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Editors' Note

Since the last issue of *Security Challenges* the continuing conflict in Syria, the tensions in the East China Sea and between North and South Korea, the impact of the Snowden intelligence leaks, incidents of terrorism and the Russian annexation/invasion of the Crimea, has meant that the security environment continues to present challenges for Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and the globe.

This edition of *Security Challenges* investigates a number of these important issues. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect assesses the role of poison gas and diplomacy in the Syrian conflict while Guy Roberts looks at the China Policies of US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and what this can reveal about managing this relationship in the 21st Century. Closer to home David Schaefer investigates intelligence reform with a focus on evolutionary changes in communications technology, the relentless growth of the information it collects and analyses and the challenges this presents to the foreign intelligence assessment process. Shandon Harris-Hogan investigates Jihadism in Australia, Rita Parker and Jenny Stewart examine energy and food security, while David Brewster looks at the India-Australia security and defence relationship arguing that if Australia wishes to be successful in its objectives of promoting greater cooperation with India, it will need to move in a consistent and sustained manner with a time horizon considerably longer than it is generally used to.

Stephan Frühling Peter Dean Andrew Carr & Iain Henry
Managing Editors
April 2014

Poison Gas and Diplomacy in Syria

Simon Adams

Two years ago in February 2012 Russia and China vetoed a second United Nations Security Council resolution aimed at holding Damascus accountable for crimes against humanity in Syria. After the vote, confident that there would be no accountability, President Bashar al-Assad's forces deployed more extreme forms of violence. For example, although protests against the Syrian regime began in March 2011, Assad's forces did not widely utilise helicopters to attack their opponents until after the second veto. Just five days after a third UN Security Council veto on 19 July, fixed wing aircraft were reportedly used for the first time. The killing rate in Syria increased from approximately 1,000 per month at the end of 2011 to approximately 5,000 per month during the second half of 2012 as the civil war metastasised. Between February and November of 2012 the death toll soared from 5,400 to 59,600.¹

Despite this horrifying body count, by early 2013 the civil war had reached a military stalemate. Both the government and armed rebels controlled considerable territory, but neither could impose a comprehensive military defeat upon the other. While the Syrian Government still bore primary responsibility for mass atrocities being perpetrated within the country, some armed opposition groups were also committing war crimes, including deadly reprisals against minority communities and the extrajudicial execution of captured government soldiers. In the words of the UN Secretary-General, Syria had also become a "proxy war, with regional and international players arming one side or the other."² Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar were

¹ Various sources have attempted to document the methodology of the Assad Government with regard to the commission of mass atrocity crimes and calculate the death toll from the conflict. The UN stopped providing cumulative figures in January 2012 due to increased problems relating to verification. Previously the UN had drawn on a number of sources, including some listed here. Among the most important sources of information regarding atrocities in Syria are the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, <<http://syriaohr.com/en/>> and the Brown Moses Blog, <<http://brown-moses.blogspot.com>>. For more on the use of aircraft by the Assad regime, see for example, Elizabeth O'Bagy et al, 'Syrian Air Force and Air Defense Capabilities', Institute for the Study of War, May 2013, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Updated%20Syrian%20Air%20Force%20and%20Air%20Defense%20Capabilities%20Brief_8May.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; 'Death from the Skies: Deliberate and Indiscriminate Air Strikes on Civilians', Human Rights Watch, April 2013, <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria0413webwcover_1_0.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

² 'R2P Monitor', No. 12, 15 November 2013, <http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/r2p_monitor_nov2013_final.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2014], p. 2.

backing various, at times competing, components of the armed opposition. Meanwhile Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah continued to bolster the political and military efforts of the Syrian government.

Following each UN Security Council veto, Russian diplomats explained that their opposition to resolutions aimed at ending atrocities in Syria was a question of defending a sovereign state from western interveners who wanted to invoke the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) to mask their "regime change" motives. Russia's position was allegedly one of principled neutrality, despite its long-term ties to the Assad Government and the fact that many atrocities in Syria were being perpetrated with Russian-supplied weapons.³

First adopted at the UN World Summit in 2005, R2P committed all the governments of the world to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. R2P is primarily a preventive doctrine, but it also allows for a range of coercive measures if a state fails to live up to its sovereign responsibilities. While R2P has been invoked in a range of situations (including Kenya and Sudan) it was not until Libya in 2011 that it was referenced by the UN Security Council while imposing coercive military measures against a sovereign state that was murdering its own people. The eventual toppling of the regime of Muammar Qaddafi by forces who were mandated to conduct civilian protection operations, ignited a furious debate at the UN about the relationship between R2P and "regime change".⁴

Despite the fact that in both Libya and Syria mass atrocities were the result of state attempts to violently suppress 'Arab Spring' uprisings, in reality there were more differences between the two cases than is commonly assumed.⁵ It is also worth remembering that while sections of the media opined that Libya and Syria were the potential graveyard of R2P as an emerging international norm, the facts indicate otherwise.⁶ For example, while the

³ Simon Adams, 'Libya and the Responsibility to Protect', Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Occasional Paper Series, No. 3, October 2012, <<http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/libyaandr2poccasionalpaper-1.pdf>> [Accessed 19 February 2014], p. 16.

⁴ For more on Brazil's important contribution to this debate, see Gareth Evans, 'R2P and RWP after Libya and Syria', Keynote Address at GCR2P/FGV/Stanley Foundation Workshop on 'Responsibility While Protecting: What Next?', Rio de Janeiro, 23 August 2012, <http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/evans_r2p_and_rwp_after_libya_and_syria.pdf> [Accessed 18 February 2014]. See also, 'Letter dated 9 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General', United Nations, 11 November 2011, <<http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/Concept-Paper-%20RwP.pdf>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

⁵ Simon Adams, 'Libya and the Responsibility to Protect', Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Occasional Paper Series, No. 3, October 2012, <<http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/libyaandr2poccasionalpaper-1.pdf>> [Accessed 19 February 2014], p. 15.

⁶ On the alleged death of R2P, see David Rieff, 'R2P, R.I.P.', *New York Times*, 7 November 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/08/opinion/r2p-rip.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

Security Council was deeply divided over Syria, individual states and regional organisations took action to uphold their Responsibility to Protect. By March 2012, one year after the conflict began, at least forty-nine countries had already imposed targeted sanctions while at least fourteen had closed their embassies in Damascus.⁷

Other parts of the UN system also lived up to their responsibilities. The Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva passed no less than eleven resolutions condemning mass atrocities in Syria between 2011 and the end of 2013 and established an independent Commission of Inquiry to document grave violations of human rights. Similarly, the UN General Assembly passed seven resolutions condemning atrocities in Syria, with a February 2013 resolution drawing support from 137 states in the 193-member Assembly. While the number of abstentions fluctuated, no more than thirteen states voted against any Assembly resolution.⁸ Unfortunately, unlike the Security Council, resolutions of the General Assembly and HRC are not binding under international law.

The deeper problem was a divide between the permanent members of the Security Council regarding the international order in the early twenty-first century. Russian and Chinese hostility to action aimed at constraining the Syrian regime was linked to a strategic clash between the P2 (Russia and China) and the P3 (United States, United Kingdom and France) on a range of situations and issues from Sudan to the future of UN peacekeeping. Meanwhile inside Syria mass atrocities continued. During 2013 Syrian government forces used aircraft, cluster munitions, heavy artillery and even ballistic missiles to terrorise and kill civilians and armed rebels. For example, Human Rights Watch documented fifty-six attacks using incendiary bombs between November 2012 and September 2013, including a deliberate air strike on a school in Aleppo that burned to death a number of teenage students.⁹ On the ground government troops and *Shabiha* militias conducted civilian massacres, including the notorious May 2012 mass murder of at least 108 civilians in Houla.¹⁰

⁷ See, for example, 'Timeline of International Response to the Situation in Syria', Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, <<http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/timeline-of-international-response-to-syria-15.pdf>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

⁸ The thirteen states who voted against the 17 November 2011 resolution were Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Syria, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Most other resolutions had twelve states voting in opposition. For the text of UN General Assembly resolutions, see <<http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm>>.

⁹ 'Syria: Widespread Use of Incendiary Weapons', 10 November 2013, Human Rights Watch, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/10/syria-widespread-use-incendiary-weapons>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

¹⁰ 'In Cold Blood: Summary Executions by Syrian Security Forces and Pro-Government Militias', Human Rights Watch, 10 April 2012, <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/04/09/cold-blood>> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; 'Syria: UN Inquiry Should Investigate Houla Killings', Human Rights Watch, 28 May 2012, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/27/syria-un-inquiry-should>>

Observing this horror, in western democracies there was a tepid debate during 2012 and 2013 about whether foreign governments should militarily intervene in the civil war.¹¹ However, support for armed intervention was never more than lukewarm even amongst those governments that were most hostile to Assad. This was primarily because the “balance of consequences” argument in Syria was a powerful one. No-one wanted to incite a broader regional conflict or become embroiled in a sectarian civil war in the Middle East. Post-Iraq public sentiment was also strongly against another armed intervention in the region. In the absence of a UN Security Council mandate, such military intervention would also be illegal under international law. By mid-2013, therefore, the Syrian conflict had fallen into a kind of stasis until a sickening chemical weapons attack on innocent civilians suddenly and drastically shifted the entire diplomatic and military calculus.

Chemical Weapons

A UN investigating team has now shown beyond reasonable doubt that on 21 August rockets containing Sarin gas were deliberately fired into two residential areas of Damascus in a “relatively large scale” attack. Each of the rockets was armed with approximately fifty-five litres of weaponised Sarin. The gas quickly killed approximately 1,400 civilians, including a large number of children. Despite the Syrian Government’s attempt to blame armed rebels, the evidence in the independent UN report and other credible investigations points to the source of the rockets being the base of the 104th Brigade of the Republican Guard. Their culpability was compelling, if not undeniable.¹²

Global revulsion at this war crime, combined with the credible threat of retaliatory military strikes by the United States and France, inadvertently led to a diplomatic breakthrough at the UN Security Council. After two-and-a-half years of deadlock the Council quickly adopted a resolution supporting a Russia-US deal for Syria to surrender its chemical weapons. Just weeks

investigate-houla-killings> [Accessed 18 February 2014]. For the account of a young survivor, see Martin Chulov, ‘Houla Massacre Survivor Tells how His Family Were Slaughtered’, *The Guardian* (UK), 28 May 2012, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/28/houla-massacre-survivor-boy-syria>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

¹¹ Anne-Marie Slaughter, ‘How to Halt the Butchery in Syria’, *New York Times*, 23 February 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/opinion/how-to-halt-the-butchery-in-syria.html?_r=2&> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

¹² For a copy of the full report, see Robert Mackey, ‘U.N. Report on Chemical Attack in Syria’, 16 September 2013, <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/168606795/U-N-Report-on-Chemical-Attack-in-Syria>> [Accessed 19 February 2014]. On culpability, see also, Eliot Higgins, ‘Sy Hersh’s Chemical Misfire’, *Foreign Policy*, 9 December 2013, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/12/09/sy_hersh_s_chemical_misfire#sthash.DZr4gOli.dpbs> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; ‘Syria: Government Likely Culprit in Chemical Attack’, *Human Rights Watch*, 10 September 2013, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/09/10/syria-government-likely-culprit-chemical-attack>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

previously the Syrian Government was denying it possessed chemical weapons. It now promptly acceded to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and provided details of its extensive stockpile.

Some human rights advocates and Syrian activists pointed out that although the chemical weapons attack was horrific, the number of dead, an estimated 1,400 people, only amounted to about one per cent of the fatalities in the conflict. What, they asked, made this atrocity so special? Such arguments neglected the fact that the threat posed by chemical weapons was unique. Although approximately 5,000 people were being killed every month in Syria, the chemical weapons attack murdered 1,400 civilians in two neighbourhoods in just a few hours.

Chemical weapons are inherently indiscriminate, inhuman and immoral. They have been illegal since the Hague Convention of 1899, long before the first chlorine gas shell was fired over the Western Front. Horrified by the ghastly consequences of mustard and chlorine gas, following World War One the Geneva Protocol of 1925 reinforced an international prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. Despite Winston Churchill advocating using “poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes” in Iraq, and Mussolini’s troops use of mustard gas in Ethiopia, the norm was established. Although Adolf Hitler, himself a survivor of a World War One gas attack, would use Zyklon-B as a tool of genocide in Auschwitz, poison gas was not widely deployed on a major battlefield again until the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988.

The use of chemical weapons complicated the relationship between Iran and Syria. As the chief international supporter of the Syrian Government as a crucial component (alongside Lebanon’s Hezbollah) of an avowed anti-western, anti-Israeli “axis of resistance”, Iran has expended considerable blood and treasure to keep President Assad in power. However, up to a million Iranians were exposed to chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war, with at least 20,000 killed. Correspondingly, there is a deep moral revulsion to chemical weapons throughout Iranian society.

Following the 21 August attack, Iran’s foreign minister condemned the use of chemical weapons, “regardless of its victims or culprits”. Iran’s new reformist President, Hassan Rouhani, called upon “the international community to use all its might to prevent the use of” chemical weapons, “anywhere in the world, especially in Syria.” Despite the fact that the Iranians blamed armed rebels for the 21 August attack, it was clear that the large-scale use of chemical weapons was unacceptable to Tehran.¹³

¹³ Marcus George, ‘Insight: After Syria, Iran Laments its own Chemical Weapons Victims’, *Reuters*, 16 September 2013, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/16/us-iran-chemical-weapons-insight-idUSBRE98F08020130916>> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; ‘Iran’s Rouhani Says Chemical Weapons Killed People in Syria’, *Reuters*, 24 August 2013,

The diplomatic compromise subsequently brokered by Russia and the United States over Syria's chemical weapons—although prompted by the threat of military action outside of international law—was hugely significant. For the first time since April 2012 the Security Council took unanimous action regarding the Syrian conflict.¹⁴ Significantly, however, resolution 2118 of 27 September 2013 did nothing to prevent the further commission of mass atrocities by anyone in Syria as long as conventional weapons were used. Despite their desire to punish Assad, the United States and France had neither the will nor the mandate to act outside of international law. Nor were their own publics supportive of the unilateral use of force to protect Syrian civilians.¹⁵

The true importance of chemical weapons resolution, however, was the temporary political space it opened for the Security Council to seek other areas of potential collaboration with regard to ending Syria's civil war.

Unfinished Business

In the aftermath of the chemical weapons resolution there were three major unresolved issues that the Security Council found itself under increased pressure to address. The first was humanitarian access. By late 2013, for literally millions of Syrians the threat from cold, disease or starvation was now as real as the threat of being shot or bombed to death. According to the UN approximately five million Syrians (almost a quarter of the population) were displaced inside the country, in addition to the two million who had become refugees beyond Syria's borders. An estimated nine million Syrians urgently needed humanitarian assistance while circumstances for the estimated 250,000 civilians trapped in besieged areas of Damascus, Homs and elsewhere were beyond desperate.

The Security Council's 2 October Presidential Statement on humanitarian access was a promising indicator of further progress, coming as it did less than a week after the chemical weapons resolution, but as of the end of 2013, it had still not been implemented. Attempts by Valerie Amos, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, to get cross-border assistance to people in

<<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/24/us-syria-crisis-iran-idUSBRE97N03E20130824>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

¹⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2043, which established a UN mission to oversee the April 2012 ceasefire in Syria, failed because of the inability of the Council to hold the Assad Government accountable for violating the ceasefire and the six-point peace plan developed by UN-Arab League special envoy Kofi Annan.

¹⁵ Alexander Dziadosz, 'Poll Finds Low Western Support for Military Intervention', *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), 10 October 2013, <<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Oct-10/234152-poll-finds-low-western-support-for-military-intervention.ashx#axzz2lhEydG4j>> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; Adrian Croft, 'American, Europeans, Oppose Syria Intervention: Poll', *Reuters*, 18 September 2013. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/18/us-syria-crisis-poll-idUSBRE98H0GN20130918>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

desperate need continued to be obstructed by the government and some rebel forces.

The second priority was for the Security Council, and especially its powerful five permanent members, to use their influence to push for meaningful peace talks. Although a pacific outcome to the conflict seemed fanciful, it was no more so than thinking that flooding Syria with arms would secure a military victory for either side or stabilise the region.

Finally, there was the issue of accountability for more than two years of mass atrocity crimes in Syria. Impunity has emboldened those on both sides who remain most resistant to a negotiated solution. In the absence of accountability for atrocities there can be neither peace nor justice. As it did with the situation in Libya in early 2011, the Security Council needed to refer the Syrian situation to the International Criminal Court for investigation and possible prosecution.

These issues were complex and fraught with political danger. But no more so than getting Syria to admit it had chemical weapons, getting Russia to agree to a UN Security Council resolution that made mention of Chapter VII (i.e.: use of force) consequences if Syria failed to surrender its poison gas, and actually organising for The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to destroy Syria's chemical stockpile by mid-2014 despite the country being in the midst of a civil war.

Nevertheless, as we approach the third anniversary of Syria's descent into bloodshed, the post-chemical weapons diplomatic opportunity has passed. Indeed, over Christmas 2013 Syrian government forces conducted a particularly brutal air campaign in Aleppo, dropping "barrel bombs" on residential areas under rebel control. Between 15 and 29 December these attacks killed 517 people. The dead reportedly included forty-six rebel fighters but the greatest number of fatalities remained innocent civilians—471 in total, including 151 children. Around the same time Amnesty International released a report detailing the torture and murder of detainees accused of "crimes against Islam" by the extremist ISIS militia in Aleppo.¹⁶ The civil war continues to inspire perpetrators on all sides to commit new and appalling atrocities.

On 22 January 2014 the 'Geneva II' peace talks finally convened in Switzerland. Although the attempt to get key protagonists to discuss a shared future was laudable, the entire event was threatened by farce. The

¹⁶ 'People Killed in Two Weeks of Barrel Bombs on Aleppo 517', Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 29 December 2013, <http://syriahr.com/en/index.php?option=com_news&nid=1310&Itemid=2&task=displaynews#.UsNc9nkQVyl> [Accessed 18 February 2014]; 'Syria: Harrowing Torture, Summary Killings in Secret ISIS Detention Centres', Amnesty International, 19 December 2013, <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/news/syria-harrowing-torture-summary-killings-secret-isis-detention-centres-2013-12-19>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

fractured Syrian opposition threatened to boycott proceedings and the Iranian Government was first snubbed, then invited, then dis-invited all in the course of a week. When the talks finally commenced they achieved little other than providing the international media with some particularly vituperative soundbites. The talks ended without any progress being made on any significant issue. An estimated 1,900 Syrians died while the opposition and government delegations traded insults beside Lake Geneva.¹⁷

The UN Security Council's inability to uphold its Responsibility to Protect the Syrian people and hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable for their crimes has been perhaps the greatest failure of the UN so far this century. Far from "external interference" by the Security Council provoking a civil war, the absence of timely and decisive action has directly contributed to a sectarian civil war has already consumed 130,000 lives and now endangers millions of civilians across the Middle East.

Not long after the second veto in February 2012 I wrote for the *New York Times* that, "the cruel truth is that there is no quick fix in Syria", but that does not mean "that the Security Council has to choose between invasion and inaction."¹⁸ Despite poison gas and failed diplomacy this remains as true now as it was then.

Dr Simon Adams is Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Established in 2008 with the support of international human rights leaders including former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as supportive governments and civil society organizations, the Global Centre is the world's leading research and advocacy organization for advancing the international norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) at the United Nations and beyond. Dr Adams has worked extensively with governments and civil society organizations in South Africa, East Timor, Rwanda and elsewhere. Between 1994 and 2002 Dr Adams worked with republican prisoners in support of the Northern Ireland peace process and is also a former member of the African National Congress. Dr Adams is the author of four books and numerous academic articles with a focus on international conflict. He has written for the New York Times, O Estado de S. Paulo (Brazil) and has appeared as an expert commentator on al-Jazeera, BBC, Chinese Central Television and numerous other media. Dr Adams previously served as Pro Vice Chancellor (International Engagement) at Monash University and as Vice President of its South African campus between 2008-2010. sadams@globalr2p.org.

¹⁷ Ian Black, 'Nearly 1,900 Killed in Syria since Geneva Talks Began', *The Guardian*, 31 January 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/31/syria-death-toll-geneva-talks>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

¹⁸ Simon Adams, 'Room for Debate: The Power of Coercive Nuance', *New York Times*, 30 March 2012, <<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/03/26/stopping-assad-saving-syria/using-coercive-nuance-against-assad>> [Accessed 18 February 2014].

The Information Revolution and Foreign Intelligence Assessment: New Challenges for Australia?

David Schaefer

With revolutionary changes in communications technology and the growing complexity of national security, Australia's intelligence community faces a relentless growth of the information it collects and analyses. This article explores the impact of this challenge on the foreign intelligence assessment process. In particular, three risks—the threat to information security, the pressure of coordinating assessment, and the potentially harmful influence of policymakers—are examined in detail. Among other changes, a proposed Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, modelled on the US equivalent, but with distinctive powers suited to Australia, should help minimise problems likely to arise in the years ahead.

One of the few things which can be said with any certainty about intelligence is that it is increasingly necessary for national security in the modern world. Whereas secret agencies once collected and analysed information about competitive diplomacy in the industrial age, they are now grappling with a host of novel problems, ranging from cyber espionage and weapons proliferation to health pandemics and environmental disasters.¹ Critics have argued that the complexity of this security agenda requires adjustments to the policymaking process in Australia; the task is not simply to protect against individual threats, but to chart a way through an uncertain environment with an inter-disciplinary, variegated, and systematic approach to national security.² As the primary means for comprehending future problems, this burden largely falls onto intelligence.

In one sense, Australia's intelligence community is well prepared for this challenge. After more than a decade of funding increases and organisational innovation, the various agencies now coordinate security operations with other parts of the government in a National Threat Assessment Centre, and are more capable of providing assistance for military operations and law enforcement. This is welcome progress, but perhaps the most vital aspect of intelligence, the capacity to inform policy, has been relatively absent in public debate or scholarly discussion about its performance in Australia. By contrast with operational concerns like

¹ William Lahneman, 'The Need for a New Intelligence Paradigm', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2010), pp. 202-4.

² Alan Dupont and William Reckmeyer, 'Australia's National Security Priorities: Addressing Strategic Risk in a Globalised World', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 66, no. 1 (2012), pp. 34-6.

catching terrorists, foreign assessment is the side of intelligence which analyses issues in defence and foreign policy for the advantage of the country's decision-makers. Despite the reformist mood of recent years, most changes seem to have barely touched on this process. In fact, the basic structure of Australia's intelligence community has remained largely undisturbed since the reforms designed by Justice Hope in the 1970s and 1980s.³

Within this framework, periodic efforts have been made to gauge the health of foreign intelligence assessment. Arguably the most systematic was the 2004 Flood Report, which reviewed the performance of intelligence in the lead up to the Iraq War. Flood did not point to any critical failures, but he drew attention to the declining instances of long-term assessment on foreign issues, and proposed a number of reforms to strengthen the contestability of analysis.⁴ Compared with this, in 2011 the Cornall Black review, an update of Flood, reported that the intelligence community was functioning effectively, but the achievements it listed were couched in terms of security operations, with little detail offered about its contribution to the formation of policy.⁵ In the absence of any proposals for reform, critics labelled the report a whitewash.⁶

Without supplying much substance, however, Cornall Black did touch on an issue which increasingly poses a challenge for the assessment side of intelligence: the growing volume of information.⁷ Indeed, one implication of complexity is that, with everything connected by degrees to everything else, the breadth of detail needed to comprehend problems in national security is much wider. This has occurred alongside truly revolutionary changes in communications technology and the proliferation of electronic sources. As a result, data flows of enormous quantity are now being processed by intelligence, and these are only expected to grow as more social activity migrates onto the digital realm in the future.⁸ In effect, national security is in the midst of an information revolution: with so many sources to monitor and

³ Graeme Dobell, 'Hope's Ghost Lingers in a Secret Security World', *Inside Story*, 11 April 2012, <<http://inside.org.au/hopes-ghost-lingers-in-a-secret-security-world/>> [Accessed 3 October 2013].

⁴ See Philip Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004).

⁵ Robert Cornall and Rufus Black, *2011 Independent Review of the Intelligence Community Report* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2011), pp. 16-7.

⁶ Paddy Gourley, 'I Spy another Intelligence Whitewash', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2012.

⁷ Cornall and Black, *Independent Review of the Intelligence Community Report*, p. 26.

⁸ William Nolte, 'Intelligence Analysis in an Uncertain Environment', in Loch Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 415.

so many ways to do it, experts now speak about the volume of collected data as a defining challenge for the intelligence profession.⁹

The outlines of this problem were already evident at the time of the Flood Report, which proposed relocating the Open Source Centre within the intelligence community to better harness the sea of data on the internet.¹⁰ However, this adjustment does not seem adequate when compared with the scale of the challenge; in one illustrative estimation, roughly ninety percent of the world's data is believed to have been created in the last two years alone.¹¹ Indeed, Allan Gyngell, a former Director-General of the Office of National Assessment (ONA), has made clear that in the intervening years, "as the volume of traditional media, new media, and social media balloons, we need to find new ways to store, search, and use it".¹² As Australia approaches ten years since Flood surveyed foreign intelligence, it is worth taking stock of this challenge: what risks does the information revolution pose for the capacity of the intelligence community to reliably inform policy?

This article investigates the issue at three separate levels of intelligence assessment: the tactical, the operational, and the strategic. In a slight divergence from the standard terminology used by intelligence scholars, the first is concerned with the issues of security for the information collected about foreign intelligence; the second deals with the production of assessment using this material; and the third focuses on the relationship between the intelligence output and policymaking. To be sure, the tactical-operational-strategic distinction is a heavily debated concept in the strategic studies literature.¹³ Its use here is not intended to make any theoretical statement, but purely for reasons of analytical clarity, so that the many pressures on intelligence assessment can be distinguished.

Indeed, while most details of intelligence are guarded from public scrutiny, there are distinct trends operating at each level of assessment in Australia's intelligence community. The resulting analysis is in many ways speculative, but by examining these trends in light of the growing pressure of information, it suggests some issues will need to be addressed with more than incremental adaptation, while others are less likely to present trouble. The article concludes with an institutional reform that can strengthen what appears to be the most vulnerable area of foreign assessment for Australian intelligence in the years ahead.

⁹ Alfred Rolington, *Strategic Intelligence for the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-4.

¹⁰ Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, pp. 104-5.

¹¹ See for example James Risen and Eric Lichtblau, 'How the US Uses Technology to Mine More Data More Quickly', *The New York Times*, 8 June 2013.

¹² Allan Gyngell, 'The Challenges of Intelligence', Speech at the National Gallery of Australia, 30 March 2011, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/pubfiles/Gyngell,_Canberra_lecture11.pdf> [Accessed 3 October 2013].

¹³ For an archetypal use of the concept, see Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987)

The Tactical Level: Information Security

Before it does anything else, intelligence must collect and distribute information. The tactical level of intelligence is concerned with the kind of material which provides assistance for active operations, such as geographic data for military planning or background detail on diplomatic negotiators. More than any other area of intelligence, this has experienced the most change in recent years.¹⁴ The impetus behind this lies in the campaign against transnational terrorism: as foreign crises, military conflict, and home-grown radicalisation feed off one another, the many customers of intelligence need to keep up with each other so that no danger in their area goes unnoticed. As a result, the dominant trend at the tactical level of intelligence has been the growing availability of information across the many agencies involved in security operations.

Until recently, critics in Australia demanded that a similar type of overhaul be applied to the broader assessment process.¹⁵ This has typically taken the form of complaints about intelligence being stuck in a Cold War mindset, and suggestions for a more seamless exchange of information across the community. It is part of a broader philosophy among reformist thinkers which holds that organisations relying on vertical hierarchy and centralised planning are too rigid, and should be replaced with fluid, horizontal networks to facilitate greater collaboration.¹⁶ Indeed, many different kinds of political, social, and economic information are relevant to national security, and need to be fused together for intelligence about truly complex problems.¹⁷ In a nod to these views, several years ago the Australian Government announced its intention to create a “smooth flow of people, ideas and activities” across the entire field of national security.¹⁸

But while it might be a good idea to share details about terrorism, there are risks associated with the greater availability of information throughout the intelligence workforce. In particular, digital subversion has emerged as a damaging reality. The public revelations of intelligence material by the activist group Wikileaks and Edward Snowden have seemingly exposed an

¹⁴ Cornall and Black, *Independent Review of the Intelligence Community Report*, p. 7.

¹⁵ See for example Carl Ungerer, *The Intelligence Reform Agenda: What Next?*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Policy Analysis 20, February 2008, p. 4; Sandy Gordon, ‘Re-Shaping Australian Intelligence’, *Security Challenges*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2005), pp. 27-58; Kevin Monks, ‘Intelligence Informatics...Transforming the Australian Intelligence Community’, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence, and Counter-Terrorism*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2008), pp. 62-87; and David Martin Jones, ‘Intelligence and National Security: The Australian Experience’, in Loch Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 840.

¹⁶ Andrew Rathmell, ‘Towards Postmodern Intelligence’, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2002), pp. 98-101.

¹⁷ William Odom, ‘Intelligence Analysis’, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2008), pp. 323-4.

