

Professional Journal of
**TE TAUA MOANA
O AOTEAROA**
The Royal New Zealand Navy

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Te Taua Moana o Aotearoa: The New Zealand Warriors of the Sea

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COVER IMAGE

The rifle featured on the cover is a taonga presented to Te Taua Moana Marae by the New Zealand Army in April 2000. For the full story of the gift, see page 4.
Photo credit: CPL Dillon Anderson.

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TE PŪ | THE RIFLE

Our cover image of he pū (a rifle) with its inset carvings is the third taonga (treasure) to be featured on the cover of the *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy*. We've chosen this taonga for the third volume of the Journal as we have the honour of including an article by the Chief of Army, Major General John Boswell. The concept for the cover was originally proposed by our inaugural General Editor Dr Lance Beath, prior to his passing in 2021, which makes it additionally poignant.

The Lee Enfield rifle was old army stock from the Second World War. It is believed that te pū featured on this cover belonged to Montgomery Hudson of Ngāti Awa and Whakatōhea, a member of Bravo Company 28 Māori Battalion.

When he returned home to Ōpōtiki, te pū was kept as a hunting rifle used to feed the whānau. Over time it was used by other former members of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), with the last known former Army whanaunga being Dovey Kaipara. It ended up being in the possession of Koro Wikotu of Kutarere and of the Ūpokorehe hapū of Whakatōhea, a brother-in-law of Doug Te Ani, whose partner Margaret Kahika was the niece of Montgomery Hudson.

Koro Wikotu carved the first images, which were of Tarawera Maunga and Putauaki Maunga of Kawerau. This was an acknowledgement of the bounty that these maunga supplied the whānau in times of tangihanga and special occasions such as hura kōhatu, and rā whānau.

Te pū was handed to Heke Collier of Ōpōtiki, a former member of the New Zealand Army, who completed the carvings, linking te pū to its origins of Ngaitama and Ngāti Ngahere of Whakatōhea, Ngai Tai ki Tōrere of Tainui and Te Whānau Apanui, Ngāti Awa and Tuhoe.

Koro Wikotu borrowed a rifle from Jack Kahika, and it was taken from his house, because Jack Kahika was a very avid hunter and would provide the elders with their kai. As a gesture of resolution Koro Wikotu handed te pū back to Jack in acknowledgement of his hunting background and mahi kai and his whakapapa lineage.

Jack Kahika then gave the rifle to Jason Kahika, as the first family member who had the right to carry the rifle being a member of the NZDF and a student of Te Whare o Tūmatauenga. He was the grandson of Elizabeth Kahika, who was the brother of Montgomery Hudson.

Jason Kahika used te pū as a Kaiwero in the Navy but also for his marae. Te pū was always destined to return to the NZDF where it belonged, and so, when the Navy Marae was opened, a wero (challenge) to Ngāti Tūmatauenga (the New Zealand Army) was given to return te pū with their blessing and bestow the mana of those who had held it on the sacred grounds of the marae ātea, so it would never be mokemoke (alone).

The Army returned te pū to its new whare at the marae opening and gave their blessing as it was returned. It would look over all whānau of the NZDF, as a gift from the tribes of the Bay of Plenty.

Ko Tarawera me Putauaki te tino kai kāpata o ngā whānau.
Ko Kutarere te wāhi tapu o ngā kaiwhakairo.
Ko Ngā uri o Mātaatua me Tainui ngā waka.
Ko Ohiwa me Waikaremoana te wairua.
Ko te pū te ingoa.

Tihei mauri ora.

Many thanks to Jason Kahika for helping us tell this story.



The full rifle shown on the cover. Photo: CPL Dillon Anderson, NZDF.

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FOREWORD



COMMODORE MELISSA ROSS

**Chair of the Editorial Review Board
Deputy Chief of Navy, RNZN**

Iti rearea, teitei kahikatea, ka taea – The rearea (bellbird) is one of the smallest birds in the forest, yet it is capable of reaching the tops of the kahikatea, the tallest tree in the forests.

I am delighted to introduce the third edition of the *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy*. The whakataukī above is one that is very apt for this edition. The loss of Dr Lance Beath as our General Editor left a large gap not just of institutional knowledge, but the process of publishing a journal and ensuring it maintains its quality and integrity. I am grateful to Managing Editors Emily Brill-Holland and, latterly, Madison Hamill, who have managed to produce a journal that meets the standards set by the previous two issues, with a team of willing volunteers.

The centrepiece of this issue is Professor Geoffrey Till's "three-in-one" article covering the integrated nature of today's challenges, their implications for navies, and analysis of the Royal Navy's Carrier Strike Group 2021 (CSG21) as a case study in the integration of naval power. The underlying theme is that integration means integrating efforts across governments as well as international partners. CSG21 was not just a naval effort, but a national one.

Captain John Sellwood completes the hat trick of having an article in each issue of the Journal with his essay on the influence of geography on great power competition. The essay was written while a student at the United States Naval War College in 2020, and was recognised as the top essay of the year.

In a closing note, he comments that how we see ourselves geographically is important because that is how the great powers will often think of us – using the map as a form of strategic shorthand. It is incumbent on us to determine how to use social, political and economic means to complement our advantages and compensate for our disadvantages. He also promises one more article for the next issue, in which he will examine these issues in more depth from a New Zealand point of view.

This issue then looks at ourselves, with an article by Chief of Army Major General John Boswell on The Land Component in the Maritime Domain. Major General Boswell sets out the relationship between the land and maritime domains. While New Zealand is a maritime nation,

success in operations, whether combat or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) is ultimately dependent on the 'boots on the ground'. Operations will only succeed if they are integrated from conception to execution.

Neil James (Australian Army, Rtd) writes about the process of establishing Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (HQ JFNZ) in 2000. He emphasises that while they were building a Joint Headquarters, there was an opportunity to create a different way of thinking – jointery, and that the headquarters would only succeed if the shirt colour became irrelevant.

Rounding off the internal focus is Chris Saxby's look at sustaining the fleet into the future. Chris simplifies the task of maintaining warships and describes what he sees as the shortcomings in New Zealand's arrangements. He concludes by suggesting some improvements for the future through the lens of international developments.

The Journal builds on the wider view of Geoffrey Till's article with a contribution from Lieutenant Junior Grade Dongkeun Lee, ROKN, a reservist officer of the Republic of Korea Navy and PhD candidate at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC), Australian National University. Lieutenant Junior Grade Lee has written a very perceptive article on the strategies available to states like South Korea or New Zealand to manage their interests in the increasingly contested and congested Indo-Pacific region. He suggests there is scope for increasing the cooperation between South Korea and New Zealand as like-minded states with similar interests, and facing similar threats.

The final part of the Journal is the first of two essays written for a staff course by current Maritime Component Commander, Commodore Garin Golding. Commodore Golding writes about the security implications for the Polar regions of China's rise, based on a dissertation written while then-Captain Golding was enrolled as a student at the Royal College of Defence Studies, the senior college of the United Kingdom's Defence Academy.

I would like to extend my thanks to the contributors, reviewers and the team that has put this issue together. All of them have primary roles and have committed a significant amount of time and effort to ensure this issue is published without compromising the standards it aspires to. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of New Zealand, in the Blue Room of Buckingham Palace. Photo taken by Julian Calder for the Governor-General of New Zealand, 2011.

A note of mourning

The death of Queen Elizabeth II occurred as this issue was going to print. It would however, be remiss of the Editors not to acknowledge her passing and her relationship with New Zealand, the NZDF and the RNZN. Her death brings to a close an era of leadership in which World War II was within living memory, and the perspective given by personal experience of global conflict. However, King Charles III has acceded to the throne, Her Majesty's Ships become His Majesty's Ships and life continues.

<i>Auē te aroha</i>	<i>Alas, sympathy and affection</i>
<i>Auē te pōuri</i>	<i>Alas, the sadness</i>
<i>E te Arikinui, te Kuini moe</i>	<i>To the Most High</i>
<i>rangimārie mai i roto i</i>	<i>Chieftainess, our Queen rest</i>
<i>ngā ringaringa o tō tatou</i>	<i>now peacefully in the hands</i>
<i>kaihanga</i>	<i>of the Creator</i>
<i>E te Arikinui haere atu rā</i>	<i>Farewell great one</i>

<i>Mā te Atua e manaaki te Kuini</i>	<i>God bless the Queen</i>
<i>Mā te Atua e whakaora te Kingi</i>	<i>God save the King</i>



EDITORIAL



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER RICHARD DAVIES

Guest Editor, *Professional Journal
of the Royal New Zealand Navy*

It is somewhat daunting to be the Journal's first guest editor – filling the shoes of the well-respected academic and diplomat Lance Beath. No pressure then. Looking over the last two issues, the editorial has been an introduction and precis for the contents, linking them to a central theme and beginning a serious conversation. Lance had put his stamp on it and was able to shepherd the production of each issue in a way that reflected the theme he had in mind for that issue. This issue, however, was always going to be different.

I intend to address as my focus, a topical issue in front of us: the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the time of writing, Ukraine is holding Russia in the south and east, and notably for a nation without a navy, has sunk four warships.

So, why does Ukraine matter, and why devote critical space in a naval journal to discussing it? There are four reasons, which are—

- the principle of the inviolability of national borders,
- the impacts for the international rules-based system,
- the failure of the United Nations (UN), and
- the sinking of major fleet units by a nation that doesn't have a navy.

There is a long tradition dating from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, through the Congress of Vienna of 1815 to the UN Charter of 1945, under which states do not interfere with the territorial integrity of others. The UN Charter specifically prohibits the use of armed force against other states. It may be imperfect, but this principle has been instrumental in preserving global peace and security since 1945, enabling states to get on with providing an ever-improving standard of living for their citizens free from the threat of aggressive neighbours. New Zealand, as a geographically isolated state in the midst of a large ocean, has been able to develop as a first world economy, trading freely with the rest of the world to the benefit of all.

The inviolability of national borders was intended to be upheld by member states of the United Nations, which, in the event of aggression by one of its members would impose sanctions on the offender and, in the extreme, authorise the use of armed force to restore the situation antebellum.

The UN has failed spectacularly. Russian use of its veto has effectively hamstrung the Security Council as guarantor of peace and security. Despite the General Assembly passing a resolution condemning Russian action, it has also been unsuccessful in getting Russian troops to withdraw. The international response to Russian aggression has been led by NATO and the European Union, with support from a wide range of like-minded states. It should be added though, a significant number of states either support Russian action or are not prepared to act against it.

The implications are hard to predict, but the failure of the UN jeopardises the international rules-based system New Zealand relies on to protect its interests, leading us to ask, what now? Can we continue to rely on security guarantees we know are flawed, or do we, as we have done at least twice in our history, seek another powerful maritime state to provide our security? We could seek closer alignment with the US, with NATO, perhaps even China. Or do we exercise our right to federate with Australia and become the eighth state?

None of these options are certainties, and we cannot know what the end result of Russia's actions will be. We do know, however, that the international environment in which New Zealand exists has become a whole lot more dangerous.

On a more naval note, at the time of writing, Ukraine forces have sunk the Russian cruiser *Moskva*, and are reported to have damaged a modern frigate, *Admiral Makarov*, and attacked other vessels alongside. The sinkings inevitably raise questions about the future viability of surface ships in combat zones; but they need to be considered in context. The ships are operating in a relatively confined space, supporting land forces, and attack by land-based missiles is a particular risk. What's important is not whether ships are put at risk, but whether commanders understand the risk and factor that into their decisions. Sending ships into danger means they and their people could be lost, and they may still have to do it. The decision to operate a major unit like the *Moskva* within missile range has to be considered in several ways – is there a threat to the ship? Can the effect be delivered in another way? If the ship is lost, can the mission still be accomplished?

On the wider question, like Mark Twain, reports of the demise of surface ships have been greatly exaggerated. The debate, though, brings into focus the fixation on platforms. Should New Zealand invest in vulnerable surface ships? This is not the question. Platforms, whether they are frigates, aircraft carriers or main battle tanks, are a means to deliver an effect. When surface ships can no longer deliver an effect, they will fade away and be replaced by some other technology yet to be determined. In the meantime, and in the absence of an obvious successor, we have to consider what is worse: to prepare for a fight that doesn't eventuate, or not prepare for the one that does.



Beginning of the Action, by Thomas Butterworth.
Image supplied by the Greenwich Museum.

Trafalgar Day

This month marks the 217th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. In the intervening years, despite the debate, myths and legends that have accreted around the action, its influence cannot be understated.

As John Hattendorf noted in the *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Maritime History*,

It demonstrated that the Royal Navy had superiority in training, professionalism and expertise in naval tactics—superiority that set it apart from any of its rivals.... Above all, the battle gave the Royal Navy an unmatched tradition of victory that is still potent, even two hundred years later.

There is a clear genetic link between that “winning tradition” and the current professionalism and expertise in naval tactics demonstrated by the Royal Navy's recent global cruise, CSG21, which Geoffrey Till writes about in our first article (page 14).



Iti rearea, teitei kahikatea, ka taea.

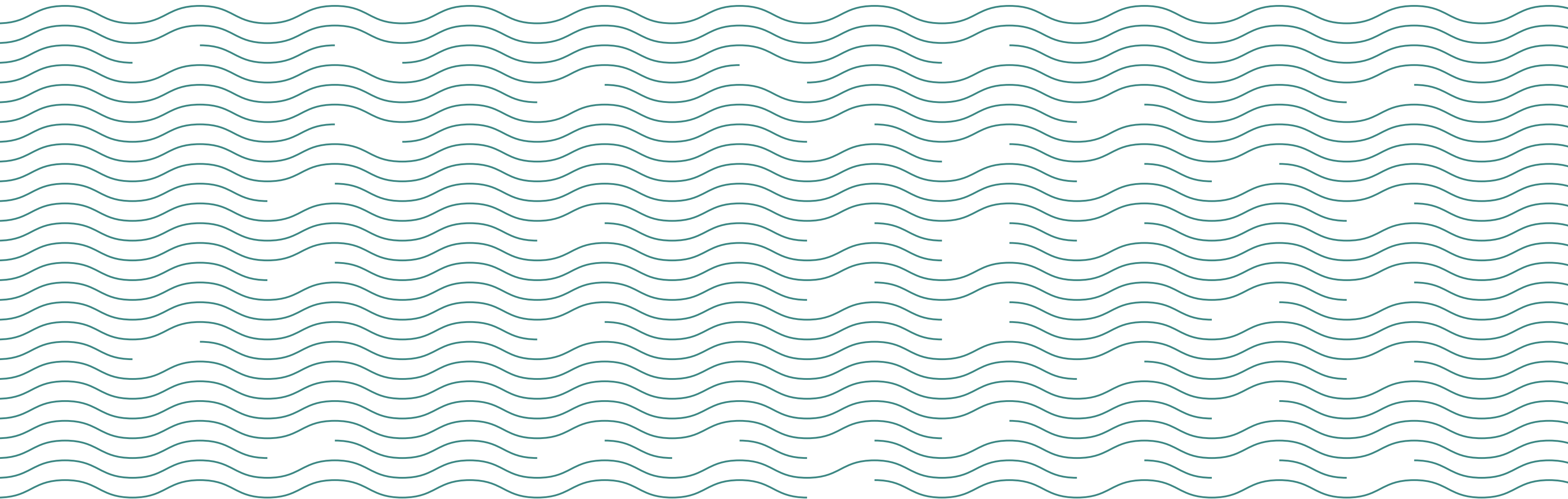
The rearea (bellbird) is one of the smallest birds in the forest, yet it is capable of reaching the tops of the tall kahikatea.

This whakataukī encourages persistence through trials and hardships. Translation from Te Wānanga o Raukawa.



DISCLAIMER

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“ONLY CONNECT”

**THE INTEGRATION OF
NAVAL POWER, GREY-ZONE
OPERATIONS AND CSG21—
THE WORLD CRUISE OF
*HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH***

Professor Geoffrey Till



In this article, **Professor Geoffrey Till** offers a three-part examination of the complex nature of today’s challenges for navies.

Like Julius Caesar’s Gaul, this article is divided into three parts. The first shows how today’s world demands the integration of all aspects of national policy. The second explores the implications of this for navies. The third and longest part shows how the world cruise of United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group 2021 (CSG21) exemplified an integrated approach to naval and national policy.

Part I: Today’s challenges

It’s trite but true to say that it’s a different world out there. It’s not just that technology has produced legions of new threats and possibilities such as cyber, artificial intelligence, biological weaponry, autonomous systems and machine learning, accompanied by more familiar ones like nuclear proliferation, hypersonic missiles and so forth. Nor is it simply the return of great power competition as the US and its partners increasingly square up against a resurgent China and a resentful Russia—and from a position of relatively weakened strength. Neither does the difference just derive from the coercive and destructive power now wielded by non-state actors ranging from potentially malign commercial corporations, to international criminal organisations to global terrorism; none of these threats are new. We’ve also had health emergencies before (the World Health Organisation reported 1500 outbreaks of infectious disease between 2011 and 2018) some of which could easily have turned into pandemics—if anything COVID-19 was overdue. Similarly, we should have realised the potential of catastrophic climate change much earlier. All of these challenges have faced us before.

The difference in fact is the *extent* of the threats posed and above all that they all apply *at the same time*. Individually, but especially collectively, they represent an unprecedentedly high level of threat to our security. This poses very real problems for today’s leaders because they have to decide the relative priority of the threats

they choose to respond to, at any given time. They know they have limited, not bottomless, resources and that there will inevitably be a gap between the demands of meeting each of the threats they choose to respond to and the resources they have available. Worse still, they know that these sets of threat-specific demands on their resources will compete. While the pandemic and climate change require international cooperation of the closest kind, the return of major international tensions makes this much more difficult. Money spent on deterrent weaponry to prevent international aggression and conflict cannot be spent on the alleviation of poverty, handling climate change or dealing with COVID-19.

All in all, it seems that the world’s leaders have more on their plate than they can comfortably deal with. Dealing with it all demands a balanced and integrated response. Unsurprisingly, it has been the leaders of arguably the most challenged of the greater powers who have been the most innovative in coming up with at least partial solutions to this problem. In many ways, Russia and China have set the pace.

In the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, Russia was in a truly parlous situation. The Soviet Union and its communist system had collapsed. Its leaders were fatally divided amongst themselves. Its economy was in ruins, its military forces isolated, demoralised and ineffective. It had no allies, or friends, as its erstwhile partners in Eastern Europe clamoured to join the West. And that was the rub. Mr Putin’s current behaviour over the Ukraine, it now seems clear, is at least in part explained by the fact Russia thought it had struck a bargain with the West, and specifically with the US; in return for giving up East Germany, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would expand ‘not one inch’ eastwards.¹ Instead, Russia thought, the West had encouraged the, allegedly spontaneous, defections of its former partners and even contemplated the eventual adhesion of Ukraine, that most historically visceral of its neighbours in the near abroad. Exacerbating Moscow’s resentment still further, a triumphant West seemed to ride roughshod over their historic

1 This interpretation of the events of the 1990s is powerfully and authoritatively argued in Yale University’s M.E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia and the making of Post-Cold War Stalemate*.

‘Money spent on deterrent weaponry to prevent international aggression and conflict cannot be spent on the alleviation of poverty, handling climate change or dealing with COVID-19.’

interests in the Balkans. This toxic mixture of imagined grievance violated Russia’s *derzhavnost*, its traditional image of itself as a great power.

The main exponent of Russia’s response to all this is usually identified as General Valery Gerasimov, currently Russia’s Chief of the Defence Staff, famous for his ideas about what have become known as “grey-zone” activities in the shadow-lands between peace and war. What is often missed though is his view that, in its subversive policies, the west had already been doing all this by means of its military and economic strength, its “attractive” soft power and its control of the international media and financial systems. Russia had no choice but to respond in kind, to the extent it could. Where there were weaknesses and gaps in the country’s armoury of counter-measures, alternative means needed to be found at least until the weaknesses were corrected. Hence Russia’s attempts to make the most political capital of its energy resources, its cyber campaigns, its ruthless assassination programmes, and a determination to re-build its military forces and to come up with wonder weapons based on “new physical principles”. Most important, this campaign to restore Russian self-esteem was domestically popular, and still is. It would help rebuild the nation, its pride in itself and the regime itself. The Ukraine war of 2022 has showed how seriously Putin takes all this.

It was the same story, at more or less the same time, in China. Deeply resentful of the impact of its 19th century humiliation by the Western powers and Japan, but all too aware of its current social, economic and military weakness, successive leaders since Mao have worried about the fragility of the regime. Western, and especially American, military proficiency in the Gulf War and US Navy carrier operations during the 1996 Taiwan crisis underlined the country’s strategic vulnerability. Worse, the chaos

of events in Tiananmen Square in 1989, alongside the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to show that the attractive soft power of the Western way of life was likely to undermine the values and survival of the party and the regime itself. Western criticism of the way in which the regime handled dissent merely reinforced the point and in some quarters increased the suspicion that the West was actually behind it.

In consequence, China has increasingly allied its efforts with Russia, redoubled its long efforts to build up the country’s economic and military power in tandem, and eagerly sought complementary ways of defending and extending its strategic interests. One result of this was the concept of the “Three Warfares” that emerged from a deservedly famous book, *Unrestricted Warfare*, written by two military officers in 1999, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui.² Qiao and Wang identified three non-kinetic means by which China could defend itself and advance its interests: political warfare, legal warfare and psychological warfare. This was not, as some western analysts initially thought, merely a way in which the country’s military could punch above its weight by adopting a variety of sneaky strategies. It was much broader than that. The military needed to accept that they were part of a wider national effort and to adapt their thinking and their behaviour accordingly. It took some time for this to be fully hoisted in. Only in 2003 when the ‘Political Work Guidelines of the People’s Liberation Army’ were revised did it publicly become policy.³

President Xi’s staggeringly ambitious Belt and Road Initiative or his campaign to win over the island nations of the Pacific and Indian oceans are excellent examples of just how strategically effective integrated full spectrum operations of this sort can be. Tactically, the ruthless but efficient conjunction of naval, coastguard and maritime paramilitary action, together with targeted legal, political and economic pressure is paying handsome dividends for the Chinese in the South China Sea. It’s a big game, and the Chinese—and the Russians

2 Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999. A FBIS translation is available.
3 The issue is well and concisely explored by Peter Mattis in two articles in *War on the Rocks* “Contrasting China’s and Russia’s Influence Operations”, and “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ in Perspective”.

Title image

(Previous page.)
The United Kingdom’s Carrier Strike Group 2021, with the Netherlands, the United States and Japan on joint exercises in the Pacific. Photo: Royal Navy.

