society of maritime nations (such as the US, France or even Australia) are less maritime and more continental than others (such as the UK or Singapore). So, to what extent can the solidaristic society broaden its universality without diluting its core identity by including other non-Western nations such as India or South Africa, whose interests are very much dependent on the stability of the current maritime order?
- What role will China play? On the one hand it has contributed to the rise of revisionism at sea and defends positions akin to mare clausum over maritime areas of strategic importance, but on the other hand it is a traditional land power trying to master some form of strategic maritime power (as demonstrated by its growing naval power projection capabilities, its network of bases and its geopolitical ambitions, as well as its civilian seapower strategy with the Belt and Road Initiative). Thus, along with its adoption of a more (albeit limited) maritime outlook, China might increasingly rely on (and thus defend) a stronger pluralistic society at sea.
- Will Russia remain an outcast, beyond even the thinner end of the pluralistic society, or will it, at least in regard to the sea, be bound by basic norms of freedom of navigation and respect for UNCLOS? At the time of writing, Russia's blockade of Ukraine that is responsible for food shortages in the Global South demonstrates its unwillingness to abide by even the most basic rules of the international society. What will need to happen in Russia for it to regain some degree of respect necessary for cooperation with members of the solidaristic society of maritime nations?

The concept of international society helps us understand that the source of the stability of the maritime order is to be found in states' willingness to maintain this stability, which is based on rational interests around the benefits they all get from a free and secure maritime domain. It also highlights the fact that differences do not pose a problem within the pluralistic society as long as nobody decides to break the rules to such an extent that the maritime order is put at risk.

Whereas at one end of the spectrum we have recently seen an increase in revisionist practices at sea, it is also important to stress that, at the other end, the solidaristic society of maritime nations is stronger and as proactive as ever in defence of the agreed norms. In this configuration, seapower has to be understood as a collective endeavour; it is a tool jointly deployed by maritime nations and their partners (alongside civilian stakeholders) in a bid to both defend their interests and strengthen the international society at sea.

Dr Basil Germond

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Saab Combat Management Systems – an Evolving Capability

For over three decades Saab has had a profound impact on Australia's defence capability. Most notably it has provided the RAN with its own world-class naval combat management system – the backbone of Australia's defence independence.

With today's complex environment, a combat management system which aids naval operators in making mission-critical decisions is vitally important. Saab's combat management system features advanced data fusion and situational awareness functionalities, supporting operators in detection, tactical decisions and engagements in real operations, as well as during training exercises.

Saab's combat management system has proven operational capabilities for an array of mission types, from extreme littorals to the open ocean and in all warfare dimensions. When most think of how a naval platform fights, first thoughts are of weapons, missiles and radars. Saab's combat management system brings together all of these elements, in addition to critical information from sensors, unmanned vehicles and other integrated systems, providing the ultimate situational awareness to naval operators.

From inception, the design of Saab's combat management system has enabled navies from across the globe to enhance the effectiveness of their missions by reducing operator workload. These efficiencies empower naval platforms to excel in their mission, whether that be surveillance, peacekeeping, or defensive operations.

Since securing the combat management system contract for the Anzac-class frigate program over 30 years ago, Saab has worked closely with the RAN to upgrade, enhance and develop its combat management system to meet their unique operational needs. The culmination of this technology transfer ultimately enabled the development of the 9LV Mk3E Combat Management System for the highly successful Anzac Anti-Ship Missile Defence Upgrade.

Originally developed in Sweden in the 1960s, Saab progressively transitioned combat system development work, including all local customisation work, and the skills and capacity for future work, to Australia. This marked the beginning of a strong and historic journey whereby Saab transferred not only the systems technology into Australia but also its future development, which continues today.

Saab's combat management system will be equipped on six of the RAN's classes of vessels: Anzac, Canberra, Supply, Arafura, Mine Countermeasures and Military Survey Vessels. Saab is also leveraging its next-generation (NextGen) combat management system experience for the development of the Australian interface to the Aegis system for the Hunter-class frigates and the Hobart-class destroyers.

In every sense, Saab's combat management system is unique to Australia, being developed by Australians for Australian requirements. Continuing to nurture the in-country capability, Saab's specialist engineering workforce continues to develop a range of new applications and features that evolve the system to consistently meet the current and future unique requirements of the Australian customer.

Over the decades, the architecture of Saab's combat management system has continually evolved to meet the changing requirements of the Commonwealth and to meet an evolving naval landscape. In order to forward plan the increasing complexities of systems needed by each platform, the architecture of Saab's combat management system has advanced to become a modular and an open-structured solution.

The architecture of the latest iteration of Saab's combat management system, otherwise known as NextGen, is now containerised and managed through modules. Utilising the system in this structure allows multiple applications to run simultaneously through a single host, securing system performance and providing greater flexibility of operator functions.

Ultimately, this choice of architecture provides run-time independence from the operating systems, increases resource budgets to enhance system stability, adds redundancy measures for system performance, and ensures a viable fallback exists to maintain capability – all while the system communications are secured through encryptions between containers.

Saab's approach to continuous evolution of its combat management system technology and architecture has enabled the system to be utilised across a range of vessel types and classes with proven operational performance. Some classes require a combat management system which controls all sensors and effectors, whilst others need less focus on defensive systems and a stronger focus on survey capabilities. Saab's modular solution approach allows the system to be scaled up or down to provide the unique capability needed for each platform.

As a key partner in the delivery of Australia's sovereign shipbuilding capability, Saab continues to support the Government to ensure the Australian Defence Force is fully equipped to protect the country from current and future threats.

Naval Health Services: Their Missions, Functions and Roles, and Fundamental Inputs to Capability

Commander Neil Westphalen, RAN

Introduction

The absence of a comprehensive health doctrine means the ADF's health services have generally been premised on various misapprehensions and assumptions since the mid-1970s that have rendered them unfit for purpose.[1] The need for elemental reform is driven by:

- excessive rates of preventable service-related illnesses and injuries, which explain why military health services must be based on a systems-based occupational health strategic model
- disquiet within the civilian community regarding health support for current and ex-serving ADF members, which has led to the 2019 Productivity Commission report on veterans' health, and the current Royal Commission into veteran suicide[2],[3]
- commander dissatisfaction within the ADF regarding its health services[4]
- the evolving nature of ADF operations, from land-centric Middle East deployments mostly conducted from in-theatre bases with their own health services, to sea-centric Indo-Pacific operations whose health services will be provided from bases on Australian soil, which heretofore have been deemed 'non-operational' because they do not deploy.

This paper aims to help guide the reforms neccessary to produce ADF health services based on a systems-based occupational health strategic model, by summarising:

- the three elemental yet intrinsically linked missions of military (including naval) health services
- the functions and roles necessary to conduct these missions
- the fundamental inputs to capability (FICs) that enable these functions and roles.

It should be noted that the paucity of analyses regarding these topics elsewhere (in particular the functions and roles) has necessitated referring to multiple previous papers by the author.

1 N Westphalen, 'Health support for naval operations: not just treatment services', Australian Naval Review, no. 2, 2021, pp. 99–106, <https://navalinstitute.com.au/australian-naval-review-2021-issue-2-online-copy>.

2 Productivity Commission, A better way to support veterans: overview and recommendations, Report No. 93, 2019, <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/veterans/report/veterans-overview.pdf>.

3 'Defence and Veteran Suicide Royal Commission', Attorney-General's Department [website], <https://www.ag.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/defence-and-veteran-suicide-royal-commission-public-consultation>, accessed 10 August 2021 .

4 T Smart, 'Graeme Shirtley Oration', 2019 AMMA Conference, Adelaide Convention Centre, 5 October 2019. Transcript held by author.

The Elemental Missions of Military (Including Naval) Health Services

The distinguished World War I veteran and medical historian Colonel Arthur Graham Butler described three inextricably linked 'allegiances' of military health services:

- The 'alleviating suffering' allegiance, or what we would now call the 'treatment services' mission
- The 'command' allegiance, or what we would now call the 'enabling operational capability' mission
- The 'national' allegiance, or what we would now call the 'civilian reintegration' mission.[5],[6]

The need for the operational capability and civilian reintegration missions explains why the scope of military health services is considerably broader (and far more complex) than that of their civilian counterparts, which have no comparable remit. Yet, for the last 25 years, the ADF's health services have been premised on the assumption that they only exist to treat patients.[7],[8],[9],[10],[11]

Military Health Service Functions and Roles

There are several military health service functions and roles necessary to conduct these missions. The following summary is in ascending priority order, based on the level of military expertise each function requires.

Treatment Services[12]

Lack of data notwithstanding, most ADF clinical presentations differ from civilian practice in that the former can be typified as either:

- musculoskeletal injuries, more or less evenly split between workplace accidents and sports injuries
- mental health disorders, likewise evenly split between people for whom joining the ADF has not been a good career choice, and people who heretofore had been fine working in Defence but are struggling in their current job.

5 AG Butler, 'The Western Front', *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914–1918*, pp. 263–64, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1940.

6 N Westphalen, 'Colonel Arthur Graham Butler's "allegiances": today's "military health service missions"', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 29(2), 2021, pp. 17–28, <https://jmvh.org/article/colonel-arthur-graham-butlers-allegiances-todays-military-health-service-missions>.

7 See Australian National Audit Office, *Audit Report No. 34 1996–97: Australian Defence Force Health Services Performance Audit*, Canberra, 27 May 1997, <https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/ANAO_Report_1996-97_34.pdf>.

8 Australian National Audit Office. *Audit Report No. 51 2000–2001: Australian Defence Force Health Services Follow-up Audit*, Canberra, 15 June 2001, <https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/anao_report_2000-2001_51.pdf>.

9 JP Stevens, *Review of the Defence Health Services*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2004.

10 Cogent Business Solutions Pty Ltd, *Conduct of a study into health care costs in the Defence Health Service*, 2006.

11 'Defence signs $1.3 billion health deal', *news.com.au*, 2 August 2012, accessed 10 August 2021, <https://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/defence-signs-13-billion-health-deal/news-story/1f8de32a8e6936adfad30b04e258bb93>.

12 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Primary health care in the ADF', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 25(4), 2017, pp. 84–89, <https://jmvh.org/article/primary-health-care-in-the-adf>.

Furthermore, besides age and gender, the military treatment services for these cases should also reflect target population demographics, such as who they are, where they work (and how much they move around), what their work entails, and why they do it. This explains why treatment services are at the bottom of this list: this acknowledges the extent to which the clinical expertise acquired in *civilian* practice – however eminent – only constitutes a *baseline* for undertaking this function in the *military* setting.

Health Promotion[13]

Like the rest of the ADF, Navy needs to maximise the general health and wellbeing of its personnel: this reduces the number requiring treatment, enables maritime operational capability, and reduces the civilian transition workload. However, the scope of *military* health promotion is far broader than civilian practice 'healthy lifestyle' interventions such as those relating to smoking, diet and exercise; it also includes:

- targeted military- and mission-specific vaccination programs, field and shipboard hygiene, and vector-borne infectious disease prevention
- military health education programs on topics such as first aid, personal hygiene and dental care, heat and cold stress management, sun exposure and insect bite prevention, and alcohol and other drug awareness
- military workplace mental health promotion programs that, besides enhancing mental resilience during operations (irrespective of whether these operations also entail deploying), also enable mentally healthy non-operational workplace and personnel management practices
- enabling command compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

A key consideration is that healthy lifestyle interventions (such as those relating to smoking cessation) should *not* prevent personnel from deploying, if they are elective in nature and/or do not prevent people from performing their normal duties. Another consideration is that military physical fitness programs should not create avoidable new injuries or preventably exacerbate old ones.

Occupational and Environmental Health[14]

Like the rest of the ADF population, Navy personnel are medically selected, are mostly young working age, are geographically highly mobile, have high turnover rates, and – for now – are still predominantly male. Hence, rather than reflecting a typical civilian dependency, it is first and foremost a *workforce* population. Furthermore, even without the hazards posed by combat

13 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Health promotion in the Australian Defence Force', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 29(1), 2021, pp. 52–60, <https://jmvh.org/article/health-promotion-in-the-australian-defence-force>.

14 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Occupational and environmental health in the ADF', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 25(1), 2017, pp. 44–52, <https://jmvh.org/article/occupational-and-environmental-health-in-the-adf>.

operations, Navy personnel, like many other ADF members, are probably exposed to the greatest range of physical, biological, chemical, ergonomic and psychosocial workplace hazards of any Australian workforce, in the existing context whereby:

- up to 90 per cent of all Army (Reserve and regular) work-related injuries and illnesses are not being reported (hence probably the same for Navy and Air Force as well)
- the current compensation claim rate among current and ex-serving Navy and other ADF personnel could be five times the worst civilian serious workers compensation claim rate
- the current per capita compensation claim costs to the Department of Veterans' Affairs could be twice the median civilian cost.[15],[16],[17]

Assessing Medical Suitability for Military Service[18]

Ensuring that Navy personnel managers, commanders and supervisors are aware of the health status of their personnel clearly pertains to the operational capability and civilian reintegration missions. This function entails ascertaining:

- whether the member in question has any medical conditions that limit or prevent them performing their normal duties
- vice versa – that is, whether the member's normal duties will exacerbate their medical conditions.

Conducting this function is clearly problematic if the medical assessor lacks an *accurate* understanding as to what the member's normal duties *actually* entail. This not only means assessors may be *allowing* Navy members to go to sea who are medically *unfit*; they may also be *preventing* Navy members from going to sea (or delaying their return) who are in fact medically *fit*.

Military Medicine Capabilities[19]

Many ADF operational capabilities – including some of strategic-level importance – require bespoke aviation, underwater and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear medicine services. Rather surprisingly, the aircrew, joint battlespace aircraft controllers, parachutists, divers and submariners who bring their respective operational capabilities to life comprise about 12

15 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Rehabilitation in the Australian Defence Force', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 27(4), 2019, pp. 7–14, <https://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AMMA-JMVH-October-2019.pdf>.

16 N Westphalen, 'Compensation in the Australian Defence Force', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 27(1), 2019, pp. 58–65, <https://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Compensation-in-the-Australian-Defence-Force.pdf>.

17 R Pope & R Orr, 'Incidence rates for work health and safety incidents and injuries in Australian Army Reserve vs full time soldiers, and a comparison of reporting systems', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 25(2), 2017, pp. 16–25, <https://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Original-Artical-Incidence-rates.pdf>.

18 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Assessing medical suitability for employment and deployment in the ADF', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 26(3), 2018, pp. 42–48, https://jmvh.org/article/assessing-medical-suitability-for-employment-and-deployment-in-the-adf.

19 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Military medicine capabilities in the Australian Defence Force', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 28(2), 2020, pp. 39–49, <https://jmvh.org/article/military-medicine-capabilities-in-the-australian-defence-force>.

per cent of all ADF members, which is equivalent to around half the current Navy population. The need for these services pertains to not only preventing or treating casualties caused by the physiological hazards posed by these environments but also giving these personnel an operational capability edge (such as aircrew pulling more 'g', or divers diving deeper/longer) vis-à-vis their opponents. Hence, the ADF health services provide these services in-house because they do not exist elsewhere in forms that facilitate this function. This significantly complicates the military health support function (see below), noting that aircrew, divers and submariners *each* constitute a sub-population that the ADF medical services have to plan for.

Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)[20]

It has been argued elsewhere that HA/DR should *not* be a *primary* role of ADF health services: their focus should be on conducting their missions in support of ADF members and other entitled personnel. That does *not* mean they have no HA/DR role at all, but it explains why this function should be considered a subset of military health support (see below). This is firstly because, unlike in other operations, where *they* support *other* ADF assets, in HA/DR the ADF health services are often *being* supported *by* these assets. Furthermore, HA/DR operations require different medical assets that can accommodate vulnerable populations such as women, children, elderly and disabled, who most likely will get better health care from non-government organisations and other agencies, especially in a benign security setting.