¹⁸ Duncan Lewis, *National Security Information Environment Roadmap: 2020 Vision* (Canberra: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2010), p. 9.

oversight in reformist thinking. In their wake, the “need to share” imperative has fallen under suspicion: among intelligence officials, there are indications of buyer’s remorse, and newfound scepticism of accessible data systems.¹⁹ In Australia, former Defence officials have echoed concerns that vitally sensitive material is being inappropriately distributed, with the clear implication that the practice should be modified.²⁰

Rather than a problem for security intelligence, this may have inflicted the most damage on foreign assessment. In the case of Wikileaks, routine diplomatic reporting and military footage available to thousands of analysts were released, causing embarrassment and probably discouraging foreign sources from reaching out to US diplomats in the future.²¹ Wikileaks relied on a low-level army intelligence analyst, Bradley Manning, who recorded digital copies of the classified material without arousing suspicion.²² Similarly, Edward Snowden was able to disseminate some of the most closely guarded secrets of Five Eyes intelligence cooperation, which were nevertheless available to him on an internal intranet within the US signals intelligence agency.²³ These are concerning because unfiltered access permitted the exfiltration of as much material as was within electronic reach; once penetrated, there is seemingly little scope for limiting damage.

While internal subversion has always been a concern, the prospect of large-scale disclosures are particularly threatening in light of Australia’s intelligence cooperation. After all, a wide range of information is collected by the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), the participating agency in the ‘Five Eyes’ intelligence alliance between Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. Along with its partner agencies monitoring foreign communications, ASD searches electronic information across the internet and mobile telephone networks, and is privy to the resulting pool of shared material. For this reason, the agency commands uncommon respect, and media inquiries have reported “huge volumes” of “immensely valuable” information picked up through its pipeline.²⁴

¹⁹ See for example David Goe, ‘Tinker, Tailor, Leaker, Spy: The Future Costs of Mass Leaks’, *The National Interest*, January-February 2014, <<http://nationalinterest.org/article/tinker-tailor-leaker-spy-the-future-costs-mass-leaks-9644>> [Accessed 20 January 2014].

²⁰ Deborah Snow, ‘Spooky Silence until next Snowden Bomb’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 2013.

²¹ Bowman Miller, ‘The Death of Secrecy: Need to Know...with Whom to Share’, *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2011, <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-55-no.-3/the-death-of-secrecy-need-to-know...with-whom-to-share.html>> [Accessed 20 January 2014].

²² Manning later announced his intention to undergo gender hormone therapy, and changed his name to Chelsea. To avoid any confusion, his original name and male pronouns are used here.

²³ Tom Gjelten, ‘Officials: Edward Snowden’s Leaks Were Masked by Job Duties’, *NPR*, 18 September 2013.

²⁴ Philip Dorling, ‘Australia Gets “Deluge” of US Secret Data, Prompting a New Data Facility’, *The Age*, 13 June 2013.

The concern for Australia is that leaks via this channel unearth the sources used in foreign assessment. The little material Snowden has publicised about Australia already exposed espionage operations targeting Indonesia's political leadership.²⁵ With the merging of information across the intelligence community, including reports from diplomats and espionage carried out by the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), an unprotected data store might compromise secrets across the range of intelligence activity, not simply electronic exploits by the Five Eyes. As in the Wikileaks case, foreign sources might be harmed by a systemic vulnerability in information management, or by further leaks from among intelligence partners. As the volume of data increases, in theory so does the likelihood of something being exposed.

But are leaks an inevitable by-product of information sharing in intelligence? Upon closer inspection, these examples were tailored to specific circumstances. Manning was stationed in Iraq at a tactical processing station where he could browse at will the contents of the Secure Internet Protocol Router Network, a classified intelligence network which contained material belonging to the US military and some civilian agencies like the State Department which utilised the network in order to save resources.²⁶ But this network existed prior to the 9/11 sharing trend; potential leakers in the US military had access to a vast trove of information for many years before he acted. What distinguished Manning was the relaxed security at his workstation: he should have been prohibited from using personal storage devices to remove data from the computer system, but this rule was not enforced at the base where he was deployed.²⁷ This routine security measure would have pre-empted the bulk transfer of classified information to Wikileaks, if not prohibiting his own viewing access.

The details of Snowden's activity are still uncertain, but the little that is known suggests he also exploited a specific flaw in internal security. With a background in technical support, he reportedly selected private-sector employment in Hawai'i because it offered a more relaxed security environment with intelligence access: indeed, the very software that was developed in response to Manning's leaks would have alerted Snowden's superiors to his downloading so much material off the intranet, but it had yet to be installed on the computer terminals at his location.²⁸ In its absence, he copied more than a million files without authorisation and escaped scrutiny because of his systems administrator privileges. There are also disputed

²⁵ Michael Brissenden, 'Australia Spied on Indonesia President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Leaked Edward Snowden Documents Reveal', *ABC News*, 18 November 2013.

²⁶ Ellen Nakashima, 'Who is Wikileaks Suspect Bradley Manning?', *Washington Post*, 5 May 2011.

²⁷ Matt Williams and Ed Pilkington, 'Bradley Manning Hearing Told of Lax Security at Military Intelligence Unit', *The Guardian*, 19 December 2011.

²⁸ Mark Hosenball and Warren Strobel, 'NSA Delayed Anti-leak Software at Base where Snowden Worked—Officials', *Reuters*, 18 October 2013.

reports that he persuaded unwitting colleagues to hand over their passwords.²⁹

In neither case was there a systematic vulnerability necessarily shared by Australian intelligence. Instead, relaxed information security arose from organisational strain. Manning succeeded because the US Army was fighting two wars, with morale suffering from the higher operational tempo of deployment. This was said to be the principal reason why his superiors failed to enforce the rules: they hoped that homesick, worn-out analysts would benefit from a personalised working environment, where music could be used and carried on portable discs.³⁰ In a similar vein, Snowden's employer, the National Security Administration, has undergone a rapid expansion in recent years: released documents speak of a "Golden Age" for signals intelligence, as the proliferation of digital information presents so many opportunities for espionage.³¹ This is part of a larger trend in US intelligence which has seen the growth of private consultants, and the proliferation of security clearances for poorly monitored contractors.³² Computer security was catching up to the risk this posed, but in Snowden's case it was not fast enough.³³

Under pressure, the US army and intelligence community struggled to maintain best practice internal security, providing leakers with the technical opportunity to evade detection as they extracted secret documents. But while there may be occasional leaks in the future, reforms being adopted make these less likely to harm Australia. Discussions in the United States have now centred on advanced information management software which can regulate the digital activity of analysts as they search through stored data, requiring authorisation for activity like downloading.³⁴ This was the very protective layer which Snowden moved jobs to avoid, and Australia should make sure that a similar system is in place and regularly updated. While more emphasis on technical security cannot eliminate the threat of internal subversion, it should at least clamp down on mass-scale disclosure of secret material.

²⁹ For duelling accounts of this story, see Mark Hosenball and Warren Strobel, 'Snowden Persuaded other NSA Workers to Give Up Passwords: Source', *Reuters*, 8 November 2013; and Andy Greenberg, 'An NSA Coworker Remembers The Real Edward Snowden: A Genius Among Geniuses', *Forbes*, 16 December 2013.

³⁰ Nakashima, 'Who is Wikileaks Suspect Bradley Manning?'

³¹ James Risen and Laura Poitras, 'NSA Report Outlined Goals for More Power', *The New York Times*, 22 November 2013.

³² See for example Dana Priest and William Arkin, *Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State* (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2011).

³³ David Sanger and Eric Schmitt, 'Spy Chief Says Snowden Took Advantage of "Perfect Storm" of Security Lapses', *The New York Times*, 11 February 2014.

³⁴ Richard Clarke, Michael Morrell, Geoffrey Stone, Cass Sunstein, and Peter Swire, *Liberty and Security in a Changing World: Report and Recommendations of the President's Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies* (Washington, DC: US Government, 2013), pp. 247-51.

Personnel vetting remains the best defence against subversion of this kind. Manning and Snowden both displayed behavioural characteristics which should have triggered some kind of preventative response from the organisations they were working for. Manning was reprimanded on multiple occasions for violent outbursts, but while his discharge or demotion was considered, the advice was never acted on.³⁵ As a privately-employed contractor, Snowden lied during his job application about past educational experience, but they hired him in spite of this because of his evident talent in computer engineering.³⁶ It is difficult to see an official intelligence agency committing the same error.

To avoid similar problems, Australia's foreign intelligence can best be protected from digital exposure by maintaining security standards in the face of rapid organisational change. This is a potential risk, but not as pressing as it is for US intelligence, if only because Australian national security is not nearly as expansive in scope, and less exposed to sweeping tides of growth or retrenchment. Tactical security will always present a challenge, but this should be viewed independently from the information sharing trend. Indeed, an analyst working in a walled-off, compartmentalised agency could still inflict great damage without effective monitoring. Careful attention to the institutional stability of intelligence agencies, and dedication to information security procedures, should do more to limit the risk of future leaks.

This is good news for the tactical level of intelligence, but it is only one particular issue for foreign assessment. While information sharing can be maintained, another question is whether the mass of information can be harnessed for the production of well-rounded assessment. Unlike information security, this is an area which seems more problematic.

The Operational Level: Coordinating Assessment

Between collecting information and informing policymakers, Australia's intelligence community must convert the mass of raw data into more targeted knowledge about complex issues. The production of assessment occurs at what can be described as the operational level of intelligence; as distinct from the tactical, this is an area which involves a broader range of analytical skills for interpretation, as the more enduring problems of national security are dealt with.

In recent years, a noticeable trend at this level of intelligence has been the effort to achieve a more efficient coordination of assessment resources. A dramatic statement of this intent occurred in 2008 when the Rudd Government placed the intelligence community under a National Security

³⁵ Richard Serrano, 'Defense Seeks Lighter Sentence for Bradley Manning in Wikileaks Case', *Los Angeles Times*, 12 August 2013.

³⁶ Mark Hosenball, 'NSA Contractor Hired Snowden Despite Concerns about Resume Discrepancies', *Reuters*, 20 June 2013.

Adviser (NSA) located in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Previously, ONA coordinated the various intelligence agencies, but over time this had taken a back-seat to the preparation of intelligence for the Prime Minister.³⁷ Instead, the NSA took over much of the responsibility for coordination with an institutionalised role: it compiles annual reports on agency performances, manages a committee to integrate intelligence functions, and promotes community-wide standards in information management.³⁸ As of writing, however, the fate of the NSA is uncertain: the office boasted an expansive role in the formation of national security policy, but there are reports that Prime Minister Tony Abbott has wound down this authority, if not necessarily the NSA's intelligence role.³⁹

Whichever way this process goes, the trend in intelligence seems likely to reinforce more coordination from above. In part this is because of money: as Cornall Black notes, a more stringent approach to priorities could help conserve finances and eliminate unnecessary duplication across agencies.⁴⁰ The case for some kind of bureaucratic streamlining has found support from scholars concerned about the greater resources invested in intelligence over the last decade.⁴¹ Beyond this, larger volumes of unstructured data picked up across the range of collection techniques need greater efforts to fuse them together for complex analysis. In this vein, an internal review by the Gillard Government in 2011 found serious deficiencies with the communication between agencies, criticising the patchwork of "separate ICT [Information and Communications Technology] arrangements, including data storage ... with limited capacity to capture and analyse enterprise-level information". Diagnosing the problem as one of bureaucratic inertia, the report called for more integration.⁴²

The assumption behind this thinking is that there is little trade-off between efficiency and comprehensiveness. Without more publicly available information this is a difficult proposition to test, but it seems insensitive to other dangers arising from the information revolution. While assessment involves the herding of various details from many sources into a coherent whole, the material needs to be scrutinised to make sure of authenticity and detail. For example, scientific expertise is needed to understand the various stages of weapons development, informants can harbour personal motivations which make them a less trustworthy source on certain issues,

³⁷ Peter Jennings, 'Unfinished Business: Reforming our Intelligence Agencies', *Policy*, vol. 20, no. 4 (2004-05), p. 5.

³⁸ Carl Ungerer, *Australia's National Security Institutions: Reform and Renewal*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Report 34, September 2010, p. 4.

³⁹ Jason Koutsoukis, 'Tony Abbott Dismantles Role of National Security Adviser by Stealth, Insiders Say', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 2013.

⁴⁰ Cornall and Black, *Independent Review of the Intelligence Community Report*, p. 19.

⁴¹ Peter Leahy, 'Bigger Budgets = Better Intelligence?', in Daniel Baldino (ed.), *Spooked: The Truth about Intelligence in Australia* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2013), p. 181.

⁴² Philip Dorling, 'Major Flaws in Aust's Intel Sharing: Report', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 2012.

and foreign language intercepts can have multiple meanings. Those familiar with the source of information are more likely to appreciate context, and are well positioned to tease out the potential complications.⁴³

The obstacle for reform is that an arrangement which harnesses this knowledge is difficult to achieve on a more efficient basis. Multiple agencies are involved in assessment of a complex issue, but conveying the detail from analysts in one agency to another requires time and interaction, not simply greater access to one another's raw material. With the exponential growth of information, more strain is placed on these inter-agency exchanges because increasing amounts of collected intelligence will probably need to be discussed at length. Without careful attention to detail, the wrong interpretation can easily be made and disastrous consequences may result.

This was the central implication of the intelligence failure which preceded Australia's involvement in the Iraq War. By early 2003, a discrepancy had surfaced between ONA and the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), the agency which focuses on strategic military affairs for the Defence Department. DIO, boasting more resources and experts with knowledge of weaponry, remained more sceptical of claims that a weapons programme existed in Iraq.⁴⁴ By contrast, ONA, tasked with a higher level of assessment to cut across many different issues, was more inclined to see a creative pattern in Saddam's behaviour. In short, the agency most familiar with the detail was better positioned to see through the ambiguity of evidence; but in the desire to integrate as much information in as little time possible, this nuance was not properly appreciated further along the process.⁴⁵

The case of Iraq illustrates other limitations to the assessment process. The Flood Report pointed out that assumptions were often used without enough critical scrutiny.⁴⁶ In explaining his agency's record, the ONA Director-General of the time described an "accumulation of intelligence" which shaped the outlook of his analysts, whereby individual pieces of material were never verified, but presented a compelling picture when taken as a whole.⁴⁷ For example, Saddam's refusal to permit meetings between his scientists and UN inspectors was cited as likely proof that Iraq possessed prohibited weapons, but only in light of the many other instances of suspicious behaviour. With the benefit of hindsight it is known that Saddam feared international exposure of his offensive weakness would threaten his regime's stability; but at the time, what should have been interpreted as self-

⁴³ Calvert Jones, 'Intelligence Reform: The Logic of Information Sharing', *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 22, no. 3 (2007), p. 390.

⁴⁴ Jennings, 'Unfinished Business', p. 8.

⁴⁵ Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, p. 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁷ Cited in Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD, *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003), p. 57.

preservation was registered as another dot in a pattern of guilt.⁴⁸ As the intelligence effort against Iraq expanded, more uncertain evidence was collected to fill out the picture of a regime determined to hide something.⁴⁹

Cognitive bias of this type will always intrude on analytical judgement. Every thinking professional has an ideological blind spot.⁵⁰ Part of this was undoubtedly due to past experience, as US intelligence had been surprised to discover Saddam's nuclear ambitions closer to realisation than had been predicted after the Gulf War. Awareness of this mistake was said to exercise great influence over analysts a decade later: while a sceptical observer might have judged the available intelligence not strong enough, a sense of urgency and the stakes involved edged assessment away from cautious detachment.⁵¹

But while it can never be fully avoided, there were features of the assessment process in Australia which left analysts more vulnerable to this weakness. Some knowledgeable observers of the process complained about the large volume of information received via Australia's intelligence partners, because much of this could not be properly scrutinised even as it left a strong impression in the months leading up to war.⁵² An investigation by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD did not openly endorse this view, but it did reveal that there were just three ONA staff members continually working on the Iraqi WMD angle.⁵³ Considering the delicacy of the subject matter, this was insufficient; and to the extent that it could have been rectified, DIO's resources had to be more thoroughly incorporated into ONA's effort.⁵⁴ In effect, coordination between the two agencies was not geared to cope with the volume of information or the complexity of the problem.

With a limited range of analytical thinking at its disposal, there appears to have been a lack of contested opinion within ONA. One publicly-known exception was Andrew Wilkie, an analyst who resigned in protest over the intelligence debate, and who took a more critical perspective than others about the agency's Iraq assessment. After scrutinising the available material, Wilkie concluded that it lacked substance and explored other motives that might have plausibly accounted for Saddam's behaviour.⁵⁵ His frustrated departure is a sign that the assessment process needs to

⁴⁸ Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 147.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7.

⁵⁰ Odom, 'Intelligence Analysis', p. 327.

⁵¹ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, pp. 138-9.

⁵² Parliamentary Joint Committee, *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, pp. 44-6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

⁵⁴ Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, pp. 26-7.

⁵⁵ Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit: The Story of the Intelligence Officer Who Risked All to Tell the Truth about WMD and Iraq* (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2004), pp. 81-98.

consciously maintain competitive perspectives by incorporating minority concerns, so that contrarian points are systematically addressed.

The fundamental risk at the operational level of intelligence is if a particularly compelling viewpoint or interpretation becomes ascendant, as it did in the Iraq debate. Given the growing volume of data for intelligence this could occur more frequently in the future. It is a well-established finding among intelligence experts that the reception of more information by analysts rarely dislodges settled assumptions.⁵⁶ Instead, with more material floating around than ten years ago, there is a greater chance of encountering something which validates an ingrained bias, or plays on the anxiety of the policy community. Rather than aiming to save money, coordination should be approached with an eye to resisting this pressure.

In this, diverse organisational habits and bureaucratic overlap can be a positive advantage. When efforts are made to economise on resources, the contextualised knowledge which can point out these kinds of shortcomings in assessment are at risk of being eliminated. Indeed, a misguided effort at streamlining was one of the few drawbacks to the Flood Report, which recommended that DIO's mandate be slimmed down in order to avoid wasteful duplication with ONA.⁵⁷ This undervalues the different strengths which a diverse group of analysts can offer, despite the ostensible similarity of their work. Moreover, while Flood noted the insufficient resources available for ONA at the time of the Iraq debate, this was a natural consequence of the agency's position at the apex of intelligence. Given its expansive scope, ONA is likely to struggle with the production of comprehensive assessment in time. There will probably never be the ideal level of expertise in the agency for the consideration of all the details associated with a complex issue.

Improving this situation does not call for any great change in funding. While it is unreasonable to burden ONA with the demand that every piece of data is explored with a detailed briefing from other agencies, there is also resistance to increasing manpower that would relieve ONA's workload.⁵⁸ The agency reportedly enjoys a collegiate atmosphere with a small staff and flattened hierarchy. Too much internal bureaucracy can dilute thinking, with each management layer adding more qualifications onto ideas until they lack analytical thrust in the final, consensus-driven product.⁵⁹ At its best, ONA is said to have resisted this trend, making conceptual links which push back against assumed thinking: in the case of Islamic extremism in South East Asia, it anticipated how local groups could merge into a terrorist organisation targeting Australia's diplomatic and commercial presence in the region.

⁵⁶ See Richard Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Langley: Centre for the Study of Intelligence, 1999), p. 51.

⁵⁷ Jennings, 'Unfinished Business', p. 8.

⁵⁸ Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, p. 109.

⁵⁹ Monks, 'Intelligence Informatics', p. 63.

Whereas their military-perspective prevented DIO analysts from noticing these signs, ONA was able to infer from socio-political trends around the world that Jemaah Islamiyah would develop into a serious threat.⁶⁰

If not investing in more analysts, how else to cope with the abundance of information? Another proposal raised by intelligence scholars is the more rigorous use of social science methods in assessment. This would target agency practice by requiring the systematic use of techniques like the hypothetical deductive method for teasing out alternative scenarios, or the search for “negative evidence” which should have occurred if a given hypothetical were correct.⁶¹ These are valuable analytical tools in some problem solving cases, but imposing them as a uniform standard would run the risk of weighing down the entire process with too much internal contestability. Recent research into the US intelligence community shows counter-terrorism analysts engaging in competitive one-upmanship, with a consequent narrowing of focus as new ideas about even the most marginal issues are challenged at every turn.⁶² This is especially problematic because the amount of information for assessment is increasing so rapidly that it demands even more time for consultation; whereas intelligence is best served if it remains innovative.

Rather than practising blanket internal scepticism or increasing staff numbers, diverse bureaucratic input offers a better prospect for complementing assessment. This could be done by assigning staff from other agencies to issue-specific teams under guidance from ONA: an inter-agency “mosaic” of skills can be established to investigate a problem from multiple angles, without the need to ferret out every possible assumption.⁶³ Inter-agency teams have already been practised on issues like people smuggling, but conducted more regularly under ONA with supervision from above, they would allow that agency to direct the investigation creatively while incorporating specialised resources to bore into more detail when needed. These groups offer a way to institutionalise the dialogue which should have taken place over the Iraq assessments, with staff having to address each other’s concerns in a more systematic way.

This should not be confined to government, as the private sector offers an increasingly vital source of knowledge about foreign trends relevant to national security. Intelligence officials have previously toyed with the idea of outside expertise being drafted into assessment; in this case, the temporary nature of an inter-agency group model offers a flexible way for people in

⁶⁰ Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, pp. 38-9.

⁶¹ Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails*, p. 191.

⁶² Bridget Nolan, ‘Information Sharing and Collaboration in the United States Intelligence Community: An Ethnographic Study of the National Counter-terrorism Center’, PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013, <http://media.philly.com/documents/Nolan_Dissertation.PDF> [Accessed 11 October 2013], p. 36.

⁶³ Rolington, *Strategic Intelligence for the 21st Century*, pp. 156-60.

business or tertiary education to be incorporated into the work of intelligence without prolonged leaves of absence.⁶⁴ The obvious drawback is the risk to information security, as more people with outside affiliations are brought into the community. But as the previous section demonstrated, the risk of an 'Australian Snowden' is a problem which should be managed with careful vetting. In fact, many of the most promising candidates are likely to be former public officials, who are more trustworthy than untested recruits. With the proximity of industry, academia, and policymaking in Canberra, the promise of stronger collaboration over intelligence problems is worthy of experimentation.

While intelligence can benefit from the inter-agency model, the challenge will be to know when it is truly needed. Sociological research suggests that a multi-party arrangement along these lines is the best way to avoid cognitive blind-spots, but that the composition of the group should not remain static.⁶⁵ Instead, periodic changes to membership would help refresh its perspective and reveal new angles worth investigating. Moreover, these teams should be viewed as a special assignment in order to receive the full cooperation of participating staff; previous attempts have been encouraging, but suffered from competition between the agencies supplying analysts, which is likely to worsen as resources are more limited than in the past.⁶⁶ For these reasons, there should be a limit to their use, and problems that might benefit from their attention will have to be prioritised. Policymakers will have to provide direction on these questions.

With the greater flow of information, coordination should be geared towards strengthening the way that multiple agencies complement one another; not simply streamlining bureaucracy. This strengthens the case for the NSA to continue supervising intelligence, and making careful use of the inter-agency model for coordinated work without marginalising nuanced thinking. The operational level of intelligence stands to benefit from these changes, but this raises issues for the next level of the intelligence process.

The Strategic Level: Policy Interface

Arguably the most difficult part of intelligence is its reception by decision-makers. This is the strategic level of intelligence; unlike the other two levels, it mixes uneasily with the role of political officials. With greater volumes of information buffeting the intelligence community, the link between assessment and the formation of policy—long a source of controversy among scholars—is being tightened, but this exposes the assessment

⁶⁴ Gyngell, 'The Challenges of Intelligence'.

⁶⁵ Susan Straus, Andrew Parker, James Bruce, and Jacob Dembosky, *The Group Matters: A Review of the Effects of Group Interaction on Processes and Outcomes in Analytic Teams*, RAND Working Paper, April 2009, <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working_papers/2009/RAND_WR580.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2014], pp. 21-2.

⁶⁶ Ungerer, *Australia's National Security Institutions*, p. 5.

process to other risks. This section examines the resulting danger of intelligence politicisation.

It has long been recognised that the dynamics of policymaking are not sensitive to intelligence. No analyst can be expected to provide answers in a timely manner because information secured covertly is typically ambiguous; by contrast, politicians are required to take definitive action, but have limited time to acquaint themselves with the details before circumstances demand a response.⁶⁷ A clash of styles is inevitable: analysts struggle to infer connections between multiple issues while policymakers want to know why they are diverting time from their busy schedule. Operating under this constraint, intelligence is best viewed as the process of interaction between assessment and policy which narrows down the field of uncertainty for the government.⁶⁸ It requires mutual trust and continuous, frank discussion.

Since its creation as the peak intelligence agency in the 1970s, ONA has taken the lead in educating Australia's political leaders along these lines, but limited itself from doing anything that could be misconstrued as providing advice. This was to make sure that the assessment process remained free of any sense of political obligation, even as it guarantees the Director-General access to the Prime Minister. But it is rarely the case that all the implications raised by assessment are properly weighed by political leaders; they come into power with what is usually a surface understanding of the national security landscape. For this reason, ONA makes a deliberate effort to focus on issues that are relevant to the government.⁶⁹ This ensures that intelligence assessment, like military strategy, has a rational purpose by serving policy.

The trouble is that this position can subtly transform into support for the government's agenda. For instance, Wilkie argued that the proximity between ONA and senior ministers encouraged the agency to alter the emphasis of its reporting to suit the politics of selling the Iraq War.⁷⁰ The Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS, and DSD raised concerns about the problem that the need to be "relevant" has for analytical independence, commenting on the possibility that ONA might have adjusted to the firm position of Howard ministers without being fully aware of it, if only to avoid tension.⁷¹ Investigations by the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) have also focused attention on this issue: while ONA analysts do not report feeling any external pressure, the IGIS determined

⁶⁷ Arthur Hulnick, 'Intelligence Producer-Consumer Relations in the Electronic Era', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2011), pp. 748-50.

⁶⁸ Allan Behm, 'The Australian Intelligence Community in 2020', *Security Challenges*, vol. 3, no. 4 (2007), p. 5.

⁶⁹ Parliamentary Joint Committee, *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 54.

⁷⁰ Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, pp. 141-3.

⁷¹ Parliamentary Joint Committee, *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 54.

several years later that it could not rule out the prospect of unconscious self-censorship taking place.⁷²

This is an issue of psychology for analysts, and is correspondingly hard to diagnose. ONA's record on Iraq does not prove the existence of politicisation; after all, its mistakes were committed by intelligence services working on behalf of several governments opposed to the Iraq War.⁷³ But one lesson which emerges repeatedly from experience is that there is more likely to be trouble when government policy is resolute and well-advertised, as it was in the case of Iraq. For example, Des Ball illustrated how the Howard Government refused to credit the intelligence picture coming out of East Timor in its public statements during the period leading up to the outbreak of militia violence in 1999. The resistance from government officials in order to avoid diplomatic fallout may have flowed back down into the assessment process, as DIO reports temporarily became more cautious about Indonesian complicity while the evidence continued to mount.⁷⁴

More distance between intelligence and policy can avoid this, but it is not advisable. Governments are entitled to decide which issues to prioritise, and political leaders will always draw on some mixture of personal views and past experiences.⁷⁵ As a result, if intelligence is not relevant it can end up under-utilised or bypassed. Just as pressure on intelligence analysts is harmful, so is their exclusion from the counsel of policymakers. This appears to have occurred during the 2009 Defence White Paper drafting process, when statements about Chinese military modernisation which diverged from ONA and DIO assessment were adopted. Where the intelligence agencies were more optimistic about the intent underlying Chinese behaviour, the hawkish outlook of Defence officials prevailed because they received the firm support of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.⁷⁶ This may or may not have been the right decision, but undertaking major policy changes which resist the findings of assessment is not an encouraging sign. Indeed, a more damning indictment of the Iraq intelligence debate is that the governments involved were simply not listening; minds had been made up, irrespective of what intelligence was saying.⁷⁷

If only to avoid becoming a wasted asset, intelligence needs to remain firmly integrated into the decision-making process. In recent years, the creation of

⁷² See the Unclassified Executive Summary from Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, *Report on the Statutory Independence of the Office of National Assessments* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2006).

⁷³ Paul Pillar, 'Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 2 (2006), p. 134.

⁷⁴ Desmond Ball, 'Silent Witness: Australian Intelligence and East Timor', *The Pacific Review*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2001), pp. 46-7.

⁷⁵ Odom, 'Intelligence Analysis', p. 325.

⁷⁶ Cameron Stewart and Patrick Walters, 'Spy Chiefs Cross Swords over China as Kevin Rudd Backs Defence Hawks', *The Australian*, 11 April 2009.

⁷⁷ Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, pp. 73-4.

the NSA was a step in this direction. A public official in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, with more time than elected politicians, can offer suggestions based on a thorough understanding of intelligence. This also provides a useful locus of decision-making about inter-agency coordination. The challenge is the position's interaction with the ONA, because that agency remains the primary source of specialised knowledge for the Prime Minister. To the extent that future NSAs rely on intelligence assessment before dispensing advice, they should be in regular contact with the ONA Director-General. Indeed, that agency continues to manage subcommittees on behalf of the NSA which deal with more technical matters of resource allocation and functional integration.