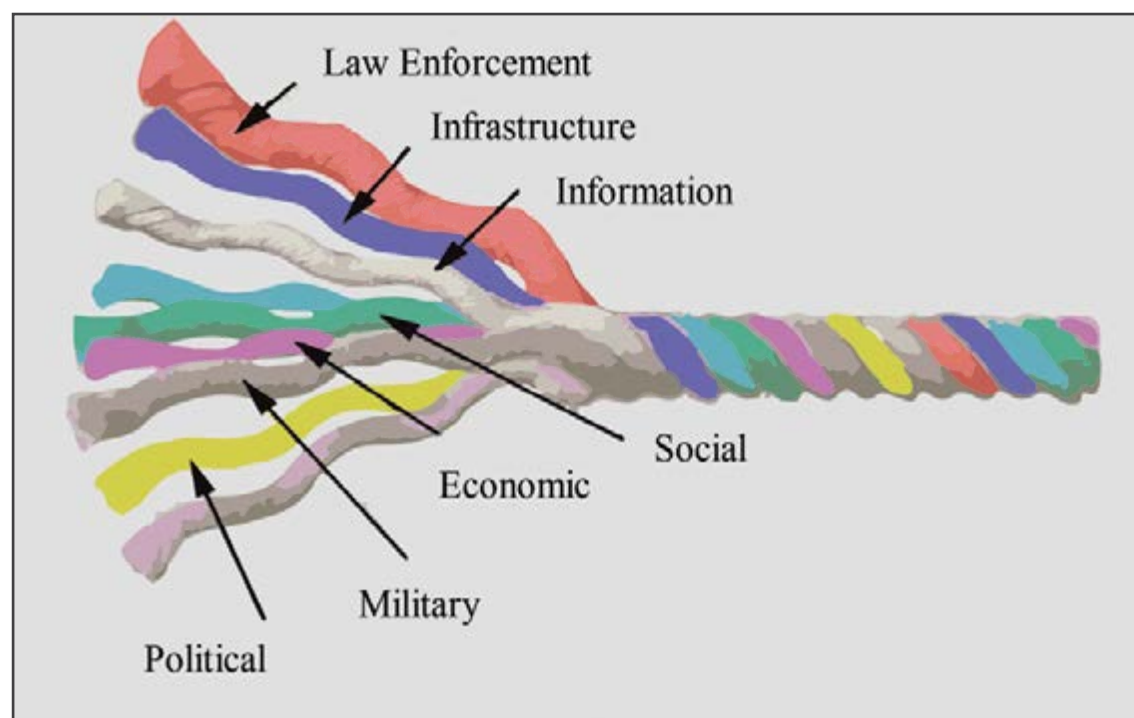


Figure 1 - The “twisted rope” analogy of NATO’s “comprehensive approach”.

too—have developed the ideas to go with it, and to extend them to other regions.⁴

The British have got the message too. This is evident in the emphasis on the integration of all aspects of national policy in its recently updated *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. In part, this is a consequence of the country having to come to terms with the economic and military expansion of China, and to some extent the unexpected level of Russian assertiveness. Moreover, Britain has found itself assailed by a whole variety of unfamiliar threats and risks. The Skripal poisoning in Salisbury and the suspected extent of Russian hacking and cyber-attacks on British institutions have combined with Western perceptions of Russian pressures and intrusions at sea, its potential use of pipeline diplomacy, its cyber pressure on the Baltic republics, and its military and paramilitary operations in Georgia, the Crimea and Ukraine to produce a conclusion that the United Kingdom (UK) and NATO were under attack by a wily and ruthless adversary willing to use all means at its disposal to get its way.

⁴ Philp, “Xi Lures Commonwealth with Military Diplomacy”; Young, “China is Already Exporting Authoritarianism”.

In similar fashion, the cautious welcome given Chinese investment in the development of the UK’s nuclear power industry and communication systems by the Cameron administration is now seen as dangerously naive. It seemed to show the dangers of compartmentalising the various dimensions of national policy so that in their enthusiasm for Chinese financial investment, the Treasury and the Department for Trade failed sufficiently to register the concerns of the Defence and Intelligence authorities. Of course, the reverse could be equally true.

Awareness of these dangers led to the creation of a National Security Council in which senior figures, often under the regular chairmanship of the prime minister, would ensure the integration of all aspects of national policy so that they worked with and not against one another.

The same impulse led to the over-arching *Integrated Defence and Security Review*, mentioned earlier. This new awareness of the need for a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to national security was inspired partly by the sense of being under attack, partly by the increasing strategic effectiveness of the UK’s possible adversaries and partly by a desire to take advantage of the opportunities for a national reset after leaving the European Union.

Some of the same concerns are evident in current United States (US) thinking too. The US is bruised by the evident failures of its strategic approach to Iraq and Afghanistan. It is acutely conscious of the relative economic and military rise of China in particular. It knows that the openness of its society and systems makes it acutely vulnerable to covert interference and attack. For all these reasons, the Biden Administration is pushing through a similar agenda provisionally under the mantra of ‘integrated deterrence’, which is scheduled to inform the new *National Defense Strategy* of 2022.⁵

Obvious though much of this sounds, none of it is easy. “Siloed thinking”, in which each of the various departments and agencies of state focus on resolving their own complex issues at the expense of deep cooperation with their opposite numbers in all the others, is natural, even inevitable; it can easily degenerate into institutional rivalry especially when resources are tight. Setting up and running mechanisms for the coordination of national policy therefore takes major time and effort. It is easy to let them slip when apparently more urgent single issues (like COVID-19 or winning the next election) come along. Hence the criticisms of Boris Johnson for, it has been concluded, neglecting the country’s wider security concerns.⁶

The integration problem may be particularly difficult for liberal democracies. Russia and China have the advantages of economies and societies that are more easily directed for strategic effect, a capacity to take the long view in striking contrast with the short-termism of democratic leaders and, in China’s case at least, enjoy bottomless resources. Authoritarian leaders can encourage and enlist the support of popular nationalism, bend the rules, defy convention and manoeuvre with great effect against their more paradoxically hide-bound liberal adversaries. Admittedly, both have only clients, not partners, and generally their causes seem less worthy to the unsuborned.

⁵ Roaten, “AFA News”.

⁶ Sabbagh, “PM ‘too complacent’ about UK’s security”. The cross-party national security committee expressed concern that PM chaired meetings of the National Security Council had dropped by two thirds to just one a month. The Committee pointed to the UK’s unpreparedness for the sudden collapse of the government in Kabul as evidence of such neglect.

Despite this, their success is worrying. It is hard to resist the conclusion that to compete effectively, the West must do better. It needs to emulate not their values and objectives but their methods of approach, and literally to get its act together.

Intrinsically there is nothing new in any of this. Sun Tzu, after all, emphasised the value of “winning without fighting” 2500 years ago. Russia’s General Valery Gerasimov could well have made the point that what he suspected the West had been doing to Russia in the 1990s was entirely consistent with the famous “twisted rope” analogy often used to illustrate NATO’s “comprehensive approach”. What is new, as remarked earlier, is the extent to which, at least in theory, the need for an integrated response is accepted these days as a basis for action. The reason for this seems fairly simple. The costs and risks of actually using kinetic military force on a significant scale against significant adversaries are very high if not prohibitive, as all parties discovered in the 2022 Ukraine war. Hence the search for other means of getting what you want in a more competitive world.

Part II: Implications for navies

Naval power is certainly a potentially important constituent of the required mix of integrated national capacities, especially for countries with significant maritime traditions and interests. It provides a wide range of strategic options in the pursuit of policy objectives, because of its flexibility, its diversity of form and its geographic ubiquity in a world mainly covered in water. The centrality of sea-based trade to the world’s peace and prosperity reinforces the point.

The Ukraine war hammers the point home. Even though the abiding impression of that conflict with its massacred civilians, burnt-out tanks and shattered streets is of its essentially land-centric nature, the maritime component has proved critical. Access to the sea for the trade that sustains the war economies of both belligerents remains critical. It can be a source of direct support for troops fighting ashore, a means of supply and of attack and defence. The West’s global sanctions campaign has to be sustained and serviced by a global diplomatic campaign, which in part has been sea-based. Naval manoeuvres far from the scene of conflict transmit messages of resolve and of warning. In short, even in a land-war

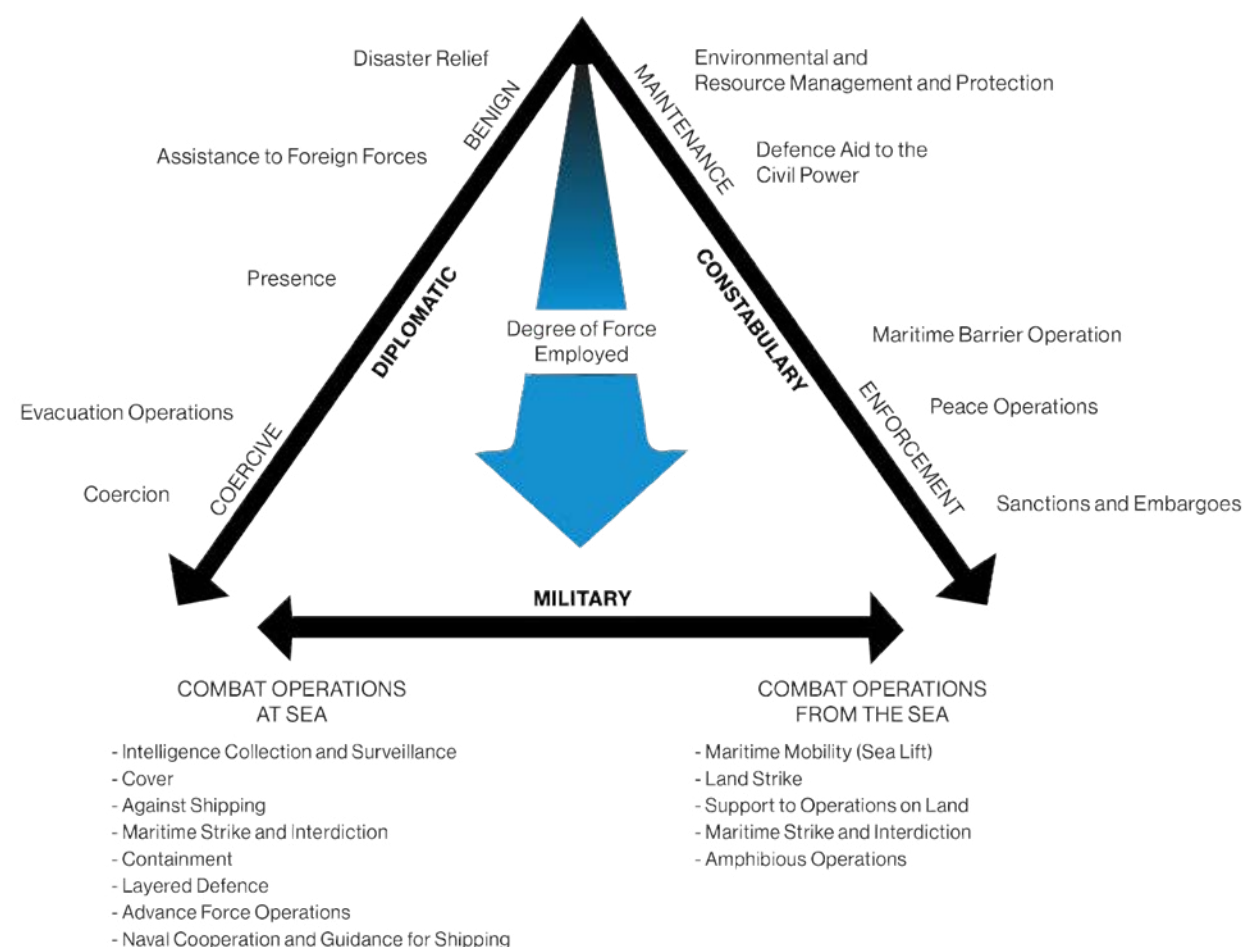


Figure 2 - Ken Booth's triangle of naval roles. Diagram based on an illustration by the Royal Australian Navy, 2010.

between territorial neighbours, navies are a key part of the mix.

But to operate more effectively as part of a comprehensive and integrated national (or alliance) grand strategy, navies may need a re-think about their role and their methods of approach. First and foremost in this should perhaps be the long-overdue abandonment of one of the most familiar expressions of the value and flexibility of naval power, namely the triangle of naval roles that first appeared in 1977 in Ken Booth's ground-breaking book *Navies and Foreign Policy*.⁷ Since then, the great and the good in the field of naval studies have tinkered around with it, adding their particular nuances and commentaries. In 2010, the Royal Australian Navy, for example, produced the version shown in Figure 2 adding a degree of explanation that scales and categorises what its authors believed were the three basic roles of navies. More recently, much the same appeared in the latest edition

of *UK Maritime Power*, where these three roles are even elevated into a "trinity". A naturally rather more sophisticated version of this appears on page 83 of New Zealand's otherwise admirable *Maritime Doctrine* of 2018. Here the triangle is expanded into a pentagon with the Navy's roles described as: combat operations at sea; combat operations from the sea; constabulary; safety and assistance; and diplomacy.

Despite their differences in detail, the authors of these variations on a theme mostly tend at least to start with Ken Booth's proposition that navies have three basic naval roles, namely constabulary, diplomatic and military. The variety of policy options these three roles provide bolster a country's security and prosperity. On the face of it, this seems reasonable. It conforms with familiar ideas about what navies are for. It has the merit of great simplicity. It is visually effective. It looks right. Nonetheless, in today's world it is misleading, wrong, even potentially dangerous. It is a subtle, conceptual, bar to the kind of full integration into national policy

and strategy that today's circumstances require.

There are three reasons for coming to this heretical conclusion. First, the triangle doesn't include that fourth element of their behaviour and impact that many of the world's navies emphasise, namely their role in national development. Many of the navies of South America, for example, devote considerable time and effort and a significant part of their budgets to social and riverine operations that are basically intended to foster the physical and economic health of the millions of their citizens who live deep in the interiors of their countries. They are not just there to fight drug smugglers and other criminals. Something like a quarter of the budget of the Brazilian Navy, for example, is devoted to this purpose.

That same navy, moreover, puts great stress on the economic benefits of two of its current major national projects, PROSUB, which is a long-term project to build nuclear-propelled submarines, together with all the technological and industrial capacity to do so, and the 'Blue Amazon' project to defend, extend and develop the country's offshore marine resources. Justifiably, the Navy claims that both projects, successfully accomplished, would transform Brazil economically,

socially and strategically, and this is largely accepted by government and people. There is no expectation that, somehow, this is not quite their job.

A recent Australian Chief of Navy has also demonstrated his awareness of the importance of this aspect of the naval business. In his insightful little book *The Navy and the Nation*,⁸ Vice Admiral Tim Barrett talks about the need to think of developing the country's maritime power as a "national enterprise". On the one hand, all the nation's assets are needed to build the navy the country needs; on the other, building the navy builds the nation too, socially as well as economically. In many countries, the indigenous design, maintenance and construction of the warships it needs is seen as adding significantly to their industrial, economic and social development. Mr Modi's stress on his 'Make in India' initiative is an obvious example of the same line of thought. Given this, it seems strange that Admiral Barrett's own navy should, in the triangular illustration of conception of its role shown here, hide this fundamentally important aspect of naval activity away in a couple of ambiguous references in the upper "maintenance" section of the constabulary role, where it manifestly doesn't fit.

⁸ Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2017.



Figure 3 - The pentagon of naval roles shown in the NZDF *Maritime Doctrine*, 2018.

⁷ London: Croom Helm, 1977.

Another developmental angle to naval activity is geographic. The water between the scattered islands of archipelagic countries is obviously critically important to their status as unified countries. For Indonesia with its approximately 18,000 islands, the Philippines and some other countries too, that water has to be a bridge between the various different parts of their country, not a barrier. Consequently navies (and the coastguard and the merchant and fishing industries) are central to their national integrity. If to a perhaps lesser degree, the same applies to the great many more countries that have territories separated by water from their mainland.

Navies therefore ought to be shouting their developmental value from the rooftops, not obscuring or ignoring it. This should not just be a cynical ploy to get the resources they need from government; instead it should be a reminder that navies have much to offer, quite apart from their more obvious defence tasks, and in many cases are already thoroughly integrated into national development. Their potential value in their further integration into national policy and strategy therefore becomes all the more obvious. If this is accepted, then a fourth side to the triangle first needs to be added, turning it into a kind of box.

The second criticism of the original triangle focuses more directly on the need to deal with and respond to the huge diversity of grey-zone challenges and the manifest advantages of winning without fighting. It also relates to the consequent need to ensure that policy options are thoroughly and effectively integrated so they work with, and not against, each other. Arguably, the triangular approach makes this more difficult. Visually the outward-facing sides of the triangle implicitly reinforce the differences between the

three naval roles it deals with, rather than their complementarity. They encourage the notion that the lines of effort they produce diverge, not that they converge in common effort. They also obscure the fact that a single act can serve all three purposes at once. Moreover, what is done in one sphere of naval activity is likely to affect and be affected by all the others. A naval act in helping a country maintain security in its own waters may, for example, lead to better political relations, defence acquisitions deals that help economic development, or even to the prospect of easier military access to that country's port facilities.

It is especially important to stress the notion of convergence, because divergence is the natural order of things. There are inevitably crucial differences between the military, diplomatic and constabulary roles. At least to an extent, they require different kinds of ships, weaponry and procedures. So a conceptual approach that accentuates those differences between the roles, however unconsciously, threatens to impede their operational integration. The resultant tensions may also make it more difficult to marry the whole maritime package with all the other policy options in the broader comprehensive national campaign.

The dangers of disaggregated thought seem evident in the current US debate about future naval priorities. In theory the American concept of "integrated deterrence" already identified sounds as though it would deliver the comprehensive approach that is needed. The intention, according to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, is to '... adopt a strategy that more closely weaves together all our instruments of national power — diplomacy, military, intelligence — with those of our allies and partners,' that will include linking US and Asian defence industries, integrating supply chains and cooperating on technological innovation. 'It's about reinforcing our strengths so we can keep the peace, as we have done in the region for decades.'⁹

The danger is that the urgency of the perceived need to "overmatch" the warfighting capabilities of the Chinese navy could easily drown out the need for a wide range of complementary but less kinetic naval activities that are also an essential

⁹ Quoted in "Blinken Vows More Military Might in the Indo-Pacific".

part of the deterrent mix. If navies exist to fight the wars they cannot deter, then it is important to sustain the lower-level diplomatic and constabulary capabilities that might make a putative adversary conclude that the overall political and economic costs of aggression are too high. In a more benign mode, such less conflictual approaches may even persuade adversaries that aggression is unnecessary, even undesirable, in the first place.

All the same, the capabilities required to have these effects can be seen to compete. This seems especially evident in the way in which "forward presence" is being talked about nowadays in the United States. A deeply authoritative review of this phenomenon by Bob Work¹⁰ makes the point that the demands of maintaining such a presence inevitably compete with those of readiness for war-fighting.

Forward presence wears out ships and crews and reduces the time for training. This has always been true. Nonetheless the debate remains open. The defenders of forward presence assert that being significantly on scene, and thereby showing that you are paying attention, familiarises you with local conditions, makes diplomatic and constabulary engagement with allies and partners easier and more credible and so makes aggression riskier. If it happens anyway, forward presence allows faster military responses. Such at least is the view of the US Marine Corps.¹¹

Both views have substance. What is evidently needed is a constructive balance between these capabilities that does not set them against one another. In the bid to correct the undoubted neglect of naval war-fighting in the US Navy over the past decade or two,¹² it is important not to forget the importance of everything else. Navies need to balance between activities seen as complementing, rather than competing with, each other. They should be seen to converge, not diverge. Exploding our box so that all four sides point in roughly the same direction then becomes the next step in the redesign process.

¹⁰ Work, "A Slavish Devotion to Forward Presence Has Nearly Broken the US Navy".

¹¹ Doornbos "Marine Corps Commandant Calls for Focus on Small"; Eckstein, "US Marine Commandant".

¹² Filipoff, "A Navy Astray".

'Starting by focusing simply on possible courses of action that might actually compete with one another is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope.'

The third and final criticism is that the Booth triangle is all about inputs, not outputs. It may be beautiful in itself as a self-admiring expression of the flexibility of navies, but it doesn't deal at all with their strategic consequence, or why they actually matter. As such it runs up against the whole philosophy of "effects-based operations". What's important is what happens in consequence of what navies do at and from the sea. It's the whole point of the exercise. Starting by focusing simply on possible courses of action that might actually compete with one another is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. Dealing with a problem like the South China Sea, the approach instead has to be clear about what we want to achieve; the maritime effects that will help us get there need to be decided. Only then should we work out how best to calibrate the combination of maritime activities needed to deliver them before merging them with other lines of development. Sadly, the famous triangle is of no help here, and may even get in the way. So, accordingly, the diagram has to be extended to show the beneficial consequences of the maritime effect. This makes it easier to link this effect with that of all the other strategic options in a truly comprehensive approach.¹³

Of course, thinking about the contribution of naval power to the national aim in this deliberate way isn't a guarantee of success, but it seems a good way to start.

¹³ Thanks are due to Cdr Guy Schotte of the Belgian Navy and the group of NATO naval officers who Zoomed into the annual workshop on maritime strategy at the Defence College for helping me clarify my ideas on this.



HMNZS *Te Kaha* joins CSG21, including HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, during Operation Crucible in 2021.

Part III: CSG21 as a case study in the integration of naval power

So that's the theory. How does it conform to today's naval realities? The world cruise of the *Queen Elizabeth* battle group in 2021 provides an ideal case study of the integrated approach. To be clear, this is an investigation of *why* and *how* the enterprise was conducted, not of the extent to which it can be considered a success. As the legendary Chinese historian said about the consequences of the French Revolution, 'it's too soon to tell.'

First of all, what was the overall aim of the exercise? The Staff College assumption is that any major action should only have one aim, to be appropriately sought at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. In this case the ultimate purpose was to defend British national interests by securing the objectives of the 'Global Britain' agenda. This agenda is often assumed to have been a rather desperate expedient that arose from Brexit, but, in fact, it was outlined in official policy formulations well before the referendum. Britain was to be seen as a force for good on the international stage, able through the effective integration of its efforts to help develop prosperity and to keep the peace against whoever and whatever might threaten it. What was good for Britain was to be shown as good for the world, and *vice versa*.

Beneath this abstract and high-sounding aspiration can be seen four objectives supporting the overall aim. Firstly, Britain was to be seen as an international player of substance whose opinion and activity mattered. Already thought to be true, the intent was to consolidate and extend this impression. Secondly, British intentions, a mixture of cooperation, reassurance and deterrence, were to be shown as benign and in the general interest. Thirdly, it needed to be shown that British interests were indeed global and not restricted to any particular geographic area. By no means was the European theatre to be seen as its exclusive area of concern. Fourthly, British interests and policy were to be multi-dimensional, spanning the diplomatic, political, social, economic, environmental and military spheres that collectively underpinned the international order.