Medical Evacuation[21]

The fact that ADF personnel end up in odd places means that their health services need to be able to evacuate them from wherever they are ill or injured. While this has typically only been considered relevant for *deployed* personnel, patient evacuation and transport should be considered far more holistically *within* Australia, including:

- off-base specialist appointments
- civilian ambulance services in major population centres
- the relevant platforms for bases in remote locations, such as service vehicles, civilian aeromedical services or military aircraft
- civilian helicopter services for ships at sea or ejected aircrew
- civilian aircraft for interstate patient transfers
- military aircraft for mass casualty events within Australia.

In short, the ADF's need to insert its patients into the civilian health system necessitates appropriately targeted elective and emergency patient transport services that – among other attributes – minimise workplace absences.

20 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Humanitarian aid/disaster relief (HA/DR) in the Australian Defence Force: health aspects, *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 28(3), 2021, pp. 15–25, <https://jmvh.org/article/humanitarian-aid-disaster-relief-ha-dr-in-the-australian-defence-force-health-aspects>.

21 For further details, see N Westphalen, 'Casualty evacuation in the Australian Defence Force', *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, vol. 28(1), 2020, pp. 29–38, <https://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/AMMA-JMVH-Jan-2020.pdf>.

Military Health Support

As previously described, health support for ADF members needs to reflect the populations being supported, their location, and their activities. For example, the population at a particular base may include trainees, headquarters or support staff, and/or members of one or more operational units. The latter might be working up to deploy, reconstituting after deploying, or performing operational roles that do not actually entail deploying. Such bases may be overseas, or at a remote location within Australia where access to civilian health services can be problematic, or at a major urban centre where it is not an issue. What the health staff at *each* of these bases need in order to conduct their missions depends on *all* of the above, which takes bespoke planning, organisation and resources. For example, the health services for a remote operational base like HMAS *Cairns* will differ from those for a remote training base like HMAS *Creswell*, or a support base for deployed units near a major urban centre such as HMA Ships *Stirling* or *Kuttabul*. Scoping, planning, implementing, assessing and monitoring the FICs each one of these services requires to conduct its three missions is a health function for which *military* (including service-specific) expertise becomes at least as important as *clinical* expertise.

Fundamental Inputs to (Health) Capability

The term 'FIC' refers to a standardised list used by the ADF to identify what resources it needs – finances to pay for them excepted – to undertake the tasks directed by government.[22] The following sections summarise these from a military health perspective.

Organisation

This and other papers have explained why military health services are far more complex than similarly scaled civilian counterparts, whose only remit is to treat patients. Although having a relatively young and highly medically selected population helps, this complexity is exacerbated by additional factors such as where ADF members are located and how much they move around, what they do and why, the personnel requiring military capability medical support, and the fact that their health services are part of a larger organisation for which health care is *not* the primary focus. This complexity is best managed – especially in a resource-constrained environment – by basing their organisational structure on an occupational health systems model.

Personnel

Recruiting and entry training of ADF health staff need to reflect the aforementioned functions and roles they are required to undertake. This begins with providing care within their scope of clinical practice, in at times exceptionally remote and/or austere situations where casualty evacuation may be delayed. However, this paper also explains why these clinical skills only constitute a *baseline*: these personnel need additional *military* as well as *clinical* skills as part of their career progression to conduct *all* of the aforementioned functions and roles. These considerations also explain why the ADF's health services *must* be based on its *uniformed* staff, and why – unlike

22 Department of Defence, *Defence capability manual*, Defence Publishing, Library and Information Service, Canberra, 2020, <https://www.defence.gov.au/publications/docs/Defence-Capability-Manual.pdf>.

their Army and Air Force counterparts – in the context where most ships have no medical officer, the Navy health services' ability to support maritime operations is utterly dependent on their Clinical Manager medics and non-medical Minor War Vessel Health Care Providers.

Collective Training

Like the rest of the ADF, Navy health personnel need their clinical *and* military skills to be shaped into teams, for broader integration into the ship or other unit (whether deployable or non-deployable) in which they serve.

Civilian Industry Support

Notwithstanding the extent to which uniformed health personnel *must* be the bedrock of the ADF health services per the 'personnel' FIC, the support they provide is complicated by the extent to which the technological health advances over recent decades have led to increasing levels of specialisation.[23] Hence, as this precludes the ADF from providing the full range of health services organically, it will always be dependent on *clinical* expertise that is only available from the civilian health system. Navy health reservists in particular should therefore have an essential bridging role between the civilian and military health settings. Even so, this does *not* mean that the ADF in general, or Navy in particular, can entrust the aforementioned *non*-treatment missions of sick and injured members to these providers.[24]

Other Support

Besides that provided by civilians, the ADF health services require various forms of support that they cannot provide themselves. These vary by service: for example, Navy health services need patient catering and bed linen support, as well as personnel for ship's first aid parties; Army needs engineering support to provide electricity or piped water; and Air Force aeromedical evacuation teams need aircraft.

Facilities

All ADF health services need facilities to work from. Examples range from fixed health centres in the base setting; to deployable facilities in ships, on the ground or in the back of aircraft; down to a ship's mess deck, half-demolished building or fighting pit in which health personnel can set up to treat patients with whatever they have available in their backpack or bumbag. Although the purposes they are needed for are broadly similar, these facilities need to reflect the clientele they provide services for and the environments in which they work: for example, divers and submariners in particular need deployable and non-deployable hyperbaric facilities.

23 In 2018, the Australian health care system had **98,395 actively employed** medical practitioners in more than 80 specialties and sub-specialties, only 30.5 per cent of whom were general practitioners. See 'Doctors in focus', Department of Health [website], 2018, <https://hwd.health.gov.au/resources/publications/factsheet-mdcl-2018-full.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2021.

24 See B Kafer, 'Optimal use of the Naval Reserve as part of the total Navy', Defence Reserves Association [website], <https://dra.org.au/conference-2016-item/23646/optimal-use-of-the-naval-reserve-as-part-of-the-total-navy/?type_fr=684>, accessed 12 August 2021.

Supplies

The scope of this FIC extends beyond pharmaceuticals and other consumables, to instruments and equipment. The complexities inherent in getting the right amounts of the right items (and their spares) to the right places at the right times, while ensuring they are properly serviced, are maintained within the cold chain and remain sterile and/or in date, validates the need for a bespoke health logistics system.

Major Systems

The ADF normally uses this term to refer to large and/or expensive items such as ships, planes and vehicles. Although this is less applicable to skill-based than to equipment-based support capabilities such as health services, the latter still require effective information technology systems for tasks such as patient record keeping, telehealth, casualty regulation, and managing medical stores. Their biggest constraint in the operational setting is bandwidth: even without emissions control limitations, it will never be sufficient – even without jamming or other forms of cyberwarfare from opponents whose compliance with the law of armed conflict may be marginal or non-existent.

Command and Management

The ADF health services require structured health command and administrative processes that interact not only with each other but also with the relevant commanders (deployed and non deployed), consistent with their advisory role. This further explains why those in health leadership roles need escalating levels of *military* expertise as part of their career progression.

Finally, it is essential to note that these FICs are *finite* and *limited*. This means the ADF health services *must* employ a risk management approach to conduct their missions, to do the greatest good for the greatest number with the resources allocated, within an organisation for which health care is *not* its primary purpose. The need for a risk management approach in this setting is entirely consistent with a systems-based occupational health strategic model.

Conclusion

Longstanding misapprehensions and assumptions within Defence have failed to recognise that, besides treatment services, military health services perform two additional missions compared to their civilian counterparts: enabling operational capability, and facilitating their clientele's eventual civilian transition. Figure 1 summarises this paper by showing the relationships between ADF operational capability, the three health service missions that support that capability, the eight health service functions and roles that enable those missions, and the nine FICs they need to conduct them. It also demonstrates the extent to which occupational health is intrinsic to *all* the components of a holistic military health care system.

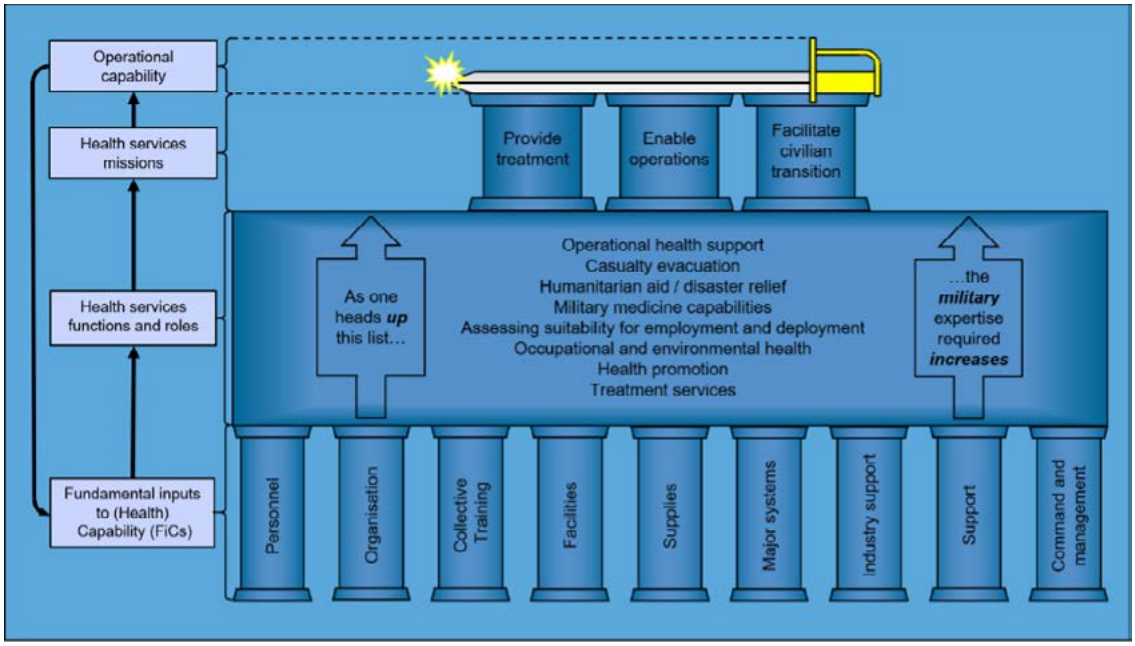


Figure 1: Operational capability, and its relationship to military health services missions, functions and roles, and FICs.

It is also suggested that, as applied to the ADF health setting, Figure 1 is consistent with the meaning of the word 'joint' as defined by the then Chief of the Defence Force in 2017:

> I look at where we've come to now from back then [1999] and we are well ahead, with a far better understanding that joint isn't doing everything the same. Joint is about bringing the best of the three services and the public service together to get the best combination you can for that particular operation.[25]

25 I McPhedran, *The smack track: inside the Navy's war: chasing down drug smugglers, pirates and terrorists*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 2017, p. 278. Emphasis added.

Commander Neil Westphalen, RAN

Neil Westphalen joined the RAN in 1987. He is a specialist occupational physician and Navy Staff College graduate, with seagoing service in HMA Ships *Swan*, *Stalwart*, *Success*, *Sydney* and *Perth*. His last shore posting was Fleet Medical Officer, before transferring to the Royal Australian Naval Reserves in 2016.

2021 Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize

Inaugurated in 2021, the Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize is awarded annually by the Australian Naval Institute to recognise excellence in books making a major contribution to the study and understanding of naval and maritime matters. The prize is sponsored by the National Shipbuilding College.

The prize is named after Commodore Sam Bateman, AM, RAN (1938–2020), a former Australian Naval Institute Councillor and strategic thinker, in recognition of his efforts to raise greater awareness of naval and maritime matters and progress the understanding and value of navies in society.

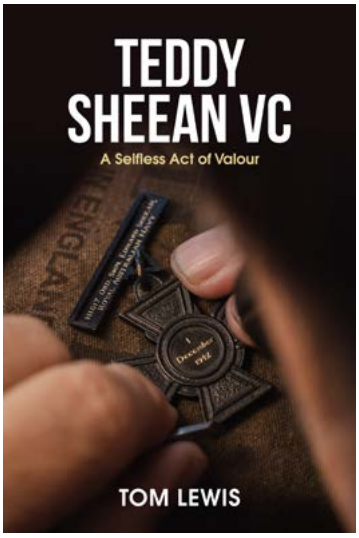
In its inaugural year, the prize was contested by 11 highly distinguished pieces that promote the study and understanding of naval and maritime matters.

The epochs covered stretch from the 1400s to modern day, with a wide range of topics, from deeply historically researched pieces to analysis of Australian capability development, World War I warship design and build, and notable personages and capabilities.

The judging panel consisted of Rear Admiral Allan Du Toit, AM, RAN (Retired); Commodore Allison Norris, CSC, RAN; Captain Guy Blackburn, RAN; and Sub Lieutenant Alison Smith, RAN.

On review the contest was particularly close, with some insightful research topics that shed light on previously unresearched naval and maritime matters.

However, the judges were unanimous in their judging and assessment of the winning entry.



The 2021 Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize was awarded to **Teddy Sheean VC: A Selfless Act of Valour**, written by Dr Tom Lewis, OAM, and published by Big Sky Publishing.

Judges' Comments

Whilst appearing to be narrowly focused on the retrospective award of Australia's first Naval Victoria Cross recipient, Teddy Sheean VC, this opus is anything but a narrow view of the Royal Australian Navy's highest honour to date. The book uses the background of Teddy Sheean's life in the early 1900s through to his death in World War II in HMAS *Armidale* as a vehicle to not only tell Teddy's story from his life in Tasmania to joining the RAN, to his ultimate sacrifice, but also review those notable personages who received

awards and accolades for their feats of courage in action in the RAN, contrasting the Australian honours and awards system to the decisions made by the Admiralty.

The language is rich, easy to read and follow, and sets the scene for a deft analysis of notable RAN personages such as Waller, Dechaineaux and Collins, to name but a few. With a strongly researched geostrategic background, *Teddy Sheean VC* also provides the reader a definitional framework for 'why the things are the way they are', such as a wonderfully raucous background to why cannons are called cannons, versus why destroyers are called destroyers. It closes with a lesson learned theme for the future in acknowledging the acts of courage that occur at sea by Australians and how, as a nation, Australia should be prouder.

The presentation of the book is sublime, with plates, pictures and charts scattered throughout that not only provide added information for the reader but also break up the in-depth analysis to hold the reader's attention without effort.

The judges note that 2021 was the year in which Teddy Sheean was awarded the first Naval Victoria Cross of Australia; however, the judging was independent and unanimous, without influence as to the winners.

Overall, *Teddy Sheean VC* not only informed and progressed the naval and maritime conversation by delivering previously undiscovered work; it also helped the reader form an opinion on what may come next, through a rich tapestry of storytelling with historical research.

The judging panel also awarded honourable mentions to three books:

- *Ikara: Australia's Cold War Wonder Weapon*, written by Angus Britts and published by the Naval Historical Society of Australia

- *A Scottish Blockade Runner in the American Civil War*, written by John F Messner and published by Whittles Publishing

- *A Ceaseless Watch: Australia's Third-Party Naval Defense, 1919–1942*, written by Angus Britts and published by US Naval Institute Press.

The Australian Naval Institute thanks the Naval Shipbuilding College for its sponsorship of this important prize, and the Bateman family for their ongoing support to the institute.