However, this gives rise to a second potential for misuse. Given that it oversees intelligence, the NSA is still likely to be better acquainted with the details of assessment than any other policy figure. Armed with this knowledge, he or she might be inclined to push a particular line of interpretation at variance with intelligence findings. This appears to have been the case with the US Defense Department in the lead up to the Iraq War, where a special unit was set up to funnel information from Iraqi defectors into the assessment debate; as critics charged, this was a case of officials creating their own material to circumvent the process.⁷⁸ With the growth of information sources in the private sector, such as think tanks and risk analysis firms, there is a greater risk of rival assessment being available to policy officials.⁷⁹ Whereas the ONA Director-General previously acted as the gatekeeper of raw information, the NSA or other advisors might be tempted to operate as their own intelligence analysts.⁸⁰

With more information at hand, intelligence may have to contend with a set of two mutually reinforcing problems. There is no escaping the fact that complex issues require more professional expertise instead of gut intuition from political officials; and this places a great premium on the relevance of intelligence assessment to policy. But with the risk that decision-makers can find information to suit their agenda when they do not receive the support they want, intelligence officials might be inclined to dip into the vast sea of unverified open source data, including social media, to supply material which retains their proximity to authority.⁸¹ In short, the second type of politicisation identified here may heighten the likelihood of the first taking place as well.

⁷⁸ Uri Bar-Joseph and Jack Levy, 'Conscious Action and Intelligence Failure', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 124, no. 3 (2009), p. 475.

⁷⁹ Joshua Rovner, 'Intelligence in the Twitter Age', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2013), pp. 267-8.

⁸⁰ This is one manifestation of a more general problem mentioned in Alan Dupont, 'Intelligence for the Twenty-First Century', *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 18, no. 4 (2003), p. 24.

⁸¹ Rovner, 'Intelligence in the Twitter Age', pp. 267-8.

As mentioned above, while the NSA was a creation of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, his successors attach less importance to the office. For the Abbott Government, this is reportedly motivated by a desire to re-impose Westminster tradition by shifting authority back into policy departments.⁸² But there is little sign that the NSA's powers over intelligence, as opposed to policy, are curtailed. After all, before the NSA was created, ONA was required to assess its own performance; considering the vastly increased resources in recent years, this was far from ideal. Whether or not the NSA loses influence, it is unlikely to herald a shift away from closer intelligence-policy links. Even if future governments feel comfortable tackling complex problems with minimal analytical support, the delicate nature of intelligence requires closer supervision of assessment by policymakers.⁸³ With the revelations about the surveillance of phone numbers belonging to prominent Indonesians, more diplomatic judgement seems necessary to regulate indiscriminate espionage; if not, exposure risks imposing more costs on Australian foreign policy.⁸⁴

Beyond that, in light of the media scrutiny and partisan debates which bedevil contemporary politics, intelligence evidence is increasingly demanded to justify government decisions, but any disclosure needs to be handled carefully so that it does not undercut policy.⁸⁵ A warning example is provided by the debate in the United States over Iranian nuclear ambitions in 2007. After a declassified National Intelligence Estimate revealed no firm evidence of a nuclear weapons programme could be found in Iran, it was seized on by opponents of the Bush administration to argue that the United States should abandon deterrence for negotiation. Lost in the media frenzy was the fact that intelligence was only referring to specific designs for building a bomb device when it mentioned "evidence"; the enrichment programme in Iran remained active, but the distinction was not emphasised in the Estimate because, in the words of one author, "we never wrote this to be read by the general public".⁸⁶ Whatever the merits of Bush administration policy, its coercive approach was undone through public misinterpretation.

Policymakers must have the capacity to shape the publication of assessment, but again, this opens up the prospect for abuse. Politicians may refer to intelligence material to confer legitimacy on their agenda, even

⁸² Greg Sheridan, 'Doubling the Advisers a Sign of Global Clout', *The Australian*, 16 September 2013.

⁸³ For example, the same article cited above which described the Abbott Government's desire to reverse centralised policy-making at the NSA also noted that the international security advisors for the Prime Minister have doubled.

⁸⁴ See for example the blog post by former ONA Director-General Geoff Miller, 'Are We Spying Just Because We Can?', *The Interpreter*, 8 November 2013, <<http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2013/11/08/Are-we-spying-just-because-we-can.aspx>> [Accessed 20 January 2014]

⁸⁵ Michael Wesley, 'The Politicisation of Intelligence', in Baldino (ed.), *Democratic Oversight of Intelligence Services* (Leichhardt: Federation Press, 2010), p. 198.

⁸⁶ David Sanger, *The Inheritance: The World Obama Confronts and the Challenges to American Power* (London: Bantam Press, 2009), p. 5.

if these are not truly representative of the picture conveyed by assessment. For example, during the 'Children overboard' affair statements from an ONA brief on the behaviour of asylum seekers were cited by Prime Minister John Howard, although this appears to have left the public with the wrong impression of how ONA viewed the situation.⁸⁷ The 2003 Parliamentary Inquiry into the intelligence assessment also showed this to be a problem during the Iraq debate.⁸⁸ While intelligence agencies may screen official statements to make sure that nothing is factually incorrect, they cannot disabuse the public of any mistaken impressions by issuing their own statements; in effect, this would invest them with a veto over government policy. As long as some evidence is expected by the public to justify policy choices, elected officials will have leeway to deploy intelligence for their own ends.⁸⁹ And as information increases, so does the material which can be exploited.

In sum, there are three types of misuse by the political authorities overseeing intelligence: pressuring analysts, manufacturing their own analysis, and misleading the public. With the growing volume of information, all three could occur more frequently over time. Unlike information security or inter-agency assessment, the trend towards politicisation presents a challenge which seems likely to worsen in the future unless more corrective action is taken.

A Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

The previous three sections have outlined the major challenges which are likely to cause problems for Australia's foreign intelligence assessment. Most troublesome among these is the intelligence-policy link, which needs to be strengthened without allowing for the distortion of analytical thinking.

There are mechanisms of intelligence oversight, but nothing which is able to continuously scrutinise the assessment process with an eye to improving its policy contribution. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security reviews intelligence administration and expenditure, and at the request of a minister may investigate operational issues. But for this very reason, political interference is unlikely to be referred to the committee; only the most public controversy will see any likelihood of this happening. By contrast, the IGIS has a broad mandate to review the propriety and legality of intelligence; in practice, this has allowed it to examine issues like the independence of assessment. But because of the many issues it needs to address across the intelligence community, it will not always be in a position to bring attention to an ongoing hole in analytical coverage, or the inadequate use of technical resources. Moreover, given the sweeping power

⁸⁷ James Cotton, *Australian Foreign Policy and the Management of Intelligence Post-September 11*, ANU Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government Discussion Paper 06-03, p. 4.

⁸⁸ Parliamentary Joint Committee, *Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 93.

⁸⁹ Wesley, 'The Politicisation of Intelligence', p. 197.

it enjoys, the IGIS has tried to avoid seeming like a rival authority for political officials which intelligence must also answer to; if anything, it has too much authority to help without complicating things.⁹⁰

By the same token, it is difficult to regulate the policy end of intelligence. Improved political judgement cannot be assured via bureaucratic reform: this is the task of the voting public, and politicians who emerge victorious from elections have the right to make the decisions they want. Australia's political leaders can only be implored to appoint fair-minded officials who can harness the intelligence process, whether it be the NSA or other policy advisors. While the NSA presently manages the intelligence community, it mostly draws on federal employees who are cycled through the public service without any long-term experience in the profession.⁹¹ But more resources and expertise directly under a policy official, be it the NSA or another advisor, risks creating an opinionated staff which quarrels with ONA. The challenge is that more institutional heft is needed to aid policymakers, but without inadvertently strengthening their capacity to mishandle intelligence.

One proposal that might strike this balance is the establishment of a Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board which reports to the policymaking authority overseeing intelligence. Building on a similar model in the United States, the advisory board could be a voluntary collection of retired professionals with experience in intelligence affairs, who can regularly monitor the output of assessment and propose ideas for improving performance. As a voluntary group, the board would not require much financing, and could bring considerable expertise into an area where policymakers are typically inexperienced. Reporting independently, it could end up playing a moderating role between political advisers, who are more inclined to implement hasty reforms which serve short-term goals, and professional bureaucrats from intelligence who are more cautious about reform. Indeed, the equivalent model has at times proved vitally useful for political leaders in the United States, especially in times of rapid technological change.⁹²

In order to maintain political independence, its members should be nominated by the IGIS, which has a good appreciation of the intelligence landscape; and if need be, these can be reviewed by the government, to ensure that political leaders feel comfortable with the advisors they're

⁹⁰ Ian Carnell, 'Eyes on Spies—another Platypus?', Speech at the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 22 November 2007, <http://www.aiaa.asn.au/act-papers/doc_details/178-eyes-on-spies--another-platypus-ian-carnell> [Accessed 8 October 2013].

⁹¹ Margot McCarthy, 'National Security: Past, Present, and Future', Speech at PM&C Amenities Room, 15 June 2012, <http://www.dpnc.gov.au/national_security/speeches/2012-06-15_past_present_future.pdf> [Accessed 3 October 2013].

⁹² See for example the Kennedy administration's use of the board in Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 272-3.

expected to listen to. To be sure, this also has its limitations: given that the board plays an advisory role, the lack of authority can leave it marginalised. Certainly, the US equivalent has seen its work fall on deaf ears when the policy side maintained distance from the group.⁹³ To avoid this problem in Australia, the board should have the power to refer problems which lie unaddressed to the Joint Parliamentary Committee: the resulting investigation may cover not only a discussion of intelligence, but also touch on the government's role in the process, as it did in the 2003 Iraq report. The board should also retain the option to publish an unclassified summary of its reporting, so that its ideas can at least have some purchase on public opinion, if not always with the government of the day. This should make it less easy to ignore those issues which the board views as most important.

With these powers in place, the advisory board would retain some capacity to ward off politicisation. Ideally, this should encourage the political leadership to extend more confidence to its members. Indeed, the board should be capable of scrutinising foreign assessment with an eye towards aiding policy, without providing a rival source of intelligence which might be expected from an empowered NSA. With greater intimacy and latitude than the IGIS enjoys, the board might also offer some advice about the political receptivity of intelligence, and ways to improve the use of intelligence in policy formation. Mistakes in the policy-intelligence relationship are more likely to be scrutinised if a larger number of experts were privy to the intelligence on which the NSA is making decisions, as at least some members from a diverse group can be expected to draw attention to the many implications for policy.

The board could also provide a useful resource for tackling the other problems canvassed in this article. The goal of streamlining the consultation between agencies would benefit from the advice of retired professionals, who know best how to capture the specific knowledge of their former employers while economising on resources. Disputes about the use of inter-agency teams for assessment could be examined in more detail and refined as the board reviews their performance. The board is also likely to offer a valuable perspective on what espionage techniques to permit, and what is not worth the risk of exposure. Given their experience, board members should also be alert to signs of organisational strain which might precede an internal security threat. Without too much power, the board has little scope for aggravating these problems; if handled correctly, however, it promises to bring more wisdom into areas which will need disciplined supervision in the years ahead.

⁹³ Kenneth Absher, Michael Desch, and Roman Popadiuk, *Privileged and Confidential: The Secret History of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2012), p. 343.

Intelligence is too important to allow for complacency. With drastic changes in the nature and volume of information, there will have to be adjustments in the way that it is used for the purposes of national security. To address some of the likely problem areas for the intelligence community, information sharing should be preserved, despite the risk of digital subversion; a wider range of analysts from different agencies should be placed onto issue-specific groups, and private sector knowledge should be utilised. But above all, the proposal for a Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board can help strengthen what appears to be the most vulnerable part of the intelligence process in the years ahead. No change in bureaucracy is completely free of risk, but as the information revolution propels us forward, it is an institutional change from which Australia can benefit.

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The Importance of Family: The Key to Understanding the Evolution of Jihadism in Australia¹

Shandon Harris-Hogan

This article investigates one of the key drivers behind the presence of jihadism in Australia, the influence of family. While no single factor can completely account for an individual's radicalisation, the following will contend that the influence of family (as well as other close social relationships) has been critical to the recruitment and retention of many members of the Australian jihadist network. The specific nature of this influence is demonstrated through case studies into the radicalisation of several significant members of the Australian network. Prominent examples of familial influence on radicalisation in other comparable Western countries have also been included to demonstrate a similar phenomenon within other international jihadist networks. However, the influence of family has at times proven critical in preventing radicalisation, and examples of this occurrence have also been included in the discussion. Overall, the article aims to contribute towards a better understanding of jihadist radicalisation in Australia by highlighting and analysing a key driver of the phenomenon.

Radicalisation and violent extremism has presented a small but persistent security challenge within many Muslim communities in the West. Though affected to a lesser extent than many countries, Australia has not remained immune from this issue. The following analysis aims to contribute towards a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon of jihadism within an Australian context. The Australian jihadist network is a complex interlinking of close relationships which transcend operational cells. This work will argue that the influence of family and other close social relationships has played a significant role in the passing of ideology and the recruitment and retention of jihadists into the network. Indeed, the networks structure and membership has evolved to reflect the strong family and close friendship relations which permeate it. The following study will begin by looking at the history of jihadist terrorism in Australia before analysing how individuals in that country have radicalised. The main body of the work contains case studies which highlight the considerable influence these close relationships have had on the decision-making process of individuals surrounding the network. However, the impact of such connections is not inherently negative as there are also instances of family members persuading individuals away from extremism. Case studies of this phenomenon are likewise explored

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before concluding with a look at the implications of these findings for counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism policy in Australia.

Jihadism in Australia

Jihadism has presented a significant security challenge throughout the Western world for longer than a decade. In the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada Muslim diaspora communities have been sites of radicalisation towards political violence. Indeed, one study revealed that more than eighty per cent of known jihadists “currently live in diaspora communities”.² The threat faced by Australia from jihadist-related activity has been small when contrasted against other broadly comparable countries. This is illustrated by the fact that only thirty-three individuals have been prosecuted under terrorism laws, compared with hundreds in broadly comparable countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and France.³ However, while comparably small in number, the threat to Australia from various manifestations of jihadism has remained persistent since the turn of the century.

Early terrorism plots in Australia were funded and directed by international terrorist organisations. The first occurred in 2000 when prominent Jemaah Islamiyah and al Qaeda figures plotted to attack Israeli and Jewish targets during the Sydney Olympics.⁴ In 2003 a cell was also uncovered in Sydney which was planning to attack the Sydney electricity grid.⁵ The actions of the cell were directed from Pakistan by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander responsible for the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India.⁶ After 2003 Australia's domestic jihadist plots shifted from being externally-guided to entirely self-starting. This shift, which was not consistent with comparable countries internationally, was predominantly due to the removal of key facilitators from the Australian community.⁷

This shift initially manifested in two self-starting jihadist cells uncovered in November 2005 in what was to become Australia's largest terrorism investigation (codenamed Operation Pendennis).⁸ A cell of Melbourne based men was also arrested in Operation Neath in 2009 while planning a

² Scott Atran, 'The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 2 (2006), p. 135.

³ Andrew Zammit, 'Who Becomes a Jihadist in Australia? A Comparative Analysis', *ARC Linkage Project on Radicalisation 2010 Conference* (2011).

⁴ Sam Mullins, 'Islamist Terrorism and Australia: An Empirical Examination of the “Home-Grown” Threat', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2011).

⁵ Stuart Koschade, 'The Internal Dynamics of Terrorist Cells: A Social Network Analysis of Terrorist Cells in an Australian Context', PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 2007, pp. 222–47.

⁶ Sebastian Rotella, 'The Man Behind Mumbai', *ProPublica*, November 2010.

⁷ Andrew Zammit, 'Explaining a Turning Point in Australian Jihadism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 36, no. 9 (2013).

⁸ Shandon Harris-Hogan, 'Anatomy of a Terrorist Cell: A Study of the Network Uncovered in Sydney in 2005', *Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, vol. 5 (2013).

suicide attack on Holsworthy Army Barracks in Sydney⁹ and a further series of raids, conducted in Melbourne in 2012, resulted in another individual being charged with a number of terrorism related offences.¹⁰ The following analysis will consider one of the potentially key reasons that the Australian jihadist network has been able to regenerate and adapt over time.

Moreover, clusters of aspiring Australian jihadists (numbering somewhere between three and fifteen in each instance) have sought training or combat overseas, chiefly in Afghanistan and Pakistan between 1999 and 2003, and Somalia or Yemen from 2006 onwards.¹¹ There have also been several significant instances of Australians involved with jihadist activity in Lebanon throughout the past decade.¹² More recently, approximately 100 individuals are believed to have travelled from Australia to participate in the conflict in Syria (many of which are believed to be fighting with extremist elements such as Jabhat al-Nusra or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL]), and nine individuals have already been killed (potentially including Australia's first suicide bomber).¹³ This explosion in the number of Australian foreign fighters has meant that the scale of the potential threat to Australia from jihadism is now larger as it has ever been.

Radicalisation in Australia

Michel Wieviorka notes that the perception or reality of discrimination and or social exclusion, inevitably leads to "reactive assertions of identity" antagonistic to the host society.¹⁴ Many Western countries have experienced such reactions manifest in acts of terrorism motivated by jihadist ideology. Fortunately the overwhelming majority of Australian Muslims, even those who perceive that society excludes them from full participation, do not join militant groups to act out their disaffection.¹⁵ This is largely due to policies of multiculturalism and other related government, police and community programs which have been successful at building

⁹ Andrew Zammit, 'The Holsworthy Barracks Plot: A Case Study of an al-Shabab Support Network in Australia', *CTC Sentinel*, June 2012.

¹⁰ *DPP (Cth) v Karabegovic* VSCA 380 (17 December 2013).

¹¹ Shandon Harris-Hogan, 'Australian Neojihadist Terrorism: Mapping the Network and Cell Analysis using Wiretap Evidence', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 35 (2012).

¹² Shandon Harris-Hogan and Andrew Zammit, 'The Unseen Terrorist Connection: Exploring jihadist links between Lebanon and Australia', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 26 (2014).

¹³ See David Irvine, 'Director-General Speech: Address to the Security in Government Conference 2013—Australia's Current Security and Intelligence Operating Environment', Canberra, Australia, 13 August 2013, <<http://www.asio.gov.au/Publications/Speeches-and-Statements/Speeches-and-Statements/DGs-Speech-August-13-2013.html>>; and Jared Owens, 'Recruit to Syria "killed" in War', *The Australian*, 18 January 2014.

¹⁴ Michel Wieviorka, 'The Making of Differences', *International Sociology*, vol. 19 (2004), p. 284.

¹⁵ Rachel Woodlock, 'Being an Aussie Mossie: Muslim and Australian Identity among Australian Born Muslims', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 22 (2011), p. 403.

social cohesion.¹⁶ However, this has not prevented a small violent extremist element emerging in Australia.¹⁷ In order to understand the presence of this element, it is necessary to explore the motivations of, and influences upon, individuals who have become involved with jihadism in Australia.

Those who become involved in jihadism outside of conflict zones undergo a process of radicalisation. Unfortunately, there is no agreed definition of what constitutes radicalisation. Indeed, definitional issues are the “principal source of many controversies and misunderstandings” that surround the topic.¹⁸ As this article specifically focuses on radicalisation in an Australian context, it will employ the definition of radicalisation used in Australia’s sole government funded national training course on the topic. The training manual states that radicalisation is:

a process in which individuals develop, adopt and embrace political attitudes and modes of behaviour which diverge substantially from those of any or all of the established and legitimate political, social, economic, cultural, and religious values, attitudes, institutions and behaviours which exist in a given society.¹⁹

Ultimately, radicalisation becomes of concern to authorities only if individuals or groups begin to endorse, promote, and/or prepare to use illegal and/or violent methods to achieve their political goals. In its most extreme manifestation this can result in an act of terrorism. While debates have thus far failed to arrive at a universally accepted definition of what constitutes terrorism,²⁰ this work will employ the definition as stated in the *Australian Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2003*.²¹ Given that this article examines the actions of people who have been identified by the Australian authorities as being involved in terrorist related activities; it is an appropriate working definition.

John Horgan and Max Taylor contend that terrorism is essentially a group activity that derives much of its energy from the existence of a community of support, and that the vast majority of people reach out in search of social ties and develop relationships with like-minded individuals before committing

¹⁶ See Hussein Tahiri and Michelle Grossman, ‘Community and Radicalisation: An examination of perceptions, ideas, beliefs and solutions throughout Australia’, Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit, Victoria Police, September 2013.

¹⁷ Louise Porter and Mark Kebbell, ‘Radicalisation in Australia: Examining Australia’s Convicted Terrorists’, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, vol.12 (2010).

¹⁸ Peter R. Neumann, ‘The Trouble with Radicalisation’, *International Affairs*, vol. 89 (2013), p. 874.

¹⁹ Australian Multicultural Foundation, ‘Community Awareness Training Manual: Building Resilience in the Community’, Counter-Terrorism Coordination Unit, Victoria Police, 2013. p. 9.

²⁰ Robert Kennedy, ‘Is One Person’s Terrorist Another’s Freedom Fighter? Western and Islamic Approaches to “Just War” Compared’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 1 (1999), pp. 3-4.

²¹ Australian Government Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2003, <<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2004A01125/Html/Text#param1>> [Accessed 1 January 2011].

violent action.²² In the Australian context, rather than isolated plots containing islands of remote non-communicating individuals there is a large interconnected network of jihadists transcending operational cells.²³ Each jihadist plot that has materialised in Australia has had strong social links to previous operational cells.²⁴ Indeed, individuals who have participated in the Australian network frequently had pre-existing ties with members already inside the network and it was often a key condition for their joining. This finding is consistent with Marc Sageman's sample of global jihadist terrorists which found that two-thirds of the sample already had some connection to the network before joining.²⁵ Indeed, even allowing for the influence of previously held ideas, beliefs and grievances, many individuals initially become involved with armed struggles of all ideological persuasions for largely personal or social reasons.²⁶ This phenomenon has been seen in groups including ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom), the Irish Republican Army, the Italian Communist Party, the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades, Turkish terrorist organisations and the Weather Underground.²⁷

Though commitment to an ideology is a necessary component of those who go on to commit an act of terrorism, 'extremist' views are held by a far greater portion of the population than the minute percentage who ultimately commit violence. The requirement of intimate social linkages to individuals already engaged in the movement contributes towards explaining the variance between the large number of socially isolated individuals with political grievances, and the small number of individuals who engage in terrorist activity. A study of more than 500 Guantanamo Bay detainees found that knowing an al Qaeda member was a significantly better predictor of those who may conduct terrorist violence than belief in a particular ideology.²⁸ Moreover, it has been noted that jihadist activity in diaspora communities is now largely executed "by self-forming cells of friends".²⁹ This finding would help to explain why to date there is very little evidence of individuals isolated from extremist networks in Australia becoming involved in jihadist violence.

²² John Horgan and Max Taylor, 'A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 18 (2006).

²³ Shandon Harris-Hogan, 'The Australian Neojihadist Network: Origins, Evolution and Structure', *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2012), p. 25.

²⁴ The obvious exception to this is the first group of jihadists to operate on Australian soil. In this instance Jemaah Islamiyah was sending operatives to Australia to fundraise and recruit from within the Australian Muslim community.

²⁵ Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 66-7.

²⁶ Tore Bjorgo, 'Introduction', in Tore Bjorgo (ed.), *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Realities, and Ways Forward* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

²⁷ Max Abrahms, 'What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy', *International Security*, vol. 4 (2008), p. 98.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Atran, 'The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism', p. 135.

The prevalence of friends, lovers and relatives among those recruited to terrorism has made personal relationships an important part of recent theorising about radicalisation.³⁰ Scott Atran notes that around twenty per cent of the terrorist networks he studied were made up of individuals who are directly related to each other while seventy per cent were friends.³¹ Similar findings were discovered in a study by the Saudi Ministry of the Interior which found that “nearly two-thirds of those in the sample say they joined Jihad through friends and about a quarter through family”.³² In the case of Australia, the biggest revelation to come from detailed examination of the connections within the jihadist network is that individuals have been far more susceptible to involvement as a result of the influence of close friendship and family influences than any other form of recruitment. This would appear a logical practice as such close relationships would ensure loyalty and a degree of trust, and would assist a network in remaining both covert and connected.

Normative support provided by families plays a significant role in sustaining violence.³³ Family relationships in particular have been a significant factor in sustaining the jihadist phenomenon in Australia. Within the network there are clear examples of ideology being passed from father to son, mother to daughter, uncle to nephew and between brothers, cousins and spouses. Moreover, the presence of several prominent facilitators has ensured that just six families have made up as much as one quarter of the entire Australian jihadist network.

However, the influence of familial relationships has also been used to mediate extreme thinking and behaviour. There have been several noteworthy examples of close family members providing a mitigating influence and guiding individuals away from the network. Additionally, family responsibility has also limited the involvement of several individuals who possessed a desire to participate in operational cells but were unable to commit sufficient time and energy.

It has been noted that there is currently a dearth of academic research and primary source analysis concerning the prevalence of radicalisation in Australia.³⁴ The following analysis of the roles played by families within the

³⁰ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalisation Happens to Them and Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 53.

³¹ Atran, 'The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism', p. 135.

³² Scott Atran, 'Who Becomes a Terrorist Today?', *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 5 (2008), p. 6.

³³ Michael King, Haula Noor and Donald M. Taylor, 'Normative Support for Terrorism: The Attitudes and Beliefs of Immediate Relatives of Jema'ah Islamiyah Members', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 34 (2011), p. 412.

³⁴ See Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya, 'Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review', Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, March 2011, p. 3; or Riyad Hosain Rahimullah, Stephen Larmar and Mohamad Abdalla, 'Radicalization and Terrorism:

jihadist community (both negative and positive), will contribute towards filling this void. For individuals who have been arrested in Australia information has been drawn primarily from the court documents and telephone intercept (TI) and listening device (LD) transcripts of Australian terrorism investigations. Though material drawn from these transcripts may now be somewhat dated and represents only a fraction of the material collected, it is nonetheless a valuable resource. This is because the sharing of such information for analysis outside of law enforcement circles is extremely rare.³⁵ According to former CIA analyst Marc Sageman, research based on TI and LD material would go a long way in helping terrorism studies scholars and counter-terrorism professionals enhance their understanding of terrorist organisation and motivations, and provide them with better insights into what they were thinking and planning in real time while they were under surveillance. He noted “these conversations, captured without the knowledge of the perpetrators, are invaluable because they provide a window into the terrorists’ minds and everyday behaviour unadorned with after-the-fact rationalizations”.³⁶ However, this study has been somewhat restricted by the less reliable information available regarding Australians accused of jihadist activity overseas. Such material, sourced from books, newspaper articles and other openly sourced information can sometimes be fragmented and contradictory. Where such material has been used the author has chosen to primarily draw from the work of journalists who have been able to directly interview the individuals involved or who have gained access to international court proceedings. Where TI and LD information has been used, the individuals outlined have been de-identified for legal reasons.

The Impact of Radicalised Family Members

The analysis will begin by looking at one of the more prominent cases of family recruitment and retention in Australia, that of the Jamals. Of seven Jamal brothers three have been separately arrested for involvement with jihadist terrorism. The eldest of the brothers, Saleh Jamal, is the individual who began the family’s involvement. Indeed, the Australian Government has previously stated that Jordanian born Saleh Jamal was critical to the evolution of jihadism in Australia. “His force of personality and unifying presence among small and often disparate groups made him both a lightning rod for disaffection and a rallying point for men looking for direction”.³⁷ Saleh spent a year in prison in the 1990s for dealing cannabis and friends noted

Research within the Australian Context’, *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, vol. 2 (2013), p. 182.

³⁵ Bart Schuurman and Quirine Eijkman, ‘Moving Terrorism Research Forward: The Crucial Role of Primary Sources’, *ICCT Policy Brief*, June 2013, p. 4.

³⁶ Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, p. 76.

³⁷ Martin Chulov, *Australian Jihad: The Battle Against Terrorism from Within and Without* (Sydney: Pan MacMillan, 2006), p. 208.

that it was during this stint in prison that he became “increasingly radicalised”.³⁸

In 2004, while on bail for an unrelated matter, Saleh flew to Lebanon using a fake passport. Other Australian jihadists located in Lebanon introduced Saleh to Lebanese terrorist organisation Asbat al-Ansar, and he undertook three weeks training with the group.³⁹ Following an intercepted phone conversation where Saleh advised his wife “You will never see me again. I am going to a place higher than the mountains”; he travelled from Lebanon to Syria. There he delivered a package used in the bombing of the UN mission in the diplomatic quarter of Damascus. Court documents cite wire taps which reveal that on his return to Lebanon Saleh was greeted with the words “May God reward you with good for what you have done in Syria”.⁴⁰

Saleh was subsequently arrested by Lebanese authorities and sentenced to five years hard labour on charges of possession of weapons and explosives, forging an Australian passport, forming a group and planning acts that endangered state security.⁴¹ The Lebanese court also linked him to the April 2003 bombing of a McDonald’s restaurant in Damascus. Sydney brothers and close associates of Saleh, Maher and Bilal Khazaal, were convicted in absentia for funding that bombing.⁴² He served two years before being extradited to Australia to face the charges he originally fled from. Following his return Saleh was sentenced to nine years imprisonment for his part in a 1998 shooting while he was a member of the ‘DK boys’ street gang. He was also sentenced to a further twelve years imprisonment in relation to the drive-by-shooting of a Sydney police station; however the decision was overturned at a subsequent retrial.⁴³

While in prison in Lebanon Saleh expressed admiration for Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi⁴⁴ and claimed that he was “30 percent likely to launch an attack in Australia” had he not fled. Prior to his extradition Saleh also threatened to fly a plane into the Sydney Harbour Bridge if he was forced to return.⁴⁵ This boast regarding involvement with jihadist activity in Australia is not without foundation. It is strongly believed that he played a

³⁸ Martin Chulov and Barclay Crawford, ‘Aussie Fugitive’s Terror “Confession”’, *The Australian*, 2 June 2004.