In order to contribute to the achievement of these four supporting objectives, the task of CSG21 was to deliver effects that ranged across multiple domains. Most obviously but not exclusively, these domains were military, political/diplomatic, economic, legal and informational. Because in today's complex world, everything affects everything else and because one action can have different effects in different domains, it is impossible to disentangle these domains cleanly. The trick is to ensure that these

effects support one another rather than being in conflict. Avoiding this had to be a high priority.

The military domain

To many, this was the most obvious focus of interest. CSG21 was seen as an opportunity to build the country's military power. It represented a major effort. On board the *Queen Elizabeth* there were 18 British and American F-35B aircraft, claimed to be the largest group of fifth generation aircraft afloat anywhere; elements of three helicopter squadrons and 42 Commando Royal Marines were also on board. The group comprised two Type 45 air defence destroyers, HM Ships *Defender* and *Diamond*, and two Type 23 frigates, HM Ships *Kent* and *Richmond*. They were joined by the destroyer USS *The Sullivans* and the Dutch frigate HNLMS *Evertsen*, all being supported by two Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, *Tidespring* and *Fort Victoria*. It was generally assumed that the SSN HMS *Astute* was in general company and perhaps an American submarine too.

To a naval audience, the tactical and operational military benefits of such a deployment would seem obvious. Having worked up the *Queen Elizabeth* beforehand, this would prove a shake-down cruise on a monumental scale. It was a spectacular opportunity to relearn the old skills of carrier

strike operations after a hiatus of over a decade. On top of that, there would be ample opportunities to learn new ones that derived from the unique characteristics of the carrier itself and even more of the operational and maintenance realities of the revolutionary F-35B Lightning aircraft. Their war-fighting capabilities were tried out for real with strikes on the insurgent forces of ISIL in Iraq and Syria.¹⁴ CSG21 returned home with much more experience and data on such matters than it had before it left. The same would go for the ability to operate the CSG as a self-sustaining battle group 12,000 miles from home. The opportunity was taken to try out new capabilities such as the deployment of the Crowsnest ASAC¹⁵ system from Merlin Mk II helicopters or the first firing in a Pacific range from *Defender's* Wildcat helicopter of the Martlet missile specifically designed to deal with swarming small attack craft. In short the deployment was an invaluable military learning experience for all concerned.

Critics did point out that there were tight margins and limits to what CSG21 could do. It represented such a major proportion of the UK's overall naval effort and implied less was available for other missions while it was in progress that the operation was

¹⁴ Ballantine, "Royal Navy Returns to Carrier Strike with Missions Against Terrorist Targets", 28-9.

¹⁵ Airborne Organic Surveillance and Control.

unlikely to be repeated in the near future. A pre-departure fire in *Fort Victoria* could have compromised the very ambitious sustainment effort. The armament standards of some of the British ships left something to be desired, especially given the likely gap in its anti-ship missile capability after the withdrawal of the Harpoon in 2023. Above all perhaps, that HMS *Diamond* had briefly to be left behind for repairs in the Mediterranean on the outward voyage and later broke down off Singapore showed that the Type 45s are still plagued with propulsion problems not due to be finally fixed until 2028. And then, of course there was that embarrassing loss of a British F-35B off *Queen Elizabeth* on 17 November 2021. All in all, however remarkable the effort and the military capacity it demonstrated, CSG21 could be seen as showing that for the Global Britain brand to be sustained at this demanding level for the long term, a significantly bigger navy would be needed. Such at least was the conclusion drawn by the House of Commons committee set up at the same time to investigate the state of the Royal Navy (RN).¹⁶

In part these admitted limitations were compensated by the opportunity CSG21 offered for extended interoperability with allies and partners around the world. First, and most obviously, the presence of a US Marine Corps F-35B squadron (VMAF 211) and the destroyer USS *The Sullivans* plus the Dutch frigate HNLMS *Evertsen* demonstrated that this was a multinational fighting unit in which the particular nationality of each constituent made impressively little difference to the military cohesion of the force. The attack on ISIL was the first combat mission flown by US aircraft from a British carrier since the visit of HMS *Victorious* to the Pacific in 1943. Useful experience in combined and sometimes cross-decking carrier operations were conducted with the French and the Italians in the Mediterranean, with the Americans and Indians in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal and with the Japanese and Americans in the Philippine Sea and the Northwest Pacific. Some 70 or so naval exercises around the world involved exercises with the navies of Ukraine, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and

South Korea, among others, some of which were quite rigorous.

Apart from their manifest military utility in developing the capacity to cooperate, these exercises also had diplomatic effect, reassuring allies and partners while illustrating British determination to defend its interests to others. China with its traditional preference for dealing with other countries one by one, rather than in combination, will have taken due note of the chain of CSG21's combined exercises and port visits with allies and partners across the Indo-Pacific region. Its particular dislike of the linkages CSG21 established and consolidated with India, Japan and South Korea were made clear. Cooperation with the other four countries of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia) reinforced the unwelcome impression in Beijing that Britain's continuing return to the Indo-Pacific after the distractions of the Iraq and Afghan wars was generally welcomed by the locals. Maybe some in China might see this as a signal that over-assertive behaviour on their part was likely to incur strong collective responses, not a set of merely individual ones. In effect, by persisting in its recent overtly coercive behaviour, there was every prospect of China encircling itself with unsympathetic neighbours. Getting that diplomatic message across would be a real achievement for CSG21.

The diplomatic/political domain

Cooperation with others was more widely the name of the game. Strategically, the deployment signalled that Global Britain would work with others to ensure the safety of the rules-based order (RBO) that underpinned the world's peace and prosperity and that its national power made it a partner of significance. On the one hand, the emphasis on cooperation with others showed that it had no unrealistic

'...the deployment signalled that Global Britain would work with others to ensure the safety of the rules-based order (RBO) that underpinned the world's peace and prosperity and that its national power made it a partner of significance.'



An F35B Lightning touching down on the deck of the HMS *Queen Elizabeth*. Photo: Royal Navy.

pretensions that it could solve the challenges confronting the RBO on its own and accepted that it was in no position, and had no wish, to seek to impose unilateral solutions. On the other hand, the fighting quality of the battlegroup suggested that it had something useful to offer. Global Britain was to be an independent actor of note, but one eager to cooperate with the like-minded while hopefully able to help persuade the unlike-minded of the error of their ways.

For this to work for anything but the shortest of terms, there had to be an element of persistence in an enlarged British presence. Alongside the efforts of CSG21, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and other agencies of the British government were already doing their collective best to develop closer relations with countries around the world, not least many of those of the Indo-Pacific region. Accordingly, having achieved the status of being a 'Dialogue Partner' of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the UK is cautiously exploring closer associations with ASEAN mechanisms and is careful to be seen as supporting their centrality to the region's affairs. This softly-softly approach chimes with an incremental increase in presence, rather than a dramatic one, as likely to be the most effective, especially in Southeast

Asia. CSG21 was not to be seen as the return of some ex-Imperial power eager to throw its weight around and wanting to force local countries to choose between supporting China (upon which many relied economically and in terms of COVID-19 vaccines) or supporting the West (many of whose values local countries identified with, and which was generally seen as an essential counterweight to growing Chinese military power). Local sensitivities (which might lead to a difference in tone between public and private expression of view about a British military presence) would, however, need to be accommodated.

The military contribution to this was further to build up defence relationships with the key countries of the region, whether this be in terms of advice and capacity building in the defence of regional maritime security, as was the thrust of CSG21's 50th anniversary exercises of the Five Power Defence Arrangement, or in the development of formal agreements and exchanges of experience in the harder war-fighting end of the naval spectrum that were more characteristic of the relationships with India, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and, increasingly, South Korea.

The British were, however, well aware that it would take more than this to substantiate the kind of persistent military

¹⁶ UK House of Commons, "We're Going to Need a Bigger Navy".

presence that they thought the diplomatic profile they wanted in the Indo-Pacific would require. Accordingly, they strengthened existing defence commitments, such as their relationship with the Information Fusion Centre at Changi Naval Base and Sembawang oil facility in Singapore, their base in Brunei and so forth. They announced that two River class 2000 ton offshore patrol vessels, HM Ships *Spey* and *Tamar*, would be “forward-deployed” in the region—not “based”, partly in deference to local sensitivities and partly because of pragmatic acceptance that the sheer size of the region required their maximum mobility. Later they might be joined or replaced by one of the new Type 31 light frigates. Additionally it seems likely that the Southern Littoral Response Group, possibly featuring the HMS *Prince of Wales*, the RN’s second carrier, would make a fairly regular appearance in the area, with its advise, assist and liaise maritime teams.

The AUKUS deal announced at the time of CSG21’s presence in the region was the most dramatic example of defence diplomacy, and it was hard not to conclude that the most unusual arrival of the SSN HMS *Astute* in Perth was connected with this development. At more or less the same time, the British announced the award of an £85 million contract for early work on its SSN-R Astute class replacement project; similarly, the US Navy is also anxious to invest in the development of submarines to follow the Los Angeles and Seawolf classes in order to respond to the growing undersea challenge increasingly evident from China and Russia. Local reactions to AUKUS were generally positive, especially in private, although Malaysia expressed concern, and Indonesia too to some extent. Unsurprisingly, Beijing was much less favourable. By contrast of course, the French were furious at both the loss of their contract and at the manner in which it was terminated. The US, the UK and Australia were at one in their desire to propitiate so important a local ally, a process now underway.

AUKUS-related cooperation is by no means restricted to the procurement of submarines. It was also intended to foster further intelligence and technological cooperation. Developing the UK’s historically very close relationship with Australia in the defence industrial and commercial sector had already received a great stimulus

through their joint Type 26/Hunter class frigate programme, which, with Canada’s participation, had become the world’s biggest frigate project. The UK’s defence industrial presence in the region shaded in of course to its wider economic stake in the area.

The economic domain

As a major and thoroughly globalised trading country, and the world’s fifth or sixth biggest economy, the UK’s economic interests in the Indo-Pacific were already extensive. Part of the Global Britain initiative, led by the Department for International Trade and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), was to expand and develop this still further, in part encouraged by the need to make up for any loss of trade with the European Union in consequence of Brexit. Its diplomatic endeavours to build a bigger military and diplomatic presence East of Suez was

matched by a corresponding economic push to do the same thing. So far the main government-led achievements in this field have been a successful bid to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and a flock of new free trade agreements with countries in the region.

The CSG21, and general Defence, contribution to this has been two-fold. Firstly, in many ways the construction and operation of a battle group headed by a new and innovative fleet carrier was seen to show a level of technological proficiency and to act as a general advert for British industry across the board rather than solely in the military sphere. Typically, support for the country’s economic ambitions was also shown by the visit of HMS *Kent* to Goa as the centrepiece of a trading venture; the main event though was to have been the Pacific Forum Conference, Exhibition and Trade Fair hosted by the *Queen Elizabeth*

herself in South Korea, which had to be cancelled for COVID-19 reasons.

Less obviously, CSG21 was represented as a way by which responsible naval power could help defend trade, and, importantly, the conditions for trade by what it was capable of doing at and from the sea. This kind of power complemented the capacity building operations ashore that were designed to help local countries maintain good order at sea, to which Littoral Strike Group South might later contribute. Dealing with piracy, the drugs trade, terrorism and other such threats to stability would facilitate greater and more secure trade. Disorder at sea, on the other hand, would reduce it. The other requirement for secure world trade, of course, was seen to be the freedom of navigation.



Carrier Strike Group 2021 Fleet.
Photo: NZDF.

The legal dimension.

For better or worse, ensuring the freedom of navigation acquired great public prominence in the build up to the first departure of CSG21. The target was widely expected to be China, whose jurisdictional claims in the South and East China seas were widely seen as a substantial threat to the freedom of the seas. In the event, what actually happened defied the hyperbole and was even something of an anti-climax. It was recognised in Britain that treating China as an enemy was likely to make it one. Accordingly the requirement was to transmit a message of firmness on the one hand, but of a willingness to accommodate Chinese sensitivities to some degree on the other. Chinese cooperation in such diverse matters as continued trade, the Iran nuclear deal, the pandemic and climate change remained essential. Accordingly CSG21's passage through the South China Sea was calibrated with care, sufficiently robust to demonstrate the UK's adherence to the freedom of navigation but not enough to spur the Chinese into more than routine denunciations. Careful all-round planning was required.

As it happened, sailing from Singapore to the Luzon Strait in Philippine waters where the next sequence of exercises were to be held did not involve going through particularly contentious waters close by disputed features in the Spratly or the Paracel groups. The usual warnings and chilling threats were made in advance by the Chinese authorities and state media, but in the event nothing untoward occurred, and at sea all behaved safely and professionally.¹⁷ Nonetheless, a large multinational battle group had passed without permission through waters within China's "nine dash line", claimed to be theirs historically and which would have been within the exclusive economic zone of features which the Chinese consider to be both islands and theirs. Either way, the passage of CSG21 through these waters would not have been welcomed in Beijing.¹⁸

¹⁷ Sandeman, "Cat and Mouse with Beijing's Submarines".

¹⁸ UNCLOS is clear that only islands have a right to an EEZ and the 2016 Tribunal concluded that none of the features disputed between China and the Philippines are islands, irrespective of who has sovereignty over them. The Tribunal also dismissed China's historic claims to the waters within so-called Nine Dash Line.

Still less would have been the frigate HMS *Richmond* passing through the Taiwan Strait on the way back. In both cases, points had been quietly and effectively made, and the freedom of navigation upheld.

It was quite otherwise at the beginning of CSG21's outward voyage compared to towards its end. What happened in the Black Sea proved a potentially more dramatic illustration of the complexities of the kind of "lawfare" advocated by Qiao and Wang back in 1999.¹⁹ With the advantage of hindsight, it can also be seen as a harbinger of approaching war; not so much for what was done, more for what was said. Two elements of CSG21, the Type 45 destroyer HMS *Defender* and the Dutch frigate HMNLS *Evertsen* detached from the main group in the Mediterranean for a visit to Ukraine. Both ships left Odessa on 22 June 2021, *Evertsen* for Romania and *Defender* for Batumi in Georgia. The British ship's itinerary was a gesture of Western support for the two countries that had suffered Russian attacks in 2014 and 2008 respectively. Her visit to Ukraine was part of a long programme of British naval support, which included the provision of loans, a substantial training programme, a promise of the gift of two mine-hunters, HM Ships, *Blyth* and *Ramsey*, and the building of the first two of a seven-strong class of P-500 fast inshore attack craft.

This support was a subject of real annoyance in Moscow. In part this was because there was a critical maritime dimension to the territorial stand-off between the Ukraine and Russia over the Donbas region on which the international media tended to focus. Russia's seizure of the Crimea made much of the Black Sea and its oil rigs a highly disputed zone, and its control of the Kerch Strait gave Moscow the option of strangling Mariupol and other ports on Ukraine's Azov sea coastline. There had already been serious incidents between the two countries in and approaching the Strait. Worse still, there were intelligence reports that a Russian attack on Ukraine might feature an amphibious assault on Odessa itself. The glaring disparity in naval capability between the protagonists

¹⁹ I am grateful for help in clarifying these issues to Lt Cdr Ollie Clarke, RN and Professor Steven Haines.

made the West sympathetic to Kyiv's call with a level of support that Russia bitterly resented.²⁰

The proximate issue, though, was *Defender's* passage from Odessa to Batumi in Georgia. The most expeditious route would involve her taking innocent passage through the territorial waters of the Crimea. Russian sensitivity about this had led to a number of incidents in the 1980s and a previous flurry with one of *Defender's* sisters the year before. While, in common with most other countries, Britain did not accept the Russian claim to the Crimea and its waters, this could be regarded as immaterial, since innocent passage does not require anyone's permission. Nonetheless, for these two reasons, HMS *Defender* passing through what Russia regarded as its waters was likely to be neuralgic for Moscow. On the other hand, if the ship avoided the area and the issue, this would disappoint the Ukrainians. Accordingly the passage was planned with great care. The ship would be in Crimean waters for just 36 minutes. *Evertsen's* voyage was rather more complicated. It seems to have stayed clear of Crimean territorial waters, but chose to patrol some 70 miles south of the

²⁰ Khurshudyan, "In Their Shared Sea".

Kerch Strait for several days before taking passage to Romania.

The Russian response to *Defender* was delivered on 23 June and to *Evertsen* the next day. What followed was a classic illustration of the complexities and importance of such grey-zone operations and how joined up one needs to be in order to prevail. All three kinds of "warfare" were conducted. Russia's military response comprised a number of over-flights, radioed warnings of an exercise in the area and shadowing, sometimes close, by smaller coastguard vessels; provided they did not hazard the *Defender's* safety, these tactics were perfectly legal, to be expected and taken as such, though unwelcoming, by the British. Except for a brief deviation to avoid one Russian vessel, *Defender* completed her passage through Crimean territorial waters as planned. Thus the concept of innocent passage as defined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea was defended, and Ukraine's entitlement to the waters upheld.

The Russians seem to accept the principle of innocent passage (certainly when passing through other peoples' territorial seas, including those of the UK!) but apparently regarded the passage of an air defence destroyer without a substantial land-attack capability as such a threat to its



HMS *Defender*
Photo: Royal Navy



HMS *Queen Elizabeth* returns home to Portsmouth after her maiden operational deployment including the United States and Indo-Pacific. Photo: Royal Navy.

security (even if only as an act of propaganda) that its passage could not be regarded as innocent. Moreover, if the conflict between Ukraine and Russia was regarded as a war (which is, however, denied by Moscow), it was therefore a belligerent; as such it *might* be entitled by its occupation of the area to suspend entitlements to innocent passage.²¹ These are clearly complex issues that need to be thought about well in advance and in context!

Evertsen, on the other hand was nowhere near Crimea's territorial waters, and some twenty aircraft subjected her to close and aggressive fly-bys. Perhaps already irritated by *Defender* the day before, the Russians chose to escalate their campaign to action in defence of what they at least regarded as their exclusive economic zone. This was a different legal issue altogether. This too could not have been totally unexpected, given Russian behaviour in the Baltic and their acute sensitivity about the Kerch Strait.²²

What was not expected, however, was the form that the Russian response took, less in the naval domain but more in that of information and influence.

The information and influence domain

The object of an information campaign in grey-zone operations is to confuse and sow doubt in the minds of your adversaries so that their resolve will be weakened either at the time or later. Accordingly “disinformation” can be strategically very effective. It can also be a means for winning the sympathy of by-standers. Some such Russian tactic was therefore expected. All the same, the British were initially taken aback when the Russian Ministry of Defence issued, but later withdrew, a story that its aircraft had dropped four bombs in *Defender's* close proximity and that the ship had been driven out of Russia's waters. This was backed up by blood-curdling threats that next time the outcome would be worse. That intruders are triumphantly ejected by such resolute defence is a common narrative for both the Russian and Chinese regimes. It plays well with domestic opinion. Representing the

²¹ Turns, “The HMS *Defender* Incident”.
²² Karreman, “*Evertsen* was on Patrol When Russians Came”. I am grateful to CDR Henk Warnar for his help in clarifying these murky issues. See his “Marine Diplomatsie. Instrument in het Nederlanders eevenswichts beleid”. *Militaire Spectator*, 8 July 2021.

British as aggressive but weak might also help divide and weaken European opinion ahead of a meeting in which the French and Germans were expected to push for the resumption of dialogue with Russia.

The Russian report was, however, quite untrue. The bombing and firing referred to might have been part of a previously advertised exercise, but it was nowhere near *Defender*. All the same, the British media fastened onto what seemed a good story and the word “controversial” began to be attached to *Defender’s* passage even in supportive media discourse.²³ This was a win for Russian disinformation.

The damage was limited, though, because of a fast and credible corrective response by Ben Wallace, the British Defence Secretary. The Russians said much the same of *Evertsen* a week or so later, but the Dutch were slower to respond effectively. The lesson was clear; in these all-important “battles of the narrative”, a coherent response rested on a thorough understanding of *all* the issues at stake, (directly and indirectly) and on tactical speed and dexterity in the message-management of incidents. Since they involve diplomatic signalling, interpretations and implementation of the law of the sea, media and public relations quite apart from their narrowly military conduct, such incidents demand a holistic approach. There could hardly be a better illustration of the need to effectively integrate actions in the naval domain with those in all the others.

The importance, and the difficulty, in getting this kind of messaging right for prospective adversaries, one’s own public, allies, partners and by-standers is hard to exaggerate. The aims can easily conflict. There was an early instance of this when the passage of CSG21 did not quite go as planned, and this was regarding whether it would visit Gibraltar on the way out. There were reports that the FCDO felt this would unnecessarily annoy the Spanish at a time when delicate post-Brexit negotiations about its future were afoot. Apparently the Gibraltar authorities were expecting a visit as a gesture of support at a difficult time and disappointed when it did not happen. To compensate, elements of the CSG21 were detached for quick port visits a little later and the HMS *Prince of Wales*

²³ Warships. “Black Sea Tensions Spike”, 2.

turned up soon after. All in all, it would seem CSG21 had managed to annoy everyone. It led to criticism that the British needed to take the information and influence war more seriously.²⁴

Fortunately, the general messaging elsewhere was much better. One of CSG21’s main purposes was to signal how important the Indo-Pacific region was to British concerns. Global Britain was to mean just that. But this was a more nuanced issue than was generally perceived. The strategic and economic significance of the Indo-Pacific region was to be acknowledged by something of a tilt in its direction, though not to the point of implying that affairs closer to home were no longer the main concern. In its perception of the ultimate balance to be struck between the home and the away game, the private Foreign Office mantra was that if Russia represented a bad but passing storm, China could well be climate change. This implied a requirement to be able to flex the nation’s effort over time. Beefing up the British presence in what used to be regarded as the Far East, by, among other things, reverting to the Global Deployments characteristic of the 1970s²⁵ was not to be taken as implying a reduction of attention to other critical areas of strategic interest, many of which were much closer to home. For this reason, the RN remained as active as it could be in home waters, in the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic. CSG21, instead of taking a fast passage direct to Singapore and Japan, loitered on the way and when coming back, conducting port visits and multinational exercises in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in the Gulf of Oman and the Bay of Bengal, off Singapore as well as in the Western Pacific. Particularly in the light of the Russian attack on Ukraine, there could be little doubting that the UK remained attentive to its NATO responsibilities. As in every other aspect of CSG21’s deployment, meeting the requirements of the Global Britain agenda through an influence campaign required integration and balance with all the elements of British power. Moreover it needed to cater for the varying demands of the very different situations it would face around the world.

²⁴ Rogers and Payne, “The UK Needs to Raise”, 32-3. The Gibraltar issue is covered in the August edition.

²⁵ Till, “The Return of Globalism”; Roberts, “The British Global Deployment”, 34-6.