The 2021 Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize Lecture, delivered by the winning author at the Australian Defence Force Academy on 10 March 2022, can be found on the ANI website.

2022 Chief of Navy Essay Competition

This year, as part of the Australian Naval Institute's strategic partnership with the Royal Australian Navy, the Institute ran the Chief of Navy Essay Competition, on behalf of the Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, AO, RAN.

The topic, set by the Chief of Navy, was 'Noting the commitment of Indo-Pacific nations to a commonality of purpose, security, prosperity and good order, how might Navies best serve a common interest?'.

The competition aimed to promote knowledge of, and interest in, a thinking, fighting Australian Navy.

The competition, which comprised three divisions, received over 40 entries, which were judged by the Australian Naval Institute Council.

The winners of the 2022 Chief of Navy Essay Competition were:

In the Defence Division, The Smith Prize, for Admiral Sir Victor Alfred Trumper Smith, AC, KBE, CB, DSC, was won by Lieutenant Sarah Kaese, RAN. Her paper was titled *Stabilising the Indo-Pacific, the New Centre of the World*.

In the Youth Division, The MacDougall Prize, for Vice Admiral Ian Donald George MacDougall, AC, AFSM, was won by Sub Lieutenant Jemima Schortz, RAN. Her paper was titled *Rising Tensions in the Indo-Pacific: Stabilising the Maritime Environment through Region Building and Strategic Reponses*.

In the Open Division, The McKenzie Prize, for Florence Violet McKenzie, was won by Mr Shaun Cameron. His paper was titled *The Law of the Jungle and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*.

The three winning papers are published in the following pages of this edition of the *Australian Naval Review*.

Stabilising the Indo-Pacific, the New Centre of the World

Lieutenant Sarah Kaese, RAN

'The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society' – Franklin D Roosevelt

There is no denying that the Indo-Pacific is a region of intense modern political and economic interest. Through observance of historical patterns, especially noted through Ian Morris's book *Why the West rules – for now*, the growth towards the East and evolving Indo-Pacific regional focus is the seeming natural and inevitable progression.[1] Saon Ray, a professor at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, stated in an article[2] that there are three key reasons for the significance of the Indo-Pacific: the presence of three of the world's largest economies (US, China and Japan); the region accounting for 60 per cent of global domestic product and 60 per cent of global maritime trade; and its being home to the fastest growing emerging economies. Politically, the region is defined by the current Sino-US 'strategic competition'[3] which questions the nature of a common interest or commonality of purpose for all Indo-Pacific nations. Presumably this would be to continue economic growth and prosperity and to maintain stability and security. However, there still remains the challenge of an overarching 'strategic competition' between the major powers of the region. Where 'strategic competition' remains the underlying flavour of the region, a common interest cannot be sought, as the fundamental definition of such competition is to outcompete the rival. Furthermore, reference to the US and China lingering on the edge of Thucydides's trap[4] threatens stability and the future of global prosperity. 'Strategic competition' must therefore evolve into something which drives Indo-Pacific nations to contribute in a stabilised environment. 'Competitive Coexistence'[5] not only enables the continual influence and growth of the major powers in the region but also allows the contribution of emerging nations to stabilise for ongoing prosperity and good order. Therefore, most simply, Indo-Pacific navies should secure the continued growth of Indo-Pacific nations. This will enable nations to competitively coexist in a prosperous region vice surviving through destabilisation. This essay aims to discuss how navies will contribute to the goal of 'Competitive Coexistence' through military cooperative missions, humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HADR) priorities, security of natural resources and communication. To understand where navies should concentrate efforts, the Indo-Pacific must first be defined.

1 I Morris, *Why the West rules – for now: the patterns of history, and what they reveal about the future*, Profile Books, Great Britain, 2010.

2 S Ray, 'Commerce and connectivity for enhancing trade in the Indo-Pacific', *Observer Research Foundation* [website], 14 December 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/commerce-and-connectivity-for-enhancing-trade-in-the-indo-pacific/>.

3 M Sussex & M Clarke, *In their own words: Chinese and US perceptions of the current state of Sino-US Relations*, The Looking Glass Publication, Centre for Defence Research, 2021.

4 Term used to describe the tendency towards war when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power.

5 W Xinbo, 'US security policy in Asia: implications for China-US relations', *Brookings* [website], 1 September 2000 <https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-security-policy-in-asia-implications-for-china-u-s-relations/>.

The 'Indo-Pacific' and more traditional 'Asia-Pacific' terms have been used interchangeably in the past to loosely define the sea areas and nations bound to the Pacific and Indian Oceans.[6] A map created by Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius in 1571 following early circumnavigation of the globe closely resembles a modern understanding of nations belonging to the Indo-Pacific (or Asia-Pacific). The map frames only a small portion of the world spanning India, China, across to North America and south to the suspected sight of Australia (labelled 'Beach').[7]

However, there is, in fact, no universal official definition of the Asia Pacific region or its boundaries.[8] Countries that are included by the term often vary depending on the context. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), for example, consists of nations in both the western Pacific (predominantly Asian and South-East Asian countries) and the eastern Pacific (United States). The goal of APEC is to 'support sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region'.[9] Another example is Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), a specialist regional body (recognised by APEC) which 'manages and expands mutual recognition arrangements' to 'facilitate acceptance of conformity assessment results' and thus increases 'economic efficiency'.[10] APAC, however, only consists of nations in the western Pacific (Asia and South-East Asia, including Australia, up to China and Japan). In attempting to define the geography of the Indo-Pacific, APAC and the 1571 map referred to above may be among the closest references. However, whilst the geographical differentiations between the Indo-Pacific and the Asia-Pacific are seemingly minimal, the terms are vastly different in their political significance. These political influences include the US focus

6 'Countries of the Asia-Pacific region', *Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies* [website], 2021, <https://apcss.org/about/ap-countries/>.

7 A Galloway, 'What's the Indo-Pacific – and how does the Quad work?', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/forget-asia-pacific-it-s-the-indo-pacific-we-live-in-now-where-is-that-exactly-20210810-p58hku.html>.

8 'APAC Countries 2022', *World Population Review* [website], <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/apac-countries>.

9 APEC Secretariat, 'Mission statement', *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation* [website], September 2021, <https://www.apec.org/about-us/about-apec/mission-statement>.

10 'About APAC', *Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation* [website], <https://www.apac-accreditation.org/about/>.

on India as a rising power in response to the rise of China;[11] the merging of Australia into the region as seen by an Indonesian naval paper;[12] and the interconnectedness of the Pacific and Indian oceans for maritime trade and prosperity. The term 'Indo-Pacific' had been referenced by Hillary Clinton, former US Secretary of State, in 2010; however, Australia was the first country to utilise the term in official documents, in 2013 (the Defence White Paper and the Foreign Policy White Paper).[13] The term seemed to gain further traction during the Trump administration, which revealed certain aspects of US foreign policy, in particular focusing on China.[14] The common theme of the rise of China in competition with the US seems to be the underlying context in defining the boundaries of the term 'Indo-Pacific'. This means that when considering how Indo-Pacific navies can work towards a common interest, the Sino-US relationship cannot be ignored. Therefore, in attempting to define the geographical boundaries of the Indo-Pacific and thus where cooperation should exist between regional Indo-Pacific navies, it would be prudent to define the area through the lens of the Sino-US 'Strategic Competition'.

Figure 2 demonstrates the geography of the Sino-US 'Strategic Competition' by the overlap of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy (indicated in blue) and the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative (indicated in red) through Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan. Note also that the four countries linked by the US Indo-Pacific Strategy are part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or 'Quad' for short). Formed in 2004, it was abandoned in 2008 following claims (by China) that it was an '"Asian NATO" designed to contain China'.[15] The problem that lies in this region of overlapping and competing foreign policies is how all Indo-Pacific nations are able to build stability and coexist, especially where it is currently defined by 'Strategic Competition' supposedly destined for war. Enter Thucydides.

11 Galloway, 2021.
12 Pusat Pengkajian Maritim Seskoal & Sea Power Center, *Indonesia-Australia maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, Indonesian Navy – Royal Australian Navy, Seskoal Press, Indonesia Naval Command and Staff College, 2020.
13 Galloway, 2021.
14 M Siow, 'What is the Indo-Pacific region and why does the US keep using this term?', *South China Morning Post*, 26 August 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3146363/what-indo-pacific-region-and-why-does-us-keep-using-term>.
15 Galloway, 2021.

> 'The defining question about global order in the decades ahead will be: Can China and the United States escape Thucydides' Trap? The historian's metaphor reminds us of the dangers two parties face when a rising power rivals a ruling power – as Athens did in 5th century BC and Germany did at the end of the 19th century. Most such challenges have ended in war. Peaceful cases required huge adjustments in the attitudes and actions of the governments and the societies … involved.'[16]
>
> 'It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable.'[17]

In 2012, Graham Allison (an American political scientist) created the concept of the 'Thucydides Trap' which was based on the above quotation by the ancient Athenian military general Thucydides.[18] 'Thucydides Trap' was used to describe a tendency towards war whereby a rising power challenges a ruling power. In 2017, Allison likened the inevitable conflict between Athens and Sparta in the Peloponnesian War to the current Sino-US strategic competition in his book *Destined for war*. 'Rise' and 'fear' were identified as the dynamic driving factors towards the Peloponnesian War and thus a 'trap' that the US and China are to avoid so as to maintain Indo-Pacific stability and prevent inevitable war. Whilst there are some inaccuracies in comparing the Sino-US relationship to Athens and Sparta (for example, the 'rise' referenced by Thucydides was typically territorial expansion, which is not the problem between the US and China),[19] the rise of China is not fully understood and to the current ruling power this is at times comprehended as threatening and thus a source of 'fear'. The development of Chinese foreign policy historically from 韬光养晦 '*taoguangyanghui*' (keeping a low profile and biding your time) to 奋发有为 '*fenfayouwei*' (striving for achievement)[20] demonstrates that China intends to continue to 'rise'. This means the avoidance of 'fear' should be the focus in maintaining a peaceful and therefore prosperous and stable Indo-Pacific. Striving for 'Competitive Coexistence' means to aim for a trend of multipolarisation in the region, meaning a distribution of power and interdependence which can significantly contribute to stability and prosperity. Therefore, Indo-Pacific navies must ensure Indo-Pacific nations' continued growth with the intent to promote interdependence, autonomous contribution and thus a 'Competitive Coexistence' for the US and China.

The Indo-Pacific is a region characterised by the marine economy due to its economic significance and percentage of global maritime trade. Due to the significance of the sea domain in this region, Indo-Pacific navies are at the forefront of promoting stability, security and prosperity through ongoing military collaboration and mutual trust. This mutual trust and military collaboration can also contribute towards reducing environmental risks in the region which would impact on the growth of emerging economies. The environment and climate of the Indo-Pacific region is governed by transient conditions and monsoonal seasons resulting in nutrient-rich waters. Whilst the monsoonal trends are a yearly cycle due to the movement of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, worsening storm conditions and increasing prevalence of natural disasters are attributed to the evolving climate. According to the 2020 Ecological Threat Register, the region has 'suffered

16 A Misenheimer, *Thucydides' other 'traps': the United States, China and the prospect of 'inevitable' war*, National War College, Washington, 2019 (quoting G Allison, 'Thucydides's trap has been sprung in the Pacific', *Financial Times*, 21 August 2012).
17 Ibid. (Allison paraphrasing Thucydides).
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Sussex & Clarke, 2021.

the most natural disasters in the last 30 years' and will continue to witness increasing stress (specifically water related) in the coming 20 years[21] due to current ecological threats and climate change. Organisations such as APEC recognise the need for environmentally sustainable methods for economies to cooperate towards prosperity as well as to address the risks to stability from climate change and ecological threats.[22] The problem of destructive overfishing and overexploitation of natural resources in the region is one key ecological threat. Destructive fishing methods include poison fishing and bottom trawling, which cause extensive reef damage, as well as overfishing due to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing[23] – not to mention the contribution to pollution in the region from poisons utilised and from abandoned or discarded ghost nets. Water pollution and acidification from these forms of destructive fishing in turn contributes to climate change,[24] whilst overfishing induces heightened localised stress due to limited food availability. An example of a successful military cooperative exercise which can be replicated between Indo-Pacific navies to regulate fishing in the region is the recent Australian and Indonesian combined maritime patrol AUSINDO CORPAT 2021. The five-day patrol was conducted along the shared maritime border between Australia and Indonesia with the aim of deterring illegal fishing.[25] AUSINDO CORPAT 2021 is an example of Indo-Pacific navies building mutual trust and collaboration towards ensuring a secure future for the fishing industry. This will see the reduction of ecological and climate change threat stressors, as well as subsequently ensuring availability of resources for continued economic growth. Coordinated patrols within the region between Indo-Pacific navies will continue to promote interconnectedness as well as prompting all nations to autonomously contribute.

Climate change is another emerging threat with potentially catastrophic impacts to the physical and strategic environment.[26] As stated previously, the frequency and intensity of natural disasters is increasing, which has the potential to pose threats to the wellbeing and security of nations in the region.

> Changes in the oceans are a particular focal point. The Indo-Asia Pacific's coastal megacities and its far-flung island nations are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surges, and saltwater intrusion into freshwater aquifers.[27]

Sea level rise, for example, has the potential to impact defined maritime boundaries and thus the

21 'Natural disasters & water stress threaten Asia-Pacific', *Vision of Humanity* [website] Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/more-natural-disasters-and-water-stress-threaten-asia-pacific/>.

22 'Supporting the Indo-Pacific to tackle climate change', *Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade* [website], <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/climate-change/supporting-indo-pacific-tackle-climate-change>.

23 K DeRidder & S Nindang, 'Southeast Asia's fisheries near collapse from overfishing', *The Asia Foundation* [website], 28 March 2018, <https://asiafoundation.org/2018/03/28/southeast-asias-fisheries-near-collapse-overfishing/>.

24 'Climate and security in the Indo-Asia Pacific", *Planetary Security Initiative* [website], 10 August 2020, <https://www.planetarysecurityinitiative.org/news/climate-and-security-indo-asia-pacific>.

25 'Australia and Indonesia conduct combined maritime patrol', Department of Defence, media release, 24 October 2021, <https://news.defence.gov.au/media/media-releases/australia-and-indonesia-conduct-combined-maritime-patrol>.

26 S Fetzek & D McGinn, 'Climate change is a security threat to the Asia-Pacific', *The Diplomat*, 10 August 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/08/climate-change-is-a-security-threat-to-the-asia-pacific/>.

27 Ibid.

security of nations. Meanwhile disruptions to supply chain components due to projected climate changes pose a very real threat to economic development and prosperity. Noting the emergence of growing economies in the region that are at risk of being severely impacted by

climate change (e.g. Pacific Islands and Indonesian Archipelago) and therefore the increased stressors impacting the nations' sense of security, reaching the goal of 'Competitive Coexistence' through multipolarisation and maintaining security in the region becomes challenging.