³⁹ Martin Chulov and Marianne Stigset, ‘Fugitive from Australia “a Contact of Zarqawi”’, *The Australian*, 6 August 2004.

⁴⁰ Martin Chulov, ‘Aussie in “Suicide Terror Conspiracy”’, *The Australian*, 26 October 2005.

⁴¹ Stephanie Kennedy, ‘Australians Convicted in Beirut’, *ABC Online*, 24 February 2005.

⁴² Frank Walker, ‘Lakemba Gun Suspect Under Arrest in Beirut’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 2004.

⁴³ Paul Bibby, ‘Brutal Story Ends as Kneecapper Freed’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 2013.

⁴⁴ Martin Chulov and Natalie O’Brien, ‘Guilty-Plea Offer Was Easy To Refuse’, *The Weekend Australian*, 10 December 2005.

⁴⁵ Martin Chulov, ‘Suspect Offered a Terror Deal—Prisoner Urged to Confess to Harbour Bridge Plot’, *The Australian*, 5 December 2005.

significant part in the genesis of a nine man cell arrested in late 2005 in Operation Pendennis. Of the five men who faced the most serious charges and received the lengthiest sentences, four were close friends of Saleh Jamal.⁴⁶ In the weeks leading up to New Year's Eve 2003 Saleh was surveilled in the company of several of these men. Their activities around Sydney Harbour triggered a security alert and a crude oil tanker was forced to anchor off shore during New Year's Eve celebrations.⁴⁷ The fifth man was Saleh Jamal's younger brother, Mohammed.

Mohammed Omar Jamal was the youngest member of the cell arrested in Sydney aged just twenty-one at the time of his arrest. Omar was the product of a strict upbringing by his father and claims he was neglected as a child.⁴⁸ However, following Saleh's release from prison in the mid-1990s, he exerted influence over Omar who became considerably more religious and devout. Through Saleh he was introduced to the other men who would go on to form the Sydney cell and he further developed these friendships in his own right after Saleh fled Australia.⁴⁹

The judge described a hierarchy within the Sydney cell, noting a leader, vice-captain and middle rank participants "with Jamal bringing up the rear".⁵⁰ A character witness described Omar as "a good kid" and "a naive young man probably taken in by these older guys"⁵¹ and at no stage during the trial did the Crown dispute that Omar "participated in the conspiracy at the behest of others who were older and more senior than he".⁵² Though Omar was clearly far from central to the group's activities, his decision not to plead guilty meant that he went on trial with the cell's four most significant members. Those men were some of the most experienced and committed jihadists Australia has witnessed and all received between twenty-five and twenty-eight years' incarceration. The Judge did note in Omar's sentencing that he embraced the group's "extremist views and convictions"⁵³ and he was even recorded in a 2005 phone conversation saying "I will kill John Howard" the then Prime Minister of Australia.⁵⁴ However, it is interesting to note that this comment mimics a threat Saleh made while detained in Lebanon. Only a few months earlier Saleh threatened to kill Mr Howard if extradited stating that, "if I was given the opportunity I'd chop him up too, without any doubt, or remorse, because he is a very evil man".⁵⁵ Such

⁴⁶ *Regina (C'wealth) v Elomar & Ors* NSWSC 10 (15 February 2010), p. 41.

⁴⁷ Martin Chulov and Michelle Wiese Bockmann, 'Plotters' Ship Almost Came in for New Year', *The Australian*, 15 December 2004.

⁴⁸ *Regina (C'wealth) v Elomar & Ors* NSWSC 10 (15 February 2010), p. 41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵¹ Malcolm Brown, Rick Feneley and Jacqueline Maley, 'Terrorists Made in Australia', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 2010.

⁵² *Regina (C'wealth) v Elomar & Ors* NSWSC 10 (15 February 2010), p. 38.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵⁴ Brown, Feneley and Maley, 'Terrorists Made in Australia'.

⁵⁵ Martin Chulov, 'I'd Chop Up PM, Claims "Terrorist"', *The Australian*, 26 April 2006.

comments demonstrate the influence Omar's older brother had over his ideology, behaviour and even friendship group.

Omar was not the only brother to be influenced by Saleh. In 2003 Omar travelled with Ahmed Jamal to the Middle East, however the two men were refused entry into Jordan. Though Omar returned to Australia, Ahmed again travelled to the Middle East and in 2004 was captured in Northern Iraq and accused of joining the insurgency. He spent two and a half years in a Kurdish jail with the prison governor noting "he is definitely al-Qaeda ... he said it from his own mouth".⁵⁶ His father claimed that he was simply travelling in the region to find a wife,⁵⁷ however, the time Ahmed arrived in Iraq just happened to coincide with the height of the insurgency. Of particular relevance are comments made by a Lebanese judge who stated that Saleh Jamal was a contact of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and had been introduced to the 'al Qaeda in Iraq' network through a Bosnian militant he met in Lebanon.⁵⁸ If he was indeed attempting to join the insurgence it is not unreasonable to conclude that Saleh's influence played a key role in this decision. Notably, both Saleh Jamal and his brother Ahmed had earlier been refused entry into Jordan, while in the company of a Lebanese Australian who had been previously convicted of attempting to establish Lebanon's first al Qaeda cell.⁵⁹ These particular Jamal brothers illustrate the influence close family members can have over each other and provide a clear insight into the role played by family within the Australian jihadist network.

The ideas and actions of family members were also influential among other members of the cell which contained Omar Jamal. Khaled Cheikho was a senior member of the Sydney cell and was described by prosecutors as "one of the leaders, thinkers and co-ordinators" of the group. In his sentencing remarks, the judge described Khaled's position in the cell as just beneath the leader acting as "some type of vice-captain or senior officer".⁶⁰ A committed ideologue, Khaled trained at a LeT camp in Pakistan shortly following his marriage to the daughter of the matriarch of the Australian jihadist network.⁶¹ Khaled Cheikho was also on the periphery of the cell arrested in 2003 which was planning to attack the Sydney electricity grid. Khaled Cheikho's nephew Mustafa Cheikho was also a member of the Sydney cell. However, in contrast to Khaled's leadership role Mustafa was described as "more of a

⁵⁶ Martin Chulov, 'Lost in the Badlands', *The Australian*, 21 March 2006. It is essential to note that there have been subsequent allegations that these comments may have been obtained under a degree of torture. If correct, any statement made should be immediately disregarded.

⁵⁷ Annabelle McDonald and John Stapleton, 'Aussie Under Arrest "Just Seeking Wife"', *The Australian*, 11 December 2004.

⁵⁸ Martin Chulov, 'Sydney Fugitive Linked to Zarqawi', *The Australian*, 31 October 2005.

⁵⁹ Harris-Hogan and Zammit, 'The Unseen Terrorist Connection'.

⁶⁰ *Regina (C'Vealth) v Elomar & Ors* NSWSC 10 (15 February 2010), p. 25.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28. See below for more detail on the "matriarch" of Australian jihadism.

‘doer’, albeit a very willing one”.⁶² Khaled’s influence over Mustafa’s beliefs and actions is evidenced long before the Sydney cell formed. Mustafa travelled to Pakistan and attended the same LeT run training camp just months after his uncle returned from his stint in Pakistan. Indeed, it was noted by the Judge that Mustafa “made a full commitment to the devout observation of his religion” only as he “came more under the influence of his uncle”.⁶³ Khaled provides a clear example of a prominent strong figure exerting influence over members of his family and drawing them into terrorist activity.

The strong family links which permeate the Sydney cell also extend to the group’s leader and his connections offshore. Born in Lebanon and raised in Australia, Mohammed Elomar was described in court as the “puppet master” of the Sydney cell. His leadership role was explicitly stated by the judge as the reason for sentencing Mohammed to the longest term of incarceration.⁶⁴ A 2005 raid on his home turned up twelve firearms and over 10,000 rounds of ammunition. Elomar also co-wrote an order for laboratory equipment and possessed bomb-making manuals and materials. When sentencing Mohammed the judge also expressed that there is “little prospect of rehabilitation. There is no present indication that Elomar will ever renounce the extremist views that fuelled his participation”.⁶⁵

Mohammed Elomar is closely related to Hussein Elomar, who is currently detained in Lebanon for involvement with Sunni terrorist organisation Fatah al-Islam. Arrested in 2007, he has been charged collectively with several dozen other suspected Fatah al-Islam militants. Though he is still awaiting trial, the official charges are murder, resisting security forces, creating a “terrorism gang” and possession of weapons and explosives.⁶⁶ Hussein’s nephew Ahmed Elomar was also detained in Lebanon on suspicion of terrorist involvement but following a week of intense questioning was released without charge.⁶⁷ In 2011 Ahmed Elomar and convicted Sydney Pendennis member Khalid Sharrouf were also charged with assaulting a man in Sydney,⁶⁸ and Elomar was later convicted of assaulting a Shiite shopkeeper he believed was a supporter of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (the man was later forced to sell his business after having his life threatened and his workplace firebombed).⁶⁹ Elomar was further charged with hitting a police officer with a metal pole during the violent protests in

⁶² Ibid., p. 33.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁶ Ed O’Loughlin, ‘Fourth Australian Held on Terrorism Charges’, *The Age*, 17 August 2007.

⁶⁷ Richard Kerbaj, ‘Boxer Freed in Lebanon Tells of Days of Torture’, *The Australian*, 4 July 2007.

⁶⁸ Paul Kent, ‘Terrorist Khaled Sharrouf’s Anger in Car Parking Dispute’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 December 2011.

⁶⁹ Rachel Olding, ‘Home Front Opens in a Foreign War’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 June 2013.

Sydney in 2012 that occurred as part of the worldwide reaction against the film 'Innocence of Muslims'.⁷⁰ In addition to the arrests, a training camp was discovered on a property owned by members of the Elomar family in the lead up to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.⁷¹ Notably, the aforementioned Saleh Jamal was linked to this camp.⁷²

The family connections that were prevalent throughout the Sydney cell arrested in Operation Pendennis were also present in the cell which was emerging concurrently in Melbourne. Three brothers, identified here only as MJM145, MJM463 and MJM536 and their cousin MJM563 performed a variety of roles within the cell arrested in Melbourne in November 2005. MJM145 was the treasurer of the group and as such was involved often, although much of his activity was of minimal operational significance. MJM463 was very much included in the group's activities and MJM563 attempted to be, however many in the group maintained reservations regarding his trustworthiness. The participation of MJM536 decreased dramatically over the course of the cell's evolution.⁷³ Another brother was also on the periphery of the cell. He was subsequently involved in a brawl with a news cameraman at his brother's committal hearing and was charged with affray, assault and behaving in a riotous manner.⁷⁴ Collectively, the men's commitment to the cell would be best described as inconsistent and their participation as more of a part-time interest practised with family and close friends.

Listening device and telephone intercept transcripts revealed the men to be particularly open to the influence of others, especially those whom they trusted.⁷⁵ As well as the brothers influencing the actions of each other, close friends also had a strong impact upon their involvement and thinking. Significantly, this included the leader of the cell who came to know the family following the death of a family member in 2003, offering them spiritual guidance in a time of crisis.⁷⁶ Another prominent figure in the cell, MJM562, was also a close childhood friend of the men.⁷⁷ Hence, the likelihood of members of the family outlined above participating in jihadist activity must be considered significantly higher even than individuals who may hold similar

⁷⁰ 'Boxer Faces New Charge over Muslim Riot', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 2012.

⁷¹ James Madden, 'Piecing Together a Picture of Hate', *The Weekend Australian*, 17-18 October 2009.

⁷² Simon Kearney and David King, 'Sydney Men the Bombmakers', *The Australian*, 9 November 2005.

⁷³ Harris-Hogan, 'Australian Neojihadist Terrorism', p. 307.

⁷⁴ Stephen Moynihan, 'Brawl Accused Get Bail, but Have to Give Up Passports', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 November 2005.

⁷⁵ Harris-Hogan, 'Australian Neojihadist Terrorism'.

⁷⁶ *R v Benbrika & Ors* VSC21 (3 February 2009), p. 12.

⁷⁷ Pete Lentini, 'Antipodal Terrorists? Accounting for Differences in Australian and "Global" Neojihadists', in Richard Devetak and Christopher Hughes (eds), *The Globalisation of Political Violence: Globalisation's Shadow* (Australia: Routledge, 2008), p. 192.

ideological ideas, simply because of their proximity to members of the network. However, although the family featured significantly in the actions of the cell the men could not be considered the thinkers or leaders of the group and their individual religious knowledge was very basic.⁷⁸ The men only became engaged with the ideology (even in its most basic form) through the influence of already established social networks. Moreover, the family's involvement was in many ways a liability for the cell. The men crudely and inconsistently implemented the group's counter-surveillance and security measures, and their attempts at speaking in coded language for discussions regarding money, training and the purchase of weapons on the black market were poor at best.⁷⁹

The influence of family is not limited to those who have grown up together. Partners can share the same ideological beliefs and can serve as a radicalising influence on each other. Australian husband and wife Amira and Yusuf Ali were both killed in the fighting in Syria in 2014.⁸⁰ Internationally, Canadians John Nuttall and Amanda Korody radicalised together in isolation from any known jihadist network. In July 2013 the couple attempted to leave pressure cooker bombs at the provincial legislature in British Columbia, Canada.⁸¹ Indeed, several terrorist networks have been known to become increasingly endogamous over time as those within the network marry the relations of other terrorists.⁸² This ensures that networks are bound by a trust that becomes increasingly hard to penetrate or break. Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah exemplifies this phenomenon⁸³ and the group's historical links to Australia has ensured this practice has extended to Australian jihadists.

One woman in particular has been intimately involved in the evolution of the Australian jihadist network. She has been described by an ex-CIA analyst as the "matriarch of radical Islam" and by Australian intelligence agents as the "grand madam of militant Islam".⁸⁴ Australian born convert Rabiya Hutchinson married into the original family of jihadists to arrive in the country. Twin brothers Abdul Rahim and Abdul Rahman were the leader

⁷⁸ See Pete Lentini, *Neojihadism: Towards a New Understanding of Terrorism and Extremism?* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013), pp. 130-1.

⁷⁹ Pete Lentini, "If They Know Who Put the Sugar it Means They Know Everything": Understanding Terrorist Activity Using Operation Pendennis Wiretap (Listening Device and Telephone Intercept) Evidence', *ARC Linkage Project on Radicalisation 2010 Conference* (2011).

⁸⁰ Pia Akerman and Jared Owens, 'Sydney Woman Amira Ali Does with Husband Yusuf in Syria', *The Australian*, 13 January 2014.

⁸¹ David Barnett, '2 Arrested in Canadian Terror Plot "Inspired by al Qaeda Ideology"', *The Long War Journal*, July 2013.

⁸² Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, p. 67.

⁸³ International Crisis Group, 'Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous', *ICG Report*, 26 August 2003.

⁸⁴ Sally Neighbour, *The Mother of Mohammed: An Australian Woman's Extraordinary Journey into Jihad* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009), p. 261.

and co-ordinator of Mantiqi 4, the branch of Jemaah Islamiyah which operated in Australia until just before the 2002 Bali bombings. Though no longer living in Australia the twins' ideology has been carried on by Abdul Rahim's ex-wife, Rabiyyah. Hutchinson's contacts with known members of al Qaeda central, courtesy of time spent in Afghanistan, may well be as extensive as those held by anybody living freely in the Western world. She was also briefly married to Abu Walid al Masri, prominent strategist and father-in-law to Bin Laden's interim successor Saif el-Adel. Hutchinson also developed a close personal relationship with the wife of current al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri (Umm Fatima).⁸⁵

Rabiyyah Hutchinson's ideology and influence has also contributed towards several of her children becoming involved in jihadism. In 2006 Rabiyyah's sons Mohammed and Abdullah Ayub, then aged twenty-one and nineteen, were detained for seven weeks in Yemen on suspicion of being members of al Qaeda and gun running to Somalia. Mohammed Ayub is also one of the 100 or so Australians currently believed to be fighting in the Syrian insurgency, and has appeared on Facebook posing with assault rifles, anti-aircraft artillery and the flag of ISIL.⁸⁶ Additionally, Hutchinson's daughter Rahmah is married to the previously discussed Khaled Cheikho, now serving twenty-five years in a NSW maximum security prison.⁸⁷ Rabiyyah also attempted to arrange for another of her daughters Devi to be contracted to marry her husband's twin brother Abdul Rahman Ayub,⁸⁸ a former al Qaeda training camp instructor who wrote part of the al Qaeda manual on warfare.⁸⁹ Indeed, there are several prominent international instances of parents having a radicalising influence over their children. The most well-known example of this in Western jihadist circles is possibly Canadian Ahmed Khadr, a known al Qaeda weapons trafficker killed in Waziristan in 2003, who raised his sons to be militants (with two spending time in Guantanamo bay and another the subject of a US extradition bid for terrorism related offences).⁹⁰

Hutchinson's influence also extended beyond her own children to facilitating others into the jihadist network. Rabiyyah met Australian Islamic convert Jack Thomas at the wedding of her own daughter to Khaled Cheikho and later brokered Thomas' introduction to al Qaeda central and facilitated his training at camp Faruq in Afghanistan in 2001.⁹¹ While Thomas was training, his wife and child were cared for by Rabiyyah. More recently, the Australian

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 229.

⁸⁶ Mark Schliebs, 'Next Generation of Jihadi Family Joins Syrian War', *The Australian*, 28 January 2014.

⁸⁷ *Regina (C'Vealth) v Baladjam & Ors* NSWSC 1467 (30 September 2008), p. 18.

⁸⁸ Neighbour, *The Mother of Mohammed*, p. 133.

⁸⁹ Sally Neighbour, *In The Shadow of Swords: On the Trail of Terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2004), p. 146.

⁹⁰ Sam Mullins, "'Global Jihad': The Canadian Experience", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 25 (2013), p. 752-3.

⁹¹ Neighbour, *The Mother of Mohammed*, p. 260.

Federal Police (AFP) launched Operation Rochester in 2007 to identify any terrorist activity among Australia's Somali community. The operation was sparked by the presence of Rabiya Hutchinson and other hard-line Muslims at a funeral held for the daughter of an Islamic convert.⁹² Operation Neath (outlined earlier) was the joint AFP, Victoria Police and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) investigation which grew out of Rochester. The operation culminated in the arrest of five men planning a suicide mission at Holsworthy army barracks in Sydney. The influence of Hutchinson highlights the extremely important role facilitator's play in the recruitment and retention of family and close friends into jihadist networks.

The Impact of Family who are not Sympathetic

As an individual begins to adopt a stricter interpretation of an ideology, changes in their behaviour, appearance and/or language are most likely to be recognised by those around them. They will become less willing to engage or compromise with those close to them who hold alternative or pluralist views.⁹³ Domestic conflict with family and long term friends holding such views may significantly predate an actual terrorist attack. Aside from the radicalising influence Boston bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev appears to have had over his brother, years before the attack Tamerlan assaulted the man his younger sister was dating because he was not a Muslim. Tamerlan also called his uncle an infidel and challenged him to a fight, leading several uncles to cut off contact from the family.⁹⁴ Similarly, Toulouse shooter Mohamed Merah's brother Abdelkader stabbed his eldest brother Abdelghani seven times after he refused to leave a girlfriend with Jewish ancestry.⁹⁵ Indeed, families and close friends are those most likely to recognise shifts in an individual's behaviour (which may indicate that person may be radicalising) well before they commit acts of politically motivated violence.

The Obama Administration's 'National Security Strategy' released in May 2010 recognises this phenomenon, stating that "our best defences against this threat are well informed and equipped families".⁹⁶ Those close are best placed to recognise individuals becoming radicalised and increasingly interacting only within smaller tight-knit social networks of people who share

⁹² Richard Kerbaj and Cameron Stewart, 'Child's Burial Prompted Probe', *The Australian*, 13 December 2007.

⁹³ Fathali M. Moghaddam, 'The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration', *American Psychologist*, vol. 60 (2005).

⁹⁴ William Saletan, 'The Boston Bombers' Awful Parents', *Slate Magazine*, 22 April 2013.

⁹⁵ Virginie Andre and Shandon Harris-Hogan, 'Mohamed Merah: From Petty Criminal to Neojihadist', *Politics, Religion and Ideology*, vol. 14 (2013), p. 310.

⁹⁶ 'National Security Strategy', The White House, Washington, May 2010, p. 18. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf>.

their particular worldview.⁹⁷ For example, London bomber Samir Khan began having sustained conflict with his family six years prior to the London bombing, and became fully estranged from his family and immersed within the British jihadist community around four years prior.⁹⁸ The following section outlines Australian examples of family members deterring individuals associating with the jihadist network from radicalising and potentially becoming involved in violence.

During the early evolution of the jihadist cell arrested in Melbourne in 2005 MJM221 appeared a committed participant. Early TI and LD transcripts record MJM221 extensively questioning the senior religious figure and leader of the group about issues such as martyrdom, and receiving the response “always when you come to my home you bring me this topic”.⁹⁹ However, during the course of the investigation period the father of MJM221 heard rumours regarding his son’s associates and activities.¹⁰⁰ The father immediately called MJM221 and advised him to “stay away from those people, away from them. I don’t want you to get involved with anything”.¹⁰¹ Later that day MJM221 also received a telephone call from his uncle in Lebanon, presumably at his father’s instigation. MJM221 is told by his uncle that he is involved in “a very dangerous thing”¹⁰² and is advised to “keep away of those group”.¹⁰³ MJM221 appears to disengage himself from the group after receiving the phone calls from his father and uncle, demonstrating that their advice and guidance had a significant and positive influence over his actions.

Similarly, Australian Izhar ul-Haque was strongly influenced away from potentially engaging in terrorism by close family. In 2003 Ul-Haque (then just out of his teenage years) travelled from Sydney to Pakistan and received three weeks training at a LeT camp. This paramilitary training was facilitated by Faheem Lodhi, who was arrested later that year (and subsequently convicted) for facilitating communication between LeT and a jihadist cell which was planning to bomb the Sydney electricity grid.¹⁰⁴ Ul-Haque was introduced to Lodhi through his mother (who was good friends with Lodhi’s wife) and court documents note that the close relationship that developed between Ul-Haque and Lodhi was “the major reason for his going to Pakistan”.¹⁰⁵ While training at the camp Izhar wrote his father a letter outlining his distaste for Westerners and his desire to join a jihad and die a

⁹⁷ Sharon Pickering, Jude McCulloch, David Wright-Neville and Pete Lentini, *Counter-Terrorism Policing and Culturally Diverse Communities* (Melbourne: Monash University and Victoria Police, 2007).

⁹⁸ Shiv Malik, ‘My Brother the Bomber’, *Prospect Magazine*, June 2007.

⁹⁹ *R v Benbrika & Ors* Listening Device Transcript 55 (22 September 2004), p. 20 [461].

¹⁰⁰ *R v Benbrika & Ors* Listening Device Transcript 206 (31 December 2004).

¹⁰¹ *R v Benbrika & Ors* Telephone Intercept Transcript 209 (31 December 2004), p. 1 [1467].

¹⁰² *R v Benbrika & Ors* Telephone Intercept Transcript 210 (31 December 2004), p. 3 [1471].

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 4 [1472].

¹⁰⁴ *R v Lodhi* NSWSC 691 (23 August 2006).

¹⁰⁵ *R v Ul-Haque* NSWSC 1251 (5 November 2007), p. 5.

martyr.¹⁰⁶ Upon receiving the letter, his father and brother travelled to the camp in an attempt to convince Ul-Haque to come home; he returned to Sydney a short time later.¹⁰⁷ Hence, Ul-Haque can be seen as another example of family intervention influencing an individual, and assisting them to disengage from the radicalisation process.

Crucially, there are also instances of families attempting to prevent radicalisation by approaching authorities for assistance. Yacqub Khayre was arrested on terrorism charges in Melbourne in 2009, then aged only twenty-two. He was accused of being a member of a jihadist cell which planned to attack Holsworthy army barracks in Sydney and during the course of the investigation Khayre also attended an al-Shabab paramilitary training camp in Somalia.¹⁰⁸ However, members of his family had previously alerted authorities to his potentially dangerous behaviour. On several occasions his uncle raised serious concerns that Khayre was on a “destructive path” predominantly due to the social group he interacted with after leaving home and dropping out of school. Following his arrest the family felt let down by the authorities’ lack of pre-emptive action.¹⁰⁹

There have been several other prominent examples of family intervention in other Western countries. The father of ‘underwear bomber’ Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab came forward following the failed attack claiming that he had informed the US embassy in Lagos of his concerns regarding his son’s behaviour months before the attempted attack.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the father of an eighteen-year-old British man alerted authorities to the fact that his son and a friend were travelling to fight in the Somali insurgency, possibly with al-Shabab. The father followed the pair to Kenya, and information he provided to local authorities allowed the pair to be intercepted by anti-terrorist police before they crossed the border.¹¹¹ These examples clearly illustrate that families are potentially strategically positioned to both recognise and prevent serious radicalisation.

Family Responsibility

Family responsibility can also have a positive impact on the thinking and actions of individuals who may otherwise have engaged in violent activity. Having a family limits the amount of free time available to engage in extremist activities and alters an individual’s priorities and outlook on the

¹⁰⁶ Martin Chulov and Trudy Harris, ‘The Award-winning Life of a Suburban “Terrorist”’, *The Australian*, 1 May 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Trudy Harris, ‘Ul-Haque Saw West as Animals’, *The Australian*, 30 April 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Zammit, ‘The Holsworthy Barracks Plot’.

¹⁰⁹ Liam Houlihan, ‘Yacqub Khayre was a Faultless Child, his Uncle Claims’, *The Australian*, 6 August 2009.

¹¹⁰ Gordon Woo, ‘Interdiction of Plots with Multiple Operatives’, in Uffe Kock Wiil (ed.), *Counterterrorism and Open Source Intelligence* (New York: Springer, 2011), p. 57.

¹¹¹ Andy Bloxham and Mike Pflanz, ‘British Teenagers Arrested by Anti-terrorist Police after Father Alerts Authorities’, *The Telegraph*, 19 October 2011.

world. During the course of the investigation into the activities of the cell arrested in Melbourne in 2005, several individuals were only able to engage with the operational activities of the group 'part-time' due to family commitments and associated responsibilities. For instance, the time MJM243 was able to commit to assisting with the activities of the cell was seriously impeded by his wife and yet MJM243 was described as a "valuable advisor" to the group, due in part to the fact he was the only cell member to have overseas training experience. MJM243 attended a camp in Afghanistan in 2001, where he pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden.¹¹² However, the judge who oversaw his trial noted that his commitment to the cell "waxed and waned from time to time" and that "this situation may have been brought about by increasing family responsibilities which he had acquired".¹¹³ There are at least half a dozen occasions throughout the course of the investigation where group members were urging this man to participate in activities, yet he was unable to commit much time due to practical considerations such as his wife being sick or having to care for his children.

Additional restrictions and complications caused by family commitments were mentioned elsewhere by members of the same cell. Following a weekend training camp one member of the Melbourne group noted in reference to a jihadist cell developing simultaneously in Sydney,

up there, they got sleeping bags, three hundred dollar sleeping bags, they got guns, they got, praise is to Allah, tents, compass, knives, everything, praise is to Allah. What have we got here? ... Our wives on our backs, that's it.¹¹⁴

This is not to suggest that the restrictions placed on the men by their associated family responsibilities were the sole reason for the cell's failure. However, it was certainly the case that some members were not as committed as others and that family considerations contributed to their more limited engagement.

Another member of the cell arrested in Melbourne in 2005 demonstrated that he was aware that starting a family of his own would impact his ability to engage in terrorism. When discussing the idea of marriage and children MJM516 stated "I've been running away from it; I don't want it and this is having a responsibility, having children and the like. I don't want. I know if I go down this path that's it".¹¹⁵ MJM516 also noted that his father held the same ideological commitments; "my dad, may Allah guide him, long time ago my dad had an opportunity ... I owe him because had he not had such an intention I wouldn't have learnt all of these things ... we had tapes ... that

¹¹² *R v Kent* VSC 431 (20 October 2008), p. 3.

¹¹³ *R v Kent* VSC 375 (2 September 2009), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *R v Benbrika & Ors* Listening Device Transcript 368 (17 May 2005), p. 17 [2843].