Conclusion

At first, this British desire to expand its global option while maintaining all the others, with decidedly finite resources, might seem to bear an unnerving resemblance to a schoolboy translation of a Latin text that had a centurion jumping on his horse ‘...and riding off in all directions.’ It has still more unnerving echoes of the disastrous Singapore strategy of 1939–41.

The conduct of CSG21, however, offers some hope that an integrated approach in which all dimensions of national policy are rallied and employed in mutual support will go some way in alleviating the difficulty in matching commitments and resources that the House of Commons Defence Committee foresaw in July 2021. But for that, the requirement to fuse the kind of maritime effect with other lines of approach aspired to by CSG21 will need to be taken very seriously indeed. Some encouragement that this is possible might be found in the departing words of CSG21’s Commander, Commodore Steve Moorhouse. CSG21 was, he said, ‘a whole of Navy effort,’ but the aim was ‘to bring together the different strands of defence, diplomacy and prosperity far more closely than previously...CSG21 is not so much a naval effort as a national one.’²⁶ This aim, it might well be thought, is for Britain to adopt some of the methods of its competitors, if in a far nobler cause. Whether the integrated approach delivers what it is supposed to may remain a moot point, but it certainly stands a better chance of doing so than the alternative.

²⁶ As quoted in Moorhouse, “History in the Making”.



PROFESSOR GEOFFREY TILL

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THE INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY ON GREAT POWER COMPETITION

HMNZS Taupo's 4" gun trained on the enemy coast off Korea during the winter months of the Korean War. Provided by the National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy. Crown Copyright.

In this article, **Captain John Sellwood** asks: to what extent does geography influence great power competition?

The essay that follows was written while I was a student at the United States Naval War College in 2020. It was the final assessment in the Strategy and Policy module and was written over a 48 hour period. I include this context because while it was a well-received response to an exam question (it was selected as the top essay), for a wider audience it has some peculiarities that bear explaining. Firstly, the Strategy and Policy module is structured around case studies that range in time from the Peloponnesian War right up to the War on Terror, and the exam questions are framed to encourage students to use all of the cases to make general points on strategy and policy. Secondly, references come from only the texts selected and issued by the faculty; wider research skills are not what was being tested. Finally, the essay structure itself is specified; it must include argument, counter-argument and rebuttal.

My response was to the question "To what extent does geography influence great power competition?" At the close of the essay I will include reflections on the implications of the ideas in this essay for New Zealand.

Introduction

To be a great power is to have mastered geography. But if the process of attaining such mastery is a negotiation, then all of the concessions run in one direction. States adapt themselves to their geographic situation or they fail. They must also adjust to the geographical realities of other states, an adjustment that can lead to competition: those that compete most effectively are the great powers of their day. Geography is thus a major influence on great power competition, providing the material basis for great powers to rise and shaping where and how strategic interaction takes place. Great powers make the most of their geographic endowment and remove as many geographic constraints as possible. The proximity of competitors strongly influences strategy and the greater the power, the more

geographic discretion a state enjoys. But no state transcends its physical existence; it must instead harmonise temporal power with geographical reality.

The Geographical Basis of Power and Competition

Great powers develop in a particular geographical context and their actions are shaped by the freedoms and constraints afforded by topography and resources. Even the most modest states are defined by their territory, the configuration and composition of their landforms, and the uses to which people can put these geographical factors. To understand the power that a state can wield we should start, as Sun Tzu admonishes, with 'the interaction of natural forces' and 'whether the ground is traversed with ease or difficulty.'¹ From the brute facts of wresting a living from the earth and moving from place to place come a natural hierarchy of landscapes suitable for the growth and propagation of human societies. The antiquity and continuity of civilisation in the great Chinese plains, for example, speaks to its rich geographic endowment.² But modernity has greatly expanded the portfolio of useful resources beyond simply the acreage of arable land. The vast Eurasian heartland, traditionally the abode of threatening nomadic tribes, provided the Soviet state with a bounty of energy resources that bolstered its status as a great power.³ Lacking access to key resources is to fall short of greatness, and is itself a major spur to compete.

Great power status is relative: states are only great in comparison to their conceivable rivals, which are partly determined by geography. For example, Athens and Sparta were only great powers in the narrow context of the ancient Greek world, as experienced and described by Thucydides. One need only widen the geographic aperture to include Persia

'Great power status is relative: states are only great in comparison to their conceivable rivals, which are partly determined by geography.'

¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 64.

² Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 193-94.

³ Kotkin, Stephen. *Armageddon Averted*.



HMS Queen Elizabeth at sea.
Photo: Royal Navy.

to find a power which easily rivaled both, let alone conduct a net assessment with contemporaneous Chinese counterparts. The point here is twofold: until comparatively recently it has not been possible for all the world's states to compare power credentials, and, even when it became possible to take a global view, proximity mattered more than absolute differentials. Thucydides' timeless insight that war is driven by fear, honour and interest is strongly conditioned by geography.⁴ For example, Great Britain feared French power—its nearest rival geographically—and formed coalitions with

states that actually posed a greater long-term challenge to British power in order to defeat Napoleon.⁵ Ultimately, Germany and Russia were too proximate for comfort; they too might have militarily dominated the continent and thereby threatened British interests. The United States of America (US) was a more geographically tolerable partner for Britain in the long run, with both states sharing a maritime outlook focused on trade and commerce.

5 French, David. *The British Way in Warfare*, 88-118.

4 Strassler, Robert B., ed. *The Landmark Thucydides*.

Maritime and Continental Geographic Influences

From the beginnings of recorded history, the ability to access and use the sea has been a key feature of national power. As Alfred T. Mahan emphasised, moving goods over water is more efficient than land transport, which provides coastal states with a way to compensate for a lack of other geographic advantages, such as extensive agricultural land.⁶ This dynamic is well illustrated by Athens importing grain during the Peloponnesian War to feed its population, huddled inside the long walls, while Spartans ravaged the countryside.⁷ The Athenian fleet safeguarded trade, which helped pay for naval mastery. The economic advantages of access to the sea are well complemented by the defensive benefits of being an island. Great Britain enjoyed comparative safety behind the natural moat of the English Channel, although the prospect of seaborne invasion by continental rivals like Napoleon could never be completely discounted.⁸ The possibility of seaborne threats led Britain to build a strong navy which, in turn, fostered seaborne trade and commerce. It was the success of the Athenian and British models that inspired Mahan to proselytize the benefits of sea power for the US, which found its most complete expression in the Second World War.⁹ Whether a state is able to follow the Athenian and British examples and develop as a maritime rather than continental power is firstly a question of geography: does the state have flexible and defensible access to the sea? If not, then the manner in which it can compete is already constrained by geography.

The intensity of great power rivalry is increased by shared borders. In general, neighbouring states interact with each other more than states that are geographically separated. Frontiers were a particular concern of Carl Von Clausewitz, who made the possibility of wars to reset borders the subject of lengthy disquisition.¹⁰ European history, right up to the present day, has illustrated the deeply felt need to adjust

6 Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Mahan on Naval Strategy Selections from the Writings of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan*, 27.

7 Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*.

8 Corbett, Julian S. "Napoleon and the British Navy after Trafalgar".

9 Weigley, Russell. *The American Way of War*.

10 von Clausewitz, *On War*.

borders to reflect the results of competition. Tinkering with the territory of nation-states was central to the peace that followed the First World War,¹¹ and the same instinct underlay political developments that followed the Second World War and the Cold War.¹² The ebb and flow of German and Russian power in Eastern Europe and the millions of dead left by this blood tide is testament to the depth of feeling engendered by their geographic interaction. Soviet insecurity over borders is further illustrated by their touchy reaction to Chinese encroachment in the Far East during the 1969 border conflict.¹³ The contentiousness of borders is also well illustrated in the case of India and Pakistan, where the flat lands of the Punjab became, after partition, the site of a tortuous frontier that is the focus of a rivalry now encompassing nuclear weapons.¹⁴ In all these cases there was as much to knit the rivals together as pull them apart, but proximity leads to familiarity, which in turn breeds contempt.

The Geographic Discretion of Great Powers

Great powers compete for reasons of fear, honour and interest, but choosing where to compete is a central question of strategy. Sending an army across a shared border to confront a rival head-on is the most direct way of competing, but it is far from the most obviously sensible approach. Julian Corbett described the value of opening peripheral theaters, particularly for maritime powers that struggle to compete on a manpower basis with continental rivals.¹⁵ Taking an indirect approach to counter a rival in the manner of Sparta's Brasidas at Amphipolis of Wellington during the Peninsular Campaign requires a careful understanding of the geographical possibilities of the new theatre. At the operational level, projection and sustainment are important considerations, but they are subordinate to questions of whether peripheral campaigns will introduce sufficient risk to alter the strategic calculus. The ill-fated Gallipoli expedition in the First World War illustrates the hazards of failing to

11 Kagan, *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*.

12 Judt, *Postwar*, 86-99.

13 Radchenko, "The Sino-Soviet Split".

14 Johnson, Rob. *A Region in Turmoil*.

15 Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*.

‘Even though the results were frustrating, the very fact of fighting against communist forces in Korea and Vietnam was a declaration of the continued importance of territorial control—the physical geography of great power competition in the nuclear age.’

overcome tactical geography in a peripheral theater.¹⁶ Conversely, the simple expedient of leapfrogging geographic strong points turned General Douglas MacArthur’s Pacific campaign into a genuine threat to Japanese control in their ‘Southern Resource Area’.¹⁷ Executed with geographical nous, peripheral campaigns are an important way to balance the scales against militarily strong rivals.

The reach of national power in the nuclear age means that the whole world’s geography now influences great power competition. Allied victory in the Second World War, having resolved the crisis of the middle powers, left two superpowers bestriding the globe.¹⁸ Halford John Mackinder’s conception of a state dominating the “world island” had come to pass.¹⁹ America’s uniquely valuable geographic endowment (unparalleled access to both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans’ bountiful natural resources) would prove crucial to the West’s eventual success. The sheer scale of the ruin that would attend direct conflict during the Cold War placed more emphasis on the proxy contests that took place in the “Rimland”.²⁰ Drawing a line on the map and declaring ‘no further’—as envisioned by Eisenhower’s Solarium Task Force—reflected a geographically-informed view of the threat posed by Soviet ideological expansionism. There were places where blood and treasure would need to be expended to fight communism.²¹ Even though the results were frustrating, the very

¹⁶ Stevenson, *Cataclysm*.

¹⁷ Weigley, *The American Way of War*.

¹⁸ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.

¹⁹ Kaplan, *Revenge*, 73.

²⁰ Ibid, 96.

²¹ Task Force B, “Selected Reports to the National Security Council by the Task Forces of the Solarium Project, July 1953”, 1-28.

fact of fighting against communist forces in Korea and Vietnam was a declaration of the continued importance of territorial control—the physical geography of great power competition in the nuclear age.

The Revenge of Human Agency

On the other hand, if geography were the principal influence on the relative power of states, there would be no real prospect of competition. Instead of the kaleidoscopic history of rising and falling powers, a world where geography determined fate would be one in which the player with the best hand at the beginning of the game would win all the tricks. Geography only weakly influences national destiny because it is not a set of unchanging facts and universal rules. As a state’s geography includes the location of resources useful to human activity, it changes as the utility of different resources changes. The map is under constant revision. Moreover, human activity may make unsustainable demands on the geographic resources of any given territory. The rise of ancient civilisations in the Middle East, their relative decline amid desertification and salinisation and the return to economic viability of their successor states after the discovery of oil illustrates both processes.²² The Soviet Union had a short window of time where its geographic endowment was converted into great power; however the totalitarian system used to effect this transformation was so grossly inefficient that the window swiftly closed and the state was dissolved²³—apparently discrediting Mackinder’s idea that whoever dominates Eurasia will dominate the world. Geography is less a set of objective facts about the earth and its features and more an interpretation of their significance for human beings.

Great powers can choose to cooperate just as well as they choose to compete. To argue that geographic proximity leads to antagonism is to ignore the frequency of cooperative relationships built on mutual exchange. Moreover, even competing economically can allow both parties to gain, in contrast to the zero-sum mentality of conquest and dispossession which characterised great power competition

²² Gooch, ““Building buffers and filling vacuums””.

²³ Gaidar, “The Soviet Collapse”.

in Thucydides’ and Sun Tzu’s times. Sir Liddell Hart’s “better peace” might, for example, involve economic partnership.²⁴ The long-running contest between France and Germany that culminated in the Second World War was replaced by far-reaching military, economic and political cooperation that had a salutary effect on the outcome of the Cold War.²⁵ The diplomatic opening to China masterminded by President Nixon and Kissinger seemed to defy the existing competitive dynamic, but it had a durable effect on a relationship that has benefited both parties, even if complete trust has been elusive.²⁶ The Soviet Union, among the most geographically conscious great powers, illustrated the primacy of politics over geography in its oscillations, from pacts with Hitler to alliance with the West, reverting to hostility during the Cold War, as well as the changing leadership of the communist world illustrated by the rupture

²⁴ Liddell Hart, *Strategy*.

²⁵ Johnson.

²⁶ Westad, *Restless Empire*.

with Mao’s China. Geographic reductionism appeals partly because it offers a certainty that is absent in practice from international politics.

The advance of human knowledge has invalidated what were once geographic articles of faith. Time and distance considerations have shifted under the influence of increasing mobility. Both Sun Tzu and Clausewitz devoted considerable space to ‘the march’ as a necessary part of strategy.²⁷ But strategic employment of force is less bound by geography than ever. Even modest improvements in the efficiency of foot and horse-borne forces allowed Napoleon to dominate his rivals with dynamic marches and counter-marches.²⁸ The location of Napoleon’s eventual humbling at the hands of Wellington and Blucher was then witness to a bloody stalemate one hundred years later during an era when firepower had overtaken mobility.²⁹ Low Country

²⁷ Sun Tzu, *Art of War*; and Clausewitz, *On War*.

²⁸ Weigley, Russell F. *The Age of Battles*.

²⁹ Stevenson, *Cataclysm*.

The UK Carrier Strike Group in convoy as it transits through the Suez Canal. Photo: Royal Navy.





HMS *Prince of Wales* conducts cold weather operations in the Arctic, off the coast of Norway. Photo: Royal Navy.

campaigning was restored to strategic favour by the integration of aircraft, armour and motorisation in the Second World War.³⁰ The differing character of these conflicts highlights geography’s essential neutrality. With the long-term picture of technological advancement as prologue, what actually matters during the decisive moments of military competition is the skill of strategists, commanders and militaries in Clausewitz’s “contest of wills”.³¹

Great power competition now depends on the social and cultural dimensions of strategy more than it does material factors. The modern incarnation of great power competition takes place against the backdrop of possible nuclear armageddon, whereby competing militarily is to invite total destruction. Accordingly, great powers are engaged in a competition of ideas (which reflect different views of social order) that is increasingly divorced from geography. The pattern of ideological struggle was set at the advent of the Cold War: stark differences in economic and political approaches fueled deep enmity which found no outlet in direct conflict.³² Both sides were to discover that proxy wars are often expensive and unsatisfactory. Communism mounted a valiant struggle for the approval of a global constituency but was ultimately no match for capitalism’s demotic flexibility. The transition to the contest of ideas is also well illustrated by the modern age of terrorism and Al Qaeda’s efforts to undermine the United States’ power. While they dreamed wistfully of territorial control from the outset, Bin Laden and his acolytes recognised that the priority was to attack the idea of American power through symbolic acts of violence.³³ The appeal of their ideas is relatively narrow, but the chaos they brought in their wake has detracted from the United States’ great power status regardless.³⁴ Great powers have less leverage over dangerous ideas than they like to concede, and geography in an age of terror is more compressed than ever.

30 Weinberg, “D-Day After Fifty Years”.

31 Clausewitz, *On War*.

32 X” [George Kennan]. “The Sources of Soviet Conduct”.

33 Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda’s Strategy*.

34 Bergen, *The Longest War*.

An F35B Lightning II on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth. Photo: Royal Navy.



Time and Space: The Framework of Power

Nonetheless, great powers exist in time and space and can only do so much to relegate the influence of these fundamental factors. Time is history and goals; it is the record of what has gone before and the story of things to come. Space is geography, which forms the bedrock of strategy: the temporal goals of states also have locations. Ideas exist in the minds of people and, as complicated as geography becomes when overlaid with modern communications and transportation, human beings can only be in one place at one time. Moreover, not every place on earth is equivalent: the differences matter. From the unequal distribution of the earth's blessings arises competition. Ignoring the material basis for progress and competition in favor of a charitable view of the infinite malleability of society is to risk joining the discredited, ahistorical ideologies that litter history's byways. Great powers that wish to remain great cannot afford to blithely disregard the freedoms and constraints that their geography bestows upon them. The earth is immune to human vanities and will deal harshly with geographic iconoclasts.

The argument/counterargument structure mandated for essays in the Strategy and Policy module can lend essays an equivocal character, as though the author was undecided on the thesis when they began composition. Despite the forceful tone of my conclusion, I recognise that the complexities and uncertainties of national power are not a mere extension of geography. One of the implicit assumptions of this essay is that the phrase "great power competition" did not need to be explained. That is true in the context of a United States war college, where staff and students are being explicitly asked to engage academically with a concept that is already a declared part of the United States strategy and policy. In New Zealand, the phrase "strategic competition" resonates more strongly, pointing perhaps to unease with the idea that the goal of interaction with other states is "greatness". But however we choose to think about national goals, pursuing them necessitates a clear understanding of how geography aids or hinders stated ambitions.

In the case of New Zealand's geography, it is not hard to find the competing perspectives. Should we think of ourselves as a small or (given the extent of our maritime domain) a large nation? Is our distance from the world's great population and economic centres a blessing or a curse? Have we been endowed with the resources to support

ourselves comfortably in the future or will we need to think carefully about where and how to get those resources? These questions matter in an era when, whether we like it or not, great powers are increasingly competing over who gets to shape the future. To think clearly about New Zealand's place in great power competition, we need to understand the unchanging geographic advantages and disadvantages New Zealand must live with. This matters because that is how the great powers will often think of us—using the map as a form of strategic shorthand. Having done so, it is incumbent on us to determine how to use social, political and economic

means to complement our advantages and compensate for our disadvantages.

More easily said than done, of course. I had agreed with the former editor of this journal, Dr Lance Beath, that I would build on the points I have just made for the next edition of the journal. That is still my intention, but I confess to being daunted by the challenge. In any case, I am more convinced, day by day, that we will be in need of deeper thought as the global distribution of power changes (sometime in non-linear and unexpected ways) and the need to adapt our strategic approach increases.



CAPTAIN JOHN SELLWOOD, RNZN

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In this article, **Major General John Boswell** sets out the relationship between the land and maritime domains. While New Zealand is a maritime nation, success in operations, whether combat or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), is ultimately dependent on the “boots on the ground”, and an integrated approach is essential to success.

Setting the scene

On the 15 August 1914, the transport ships *Monowai* and *Moeraki* sailed from Wellington escorted by the British cruisers HM Ships *Philomel*, *Psyche* and *Pyramus*. On board was the approximately 1400-strong Sāmoa Advance Party of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. They sailed for German Sāmoa, which, due to its radio transmitter station (and ability to communicate with both Berlin and Germany's naval fleet), presented a strategic threat to Great Britain. On 29 August, the New Zealand troops disembarked and seized German Sāmoa unopposed.

German Sāmoa was the first amphibious military operation undertaken by New Zealand forces. Since then, the New Zealand Army has regularly operated in the wider maritime and littoral environment, undertaking missions such as disaster response operations in the South West Pacific, amphibious landings in Timor-Leste and defence diplomacy.

Across New Zealand's maritime areas of interest, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) has responsibilities for the defence of its territories, protection of its resources and support to its Pacific partners. While the New Zealand Army does not have a “blue water” operational focus, there is a regular need for land forces to operate in partnership with their Navy and Air Force colleagues, particularly in the heavily populated and urbanised littoral zone.

Noting the number of coastal communities located in the wider Indo-Pacific region and their susceptibility to natural disasters and insecurity, it is clear that Army has a critical role to play in the provision of human security in a maritime setting.

Article aim and scope

The focus of this article is how the Land Component intends to operate in the maritime domain. It will discuss how the New Zealand Army thinks about the maritime and littoral domains and the threats to security that arise in these complex environments. It will elaborate on the roles that the New Zealand Army is required to undertake when operating in and from the maritime domain, and how land forces should be organised, prepared and integrated to meet contemporary security challenges. It will discuss how the Land Component can contribute with joint and multinational partners to New Zealand defence policy objectives in the maritime and littoral environments and highlight ways to further improve these important partnerships.

A New Zealand Army view of the maritime domain

In the simplest terms, the geographical area where naval, land and air forces operate together most frequently is in the littoral. This is a highly complex and immensely diverse area that comprises exclusive economic zones, territorial seas, internal waters and land.¹ It is within this zone that land forces will potentially be supported by naval and air forces via logistics support, health support, communications, fire support, rotary wing support, surveillance and communications.

Globally, nearly 2.4 billion people, or 40% of the global population, live within 100 km of the coast; moreover, 60% of the world's urban areas lie in this geographic zone. Delving deeper again, United Nations statistics tells us that approximately 800 million people, or 10% of the world's population, live in coastal regions that are less than 10 metres above sea level;² the majority of this group resides in the Indo-Pacific region. Coastal activities, including resource extraction and trade, are a significant part of the region's economic

THE LAND COMPONENT IN THE MARITIME DOMAIN

Able Seaman T. Radcliffe (pictured), of Timaru, as part of a shore patrol from HMNZS *Rotoiti*, which destroyed enemy gun positions in Northwest Korea, August 1951. British Admiralty official photograph provided by the National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy. Crown Copyright.

¹ NZDFP 3.2.1

² *UN Factsheet: People and Oceans*, The Oceans Conference, 5-9 June 2017.

character. The most basic deduction we can make from these facts is that the maritime domain, including the littoral, needs to be a focus for defence and security policymakers and practitioners, both now and into the future. Noting the likely impacts of climate change and the size of the population in the Indo-Pacific region that could be affected, this focus will only increase.

We only need to look at recent history to get a sense of the future that awaits us. The last decade has seen the NZDF respond to a multitude of natural disasters, both domestically and within the region. Examples include the Christchurch earthquake of 2011, the Fiji cyclone response in 2016, and the Whakaari/White Island eruption in 2019. The *Defence Assessment 2021* identifies the increasing impact of climate change on Pacific island nations as a significant driver of insecurity; it is sensible to expect a greater prevalence of weather-related natural disasters and a rise in tensions among at-risk regional communities as the effects of climate change play out.

Over time, climate change impacts human security, with increasing water shortages, food insecurity, and health impacts such as increased vector-borne and bacterial diseases, and compromised nutrition. Where livelihoods are affected, climate change will induce displacement and migration (both internal and cross-border) and has the potential to destabilise areas with weak governance, magnifying traditional security challenges.

—Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018³

As a region of islands, 95% of cities and populations within the Pacific are located in the littoral. In order to operate in these locations, the NZDF requires forces that can be moved via strategic lift (either by air or sea), disembarked, and supported. This is particularly the case for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). Each disaster is unique in cause, scale and scope; therefore, each response must be tailored to meet local government needs, to integrate with existing command and control arrangements and to comply with local policies.

³ SDPS18, paragraph 98.

A humanitarian operation is specifically mounted to save lives and alleviate human suffering where responsible civil actors in an area are unable to support a population. A humanitarian operation can take the form of a disaster relief operation, a humanitarian assistance operation, or a humanitarian intervention operation.

—NZDDP 3.20 Humanitarian Operations

In addition to HADR, the recently released Defence Assessment has affirmed that there will continue to be a strong expectation that the NZDF will respond to instability and other security emergencies in the South West Pacific, as occurred in the Solomon Islands in late 2021.

New Zealand Army outputs

Before we continue, it is worth highlighting the NZDF outputs specific to the Army—

- Conduct combat operations globally within a coalition or multinational force context.
 - Conduct and lead independent, coalition or multi-national regional stability and security operations.
 - Conduct highly responsive national, regional and global Special Operations independently or within a coalition or multi-national force context.
- By maintaining the capabilities that allow it to meet its outputs, the New Zealand Army has the ability to contribute to—
- the protection of New Zealand and New Zealanders;
 - regional and global operations that contribute to New Zealand's security, stability and interests; and
 - maintenance of the New Zealand Government's awareness on foreign defence matters.

Many of the military response options that address these needs will do so in the South West Pacific, and will therefore have maritime aspects.



New Zealand soldiers of the 14th Brigade land at Baka Baka, Vella Lavella to relieve the US 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division, on September 17, 1943. Photo: US Army Signals Corps.

Since our initial foray into German Sāmoa, the New Zealand Army's view of the maritime domain (and the littoral particularly), and the capabilities we need to effectively operate within it, have developed considerably. In the *Future Land Operating Concept 2035*, Army notes—

*There will continue to be a strong imperative for the NZDF to be able to respond to and assist New Zealanders, New Zealand communities and those Pacific Islands that operate as dependencies or in free association with New Zealand when required to do so in an emergency.*⁴

The most likely scenarios for significant future Navy, Army and Air Force outputs-focused interactions within the maritime domain will be during the conduct of Stability and Support Operations (SASO).

The Army, being a people-centric organisation, is consistently focused on operational roles that require it to support and interact with the peoples of other nations. If necessary, we are also required to counter people-based threats to security and stability both within our region and further afield. In other words, persistent *human security* within the maritime domain

falls very much into the remit of the Land Component.

Responses in 2015 and 2016 to cyclones Pam and Winston respectively provided a prime example of the NZDF capabilities needed to respond effectively to crises of human security in the Pacific. HMNZS *Canterbury*, with an embarked HADR Task Group, formed from the Army's 2nd Engineer Regiment, Combat Support and Combat Service Support units, form the nucleus of these HADR relief responses. As such, familiarity and interoperability with the key units that are likely to be involved in these responses, including the need to routinely train together, is crucial.

Conflict in the South West Pacific could see the NZDF being required to undertake stability operations in a threat environment. Such operations in the littoral zone of a nation in conflict, or at least on the verge of conflict, point toward the need for amphibious operations whenever there remains a need to move forces from the sea to land. Examples could be operations to support the initial lodgement of a joint force, reinforce success in certain sectors, or even to “open up” new areas of operation within a maritime theatre.

⁴ FLOC35, Chapter 1, 20.

Auckland Weekly News, 20 August 1914. S.S. Monowai departing Wellington for Samoa. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19140820-43-3.



Amphibious operations

Taking into consideration the *Defence Assessment 2021*, the current level of capability, and a pragmatic approach, the types of operations the NZDF is most likely to undertake and should focus short- to medium-term efforts on are—

- opposed⁵ and unopposed amphibious operations;
- sealift;
- sea basing; and
- logistics over-the-shore (LOTS) operations.

Amphibious task group (ATG) – A task organisation of naval forces and a landing force, with their organic aviation and other supporting forces, formed for the purpose of conducting an amphibious operation.

⁵ It is not intended for a NZDF ATG to independently conduct an opposed landing into an Amphibious Objective Area (NZDFP 3.2.1).

Amphibious operations are primarily conducted to achieve a “land objective” by—

- applying leverage from the sea;
- conducting operations in the littoral; or
- providing support and assistance to operations other than war.⁶

Essentially, an amphibious task group (ATG) utilises the sea as an operational manoeuvre space, projecting combat power ashore at a strategic location and time.

Amphibious operations necessitate extensive training in order to execute what is a complex series of undertakings. The training burden that this produces cannot be underestimated. The NZDF must be very realistic in regard to what level of amphibious operations it intends to execute, if it wants to ensure these are carried out in a safe and effective manner.

Types of amphibious operations

Amphibious operations can anticipate opposed landings, meaning potentially maritime, land and air forces in opposition, thus making the disembarkation component significantly more complex than an HADR scenario.

⁶ NZDFP 3.2.1.

The five types of amphibious operations are outlined below—

- **Amphibious raids** are operations that are limited by time, space and resources and are conducted in order to destroy or disrupt, gain information or create a diversion.
- **Amphibious assaults** are the primary type of amphibious operation and involve establishing semi-permanent forces on potentially hostile shores.
- **Amphibious withdrawals** are withdrawals by sea in naval ships or craft from potentially hostile shores.
- **Amphibious demonstrations** are conducted to deceive adversaries.
- **Amphibious support to other operations** use force elements to provide assistance to non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) and HADR operations.

New Zealand does not aspire toward the level of capability required for the conduct of large-scale and independent opposed amphibious landings. However, the NZDF does maintain an amphibious capability, primarily through HMNZS *Canterbury*.⁷ Undertaking small scale landings at company level and below, or with Special Forces, still requires a high degree of planning, even to successfully execute unopposed operations.

The Army’s contribution pre-landing

Beach reconnaissance and beach clearance are both essential parts of the process of an amphibious operation. These reconnaissance missions can be carried out by Special Forces. Following this, advance force operations elements are sent out ahead of the main ATG to “prepare the ground”. Possible activities include surveillance by Special Forces, likely in conjunction with supporting assets from the Navy and Air Force. The aim of these activities is to ensure favourable conditions for follow-on forces.

Before the landing, a pre-assault wave may be launched. This is made up of elements from the Royal New Zealand Navy’s Littoral Warfare Support Force (LWSF), Army Plant Operators, and the Amphibious Beach Team. They are responsible for marking and

⁷ NZDF Maritime Doctrine, 2nd Ed.

controlling the beach, unloading landing craft, recovering vehicles and ensuring a smooth and efficient passage of the landing force across the beach.

Related operations and secondary roles

NZDF force elements may conduct roles that are not amphibious in nature but require the same generic capabilities. These include—

- **Sealift.** Combat support operations, requiring sea movement, such as administrative disembarkation on friendly territory, water terminal and LOTS operations.
- **Sea basing.** Amphibious ships may be tasked to establish an afloat sustainment capability. The NZDF currently has limited capability to undertake sea basing for an extended period.
- **LOTS.** These operations are defined as the loading and unloading of vessels at sea and the insertion and extraction of personnel, stores and equipment into a Joint Forces area of operations in an environment without the presence of an adversary or proper port facilities. LOTS operations involve both water transport and terminal assets to move cargo and personnel from offshore shipping to a beach terminal and vice-versa. Like sealift, LOTS operations are not amphibious operations, however can be critical to sustaining land operations. Experience in Suai, Timor-Leste from 1999–2001 demonstrated their importance. Several current NZDF Capability Branch Land Domain projects focus on enhancing the equipment available for these activities.

Photo: NZDF /
CPL Dillon Anderson.



Characteristics

The characteristics⁸ of an amphibious capability are listed below and demonstrate the strategic, operational, and tactical benefits to Navy and Army as part of a joint force—

- **Access.** An amphibious force can land almost anywhere, thus enabling them to respond rapidly to an emerging crisis.
- **Mobility.** Amphibious forces can move approximately 300 miles per day. This, in addition to access and lift capacity, is a critical dimension of theatre entry.
- **Versatility.** An amphibious force is expected to be held at a high state of readiness for contingent tasking; it can respond rapidly with a range of capabilities and operate across the spectrum of conflict.

⁸ NZDFP 3.2.1.

- **Poise.** Amphibious forces can remain at sea to signal political intent and act as a deterrent.
- **Leverage.** Leverage is achieved by using amphibious forces to provide decision makers with options.

Organising for amphibious operations

A decade ago the idea of combining the Services and effectively creating a marine corps was a topic of active discussion. The Chief of Defence Force at the time (Lieutenant General Rhys Jones, CNZM) chose not to follow this path and publicly concluded that the strengths and benefits of the single Services needed to be preserved. In other words, each Service needed to maintain tailored capabilities and was deliberately structured to meet the range of outputs required of them by Government. The Army, for example, has resolved to become a modern, agile and highly adaptive light combat force that is trained, equipped and led to operate effectively domestically, within our region and as part of a global

coalition force across the spectrum of conflict. This concept of building on our competitive advantages is captured in the *Army25 Strategy*.

Even for larger western militaries, amphibious manoeuvre in an opposed setting is a complex and challenging undertaking. It involves shaping operations (for example, reconnaissance and strike activities), establishing sea and air control, advance force operations to prepare landing areas, and then the actual conduct of ship-to-objective manoeuvre. Beyond the actual landing, there remains the ongoing need to support forces from the sea until they are either out of range of naval support, or they have established the level of land-based logistical support necessary for them to operate independently. Given that most island nations within the Indo-Pacific region are wholly littoral in nature, Navy and Air Force support would be required until land forces are withdrawn.

Command experience is critical to amphibious operations, due to their dynamic nature. Experience in the use of decentralised

command is often the only means to combat the many challenges inherent to the complexity of amphibious operations. There have been few opportunities for the Navy and Army to effectively train for amphibious operations in recent years. Exercises Tropic Twilight and Croix de Sud in May 2018 were the last major training activities with amphibious elements. This has significantly limited the ability for land forces to integrate with HMNZS *Canterbury*. This paucity of joint training has led to skill fade and growing unfamiliarity with core aspects of amphibious operations. With neither the necessary training nor operational demand, there has been a clear shift in the NZDF's capability development priorities, and a resultant degradation in service interoperability.

A lack of exercises and command experience is being compounded by the high tempo experienced by all three Services. This tempo means that amphibious-related courses and training are being deprioritised against other, more pressing, needs. The point being that in a time-constrained

environment, competing demands have significantly impacted training priorities. When exercises, training and experience wanes, capability is eroded and needs to be regenerated through targeted interventions.

Defence diplomacy and international partnerships

At a lower level, the Army retains a considerable soft power, defence diplomacy presence across the South West Pacific and, to a lesser extent, the greater Indo-Pacific region. This includes the provision of defence attachés (alongside our Navy and Air Force colleagues), technical and leadership advisors across a number of island nations, the provision of embedded Army personnel within other nations' security forces, the regular deployment of mutual assistance training teams and training of our Pacific partners here in New Zealand under the NZDF's Mutual Assistance Programme. Such activities build and strengthen relationships with these partner nations, enhance the capacity of indigenous security forces and, as a consequence, improve interoperability and national resilience when responding to either internal security issues or natural disasters. The most tangible by-product of this improved resilience is a reduced likelihood of the NZDF being required to respond to such disruptions. It therefore allows us to focus our limited Naval, Army and Air Force security and humanitarian response forces on small nations that are not as well prepared.

While the Guardian-class patrol vessels of Pacific Island Countries (PIC) are an incredibly important capability, the largest portion of the respective PIC defence forces are their land components, and engagements with these forces by the New Zealand Army are a critical element of wider defence engagement. This greater level of responsibility also gives the Land Component a greater stake in "Phase Zero Operations" across the region.

Phase Zero Operations – operations and activities, including training and defence diplomacy, that contribute to the security of a region/area but sit below a state of conflict.

Like amphibious operations, Phase Zero within the maritime domain will need to be carefully targeted, well-coordinated and, when appropriate, joint by nature.

At the highest level, the Army must be able to participate in amphibious operations in an opposed setting; if this scenario were to come to pass, NZDF involvement would need to be as a part of a multi-national coalition. Within the context of the Indo-Pacific region, such an undertaking should always be at the invitation of a host nation government and would require a Joint Task Force to effectively mitigate the risks posed by the threats that would be present. These could range from disaffected and armed civilians attempting to disrupt friendly force amphibious activities through to formed military units working to prevent amphibious landings. Any threat of this nature would see NZDF forces working closely with our Australian Defence Force (ADF) colleagues. Regular engagements with ADF counterparts will ensure that integration at the operational level is seamless and effective.

Looking forward

In acknowledging the significant human dimension to New Zealand's maritime domain, it becomes clear that the Land Component has a specific role to play in the provision of persistent human security across the spectrum of conflict, including during the conduct of Phase Zero Operations. However, the complexity of the maritime domain and the environmental challenges associated with operating in the Pacific region will always point toward the need for joint responses from the NZDF. In the last decade considerable progress has been made in developing shared understanding and coherency of capabilities across the three Services.

In line with Government direction, we must increasingly focus our efforts on supporting a secure, stable and resilient South West Pacific. Notable improvements in joint planning, better integration of land forces on naval platforms, and joint consideration of capability projects have set a good foundation to build upon. However, recent successes in these key areas can quickly be eroded by posting cycles, changing priorities and a lack of direction.

As the Land Component, alongside its Navy and Air counterparts, now looks

toward regenerating core capabilities and outputs following Operation Protect (NZDF's contribution to the national COVID-19 response), it is critical that the Land Component is able to function effectively across the spectrum of operations; from Phase Zero activities that sit below the threshold of conflict through to mid-intensity combat operations. It is equally vital we acknowledge that the Army's future operational deployments will often be reliant upon our ability to effectively operate alongside the Navy and Air Force within the maritime domain.

Due to the many demands on our organisation, capability development will only ever occur if it is led, prioritised, planned and resourced effectively for success. A concerted focus on preparing for more complex amphibious operations would cover many of the requirements necessary for undertaking regional stability and support operations. This would then ensure that the NZDF is prepared for future deployments within the Indo-Pacific region.

CHIEF OF ARMY, MAJOR GENERAL JOHN BOSWELL, DSD

Major General Boswell enlisted into the New Zealand Army in January 1984. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School of New Zealand in December 1985 into the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment in the rank of Second Lieutenant.

As an infantry officer he has served with the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment in both Singapore and New Zealand, and has completed two postings to the 2nd/1st Infantry Battalion including as the Commanding Officer.

Throughout his career Major General Boswell has undertaken a range of regimental, staff and training appointments including postings as the Chief Instructor of Combat School, Director Army Training, and as Military Assistant at the New Zealand High Commission in London. As a senior officer Major General Boswell has held a variety of appointments including Head of Strategy Management (Army), Acting Deputy Chief of Army, and the Chief Staff Officer - Joint Plans at Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand. In 2016 he was posted to Defence Headquarters as the Assistant Chief Strategic Commitments and Engagements and, in early 2018, was posted back to Army as the Land Component Commander.

Major General Boswell has deployed on operations with the United Nations in Angola, East Timor and to the Middle East. Major General Boswell deployed to Afghanistan in April 2010 as the Senior National Officer and Commanding Officer of the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team. Major General Boswell was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Service Decoration (DSD) in recognition of his service in Afghanistan.

Major General Boswell was appointed Chief of the New Zealand Army on 10 September 2018.



Major General Boswell is a graduate of the Australian Command and Staff College and the National Defence College of India.

Major General Boswell holds a Masters in Defence Studies from the University of Canberra, a Masters of Philosophy (Defence and Strategic Studies) from the University of Madras, and a Masters of Management, Bachelors of Arts (History) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from Massey University.

Major General Boswell is married to Vicky and they have a son and a daughter; Joseph and Kate. His interests include all sports, either as a participant, administrator or spectator.

BUILDING JOINTERY,

NOT JUST HQ JFNZ

As HQ JFNZ nears the end of its 20th year of operation, **Neil James** (Australian Army, Rtd) reflects on the Joint Implementation Team that designed and established a joint-force headquarters from scratch.

Introduction by RADM James Gilmour, Commander Joint Forces New Zealand

As this journal goes to press, Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (HQ JFNZ) will have just celebrated 21 years of joint operational command – imagining, designing, supporting, coordinating and controlling NZDF operations across the three traditional operating domains. The headquarters has grown from an initial collection of single-Service staff who had to lead the change journey that HQ JFNZ and NZDF embarked on, to a staff that operates almost seamlessly, regardless of the uniform or civilian attire worn.

As I reflect on the journey we have taken, it makes me immensely proud to recognise how far we have come in educating ourselves, understanding each other and working together. Different Services, divisions and corps each have their own identities that have not been lost, but have been enhanced, by working in an environment that embraces our differences and uses them so that the sum is greater than the parts. Operating in a joint environment is an advantage when considering the joint effect we aim to achieve. It often gives us differing perspectives and therefore allows us to develop options beyond what a single-Service staff would consider, enabling us to solve complex problems more efficiently and effectively.

HQ JFNZ has evolved and developed beyond the initial concept too. A National Maritime Coordination Centre (NMCC) was established within HQ JFNZ, drawing in Other Government Agencies (OGA) such as New Zealand Customs and the Ministry of Primary Industries to provide representatives with crucial links into their organisations and resources. The NMCC operates physically and practically alongside the Joint Operations Centre, allowing military tasking to be produced in support of OGA priorities. Furthermore we have been aided in our operations by a new watch floor facility, allowing the co-location of intelligence and operations functions, and much improved situational awareness through a Common Operating Picture and Joint Watch Centre.

We've also established the Deployable Joint Inter-agency Task Force (DJIATF), allowing the NZDF to rapidly surge a command team into any area of operations alongside OGA staff. As an extension of HQ JFNZ, this deployable headquarters has allowed the NZDF to quickly gain an appreciation of evolving situations, coordinate on the ground (or at sea), and to better link back to HQ JFNZ for the planning and assignment of assets to support the resolution of situations. Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, Civil Defence including Pandemic Response, and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations are just some of the activities conducted in recent years, and HQ DJIATF also regularly trains to be able to deploy in conventional conflict scenarios.

Lastly, the joint approach in HQ JFNZ has filtered down into formations and units too, with a continual rotation of personnel in staff positions taking the joint approach back into their parent units. Being a member of a joint staff is a professionally satisfying, valuable military experience, and so often HQ JFNZ sees personnel returning multiple times at different staff levels over the course of their careers, hopefully enabling them to become more rounded professionals in their chosen specialisation.

The establishment of HQ JFNZ was perhaps the first step in our journey to become an integrated defence force. This NZDF strategy doesn't just rely on interconnected capabilities, but is underpinned by knowledgeable and professional personnel conducting command and control of our operations. Together as one we can be a force for New Zealand.

Ngā rau e toru o te patu kotahi e.

A soldier with an Amphibious Beach Team, 5th Movements Company, guides a CAT938K with an aluminium trackway off HMNZS Canterbury's Landing Craft at Army Bay, Whangaparaoa. Photo: NZDF.

Crossing chasms not just ditches

This account uses no names to protect the innocent.

Before arriving in New Zealand on exchange to join the Joint Implementation Team (JIT) establishing Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand (HQ JFNZ), my nearly 30 years Australian Defence Force (ADF) service had included working in both joint and joint-force headquarters. Much of this had been during the pioneering stage of real, not just nominal, “jointery”.

Never waste a deadline

The JIT had been tasked to design and build the New Zealand Defence Force’s (NZDF) first ever operational-level joint-force headquarters. The NZDF’s only prior joint (not joint-force) headquarters was the strategic-level HQ NZDF.

A key advantage of the situation was impetus (especially in contrast to the ADF). Chief of Defence Force (CDF) had directed that HQ JFNZ was to stand up on 01 July 2001, ‘even if it had to be in tents’. Another key advantage was the NZDF’s long history of resourcefulness and adaptability in coping with severe resourcing constraints.

Lessons from others

Most relevant to helping build HQ JFNZ was my experience as J2 at Headquarters Northern Command (HQNORCOM) in Darwin 1994–96. This joint-force headquarters had been structured on a component-command basis from 1988–93.

Following lessons from Exercise Kangaroo93, it became an integrated headquarters. Integration was further streamlined following Kangaroo95, and I had been on the two-person team involved.

There were many lessons for the JIT from HQNORCOM’s pioneering role and development that applied to the structural, procedural and cultural-change jumps the NZDF would need to make to meet CDF’s July deadline.

There were also wider lessons for HQ JFNZ from the ADF’s often stalled 1996–2004 saga to transform its component-based Headquarters Australian Theatre (HCAST) into what eventually became Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC). Significant ADF obstacles were that the existing environmental headquarters were old, large, and commanded by two-star officers, resulting in cultures that

tended to oppose structural and cultural change.

The NZDF’s single-Service environmental headquarters were much smaller. There was a greater willingness to embrace real “jointery” because the Government insisted, and there was no longer any practical alternative on operational, staffing and financial grounds. Moreover, such change can be achieved faster, and be accepted more readily, in smaller organisations where dinosaur-thinking has no caves in which to retreat.

The JIT starts work

In January 2001, the JIT began working in some spare offices in a logistics warehouse in Trentham. Soon after we moved to the former Telecom New Zealand cafeteria, next door to the Army Logistic Executive.

The location was particularly advantageous. Sitting at desks arranged around the large open space of the dining hall, the team grew from February onwards. We got to know each other very well, including our various specialisations and tasks, because the only physical separation was by air.

Each part of the team could not avoid listening in to other discussions and telephone calls. Many potential problems were avoided or minimised because we each had a sound idea of who was doing what and why. Ideas and suggestions could be widely discussed.

Around the corner in Seddul Bahr Road, remodelling of the Land Command building began for HQ JFNZ. The new headquarters would be moving in on a floor-by-floor basis to meet the deadline. Having an able engineer colonel to run the project was a strength of the team, and the reconstruction charged ahead. The building had originally been built to house the New Zealand public service’s main computer servers. Cutting new windows in the substantial walls of an earthquake-resistant building was costly, but fortunately the floor to house the new Top-Secret-level Joint Command Centre didn’t need too many windows.

Structuring HQ JFNZ

Some JIT planning in late 2000 for the structuring of HQ JFNZ had relied on outdated ADF and allied experience. It was also reliant on staffing levels and breadth of expertise that the NZDF could neither provide nor sustain.