> 'Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, increasing security threats across the Indo-Pacific region, from increasingly devastating storms and sea level rise, to migrating fish stock compromising the region's food security. The region's megacities are at particular risk, which will only intensify with high temperatures and warmer waters. Now is the time for "climate proofing" measures, from incorporating climate security risks into foreign and defense policies in the region, to strengthening capacities for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Security organizations should work together with diplomatic, development and disaster response agencies to coordinate preparedness, planning and response.'[28] – International Military Council on Climate and Security Secretary General, the Honorable Sherri Goodman

Indo-Pacific navies should identify these regions at higher risk of natural disasters and other climate change related issues to develop effective response measures. These will need to be executed as quickly as possible to ensure minimal disruption to maritime trade as well as supporting the affected nation's recovery. The coordinated HADR effort following the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 is a good example which included Australia, Japan, India and the US. However, to truly promote multipolarisation in the region, a wider array of nations including Indonesia, the Pacific Islands and China should be included in such examples. For a region as large as the Indo-Pacific, it may also be effective if Indo-Pacific navies were to adopt a state of readiness in order to posture and respond to disasters that may occur based on statistical data. In 2011, a statistical assessment of tropical cyclone tracks in the western north Pacific presented findings relating to frequency and location of tropical cyclones. Key findings in particular included a clear overall pattern of storm paths, 'with westward motion at low latitudes (northern hemisphere) and eastward motion at mid and high latitudes' as well as the average occurrence of storms being within the July to October period.[29] Similarly, in 2018 a statistical assessment of tropical cyclone tracks in the Southern Hemisphere determined that global warming caused tropical expansion.[30] This led to the incidence of tropical cyclones intensifying in the south Indian Ocean whilst cyclone locations were moving both poleward and towards the equator. The majority of tropical cyclones were observed to occur in the January to March period.[31] In considering this statistical data, Indo-Pacific navies are able to concentrate response plans to the southern portion of the Indo-Pacific in early and late months of the year whilst focusing in the northern Indo-Pacific (Philippines and northward) in mid-year. More efficient means of responding to natural disasters will lead to quicker recoveries and thus continued growth.

28 'Climate and Security in the Indo-Asia Pacific', *IMCCS* [website], <https://imccs.org/climate-and-security-in-the-indo-asia-pacific/>.

29 E Yonekura & T Hall, 'A statistical model of tropical cyclone tracks in the western north Pacific with ENSO-dependent cyclogenesis', *Journal of Applied Meteorology and Climatology*, vol. 50(8), 2011, pp. 1725–1739.

30 An expansion of the northern and southern latitude boundaries to the tropics.

31 H Ramsay, S Chand & S Camargo, 'A statistical assessment of Southern Hemisphere tropical cyclone tracks in climate models', *Journal of Climate*, vol. 31(24), 2018, pp. 10081–10104.

Indo-Pacific navies are able to adopt environmentally sustainable practices to reduce shipping emissions contributing to climate change. Shipping emissions are calculated based on the weight of and ongoing demand for products, the distance the vessel must travel, efficiency and fuel used.[32] Whilst the Indo-Pacific is the centre of significant economic growth and prosperity, it is a significant contributor to global emissions. Due to the projected damage this region is causing the climate, the International Maritime Organisation and the UN have placed the reduction of shipping emissions high in their priorities. There are various methods to reduce emissions, which include technology and technical changes, naval architecture design and operational measures. In the immediate future, Indo-Pacific navies are able to focus on operational measures to reduce emissions, which in turn builds trust between nations that the region, in its entirety, cares about climate impacts on nations' security and prosperity. The International Council on Clean Transportation collaborated on a major study in 2010 to identify 53 different ship types to which efficiency technologies could be applied.[33] The study determined 22 existing technical and operational measures that could immediately be integrated in shipping in order to reduce emissions. These 22 measures were split into 15 groups (Figure 3). When considering the immediate actions Indo-Pacific navies can take to ensure minimal delays to ongoing patrol requirements, weather routing and speed reduction will be discussed.

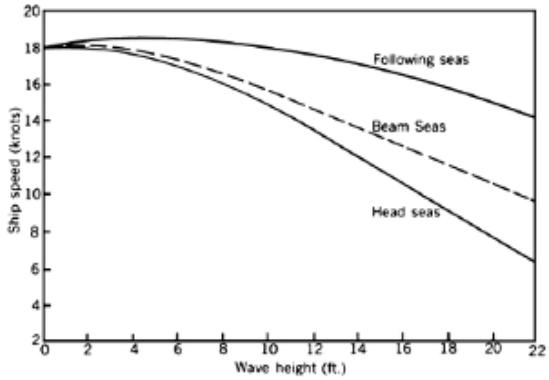
Propeller Polishing	Hull Cleaning	Speed Reduction
Autopilot Upgrade	Air Lubrication	Main Engine Retrofits
Water Flow Optimization	Hull Coating	Speed Controlled Pumps and Fans
Weather Routing	Wind Power	High-Efficiency Lighting
Propeller Upgrade	Waste Heat Reduction	Solar Panels

Weather routing is a method of utilising currents, weather forecasts and sea conditions to determine a fuel-efficient route for voyages. This method is already used by a large portion of the world's fleet; however, noting the dynamic and occasionally sporadic nature of some naval patrols, the method can be employed better by Indo-Pacific navies. A part of training as a Maritime Warfare Officer in Australia includes the introduction of routing charts provided by the UK Hydrographic Office. These charts are based on historical data of statistical weather patterns, wind directions and recommended routes. This data can be utilised to determine an effective route and passage plan whilst ensuring fuel efficiency.

32 S Bullock, 'Ten ways to cut shipping's contribution to climate change – from a researcher', *The Conversation*, 17 September 2021, <https://theconversation.com/ten-ways-to-cut-shippings-contribution-to-climate-change-from-a-researcher-167997>.

33 *Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships*, White Paper Number 11, The International Council on Clean Transportation, Washington, 2011.

Bowditch's *American practical navigator* provides further information on the principles of weather routing. In particular, a diagram (Figure 5) is presented which details the performance curves for a commercial vessel proceeding at 18 knots impacted by weather and seas approaching from varying directions. The diagram indicates that a ship experiencing following seas will have a reduced impact on ship speed compared to a ship experiencing head seas, which would most likely travel a far shorter distance in the prevailing conditions with minimal fuel economy. By utilising these methods of weather routing, Indo-Pacific navies are able to ensure optimum fuel efficiency where possible.



Noting that following seas in significant weather conditions maintain ship speeds within 2 to 4 knots, where routes are planned to account for a following sea, Indo-Pacific naval vessels subsequently would be able to reduce speed and thus main engine power in order to further conserve fuel. Whilst there are greater opportunities for Indo-Pacific navies to collaborate on technology advances to reduce emissions in their respective fleets, these immediate operational measures would be effective for Indo-Pacific navies deployed in collaborative patrols through the region.

In order to effectively conduct collaborative missions or patrols and planning for effective response procedures to build mutual trust between Indo-Pacific navies, communication is the final glue. Communication can be achieved through cultural integration, which may include ongoing exchange positions throughout Indo-Pacific navies for valuable information sharing and skill development. Language in particular should become a key focus of Indo-Pacific navies' individual professional development. Not only does language allow for communication across borders but

also certain characteristics of cultures are present within the language. Chinese and Japanese languages, for example, highlight an underlying art to their writing systems (Chinese calligraphy and Japanese kanji), which draw significant links to their respective cultures. Chinese calligraphy in particular, when handwritten, has historically referenced the strength or resolve of a significant military general or leader in the nation and, when mimicked by one's own handwriting, is believed to provide insight into the nature of that person. Additionally, the structure and components of a Chinese character can also determine the varying English translations depending on the context. Pidgin English or *Tok Pisin* (spoken in Papua New Guinea) as well as elements of Indonesian demonstrate an underlying cultural aspect of owning or possessing being important. For example, the phrase 'I don't understand', *Mi no harim gut tok bilong yu*, literally translates to 'I don't understand the speak/talk belonging to you'. In 2016, Wendy Ayres-Bennett, a professor of French philology and linguistics at the University of Cambridge, wrote an article discussing the recent language policy introduced within the British Army to address growing risks to national security from language shortages. The policy included language studies and cultural training as a core competence in military progression.[34] Adopting a similar policy within Indo-Pacific navies would therefore provide a number of benefits. Noting the diversity of cultures within the Indo-Pacific, mutual understanding of language and thus culture would provide the foundations for coexistence within the region. Such policy would demonstrate a clear intent for navies to communicate and therefore cooperate.

In conclusion, the Indo-Pacific is defined by evolving regional relationships and economic growth. The Indo-Pacific region is currently defined by 'Strategic Competition' between the rising power, China, and the ruling power, the US. This means the role of Indo-Pacific nations and consequently Indo-Pacific navies will become increasingly important in maintaining stability, security and ongoing prosperity to evolve beyond 'Strategic Competition' towards 'Competitive Coexistence'. As discussed throughout this essay, Indo-Pacific navies are to employ various measures including collaborative patrols, HADR response plans, climate change considerations and communication development. These measures will promote interconnectedness and interdependence between nations striving to autonomously contribute to the region and thus maintain global order. Without a doubt, the future of the world is deeply entwined with the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, with the vision of a stable, ordered and economically prosperous region at the forefront for all Indo-Pacific nations (not just the major powers), Che Guevara's words ring true: peaceful coexistence cannot be limited to the powerful countries if we want to ensure world peace.

34 W Ayres-Bennett, 'How the British military became a champion for language learning', *The Conversation*, 6 June 2016, <https://theconversation.com/how-the-british-military-became-a-champion-for-language-learning-60000>.

Lieutenant Sarah Kaese, RAN

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Rising Tensions in the Indo-Pacific: Stabilising the Maritime Environment through Region Building and Strategic Responses

Sub Lieutenant Jemima Schortz, RAN

Introduction

With the maritime domain so important and influential to the world's history, politics and security, and to the global economy, the prosperous region of the Indo-Pacific has become a hub of activity for many states. Comprising 24 nations in its regional framework, the Indo-Pacific is at the centre of approximately two-thirds of the global economy, and currently seven of the world's largest militaries engage in operations in the region.[1] A common interest for these states emerges: ensuring stability is maintained, which allows nations to capitalise on their maritime rights without threat or coercion. However, this level of political and economic investment from multiple stakeholders who wish to capitalise on the region's opportunities has led to rising tensions and disputes among the major players, primarily the United States and China.[2] In this, one of the significant challenges of the modern age, nations have a responsibility to uphold the common interests of a secure maritime environment through good order to ensure the region continues to provide resources and economic growth. This requires nations' naval and maritime capabilities to work with policymakers to foster open and free seas in the Indo-Pacific.

The second part of this paper, 'Contextual Understanding', examines the geographical outlay of the Indo-Pacific, followed by the importance of the region for international stability. Common interests are then identified following an understanding of the region's relevance. The third part, 'Solutions', offers solutions to achieve the common interests through international collaboration, despite varying political climates and objectives. These solutions include both region building measures and strategic responses. Conclusions are drawn in the final part, which emphasises maritime stability in the Indo-Pacific through a layered approach of law, codes of conduct and collaboration, supplemented by minilaterals and freedom of navigation exercises.

Contextual Understanding

Defining the Indo-Pacific Region

In recent years, 'Indo-Pacific' has become a broadly recognised term which has largely replaced Asia-Pacific.[3] From a general, geographical understanding, the Indo-Pacific encompasses the Indian and Pacific oceans, and includes the surrounding countries.[4] However, different states have adopted different definitions of the Indo-Pacific. The Australian 2017 Defence White Paper

1 National Security Council of the White House, *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*, February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>, p. 4.
2 Ibid., p. 5.
3 P Varghese, *The Indo-Pacific, and its strategic challenges: an Australian perspective*, ISEAS Publishing, Singapore, 2019, p. 13.
4 K He & M Li, 'The institutionalization of the Indo-Pacific: problems and prospects', *International Affairs*, vol. 96(1), 2020, p. 151.

defined it as the 'Region ranging from eastern Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean connected by Southeast Asia, including India, North Asia and the United States',[5] which encompasses the critical space where current disputes are arising between the major regional players. The expansion of the Asia-Pacific region to the Indo-Pacific can be seen as an effort to increase institutional structures to facilitate prosperity and improved regionalism. By this perspective, the Indo-Pacific goes beyond its geographical meaning and becomes a strategic concept, a geopolitical framework where policies and state action come to fruition.

The Importance of the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific has been at the forefront of current political discussions due to its essentialism for countries as a mean of trade, energy resources and maritime security. The Indo-Pacific region has 65 per cent of the world's ocean, 25 per cent of its land, more than half the world's population, 60 per cent of the global GDP and two-thirds of global economic growth.[6] The Indian Ocean is the most utilised and strategically important passage of trade, transporting approximately two-thirds of the globe's oil and one-third of the world's cargo.[7] It is unquestionable why the 2013 Defence White Paper described the region as 'the geographic centre'[8] and a key consideration for defence pursuits. The Japanese Cabinet Secretariat considered security of the Indo-Pacific sea lanes as, regarding their economy, a 'matter of life and death'.[9] Due to seaborne trade being more inexpensive and more efficient than land trade, particularly regarding energy, the Indian Ocean sea lanes carry 80 per cent of China's oil, 90 per cent of South Korea's and 90 per cent of Japan's.[10] This significant dependence on the region for economic stability creates a major strategic vulnerability, which has impacted diplomatic partnerships and naval modernisation.[11] Thus, it is evident that the shift from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific does not just accommodate the changing influence of the Indian Ocean, and in part India, but represents the change in security for the whole maritime environment.

Common Interest

By understanding both the scope and importance of the Indo-Pacific, a common interest emerges between the relevant state actors: a secure, stable maritime environment which enables unhindered transport and utilisation of resources due to ongoing security. Therefore, various nations have increased their naval presences in the region and engaged in militarisation, on

5 Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper.html>, 'Glossary of terms'.

6 National Security Council of the White House, 'Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States', p. 5.

7 Australian Government, *Defence White Paper 2013*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013, <https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/WP_2013_web.pdf>, p. 13.

8 Ibid., p. 8.

9 C Wirth, 'Whose "Freedom of Navigation"? Australia, China, the United States, and the making of order in the "Indo-Pacific"', *The Pacific Review*, vol. 32(4), 2019, p. 476.

10 R Medcalf, 'The evolving security order in the Indo-Pacific', in D Brewster (ed.), *Indo-Pacific maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, National Security College, Canberra, 2016, p. 9.

11 Ibid.

both land and sea, to secure their interests and uphold the prosperity of the region. A prominent example is the United States Freedom of Navigation Program, which aims at creating a consistent presence of security by upholding the right, per the US interpretation, of freedom of innocent passage for all ships, including military vessels.[12] However, the main source of militarisation is attributed to the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has increased its naval presence, has a permanent military base in Djibouti and continues to establish artificial islands in the Spratly Islands with the objective of obtaining sovereignty over additional waters.[13] The PRC's latest effort was its attempt to secure a military facility on the Solomon Islands; whether this will come to fruition is yet to be revealed.[14] Australia states that China's 'power and influence are growing to match, and in some cases exceed, that of the United States';[15] naturally there is rising tension in the region, particularly between the US and China, jeopardising the common interest of a stable maritime environment.

This issue is not unrecognised by other nations. The PRC's actions in the South China Sea garnered G-7 and EU leaders' attention in 2016[16] – not to mention that, due to the trade dependency of most countries on the globe, maritime security is of interest to nearly all states irrespective of their geographical location. The contention between the major players is a dangerous phase for the region and it is here where the role of navies and defence comes into play. China must be managed and balanced, rather than frustrated and restrained. Creating a strategic equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific with respect to all states' common interest of maritime security will be a significant challenge, requiring the resources and collaboration of all regional maritime players.

Solutions

It is undeniable that resolving the issues that threaten the common interest of prosperity, security and good order in the Indo-Pacific is challenging. All relevant states have their own international behaviour and perspectives towards their actions which have been shaped by history, culture, and geography. For Australia, its interaction with China must simultaneously respect the economic relationship, due to the reliance on trade, and reject the security threat towards regional and global law and policy. Therefore, the solutions presented focus on this need for equilibrium, proposing both region-building efforts, which focus on law, good conduct and collaboration regarding military ventures, and a strategic response to oppose threats to maritime security. These propositions include direct actions by navies and policymakers, as both are relevant and important aspects of navy involvement.