¹¹⁵ *R v Benbrika & Ors* Listening Device Transcript 441 (17 September 2005), p. 25 [3647].

would sell for souls and money”.¹¹⁶ MJM516 stated that the reason for his father’s disengagement was his wife and children and as a consequence of observing his father’s life decisions, MJM516 became adamant not to marry. Instead, he planned to attend an overseas training camp and had received provisional acceptance in the form of a letter.¹¹⁷ However, not all of his family was necessarily supportive of his actions and ideas. Raids conducted in the home of MJM516 uncovered a letter written to him by his sister, urging her brother “not to do anything stupid”.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Though it is impossible to completely extricate the influence of friends and family away from the myriad of other external effects which impact the radicalisation process it is clear that, at least within the Australian context, the influences of these close personal relationships is a key to understanding the jihadist network. The cases outlined in this study demonstrate the impact of close pre-existing relationships in the evolution and adaptation of the network. Whether positive or negative, the influence of immediate family is evidenced in the decision-making process of many key figures within the Australian jihadist scene. This finding has significant implications for future counter-terrorism/countering violent extremism policy in Australia, especially in light of recent developments in Syria. In order to prevent further radicalisation, and potentially a catastrophic act of mass casualty terrorism, focus needs to be directed towards addressing the close family and friendship influences which draw people into the Australian jihadist network.

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¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 24 [3646].

¹¹⁷ *R v Benbrika & Ors* (Supreme Court of Victoria, February-September 2008): [4154].

¹¹⁸ Lentini, ‘Antipodal Terrorists?’, p. 195.

Energy and Food Security: Is Australia Fragile or Resilient?¹

Rita Parker and Jenny Stewart

The Australian state is not normally considered in the context of fragility. We challenge the assumption of Australian robustness by examining the way in which two potential vulnerabilities are framed and the way these issues are incorporated in to the political and institutional policy agendas. Food and energy security will be examined in the context of Australia as a complex adaptive system with an analysis of the vulnerabilities of these two issues as understood by different actors. While it can be argued that Australia has been resilient in the past, we argue that this state cannot be taken for granted for the future. There are vulnerabilities that could become triggers for unexpected changes, or which could tip towards greater vulnerability and fragility.

Complex Adaptive Systems and Resilience

The analytical framework of this paper is based on complex adaptive systems theory (CAS). From a systems view, a complex adaptive system is simply one where we allow for multi-dimensionality; emergent properties and learning.² CASs change in ways that are hard to predict, because they are premised on a degree of flexibility.³ Within this framework, resilience is considered to be a property of a system. Australia functions as an open system connected to, and embedded within, the rest of the world. As part of an open system, any variable might change and act as a tipping point and alter the system.

Originating in engineering and ecology disciplines, resilience has been adopted by a number of other disciplines (including economics) and is referred to in a range of policy areas such as critical infrastructure, emergency management, and supply chains. Cross-disciplinary perspectives have been particularly fruitful. For example, the relationship between social capital, state action and community resilience has been demonstrated in patterns of adaptation of communities to the challenges of

¹ This paper follows on from the work the authors undertook in the first stage of the Australian Academy of Science project, Australia 2050. The resulting book, M. R. Raupach et al., *Negotiating Our Future: Living Scenarios for Australia 2050* (Canberra: Australian Academy of Science, 2012) was launched by the Governor-General in February 2013.

² E. Mitleton-Kelly, 'Ten Principles of Complexity and Enabling Infrastructures', in E. Mitleton-Kelly (ed.), *Complex Systems and Evolutionary Perspectives on Organisations: The Application of Complexity Theory to Organisations* (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd, 2003), pp. 23-50.

³ M. Crozier, 'Rethinking Systems: Configurations of Politics and Policy in Contemporary Governance', *Administration and Society*, vol. 45, no. 4 (2010), pp. 504-25.

climate change.⁴ However, like a number of other concepts such as poverty, well-being or security, resilience is a contested term and there is no single universally accepted definition.⁵ However, based on our work with the Australian Academy of Science we can say that resilience is a property of a system, and when hit by a shock, a system can either recover its original form, or adapt and transform into something different, or collapse and cease to function. General resilience means the ability of a system to adapt to shocks while retaining its internal structure, function, feedbacks and, therefore, identity.⁶

The resilience perspective recognises that our world is a place of dynamic change. Changes occur in an interlinked way, so deliberate actions that aim to bring about a change in a specific area often lead to unanticipated and potentially unwanted consequences elsewhere.⁷ In today's environment this means low probability high impact risks and threats can arise with short lead times or at a slower incremental pace which fails to raise concerns. Such issues can arise from unexpected sources with unwanted consequences, and our contention is that such circumstances have the potential to lead to fragility.

Resilience is a Value-Neutral Term

While we generally think resilience is desirable, and governments present it as a desirable goal, it is important to acknowledge that resilience is the property of a system. Whether the resilience of a particular system is desirable or not, is therefore a value judgement, depending upon our view of the desirability of the system itself. Examples of nation-states that we might consider to be less than desirable but, to some extent, are resilient include North Korea and the former Soviet Union in World War Two.

Resilience is more than bouncing back, which implies a capability to return to a previous state or to a point of vulnerability. Even if people wanted to return to a previous state, changes in the physical, social and psychological reality of societal life, particularly after an unexpected disruption or disaster, can make this impossible.⁸ Instead, resilience means moving from a reactive state through a proactive state and on to one which has the capacity to

⁴ See, for example, W. N. Adger, 'Social Capital, Collective Action and Adaptation to Climate Change', *Economic Geography*, vol. 79, no. 4 (2003), pp. 287-404.

⁵ R. Reid and L. C. Botterill, 'The Multiple Meanings of "Resilience": An Overview of the Literature', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 72, no. 1 (2013), pp. 31-40.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸ Rita Parker, 'Non-Traditional Threats and Security Policy Response', *The Journal of Defence and Security*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2012), pp. 1-11.

anticipate threats and challenges.⁹ In doing so, it means having a capacity to adapt to change without compromising fundamental values.

The Fragile State

The resilience of civil society and the extent of its vulnerability are influenced by a number of factors which determine if a nation-state is fragile. Over time, liberal democratic societies are considered to be more resilient than totalitarian states, because their adaptive capacity is able to draw upon networks of trust and reciprocity (and hence social capital) that are characteristic of civil society. However, the relationship between social capital and the state is a complex one, with interwoven public and private components that in turn reflect policy and governance.¹⁰ A liberal democratic state may (for example) undermine social capital by policies that are detrimental to community well-being, or which expose communities to major economic shocks. The issue of vulnerability and fragility requires consideration of the concept of the fragile state and the way concepts and issues are framed as part of the policy agenda. What is a 'fragile state'? The World Bank defines fragility in the context of "countries facing particularly severe development challenges: weak institutional capacity, poor governance, and political instability".¹¹

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), following this approach, refers to fragile states failing to meet a single development goal.¹² In a 2008 discussion paper, however, the OECD moves somewhat away from the emphasis on development, describing fragile states as "those that are unable to meet [their] population's expectations or manage changes in expectations and capacity through the political process".¹³ Energy and food security are two areas where expectations (particularly in a developed country such as Australia) are high, and managing change poses considerable challenges to the political process and to the values that underpin it.

By extension, we define a fragile state as one that *cannot* adapt to change without sacrificing its core values, i.e. its identity. The emphasis on values in

⁹ R. Parker, 'Managing for Resilience', in S. Cork (ed.), *Resilience and Transformation* (Canberra: CSIRO Publishing, 2010), pp. 31-7.

¹⁰ Productivity Commission, 'Social Capital: Reviewing the Concept and its Policy Implications', Commission Research Paper, Canberra, AusInfo, 2003, <<http://www.pc.gov.au/research/commission/social-capital>> [Accessed 8 November 2013], para. 2.3.

¹¹ World Bank Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Group, 'Fragility and Conflict: Supporting Peace and Development in Situations of Fragility and Conflict', Washington: World Bank, nd.

¹² DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility, 'Fragile States 2013: Resource Flows and Trends in a Shifting World', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012, <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/FragileStates2013.pdf>> [Accessed 8 November 2013].

¹³ OECD, 'Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience', OECD/DAC Discussion Paper, Paris, 2008, <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/41100930.pdf>> [Accessed 8 November 2013], p. 16.

this context aligns with the conceptualisation of values as being intrinsic to the political and policy processes.¹⁴ Note that, as with resilience, we are not making a value-judgement about the desirability of the values involved. While democratic states are usually considered to be less fragile (more resilient) than those that are not, and we would generally endorse democratic values, it is also the case that non-democratic states may prove to be resilient (as for example the Soviet Union showed itself to be in World War II). States whose core values are conflicted (Egypt, for example) may prove particularly fragile (in that they are vulnerable to rapid change caused by triggering events).

It is challenging to see Australia in this light. Institutional values—such as market-oriented liberalism, treating people fairly, and a moderate multiculturalism—seem quite robust. But they are not invulnerable, particularly in an era of rapidly changing global conditions where, even in a nation as economically fortunate as Australia, symptoms of alienation from mainstream political processes are apparent. While it is difficult to demonstrate that levels of trust in government in Australia are in fact declining, careful empirical work suggests that Australia has something of a ‘trust deficit’. As Bean notes, “only a minority of the adult population express social and/or political trust, a trend evident for some time”.¹⁵ All the sub-systems—political, economic, social and ecological—interact, but the political system is of particular importance, in that it encapsulates the policy-making and governance capacities of the state. We argue that the reflexivity of the political system, and hence its contribution to resilience or to fragility, is heavily dependent upon the way in which issues are perceived and contextualised or framed.

Framing

The way in which policy issues are framed is a key attribute of the responsiveness of the political system. ‘Framing’ in this sense is a simple analytical idea, denoting what is considered to be important (within the frame) and what is considered to be unimportant (outside the frame).¹⁶ The predominant framing rationale for Australian policymaking is economic rationalism—the belief in the power of markets, both to confer adaptation and to anchor decision-making in the realm of the individual and corporate worlds, rather than in that of the state.¹⁷

¹⁴ Jenny Stewart, *Public Policy Values* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

¹⁵ C. Bean, ‘Is there a Crisis of Trust in Australia?’, in S. Wilson et al. (eds), *Australian Social Attitudes: The First Report* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), p. 138.

¹⁶ M. Y. Smith and R. Stacey, ‘Governance and Cooperative Networks: An Adaptive Systems Perspective’, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, vol. 54, no. 1 (1997), pp. 79-94.

¹⁷ Michael Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra: A Nation-Building State Changes its Mind* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

This economic frame helps us to 'see' certain policy actions (for example regulation or re-regulation), but it is not a systems-view. For example, it may preclude perceptions of interconnections which may threaten the viability of the market system itself (for example, the global financial crisis was foreseen by relatively few analysts). Framing has a strong association with agenda-formation, because it affects the way in which policy problems are 'constructed' or understood. For example, proponents of agricultural development proclaim that Australia could become 'the food bowl of Asia', a framing of the issue that proclaims plenitude and an apparently convenient marketing strategy, while excluding from the agenda the more problematic aspects of such a strategy (for example environmental considerations).

Because viable policy agendas need to attract support from diverse interests, as well as being 'saleable' politically, framing tends to emphasise more, rather than less, palatable solutions. For example, in the wake of the Blue Mountains fires of October 2013, combating increased fire-intensity by stronger public management (through programs of hazard reduction) is likely to prove more acceptable politically than (for example) restricting re-building in fire-prone areas.

Energy

The way in which the term 'energy security' is framed influences the way it is presented, perceived and addressed as part of the policy process. Different actors define it in different ways. In international relations it generally refers to the politics of energy and resource management, whereas in economics, economists argue that energy supplies are determined by market forces and are therefore not a matter of security.¹⁸

The energy situation in Australia is complex; however, we can identify five key factors for consideration. First, Australia is energy rich in uranium, liquefied natural gas and black coal and these form the basis for our energy exports. But we are also a net importer of petroleum. Secondly, most of our imported oil transits through maritime choke points. For example, the Strait of Hormuz, leading out of the Persian Gulf; and the Strait of Malacca, linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans, are two of the world's most strategic choke points, and the most significant for Australia. Thirdly, although Australia is a net food exporter, oil imports impact food production, processing and distribution; and the food system is dependent on the transportation system which in turn is heavily dependent on imported oil. Fourthly, the International Energy Agency (IEA) sets a minimum oil stockholding requirement for member states like Australia. However, Australia does not meet its stockholding obligations. And fifthly, domestic refining capacity in Australia

¹⁸ V. Comolli, 'Energy Security', in B. Giegerich (ed.), *Europe and Global Security* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010).

is decreasing. After the Shell plant at Geelong and BP plant in Brisbane close there will be only three refineries remaining.

These facts lead to an examination of whether Australia's energy system is robust and resilient, or whether it is vulnerable and contributing towards the fragility of the nation-state and civil society. The way the issue of energy security is framed influences the way it is perceived. For example, closing a refinery does not necessarily affect energy security. Instead, it means that Australia needs to import more refined products, like petrol and diesel. Economists will argue that at a national level, a country should only compete in those industries where it enjoys a real competitive advantage. The logic is that if Australia can buy refined fuels from Asia more cheaply than it can produce them in Australia, then the most efficient use of resources is for Asian refineries to produce Australia's fuels. However, by framing the issue differently it can be argued that depending on trade to provide secure energy is a potential tipping point which could lead to increased vulnerability and possible fragility when the source or supply of energy is threatened.

Actions by non-state actors such as piracy or hijacking of oil tankers can affect energy security. Similarly, actions by another nation-state which produces or through which energy transits, can affect energy security and influence foreign policy freedom. For example, in 2009 Russian Gazprom and the Ukrainian Naftohaz Ukrainy failed to agree on price levels for that year. The subsequent deliberate disruption to the gas supply by Russia affected twelve European Union (EU) member states and six non-EU nation-states, including those that rely almost entirely on gas supplies from Ukraine such as Bulgaria and the Republic of Slovakia.¹⁹ Australia can be considered in similar terms. As a net importer of petroleum, Australia's oil imports transit other nation-states and it relies on external providers and sources of supply. As noted by Blackburn²⁰ forty per cent of Singapore's oil comes from the Middle East, and fifty-one per cent of Australia's imported petroleum products come from Singapore.

Returning to the point about Australia's oil stockholding, each of the twenty-eight member nation-states of the IEA has an obligation to have oil stock levels that equate to no fewer than ninety days of net imports. (This requirement excludes the three net exporting member-states of Canada, Denmark and Norway.) The minimum requirement is based on net imports of all oil, including both primary products such as crude oil and natural gas liquids (NGLs), and refined products but excludes naphtha and volumes of oil used for international maritime bunkers. The IEA is explicit about what can and cannot be counted to meet the obligation. Specifically, the IEA does not permit the inclusion of military stocks, volumes in tankers *at sea*, *in pipelines* or *at service stations*, or amounts held by end-consumers. Nor

¹⁹ Comolli, 'Energy Security', p. 180.

²⁰ John Blackburn, *Australia's Liquid Fuel Security* (Canberra: NRMA, 2013).

does it permit the inclusion of crude oil not yet produced. Member-states can meet their obligation through both stocks held exclusively for emergency purposes and stocks held for commercial or operational use, including stocks held *at* refineries, *at* port facilities, and *in* tankers *in* ports. In 2012 Australia held seventy-two days of stock. According to the IEA, Australia's holding for the first six months of 2013 was an average of sixty-four days of net imports, just two-thirds of the required ninety-day holdings.²¹

Energy Sector Actors

Drawing on the definition by Brown and others, that “Energy security refers to a resilient energy system”,²² it is possible to probe whether Australia has a resilient energy system, or whether there are vulnerabilities in the system which would militate against its resilience. As noted in the earlier section on framing, there are a number of actors who influence the policy community and frame the issue of energy security in a particular way. Institutional actors representing Australia's oil industry, such as the Australian Institute of Petroleum (AIP), frame the issue in low-risk terms, citing diversity of supply, reliable supply chains, domestic refining capacity together with imported petroleum products and efficient supply management as providing a high level of liquid fuel security for Australia.²³ The Institute refers to the 2011 Liquids Fuel Vulnerability Assessment produced by ACIL Tasman²⁴ and 2012 Energy White Paper²⁵ as supporting evidence. The Assessment referred to by the Institute states that there has been no major disruption to supply, and there is an appropriate balance being maintained by suppliers. In turn, the 2012 Energy White Paper states that “Australia is linked into well-established global supply chains ... and import dependency itself does not imply an energy security threat”.²⁶ The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics in its Report on Australia's Oil Refinery Industry in January 2013 framed the issue with a different emphasis when it stated, “Energy security is enhanced by diversifying options, as long as the market is able to supply those options in an affordable and reliable way”.²⁷

The supply chain is a critical element of Australia's energy supply, but as noted by the former Federal Minister of Defence, Senator the Hon John Faulkner, it is not always reliable. In a speech in 2012 he stated, “Fuel supply is a critical factor ... While the fuel supply chain can meet current

²¹ International Energy Agency, ‘Closing Oil Stock Levels in Days of Net Imports’, 29 July 2013, <<http://www.iea.org/netimports.asp>> [Accessed 5 August 2013].

²² M. H. Brown, C. Rewey, T. Gagliano. *Energy Security* (Washington DC: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2003).

²³ Australian Institute of Petroleum, <<http://www.aip.com.au/>> [Accessed 8 November 2013].

²⁴ ACIL Tasman, *Liquids Fuel Vulnerability Assessment* (Canberra: ACIL Tasman, 2012).

²⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, *Energy White Paper 2012, Australia's Energy Transformation* (Canberra: Department of Energy, Resources and Tourism, 2012).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

²⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, *Report on Australia's Oil Refinery Industry* (Canberra: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, 2013), p. 68.

requirements, its resilience under the stress of major operations is much less certain.”²⁸ In October 2012 a major transport company responsible for delivery of fuel and LPG had a large portion of its tanker fleet grounded because its vehicles were found to be unsafe. This had a direct impact on fuel availability and fuel prices. Australia’s energy situation has also been commented on by the IEA,

Australia does not have public stocks, nor is there any minimum stockholding requirement imposed on oil companies operating in the country. The Australian government relies on the normal stockholding practices of the domestic oil industry to meet its 90-day net import obligations as a member of the IEA.²⁹

Normal industry practices are based on just-in-time delivery.

Our concern is the way different actors frame the energy issue separately from, instead of as part of, the complex adaptive system. We suggest that specific interest groups such as energy owners, producers, retailers, government institutions and specialist user groups, for example, motorist associations, frame the issue of energy in a particular way. They do not necessarily present issues associated with energy, its security and resilience, as part of a wider complex system of which Australia and its civil society are part. What appears to be lacking is the public voice of civil society in the energy debate.

We suggest that the energy situation has been framed from a retrospective viewpoint and it is not necessarily as robust as portrayed, nor are its potential future vulnerabilities being adequately addressed. Similar to the recent reports about climate change, we suggest we cannot rely on the past to forecast the future.

The global system to which Australia belongs is one of dynamic change and it is influenced by a number of factors and actors. The pace of change can be variable; it can occur at a slow and less obvious tempo (like the slowly boiling frog that does not realise until too late that it is literally in boiling water and in peril), or change can occur at short notice, or rapidly. For example, directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing known as ‘fracking’ have had a significant impact on international energy supply and demand. In particular it has led to an increase in US oil production. According to the Energy Information Administration, US oil production expanded by a record 790,000 barrels a day last year.³⁰

Dynamic change can also be influenced by seemingly unrelated or distant actions. For example, the financial and trade systems underpin all energy

²⁸ John Faulkner, Speech on the 2013 Defence White Paper, Lowy Institute, 9 August 2012.

²⁹ International Energy Agency, ‘Closing Oil Stock Levels in Days of Net Imports’.

³⁰ Lisa Murkowski, ‘Energy 2020: A Vision for American’s Energy Future’, United States Senate, Washington DC, 2013, < <http://bit.ly/Energy2020Doc> > [Accessed 8 November 2013].

supply chains and in turn those systems are influenced by the energy system. Current and future conflict in the Middle East could exacerbate the global financial situation and global energy security. Economic sanctions on Iran have already taken their toll. As reported by the US Energy Information Administration, crude oil production in Iran has fallen about 700,000 barrels per day since 2012, and exports have dropped even more dramatically, costing Iran about US \$3 billion to \$5 billion in revenue.³¹ Saudi Arabia is experiencing a domestic oil demand which has the potential to threaten its export revenues and OPEC's World Oil Outlook anticipates a decline in global demand for its oil to 2016 with production falling by 29.7 million barrels per day.³² Disruption to the energy supply chain, particularly of petroleum, would mean that Australia would need to compete with other nation-states for access to the same limited pool of available petroleum.

However, the issue is not just about oil rigs, tankers, pipelines and supply chains. Australia's food production, processing and distribution are dependent on petroleum. Dunlop notes that every person's food contains the distillate of sixty-six barrels of oil a year and we 'eat' 4.1 litres of diesel each day.³³ Given the vast distances and transportation requirements in Australia, it could be argued that a protracted energy crisis could lead to a food crisis.

Food

How resilient is Australian agricultural production? Could we see food security ever becoming an issue in Australia? How are the relevant issues being framed by actors? As with energy, the salient facts would, at face value, lead to few grounds for concern. Australia is a major exporter of food, both processed and unprocessed: in 2012, admittedly a year of good seasons, exports of rural products (excluding wool) amounted to \$33.2 billion.³⁴ In the same period, imports totalled \$9.1 billion. While the volume of food imports can be expected to continue to rise (especially if the Australian dollar continues at the high levels of 2012-13), Australia will clearly remain a net exporter of food. With intense competition pressure applied to the sector, there has been considerable re-structuring in agricultural production since the mid-1980s. During this period, key

³¹ US Energy Information Administration, 'Sanctions Reduced Iran's Oil Exports and Revenues in 2012', 26 April 2013, <<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=11011>> [Accessed 8 November 2013].

³² P. C. Glover and M. J. Economides, 'OPEC Fracked', *The Commentator*, <www.thecommentator.com/article/3339/opec_fracked> [Accessed 4 November 2013].

³³ I. Dunlop, 'Australia's Climate Change & Energy Dilemma—the Case for Emergency Action', *Climate Futures Seminar*, Macquarie University, Sydney, 11 June 2013.

³⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '5302.0—Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia, Sep 2012', *Time Series spreadsheets*, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/5302.0Sep%202012?OpenDocument>> [Accessed 8 November 2013], table 101 Merchandise Exports by SITC Division on a Balance of Payments Basis, Chain Volume Measures—Quarter.

'traditional' sectors such as grains have become even more export-oriented.³⁵ There have also been changes in the composition of Australian food exports. Wine, for example, totalled almost \$3 billion in 2012, up from negligible levels in 1974-75.³⁶

However, when considered from the point of view of inter-dependencies across systems, Australian food security appears more problematic. Natural disasters (such as bushfires or floods, or human or animal pandemics) pose obvious threats to food supply chains.³⁷ With increasing concentration of production, most foods are transported internally across huge distances—the 'carbon footprint' of Australian food production is large. There is an obvious link with energy security. Logistical cycles are very short. As Blackburn's work has shown, in the event of an interruption in fuel supplies, stockholdings of chilled and frozen goods would be at seven days, and dry goods at nine days.³⁸

Other types of problem are emergent in character. The availability of water is an obvious and continuing concern, particularly in view of the probable impacts of climate change on a fragile ecology. Although we know that production adapts and changes after periods of drought, the resilience of systems such as the Murray-Darling Basin—despite extensive policy attention—must continue to be in doubt.

It is, however, on the social front that Australian agriculture appears to be struggling. Productivity growth has been enhanced by the substitution of capital for labour, associated with increases in the minimum viable farm size. However, over many years, this has meant a continuing attrition in the numbers employed in the sector and in turn, relentless pressure on farm families. In 1986, there were just over 250,000 farmers on the land in Australia. By 2001, that number had reduced to 180,000 with a projected further decline to 120,000 by 2030.³⁹ While some sectors, such as grain production, expanded both production and productivity between 1993-94 and 2002-03, others, particularly horticulture, presented a more static picture. Vegetable production, for example, contracted slightly in volume terms over the 1993-94 to 2002-03 period.⁴⁰ Only one horticultural sector of any size, the production of wine-grapes, has shown significant expansion. A declining agricultural workforce (in terms of overall numbers) has aged rapidly. In

³⁵ Productivity Commission, 'Trends in Australian Agriculture', Commission Research Paper, Canberra, 2005, <<http://www.pc.gov.au/research/commission/agriculture>> [Accessed 8 November 2013].

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Resilience in the Australian Food Supply Chain* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, February 2012).

³⁸ Blackburn, *Australia's Liquid Fuel Security*.

³⁹ Neil Barr, 'The Micro-Dynamics of Change in Australian Agriculture: 1976-2001' (Canberra: Australian Census Analytical Program, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004), table 5.9.

⁴⁰ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Australian Agriculture and Food Sector Stocktake* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), table 10.

2012, the median farmer age was fifty-three years, by far the oldest of any economic sector.⁴¹ Barr describes an “exodus of the young” from farming in the period from 1976 to 2004.⁴² Few farm families are able to make ends meet without outside employment in nearby towns and centres.⁴³ Tertiary enrolments in agricultural science have been in decline since the mid-1990s.⁴⁴ Despite these facts, the continuity of agriculture is taken for granted in the Australian psyche. Unlike many other countries, apart from hardship relief, little policy emphasis is placed on the maintenance of rural activity, or lifestyles. With few families on the land, communities shrink or die.

Adding to these difficulties, climate change and increasing seasonal variability expose Australian farmers to heightened levels of risk, particularly for cropping industries in low-rainfall areas.⁴⁵ If they occur, reduced rainfall and increasing temperatures will have their major negative impacts on the ‘Mediterranean’ regions of Australia (south-west Western Australia, the Eyre Peninsula, the Riverland area of South Australia and the irrigation areas of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales). However, even within particular regions, impacts will be highly variable, making the tasks of adaptation difficult to predict and even more difficult to coordinate.⁴⁶

Australian agriculture may be well-placed to take advantage of anticipated rises in world prices. However, meeting world food demands without over-exploiting the land is a different matter, entailing considerable risk.⁴⁷ Moreover, the profits from this expansion will, increasingly, go overseas as Australian agribusinesses are bought out by foreign-owned firms. While overseas capital has been vital to the development of rural Australia, the question arises: is an increasingly foreign-owned sector more or less resilient than one where control lies in Australian hands? Certainly, the tying of production to particular markets (for example through foreign direct investment from the United Kingdom) has historically been a source of vulnerability. Strategic investment by Chinese companies into the Australian farm sector carries these kinds of relationship into uncharted territory.

⁴¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Labour Force and other Characteristics of Farmers’, Feature Article in 1301.0—Year Book Australia, 2012, 24 May 2012, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Home%20page~1>> [Accessed 8 November 2013].

⁴² Barr, ‘The Micro-Dynamics of Change in Australian Agriculture’, p. 64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Office of the Chief Scientist, *Health of Australian Science* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, May 2012), section 4.7.

⁴⁵ Government of Western Australia Department of Agriculture and Food, *Grains Industry Investment Profile*, Part 3 Impact of Climate Change on Cropping Systems (Perth: Government of Western Australia, 2008).

⁴⁶ CSIRO, ‘An Overview of Climate Change Adaptation in Australian Primary Industries—Impacts, Options and Priorities’, Report prepared for the National Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries, February 2008.

⁴⁷ P. Langridge and S. Prasad, ‘Australia can’t Feed the World but it can Help’, *The Conversation*, 8 January 2013.

Food Sector Actors

Broadly speaking, farmer organisations (such as the National Farmers' Federation) have been economic rationalist in outlook.⁴⁸ The National Party, too, despite its origins as a collectivist, agrarian party has embraced the policy agenda of free trade and market dominance.⁴⁹ Industry supports to farming at both state and federal levels have been progressively dismantled since the 1980s. Largely urban-based environmental groups have had a profound impact upon the way in which Australia's productive systems are perceived, particularly those dependent upon irrigation. While farmers protested successfully against initial versions of the Murray-Darling Basin plan, they have been less successful in opposing foreign takeovers of Australian agribusiness. The 'wall of sound' emanating from the mainstream (largely foreign-owned) media frames the issue as one of market inevitability.⁵⁰ According to this view, those opposing any form of foreign direct investment should desist, lest overseas capital be scared away.⁵¹ As Australian production continues to be restructured along the contours prescribed by owners of capital largely based elsewhere, there are many grounds for concern. Where, in the long term, will food produced in Australia end up? What is the future of Australian agriculture as a basis for the continuing vitality of rural and regional communities? A dwindling agricultural workforce, fragmentation and privatisation of state-based agricultural extension and development services and a diminishing number of young people wanting to go on the land, is hardly a recipe for long-term food security.

Adaptation and the Political System

We have argued for the existence of a number of challenges to Australian resilience in two key sectors: a vulnerability to short-term factors in the case of energy and to long-term factors in the case of food production. Our analysis suggests that these challenges may well exceed existing adaptation capacity—indeed we have identified a number of factors (such as reductions in social capital flowing in part from poorly-framed policies) that we consider may erode that capacity.

We have argued for the primacy of the political system, particularly in a state-centred nation such as Australia, as the main means through which collective responses to challenges to resilience are identified and organised.

⁴⁸ National Farmers' Federation, 'History', <<http://www.nff.org.au/history.html>> [Accessed 23 October 2013].