After spirited JIT discussion, I was directed to draft a paper detailing more modern options for the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) to consider. Three options eventuated—

- A modified component-command model with a joint staff coordinating it. This was needed to prove to any remaining joint-naysayers why this would not work with the constrained staffing and other capacity limits applying.
- An integrated model organised in J1–J9 branches, with the maritime, land and air commanders supported entirely by the joint staff.
- A streamlined model organised in three large branches (Operations, Plans and Support), with the relevant parts of J1–J9 functions apportioned between them. This meant, for

example, that J43, J63 and J73 staff would be co-located with J3 (and J2) in Operations Branch and their planning staffs with J5. As well as C31 (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence) and procedural advantages, such a structure would enable savings in branch support staff, enabling their redeployment elsewhere in the headquarters.

As with most three-option proposals, COSC went for the middle ground but agreed that the standard J1–J9 structure could be loosely grouped in three divisions (Operations, Plans and Support).

The integrated model suited the layout constraints of the building and the security-compartmentalisation requirements. J2, J3 and much of J6 would be located on the second floor and most of the remainder on the third (with all its existing windows). The joint and environmental commanders, Chief-of-Staff and joint coordination staff would

HQ JFNZ Staff pose for a photo in 2018. Credit: NZDF / SGT Sam Shepard.



be grouped together in an annexe built to adjoin the ground floor.

Approval of the overall organisational structure enabled the JIT to focus on three key transitional problems: information technology, getting the staff, and developing the joint-staff processes and standard operating procedures (SOPs) needed.

The able RNZN commander leading the personnel planning was to be the initial J1 so had a vested interest in the three Services providing the right people. This was not easy because some in HQ NZDF and the Services wrongly thought that HQ JFNZ just needed to absorb the staff from the existing environmental headquarters. But the numbers, specialisations, careers and locational preferences did not match.

Information technology demands took time to resolve as there were insufficient funds to fully kit out the building with new systems. Those moving from Devonport

and Whenuapai brought their desktop computers with them. HQ JFNZ had only one Secret-level terminal on each floor for the first year or so.

Much of the organisational-structure and procedural challenge fell to our four-member, tri-Service planning team. We were later joined by a very able RNZN captain who was to be the J5. Only two months or so after HQ JFNZ stood up, however, he was deployed to Tampa as the NZDF Liaison Officer at US Central Command. As the J53, and although an Aussie, I became the J5 for a busy operational period for the NZDF.

Joint team-building challenges

During March and April, numerous conferences, and visits to the three existing environmental headquarters to examine current structures and procedures, identified many difficulties. It quickly became clear that many of the SOPs needed would have

to be rewritten from narrow bases or from scratch.

Another problem was existing Service-based technology did not, then, enable the type of electronic Common Operating Picture hardware and software that the HQ JFNZ joint watch centre would need, especially between Navy and Air Force capabilities.

Two significant personnel challenges were limited depth in staff training and gaps in initial staffing.

All the branch heads were staff college graduates and the J1 was a graduate of the ADF's Joint Services Staff College. However, only four of the many desk-level major-equivalent (MAJ(E)) officers would be staff college qualified, and one of them was the other ADF exchange officer.

Many of the desk officers throughout the headquarters had spent more than a decade in that rank, especially the squadron leaders. We had warrant officers in several captain-equivalent jobs and in some MAJ(E) ones, and about 25 vacancies across the headquarters in our first year.

Pushing cultural change

In the early months of 2001, there were many conferences at both HQ NZDF and the JIT. If I closed my eyes to the uniform of the speaker, I often heard the same type of stale arguments against "jointery" from New Zealand Army quarters that in Australia would have then come from much of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Generally, in a new joint headquarters there are five options for organising a function or process, or tackling a task. How each Service does it, how joint headquarters elsewhere in your defence force do it, and how foreign joint headquarters do it.

The structural and cultural challenges, especially with many senior non-commissioned officers and older middle-ranking officers, is to encourage them to consider other ways than the automatic "we've always done it this way" choice of their parent Service. It was also clear that many staff had little or no idea of Service capabilities other than their own.

Cultural change needs to accompany and bolster organisational change, not follow it. HQ JFNZ was a blank canvas and a relatively small headquarters. The NZDF does not have a complex range of capabilities compared to, say, Australia or Canada. All these features were an

advantage in terms of encouraging cultural change and introducing integrated and effective joint-staff processes.

From the beginning of the JIT, and later in the headquarters, we hammered several key aphorisms—

- All staff work for all commanders.
- There is no such thing as a dumb question in a new joint headquarters.
- When in doubt, look up the phonebook (see below).
- The quickest way to cross a chasm is with a single step (this was particularly relevant when merging single-Service practices into joint procedures).

Downhill run to the deadline

Most of May and June I spent focused on three inter-related structural and cultural tasks, each requiring approval from the incoming Chief-of-Staff and all four commanders.

First, we pored over the existing architect's plans to matched the new structure to the physical layout. This meant allocating where every section and every desk would be located, and why. We also determined which functions needed to have at least one desk in the Joint Watch Centre, within the Joint Command Centre, largely based on which C3 decisions involved a sub-24 hour timeframe.

Second, much effort went into writing a quick-reference manual for how the headquarters worked. This was as much for the benefit of the rest of the NZDF as it was for HQ JFNZ staff and was disguised as the HQ JFNZ phonebook.

As a key aid to cultural-change, the phonebook described the role and responsibilities of every branch and its component sections or centres. Using only joint terminology, it listed the rank and name of every staff member, described their job, its title in full, and its J-number (eg J33L).

Finally, when each member of staff entered HQ JFNZ on or before 01 July 2001, sitting on every workstation was their detailed duty statement. This covered their responsibilities and duties in only joint terminology, including what was different to what they had done in their 'equivalent' single-Service job.

A NH-90 Air Force crew, operating from HMNZS Canterbury, deliver infrastructure to Tokelau (November 2020). Photo: NZDF.



Little or no single-Service or outdated nomenclature survived, but some personal and Service habits were harder to break.

What worked well

The legislative basis for joint command in New Zealand, before HQ JFNZ was even thought of, was a major help. Unlike most comparable countries at the time, the CDF, not the Service chiefs, had full command of the NZDF and allocated force elements back to the chiefs for force preparation. Operational command could therefore be readily delegated to the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand (COMJFNZ). This avoided many of the pitfalls that had bedevilled joint command arrangements around the world for years.

A telling example of working-level success occurred on the first day. Out of habit, the squadron leader in J5 responsible for planning P-3 Orion support to the Navy began to write a signal (remember them) to his naval counterpart. He then stopped and laughed, because the relevant lieutenant commander now sat (deliberately) at the desk next to him.

Concerns that the joint staff alone would not be able to support the three environmental commanders soon dissipated. This was because at desk level in nearly every section were staff from each Service. It was only the branch or section head who might be from another Service. Confidence in providing or accepting advice by someone wearing a different coloured uniform grew even quicker than we had hoped.

While the permanent annexe for COMJFNZ and the three environmental commanders was being built, they worked in temporary cubicles built inside the ground-floor function room. Having all four of them work in such close proximity for several months (sharing two civilian personal assistants) forged the command team together from the start. This, and many other teamwork successes, were grounded in thoroughly by the Chief-of-Staff, a particularly unflappable and diplomatic group captain, and by a capable major heading the joint co-ordination section.

As with my British commander in West Germany, and with UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) in Iraq, COMJFNZ found having an allied (non-NZDF) officer in the JIT handy—particularly

when initiating or supporting discussions about reforming structure or joint procedure, or with transmitting unpalatable messages within the NZDF.

What could have been done better

The JIT closed down when HQ JFNZ stood up, not least because most JIT members now had busy jobs in the headquarters. In retrospect, a small JIT should have been retained for six months to ease the transition.

Because the one-star environmental commanders had no dedicated staff, we had to double-hat three lieutenant colonel equivalent officers as their military assistants (MA) to co-ordinate support by the joint staff. Two (Navy and Air Force) were J3 section heads. The other one was the J4, who thus had a herculean workload. The environmental commanders should have had dedicated MAs from the start.

The effects of 9/11

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington obviously speeded the bedding-in of HQ JFNZ. The major effect, however, was reinvigorating positive national attitudes to defence, and ensuing matters, at governmental and departmental levels.

HQ JFNZ operational planning processes were operationally tested and became streamlined more quickly than would otherwise have been the case, as were C3I processes. Another positive effect was that the subsequent operational focus boosted morale in a defence force still undergoing shock from the impending loss of its air-combat capability.

Epilogue

Prior to returning to Australia, I was advised I would be posted to the three-person project team developing the plan for the new HQJOC at Bungendore, near Canberra. One of us would be responsible for the building, one for communications and IT, and I would tackle initial organisational design.

This prompted one question, would HQJOC be an integrated or component-based joint-force headquarters? The answer was a very definite “component”, with the plan being that three environmental, a logistic and the joint component would each occupy a floor of a five-storey building.

Noting that joint-force headquarters the world over tended to become integrated within a few years, I declined the opportunity for another bout of (Australian) dinosaur-busting.

When I marched out of HQ JFNZ in mid-February 2003, I handed over a smoothly running J5-ship to a capable officer I had taught at Command & Staff College a decade earlier. This was particularly satisfying.

Two days later, the JSO2 Coordination kindly picked me up from the Trentham Officers Mess (my family having left a fortnight earlier) and drove me to Wellington airport.

He noted my HQ JFNZ lapel pin. We agreed it was only right that I was still wearing it as I departed New Zealand, having had one of the most professionally satisfying jobs in my career.



NEIL JAMES

Neil James served in the Australian Army's full-time and reserve components from 1973 to 2019. His final regular-army posting was as senior ADF exchange officer at HQ JFNZ January 2001 to February 2003.

Neil's exposure to the NZDF began at RMC Duntroon 1973–76 followed by regular ANZUS exercises in Australia (and at Waiouru in 1980 and 1981). He also taught many Kiwi students in Australia at the School of Military Intelligence and the Army Command & Staff College, Fort Queenscliff.

His other overseas service included a deployment to Malaysia, UNMOGIP in Kashmir, UNSCOM in Iraq and exchange postings with the British Army in West Germany and the Canadian Forces in Canada. He had the unusual record of having served with or alongside nearly all the armies of the old Commonwealth: Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore and the UK.

Since returning from New Zealand, Neil has been executive director of the Australia Defence Association. This has included visits to ADF deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan and speaking at strategic-policy conferences across Asia and Europe.

In this article, **Chris Saxby** examines the four key components of sustaining a fleet, and how New Zealand can prepare its sustainability environment for a frigate-based fleet of the future.

Introduction by Captain Andrew Watts, RNZNR

As Lead for the Future Surface Combatant requirement from 2017–19, I had extensive dealings with both Chris Saxby and his predecessor, Mike Wardlaw. I knew instinctively that I needed to take the broadest possible view of the components of capability, including the way in which it was sustained. Despite having studied the PRICIE concept (and a long-standing personal commitment to trying to understand what the engineers and logisticians were on about), I was essentially groping in the dark. Mike Wardlaw had already started Babcock New Zealand Limited (BNZL) down the ISO 55000 accreditation track, recognising that proper application of asset management principles was the best way to get maximum value out of limited MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul) resources. As I got further into the future fleet challenge, Chris provided further insights into the way in which capability requirements should be framed. Both Mike and Chris had a huge influence on the development of the vision for a top-down view of the totality of our fleet requirements; as opposed to looking at each component (combat, patrol, sustainment, littoral operations) in isolation that I tried to express in the article I contributed to Volume 1 of this Journal.

To recap very briefly, the fact that every ship in the current fleet except HMNZS *Aotearoa* reaches the end of its life of type in a very short window in the early to mid-2030s gives us a golden opportunity to acquire a fleet that allows us to address the sustainment challenges Chris so adroitly highlights. We must break down the siloed view of capability represented in the current Defence Capability Plan and think about the totality of our requirements and how they should be met—if for no other reason than we owe it to the New Zealand taxpayer to look at ways in which we can deliver the best possible value for their hard earned tax dollars. Addressing this requires the widest spread of intellectual input irrespective of branch. Leading the exercise requires a person with a wide knowledge base and the ability to reconcile an equally wide range of perspectives. The best person for that job could be an engineer or logistician or badged warfare officer. The critical requirement is the ability to synthesise input from all disciplines.

We need to think very carefully about how we express requirements. There are people who have studied this in far greater depth than me, but in my view, we need to think about requirements in terms of *performance*—what do we need our fleet to do—and *availability*—where, when and for how long does the fleet need to be able to do it. This plays into Chris' philosophy, allowing an asset management-based solution to be arrived at that '...ensures that the support products purchased with any initial build programme actually fit the chosen and practical sustainment methodology, not merely an ideological integrated logistics support (ILS) suite based on a theoretical norm...' In addressing performance and availability, we need to use the discipline of the PRICIE concept to ensure that every aspect of capability is addressed.

In stressing the need for engineering and logistics considerations to be fully integrated with performance requirements, I am not downplaying the latter. We need deep analysis of strategic context, doctrinal and technological opportunity, and tactical performance requirements, not just for combat, but across the spectrum of capability. This analysis must be fully integrated with the outstanding operational research capabilities of the Defence Technology Agency. I've said it before and I'll say it again, these people are a priceless asset.

To go back to the business of arriving at integrated fleet performance and availability requirements, I don't believe the current Integrated Project Team (IPT) concept is the best way to address this, notwithstanding the outstanding results it has delivered on specific projects. We need something more fluid, based on putting together not only competencies and disciplines but also individuals whose records indicate an ability to think and innovate

PREPARING TO SUSTAIN A MODERN FRIGATE- BASED FLEET

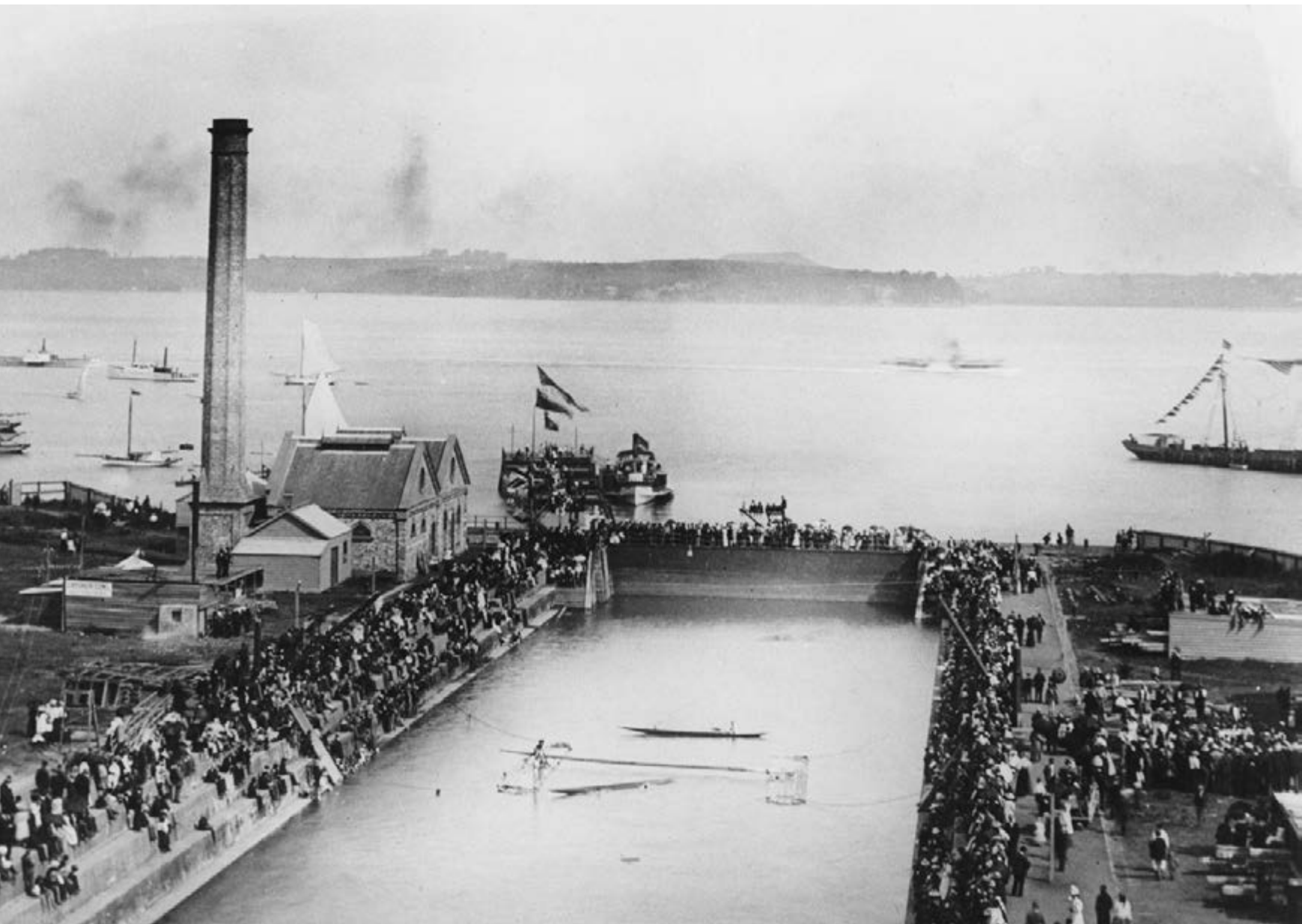
Replacement
of a propeller
on HMNZS
Manawanui while
in dry dock.
Photo: NZDF
/ PO Chris
Weissenborn.

laterally. We need more than one voice in each particular discipline, the whole led by an officer or official with a talent for bringing a wide range of viewpoints into the discussion and an ability to see the value in ideas.

Finally, Chris makes a point about which I feel very strongly: ‘... a disproportionate skill reliance on those few marine-skilled journeymen senior ratings who remain in service...’ These people are gold dust, as are their equivalents in the warfare and logistics worlds, and there are officers and civilians as well as senior ratings who fall into that category. I know for a fact that the Service recognises their value, and it’s great to see that the unnecessary encumbrance of “retiring age for rank” has been chunked in the gash bin where it belongs—not just formally, but also in our thinking. I very much hope that any team put together to look at integrated fleet capability includes such people. For one thing, they might help us avoid dead ends like the operator/maintainer and repair by replacement concepts adopted and then discarded by the Royal Navy.

In closing, Chris’ article is one of the most important to yet appear in the Journal. I commend it to all readers, but especially to those warfare officers who would like to learn more about what the totality of capability actually means.

Opening of Calliope Dock, 16 February 1888.
Photo: National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy.



In the beginning

1888, apart from being the first year that a rugby team left Britain to represent more than one of the nations of the British Isles—thus beginning the remarkable institution that is ‘the British & Irish Lions’—was also the year that Calliope Dock was inaugurated, having been commissioned earlier that decade in 1881 by the Auckland Harbour Board.

It was, at the time of its construction, the largest dock in the Southern Hemisphere—significantly larger than was required at the time—and a key strategic support asset for the Navy that protected the sea lines of communication for the Empire. By 1913, the dock was considered no longer suitable for the modern fleet, having already undergone minor modifications in 1903 and 1909. Further modifications followed in 1915, but by 1927, it was considered yet again that the dock and, this time, the workshop facilities were out of date for modern ships. Debate on this raged for over 15 years until a new caisson was fitted in 1942 and the dock was lengthened in 1943 to accommodate the modern United States (US) cruiser.

The latest modifications, to enable support to the Anzac frigates, were undertaken in 1996; these included new pumping arrangements (although the original pump house still encloses them), the latest caisson and extensions to the rudder and sonar pits.

Calliope Dock was just as much a tool of foreign policy in the late 19th century as the ships that it serviced and has enabled the sustainment of the fleet that serves New Zealand for over 130 years. However, noting the continued modifications that modern fleets have required of the dock facility across its lifetime, is it now enough?

‘Enough’ is a reasonable question, but in what capacity? It is first essential to examine what a modern support solution requires, and this can be broken down into four key components: the dock facilities and infrastructure, the skills and experience of the people engaged, the supply chain, and the processes used.

What does a modern support solution require?

Dock facilities and infrastructure

The dock facilities would appear to be easy. To enable the sustainment of any ship, it must be possible for the sustainment team to bring the ship out of the water. This is largely and simplistically due to the materials that ships are constructed of not being compatible with the marine environment—either the salt water in which they sit or the marine growth endemic within the water. Additionally, it can be necessary to ensure that the docked platform is entirely stable for weapon and sensor alignments.

The International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires that ships be subject to a bottom survey twice in every five year period; this is further expounded upon by detailed ship classification rules or the rules of flag states.

There are broadly five different dry docking methodologies—

- The basic docking method, a **graving or excavated dock**, is set up on land near the sea shore, with concrete used to build walls, dock blocks and gates. The ship is then shifted through a caisson gate into the dock and positioned above the dock blocks. Upon closing the gate, the water is drained from around the ship until the ship is resting on the blocks. Ultimately the dock is dry, enabling fulsome access.
- **Floating docks** were originally only used to salvage and repair vessels at sea that had broken down or had an accident. A U-shaped structure of pontoons was towed into an adjacent position to the ship in need of support and then filled with water, sinking the dock and enabling the ship to be manoeuvred above the pontoons. Once the ship was secured, the water was released, making the dock rise up and revealing the previously hidden parts of the ship. More recently, this type of dock has found popularity where coastal land is unavailable for the excavation of graving docks.

- A **syncrolift or shiplift docking method** is fundamentally a large elevator taking ships from sea-level to land-level where they are then transported by hydraulic or electric trollies to a working area. Since the syncrolift is not permanently used to deliver the docked work, it can be re-used repeatedly to lift multiple ships from the sea. The key constraint is the area of free adjacent land, whereas a graving dock or floating dock typically can only support a single ship at a time (or in extremis, two smaller vessels).
- In **slipways**—designed for smaller boats only—the hull is placed on trolleys and the vessel is winched ashore up a ramp.
- **Careening** is the practice of using the tides to beach a vessel. While the tide is low, areas needing attention that are usually hidden below the waterline are revealed; the ship is then re-floated at high tide. This method is now used primarily for small vessels.

It is self-evident that a modern fleet requires a facility of suitable size that enables repeatable and, at times, lengthy docking; this precludes either a slipway or a careening beach. As a result, the coastal geography can have a much more solution-defining input to the final choice. The syncrolift requires expansive coastal land to make best use of the multiple lifts such a facility enables; the investment cost requires significant throughput to enable commercial return. The floating dock and graving dock also require suitable coastal land features: the former to enable the floating dock to be secured to the harbour safely; the latter, suitable ground or rock into which to excavate for stability. Additionally, both require considerable investment and a commercial return route unless owned by central government as a strategic asset.

People and skills

A modern warship is a complex feat of engineering. While warship reliability, like that of the motorcar, has increased significantly (delivered by the modern equipment that make up a warship's systems), there is a need for considerable skill and experience

in the large engineering involved in warship sustainment.