12 National Security Council of the White House, 2022, p. 8.
13 Medcalf, 2016, p. 9.
14 A Greene, 'Australian general says Chinese military presence in Solomon Islands would force ADF rethink', *ABC News* [website], 31 March 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-31/defence-general-warnings-chinese-military-solomon-islands/100954752>, p. 1.
15 Australian Government, 2017, 'Chapter two: A contested world'.
16 Wirth, 2019, p. 476.

Region Building

The concept behind region-building efforts is to accommodate the PRC in Indo-Pacific institutional understandings by fostering confidence and dialogue to achieve objectives without conflict. Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore, observed:

> 'In the old concept, balance of power meant largely military power. In today's terms, it is a combination of economic and military, and I think the economic outweighs the military.'[17]

China has major trading relationships with many parties in the Indo-Pacific, and their economic health serves vital functions. By removing the pressure of a strategic response, a strong working relationship could develop which allows constructive contribution from China. This approach has been adopted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which predominantly manages security affairs through regional building concepts.[18] The PRC is a strong state actor in the Indo-Pacific; intentions to shape it in accordance with a rules-based system rather than forcefully resist would be in the best interests of the regional communities. This should occur in three phases: solidifying the rule of law, strengthening and formulation of codes of conduct specific to the region, and collaboration efforts to mitigate other security threats.

Rule of Law

An issue which currently jeopardises peace and security in the Indo-Pacific is the unclarity and ambiguous nature of the main legal framework, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Many of the disputes which have arisen, including increased claims of sovereignty over certain waters, exclusion of vessels in different zones and restriction of navigational freedoms, largely arise due to misinterpretation. Whether this misinterpretation is accidental, due to ambiguity, or intentional, to allow states to ignore unfavourable provisions under plausible deniability, is irrelevant. This misinterpretation demonstrates that clarification needs to occur, or states will continue to engage in brinkmanship to see what actions will go unchecked. Ensuring that all states are aware of their obligations under UNCLOS and the legal standing on certain issues is the first step to ensuring peaceful coexistence in the region. While there have been multiple attempts to clarify the treaty prior to and following its entry into force in 1994,[19] with the increased focus on trade and energy resources in recent years it is paramount that a rules-based system is firmly established. Chinese efforts to prevent American military vessels in the East Asian seas[20] is a prime example of such interferences due to unresolved responsibilities under the treaty. It is questionable how a nation is expected to fully utilise and secure its rights in the ocean, for both transport and military operations, when certain countries exclude its passage in waters over which they have no sovereign right.

17 Varghese, 2019, p. 8.

18 CA Thayer, 'Managing security tensions in the South China Sea: the role of ASEAN, in D Brewster (ed.), *Indo-Pacific maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, National Security College, Canberra, 2016, p. 25.

19 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982*, <https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm>.

20 R Pedrozo, 'Military activities in the exclusive economic zone: East Asia focus', *International Law Studies*, vol. 90(1), 2014, p. 521.

Furthermore, the continued disputed claims to maritime jurisdictions further create contention in the region. The Indo-Pacific is one of the most geographically complex areas, due to its number of archipelagos and states sharing adjacent waters, such as the overlapping jurisdictional claims of China and Japan regarding their exclusive economic zones (EEZs).[21] Formal claims, rather than just physical occupation, need to be established. This is particularly true of islands to which nations are attempting to invoke sovereign right but that, per the treaty, may not be classified as islands but rather as rocks or atolls. Whilst it is an imposing concept for states desiring to utilise their legal right of a 200 nautical mile EEZ, or even 12 nautical mile territorial sea, if hostility were to cease due to codes of conduct and open dialogue (discussed below), supported by collaboration and information sharing, such clarification would not be as burdensome.

The argument arises that while law is the only mechanism to regulate maritime disputes on an equitable basis, it is another matter to enforce compliance. The concern is that China will not follow the laws as outlined in UNCLOS, or respect the rules as adopted by the region's major powers.[22] This was shown by China's rejection of the arbitral tribunal ruling regarding the South China Sea in 2016, undermining confidence in international law.[23] Yet, clarifying this law removes the defence of misinterpretation and blatantly labels China as a state which breaks international law, a position which leads itself to a strategic response (see 'Strategic Response' below). However, prior to strategic responses it is important to support the strengthening of international law with explanation and mobilising like-minded communities to support legal findings. Every country has different perspectives and histories which result in variances in what laws mean in practice. China may view such lawful clarifications as targeted restrictions, whereas it should see international law as a stabiliser which supports its economy and prosperity; thus meaningful communication is required for understanding. This is not impossible for China, which already benefits from trade laws outlined in the World Trade Organization and from the UN Charter, whereby it has a permanent seat on the Security Council.[24] A prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific must be dedicated to peaceful dispute resolutions with respect to international law and the UN Charter whilst rejecting unilateral, forceful activities.

Indo-Pacific Codes of Conduct

Due to the geopolitical complexity of the region, an Indo-Pacific code of conduct which specifically targets the needs and disputes of the area may be beneficial to supplement the generality of UNCLOS. This has already been accepted and implemented in some countries, with Japan's Foreign Minister Hayashi proposing an Indo-Pacific treaty of friendship and cooperation, and Indonesia creating the Indian Ocean Rim Association Concord to promote economic cooperation

21 C Rahman, 'The limits to maritime security collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region', in D Brewster (ed.), *Indo-Pacific maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, National Security College, Canberra, 2016, p. 38.
22 Ibid., p. 39.
23 Thayer, 2016, p. 26.
24 Varghese, 2019, p. 12.

and commonality.[25] Yet these instruments have evidently not addressed the major disputes and requirements of the region. A solution may be a depoliticised space with a third-party mediator where parties can engage in open dialogue to achieve their aims, or at the very least bearable compromises, which focuses on polices which will stabilise the region. This includes defining militarisation and what acts states consider as aggressive, and identifying red lines which, if crossed, would be significantly destabilising, factors which Australia, the US and ASEAN have all identified as high priority.[26] This is not an impossible feat, as the 2014 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit between Beijing and Tokyo showcased that bilateral agreements can be drafted when the climate is so turbulent that to ignore it would be highly detrimental to both states.[27]

It is noted that with the increasing nationalism, domestically motivated politics, economic investments, and competition over maritime resources such as hydrocarbons and fishing, compromises will be difficult to obtain. However, these factors just emphasis how important it is to implement confidence and regional building measures to secure the region as a prosperous hub of international cooperation. These discussions and development of procedures could involve crisis management, navigational safety measures for naval encounters, and rules of engagement, presented in a formal code of conduct. It has been suggested that strengthening existing codes, namely the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and including additional parties may also be useful.[28] A legally endorsed code, which increases the parameters of the existing instruments to better reflect the current environment and what actions will be considered hostile, will be beneficial for the unique international security concerns relevant to the region.

Confidence-Building Measures

To progressively stimulate the region, confidence needs to be built between the regional players through international collaboration which is motivated by communal objectives surrounding resources and security. ASEAN supports region building which will proactively engage China.[29] By identifying common interests and promoting joint progressive schemes, Indo-Pacific states could meaningfully contribute and work towards creating a foundation of trust. Common interests, as discussed in the previous part of this paper, include security for sovereign waters, primarily shipping lanes, for economic gains. Piracy, armed robbery, illegal drug trafficking and other transnational crimes are all threats which collectively impact the economy of Indo-Pacific states. Open communication and joint efforts from naval forces to target and remove illegal activity in the Indo-Pacific benefit all participatory states, by improving security whilst increasing inter-state confidence. Additional confidence-building projects could include joint military exercises

25 R Muna, 'Australia-Indonesia maritime security cooperation as a contribution to Indo-Pacific security', in D Brewster (ed.), *Indo-Pacific maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, National Security College, Canberra, 2016, p. 46.
26 Thayer, 2016, p. 29.
27 J Yuan, 'Managing tensions in East Asian waters: challenges and responses', in D Brewster (ed.), *Indo-Pacific maritime security: challenges and cooperation*, National Security College, Canberra, 2016, p. 21.
28 Ibid. p. 22.
29 L Buszynski & DT Hai, *Maritime issues and regional order in the Indo-Pacific*, Palgrave Macmillan, Switzerland, 2021, p. 17.

surrounding disaster relief, search and rescue operations, marine scientific research, and environmental protections,[30] which involve communication and cooperation spanning across all levels, from policymakers to naval personnel.

Other ideas have included maritime hotlines[31] and/or a shared maritime communication platform. This would create transparency and help mitigate potential conflict through information sharing and transparency on matters such as planned construction activities and weapon testing. Navies, and to an extent non-military vessels, would largely be responsible for these undertakings and voluntary communications, due to their physical presence in the domain and accumulation of information during their passage. Furthermore, it would be their responsibility to uphold the agreed-upon codes, making decisions which respect the rule of law, the desire for international collaboration and the security of the region. The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre in Singapore, targeting piracy and armed robbery, is an example of utilising shared information and acting upon it in the maritime environment.[32]

These joint projects, which could employ shared expenses and equal participation without de-emphasising jurisdictional claims, would reduce and transform maritime security enforcement and naval activities. Rather than combating each other, the states redirect resources to collaboratively reducing common terrorisations to the region. While sovereignty claims cannot realistically be ignored long term, these collaborative, confidence-building tasks create a foundation for positive negotiations with a focus on resource incentives.

Strategic Response

While continuously endorsing region-building efforts and negotiations to achieve the common interest of prosperity and security, there is a necessity to consider strategic responses to the tensions arising in the Indo-Pacific.

Minilaterals

The overarching aim for the Indo-Pacific region is to de-escalate tensions; thus, the formation of an overly powerful, democratic alliance may be seen as a threatening action and further inflate China's aggressions. Therefore, a solution is minilateral agreements which see regional stakeholders improving their strategic position while maintaining a balance of power across the region. Minilaterals are defined by Erica Moret, a senior researcher at the Global Governance Centre, as the:

> [d]iplomatic process of a small group of interested parties working together to supplement or complement the activities of inter-national organizations in tackling subjects deemed too complicated to be addressed appropriately at the multilateral level.[33]

This solution allows regional players to form multiple minilaterals with various countries which adopt common interests and mentalities, such as on nuclear warfare and freedom of navigation, without aligning on areas of discrepancies. For example, Australia has been forming minilaterals

30 Thayer, 2016, p. 28.
31 Ibid., p. 29.
32 Rahman, 2016, p. 41.
33 E Moret, 'Effective minilateralism for the EU: what, when and how', *European Institute for Security Studies*, vol. 10(26), 2016, p. 16.

with India and Indonesia, both of which do not wish to be part of a large alliance with overarching powers.[34] Australia has also formed minilaterals with Japan and the United States, developed as a trilateral to endorse maritime security through an 'innovative security triangle' which converges 'interests, defence capabilities and maritime geography'.[35] The Quad also engages in security dialogue and joint military exercises, with some referring to it as the 'Asian NATO'. However, there is no NATO in Asia, with some scholars suggesting this is due to the lack of a common enemy as, while China is considered by many as a threat to the region, it does not incite the unification needed to form a military alliance to balance against it.[36] Yet this is where the influence of the minilaterals emerges, as they go beyond military alliances and begin creating an institutionalised network of support and cooperation which endorses security while being neither an overwhelming presence which threatens China nor too widespread to inhibit consensus building.

These minilaterals create an essential equilibrium, conveying to China a willingness to form institutions which respect peaceful resolutions and maritime sovereignty but also endorsing strategic stability which will not allow breaches of maritime law to go unchecked. This aims to encourage a balance of power to occur; as coalitions of regions rise, the opposition will adjust in response. Similarly, minilaterals will help dissipate the Sino-US rivalry, as multiple minilaterals are established between other middle powers aiming to ease tensions in the region, as both China and US are powerful entities that attract dependence but also apprehension from other states. The India-Australia-France meeting in September 2020 was politically significant for these reasons; it stated a desire to balance their relationship with China by avoiding confrontation but maintaining stability in the region.[37] It is even more effective as many of these middle powers can tread in maritime zones where others cannot, such as Japan, which is often seen as a non-controversial partner in security relationships.[38] It is aspects such as these, notwithstanding the collaborative projects, which allow 'weaker' states to effectively contribute to a partnership and undercut sentiments of imbalance which may jeopardise a security relationship. Additionally, these coalitions support nations in particularly vulnerable areas by allowing them to increase their autonomy and influence to successfully contribute to the stability of the region, an important aspect when the decisions of the tribunal and legal bodies need to be enforced by the majority of the region.

Freedom of Navigation

While these minilaterals serve as a strategic deterrence, it is important to emphasise such objectives with reinforcing initiatives, namely freedom of navigation exercises. The US's Freedom of Navigation Program aims to challenge excessive maritime claims by upholding its right to freedom of navigation per customary and international law. However, interestingly, the US is not a party to UNCLOS,[39] despite asserting its rights under the convention. As stated above, there is a

34 Varghese, 2019, p. 11.
35 F Grare, 'Exploring Indo-Pacific convergences: the Australia-France-India trilateral dialogue', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 43(4), 2020, p. 156.
36 He & Li, 2020, p. 152.
37 Ibid., p. 167.
38 Buszynski & Hai, 2021, p. 28.
39 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982*.

necessity to clarify under UNCLOS what 'freedom of navigation' entails for warships and ensure parties asserting such rights are bound by international regulations. A nation exercising its right to innocent passage and free navigation serves as a stabilising effort which asserts rules-based order during unsanctioned maritime expansion. The minilateral system will aim to create partnerships which counteract egregious actions and negatively influence regional development. This is particularly important regarding the conception of artificial islands and reconstructing existing low-tide elevations to promote them to island status, as has been witnessed with the PRC particularly in the South China Sea. Islands attract maritime rights due to sovereign jurisdiction which will limit passage for many nations and restrict the free flow of goods. This has already been observed in recent years, with one example being China's maritime militia coordinating in Japan's EEZ surrounding the Diaoyu Islands to assert China's claims, despite China opposing the same actions in its EEZ with threats of force.[40] Laws need to be clarified regarding what is acceptable for passage of warships, codes of conduct must be developed for the specific region, and efforts to coordinate with regional players must be endorsed. When these actions fail and military opposition begins restricting navigation and trade routes, the minilaterals need to engage naval capabilities to ensure that the seas remain open and stable, as such principles are at the core of the international community.

Conclusion

The Indo-Pacific is a strategically pivotal region which will continue to see tensions arise unless nations undertake policy talks and naval cooperation to achieve the common interest of a prosperous, open maritime region which fosters multilateral collaboration. This mutual objective can be achieved through a layered approach which endorses both region-building activities and dialogue, supported by formation of minilaterals to strategically reject unilateral actions which threaten the freedom of navigation. To build the region, international law regarding the maritime environment under UNCLOS must be solidified to ensure no state may use the treaty's ambiguity to bypass responsibilities. This clarification should be supplemented by a code of conduct which specifically addresses the geopolitical complexity of the Indo-Pacific region. International law and regional policies should be supported by naval collaboration in various maritime activities to facilitate international relationships built on trust, confidence and transparency. Whilst region-building approaches to the Indo-Pacific disputes are essential, they must be accompanied by strategic responses which support peaceful resolutions and strongly reject unilateral, destabilising actions. The formation of minilateral agreements between states will ensure that nations, primarily China, that seek to exceed their maritime rights will be counterweighted by a network of nations that wish to uphold good order in the seas. Continual utilisation of a state's freedom to navigate the seas, following a clarification of UNCLOS, will present a strong, united force which rejects militarisation of the Indo-Pacific. Whilst a Herculean feat, it is imperative that nations' leaders and defence forces work in unison to uphold the long-held principle of open, free seas and protect the prosperous Indo-Pacific, which facilitates the livelihood of 60 per cent of the global population.