⁴⁹ G. Cockfield, 'The National Party', in A. Fenna, J. Robbins and J. Summers (eds), *Government and Politics in Australia* (Sydney: Pearson, 2013).

⁵⁰ See, for example, the coverage by *The Australian* during early October 2013, of the takeover offer by Saputo for Warrnambool Cheese, and the offer by the American firm ADM for GrainCorp.

⁵¹ For an indicative post-2013 election example, see J. Sloan, 'Abbott Maintains Sensible Foreign Investment Policy', *The Australian*, 21 September 2013.

A number of factors suggest grounds for concern on this front. While organisations representing civil society are significant, they are themselves increasingly incorporated into the state through service-delivery arrangements and other forms of co-option.⁵² Adaptation relies heavily on the responsiveness of governance to the needs and wishes of citizens. But it also requires a willingness to take the tough decisions when these are needed. While we see heartening instances of policy responding to both these criteria (for example in the complex negotiations and decisions that have characterised the evolution of policy for the Murray-Darling Basin), a political system based on adversarial, party-based politics may fail in both representativeness (due to declining party membership) and toughness (due to a preoccupation by political leaders with short-term electoral advantage). The rise of minority, right-wing parties evident in Senate voting patterns in the 2013 Federal election suggests the disaffection of many voters with the traditional parties (the Liberal and National Parties and the Australian Labor Party). Voter turnout has been declining for some years,⁵³ and according to recent Australian Electoral Commission data informal voting (including some indicators of deliberate informal voting) has been on the increase.⁵⁴ Whether, on balance, these developments mean the political system is evolving in healthy directions, or not, remains to be seen.

Conclusion

We contend that the concept of a fragile state is not limited to economic indicators or to poor and desperate states. There are vulnerabilities in Australia that have the potential to act as triggers or which could tip towards greater vulnerability and fragility, and to less stability and less resilience. Such a situation would have a negative effect on civil society and the nation-state, particularly if sustained over a long period of time. When we think about Australia as part of an interconnected system, there are several vulnerabilities which become more real when we conceive them as potential security risks. Australia's energy and food are not traditionally framed as security risks, but they intersect and they have the potential to be tipping points towards increased fragility. In the current policy structure, food and energy have been framed separately and from a predominantly economic framework, rather than as integral components of a complex adaptive system which includes but is not dominated by economic considerations. As such, there is a degree of policy blindness to future vulnerabilities and potential fragilities. Low probability, high impact issues can have

⁵² G. Ramia and T. Carney, 'New Public Management, the Job Network and Non-profit Strategy', *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, vol. 6, no. 2 (June 2003), pp. 253-75.

⁵³ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 'Voter Turnout Data for Australia', <<http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?id=15>> [Accessed 4 November 2013].

⁵⁴ Australian Electoral Commission, 'Analysis of Informal Voting, House of Representatives, 2010 Federal election—Key Findings', <http://www.aec.gov.au/about_aec/research/paper12/key-findings.htm> [Accessed 4 November 2013]

unexpected consequences which could have a severe and negative impact on civil society.

It is our contention that by reframing Australia's food and energy systems through an analytical framework of complex systems thinking, adaptive capacity and resilience offers a way forward to see connections and relevant issues. Drawing on the points made at the beginning of this paper about resilience and applying them to food and energy security as part of a system, it is possible for that system to have the ability to adapt to shocks while retaining its internal structure, function, feedbacks and therefore its identity. Having a resilient system offers a way to adapt and to transform for the future to deal with those unexpected consequences so that we are sufficiently resilient in the future.

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The India-Australia Security and Defence Relationship: Developments, Constraints and Prospects

David Brewster

In coming years, India is likely to become one of Australia's most important partners in the region. This article explores how the security and defence relationship has developed in recent times. It discusses challenges in the relationship before exploring potential areas for enhanced security and defence cooperation. It argues that if Australia wishes to be successful in its objectives of promoting greater cooperation with India, it will need to move in a consistent and sustained manner with a time horizon considerably longer than it is generally used to. In some cases, Australia may also need to move past any immediate expectations of the reciprocity that would be expected in developing security partnerships with most countries.

In coming years, India is likely to become one of Australia's most important partners in the region. The rise of India will make it one of Australia's most important economic relationships and a key diplomatic collaborator. There are also growing expectations that India will take greater responsibility for regional security.

While they share many institutions and values, India and Australia have long operated in largely separate strategic spheres. But these spheres are converging. The two countries now share many security concerns, including the growing impact of China on the strategic environment. Australia has recognised India as an important new strategic partner. India too is beginning to see Australia as one of several new security partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Part 1 of this article provides an overview of recent developments in the relationship and the challenges faced in developing a security and defence partnership. Part 2 then explores in detail the many potential areas for enhanced cooperation between them, while Part 3 includes observations on prospects for the relationship.¹ The article concludes that if Australia wishes to enhance its security and defence relationship with India, it must be prepared to act outside its comfort zone. In many ways, India represents a *sui generis* case in Australia's regional relationships, certainly in the degree

¹ Much of this article is based on confidential interviews conducted by the author in 2013 with serving and retired military officers, diplomats, government officials, corporate executives and analysts in India and Australia.

of caution it exhibits in relation to security and defence cooperation with other countries. This represents a considerable challenge for Australia in developing an effective model for engagement with India. Policy-makers must accept that Australia will need to move in a consistent and sustained manner with India, with a time horizon considerably longer than it is generally used to.

1. Developments in the Strategic Relationship—and Challenges

For most of their history as independent states the political and strategic relationship between India and Australia has not been close: bilateral relations have often been characterised by long periods of indifference interspersed with occasional political irritations. During the Cold War and for some time after, India was preoccupied with its immediate security problems in South Asia, while Australia traditionally focused on security concerns in East Asia and the Pacific. Australia rarely figured in New Delhi's security calculations except as a US stooge. Canberra considered India as difficult to deal with, anti-American, and too close to the Soviets.²

But Australia and India's spheres of strategic interest are now converging and their strategic interests are coming into much greater alignment. The emergence of both China and India as major powers with strategic interests across the Indo-Pacific is bringing India and Australia closer together and forcing them to engage on security and defence issues much more than ever before. Two factors, in particular, have been important in overcoming previous constraints on the relationship. The first is India's limited strategic rapprochement with the United States over the last decade or so. The distance of the India-US relationship had previously caused both India and Australia to look at each other with faint suspicion. This roadblock is now much diminished. The second is shared concerns about the rise of China, although as will be discussed later, India and Australia hold mildly different perspectives on the issue. But, importantly, certainly from Canberra's perspective, the US and China factors should not be seen as overshadowing the many other reasons for the closer bilateral engagement between Australia and India.

Over the last decade or so, Australia has pursued the relationship with considerable enthusiasm. This has led to a series of bilateral agreements that provide a formal basis for cooperation on security and defence-related matters. This included a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in 2009. This established a framework for further cooperation in security matters and provides for the formalisation of regular consultations and dialogues between foreign ministers, military and diplomatic representatives, and joint working

² For a history of the strategic relationship, see David Brewster, *India as an Asia Pacific Power* (London: Routledge, 2012).

groups on maritime security operations and counter-terrorism and immigration.³ India has made analogous declarations only with the United States and Japan.

Over the last decade or so, regular bilateral dialogues have significantly expanded opportunities for engagement on security and defence. These include annual meetings of Australian and Indian Foreign Ministers, regular meetings of Defence Ministers, annual Defence Policy Talks at senior official level, regular visits of Service Chiefs and regular staff talks between senior officers of the three services. But these dialogues, as important as they are, have so far yielded few concrete results. Many observers do not consider that they yet have a great deal of substance and engagement at an operational or tactical level remains extremely thin. Indeed, despite much rhetoric, the road towards a closer security partnership is likely to be a slow and frustrating one for its proponents.

To a considerable extent this reflects differences in historical experience and cultures of India and Australia. While these differences have been narrowing in recent years, they continue to have significant effect on the dynamics of the relationship and will likely continue to do so for many years to come. Some of these challenges include differences in strategic traditions; differences in decision-making processes; and perspectives on China and Pakistan.

DIFFERENCES IN STRATEGIC TRADITIONS

Through their history as independent states, India and Australia have developed different strategic traditions and attitudes towards security cooperation, and this remains a significant issue in their engagement today. In short, Australia sees security alignments and cooperation as an important means of *enhancing* its influence while many in New Delhi effectively see cooperation as *reducing* India's influence and inconsistent with a national objective of achieving 'strategic autonomy'. This objective is often seen as being closely linked with India's aspirations to become a great power. Though rarely defined, it has a strong resonance in Indian strategic thinking, just as the idea of 'non-alignment' was an ideological touchstone during the Cold War. This differs significantly from Australia's strategic view of the world. Indeed, strategic autonomy should be seen as part of India's 'national DNA', just as strategic collaboration is part of Australia's.

The idea of strategic autonomy leads many among the Indian elite to have strong instincts against security cooperation with other states, except under the clear banner of the United Nations. For many, security cooperation, particularly on operational matters, carries the taint that India's strategic

³ For a detailed discussion of the Australia-India Security Declaration, see David Brewster, 'The Australia-India Security Declaration: the Quadrilateral redux?', *Security Challenges*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Autumn 2010), pp. 1-9.

autonomy will be undermined.⁴ These concerns are intensified in relation to the United States, which many in Delhi still see as having hidden motives with respect to India. For this reason, Australia has been relatively careful in keeping its defence and security engagement with India on a bilateral basis and not simply trying to piggy-back on the United States.

These suspicions about security cooperation *per se* tend to be more muted in the Indian Navy. In comparison to the other services and many defence bureaucrats, the Indian Navy has a more international outlook that reflects the global perspectives it inherited from the Royal Navy and the fact that it often operates far from India's shores, frequently in (informal) cooperation with other navies. Over the last two decades, the Indian Navy has been at the forefront of pushing for cooperation with other regional navies and it takes what initiatives it can within the strictures imposed by the Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Some in New Delhi also question whether there is any real need for India to cooperate with others, believing that India, as a rising power, should be able to 'go it alone' in expanding its regional security role as part of an overall objective of achieving strategic autonomy. Why should India tie itself down in engagements with other powers? As one mid-ranking Indian naval officer commented, "Why would a growing power like India want to cooperate with a declining power like Australia?" This is compounded by the view of some in New Delhi (one that is admittedly waning) that Australia is not an 'independent' strategic actor due to its relationship with the United States. More sophisticated Indian interlocutors with Australia have a good understanding of the complexities of Australia's strategic perspectives beyond the US alliance, but the US alliance still remains a material factor in Indian thinking about Australia.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF DEFENCE RELATIONSHIPS

Another major challenge in developing the relationship is the very different perspectives on the role and importance of defence relationships as part of foreign policy. Australia sees its defence forces as playing an important foreign policy role. As the 2013 Defence White Paper states: "Australia's international defence engagement is a critical component of the Government's approach to managing the strategic transformation occurring in our region."⁵ For decades Australia has made significant investments in

⁴ For example, Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony commented that there were no prospects of Indian and US forces ever operating together and senior defence ministry officials have completely ruled out actual joint operations with the United States because they are tantamount to becoming part of a military alliance. Sourabh Gupta, 'US-India Defence Ties: The Limits to Interoperability', *East Asia Forum*, 31 July 2011.

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, *Defence White Paper 2013* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2013), p. 55.

the development of defence forces of regional partners through defence training and cooperation.⁶

In contrast, India has a narrower view of the role of its armed forces, including the role of defence force relations with other countries. New Delhi does not see the Indian armed forces as being a principal foreign policy actor. The Indian bureaucracy keeps a tight reign over the defence forces, seeing them as fulfilling only a narrow military role, and although many senior Indian military officers see the benefit of greater contact with their foreign counterparts, they face considerable bureaucratic and political constraints.⁷ The Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony has also limited the amount of contact between the Indian and foreign officers, especially with the United States and its allies, apparently from concerns that Indian officers may become tainted by Western perspectives.⁸ The Indian Navy has been permitted (or has carved out for itself) a relatively greater measure of freedom in dealing with foreign counterparts—usually on the basis that such interactions take place well out of sight of New Delhi.

But this is not just a bureaucratic issue. Keeping its defence relationships within tight parameters is consistent with India's policy of 'poly-alignment' with many different counterparts. For example, although it has a close security relationship with Israel in defence technology and intelligence, India keeps the relationship within certain bounds to allow it to continue to have friendly relations with Iran and other countries in West Asia.

These differences in perspectives of the role of defence forces in foreign relations are reflected in the differences in resources committed to foreign liaison. Despite India's huge military establishment, the Defence Protocol and Foreign Liaison Division, the defence diplomacy group within the Indian MoD, is staffed with merely half a dozen officers. In contrast, Australia's main defence diplomacy group, the International Policy Division of the Australian Department of Defence (DoD), has a staff of around fifty, which is in addition to the foreign liaison groups operated by the individual armed services. As a result, the Indian MoD is often overwhelmed by requests from many states wishing to interact with India, many of whom are of more immediate importance to New Delhi than Australia.

⁶ See generally, Sam Bateman, Anthony Bergin and Hayley Channer, *Terms of Engagement: Australia's Regional Defence Diplomacy*, ASPI Strategy Series (Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 18 July 2013), p. 9.

⁷ See generally, Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernisation* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010).

⁸ Sandeep Unnithan, 'Lone Dissenter; Antony Reins in Military Ties with the US and Emerges as the Lone Dissenter in the Government', *India Today*, 18 April 2011.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

One of the biggest causes of frustration for those tasked with developing the relationship is the differences in political and bureaucratic decision-making processes and style.

As noted above, the Australian armed forces have quite a deal of latitude in engaging with foreign counterparts as a way of encouraging cooperation and extending Australia's influence. In contrast, the Indian armed forces operate under the tight control of the civilian bureaucracy in the MoD. On top of this is the additional requirement that the Indian MoD itself must also obtain clearance from the Indian MEA for its foreign liaison activities (for example, in arranging foreign visits by senior officers), which places yet another level of bureaucratic constraints on India's activities.

Australian interlocutors report considerable frustrations in dealing with the Indian bureaucracy which often springs from differences in the way they work. The implementation of initiatives believed to have been previously agreed are frequently blocked or delayed by the Indian bureaucracy for no discernible reason. These reports are by no means specific to Australia and are consistent with the experiences of many foreigners in dealing with New Delhi. Indian bureaucracy also has a strong tendency towards inertia, being sprinkled with power centres that have power to veto initiatives but little incentive to approve them. Indian bureaucratic decision-making in general also tends to be *ad hoc*, with only broad guidelines set by the political leadership, giving bureaucrats considerable scope to implement (or not) decisions. This gives bureaucrat decision-makers considerable power to prevent the implementation of initiatives even when they have received in-principle approval at the political level. However, it is equally true that the latitude allowed to Indian bureaucrats means that they can sometimes move fast to implement measures they approve of. Interlocutors require the skill (or luck) to encounter the latter and not the former.

Australian policy-makers and officials have decades of experience of dealing with their counterparts in East Asia and have become more culturally acclimatised to developing security relationships in that region. But they clearly are still learning how to work around the Indian bureaucratic system—including how to make contact with the bureaucracy at the right level. As one senior Indian naval officer commented, one must engage at a level where a bureaucrat will have time and interest in the relevant matter. It is not a question of trying to go as high as possible in the hierarchy, because if you try to engage at too high a level “you will get jammed”.

On top of these bureaucratic differences, there is a basic difference in how foreign policy is formed. In general, the Indian foreign policy decision-making process is highly reactive, and Delhi often only takes action in the face of a crisis—and there is simply no immediate security crisis that requires cooperation between India and Australia.

PERSPECTIVES ON CHINA

Mutual concerns about China are also an important factor in the relationship, although differences in perceptions can sometimes cause problems. China is a major factor in India's strategic calculations, including numerous claims about China's so-called 'String of Pearls' strategy to develop a naval presence in the Indian Ocean. Decision-makers in New Delhi may not wholly believe these claims, but they do reflect a visceral concern that China wants to restrict India's freedom of action in the Indian Ocean. In contrast, Australian analysts tend to be more understanding of China's interests in protecting its trading routes in the Indian Ocean and treat claims about Strings of Pearls with a degree of scepticism.⁹

Despite these differences, there can be little doubt that China plays an important role in the India-Australia relationship. Among other things, both India and Australia want to be in a position to signal to China that they have options in terms of forming regional security partnerships if China becomes overly assertive in the Indian Ocean or Southeast Asia. As one former Indian diplomat put it: "What can India and Australia do together that will send the right signals to China?"

PERSPECTIVES ON PAKISTAN

There are also differences in perspectives towards Pakistan, although these are currently being managed reasonably well. In the years after the Cold War, there was talk of other states 'de-hyphenating' or 'de-linking' their relationships with India and Pakistan. In fact, over the last decade, Canberra has largely de-linked India and Pakistan in its strategic thinking. Canberra now clearly recognises that India is an important economic and security partner, and a net security provider to the region, while Pakistan is considered by many in Canberra as a significant threat to regional stability and a potential failed state.

Nevertheless, despite the 'de-hyphenation' Australia's relationship with Pakistan could still be somewhat of a drag on the relationship with India. Australia has a security relationship with Pakistan dating back to the Cold War. Australia's military presence in Afghanistan and its focus on counterterrorism in recent years has caused the engagement to grow further, and Australia now provides considerable assistance in training of the Pakistan army. However, Canberra may come to the view that the drawdown of Australia's military commitment in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to downgrade its defence engagement with Pakistan.

⁹ See, for example, Andrew Selth, *Chinese Military Bases in Burma: The Explosion of a Myth*, Regional Outlook Paper No. 10 (Brisbane: Griffith University, 2007).

2. Opportunities for Security and Defence Cooperation

Although there are considerable challenges in developing the relationship these are more than offset by the possible opportunities. This section examines potential areas for enhanced cooperation between India and Australia, such as:

- security dialogues;
- cooperation in Indian Ocean regional institutions;
- cooperation in other international groupings;
- people-to-people contacts;
- naval exercises and training;
- humanitarian and disaster relief/search and rescue;
- maritime piracy;
- maritime border protection and maritime domain awareness;
- cooperation between other military services;
- defence technology cooperation; and
- Antarctic research.

While there are many potential opportunities, Australia needs to act strategically in proposing areas of cooperation that fit well with India's strategic perspectives and traditions and do not push political hot buttons. Australia should not simply try to replicate defence engagement programs that it has used with other neighbours.

SECURITY DIALOGUES

As previously discussed, over the last few years Australia and India have established a number of regular bilateral security dialogues or engagements. Even if these are frequently more form than substance, they represent a big step forward compared with the previous level of engagement. Canberra's current approach is to regularise these engagements and avoid pushing too hard to give them substance. It is assumed that they will gain more substance over time as a relationship of trust is developed, although some observers still have their doubts about this.

One priority for Australia should be to expand these dialogues to include other partners. An important missed opportunity in this respect was the so-called Quadrilateral Security Dialogue among Japan, the United States, India

and Australia which was proposed by Japan in 2007. However, although Australia participated in some initial consultations, it later publicly backed away from the proposal, causing considerable damage to Australia's credibility in New Delhi. Although India too backed away from the Quadrilateral, it was the manner in which Australia acted that caused lasting damage to its reputation. India now participates in a Trilateral Security Dialogue with the United States and Japan at the sub-secretary level. The establishment of an analogous dialogue involving India, Australia, and the United States would represent a significant step forward in the relationship. Although New Delhi has resisted Australian proposals to establish such a dialogue, this view may change after the forthcoming Indian general elections.

Both Australia and India also see considerable benefit in working together to draw Indonesia into greater diplomatic and security cooperation in the region. India, Australia, and Indonesia are the past, current, and incoming chairs of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA),¹⁰ while Australia and Indonesia are respectively the current and incoming chairs of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). This creates practical opportunities for more dialogue among this 'troika'. In September 2013, the first track 2 Trilateral Indian Ocean Dialogue among India-Australia-Indonesia was held in New Delhi and there are plans for further such dialogues in 2014. Regular dialogues would represent an important acknowledgement by the three countries of their common interests in regional security.

COOPERATION WITHIN INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Unlike East Asia, where an alphabet soup of institutions provides numerous forums for dialogue and cooperation, the Indian Ocean region is thin on pan-regional groupings. This reflects the great diversity of states within the region and, indeed, the lack of any real understanding that the Indian Ocean constitutes a region at all.

The two pan-Indian Ocean groupings of any significance are IORA and IONS, the latter of which is a forum for interaction between regional navies based on the model of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium. While these groupings are likely to provide only limited scope for region-wide cooperation, they are both becoming useful loci of bilateral cooperation between India and Australia.

IORA was established in 1997 with the principal aim of promoting regional trade, but has had few concrete achievements since that time. Over the last few years, Australia and India have both attempted to revive interest in the grouping. Australia assumed the chair from India in November 2013. In 2011, India and Australia worked together to bring maritime security-related issues onto IORA's agenda for the first time. Despite these developments, it

¹⁰ Previously called the Indian Ocean Rim—Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).

is unlikely that IORA will become a significant actor in regional security any time soon. Its role is likely to be limited to a useful talk-shop for littoral states on 'soft' maritime security issues, although that in itself is a major step forward from the current position. IORA could however potentially act as an umbrella grouping to encourage the implementation of security initiatives among members on a sub-regional basis (for example, among India, Australia, and Indonesia in the eastern Indian Ocean).

IONS is the only pan-Indian Ocean grouping of states that has a significant security element. The grouping, which was established in 2008 under the sponsorship of the Indian Navy, involves a biennial meeting of navy chiefs with the objective of encouraging an exchange of perspectives on a relatively informal basis. IONS includes the navies of all the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Although the majority of navies in the Indian Ocean have severely limited capabilities and function as little more than coastguards, IONS still represents a potentially important forum for the exchange of perspectives on maritime security. It also represents a potential platform through which countries like India and Australia can take small steps towards common perspectives on security issues and even on operationalising cooperation on such matters as maritime domain awareness. As the chair of IONS Australia now has an opportunity to breathe more life into the grouping, particularly in encouraging greater cooperation between Australia, India, and ASEAN states.

COOPERATION IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY GROUPINGS

There may also be scope for India-Australia cooperation on security issues at a global level, including within various non-proliferation regimes. These include the Australia Group (a grouping of some forty-one states and international organisations that collaborate to prevent the abuse of dual-use technology and materials for chemical and biological weapons programmes), the Nuclear Supplier Group (suppliers of nuclear materials and technology), the Missile Technology Control Regime (relating to the proliferation of missile technologies) and the Wassenaar Arrangement (aimed at non-proliferation of conventional arms and dual use goods). Australia is chair of the Australia Group and an active member of the other regimes. India is currently not a member of any of these groupings, which represents a significant anomaly in the international arms control system.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signalled US support for bringing India into the various export control regimes. Rory Medcalf of the Lowy Institute argues that Australia's role in the Australia Group can give it some leverage to assist India. The Australia Group may be a logical place to begin India's formal entry into the global export control network, because it is not connected to any residual sensitivities about nuclear issues. Given India's massive chemical industry and the growing biotechnology sector, the absence of India from the export control regime is unsustainable. Australian assistance in the Australia Group could also help to overcome any remaining

misperceptions in New Delhi that Australia does not trust India on non-proliferation.¹¹ But, as one report noted, building a consensus in favour of Indian membership in any of these regimes will take time.

The participation by India in such groups may also require changes in New Delhi's attitudes towards such regimes. India has long opposed the international nuclear non-proliferation system, which it argued unfairly discriminated against it. India also opposed other export control regimes based on the argument that they were part of a western policy of denying technology to India and other developing countries. India's current position, that it should be granted entry into all international export control regimes simultaneously, is likely to significantly delay any progress in this area, particularly in light of the large and varied membership of each of the groupings.

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES

People-to-people networks will be an extremely important factor in developing the India-Australia security and defence relationship. The development of personal relationships and experiences of policy-makers, military officers, and civilians in the security community can provide sorely-needed glue in the bilateral relationship. It is in Australia's interests to encourage a better understanding of different strategic perspectives and political and bureaucratic processes, which are important drivers in what India does (or more frequently does not do) in its security relations.

Both the Indian and Australian armed forces (and in particular the navies) would, as a matter of principle, likely welcome initiatives that give greater access to training opportunities with their counterparts. However, creating such opportunities will require overcoming bureaucratic inertia, especially on the Indian side. As discussed, India allocates considerably less resources to defence cooperation than Australia, and it is overwhelmed by suitors that wish to engage with it.

There are currently regular exchanges of mid-level and senior officers between Indian and Australian military colleges. India offers one position each year for a mid-level Australian officer at its Defence Services Staff College, and most years it also offers one position for a senior Australian officer at the National Defence College (which is relatively significant given that only four positions are offered annually to western countries).

Currently, two positions are offered annually to Indian officers at the Australian Defence College (ADC): one at the Australian Command and

¹¹ Lisa Curtis, Walter Lohman, Rory Medcalf, Lydia Powell, Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan and Andrew Shearer, 'Shared Goals, Converging Interests: A Plan for U.S.-Australia-India Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific', The Heritage Foundation, Lowy Institute and Observer Research Foundation, 3 November 2011.

Staff College (out of forty-five positions for foreign officers) and one at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies (out of twenty-three positions offered to foreigners). However, there are no Indian officer cadets attending the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) (out of approximately forty foreign cadets). There are also no Indian instructors at the ADC or ADFA (out of around ten foreign instructors currently at those institutions). There is clearly significant room to expand the Indian presence at Australian military training institutions, but probably less scope in practice for the placement of more Australian officers at Indian institutions. Person-to-person contacts can also be encouraged through exchanges of technical instructors or the provision of small training teams.

Importantly, the building of personal relationships must occur on both the military and civilian sides in the security community. This can include exchanges of civilian analysts and commentators between quality civilian think tanks and academic institutions focusing on security-related issues. The objective would be to promote public discussion and analysis of the relationship as part of the policy-making process.

NAVAL EXERCISES AND TRAINING

The principal point of contact between the Indian and Australian armed forces is between the navies. This reflects their shared interests in maritime security in the Indian Ocean, as well as the physical fact that navies commonly operate far from their home territories, frequently in contact with other navies. The Indian Navy has been the most active of any of the Indian armed services in pursuing defence diplomacy throughout the Indo-Pacific region. It currently conducts regular exercises with the navies of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, and Brazil, but not with the Royal Australian Navy.

In many ways, military exercises are the 'pointy end' of defence cooperation. They provide an important forum for militaries to interact, learn from each other, and develop inter-operability, but they are also an important symbol of a broader strategic relationship.

Currently, the RAN and the Indian Navy conduct irregular passing exercises (or 'PASSEXes'), mostly while Australian ships are on passage to and from deployment to the Persian Gulf. Repeated requests by Australia for regular bilateral exercises have met with bureaucratic resistance in New Delhi, but during the June 2013 visit of Indian Defence Minister A. K. Antony to Australia, bilateral maritime exercises beginning in 2015 were announced.

The ability of the Indian Navy to engage in regular exercises with other navies is constrained by the Indian MoD, which has an unofficial policy against the Indian Navy's participation in multilateral exercises. This policy arose following Exercise *Malabar 07*, when the annual India-US naval exercises were expanded to include vessels from Australia, Japan, and

Singapore. The exercise caused significant political backlash from Indian nationalists and leftists, who claimed that it signified a military alliance with the United States and/or a containment policy against China. The avoidance of multilateral exercises means that the Indian Navy is stretched by the number of bilateral exercises it undertakes.

PASSEXes: Australia can certainly give more attention to the opportunities for PASSEXes, which have less impact on the Indian Navy's resources. PASSEXes—perhaps even including multiple vessels—represent a politically non-controversial way of increasing the frequency of interactions between Australian and Indian vessels. One senior serving Indian flag officer remarked that the RAN may not be taking full advantage of opportunities for more substantial PASSEXes while on passage to and from the Persian Gulf area. There was a perception that the RAN may be more interested in R&R or in getting home, than in exercising with the Indian Navy. However, it is more likely that the RAN vessels were time-constrained by their scheduled dates of return to Australia which are very difficult to change. Pushing for extended PASSEXes will therefore require a political decision in Canberra to reduce deployment time in the Persian Gulf area and spend more time in transit, including in visits to India.

Regular bilateral naval exercises: In June 2013, the Indian Defence Minister agreed to commence regular bilateral naval exercises by 2015. Holding such exercises alternatively in the Bay of Bengal and off Fremantle would facilitate the inclusion of an Anti-Submarine Warfare element in the exercises, which may be attractive to the Indian Navy. A possible alternative could be to hold exercises out of India's Andaman Islands, which may permit the Indian Navy to commit greater resources while also fitting with the RAN's regular visits to Singapore and Malaysia. It would also underline India's and Australia's common interests in ensuring freedom of navigation through the Strait of Malacca.

Multilateral naval exercises: Although the Indian Navy would, in principle, also welcome the opportunity for multilateral exercises involving the RAN, it may find it difficult to participate in the Australian-hosted Exercise *Kakadu*. A senior serving Indian flag officer commented that the Indian Navy had previously received in principle approval from the MoD to participate in *Kakadu* and had made preparations to do so, but at the last moment was blocked by the MoD apparently on the grounds of cost. This may change in coming years. In the longer term there may also be potential for trilateral naval exercises involving India, Australia, and other key Indian Ocean partners such as Indonesia, Singapore or South Africa, focusing on Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) and/or Search and Rescue (SAR). New Delhi may see the involvement of other non-western states in addition to Australia as easing potential political concerns.