The most obvious necessity is the scale of the engineering involved and how this differs from typically adjacent industries such as vehicle manufacturing or building: electrical voltages are higher than for buildings; power is greater; water pressures are higher, as are air pressures in ship systems; rotating machines are larger, as are gearboxes and engines; and shafts and steering systems also have a scale largely unmatched ashore. Developing the competence to operate with systems on this scale requires a degree of experience that only comes with time. Such competence can be accelerated through training, but inevitably skill consolidation only occurs through actually working with such systems.

Behind the scenes, the competences required of the design engineer are not unique but take time to master, especially when the interconnected nature of complex systems is considered. Integration is a term frequently used but rarely understood.

Supply chain

A supply chain is the system providing a product or service to a consumer; it can include organisations, people, activities, information and resources. The supply chain has three components repeating through it—

- procurement (of raw materials through to manufactured materials);
- operational management (the added value delivered by a contractor—from processing raw materials through to actually manufacturing components/products); and
- the downstream installation/use of the product by/for the consumer.

Supply chains directly relate to value chains; suppliers are often categorised by “tier”. First-tier suppliers supply the client directly, second-tier supply the first tier etcetera.

While most good supply chain managers understand that the core attributes making up a supply chain are purchasing (sourcing), planning (scheduling) and logistics (delivery), the complexities of a warship and the complication of being an island nation ensure that the naval supply chain is anything but straightforward.

Much of the equipment fitted to the current fleet has been originally sourced from Europe—and not all of it has been subject to definitive owner's choice. This means that the supply chains remain disparate and not under the owner's control or even advocacy.

Processes

When considering the processes required for the material sustainment of a fleet, it is essential to understand the systems integration needs of any one particular platform or class. It is not as simple as just generating a maintenance schedule for a number of equipment pieces and then conducting the maintenance at the time due. Such an approach has been seen to generate considerable inefficiencies both for the operator of a platform and for the maintainers, including the industrial support team, leading to considerable over-investment.

To begin to understand the scale of the challenge within the support environment,

the ongoing likelihood of financial constraint and accessibility of limited sustainment manpower can be set against the anticipated requirement for increased operational availability across wider geographical deployments. To resolve such a conundrum, clarity of requirement is the first step, followed by clarity of responsibilities. A holistic approach to fleet material management can then be undertaken.

To take a holistic approach, a fulsome picture of the fleet needs to be developed; this requires quality data capture, appropriate information discernment and actions formed from knowledge.

HMNZS *Manawanui*
in the Calliope Dry
Dock, 2019.
Photo: NZDF/ PO
Chris Weissenborn



Current cracks in New Zealand's marine support

Given the four key components (the dock facilities and infrastructure, the skills and experience of the people engaged, the supply chain and the processes utilised) where are the current gaps in our enterprise?

The first is clearly observable: the current dock facility is too small for the whole of the current fleet—and very likely the fleet to follow, especially should it contain more amphibious shipping than hitherto has been the case. To ensure future sovereign control of fleet sustainment, a larger dock facility is required. However, despite the lengthy New Zealand coastline, there is very little 'new space' available for industrial use and even less available within existing ports where a graving dock can be dug. There are a couple of readily identifiable harbour resting places for a suitably sized floating dock, with one more obvious than the other when the hinterland is taken into account. Additionally, the shoreside infrastructure supporting Calliope Dock is unable to meet the efficiencies expected of a modern dockyard. The estate ranges over too much of the dockyard and the workshop buildings consume too great a footprint when considering the other uses that the naval base might require of this valuable coastline.

The second is that, despite the recent surge in apprenticeships, cadetships, internships

and graduate programmes, there is a considerable age-related skills gap within the enterprise. This isn't restricted to the industrial component but is also reflected in the naval workforce, with a disproportionate skill reliance on those few marine-skilled journeymen senior ratings who remain in service. This isn't an ageism argument, merely a reflection that developing the skills, competence and confidence to take on many engineering challenges takes a degree of time that cannot always be accelerated in the classroom. Additionally, although building strongly from its previous, historically male-dominated, position, the industrial enterprise must continue with its work on promoting diversity and inclusion, and building more enduring collaborations with academia for not only development of training and skills, but also research and technology.

The third is that the supply chain has a strong Tier 1, operating increasingly effectively as a strategic partner, but when the national supply chain is examined in even cursory detail, the dearth of Tier 2 components is very clear. This disables national supply chain growth and retains reliance upon international provision. It also impacts internal supply chain investment within New Zealand and is an area where growth stimulation could occur. The supply chain should be tested for not only resilience—the previous 'just-in-time'

philosophies were found to be wanting in the COVID-19 era when national, let alone international, supply lines were strained—but also for its environmental credentials, seeking longer term partnerships with Tier 2 suppliers who are committed to low- or zero-carbon targets and reduced wastage.

The fourth is the processes. There is increasing concurrence globally that formalised asset management promotes the optimisation of an asset's use versus the investment made to sustain that use. The RNZN is in the process of adopting an asset management philosophy, but how far and deep does the methodology penetrate? In addition, the digitisation of the fleet is behind where it ought to be, in both the development of data and its exploitation through information and knowledge management.

Filling the gaps

Let's review these in a differing order, dealing with (perhaps) the most simple to derive impact first.

The RNZN and their Tier 1 industry strategic partner are on an accelerating path to derive a formal asset management approach to the current fleet's support; that approach should continue to be encouraged, invested in and delivered at best speed. With the building of an asset management plan (AMP) for each component of the current fleet, aligned to the accepted strategic asset management plan (SAMP), a requirements set or template will emerge, which should accompany the technical or operational specifications when engaging future platform suppliers to ensure that the support products purchased with any initial build programme actually fit the chosen and practical sustainment methodology, and are not merely an ideological integrated logistics support (ILS) suite based on a theoretical norm. It could be argued that when operational requirements can be increasingly met from a range of suppliers offering 'menu-priced capability' for platforms, the requirements set for the support solution should be more bespoke than the technical or operational ones. Certainly more money will be invested in this channel across the platform's life. As the first component of digitisation, a good AMP requires suitable data or information being fed to it to enable it and to maintain it through life. Here an integrated data environment, providing data and information

in real time and a 'single version of the truth' is key to sound decision-making. That said, data accuracy is critical, and it will be up to all to ensure that data is cherished. It will be vital, too, that data can be appropriately shared to eliminate multiple versions being produced. Compliance with Defence security remains essential, but methods of digital collaboration will need to be found if progress is to be made and opportunities exploited.

The RNZN's strategic partner is clearly investing in the regeneration of skills and this, too, could/should be further encouraged and matched. What technical skills do the Navy's engineering teams need for the future delivery of sustained operational deployments, and what should be vested in industrial support? Navies of any size can no longer open up the black box and expect to fully comprehend its internals, let alone fix them, nor is a lathe or a welding torch the obvious solution to many of the technical problems found on board. In evaluating the skillsets for the future, it would be apposite to review the branch and rate structure for the future, together with how the skills needed are trained, remunerated and retained. The strategic partner could also reflect on the technical skills needed for the next epoch and consider the same questions: what skills are required (at Tier 1 and lower levels), how are they to be trained, what structure should these personnel sit in across a technical career, and how could they be remunerated and retained? Both components could consider mature, sideways entry to bring in new, high-level skills where significant gaps are determined and develop revolving door mechanisms to encourage the retention of skills in the enterprise as a whole. In considering skills, the role of the supply chain can be taken into account, as can the increasing power of distributed knowledge delivered to the point of use through digital technology, especially if working with a global industrial partner. The opportunity to promote linkage with the tertiary education sector can also be incorporated, as can the opportunity to invigorate and inspire the next generation through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in schools, but from the dockyard and the naval enterprise.

The supply chain also has a significant role to play in the sustainment of the future fleet. While there is no equivalent New Zealand policy to the Australian Industrial Content



HMNZS Te Mana
eases into Calliope
Dry Dock. Photo:
NZDF / PO Chris
Weissenborn.

Policy favoured across the Tasman, there is a subtle and increasing desire by government to see greater resilience in the supply chain; this may be code for New Zealand content. It could be seen in both Defence's and wider government's best interests for a greater portion of the supply chain to be delivered nationally, rather than internationally, but to do so it is almost inevitable that the very small 'mom and pop' organisations that have previously done well will not be able to do so in the future without considerable investment. But what to invest in? Here, both Defence and the strategic partner can provide leadership. The establishment of a critical mass of Tier 2 suppliers capable of leading, amalgamating and delivering across the country not only to Defence, but to broader technical industries too, could be a key priority for the future. Such an approach would provide for national opportunity. National and New Zealand regional investors could see this as a significant long-term prospect to develop community skills and long-term, high quality jobs. Tier 2 opportunities can be enabled when a sound (fleet-wide and long-term) material and services demand plan is established; a key output from the digitised enterprise outlined earlier.

This leaves the issue of sovereign control of the national dock and infrastructure required for support. Irrespective of whether this is a central government desire or something that Defence and wider government are content to leave to the global market, there is an opportunity to increase dock capacity and a burning need to improve support workshop facilities; the latter to free up essential space in Devonport—the enduring “home of the Navy”. Looking to the future, a port capable of hosting a floating dry dock is expected to be provided with the resource consent to do so, and a national or international investor may be found to make the long-term, visionary investment that is needed in such a case. Returns on such an investment will take decades to appreciate, so anyone looking to make a quick dollar on this will be sorely disappointed. The investment for the dock will not be small either, and the returns also delivered over a longer-than-might-feel-comfortable period. This will require an investor who is capable of taking a longer-term view; the environment might require

altering to enable this together with some commercial encouragement.

So what happened elsewhere?

The United Kingdom (UK) government developed six guiding principles for their *Defence Industrial Strategy* of 2005—

- **Appropriate sovereignty**—this considered the degree of sovereignty to be held over industrial skills, capacity, capability and technologies. It recognised that even in the UK not everything could be sourced nationally. Where there was reliance upon an international supply chain or supplier, increased assurance on security of supply would be sought; this could mean increasing international cooperative arrangements with other governments.
- **Through-life capability management**—this was to see a shift away from successively designing and manufacturing generations of platforms and towards more incremental procurement and through-life capability insertion, exploiting technology changes and optimising opportunity through the open architectures that better enable technology insertion.
- **Maintaining key industrial capabilities or skills**—where the national market could no longer sustain specific skills or industrial capabilities that were considered vital to the national interest, it was determined that such skills should be retained through policy support.
- **The importance of systems engineering**—to enable the Defence machine (both from a customer and a prime supplier perspective) to understand the key importance of understanding and managing ‘the complexities, challenges and costs associated with the overall management of design, manufacture, and upgrade’;¹ this being important across the acquisition and ownership cycle.

¹ UK Ministry of Defence, *Defence Industrial Strategy*, 17.



- **Value**—‘driving in long-term best value for money,’² especially balancing the exploitation of a well-honed international supply chain against the development of a national one.
- **Change**—as a result of consideration of government policy, change was expected by both government and industry.

Fast forward to 2021 and the UK's *Defence and Security Industrial Strategy* (DSIS) builds on the earlier policy, stating that it ‘will see industry, government and academia working ever closer together to drive research, enhance investment and promote innovation’.³

Further, the UK now ‘aims to establish a more productive and strategic relationship between government and the defence and security industries’. These ‘critical industrial

² Ibid.

³ UK Ministry of Defence, *Defence and Security Industrial Strategy*, 2.

capabilities’ are considered a ‘vital strategic asset in their own right’ to ensure operational independence is maintained.⁴

In support of those industries, the government is welcoming ‘investment from overseas to build capacity, introduce new technology and techniques, and generate employment’. The DSIS is to be ‘part of a broader, consistent, government drive to promote both national security in its traditional sense, and the economic growth which both underpins and depends on that security’; this includes broader government policy changes (including the new social value procurement policy) to ‘promote economic growth that is distributed more equitably across the UK’—something that clearly resonates with the most recent New Zealand government procurement rules.⁵

Through the DSIS, the UK is ‘replacing the former policy of “global competition by

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

HMNZS *Te Kaha* undergoes a refit during 2022 in the Calliope Dry Dock. Photo: Babcock NZ.

default” with a more flexible and nuanced approach’, which requires that markets, technology, international partners, national security and prosperity opportunities are ‘consciously assessed before deciding the correct approach to through-life acquisition of a given capability’. This approach will enable ‘defence and security departments to use competition where appropriate, but also to establish where global competition at the prime level may be ineffective or incompatible with our national security requirements. In those situations another approach may be needed to secure the capability we need and to deliver long-term value for money’, and the UK may opt for long-term strategic partnerships.⁶

Observations

From a historical perspective, irrespective of the century, government policy has a determined impact on the defence industrial climate and industries’ reaction with investments and supply chain developments. Government policy also has a marked impact on technological development and its acceleration.

In more modern times, governments and industry are realising that collaborations

deliver more, are more effective and are financially more viable than deciding to go it alone; this includes collaborations with academia. When collaborations are determined for the longer term, they have frequently been called strategic partnerships.

To enable the RNZN to prepare the environment for a frigate-based fleet of the future, a focus will be required on digitising support and exploiting asset management methodologies; the pan-environment development of people skills, both in the Navy and in industry; the encouragement of a more resilient supply chain supported by a small network of Tier 2 national suppliers; and the acquisition of a suitably sized national facility floating dry dock along with the modernisation, but shrinkage, of the onshore workshop facilities at Devonport.

⁶ UK Ministry of Defence, *Defence and Security Industrial Strategy*, 2.



An old photograph showing Devonport from Calliope Dock. Photo: National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

AUTHOR’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In compiling this paper I have drawn on my four years’ leadership of the naval support enterprise at Devonport. In that time I have seen a modest industry revolution as a result of subtle, yet important changes to government policy initially springing from the *NZDF Framework for External and Industry Engagement*. Strong NZDF leadership enabled the development of the strategic industry partner theme to such an extent that industry investment followed and improvements naturally resulted. The pace of continuing change is now fast and embedded much more deeply across the support enterprise than hitherto had been thought possible, with innovations springing from not only senior policy makers, but also junior staff.

I’m indebted to the National Museum of the RNZN for their open source historical information regarding Calliope Dock. While I have consulted colleagues across Babcock, this work—and any mistakes it contains—is mine and represents my own thoughts and reflections, not those of the company.

CHRIS SAXBY

Chris Saxby has a wealth of experience from both Babcock and the Royal Navy in strategy, planning, delivery and people development, with a core focus on warship engineering and naval base management.

Chris was the Managing Director of Babcock (New Zealand) from August 2017 to July 2021 and led the Devonport Naval Base team through a significant period of change, positioning the organisation through performance improvement and collaboration for continued growth. Chris was previously Babcock’s Head of Programmes for Warship Support, holding the unique client-side responsibility for complex-warship Class Output Management for the Royal Navy’s Type 23 frigates, Sandown class mine counter-measure vessels and all amphibious shipping. In this role he kicked off the successful delivery of the frigate life-extension programme, the practical outcome from his earlier planning work as Babcock’s Warship Support, Head of Strategy.

In uniform, he designed the re-structuring of the UK Ministry of Defence’s (MoD’s) Defence Equipment & Support Ships directorate. In Babcock, he was a trusted architect within the UK MoD’s Common Support Model programme. Both these pieces of work were seminal in setting the course for the future of warship support in the UK.





STRATEGIC HEDGING BETWEEN THE DRAGON AND THE EAGLE:

SOUTH KOREA, NEW ZEALAND AND MARITIME
SECURITY COOPERATION

Lieutenant Junior Grade (Reserve) Dongkeun Lee

In this article, **Lieutenant Junior Grade Dongkeun Lee** of the Republic of Korea Navy Reserve asks, what are the strategies available to states like South Korea or New Zealand to manage their interests in the increasingly contested Indo-Pacific region?

Introduction

To exert influence on the international system and increase national power, middle and small power countries often choose to take collective action, such as through alliance formation, partnerships with more powerful nations and multilateral cooperation. A recent example of a middle power strategy, in the context of increasing strategic competition, is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad). Australia, Japan and India have deepened their strategic ties with the United States (US) to balance the threat posed by China in the

region. The growing prominence of the Quad raises the possibility that other countries like the Republic of Korea (ROK) and New Zealand could adopt similar strategies. However, even though taking collective action can provide benefits to middle and small powers, it can also raise risks.

The extended competition between the US and China clearly requires Seoul and Wellington to very carefully consider appropriate strategies that could accommodate the uncomfortable tension between security and economic imperatives. This is especially important at a time when China is trying to expand its influence over the Indo-Pacific region and the US is trying to contain the rise of China with its Indo-Pacific Strategy.¹ Therefore, both countries need to carefully consider how to manage a hedging strategy between the dragon and the eagle. A major part of any hedging strategy should be maritime security cooperation. South Korea and New Zealand are well placed to build on existing cooperation in the maritime domain and pursue mutually reinforcing strategic approaches.

¹ US Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*, 7–10.

The dragon rising

Both South Korea and New Zealand have complex relationships with China. Both countries have, at times, perceived China as a threat to their national interests. During the Korean War, China participated on the side of North Korea and so stood as an enemy of both New Zealand and South Korea. But the relationship between Beijing and both Seoul and Wellington started to normalise following the resumption of bilateral contact between the US and China in 1972. As China opened its economy and adopted a market-oriented system, it became an important trade partner for both New Zealand and South Korea. Even though relations have improved through trade, the rise of China has changed the security circumstances that Wellington and Seoul are facing as Beijing has implemented more aggressive strategies to increase its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

In both South Korea and New Zealand, the perception of China's actions has become more negative in recent years. Survey research shows that the South Korean people increasingly regard China as a threat. According to a survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in

2004, 16.9% of respondents answered that China had a negative influence on South Korean security. In 2006, this number increased to 25.5%. In 2011, 43.4% of respondents viewed China as a security threat to the ROK, and in 2021, this number was 83%.²

Similar to Koreans, New Zealanders increasingly perceive China as a threat. According to an annual survey conducted by the Asia New Zealand Foundation in 2021, for the first time more New Zealanders perceived China as a threat rather than a friend. This is a significant change from the 2011 survey, when only 7% of survey respondents answered that China was a threat to New Zealand.³ This number had grown to 21% in 2019 and 35% in 2020.⁴

² Lee, *Faltering Korea-China Relations with the Emergence of the G2 Era*, 15. See also, Friedhoff, "South Koreans See China".

³ Robertson, *New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples in 2011*, 46.

⁴ Tuhono and Brunton, *New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples in 2020*, 34.

Lieutenants Long and Williams from HMNZS *Hawea* survey the Han River. Provided by the National Museum of the RNZN. Crown copyright.



Ships' Companies from South Korean ships ROKS *Chungmugong Yi Sun-Sin*, a missile destroyer, and supply ship ROKS *Cheon Ji*, pay tribute to the fallen at Pukeahu National War Memorial in Wellington during the visit of the ROKN Training Squadron in 2016.

HMNZS Te Kaha visited Busan in 2017. Photo: NZDF.



The eagle responds

China is regarded by the US as a revisionist state, and potential disputes in the maritime domain are a core concern of Washington, DC. To deal with this issue, the US emphasises the importance of cooperation with allies and partners in the region.⁵ The US Department of Defense (DoD) highlights the need for collective maritime cooperation with its allies and partners, and both South Korea and New Zealand are specifically referenced in the Indo-Pacific Strategy Report.⁶ This shows that the US has expectations that both the ROK and New Zealand will actively participate in its maritime security network. However, US strategy in the Indo-Pacific is clearly targeting China, so active participation in the network requires careful consideration by both ROK and New Zealand.

Both New Zealand and South Korea are reliant on the US to underwrite their national security, although to different degrees. Since the Korean War, South Korea has allowed the US to station approximately 25,000 troops on the Korean Peninsula as part of the formal bilateral defence alliance between the ROK and the United States. New Zealand is a member of the Five Eyes, which is a strong intelligence sharing network, and there has been a long-standing military relationship between New Zealand and the US, including working closely together on operations in the Middle East.

China does not want the ROK and New Zealand to actively participate in the security network that Washington, DC wants to maintain in the region. It is wary of any network of alliances that might allow the US to contain China's rise. One of the most recent developments in this area is known as the "Quad".

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

The Quad is a strategic dialogue between the United States, India, Japan and Australia. The four member states of the Quad have common interests: first of all, they are democratic countries that share many values; secondly, they support regional economic development; and thirdly, they are all concerned about the possibility of conflict with China.

Despite its establishment in 2007, the Quad was not developed as a regular security dialogue between the member states until 2016. During the 2017 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit held in the Philippines, the four member states of the Quad agreed to use the dialogue to help address Chinese behaviour in the South China Sea region. In October 2020, Quad foreign ministers gathered together for their first meeting. Soon after this, the member states conducted a maritime military activity called Exercise Malabar, an expansion of a previous trilateral exercise between Washington, DC; Tokyo and New Delhi: for the first time, Australia also participated in the exercise.

Following the 2021 US presidential election, the Quad was developed one step further. In February 2021, foreign ministers agreed to conduct a regular dialogue between the member states.⁷ In March 2021, rather than a ministerial-level meeting, the four member states held a summit-level virtual dialogue and agreed on a face-to-face summit around the end of 2021.

South Korea and New Zealand: Strategic drivers

South Korea and New Zealand are two states who might wish to increase security cooperation with the Quad nations. However, doing so could complicate their relationships with China since both New Zealand and the ROK heavily rely on trade with Beijing. In 2019, China was the highest import and export partner of both countries.⁸

Neither the ROK nor New Zealand have strong economic leverage over China. The economic conflict between Beijing and Seoul that occurred due to the deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system on the Korean Peninsula demonstrates how South Korea's reliance on trade with China can be used by Beijing to punish Seoul. THAAD was intended to defend against North Korean ballistic missiles but China regarded THAAD's radar system as simply 'too close' and a threat. In 2016, China banned Korean entertainment products from Chinese music streaming services and TV networks

⁵ US Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*, 7-9.

⁶ Ibid, 24-26, 31-32.

⁷ Kobireski, "The First Quad Meeting in 2021".

⁸ The Observatory of Economic Complexity, "Where does New Zealand Export to? (2019)".

as a measure to pressure Seoul against accepting the US THAAD deployment. The Chinese government even banned Korean companies from marketing products and services on Chinese soil with the result that the Korean entertainment industry's profit from China dropped by almost 80% in 2017 compared to 2016.⁹

The situation for New Zealand is similar to the ROK. New Zealand's exports to China accounted for around 28% of export value in 2020. Furthermore, about a quarter of dairy goods exports, 60% of forestry products exports and half of meat exports go to China every year. China is the second largest market for New Zealand tourism businesses, and about half of all international students in New Zealand are Chinese nationals.¹⁰

Even though China has used economic statecraft against states that it perceives to be implementing containment, it has not yet applied economic pressure to New Zealand. Wellington has maintained a more nuanced position regarding China when compared to the other Five Eyes members. In April 2021, when the United Kingdom (UK), the US, Canada and Australia condemned Chinese actions in Xinjiang as 'genocide', New Zealand avoided using the word

'genocide' but instead referred to 'human rights abuses'.¹¹ Moreover, New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta has stated she is uncomfortable with expanding the Five Eyes arrangements to include foreign policy.¹²

Strategic options

Given the competing influences from China and the US, what would be the best approach that New Zealand and South Korea could take to navigate the waters of this complex and uncomfortable strategic environment? The three main options available are balancing, band-wagoning and hedging.