40 Buszynski & Hai, 2021, p. 102.

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The Law of the Jungle and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Mr Shaun Cameron

The 21st century has been described as the 'maritime century'[1] due to the world's increasing reliance on the oceans for prosperity, with global seaborne trade more than doubling from around 4 billion tons in 1990 to over 11 billion in 2020.[2] Much of the world economy is dependent on the maritime environment for shipping, as well as for the distribution of food, energy, and the varying materials required for health, industry and manufacturing, in an interconnected system valued at $US14 trillion in 2019.[3]

Maritime power has further been the basis upon which the most powerful empires have built themselves for the last 500 years,[4] and the economies of developing nations in the Indo-Pacific have shown the largest shift towards a sea-focused future in building their own prosperity.[5] The rising prominence of the maritime domain would suggest that navies are well positioned to serve the common interests of Indo-Pacific states in providing security, prosperity and good order, but this contribution requires more nuance than the mere putting of ships to sea. This essay will discuss the importance of addressing maritime challenges and the role of navies in a prosperous and secure future for the Indo-Pacific, although in the modern domain ships and submarines are not a panacea. The path to security, prosperity, and order may in fact be a path less noteworthy than the acquisition of new technology or hard power capability: it lies in cooperation.

Modern Warfare

The modern battlefield is one where kinetic warfare is increasingly being replaced by or supplemented with hybrid tactics,[6] including the use of cyberattack,[7] foreign interference,[8] and

1 R Griggs, 'A maritime school of strategic thought for Australia', in J Jones, *A maritime school of strategic thought for Australia: perspectives*, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, 2013, p. 9, <https://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Combined%20%28web%29_0.pdf>.

2 'Transport volume of seaborne trade from 1990 to 2020', *Statista* [website], November 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264117/tonnage-of-worldwide-maritime-trade-since-1990/>.

3 'Shipping and world trade: driving prosperity', *International Chamber of Shipping* [website], n.d., accessed 2 February 2022, <https://www.ics-shipping.org/shipping-fact/shipping-and-world-trade-driving-prosperity/>.

4 C Rahman, 'The inescapable ocean: on understanding Australia's strategic geography', in J Jones, *A maritime school of strategic thought for Australia: perspectives*, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, 2013, p. 75.

5 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Review of maritime transport 2021*, United Nations, Geneva, 2021, p. 3, <https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/rmt2021_en_0.pdf>.

6 A Bilal, 'Hybrid warfare – new threats, complexity, and "trust" as the antidote', *NATO Review*, 30 November 2021, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/11/30/hybrid-warfare-new-threats-complexity-and-trust-as-the-antidote/index.html>.

7 D Hurst, '"Significant threat": cyber attacks increasingly targeting Australia's critical infrastructure', *The Guardian*, 12 September 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/sep/15/significant-threat-cyber-attacks-increasingly-targeting-australias-critical-infrastructure>.

8 B Jaipragas, 'Is China the "Country X" Singapore's foreign interference law dare not name?', *South China Morning Post*, 9 October 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3151718/china-country-x-singapores-foreign-interference-law-dare-not>.

influence on public opinion.[9] Varying forms of economic coercion have impacted Australia and other nations across the Indo-Pacific, and states are looking beyond the strategies of the past in ensuring national security in a strategic environment described within the 2020 Defence Strategic Update[10] as being characterised by expanding cyber capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, great power competition, and grey zone activities.

As squadrons of Chinese fighter jets flew through Taiwanese airspace in response to US-Japan maritime exercises in early 2022[11] and the Russian navy loomed over the coast of Ukraine during a heightened fear state pre-invasion,[12] we may look towards a lesser-known text of security strategy and international relations for guidance in responding to such acts of intimidation and coercion by greater powers. The tome referred to is unlikely to be on the reading list for any tertiary qualification in the field or found within any military academy, but perhaps does offer guidance on how smaller and middle powers such as those of the Indo-Pacific may secure their common purpose of increased security, prosperity and good order, and the potential role that navies may play in this endeavour.

The Law of the Jungle

This text is in fact a poem titled 'The Law of the Jungle' found within Rudyard Kipling's 1895 sequel to *The jungle book*, aptly titled *The second jungle book*.[13] It reads:

> Now this is the Law of the Jungle – as old and as true as the sky;
>
> And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.
>
> As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back –
>
> For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.[14]

The poem outlines the importance of cooperation within the wolf pack in the survival of the fittest environment of the jungle, one not so different to a landscape of international affairs containing more and more opportunities for coercion and a rising focus on security as strategy.

9 *Understanding mass influence: three case studies of contemporary mass influence activities*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2021, <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:dcbca90e-72e8-469d-98a6-605b8d97421b#pageNum=1>.

10 Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2020, pp. 11, 12, 13, <https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020_Defence_Strategic_Update.pdf>.

11 E Cheung & B Lendon, 'Dozens of Chinese warplanes fly near Taiwan after US-Japan show of naval might', *CNN* [website], 24 January 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/23/asia/china-taiwan-warplane-incursion-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>.

12 S Horrell, 'Darkness on the Black Sea', *Center for European Policy Analysis* [website], 16 February 2022, <https://cepa.org/russian-navy-looms-over-ukraines-black-sea-coast/>.

13 R Kipling, *The second jungle book*, *The Gutenberg Project* [website], <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1937/1937-h/1937-h.htm>.

14 R Kipling, 'The Law of the Jungle', *The Kipling Society* [website], <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_lawofjungle.htm>.

States that were once more dove than hawk such as South Korea[15] and Japan[16] have turned towards defence spending to ensure security. South Korean and Japanese defence budgets have risen by 3.4 per cent[17] and 1.1 per cent[18] respectively, a record figure for Japan in a climate of pandemic-induced reductions in its economy.[19] Both countries have been on the receiving end of past coercion from a larger power in China, with South Korea experiencing weaponised tourism[20] after it allowed the US to move part of its anti-missile defence system to a deployment site within the country, while Japan lost access to Chinese rare earths for two months after a territorial dispute.[21]

Wolves without the Pack

Other states with histories of tussling with Beijing have also looked towards enhancing security. The Philippines has proposed a record 7.87 per cent[22] increase to its own defence spending in 2022, while Vietnam aims to raise its defence budget from US$5 billion in 2018 to $US7 billion in 2022.[23] Both states[24] have existing territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea, along with Malaysia, whose own military spending will increase by 1.8 per cent in 2022.[25] Indonesia's defence budget declined by 2 per cent in 2022[26], although it is seeking a further $US125 billion in loans for long-term military modernisation.[27] Much of this effort likely ties into plans to develop

15 L Kim, 'A hawkish dove? President Moon Jae-in and South Korea's military buildup', *War on the Rocks* [website], 15 September 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/a-hawkish-dove-president-moon-jae-in-and-south-koreas-military-buildup/>.

16 K Takahasi, 'Japan approves record defence budget for fiscal year 2022', *The Diplomat*, 27 December 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/japan-approves-record-defense-budget-for-fiscal-year-2022/>.

17 J Grevatt & A MacDonald, 'South Korea finalises USD46.32 billion defence budget for 2022', *Janes* [website], 3 December 2021, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/south-korea-finalises-usd4632-billion-defence-budget-for-2022>.

18 R Kaneko, 'Japan's defence budget for 2022 hits record for eighth year', *Japan Times*, 24 December 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/12/24/national/defense-budget-record/>.

19 'Japan's economy shrinks faster than expected in Q3', *Al Jazeera* [website], 15 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/11/15/japans-economy-shrinks-faster-than-expected-in-q3>.

20 'North Korea: China urges withdrawal of US missile defence system in South Korea', *ABC News* [website], 26 April 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-26/china-urges-withdrawal-of-us-missile-defence-system/8474296>.

21 'China resumes rare earth exports to Japan', *BBC News* [website], 24 November 2010, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-11826870>.

22 'Philippine defence budget to rise 7.87 pct in 2022', *XinhuaNet* [website], 17 August 2021, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/17/c_1310132492.htm>.

23 NT Phuong, 'Why is Vietnam's military modernization slowing?', *Institute of South East Asian Studies* [website], 22 July 2021, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2021-96-why-is-vietnams-military-modernisation-slowing-by-nguyen-the-phuong/>.

24 'Territorial disputes in the South China Sea', *Council on Foreign Relations* [website], 18 February 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea>.

25 Grevatt & MacDonald, 2021.

26 Ibid.

27 T Chairil, 'What is Indonesia's US$125 billion arms procurement budget plan about and what does it need to do?', *The Conversation*, 23 June 2021, <https://theconversation.com/what-is-indonesias-us-125-billion-arms-procurement-budget-plan-about-and-what-does-it-need-to-do-163080>.

Indonesia's naval capability[28] in deterring incursions from Chinese vessels into its sovereign waters.[29] This increase in regional defence spending points to a breakdown in good order and that states must build their capability to maintain national security.

Australia has also increased its maritime capability with the acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, which will allow the Royal Australian Navy to hold at strategic flashpoints around the region, such as in the South China Sea and near Taiwan, for significantly longer periods compared to diesel-electric submarines.[30] Despite this, debate still continues amongst established strategists such as Hugh White[31] on the efficacy of nuclear versus diesel-electric submarines, and the earliest these assets could take to sea will still be the late 2030s.[32] Criticism has further been directed at the design of new Hunter-class surface frigates, raising questions related to Australia's naval warfighting ability.[33] Regardless of the veracity of questions regarding Australian ships and submarines, these obstacles faced in the building of hard power show that pursuing warfare capability provides no short pathway towards security.

Facing the Dragon

Beijing has chosen to not comply with the Law of the Sea Convention or accept tribunal rulings over its behaviour in challenging good order in the South China Sea, and has instead continued to impinge on the sovereignty of other regional states in a maritime domain.[34] Nations in the Indo-Pacific have realised that in defending sovereign territory and exclusive economic zones perhaps they cannot rely on tribunals, other nations, and good order; they must rely on themselves and their own maritime capability.

Although Chinese encroachment and coercion is likely on the minds of governments throughout the Indo-Pacific, defence spending cannot be reduced to one Sino-related threat. South Korea faces the missile-happy spectre of its northern brother, North Korea,[35] and South-East Asian states

28 'Indonesia increases the naval budget to counter China's naval expansion', *ANI* [website], 22 January 2022, <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/indonesia-increases-the-naval-budget-to-counter-chinas-naval-expansion20220120213834/>.

29 'Indonesian patrol confronts Chinese ship in economic zone near disputed South China Sea', *The Economic Times*, 16 September 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/indonesian-patrol-confronts-chinese-ship-in-economic-zone-near-disputed-south-china-sea/articleshow/78138691.cms>.

30 A Galloway, '"Pathetically undergunned": the Navy's nuclear dilemma', *The Brisbane Times*, 14 February 2022, <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/politics/federal/pathetically-undergunned-the-navy-s-nuclear-dilemma-20211229-p59knk.html>.

31 H White, 'SSN vs SSK', *The Interpreter*, 29 September 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/ssn-vs-ssk>.

32 A Greene, 'Nuclear submarines and closer interaction with British military to dominate Australian talks with UK', *ABC News* [website], 18 January 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-01-19/nuclear-submarines-dominate-australia-uk-talks/100765474>.

33 M Hellyer, 'Hunter-class frigate report indicates Australian naval shipbuilding in disarray', *The Strategist*, 2 February 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/hunter-class-frigate-report-indicates-australian-naval-shipbuilding-in-disarray/>.

34 S Tiezzi, 'US State Department study dismisses China's "unlawful maritime claims" in South China Sea', *The Diplomat*, 14 January 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/us-state-department-study-dismisses-chinas-unlawful-maritime-claims-in-south-china-sea>.

35 'North Korea missile tests: biggest since 2017', *BBC News* [website], 30 January 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-60186538>.

have territorial disputes not only with China but also with one another.[36] While the prominence of quarrels in the South China Sea has likely instigated the defence modernisation efforts of nations such as Vietnam[37] and Malaysia,[38] these are also historic military deficiencies. Chinese incursions into maritime territories[39] and sovereign airspace[40] have likely only underlined the importance of military deterrence in overall strategy.

Regardless of how smaller and middle powers structure their defence spending, they are eclipsed by Beijing's own capability in proclaiming a 2021 defence budget of $US183.5 billion, an increase of 6.6 per cent from 2020.[41] China can be seen as one of the 'Lords of the Jungle' described in Kipling's poem (although there is no mention of the 'Dragon') and for smaller states facing such capability their strategy to maintain prosperity, security and good order should keep with that of the wolf and the power of the pack. In essence, Indo-Pacific states should work together to face the challenges posed by greater powers, rather than build naval and defence capability alone. Existing groupings such as AUKUS and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) are prime examples in this strategy.

Divide and Rule

But in this the Dragon adheres to Kipling's poem in that:

> When ye fight with a wolf of the Pack, ye must fight him alone and afar, Lest others take part in the quarrel ...[42]

Divide and rule is a common tactic for governments such as Beijing in separating smaller states from the benefits of cooperation, whether in isolating Taiwan from its diplomatic allies or in targeting individual nations of the Indo-Pacific for territorial encroachment. Security alliances and their potential for cooperation induce anxiety in great powers such as China[43] and can expose the vulnerability of a superpower towards groupings of countries that arise within its sphere of influence.[44]

36 RW Yuniar, 'Indonesia's land and maritime border disputes with Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam', *South China Morning Post*, 12 January 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/explained/article/3163035/indonesias-land-and-maritime-border-disputes-malaysia>.

37 W Shang-Su, 'Deterrence under the dragon's shadow: Vietnam's military modernisation', *The Interpreter*, 30 March 2018, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/deterrence-under-dragon-s-shadow-vietnam-s-military-modernisation>.

38 J Hammond, 'Malaysia investing in military personnel, equipment', *Indo-Pacific Defence Forum* [website], 1 June 2021, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/06/malaysia-investing-in-military-personnel-equipment/>.

39 'Philippines flags "incursions' by nearly 300 Chinese militia boats", Reuters, 12 May 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-flags-incursions-by-nearly-300-chinese-militia-boats-2021-05-12/>.

40 'South China Sea dispute: Malaysia accuses China of breaching air space', *BBC News* [website], 2 June 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57328868>.

41 MP Funaiole, B Hart, BS Glaser & B Chan, 'Understanding China's 2021 defense budget', *Center for Strategic & International Studies* [website], 5 March 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-chinas-2021-defense-budget>.

42 Kipling, 'The Law of the Jungle'.

43 MMH Mukit, 'Why China is anxious about the Quad', *Bangkok Post*, 24 May 2021, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2120627/why-china-is-anxious-about-the-quad>.

44 P Suciu, 'Here's why Russia is scared of a NATO invasion', *The National Interest* [website], 10 September 2021, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/heres-why-russia-scared-nato-invasion-193361>.