Amphibious capabilities: Amphibious capabilities are currently a major focus for both India and Australia and could potentially provide an important area of specialisation in the India-Australia defence relationship. In the longer term, amphibious exercises focused on HADR and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs) could become a focus in the naval relationship, as well as potentially creating opportunities for enhanced interaction between the respective armies and air forces.

Submarine escape training: Submarine escape training presents another opportunity. The RAN's Submarine Escape Training facility in Fremantle is one of only a handful of such facilities in the world. Australia has recently agreed to give the Indonesian Navy access to the facility and the RAN could also offer use of the facility to the Indian Navy. This would be an opportunity to develop closer ties between the Indian and Australian submarine forces, which are the largest and most advanced among Indian Ocean states.

HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF/SEARCH AND RESCUE

HADR and SAR operations are likely to play an ever more important part in naval operations, both as a response to domestic political expectations and as a function of soft power. As discussed below, many saw the Indian Navy's HADR response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami as a game-changer in its thinking about the importance of amphibious capabilities as has India's more recent NEO operations in Lebanon and Libya.

HADR and SAR are commonly-cited areas for cooperation between navies and related services without the political controversy in India that often accompanies defence cooperation with western states. While HADR and SAR sit at the 'soft' end of the spectrum of security cooperation, they can be useful fields in which to develop personal relationships and inter-operability as well as providing an opportunity to generate significant goodwill.

India's work with Australia, the United States and Japan in the multilateral naval response effort to the 2004 Tsunami is often seen as a major turning point in Indian understanding of the potential benefits of cooperation with other maritime democracies in the Indo-Pacific. Cooperation between the four navies led directly to the 2007 proposals for a Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, discussed above. The episode was an important lesson in the potentially broader strategic consequences of cooperation in HADR.

There is potential for Australia, India and other Indian Ocean partners to work together in a number of ways. Australia and Indonesia have established a joint Facility for Disaster Reduction (AIFDR) and there is potential for India to be included in similar arrangements. India and Australia could also sponsor the development of a system for responding to natural disasters in the Indian Ocean region similar to the FRANZ trilateral

cooperation arrangement in the South Pacific.¹² Under the FRANZ arrangement, Australia, France, and New Zealand exchange information to ensure the best use of their assets and other resources for relief operations after cyclones and other natural disasters. The arrangement also provides for disaster relief coordination engaging aid and defence elements from all three countries. Overall, cooperation between India and Australia in disaster relief could yield considerable benefits for relatively little cost.

MARITIME PIRACY

In coming years, India and Australia will be expected to shoulder an increasing burden of responsibilities for Indian Ocean maritime security in relation to non-state actors. This includes responding to piracy, maritime terrorism, smuggling, people trafficking, and illegal fishing.

Piracy in and around the Strait of Malacca was previously a matter of concern but this is now much reduced. Concerns about piracy have largely shifted to the western Indian Ocean. Australia contributes to international efforts to fight piracy and maritime terrorism in the northwest Indian Ocean through participation in the Combined Military Forces in Combined Task Forces 150 and 151 and India undertakes anti-piracy operations in the region by itself. While there may be potential for the RAN and Indian Navy to coordinate their efforts in the northeast Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy appears to be content with its current efforts and sees no pressing need to change them. In any event, incidents of piracy in the northwest Indian Ocean have dropped considerably in recent times and feelings of 'crisis' have receded.

A more ambitious initiative could involve the promotion of a Memorandum of Understanding on Piracy among Indian Ocean littoral states and other interested states to set out agreed zones of responsibility in relation to piracy. This might make anti-piracy efforts more efficient, but would probably require a significant political commitment from New Delhi.

MARITIME BORDER PROTECTION AND MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS

The protection of India's maritime borders from terrorists and other illegal arrivals has become a major Indian security concern in recent years, particularly since the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai when Pakistani-based terrorists infiltrated the city from the sea. Maritime border protection has also become a major security focus for Australia.

The distances across the Indian Ocean makes tracking of vessels and aircraft (both military and civil) in this space a very difficult task and currently

¹² 'Workshop Report: Strategic Objectives of the United States in the Indian Ocean Region', Future Directions International, 29 September 2011, <<http://www.futuredirections.org.au/publications/workshop-papers/248-strategic-objectives-of-the-united-states-in-the-indian-ocean-region.html>> [Accessed 14 March 2014].

beyond the resources of any single country. This makes maritime domain awareness a ripe area for cooperation and an opportunity to build ongoing relationships between the services. India has made major investments in its *maritime* intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, in recent years. Australia already has considerable maritime ISR capabilities throughout the eastern Indian Ocean in areas that abut or overlap with areas of strategic interest to India, including operating AP-3C Orion aircraft through Malaysia's Butterworth Air Base. In coming years, both India and Australia will acquire Boeing P-8 maritime aircraft as the backbone of their maritime ISR capabilities; both are also considering acquiring Global Hawk UAVs or their maritime equivalents. These common platforms and sensors may create opportunities for cooperation in training and maintenance.

The Indian Navy has expressed interest in working with Australia in shipping identification including the Australian Maritime Identification System. While both India and Australia already have access to shared information about so-called 'white' shipping (merchant vessels), it would be a significant step to extend information-sharing arrangements to so-called 'grey' or 'red' shipping. There are also opportunities for cooperation between India, Australia and key security partners in Southeast Asia (such as Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia) in enhancing maritime domain awareness in the eastern Indian Ocean, the Indonesian archipelago, and the South China Sea. It has, for example, been suggested that India and Australia could jointly sponsor a regional maritime domain partnership, which would involve collaboration with Southeast Asian states in intelligence sharing, maritime domain awareness and coordinated patrolling.¹³

COOPERATION BETWEEN OTHER MILITARY SERVICES

The potential for cooperation between the Indian and Australian air forces and armies are somewhat more limited than in the maritime space, although opportunities do exist.

For much of their history, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and RAAF used quite different equipment which, apart from political factors, has reduced the scope for cooperation. However, many common platforms are now being operated or are in the process of being acquired by the IAF and RAAF. This currently includes Hawk trainers (which are manufactured under licence in India), C-17 Globemaster and C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, and will soon also include P-8 Poseidon aircraft, A330 multi role tanker transports, and CH-47F Chinook heavy lift helicopters. These common platforms provide opportunities for shared training, maintenance, and in the longer term, even exercises. According to one Australian observer, Australia's and India's interests in operating common air force platforms might place the relationship on a different footing compared with some other defence

¹³ Commander Shishir Upadhyaya, 'India and Australia Relations: Scope for Naval Cooperation', *National Maritime Foundation*, 4 December 2009.

partners of India, who are sometimes seen as using cooperation as a way of showcasing potential equipment sales to India. Australia has no vested interests in this respect.

For its part, the RAAF sees considerable benefits from greater interaction with the IAF, including gaining the benefit of the IAF's perspectives on doctrine, war fighting and the operation of common platforms. This would provide the RAAF with access to different ways of thinking as compared with the United States. The RAAF may also be interested in the IAF's particular experience in areas such as high altitude flying (which the IAF frequently practises in the Himalayas) and flight safety. The RAAF has suggested implementing greater cooperation with the IAF through the establishment of 'sister' relationships between squadrons that operate common platforms. This could provide a structure for reciprocal visits and personal relationships.

There is potential for bilateral air exercises in the longer term. The IAF has previously provided observers to Exercise *Pitch Black*, which is Australia's leading multilateral air force exercise, involving participants such as the United States, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. In the future, there may be scope to expand the IAF's role to participate in the International Planning Group element in Exercise *Pitch Black*. Although bilateral exercises are not currently being considered, there may be long-term potential for bilateral exercises in the relatively non-controversial areas of HADR/SAR, with a focus on the shared maritime domain. In addition, given that India's maritime surveillance capabilities are largely operated through the Indian Naval Air Arm, it may make sense for the RAAF to give greater focus to developing a direct relationship with the Indian Navy.

Opportunities for cooperation between the Indian and Australian armies may be more limited. The two armies are quite different in some ways. The Australian Army is relatively small and largely structured as an expeditionary force, while the Indian Army is a large standing force focused on border defence and internal security. These differences in structure and missions may limit opportunities for exercises. Nevertheless, there may be opportunities for specialised cooperation, for example, in training for high altitude or amphibious operations.

Their shared histories of service can also be celebrated. Australian and Indian soldiers have fought alongside each other in numerous conflicts, including at Gallipoli (1915), in Palestine (1917-18), France (1914-18), North Africa (1940-42), Syria (1941), Malaya/Singapore (1941-42), and elsewhere in Southeast Asia (1941-45). These battle honours are an important reminder of the shared histories and traditions of the Indian and Australian armed forces, which can be a foundation for further cooperation.

A potential focus for army-army cooperation can be the sharing of India's and Australia's knowledge and experience in peacekeeping operations.

Both countries have long been contributors to such operations. India has contributed to some forty United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations with more than 100,000 personnel, making it one of the largest contributors of any country in the world. Australia has contributed to more than 100 peace operations involving some 30,000 personnel. Enhanced cooperation in the training of peacekeepers can be an important opportunity to demonstrate India's and Australia's shared commitment to the UN and international stability. It can also be an important opportunity for Australia to learn from India's expertise in this area, while India might benefit from Australia's recent experience in stabilisation operations among Pacific island states.

India operates the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in New Delhi, which also provides the Secretariat of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres. Australia's Peacekeeping Operations Training Centre is located in Newcastle. In the past Australia and India have exchanged students and instructors to their peacekeeping training centres on an *ad hoc* basis. More focused cooperation in peacekeeping training may be possible and in the longer term the potential for bilateral peacekeeping exercises can be explored. India currently conducts peacekeeping exercises with several regional states, while Australia conducts a biennial peacekeeping exercise with Thailand.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

Some see defence technology as a potentially important focus in the relationship. India's need for defence technology has formed a key part of its relationships with the Soviet Union/Russia, France, Israel, and the United States, and increasingly also regional partners. In 2013, New Delhi announced that it was acquiring at least fifteen US-2 amphibious aircraft from Japan as part of an enhanced strategic partnership with Tokyo. The possibility of getting access to defence technology is something that gets New Delhi's attention.

But there are also reasons for caution in using defence exports by Australian companies as a means to enhance the bilateral relationship. The most significant is the parlous state of India's defence procurement system, which is Byzantine, dysfunctional, riddled with corruption, and as a consequence barely functioning. With few exceptions, defence acquisitions involving foreign private suppliers are at a virtual standstill, although major sales made on a government-to-government basis are moving ahead, if slowly. Australian defence suppliers are likely to be extremely hesitant about the risks of trying to do business in the Indian defence sector unless significant changes are made in the Indian defence procurement system. That seems many years away.

But Australian companies may have opportunities that do not necessarily involve exposure to the Indian defence procurement process. In naval shipbuilding, this could include programmes for the joint training of naval

engineers or, for example, exploiting the interests of third parties in the Indian and Australian defence industries. Private shipbuilders such as Pipavav Defence are becoming increasingly prominent in India and they could be potential partners with Australian companies. The huge paramilitary forces maintained by the Indian central and state governments are also major buyers, although this market tends to be keenly priced and unsuitable for high-end high-priced products.

Direct cooperation between the government defence research organisations, India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Australia's Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) is another opportunity. In theory at least there is considerable scope for cooperation and joint projects between the DRDO and DSTO in shared areas of interest. In recent years, India's DRDO has entered into technology-sharing agreements with its counterparts in countries such as South Korea and Singapore.

But Australia's DSTO may not currently consider India as a priority international partner and its current arrangements with key technology partners may constrain its ability to exchange information with the DRDO. The DRDO's role as both an R&D organisation and a manufacturer is also seen as a cause of potential complications. The caution of the DSTO in engaging with the DRDO may only change as part of a broader government approach of enhanced cooperation with India.

But some observers question the utility of trying to use defence technology cooperation—particularly technology procurement—as a means of developing a closer security relationship. India has, in the past, resisted attempts of several of its defence technology partners (such as the former Soviet Union and currently the United States) to leverage defence sales into a broader defence relationship. A Pentagon study found that senior Indian military officers tend to see defence technology procurement as quite separate from a broader defence relationship and are resistant to allowing equipment acquisitions to be used as a reason for operational cooperation.¹⁴ Experience has also demonstrated that a defence procurement relationship with India, even by major powers, can often be a cause of considerable disputes and political irritations in the bilateral relationship.

For these reasons, although there may be opportunities for defence technology cooperation in certain niche areas, both Canberra and New Delhi may be cautious about trying to focus on this area as a major aspect in developing the relationship.

¹⁴ Juli A. Macdonald, 'Indo-U.S. Military Relationship: Expectations and Perceptions', Report by Booz Allen Hamilton for the Director, Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, October 2002.

COOPERATION IN ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

A further area of potential cooperation is in Antarctic research. While not directly security related, this area relates to the shared oceanic domain and can potentially create goodwill and a feeling of oceanic partnership. Australia's efforts in the Antarctic are conducted through the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) based in Tasmania, while India's are conducted through the National Centre for Antarctic and Oceanic Research (NCAOR), based in Goa, which reports to the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Both organisations are wholly devoted to scientific research.

Australia has had a permanent presence in the Antarctic since 1954 and now operates four permanent bases. Australia claims more than 40 per cent of the continent as Australian territory. Although India has had a permanent presence since 1984, there has been relatively little interaction between the two countries. India's Maitri Station is on the other side of the continent from the Australian bases. However, the opening in 2013 of a new Indian base, called Bharati Station, which is some 120 km from Australia's Davis base, opens considerable opportunities for cooperation in logistics and scientific research.

Currently, all of India's air logistics to the Antarctic are channelled through South Africa using the Russian-sponsored DROMLAN consortium. This makes sense for the supply of India's Maitri Station (which is located south of Cape Town), but less so for Bharati Station. Supplies for Bharati are now taken to Maitri Station and then airlifted a further 4,000 km across the middle of Antarctica, including a refuelling stop at a Japanese base.

Bharati could potentially use the Australian logistical supply system operating through Tasmania, which is used to supply Davis Station. Similarly, it may make sense to share maritime supply arrangements. Currently, a vessel chartered by the NCAOR must make a fifty-day triangular run between Cape Town, Maitri Station and Bharati Station, severely restricting its abilities to make deliveries to Bharati. The potential for exchange of scientific personnel between the AAD and NCAOR is also unrealised.

3. Prospects for a Security and Defence Partnership

Where does that leave the prospects for security and defence cooperation between India and Australia? Although there are numerous shared interests and opportunities for cooperation, a closer relationship will require sustained political will in both Canberra and New Delhi to overcome the differences in strategic culture and perspective.

Australia recognises India as an important new security partner in the Indo-Pacific, but India is only beginning to see Australia as a useful partner. For India, in some ways, Australia represents a difficult case. India has no direct

security interests in our immediate area and Australia's close relationship with the United States sometimes creates political unease in New Delhi.

For several reasons, moves towards greater security and defence cooperation will need to be initiated by Australia, which has significantly more focus, resources, and experience in defence cooperation than India. But if Australia wishes to be successful in its objectives of promoting greater cooperation with India, it will have to consider the following:

- Australia must convince India that it can better achieve its strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific in cooperation with Australia than by acting alone.
- Australia will have to demonstrate that there are practical security problems that must be addressed in a cooperative manner.
- While mutual concerns about China are an important underlying element, China should not be elevated as the moving cause of the relationship.
- Australia will have to move in a consistent and sustained manner with a time horizon considerably longer than it is generally used to.
- Australia must also move past any immediate expectations of the reciprocity that would be expected in developing security partnerships with most countries. India simply does not have the institutional capability to act in a reciprocal manner, as do other countries.

In short, if Australia wishes to enhance its security and defence relationship with India, it must be prepared to act outside its comfort zone. Australia has considerable experience in defence cooperation with the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia Pacific. This has often focused on providing assistance, but the emphasis is now moving towards strategic partnerships. As a recent report on Australia's defence diplomacy programme commented:

As regional defence forces expand and modernise and we lose our technological advantage, engagement becomes more about strategic partnerships and less about aid and assistance. This requires a significant change in mindset.¹⁵

In many ways, India represents a *sui generis* case in Australia's regional relationships, certainly in the degree of caution it exhibits in relation to security and defence cooperation with other countries. This represents a

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

considerable challenge for Australia in developing an effective model for engagement with India.

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Acknowledge and Commit, Disagree and Continue: US China Policy for the 21st Century

Guy Roberts

Case study comparison of the China Policies of US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush can provide insight into how the relationship can be managed in the 21st century. A relationship built on trust and communication creates stability between America and China; trust acknowledges disagreement and reinforces commitments. Breaking agreements, making unreasonable demands, or acting for short term self interest undermines the relationship, reduces opportunity for genuine cooperation, and hampers communication when crises occur. Bush's management of the relationship was a highpoint of recent US-China interaction, and serves as a blueprint for the 21st century relationship for Australian and American elites.

The growth of China's economy is such that a recent Australian Treasury Working Paper predicted China's economy would surpass America's in less than sixteen years.¹ Given that the infrastructure of a modern nation-state's comprehensive power is ultimately based upon economic rather than military strength, this growth has intensified global concern about instability and conflict in the Asia Pacific region.² China's development is seen as a more serious (and less ideological) challenge to American pre-eminence than anything it has previously encountered. Even at the hottest of Cold War moments, the Soviet economy could not hope to muster a challenge to American primacy. However, China is not replaying the Cold War; it has accepted market economics and will outgrow the American economy by exploiting the rules of the international system, not by challenging them.³

Since most great power transitions of the past have been marked by conflict between challenger and hegemon, many observers feel a conflict between China and America will be an inevitable outcome of the new economic

¹ Wilson Au-Yeung, Michael Kouparitsas, Nghi Luu and Dhruv Sharma, *Treasury Working Paper 2013-02*, Commonwealth of Australia, The Treasury, 25 September 2013, <http://www.treasury.gov.au/~media/Treasury/Publications%20and%20Media/Publications/2013/Long%20term%20international%20GDP%20projections/Key%20Documents/PDF/Working_paper_2013_2.ashx> [Accessed 13 January 2014].

² For two prominent sides to this debate, see Hugh White, *The China Choice: Why America Should Share Power* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2012); and Robert Lieber, *Power and Willpower in the American Future: Why the United States is Not Destined to Decline* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³ For further exploration of the non-revisionist China argument, see Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Is China a Status Quo Power?', *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003), pp. 5-56.

reality.⁴ US-China diplomacy must therefore seek to minimise the potential for such conflict. However, such diplomacy should not mean avoidance of confrontation at all costs. By reviewing case studies of US-China economic management and negotiation, crisis management, leader-to-leader relations and the Taiwan Strait issue during the Clinton and G. W. Bush administrations, this article argues that a successful Sino-American relationship must pragmatically acknowledge that genuine disagreements can arise between America and China. Leaders must confront the fact that interests between them will occasionally and legitimately diverge, as to pretend otherwise undermines genuine dialogue. Acknowledging differences candidly will reduce the chance of misunderstanding, further disagreement or noncooperation in other fields. Elite leaders in America should foster direct, durable relationships with their Chinese counterparts. Such a pragmatic, results-based relationship would most effectively minimise the potential for conflict between America and China in the 21st century. In comparing Clinton and Bush, this article contends that the more effective manager of US-China diplomacy was Bush, and that his China Policy is worthy of emulation as China grows in economic strength and further embeds itself into the international society.⁵

This article does not contend that Bush was a better manager of the relationship because he was a Republican, nor that Republican Presidents work more effectively with China than Democrat Presidents—an attitude encapsulated by a comment of Bush’s first term Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage:

China has been known to tell people that they actually prefer, historically, Republican governments ... because they’re more predictable, their interests are more well defined, and so China can know what they’re going to do tomorrow as well as what they’re going to do today and they like that.⁶

The basic objectives of American China policy have been bipartisan for decades—regardless of presidential affiliation: to embed the Chinese economy within the current global economic order, to maintain peaceful

⁴ For a discussion of these issues, see M. Taylor Fravel, ‘International Relations Theory and China’s Rise: Assessing China’s Potential for Territorial Expansion’, *International Studies Review*, vol. 12 (2010), pp. 505-32; Avery Goldstein, ‘Power Transitions, Institutions, and China’s Rise in East Asia: Theoretical Expectations and Evidence’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4/5 (August 2007); and Paul Wolfowitz, ‘Bridging Centuries: Fin de Siecle All Over Again’, *National Interest*, no. 47 (Spring 1997). For the ‘China must be contained’ arguments, see Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China’s Military Threat to America* (Washington D.C.: Regenery Publishing, 1999); Joe Barnes, ‘Slaying the Chinese Dragon: The New China Threat School’, in *China and Long-Range Asia Energy Security* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1999); Arthur Waldron, ‘A Free and Democratic China?’, *Commentary Magazine*, November 2000; ‘Eight Steps Toward a New China Policy’, *Orbis*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Winter 1997); and Charles Krauthammer, ‘Why We Must Contain China’, *Time*, 31 July 1995.

⁵ This article does not excuse or exonerate President Bush from his foreign policy decisions in other fields; it does not discuss them at all.

⁶ Richard Armitage, interview with the author, 12 July 2012.

relations, and, ideally, to see the emergence of a non-authoritarian 'Good China'.⁷ Since different administrations have shared the same fundamental objectives, the level of success or failure in US-China relations must be dependent upon presidential technique, not party affiliation.⁸ It is the outlook of the President that frames the narrative of the relationship. In this sense, 'bumper stickers' have abounded, an effort to encapsulate what different administrations hope the relationship will become. In 2000, President Clinton called China a 'Strategic Partner', while Bush, during the election campaign, called it a 'Strategic Competitor'. Once in office, however, Bush sought to build a "candid, constructive relationship". Showing different priorities, President Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, asked the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd: "How do you deal toughly with your banker?"⁹ Bush's pursuit of a "candid, constrictive relationship" with China was a genuine blueprint for engagement that led to the "best relations since 1972".¹⁰ Bush's approach toward China, although confrontational at times, was distinguished by stability, cooperation and a results-focused diplomacy. Comparing specific examples of US-China relations in the Clinton and Bush administrations highlights the most effective bilateral guidelines for China engagement in the 21st century.

Economic Interaction and Negotiation

During the 1992 election campaign, Clinton had criticised his predecessor, George H. W. Bush (Bush Senior), for his management of US-China relations after the Tiananmen Square Incident. Bush Senior, famed for being his own 'desk officer' on China, had felt that maintaining communications with the Chinese leadership was the best way to ensure China would continue to pursue reforms.¹¹ Contrastingly, Clinton berated Bush Senior for maintaining relations with the "Butchers of Beijing", and argued "that we should [not] give Most Favoured Nation Status to Chinese

⁷ For more on the bipartisan fundamentals of American policy in Asia (which includes stronger ties with America's regional allies), see individual and collaborative reports by Joseph S. Nye, Clinton's Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, and Richard Armitage, Bush's Deputy Secretary of State. See also *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, US Department of Defense, 1995.

⁸ For a comprehensive overview of US-China relations from 1988 to 2000 (including the Presidency of George H. W. Bush), see David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁹ 'US Embassy Cables: Hillary Clinton Ponders US Relationship with its Chinese "Banker"', *The Guardian*, 4 December 2010, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/199393>> [Accessed 29 October 2012].

¹⁰ See Bonnie Glaser, 'Fleshing out the Candid, Cooperative, and Constructive Relationship', *Comparative Connections*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2002); Bonnie Glaser, 'The Best since 1972 or the Best Ever?', *Comparative Connections*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2005).

¹¹ For a further exploration of Bush Senior's response to the Tiananmen Square Massacre, see Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), pp. 412-28.

communists who deny their people's basic rights."¹² Winning the 1992 election, Clinton declared America would follow a more human rights oriented agenda toward China, and that the extension of Most Favoured Nation Status (MFN) to China would only continue if genuine advances were made in China's respect for human rights. Clinton's 28 May 1993 Executive Order stated that MFN would not be continued unless China had made overall progress across several issues:

- taking steps to begin adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- releasing and providing an acceptable accounting for Chinese citizens imprisoned or detained for the non-violent expression of their political and religious beliefs, including such expression of beliefs in connection with the Democracy Wall and Tiananmen Square movements;
- ensuring humane treatment of prisoners, such as by allowing access to prisons by international humanitarian and human rights organisations;
- protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage; and
- permitting international radio and television broadcasts into China.¹³

This was certainly a confrontational approach.¹⁴ However, it also had two fundamental flaws. Firstly, the declaration was perceived by the Chinese as blatant interference in their sovereign affairs—an act of Western Imperialism reminiscent of China's humiliation in the 18th century. By backing China into a corner, Clinton ensured that the Chinese leadership would not want to cooperate, lest they be seen as obeying orders from an interfering outsider.¹⁵ Secondly, despite his rhetoric, Clinton was unable to resist pressures from America's business community to continue to give MFN status to China for economic reasons.¹⁶ The result was that China did not move to comply with Clinton's demands and Clinton was unable to maintain his position in the

¹² Peter Baker, 'Bush, Clinton and China', *The Washington Post*, 8 April 2008, <<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2008/04/bush-clinton-and-china.html>> [Accessed 1 September 2013].

¹³ Bill Clinton, 'Executive Order 12850—Conditions for Renewal of Most-Favored-Nation Status for the Peoples Republic of China in 1994', 28 May 1993, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=61546#axzz2gY3vuxIK>> [Accessed 28 September 2013].

¹⁴ For further exploration of this issue, see David M. Lampton, 'China Policy in Clinton's First Year', in James R. Lilley and Wendell L. Wilkie II (eds.), *Beyond MFN: Trade With China and American Interests* (Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press, 1994), pp. 9-35, 153-8.

¹⁵ For further exploration of such attitudes, see Alan Wachman, 'Does the Diplomacy of Shame Promote Human Rights in China?', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2001), pp. 257-81.

¹⁶ David M. Lampton, 'America's China Policy in the Age of the Finance Minister: Clinton Ends Linkage', *The China Quarterly*, no. 139 (1994).

face of domestic pressure. Almost a year later, on 26 May 1994, Clinton had to declare:

The Chinese did not achieve overall significant progress in all the areas outlined in the executive order relating to human rights ... Given the fact that there has been some progress but that not all the requirements of the executive order were met, how can we best advance the cause of human rights and the other profound interests the United States has in our relationship with China[?] ... I have decided that the United States should renew Most Favored Nation trading status toward China. This decision, I believe, offers us the best opportunity to lay the basis for long term sustainable progress in human rights, and for the advancement of our other interests with China ... I am moving, therefore, to delink human rights from the annual extension of Most Favored Nation trading status for China.¹⁷

This back down further undermined Clinton's standing with the Chinese Government. Attempting to link MFN status with human rights progress in China made Clinton look interfering and imperialistic. Abandoning this linkage less than a year later made Clinton look vacillating and weak as well. An issue of disagreement had been allowed to impact—temporarily and unproductively—on the relationship without profit or resolution. Clinton's announcement and its subsequent retraction was counterproductive for the relationship as a whole; it showed that Clinton's commitment to human rights, a traditional American priority, was not inviolate, and that Clinton could be outfaced with stiff resistance. David Lampton paraphrases one US Congressman speaking to visiting Chinese dignitaries before the initial announcement:

I have some good news and some bad news for you. The bad news is that President Clinton has promised to take MFN away from China if human rights don't improve. The good news is that he doesn't keep his promises.¹⁸

Given the mutual interest of economic development, Clinton had sought to define and defend his administration's China Policy as a 'Strategic Partnership'. However, this perception was firmly rejected by the 2000 Republican Candidate, George W. Bush, who instead positioned 'Strategic Competition' as the watchword for US-China relations for his term in office. During the 2000 campaign, Bush took a swipe at what he saw as Clintonian inconsistencies: "One year, it is said to be run by 'the Butchers of Beijing'. A few years later, the same administration pronounces it a 'Strategic Partner'".¹⁹ Bush, who prided himself on being the "calcium in the bones", thus scorned what he saw as a policy of inappropriate flexibility.²⁰ The Bush team also criticised Clinton's 1998 nine-day visit to China, designed to

¹⁷ 'Press conference of the President', Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 26 May 1994.

¹⁸ Lampton, 'America's China Policy in the Age of the Finance Minister'.

¹⁹ John W. Dietrich (ed.), *The George W. Bush Foreign Policy Reader, Presidential Speeches with Commentary* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2005).