Regional alliances such as AUKUS[45] and the Quad[46] have formed as pacts to counter China's rising hegemony and increasingly coercive strategies, but smaller nations in the Indo-Pacific do not have the same ability to form such power groupings. These states must further consider factors such as trade, aid, and possibly being targeted by grey zone activities. Beijing has become an increasingly important trading partner for states in the region, overtaking Australia in Pacific trade[47] and becoming the third-largest aid donor in the Pacific.[48] China has employed this aid to divert Indo-Pacific states such as Solomon Islands[49] and Kiribati[50] away from ties with Taiwan, and utilised coercive measures with nations such as Palau that rebuff its directives.[51] Beijing has become adept at such hybrid tactics, further utilising public-opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and 'lawfare': the misuse and abuse of international law for one's own purposes.[52] The Pacific has become particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 era due to the region facing a potential 'lost decade' of social and economic growth resulting from the pandemic.[53] South-East Asia has become a similarly contested space for great power competition,[54] and has experienced a new strategy of creating and leveraging influence through the donation of COVID-19 health supplies and vaccine diplomacy.[55]

Lack of Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific is increasingly being viewed as a region of primary geostrategic importance, and the use of navies to ensure the security, prosperity and rules-based order of the region is growing in prominence. Australia[56] and the US[57] have directed a maritime focus towards the

45 'AUKUS: UK, US and Australia launch pact to counter China', *BBC News* [website], 16 September 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-58564837>.

46 SA Smith, 'The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: what to know', *Council on Foreign Relations* [website], 27 May 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>.

47 M Dornan & S Muller, 'The China shift in Pacific trade', *DevPolicy Blog* [website], 15 November 2018, <https://devpolicy.org/china-in-the-pacific-australias-trade-challenge-20181115/>.

48 J Pryke, 'Submission to inquiry into Australia's defence relationships with Pacific Island countries', *Lowy Institute* [website], 1 July 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/submission-inquiry-australia-defence-relationships-pacific-island-countries>.

49 N Whiting, C Zhou & K Feng, 'What does it take for China to take Taiwan's allies? Apparently, $730 million', *ABC News* [website], 19 September 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-18/solomon-islands-cuts-ties-with-taiwan-in-favour-of-china/11524118>.

50 Y Lee, 'Taiwan says China lures Kiribati with airplanes after losing another ally', Reuters, 20 September 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-taiwan-diplomacy-kiribati/taiwan-says-china-lures-kiribati-with-airplanes-after-losing-another-ally-idUSKBN1W50DI>.

51 S Cameron, 'Palau faces the dragon', *The Interpreter*, 22 November 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/palau-faces-dragon>.

52 B Chellaney, 'China's global hybrid war', *The Strategist*, 10 December 2021, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-global-hybrid-war/>.

53 R Rajah & A Dayant, 'Avoiding a Pacific lost decade: financing the Pacific's COVID-19 recovery', *Lowy Institute* [website], 9 December 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/lost-decade-pacific>.

54 B Kausikan, 'ASEAN's agency in the midst of great power competition', *Australian Outlook*, 30 October 2020, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/aseans-agency-in-the-midst-of-great-power-competition/>.

55 S Cameron, 'COVID-19 and vaccine diplomacy in the land of smiles', *Australian Outlook*, 6 August 2021, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/covid-19-in-the-land-of-smiles/>.

56 J Burke, 'Indo-Pacific Endeavour shows Australia's security found in, not from, Asia', *The Strategist*, 19 November 2021, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/indo-pacific-endeavour-shows-australias-security-found-in-not-from-asia/>.

57 AR Darmawan, 'Joe Biden's new Indo-Pacific strategy: a view from Southeast Asia', *The Interpreter*, 16 February 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/joe-biden-s-new-indo-pacific-strategy-view-southeast-asia>.

Indo-Pacific, and European powers such as Germany,[58] France[59] and the United Kingdom[60] are all looking to build naval capability and strategic partnerships in the region. Still, this increased interest and involvement from greater powers in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain has not directly equated to a significant increase in security for smaller nations in the region.

Maritime disputes still exist in areas such as the South China Sea, whereby China has repeatedly infringed upon the sovereignty and exclusive economic zones of nations such as the Philippines,[61] Vietnam,[62] Malaysia[63] and Indonesia.[64] The shift in focus of European powers and the US towards the region has not necessarily increased security, prosperity or order. Further, the risk of tensions breaking into conflict around the South China Sea is particularly dire for waterways that saw $US3.37 trillion in trade in 2016,[65] as well as hosting transport of significant amounts of the world's energy.[66] A regional conflict or blockade that froze international shipping would contract Taiwan's economy by a third, while Singapore's economy would fall by 22 per cent. Hong Kong, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia would suffer falls in their economies of 10 to 15 per cent, with these figures not including potential costs and casualties from kinetic warfare.[67] Australian maritime trade is not immune to the effects of conflict or targeted coercion: Captain Michael Beard of the RAN has outlined Australia's lack of maritime trade strategy in protecting important sea lines of communication and the resulting risks to Australia's shipping routes from foreign interference or aggression.[68] With Beijing's greatest naval expansion in generations,[69] an Indo-Pacific dominated by China may lead Australia and its exclusive economic zones to be the next target of territorial coercion.

58 B Wenger, 'Frigate deployment shows Germany's intent in the Indo-Pacific', *The Strategist*, 17 February 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/frigate-deployment-shows-germanys-intent-in-the-indo-pacific/>.

59 JM Perez & C Vecedo, 'AUKUS and France as an Indo-Pacific power', *Geopolitical Monitor*, 9 February 2022, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/aukus-and-france-as-an-indo-pacific-power/>.

60 B Bland, 'UK's Indo-Pacific tilt – not just for the good times', *The Interpreter*, 17 August 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/uk-indo-pacific-tilt-not-just-for-good-times>.

61 'Philippines flags "incursions" by nearly 300 Chinese militia boats', Reuters, 2021.

62 'Vietnam tacks between cooperation and struggle in the South China Sea', *International Crisis Group* [website], 7 December 2021, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/north-east-asia/china/318-vietnam-tacks-between-cooperation-and-struggle-south-china-sea>.

63 PP Kumar, 'Malaysia summons Chinese ambassador over South China Sea vessels', *Nikkei Asia* [website], 5 October 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-China-Sea/Malaysia-summons-Chinese-ambassador-over-South-China-Sea-vessels>.

64 K Jibiki & T Hadano, 'China tells Indonesia to stop drilling off South China Sea Islands', *Nikkei Asia* [website], 28 December 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-China-Sea/China-tells-Indonesia-to-stop-drilling-off-South-China-Sea-islands>.

65 'How much trade transits the South China Sea?', *Center for Strategic & International Studies* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea>.

66 'Almost 40% of global liquefied natural gas trade moves through the South China Sea', *United States Energy Information Administration* [website], 2 November 2017, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=33592>.

67 K Cosar & BD Thomas, 'The geopolitics of international trade in Southeast Asia', *NBER Working Paper Series,* Working Paper 28048, 2020, p. 11, <https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28048/w28048.pdf>.

68 M Beard, 'Protecting Australia's maritime trade: the need to plan now to bring the future into the present', *Tac Talks*, no. 1, 2021, p. 4, <https://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Tac_Talks_Issue%20_01_2021.pdf>.

69 T Shugart, 'Australia and the growing reach of China's military', *Lowy Institute* [website], 9 August 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/australia-and-growing-reach-china-s-military>.

Following the 'Law of the Jungle' and utilising cooperation cannot simply involve greater powers increasing their maritime hard capability in the Indo-Pacific, a situation possibly leading to a 'security dilemma' whereby the measures taken by one state to increase its security result in equal or greater reactions from other nations that feel their own security is reduced.[70] This spiral continues on, with participating states in fact becoming more insecure due to the arms race that security dilemmas often entail. Increasing security should instead take on forms developing the strength and ability of smaller nations, leading to alliances and increased capability in aggregate and allowing for their participation in power groupings. Indo-Pacific states should be empowered to contribute to their own prosperity and security and be active participants in maintaining good order and pursuing commonality of purpose.

Maritime Cooperation

One example of such endeavours is the Australian Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP).[71] The PMSP is a commitment of $AU2 billion over 30 years for enhancements to Pacific nation maritime capability and includes the provision of patrol boats, 21 of which will be provided to 12 Pacific island nations and Timor-Leste between 2018 and 2023. These ships will operate as sovereign assets of participating nations, and will be packaged with long-term training, advisory, maintenance, infrastructure and other support.[72] The PMSP supports smaller states to participate in large multilateral naval operations, such as Timor-Leste taking part in the HARI'I HAMATUK exercise with the US, Japan and Australia.[73] The program entails a region-wide integrated aerial surveillance network, supporting intelligence-driven maritime patrols and contributing to regional maritime security. This program has also provided enhancements to regional coordination and improved operability between Pacific island states in meeting maritime challenges and opportunities. The US has advocated for a similar form of military diplomacy in the region, with the US Military Commander in the Pacific supporting the strategy of cooperation and stating that preparing the Indo-Pacific for the future requires increasing the confidence and combat readiness of partners in the region.[74]

70 CL Glaser, 'The security dilemma revisited', *World Politics*, vol. 50(1), 1997, p. 174, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100014763>.

71 'Pacific Maritime Security Program', *Australian Government Department of Defence* [website], n.d., accessed 17 February 2022, <https://www.defence.gov.au/programs-initiatives/pacific-engagement/maritime-capability>.

72 'Defence co-operation: Timor-Leste', *Australian Embassy Timor-Leste* [website], n.d., accessed 17 February 2022, <https://timorleste.embassy.gov.au/dili/Defence.html>.

73 'ADF wraps up Exercise Hari'i Hamutuk in Timor-Leste', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, 30 September 2021, <https://asiapacificdefencereporter.com/adf-wraps-up-exercise-harii-hamutuk-in-timor-leste/>.

74 B Nicolson, 'US Army Pacific Commander: next war will be violent, very human, unpredictable and long', *The Strategist*, 18 February 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/us-army-pacific-commander-next-war-will-be-violent-very-human-unpredictable-and-long/>.

This form of cooperation and the supporting of Indo-Pacific allies to develop their maritime capability not only benefits the participating state but also works to build the security, good order and prosperity of the region through the use of and development of navies. This is particularly relevant for developing nations in the Indo-Pacific, which face further barriers to trade and prosperity such as the natural costs arising from geographical maritime location, lower technological development, and transport security costs.[75]

The Defence Cooperation Program

A further example of this form of cooperation and capability building is the Australian Defence Cooperation Program, which has made inroads into forming strategic relationships with militaries across the Indo-Pacific. The program was allocated over $AU155 million for a wide range of educational and maritime activities across 2021 and 2022.[76]

The program engages states throughout South Asia, South-East Asia and the South Pacific to support Australia's defence engagements and relationships. This avenue of cooperation has been reported by the Australian National Audit Office as being highly valued by nations throughout the Indo-Pacific, whose personnel benefit from education and training opportunities provided at Australian civilian and military institutions.[77] Multilateral and bilateral exercises are further included in the program, and the most recent Australian Defence White Paper singled out this cooperative endeavour for enhancement to build the confidence and capacity of regional partners.[78]

In 2021 and 2022, nearly $AU27 million[79] was allocated to cooperation in South-East Asia, allowing for coalition operational deployments, developed maritime security, cooperative exercises, [80] senior officer visits,[81] and exchange postings.[82] Over 2000 officers from the Thai military have taken part in the program since 1991,[83] and the King of Thailand was a participant, training at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, with current Governor-General of Australia David Hurley, former

75 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 'Barriers and impediments to trade and investment between Australia and the Pacific', *Parliament of Australia* [website], 12 November 2020, <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/TradewithPacific/Report/section?id=committees%2Freportjnt%2F024515%2F73471>.

76 M Hellyer, 'The cost of defence public database', *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* [website], 22 December 2021, <https://www.aspi.org.au/cost-of-defence-database>.

77 Australian National Audit Office, *Defence Cooperation Program*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, p. 9, <https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/anao_report_2000-2001_32.pdf>.

78 Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2016, p. 118, <https://www.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/2016-Defence-White-Paper.pdf>.

79 'Defence Cooperation Program', *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* [website], Canberra, 2021.

80 'Maritime security', *Australian Embassy Cambodia* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://cambodia.embassy.gov.au/penh/MaritimeSecurity.html>.

81 'Defence', *Australian High Commission Malaysia* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://malaysia.highcommission.gov.au/klpr/Defence.html>.

82 'Defence Cooperation Program', *Australian Embassy Vietnam* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://vietnam.embassy.gov.au/hnoi/Defence_section.html>.

83 'Defence Cooperation Program', *Australian Embassy Thailand* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://thailand.embassy.gov.au/bkok/Connecting_with_Australia_Defence.html>.

Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove, and former Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Organisation Major General Duncan Lewis.[84] Such historic links not only enhance the capability of partners in the region but also illustrate unique and sincere relationships that cannot be replicated through ties arising from vaccine diplomacy, the provision of aid, or transactional trade.

Around $AU32 million[85] was contributed to combined exercises, training, education, infrastructure projects, and advisory and liaison positions in Papua New Guinea,[86] and the program undertook a similar strategy in the South Pacific in supporting the regional maritime security program.[87] In 2021 and 2022, the South Pacific accounts for over 51 per cent of the Defence Cooperation Program's budget, a lion's share of nearly $AU80 million.[88] This funding supports programs in a wide variety of Pacific states, including Fiji,[89] Samoa,[90] Palau and Solomon Islands,[91] and was identified in 2021 by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade as being one of Australia's most comprehensive and successful regional engagement mechanisms.[92]

The Defence Cooperation Program has little military strategic value in the traditional sense; instead its efficacy lies in the relationships built and sustained with regional partners. The Australian Auditor-General found that long-lasting relationships between participants in the program and their Australian counterparts have allowed prompt and sympathetic hearings in foreign policy discussions and have advanced Australia's interests.[93] People-to-people links have helped decrease tensions between Australia and other nations at key junctures and have allowed Australian defence personnel to familiarise themselves with the Indo-Pacific environment and its operating procedures, as well as the individual capabilities and cultures of participant states. This program has been an important driver of maritime capability in the Indo-Pacific and is an example of how cooperation in the naval domain can assist regional states in building their own maritime strength, but also in establishing relationships that would be essential in any future grouping against territorial encroachment or coercion by greater powers.

84 M Ford, 'The Australian Government made a documentary about Thailand's king. But the timing has raised eyebrows', *ABC News* [website], 21 February 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-21/austrailan-government-makes-a-documentary-for-thailands-king/13171976>.

85 'Defence Cooperation Program', Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2021.

86 'PNG-Australia Defence Cooperation Program', *Australian High Commission Papua New Guinea* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://png.embassy.gov.au/pmsb/defence.html>.

87 'Defence Pacific engagement', *Australian Government Department of Defence* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <www.defence.gov.au/programs-initiatives/pacific-engagement>.

88 'Defence Cooperation Program', Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2021.

89 'Fiji-Australia defence cooperation talks', *Australian High Commission Fiji* [website], 20 June 2003, <https://fiji.highcommission.gov.au/suva/MR203defence.html>.

90 'Stepping-up in Samoa', *Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade* [website], n.d., accessed 15 February 2022, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/samoa/stepping-up-in-samoa>.

91 'Defence support to Solomon Islands', *Australian High Commission Honiara* [website], 26 January 2012, <https://solomonislands.embassy.gov.au/honi/120509120509.html>.

92 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Inquiry into Australia's defence relationships with Pacific Islands nations*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2021, p. 9, <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-04/apo-nid312222.pdf>.

93 The Auditor-General, *Defence Cooperation Program*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2011, 42, <https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/anao_report_2000-2001_32.pdf>.

Cooperation for All

While existing military and naval cooperation has enhanced the capability, infrastructure and knowledge of states around the Indo-Pacific, the benefits of this cooperation are lost if nations must then take care of themselves during times of crisis, or in facing challenges to good order. Modern maritime strategy and thought is a complex interaction of numerous variables, strategies and goals. It views sea actions as a function of state power that can include diplomacy, trade and border protection, coastal defence, protection of offshore interests, and the exploitation, conservation and regulation of exclusive economic zones.[94] Maritime strategy and naval cooperation is ideally suited not only to serving defence interests in the region but also to pursuing other goals in diplomacy, trade and such. A nation's maritime power rests on key elements such as geographical location, dependency on commercial sea activities, military and diplomatic strategy, maritime tradition, and shipbuilding potential.[95] States relying on one another for advantageous basing opportunities, knowledge sharing, and Australia's acquiring of nuclear submarines through AUKUS are examples of cooperation being essential in the building of regional maritime power and the primary role that navies play.

Cooperation between navies will be important in navigating the effects of geopolitical tensions through capability building, particularly for smaller nations without the means or knowledge to create those opportunities for growth alone. The deployment of naval power by one state, whether it be nuclear submarine or small coastal patrol vessel, is limited in facing potential maritime aggression by greater powers with immense defence budgets or in deterring potential escalating conflicts that could lead to catastrophic effects. Through cooperation and combined multilateral naval forces, the path is relatively clear towards levels of security, capability and maritime power that are enhanced as a whole and offer more opportunities for securing the safety and sovereignty of individual Indo-Pacific states. Perhaps Kipling summarised best when he wrote:

> The strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.[96]

Further Maritime Threats

Maritime challenges facing the Indo-Pacific are not only geopolitical in nature. The region further faces the maritime threat of increasing piracy, particularly around the Strait of Malacca and South-East Asia.[97] Piracy not only represents a physical and economic threat to individual vessels and shipping companies, a threat that has been estimated as costing between $US1 billion and $US16 billion per year because of theft, ransom, increased insurance costs, shipping delays and anti-piracy measures,[98] but can further impact trade within and from the region. Research has shown that an increase of 10 acts of piracy along traditional maritime trading routes between two

94 JB Hattendorf, 'What is a maritime strategy?', in J Jones (ed.), *A maritime school of strategic thought for Australia: perspectives*, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, 2013, p. 23.

95 AD Muraviev, 'Maritimisation of maritime Australia', in J Jones (ed.), *A maritime school of strategic thought for Australia: perspectives*, Sea Power Centre, Canberra, 2013, p. 83.

96 Kipling, 'The Law of the Jungle'.

97 A McCauley, 'The most dangerous waters in the world', *Time*, 9 September 2014, <https://time.com/piracy-southeast-asia-malacca-strait/>.

98 P Chalk, *The maritime dimension of international security: terrorism, piracy, and challenges for the United States*, RAND, California, 2008, p. 16, <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG697.pdf>.

countries led to a decrease in bilateral trade value of 11 per cent.[99] The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated and provided opportunities for maritime piracy through the diverted attention and focus of governments, leading to a 24 per cent rise in global piracy during the health crisis.[100]

Cybersecurity is another identified threat to the maritime Indo-Pacific domain. Ships and ports are vulnerable to malicious cyberattacks originating from email, denial of service, impersonation or other means, which can lead to the corrupting of ship systems and can spread to land-based systems and operations associated with a vessel, potentially leading to financially crippling effects. One example is the world's largest shipping and container logistics company, Maersk, falling victim to a cyberattack that halted its global port operations.[101] Indo-Pacific states both large, like Japan,[102] and small, such as Papua New Guinea,[103] have been targeted by cyberattack, and cooperation between regional nations has long been advocated as an avenue for building cyber defence and capability.[104]

Sea slavery on fishing vessels is a further regional challenge, whereby an estimated 17,000 workers on fishing vessels around South-East Asia alone in 2018 could be considered as slaves.[105] Regional nations lack the capability and determination to make real progress in addressing a potential plague of sea slavery, and cooperation, support and direction from other Indo-Pacific nations could build maritime anti-slavery capability and focus it towards addressing this ongoing human rights crisis.

Climate change is another spectre for nations in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the Pacific, which will face losses in littoral infrastructure, cyclones and droughts of increasing intensity, failure of subsistence crops and fishery resources, losses of mangroves and coral reefs, and the spread of certain diseases.[106] Pacific nations are facing a change in their fundamental way of life and require support in navigating the threats ahead. Naval cooperation will not only develop the capability of Indo-Pacific states in countering local piracy through the provision of naval assets, training, and anti-piracy exercises, but also in supporting island nations to defend themselves from and adapt to the encroaching effects of climate change on their maritime and coastal domains.

As outlined within this essay, when faced with challenges to the common purpose of Indo-Pacific states in pursuing prosperity, good order and security, nations often face these provocations and resulting disputes alone. Cooperation between nations is one key avenue for increasing capability,

99 S Bensassi & I Martinez-Zarzoso, 'How costly is modern maritime piracy to the international community?', *Review of International Economics*, vol. 20(5), 2012, p. 870, <https://doi.org/10.1111/roie.12000>.

100 'Evolution of piracy at sea: pirates in maritime 2020', *Marine Digital* [website], 20 November 2020, <https://marine-digital.com/article_pirates>.

101 A Greenberg, 'The untold story of NotPetya, the most devastating cyberattack in history', *Wired*, 22 August 2018, <https://www.wired.com/story/notpetya-cyberattack-ukraine-russia-code-crashed-the-world/>.

102 'The cyber threat to Japan and the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo', *MER Group* [website], n.d., accessed 17 February 2022, <https://mer-group.com/the-cyber-threat-to-japan-and-the-2020-olympic-games-in-tokyo/>.

103 'PNG government system hit by ransomware attack', *RNZ* [website], 29 October 2021, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/454467/png-government-system-hit-by-ransomware-attack>.

104 JL Lewis, *Hidden arena: cyber competition and conflict in Indo-Pacific Asia*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, 2013, p. 12, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/hidden-arena-cyber-competition-and-conflict-indo-pacific-asia>.

105 JJ Rose, 'Caught in the net: slavery on Southeast Asian seas', *The Interpreter*, 31 October 2018, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/caught-net-slavery-southeast-asian-seas>.

106 E Ronneberg, *Fact sheet: Pacific climate change*, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Apia, 2008, pp. 1, 2, <https://www.sprep.org/attachments/Publications/FactSheet/pacificclimate.pdf>.

resilience, knowledge and experience in defending regional maritime sovereignty, developing military capability, and countering piracy and the effects of climate change, as well as addressing the scourge of sea slavery. The world is indeed within a 'Maritime Century' and navies hold a key place in engaging with regional militaries, forming relationships, sharing maritime knowledge and strategy, and combining naval forces to meet the needs of Indo-Pacific states in pursuing a common purpose of shared security, prosperity and good order. The 'Law of the Jungle' perhaps held wisdom in outlining the benefits of cooperation, for, just as within the wolf pack, the individual ship is nothing compared to the armada, and lone nations within the Indo-Pacific hold greater security, prosperity and purpose within an ordered environment among cooperative alliances of regional partners and supporters.

Mr Shaun Cameron

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Interoperability, South Pacific Burden Sharing, and Trans-Tasman Relations – Another Perspective

Captain Andrew Watts, RNZN (Retired)

This response to David Andrews's excellent article in Issue 1, 2021, is somewhat overdue. I am behind in my *Australian Naval Review* reading due to temporary residence in the Middle East; my post takes a long time to catch up with me. David makes several important points that I would like to follow up, hence this submission to the editorial team.

I suggest that the issue at stake is Australia-New Zealand complementarity and 'supplementarity', not interoperability. The latter can never be taken for granted, but we have managed to maintain our ability to operate together to common doctrines and procedures quite well, largely due to our common membership of the Five Eyes community, our common access to NATO doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures, and the critically important AUSCANNZUKUS information exchange interoperability forum. The New Zealand Defence Force has made significant strides in interoperability in recent years with the acquisition of Link 16, advanced SATCOM capability, and other advanced information exchange and processing mechanisms. In the all-important doctrine sphere, continued New Zealand access to the RAN Principal Warfare Officer course and ADF Joint Professional Military Education opportunities has also been very important, together with the generosity with which the RAN and ADF leadership have supported the exchange of information and ideas. As long as this effort is maintained at all levels and by both countries, interoperability will continue to be on a sound footing.

Complementarity, where each country's force structure is designed such that each 'complements' the other, is a different story.[1] It has been discussed regularly over the years, including at Australia-New Zealand defence talks which I supported when in uniform. It seems to have taken on a different meaning in recent years, as the following excerpts from the Australia–New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations appear to indicate:

> Focus Area 1: Effectiveness in influencing security outcomes.
>
> Our approaches to operations and exercises are coordinated and complementary, and contribute to stability in our region.
>
> Focus Area 2: Effectiveness in combined operations.
>
> 2.1 Respective force design and capability decisions take into account our need to operate together …[2]

1 Described as 'the deliberate design of Australian and New Zealand forces such that they complement and complete each other' in G Brown, *Australia-New Zealand Closer Defence Relations, an evaluation*, Background Paper Number 2, Parliamentary Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library, 1993, p. 12.

2 Minister for Defence, 'Australia – New Zealand Joint Statement on Closer Defence Relations', media release, 9 March 2018, Department of Defence, Canberra, <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/statements/australia-new-zealand-joint-statement-closer-defence-relations>.

I don't recall there ever being a great deal of substance to discussions about complementarity, nor do I recall a single significant New Zealand capability decision that aimed to set in place capability that Australia didn't have but might need.[3] It seems somewhat unlikely (to me at least) that Australia should decide not to invest in an area of capability, however minor, on the grounds that it would be provided by New Zealand. Notwithstanding shortfalls in New Zealand maritime combat capability, what we seem to have achieved in the maritime sphere is closer to 'supplementarity', where New Zealand capabilities add mass to the combined whole.

For instance, New Zealand naval tankers add significantly to combined replenishment at sea capability – increasing it from two tankers to three. During the Australian amphibious sealift capability hiatus prior to the commissioning of HMA Ships *Canberra* and *Adelaide*, HMNZS *Canterbury* provided stand-in capacity to ADF land forces. The two upgraded Anzac frigates make a measurable contribution to total combined surface combatant capability and, perhaps most significantly of all, the future Royal New Zealand Air Force P-8A fleet adds a further four aircraft to Australia's eight. Supplementarity is quite obviously a good thing.

However, I contend that doctrinal and technological developments allow New Zealand to make maritime capability choices that bring about complementarity without compromise to either nation's wider national interest based capability requirements. David is kind enough to reference an article I wrote which appeared in Volume 1 of the *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy* in December 2020, in which I explore the potential for modular technologies to enable RNZN future surface capability to be based on a single common platform, adaptable for combat, patrol, expeditionary reconnaissance and, to some extent, sealift missions as required.[4] An occasional paper based on this article is available on the Australian Naval Institute website, so I won't regurgitate the arguments here. Suffice it to say that I have done enough technical and industrial research to be confident that such an approach, if backed up by meaningful operational research and a flexible and innovative (i.e., non-transactional) procurement strategy, could indeed work. I also believe it to be consistent with emerging distributed maritime operations concepts.

If New Zealand were to adopt a modular capability strategy, it could be possible to give greater effect to the ministerial-level aims above. For instance, New Zealand could acquire modules that allow a contribution to theatre anti-submarine warfare capability in the littoral regions, where high ambient noise levels might reduce the value of the presumably very low acoustic signature of the Hunter-class frigate, freeing it up for important bluewater missions elsewhere. Similarly, a modular New Zealand platform might be capable of supporting advanced expeditionary reconnaissance and mine countermeasure capabilities from both navies. The notice which an RNZN modular combatant might need would vary according to the nature of the modules being exchanged, but with people permanently assigned to modules as opposed to ships, and shore-based training

3 I must caveat this. My capability development role was in the joint space. Although I had responsibility across all domains (I was Director Capability Development at HQNZDF), much happened in the land and air domains that I was never fully across, for the obvious reason that I am a sailor and not a soldier or an airman. There was a great deal of bilateral capability discussion between the two armies, for instance, which I tried not to encumber by injecting myself into debates to which I could add no value – although I did my utmost to support the land case in the joint sphere. Land capability decision-making may well have been influenced by these discussions, and the result may well have been a significant capability decision heavily influenced by complementarity considerations.

4 A Watts, 'Designing the next fleet', *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy*, vol. 1, 2020, pp. 24–46.

facilities that allowed module teams to be maintained in a high state of readiness, this might not be such a serious limitation. Hopefully, these possibilities and issues will be discussed with the RAN as modular naval capability concepts are explored.

Where I take issue with David is in his repetition of the following statement made in the *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy*:[5]

> … a more focused RNZN equipped for maritime security and constabulary operations could still make an important and valued contribution to alliance efforts and regional security by complementing partner capabilities and freeing up their resources to be deployed elsewhere.[6]

It is exactly this relegation to a lower intensity, non-combat role that my proposal for an integrated fleet design based on common platforms and modularity is intended to avoid.

New Zealand must consider the morality of leaving the fighting to others when fighting becomes unavoidable, when in the final analysis our vital interests are just as much at stake as theirs. There are disturbing signs in recent commentary that the thinking embodied in the statement quoted above is taking hold. It must be challenged, not least because the premise on which it is based, that New Zealand cannot afford maritime combat capability, is groundless. Meaningful combat capability can be acquired without committing to Type 26 frigates, provided our thinking is broad enough to encompass modular possibilities and we have a clear idea about our likely missions and how we can complement/supplement our allies and partners.

One final point: in his otherwise excellent and well-researched article, David states that New Zealand spends 'approximately one per cent' of GDP on defence.[7] This is incorrect. New Zealand currently spends over 1.5 per cent of GDP on defence, and earlier data closer to 1 per cent was based on assessments that accounted for the capital charge on the defence inventory, but not the capital amount actually spent on defence equipment.[8] Expenditure of 1.5 per cent compares favourably with Canada (1.4 per cent),[9] Japan (1.0 per cent),[10] and Germany (1.4 per cent).[11] Australians are perfectly entitled to offer the view that New Zealand should spend more on defence, but it's important that the facts are correct to begin with.

Thank you again to David for drawing attention to New Zealand's naval capability conundrum in his well-thought-out and well-written article. I hope that further contributions on Australia/New Zealand maritime defence complementarity appear in the *Australian Naval Review*.

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5 T Portland, 'A maritime security reset for the Royal New Zealand Navy', *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy*, vol. 1, 2020, pp. 108–109.

6 D Andrews, 'Interoperability, South Pacific burden sharing, and trans-Tasman relations', *Australian Naval Review*, no. 1, 2021.

7 Ibid.

8 'Military expenditure (% of GDP) – New Zealand', *World Bank* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=NZ>.

9 'Military expenditure (% of GDP) – Canada', *World Bank* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=CA>.

10 'Military expenditure (% of GDP) – Japan', *World Bank* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=JP>.

11 'Military expenditure (% of GDP) – Germany', *World Bank* [website], <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=DE>.

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Andrew Watts joined the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1980 as a Midshipman in what was then the seaman specialisation. He qualified as Principal Warfare Officer in 1989, and commanded HMNZ Ships *Pukaki (II)*, *Wellington (II)*, *Resolution* and *Te Mana*. He first retired from the Navy as a Captain in 2011, spending three years in the private sector working for Opus International Consultants. He re-joined the Navy in 2014 at the request of the then Chief of Navy to take up an appointment as Director, Operation NEPTUNE, the Navy's year-long program of events to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its founding in 1941. His final appointment was as Lead, Future Surface Combatant in Capability Branch, Headquarters New Zealand Defence Force. He transferred from regular service to the standby Naval Reserve in January 2020. He is now employed by KPMG Saudi Arabia and the Levant as a Defence Consultant.

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HMAS *Parramatta* departs Fleet Base East, Sydney, for a three-month Regional Presence Deployment to South East and North Asia. *Photographer:* ABIS Susan Mossop

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