²⁰ Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006) p. 326.

strengthen the relationship, as equally inappropriate since the visit did not include side trips to America's Japanese and South Korean allies: "Never again should an American President go to Beijing for nine days and refuse to stop in Tokyo or Seoul."²¹

While Clinton had changed position several times on trade issues, whether regarding Chinese human rights or, as will be discussed, on China's World Trade Organization (WTO) entry, Bush did not compromise on his outlook; trade was a good thing for the relationship and the Bush team felt that economic integration would be good for human rights in China, as well as for bilateral ties and the American economy. Domestic criticism would not be allowed to hijack or damage what Bush thought best. Written in 2000, Condoleezza Rice's 'Promoting the National Interest' declared that:

Trade and economic interaction are, in fact, good—not only for America's economic growth but for its political aims as well ... although some argue that the way to support human rights is to refuse trade with China, this punishes precisely those who are most likely to change the system.²²

It should be noted that Bush did not abandon human rights issues, but took a different approach to the Clinton administration. Richard Armitage stated that a more private method was more conducive to relations:

Approach the Chinese privately and say here's what you're doing, if you fix it in this period of time, it'll stay here, otherwise the pressure is going to go up ... they appreciate the fact that they got caught, we caught them, we handled it in a way which showed we wanted to have a tomorrow, we didn't want to score a short-time political point ... they appreciated it.²³

Bush recalled in his memoirs that, rather than terrorism, what kept Chinese President Hu Jintao "up at night" was "creating twenty-five million new jobs a year".²⁴ Bush's priority was to foster an endogenous Chinese appreciation of economic development, and to share the benefits of appropriate trade between the two countries. Bush also worked to convince the Chinese that his position and statements could be relied upon. As such, he did not want to 'own' economic engagement between the two countries, but rather see it develop as an issue of mutual benefit—even at the risk of staunch domestic criticism. For example, in 2004, the premier American trade union group, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), filed a trade complaint about Chinese labour conditions. The complaint was rejected by the Bush administration for the aforementioned

²¹ Condoleezza Rice, 'Promoting the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (2000), pp. 45-62.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²³ Armitage, interview with the author, 12 July 2012.

²⁴ Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 427.

reasons.²⁵ This proved to the Chinese leadership that Bush was genuine in his commitment to trade relations.

If China failed to fulfil its obligations, the Bush administration were in a position to respond by using official avenues of adjudication. In December 2001 China finally became an official WTO member, it promised to “abide by WTO rules and honour its commitments while enjoying its rights.” On 17 February 2003, Robert Zoellick, then a US Trade Representative, visited China to discuss its WTO ascension, economic reforms and bilateral and global trade issues. During his visit, Zoellick likened the WTO ascension as an economic tie comparable to the political tie created by the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué. With concerns about the sustainability of ‘Brand China’ in the face of copyright breaches and poor workmanship, Zoellick stressed China needed to continue to push economic reforms and ensure industrial and intellectual standards were maintained.²⁶ In March 2004, the United States filed the first case against China at the WTO, based on a 17 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT) on US-built semiconductors. The move triggered a sixty-day consultation period, and China responded to the case by expressing surprise and then agreeing to discuss the VAT.²⁷ Maintaining a firm commitment to mutual trade standards and tariff agreements, Bush was able to foster closer economic interaction and negotiation, without posturing or making unsustainable demands. Bush remained committed to shared agreements, and when China reneged (or was unable to enforce compliance) on such agreements, he used accepted norms of economic behaviour to foster Chinese recalibration, such as filing a complaint with the WTO rather than publically criticising the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership in a way that could trigger resentment and truculence. These methods encouraged the CCP leadership to see Bush as a trustworthy, pragmatic figure.

Taiwan Strait Issue

The negative interpretation of Clinton’s agenda and personality following his human rights back down was a significant contributor to the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. A traditional flashpoint of relations, a cloak of ambiguity about America’s intentions had helped keep the Strait comparatively peaceful. As Joseph Nye explained,

if the U.S. were to say we will come to the defence of Taiwan, no matter what happens, then clearly Taipei would say “oh, we can do whatever we want”—and that would be destabilizing. On the other hand, if the U.S. said we will not defend Taiwan in the case of unprovoked attack, then Beijing

²⁵ Anita Chan, ‘America, Chicken Feet, Chinese Tires and the Struggle for Labor Rights’, *New Labor Forum*, vol. 19, no. 3 (2010), p. 58.

²⁶ Bonnie Glaser, ‘China and the U.S. Disagree, but with Smiles’, *Comparative Connections*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2003).

²⁷ Bonnie Glaser, ‘A Familiar Pattern: Cooperation with a Dash of Friction’, *Comparative Connections*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2004).

would think “Oh, we can do whatever we want”—and that would be destabilizing. So that’s the tactical reason ... for why the U.S. is careful not to give either side a carte blanche or a free ticket.²⁸

However, Taiwan had also fostered strong relations with the American Congress, which largely supported the democratic traditions of the island. In 1994, Clinton had received a great deal of opprobrium from House Republicans for refusing to allow Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to disembark from his plane during an over-night refuelling in Honolulu. A year later, Lee requested a visa to visit his alma mater, Cornell University. Although Clinton’s Secretary of State assured the Chinese that such a decision would be inconsistent with the administration’s stance on Taiwan, a visa was granted following domestic pressure from a nearly unanimous Congressional resolution to that effect.²⁹ The speech that Lee gave at Cornell, entitled ‘Taiwan’s Democratisation Experience’ further outraged an aggrieved People’s Republic of China, which subsequently declared a number of missile tests would be held along the coast close to Taiwan.³⁰ Seeking to influence the upcoming Taiwan elections, the Chinese display then escalated into live ammunition exercises and amphibious assault exercises stretching from November 1995 onward.³¹ Faced with an unheralded crisis, the US Government moved two aircraft carrier battle groups into the region, while the Chinese bellicosity actually ensured President Lee was re-elected during the crisis. Tensions gradually eased thereafter, and the US battle groups were able to move away from the region.

America’s response to this crisis had been largely preordained by the Taiwan Relations Act and the Three Joint Communiqués, but these understandings had traditionally afforded the US President a degree of diplomatic malleability and opacity on the issue.³² At the start of 1995 cross-strait relations had been no more dangerous than usual, and tensions seemed at a “four decade low” until Lee’s visa was granted.³³ The ferocity of the Chinese action was exacerbated by a sense of Chinese betrayal; having

²⁸ Quoted in Ronald C. Keith, ‘Strategic Ambiguity and the New Bush Administration’s “China Threat”’, *The Review of International Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2001), p. 3. See also Pan Zhongqi, ‘US Taiwan Policy of Strategic Ambiguity: A Dilemma of Deterrence’, *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 12, no. 35 (2003).

²⁹ ‘Lee Teng-hui Now Welcome to the USA, But Needs to Improve Democracy in Taiwan’, *Taiwan Communique*, no. 66, June 1995, <<http://www.taiwandc.org/twcom/66-no1.htm>> [Accessed 1 September 2013].

³⁰ Andrew Nathan, ‘China’s Goals in the Taiwan Strait’, *The China Journal*, no. 36 (July 1996), p.87-93.

³¹ Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, ‘The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996: Implications for US Security Policy’, *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 7, no. 19 (1998).

³² For further exploration of this issue, see Steven M. Goldstein and Randall Schriver, ‘An Uncertain Relationship: The United States, Taiwan and the Taiwan Relations Act’, *The China Quarterly*, no. 165 (2001).

³³ Andrew Scobell, ‘Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis’, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 2 (2000).

being told that Lee would not receive a visa, the Washington policy turnaround further undermined Chinese trust in Clinton's word, which in turn weakened the effectiveness of the ambiguity with which America had traditionally shrouded and protected the Taiwan question.³⁴ Unlike the awkward Human Rights/MFN issue, the 1996 Taiwan Strait Incident was a full blown crisis, unleashed by the granting of a visa against Clinton's assurances to Beijing, which allowed Lee's comments to be made to a prestigious American forum. As will be discussed, Bush's handling of Taiwan/China/America tensions was markedly different. Although more confrontational toward China than Clinton in many respects, Bush's presidency did not experience any crisis similar to the 1996 events, even when China was again upset by the mutterings of independence by a Taiwan President in 2002-2003. Had Clinton kept his word on the visa issue, the Chinese Government would not have felt the need to risk hawkish action to reaffirm the 'One China' status quo.³⁵

Having seen such incidents unfold during Clinton's presidency, Bush took a different approach to the Strait issue, seeking from his first moment to improve stability and understanding between Washington and both Beijing and Taipei.³⁶ However, Bush's public support of Taiwan changed during his first term—but the reasons for this lie with Chen, not Bush. After the 1996 crisis, Clinton had been wary of supporting further visits to America by President Lee, or his successor, Chen Shui-bian. Bush felt that this policy swung too far toward appeasement of Beijing. During a visit to America in 2000, Chen had been allowed on American soil, but was "effectively quarantined ... in his hotel in Los Angeles, [the Clinton administration] not allowing him to hold a press conference or give a public speech."³⁷ In contrast, Chen's 2001 visit under the Bush administration was far more open and interactive; New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani praised Taiwan in terms that contradicted the One China Policy, and in Texas Chen met with the vocal pro-Taiwan Republican Senate Leader Tom Delay.³⁸ Although Bush reaffirmed his commitment to the One China Policy, and the Three Communiqués, the change in treatment of the Taiwan President was part of Bush's policy to ease Taiwan's diplomatic isolation—motivated by the established and growing democratic tradition on the island.

³⁴ Pan Zhongqi, 'US Taiwan Policy of Strategic Ambiguity: A Dilemma of Deterrence', *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 12, no. 35 (2003), p. 387. See also Lawrence Grinter, 'Handling the Taiwan issue: Bush Administration Policy toward Beijing and Taipei', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2002); Ronald C. Keith, 'Strategic Ambiguity and the New Bush Administration's "China Threat"', *The Review of International Affairs*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2001).

³⁵ Andrew Scobell, 'Show of Force: Chinese Soldiers, Statesmen, and the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 115, no. 2 (2000).

³⁶ Bonnie Glaser, 'Mid-Air Collision Cripples Sino-U.S. Relations', *Comparative Connections*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2001).

³⁷ Bruce J. Dickson, 'New Presidents Adjust Old Policies: US-Taiwan Relations under Chen and Bush', p. 648.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 653.

Although Bush favoured stronger diplomatic and military ties with Taiwan, he did not support moves toward independence. Bush's support of Taiwan was finite, and based on his own intentions for the trilateral relationship, not those of Taipei or Beijing. Although he supported Chen during the 2001 visit, agreed to the biggest arms sale to Taiwan since his father's presidency, and, during a morning television interview, declared that America would do "whatever it takes" to defend Taiwan, Bush did not write a blank cheque in support of Chen. As Bonnie Glaser commented: "It was not clear in 2001 that Chen Shui-bian was going to be the problem that he became."³⁹ This became clear when Chen began pro-independence agitation in May 2003 by calling for a national referendum on Taiwan membership of the WTO (membership required sovereign status). Private warnings to Chen by US officials fell on deaf ears, and continued manoeuvrings by Chen prompted an official statement by Bush in December 2003 that America did not support

any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo. And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally, to change the status quo, which we oppose.⁴⁰

Bush's criticism of Chen outraged many American conservatives, including Congressional Republicans and think-tanks. Neoconservative writers William Kristol and Robert Kagan circulated a memo that warned "appeasement of a dictatorship simply invites further attempts at intimidation".⁴¹ However, to the Chinese Communist Party, Bush's statement was a critical moment of his first term. It showed that Bush was not a blind supporter of Taiwan, and that he had a genuine commitment to regional stability (as they saw it) even in the face of American domestic opposition. The reining-in of Chen gave Bush a great deal of 'face' in Beijing. Robert Sutter argues that the Bush administration's previous support for Taiwan had been wilfully misinterpreted by President Chen as support for *de jure* independence, and that the United States was also concerned that Chen's efforts reflected a growing pro-independence sentiment in the Taiwan population—and this changing opinion motivated Bush to publicly rebuke pro-independence movements.⁴² However, since Bush recognised such outcomes would be unacceptable to the Chinese, and since Chen had ignored private conversations, Bush was forced to publicly castigate Chen for his manoeuvring. Although this did not mean that US-Taiwan relations were discarded in favour of closer US-China relations, it proved the largesse Taiwan received was carefully controlled. As Denis Van Vranken Hickey suggested:

³⁹ Bonnie Glaser, interview with the author, 10 July 2012.

⁴⁰ Michael D. Swaine, 'Trouble in Taiwan', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 2 (2004), p. 42.

⁴¹ Joshua Kurlantzick, 'Chinese Wall: Bush's Outdated Taiwan Policy', *The New Republic*, 15 March 2004.

⁴² Robert Sutter, 'The Taiwan Problem in the Second George W. Bush Administration—US Officials' Views and their Implications for US Policy', *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 15, no. 48 (2006), p. 418.

The U.S. has not sacrificed Taiwan to gain China's friendship and support. However, all available evidence suggests the Bush administration will not endorse any major adjustments in security or political relations with Taiwan ... In short, it appears that Taipei's drive to upgrade relations with Washington has hit a 'glass ceiling'.⁴³

The point is that these changes of policy regarding Taiwan were based on Bush's consistency and Chen's inconsistency, not the reverse.

Furthermore, in making his public statement opposing Taiwanese independence, Bush concurrently, and privately, informed Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao that America's policy position remained unchanged, and that America would still 'have to get involved' if force were used against Taiwan—a position acknowledged by the Chinese leadership.⁴⁴ Most importantly, Bush's public statement about independence was not a case of a reactive American foreign policy stamping down on Taiwan's President, but a coordinated, sustained management of the US/China/Taiwan situation, bound by the Taiwan Relations Act, that avoided a repeat of the 1996 crisis. Former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Mike Green argues that this incident helped strengthen Bush's reputation in Chinese circles as a President who could be trusted: "The President could do anything after that, because the Chinese ... foreign minister told me that they knew from that that he was supportive of Taiwan, but there were boundaries, and it's clear that there were."⁴⁵

Leader-to-Leader Relations

As China's economic base strengthens and its power grows, the issue of 'face' is seen as increasingly important to the CCP leadership, and to the Chinese people. As the 'Leader of the Free World', the President of the United States can enjoy a great deal of cachet with the Chinese leadership. Equally, however, there is great risk that a Chinese leader can feel or act slighted, if they are not treated with the respect that they feel they, and China, are due.⁴⁶ The visit of Premier Zhu Rongji to Washington in late 1999 provides an example of the latter. Although the visit did not result in general embarrassment for Clinton, or a military crisis, it was another occasion when relations between America and China were undermined. After thirteen years of negotiation for China's entry into the WTO, Zhu had arrived in Washington assuming the last bilateral trade issues were squared away and an overall agreement could be signed. Zhu had made significant concessions to reach

⁴³ Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, 'Continuity and Change: The Administration of George W. Bush and US Policy toward Taiwan', *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 13, no. 40 (August 2004), p. 268.

⁴⁴ Bonnie Glaser, 'Wen Jiabao's Visit Caps an Outstanding Year', *Comparative Connections*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2004).

⁴⁵ Mike Green, interview with the author, 11 July 2012.

⁴⁶ There is extensive literature on this issue, tied as it is to issues of nationalism and China's political development. See Jonathan Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power, 1850-2009* (London, Penguin Books, 2009).

what he thought was, essentially, an agreed contract.⁴⁷ However, Clinton and his advisors, looking at these concessions, and facing domestic challenges to the agreement, sought to introduce a new round of last-minute qualifications and guarantors—changes of which Zhu was not aware when flying to America. An American official closely involved in the negotiations admitted the situation reflected “bad communication”.⁴⁸ Zhu returned to China almost empty-handed, embarrassing his own domestic audience.⁴⁹ Zhu had put a considerable amount of political capital into pushing domestic reforms for Chinese WTO access, and Clinton’s decision was seen as both a rebuff of these efforts and as evidence of American unreliability. The subsequent publication of those concessions that Zhu *had* been willing to make further undermined his position, with Chinese students and internet commentators labelling the concessions a betrayal of Chinese interests reminiscent of the ‘Century of Unequal Treaties’ of the 1800s. It took several months, and several letters from Clinton to Zhu, before the Chinese leadership felt they could return to WTO negotiations.⁵⁰

It was a matter of both policy and inclination that Bush’s relationship with the Chinese leadership should be frank and productive, which, according to Green, was part of Bush’s executive outlook even before becoming President:

it was a very deliberate, Governor’s approach—investing in relationships ... He had that instinct ... of a successful governor ... he built relationships, he helped people out, sometimes when they didn’t even ask, he helped people out. It was a very Asian way of doing business ... His personality was therefore very well suited to the region.⁵¹

Green differentiates this from Clinton’s own famous charm, arguing that Bush sought to invest relationships over the long term. Rumsfeld argues that this aspect of Bush’s personality was a distinct asset for American foreign policy:

When it came to personal diplomacy, George W. Bush was an active and productive, if publically underestimated, asset ... In meeting after meeting, I saw the President put his foreign interlocutors at ease. This personal rapport paid dividends ... His relationships translated into closer ties between our countries and tangible support for initiatives like the ninety-country Proliferation Security Initiative.⁵²

An example of this leader-to-leader relationship building is found in Bush’s response to the 2002/2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

⁴⁷ Bonnie Glasser, ‘Challenged by New Crises’, *Comparative Connections*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1999).

⁴⁸ Discussion with the author, 2013.

⁴⁹ Joseph Fewsmith, ‘China and the WTO: The Politics Behind the Agreement’, *NBR Analysis*, December 1999.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Mike Green, interview with the author, 11 July 2012.

⁵² Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), p. 628.

outbreak in China. The outbreak triggered a major crisis for the CCP. With 5,327 infections and 348 deaths, CCP priorities of “maintaining social stability” had actually undermined public health efforts. Rather than criticise the CCP for its handling of the disease, Bush publicly supported his Chinese counterpart by praising President Hu’s willingness to be open about this transnational threat.⁵³ Green argues that this particular gesture, a public statement of support toward Hu, was an important moment for the new Chinese President and gave Bush a great deal of prestige in Hu’s eyes. Green argued:

When Hu Jintao became President in the midst of SARS, when he was being criticized around the world, the President called him and said: “You’re doing a good job ... if there’s anything I can do to help [call].” And the Chinese came back and said “Man! That had an impact on Hu Jintao.” No other world leader did that, they all just said you’ve got to do something and they criticized him.⁵⁴

Green argues that this was a conscious decision by Bush, for “investment in relationships for the long run, so that you have them in a crisis, whether an ally or the Chinese Leader, you need to [be able to] pick up the phone next time there’s a crisis.”⁵⁵

Crisis Management

The importance of these direct relationships between American and Chinese leaders was highlighted in America’s accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on the night of 7 May 1999. The lowest point of Clinton’s relationship with China, five missiles hit the compound during the attack, killing three Chinese civilians. It was reported as a mistake in targeting by the CIA, but the bombings triggered virulent anti-American riots across China. Many Chinese officials shared the outrage of the rioters, while more pragmatic officials were limited in salvaging the benefits of the Sino-American relationship without losing face in the eyes of the Chinese public.⁵⁶ Although the Chinese deemed the relationship with America essential for China’s future, their relationship with Clinton received further damage, and Premier Jiang Zemin did not answer the phone when Clinton called on the newly established Washington-Beijing hotline. Again, Clinton was left with no option but to scramble to re-establish ties, doggedly pursuing the concept of China-US ‘Strategic Cooperation’. Ultimately, the incident showed how little genuine political capital or trust Clinton had been able to develop with China after nearly eight years as President.

⁵³ Bonnie Glaser, ‘SARS, Summity, and Sanctions’, *Comparative Connections*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2003).

⁵⁴ Green, 11 July 2012.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Peter Hays Gries, ‘Tears of Rage: Chinese Nationalist Reactions to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing’, *The China Journal*, no. 46 (July 2001), pp. 25-43.

Yet a crisis of similar proportion in the opening days of Bush's presidency led to a different outcome. On 1 April 2001, an American EP-3 surveillance plane collided mid-air with a Chinese F-8 fighter off the Chinese coast—the Chinese pilot was killed and the American plane made an emergency landing on Hainan Island, where the crew were immediately detained.⁵⁷ The collision triggered the first serious foreign policy challenge for the Bush administration—and could have become a serious diplomatic or military embarrassment or disaster.⁵⁸ The main issue of the crisis was the Chinese demand for an apology for the loss of the pilot's life, matched by America's demand for the release of the US Servicemen without an apology.⁵⁹ Once these demands had been publicly stated, the defusing of the crisis was only possible through a diplomatic compromise that would allow both sides to 'save face' without admitting fault.⁶⁰ Efforts at communication by the State Department were confounded by a Chinese bureaucracy that was grudgingly slow to respond to American overtures. As with the Belgrade bombing, Premier Jiang Zemin was slow to respond to calls from the American President. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage recounted: "After some initial flurries of not being able to find the Chinese—they didn't want to answer the hot line, because they didn't have their act together, over time we were able to resolve this."⁶¹ It was later discovered that one of Jiang's reasons for delaying his response was the misinformation he had received about the incident from the People's Liberation Army (PLA).⁶²

Ultimately, the crisis was defused by a letter drafted by Powell and the State Department regretting the incident and the pilot's death, but without taking responsibility for the collision. The incident indicated to Bush that proper management of bilateral relations required a top-level connection between leaders which could bypass not only bilateral tensions between countries, but also circumnavigate tensions within the Chinese Government hierarchy, which might have bureaucratic reasons for obfuscating the facts when crisis struck. Green argues

the lesson was the President of the United States has got to have a very strong relationship with the President of China, because all the other channels are unreliable, and the PLA is beyond the control of the Foreign Ministry, and even beyond the control of the CCP, in an operational sense

⁵⁷ Jean A. Garrison, *Making China Policy: From Nixon to G. W. Bush* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), p 169.

⁵⁸ Glaser, 'Mid-Air Collision Cripples Sino-U.S. Relations'.

⁵⁹ For an examination of the technicalities of this linguistic showdown, see Kevin Avruch and Zheng Wang, 'Culture, Apology and International Relations: The Case of the Sino-U.S. "Spy Plane" Crisis', *International Negotiation*, vol. 10 (2005), pp. 337-53.

⁶⁰ Garrison, *Making China Policy*, p. 170.

⁶¹ Armitage, 12 July 2012.

⁶² It is suggested this was partly as a cover-up by the PLA to avoid responsibility for the collision and death of their pilot; see James R. Lilley and Arthur Waldron, 'The U.S. Owes No Apology to the Chinese', *The Wall Street Journal*, 05 April, 2001, <<http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/asia/the-us-owes-no-apology-to-the-chinese/>> [Accessed 23 September 2013].

... so the lesson was ... the President's ability to talk to and trust in the Chinese leader matters.⁶³

The need to foster personal ties between Bush and the Chinese leadership reinforced Bush's pre-existing commitment to leader-to-leader ties of trust and understanding—and would contribute to the success of US-China relations as a whole, as Bush's response to the SARS outbreak would later show. The Hainan Island Incident was the first major test of Bush's China policy and his nuanced response—firm, yet open to dialogue—successfully resolved a crisis.

Conclusion

By mid-1999, near the end of Clinton's Presidency, relations with China were still so difficult that Bates Gill could ask "what happened to the 'constructive strategic partnership' professed by the two sides just a year ago?"⁶⁴ In 2000, Ralph Cossa labelled any Clinton-era claim of cooperation and unity between the two countries as "more style than substance".⁶⁵ Yet by late 2003, management of the US-China relationship was being praised inside and outside the administration. During a speech at George Washington University, Powell declared US-China relations "the best they have been since President Nixon's first visit". Powell repeated this statement in a 2004 Foreign Affairs article, in which he also underlined that the United States welcomed "the emergence of a strong, peaceful and prosperous China".⁶⁶ Armitage declared the administration was "absolutely delighted with the state of our relations with the People's Republic of China and the direction we're going", and that the Chinese leadership shared his sentiments.⁶⁷ In addition to Chinese cooperation regarding the Six Party Talks, the United States also felt it was seeing genuine, endogenous Chinese progress or concession across the entirety of American interests in the relationship. Robert Sutter argued that Bush's China policy had been vindicated by the outcome of the Hainan Island Incident, and that Bush had secured ongoing Chinese accommodation:

since mid-2001 ... [the Chinese Leadership], have carried out what appears to be their most important adjustment in Chinese foreign policy toward the United States and US interests in world affairs since the end of the Cold War, strongly emphasizing the positive while eschewing pressure, confrontation and conflict ... moderation is all the more striking because US policy in these sensitive areas during the Bush administration has moved

⁶³ Green, 11 July 2012.

⁶⁴ Bates Gill, 'Limited Engagement', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 4 (July/August 1999).

⁶⁵ Ralph A. Cossa, 'Ushering In the Post Post-Cold War Era', *Comparative Connections*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2001), p. 3.

⁶⁶ Colin Powell, 'A Strategy of Partnerships', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 1 (2004).

⁶⁷ Glaser, 'The Best since 1972 or the Best Ever?'

forward without concessions to Chinese concerns ... major credit has to go to an effective Bush administration policy toward China.⁶⁸

Policy Recommendations

These various case studies help to identify key recommendations for foreign policy toward China for American and Australian strategic leaders. A priority must be placed on fostering leader-to-leader relationships of trust and candour, which allow calibration and finessing of other areas of engagement. From an American standpoint, announcing ultimatums for the relationship is counter-productive and disingenuous – if they are inconsistent, irresolute or contingent on domestic circumstance. Forcing China to change a policy only works if it maintains Chinese ‘face’, if dialogue is maintained, and if American commitment to that policy is unwavering. Negotiation with China on regional issues can be volatile, and must take into account political considerations within China. Finally, relationships in crises are dependent upon the relationship as a whole; a good relationship allows opportunity for crises to be quickly overcome, a bad relationship lets them fester and contaminate bilateral relations beyond the specific issue or moment in time.

President Obama has experienced a number of challenges in the bilateral relationship. Shared tensions over North Korea have been carefully defused, and Obama has called Chinese bluffs where necessary, such as deciding to include an aircraft carrier in joint exercises in the Yellow Sea (despite Chinese protests) after the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan* and, most recently, flying two B-52 Bombers through East China Sea airspace days after China claimed the area as an “air defence identification zone”.⁶⁹ All of this has taken place against the backdrop of America’s recent ‘pivot to Asia’. The implications of the ‘pivot’ to Asia have been widely discussed and disseminated, and for the purposes of this article, it is clear that the subsequent attempt to rebrand this as a ‘realignment’ was, in part, motivated by a desire to appear less confrontational and challenging to China—to save face, rather than to antagonise. The two-day summit between Obama and the new Chinese President Xi Jinping in January 2013 was welcomed by China as a substantial, workman-like meeting of equally powerful and professional governments and leaders. For future American leaders, the need to establish person-to-person ties of trust and reliability should remain the highest priority, even in the face of persistent domestic policy concerns or rising tensions between both countries.

⁶⁸ Robert Sutter, ‘Bush Administration Policy Toward Beijing and Taipei’, *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 12, no. 36 (2003), p. 478.

⁶⁹ See John Pomfret, ‘U.S. and South Korea to announce joint military exercises’, *Washington Post*, 15 July 2010, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/14/AR2010071405675.html>> [Accessed 12 December 2013]; and ‘U.S. Sends Two B-52 Bombers Into Air Zone Claimed by China’, *New York Times*, 26 November 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/world/asia/us-flies-b-52s-into-chinas-expanded-air-defense-zone.html?_r=0> [Accessed 12 December 2013].

Compared to the United States, Australia's China engagement is far smaller in both scale and complexity, but certain issues remain comparable and leader-to-leader ties remain essential. Comments on Asian immigration, stated while in opposition, came back to haunt Prime Minister John Howard, and Howard's initial China engagement foundered on Chinese antipathy. A 'reboot' of the relationship took place during the 1996 APEC meeting in Manila, when Howard and Jiang Zemin met face to face, which Howard claims "laid the groundwork for the productive links developed between [Australia and China] ... over the ensuing five years."⁷⁰ By focusing on mutual interests, particularly on economic issues, Howard was able to build a largely constructive relationship with China. Howard recognised that attempting to influence China required finesse:

I think this idea of saying to the Chinese "we won't deal with you unless you lift your human rights game or we're going to do this or that" ... it won't work because you're never really in a position to deliver on the threats. That's the problem with making threats like that ... you actually have to deliver on them. And unless you're in a strong position to do that, that's quite hard.⁷¹

The 'China Choice' issue facing Australia—whether Australia should embrace closer ties with China, at the expense of traditional ties to America—does not necessarily need to be made. Howard was able to balance both relationships throughout his term, and the October 2003 addresses to both Houses of Parliament by Bush on one day, and then by Hu the next, was the epitome of Australia's trilateral relationship management which, as with America's stance on Taiwan, is aided by ambiguity and a lack of resolution. As the current Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, feels his way into the Australia/China relationship, a direct, Prime Ministerial relationship with Chinese leaders will be essential for promotion of Australian interests, in trade, diplomacy and crisis management, in addition to the 'day to day' management of the relationship by the Australian Foreign Minister and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Although interests may remain divergent, the perception of how these interests and divergences can be managed by elites in America, China and even Australia will have a great impact on relations between the world's two largest economies. By establishing a relationship of trust, Bush was able to defuse Chinese fears about keeping or losing 'face', and allow China's leaders to rely upon his word as they coordinated the legion of challenges facing 'China's Rise'. This strengthened both the US-China relationship and broader regional stability. Twenty-first century policy makers should take note of the elite level engagement underpinning this successful management of US-China relations.

⁷⁰ John Howard, *John Howard: Lazarus Rising* (Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), p. 390.

⁷¹ John Howard, interview with the author, 15 October 2010.

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