The concepts of 'balancing' and 'band-wagoning' are defined by Kenneth Waltz in his book *Theory of International Politics*. According to Waltz, under the anarchical international system, countries implement either balancing or band-wagoning strategies in response to the distribution of power among nations. Balancing refers to allying with the weaker side to cope with a greater power, and band-wagoning refers to choosing to partner with the stronger power.¹³

¹¹ Lew, "New Zealand Accuses China of Human Rights Abuses but not Genocide".

¹² The Guardian. "New Zealand 'Uncomfortable' with Expanding Five Eyes' Remit, Says Foreign Minister".

¹³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.

⁹ Kwon, "Broadcast Hallyu", 72.

¹⁰ Stats NZ, "China Top Trade Partner for 2019".



HMNZS *Te Kaha* visited Busan in 2017. CDR (now CAPT) Stephen Lenik on the right. Photo: NZDF.

Stephen Walt redefined the concepts of balancing and band-wagoning within his 'balance of threat' theory. Unlike Waltz, Walt believes that threat is the main driving factor of alliance formation, not power. Walt defines balancing as forming an alliance with a side that poses a lesser threat, and band-wagoning as alliance formation with the side that poses a greater threat.¹⁴ The formation of partnerships in response to the growing threat from China, centred on the US, is a form of balancing, according to Walt's definition.

Even though Walt's concepts of balancing and band-wagoning are generally accepted by scholars, one of the most well-known criticisms relates to the dichotomous view of state behaviour. In most situations, states are reluctant to choose a side unless there is a clear benefit from either balancing or band-wagoning. Thus, rather than showing clear balancing or band-wagoning, they often display more complicated decision-making like hedging.¹⁵

The concept of hedging is a relatively new term in the field of international relations, but the concept itself is very simple. Rather than states clearly showing either balancing or band-wagoning behaviour, they implement multiple foreign policies that can produce mutually counteracting effects. Hedging is a preferred strategy for small and middle power states who are unable to definitively influence global power distribution and cannot take the risk of fully choosing sides.¹⁶

South Korea and New Zealand are well-suited to the hedging concept. Both countries are reluctant to solely stand on the side of the US, since it is too risky for them to abandon the economic benefit they derive from trade with China. Korean-American political scientist David C. Kang claims that the concepts of balancing and band-wagoning are too extreme to use when analysing the case of South Korea. Furthermore, he argues that Seoul is neither balancing nor band-wagoning against Beijing, but hedging and maintaining a potential balancing option.¹⁷ He even argues that the US is not balancing China either, since it is simultaneously following policies

to help the development of China, while also attempting to contain it.¹⁸

Hedging in the maritime domain

Both South Korea and New Zealand have an incentive to pursue a hedging strategy in the maritime domain. Both are maritime countries, and the maritime domain is a key factor in trade and security policy. China and the US must rely on naval assets to project power in this region, so the maritime domain has become a major part of strategic competition.

A hedging strategy must balance the interests of two greater powers, so it is important to understand the demands the US and China might place on South Korea and New Zealand. *The Indo-Pacific Strategy Report* of the US DoD clearly shows the interests and strategies of the US in the region. According to the report, a free and open Indo-Pacific is the main goal and interest of the US. The report says all nations should enjoy the freedom of access to international waters and airways, and it directly denies a Chinese territorial claim over the South China Sea. Moreover, the report emphasises the role of its partners, including the ROK and New Zealand.¹⁹

The US wants both South Korea and New Zealand to actively participate in its maritime security network. One of the main operational areas for the US is the South China Sea, and it regularly conducts freedom of navigation operations in these waters. However, for both the ROK and New Zealand, participating in US-led freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea could be risky and may not meet the two countries' national interests, especially economic interests. In October 2021, two Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) ships joined a UK carrier strike group in the South China Sea despite the risk of increasing tension between New Zealand and China. In the view of Jim Rolfe, if New Zealand warships were to sail through the South China Sea for routine exercises or visits with regional countries, it would not cause any trouble. However, if New Zealand tried to "poke" China, it would be a problem.²⁰

¹⁴ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 17.

¹⁵ Koga, "The Concept of 'Hedging' Revisited", 638.

¹⁶ Kuik, "The Essence of Hedging" 163-165.

¹⁷ Kang, "Between Balancing and Bandwagoning", 12-13, 19.

¹⁸ Ibid, 20-21.

¹⁹ US Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*, 3-4.

²⁰ Craymer, "South China Sea".

Korean Navy sailors aboard ROKS *Chungbuk*, an Incheon-class frigate, salute during the RNZN 75th Anniversary's International Naval Review in Waitematā Harbour, 2016. Photo: NZDF.



The ROK Navy has not conducted or participated in US-led activities in the South China Sea but there has been an ongoing discussion about potential participation. During the ROK Navy policy discussions in 2020, Professor Min Gyo Koo mentioned the potential active participation of the ROK Navy in the South China Sea. According to him, due to the recent changes in the international maritime security environment, a passive strategy towards the South China Sea would no longer fulfil the national interests of the ROK.²¹ However, the ROK Navy has not yet decided on a South China Sea deployment since it could harm the relationship with China.

Beijing could regard the active participation of Seoul and Wellington in US-led maritime security activities in the South China Sea as a balancing strategy against it. As such, participation would not accord with the hedging strategy that the two countries should prefer. Nonetheless, both Seoul and Wellington cannot ignore US interests in this matter and so they need to implement strategies that respond to the requirements of Washington, DC as well. As like-minded countries, the ROK and New Zealand regularly conduct bilateral

maritime training and exercises, and these activities can be one of the hedging strategies to balance the competing demands of both the US and China.

One of the bilateral activities already conducted between the ROK Navy and the NZDF is Exercise ROK-Kiwi, an exercise that is designed to enhance cooperation and, indirectly, increase preparedness for military operations in the vicinity of the Korean Peninsula. New Zealand typically sends a P-3K2 aircraft to South Korea and conducts anti-submarine warfare exercises with the ROK Navy. Sometimes, exercise participation is expanded to include Japan and the US, and it becomes a multilateral exercise. Another maritime exercise that South Korea and New Zealand participate in together is Exercise Ssang Yong. This is a biennial amphibious exercise that is hosted by the ROK Marine Corps, which the New Zealand Army 161st Battery first participated in during 2016. For the ROK Armed Forces, maritime patrol aircraft such as the P-3 are a component of the ROK Navy, and the ROK Marine Corps is a subordinate (but distinct) component of the ROK Navy. Even though the RNZAF and 161st Battery are not parts of the RNZN, those two units both contribute to military outputs in the maritime domain. Through exercises like these, Seoul and Wellington can satisfy

the US's interest in increased cooperation among allies and partners, while not directly threatening China.

Conclusion

The changing security environment in the Indo-Pacific suggests middle power countries need to carefully consider which strategies are best suited to their national interests. Japan, India and Australia, as regional middle powers, have chosen to balance the growing threat posed by China, establishing the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. South Korea and New Zealand are heavily reliant on their economic relationships with China, and it is not in their national interests to fully pursue balancing strategies against China. Instead, South Korea and New Zealand have preferred to implement hedging strategies. Both are like-minded countries that value democracy and freedom, and both share similar strategic environments that require careful consideration of national interests. New Zealand participated in the Korean War as a member of the United Nations forces defending the ROK, and the RNZN played a significant role in this conflict. A long history of cooperation provides a good basis for alignment of hedging strategies in the face of the changing regional security environment.

Maritime exercises are well-suited to support the goals of hedging that South Korea and New Zealand are seeking. In addition to exercises ROK-Kiwi and Ssang Yong, there is greater scope for activities that mutually benefit both navies. For example, the ROK recently built HMNZS *Aotearoa*, and the ship is now actively serving the interests of New Zealand. Increasing cooperation between South Korea and New Zealand not only supports strategic hedging between the dragon and the eagle, but will also benefit Koreans and New Zealanders from all walks of life.



LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE DONGKEUN LEE, ROKN RESERVE

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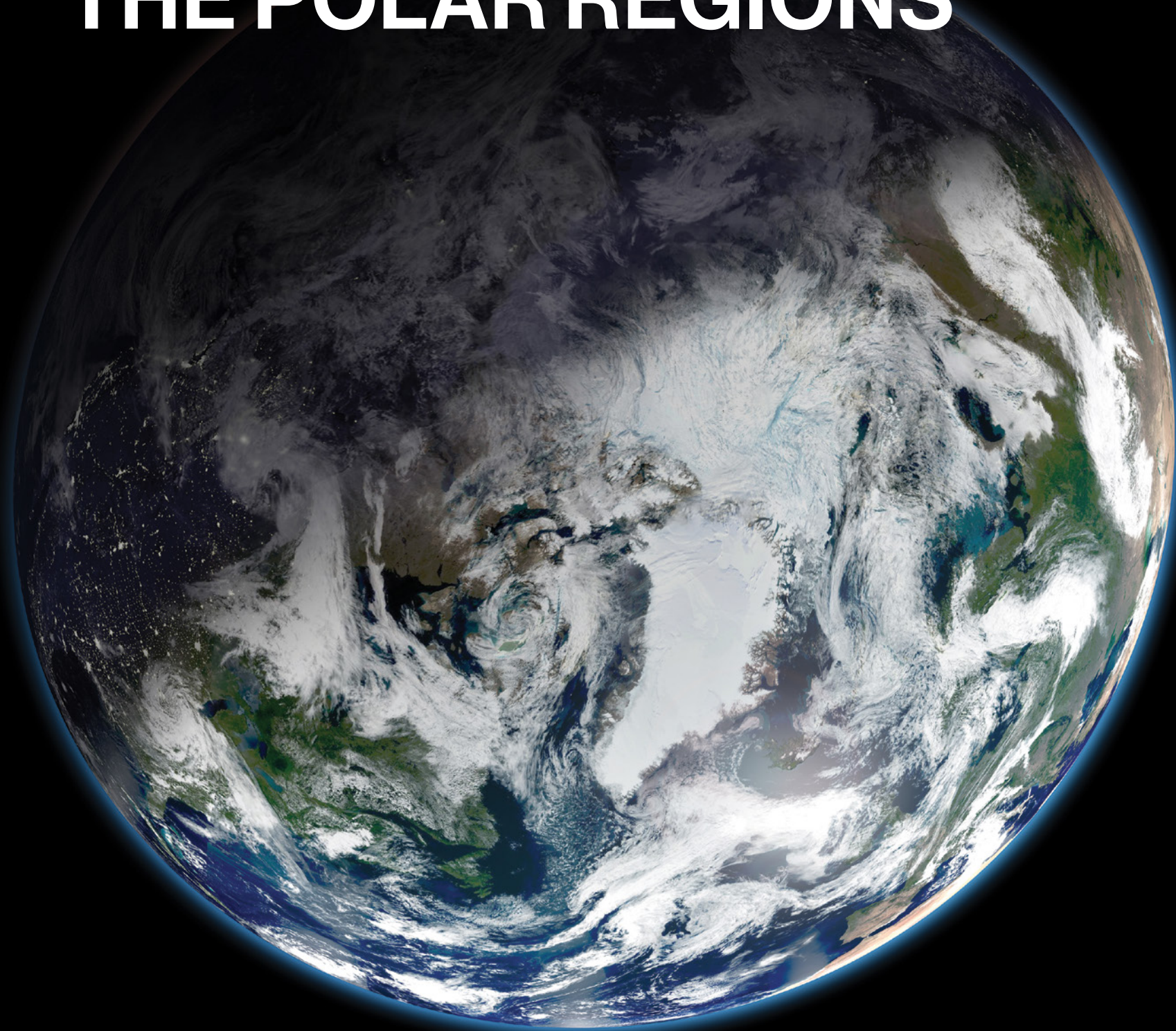
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²¹ Choi, "The ROK Navy Should Consider Operations in the South China Sea".

THE RISE OF CHINA: SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE POLAR REGIONS



This is the first of two articles by **Commodore Garin Golding** that examine the rise of China and explore the implications of its related interests and activities in the Arctic and Antarctica.

The two articles effectively reproduce a dissertation written in 2020, while then-Captain Golding was a student at the United Kingdom's Royal College of Defence Studies. Acknowledged as being thus somewhat time-bound as well as assignment-purposed, the paper includes an evaluation of China's grand strategy, viewed through the lens of its instruments of national power, as a means to survey developments in the Polar regions. This first article is presented in two sections, covering China's rise to power and then its interests and activities in the Arctic. The second article, which will follow in the next edition of the Journal, focuses on China's exploits in Antarctica.

Introduction

China has made a remarkable rise in the global community; its emergence as a global leader has been admired by many and feared by some. China has ambitious plans to restore the country to its Middle Kingdom status and in doing so, address the perceived wrongs from its “century of humiliation”. The rise of China under Deng Xiaoping pulled the nation out of poverty and provided an invaluable foundation on which to realise its “China dream”. Over the last decade, President Xi Jinping has set out an ambitious ‘Made in China 2025’ strategic goal and seems determined on transforming China into a ‘fully developed and advanced nation’ by 2049.¹ It is anticipated that by 2049, China will also look to reunify the nation, with the return of Taiwan into the fold to be a defining moment of China’s centenary celebration of the People’s Republic.

China’s strategy is grand in the sense of both its timescale and ambition. Grand strategy, as defined by Hal Brands, is a ‘purposeful and coherent set of ideals about what a nation seeks to accomplish in

the world, and how it should go about doing so.’² For a grand strategy to be successful, it needs to reflect a clear understanding of the international system, the operating environment, and the national interests and objectives it is seeking to achieve.³ While China has not published a stand-alone grand strategy document, it is not hard to see what China is trying to accomplish in the world prior to 2049. Its strategic approach employs all its instruments of national power in an integrated manner to achieve the political outcome of China as a prosperous superpower at the helm of the international order.

The rise of China

For those who are trying to understand China today, history, culture and geography matter. These three elements combine to provide invaluable context for China’s actions and behaviours on the world stage today and into the future. Two aspects of Chinese history are significant in shaping its grand strategy. Firstly, within the Chinese historical narrative, China has always been a leading power, particularly during the Ming (1368–1644) and beginning of the Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, a period in history when the country had the largest economy in the world. Other states viewed these dynasties as superior, and vassals came to Beijing bearing tribute to them.⁴ Thus, the Chinese official discourse prefers “the great revival of China” or “national rejuvenation” to the term “the rise of China”.⁵ This discourse forms the central part of the Chinese Communist Party’s (CPC) propaganda in its role in leading China’s return to its “rightful” position in the world.⁶

The second aspect, and arguably the most influential, is China’s need to address the perceived wrongs from its century of humiliation, one of which was a loss of international standing and dignity. While there were many times in this period (circa 1839–1949) when China felt it had been wronged, arguably the most humiliating event and one which underpins the current wariness of the West, was the

The Arctic from Space.
Photo: NASA.

¹ President Xi Jinping address to the Communist Party of China 19th National Congress cited in Jun, “China’s Vision”.

² Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy*, 3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rosecrance and Miller, *The Next Great War?*, 76.

⁵ Professor Jinghan Zeng, Chair in China and International Studies and Director of University Confucius Institute Lancaster, “Domestic China”.

⁶ Ibid.

‘Chinese methods to “build a shared spiritual home based on Chinese culture” and to quell dissent have included mass surveillance and the use of what the CPC calls “vocational education camps” to ensure the Uyghur population undergo cultural and religious conversion.’

Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901). The Boxer movement, responding to increasing levels of poverty, foreign occupation and frustration at Christian religious expansion began its rebellion in 1899, with the aim to evict all Europeans from China. The bloody uprising focused primarily on Western-built railroads, churches and areas where foreign diplomats were concentrated.⁷ Chinese resistance against foreigners and Christians was met by an eight-nation invasion, resulting in the sacking of Beijing and the execution of government officials. The Boxer Rebellion formally ended with the signing of the Boxer Protocol in September 1901, which mandated the punishment of those behind the rebellion, forced China to pay reparations of ten billion pounds sterling (the equivalent of one year’s gross domestic product) to the countries affected, and severely weakened the Qing dynasty.⁸

Geographically, China is an expansive country surrounded by many nations, some of which pose a potential threat to China. China’s borders on many vectors of the compass are primarily ‘...secured by its geographical features, which lend themselves to effective defence and trade.’⁹ Inhospitable terrain in the northern and southern regions of China provide certain natural border defences. The Gobi Desert, for example, provides ‘...a massive early warning system-cum-defensive line’ from any thought of invasion from the north.¹⁰ In the south, the hilly jungle terrain bordering Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, which Beijing assesses as posing ‘only a minor threat’ or a ‘problem that can be managed’, provides a level of assurance to China that they have a secure southern border.¹¹

There are other borders, however, where natural features are less daunting and which are subject to strengthening measures. In the Manchuria-Russian border region, for example, China has focused on creating a population offset, with over 100 million Chinese living in Manchuria compared to only seven million on the Russian side of the border, providing Beijing with an additional protective buffer.¹² This population imbalance continues to increase with more Chinese populating this remote region each year, while the Russian population is decreasing due to urbanisation. China has used more controversial approaches to strengthening border regions in Tibet and Xinjiang. In Xinjiang, for example, China has used forceful measures to unify and integrate the Uyghur population into the Chinese nation. Chinese methods to ‘build a shared spiritual home based on Chinese culture’ and to quell dissent have included mass surveillance and the use of what the CPC calls “vocational education camps” to ensure the Uyghur population undergo cultural and religious conversion.¹³ These measures have received widespread condemnation from the international community, with some considering China’s approach in Xinjiang to be ‘cultural genocide’.¹⁴ Tibet is significant to China as the region provides an important barrier to China’s greatest potential land-based threat, India. These two major powers have a history of border disputes over territory that dates back to 1962. Complicating the relationship is that both nations have competing boundary claims.

China’s weakest border and the one of most concern is its coast, which looks out to the East and South China seas. For China, the strengthening of island chains within the South China Sea (SCS) forms a “great sea wall”, which, from a national security perspective, protects China’s vulnerable maritime flank. As Tibet forms a buffer for China’s southern edge, the SCS is the buffer of its vital eastern coast. The SCS is not only important for China’s security but is also important because of the valuable minerals, fossil fuels and other

resources that these waters contain. Even given ambitions concerning Taiwan, many academics assess China’s approach in the SCS as creating the ‘...front line of the next major struggle for international military and economic hegemony.’¹⁵ China is certainly ‘the central player and main protagonist in the unfolding drama of how control over the South China Sea is to be allocated.’¹⁶

The SCS is important as it unveils key behaviours of China’s broader strategy. In contested or disputed areas, establishing a footprint is a vital first step, followed by a deliberate consolidation phase. The footprint is then protected, while concurrent activity is undertaken to delay any immediate resolution of the dispute, in order to allow China to build greater military strength and endeavour to gain wider support through its diplomatic and informational instruments of power. As always with China, its economic power will be used to coerce and influence where able. China’s actions in the SCS are significant as they provide an insight into possible strategies that could be undertaken in other strategic theatres such as the Arctic and Antarctica. Success in the SCS is of course also of critical importance to China’s future unification plans, as within any wartime setting, the SCS is a potential blockade area and a key battlespace where control will be contested.¹⁷

For those who study China, ‘culture has long been considered a key dimension in explaining and interpreting China’s security policy and military strategy.’¹⁸ Much of the literature on Chinese culture points to strategic behaviours that have a ‘distinctive minimally violent character.’¹⁹ The literature typically identifies three core characteristics—

(1) a theoretical and practical preference for strategic defense—earthworks, walls, garrisons, static positional defense, accompanied by diplomatic intrigue and alliance building rather than the invasion, subjugation, or extermination of the adversary; (2) a preference for limited war, or the restrained application of force for clearly enunciated political ends; and

(3) an apparently low estimation of the efficacy of violence, as embodied for instance in Sun Zi’s oft-cited phrase, ‘not fighting and subduing the enemy is the supreme level of skill.’²⁰

China’s transformation over the past four decades has reflected this non-violent strategic culture. Early in this period, Deng Xiaoping was a pivotal figure emphasising China’s peaceful change by way of ‘...his great opening and modernisation plans and exhorting the Chinese elite to pursue peaceful market-driven strategies for economic and social progress.’²¹ His successor, Hu Jintao, followed on this work with a “peaceful rise” policy. These leaders maximised key cultural strengths of strategic patience, the willingness to sacrifice material interests for longer-term welfare gains, and the prioritisation of the community over individuals to enhance China’s prosperity and standing in the world.

President Xi’s approach diverges from Deng’s peaceful market-driven strategy and “low foreign policy profile” and instead has become more revisionist and assertive.²² For this to be successful, domestic support for the CPC must be strong. President Xi is implementing reforms in an attempt to address historical instances of “internal fragmentation”, adopting internal measures to further protect and enhance the CPC’s control and primacy.²³ Changes to laws to enable President Xi to remain in power for life is one recent measure implemented. Additionally, H.R. McMaster, reflecting on relations with China in his role as the United States (US) National Security Advisor, identified that the CPC’s strengthening of internal systems was aimed at stifling human freedom and extending its authoritarian control.²⁴ The contemporary culture within

‘The contemporary culture within China has become more accepting of digital monitoring and reflects a society under increasing control measures from the CPC...’

7 Rosenberg, “China’s Boxer Rebellion of 1900”.
8 Ibid.
9 Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography*, 40.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid, 42.

12 Ibid, 41.
13 The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, *Historical Matters Concerning Xinjiang*.
14 Leibold, “China’s treatment of Uighurs”.

15 Hastedt, Lybecker, and Shannon, *Cases in International Relations*, 20.
16 Ibid.
17 Fravel, “China’s Strategy in the South China Sea”, 296.
18 Scobell, “China’s Real Strategic Culture”, 211.
19 Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 22.

20 Ibid, 25.
21 Paul, “Recasting Statecraft”, 9.
22 Economy, “China’s New Revolution”, 61.
23 McMaster, “How China Sees the World”.
24 McMaster, “How China Sees the World”.

China has become more accepting of digital monitoring and reflects a society under increasing control measures from the CPC, and one which displays higher levels of conformity and obedience.

With greater control, Xi's grand strategy seems to have adopted another Chinese strategic cultural characteristic of 'subduing the enemy by attacking the enemy's strategy and alliances.'²⁵ China is looking to take advantage of the fragmentation of Western alliances and leadership vacuums created by the US's increasingly nationalistic and protectionist approach to geopolitics. China's "Three Warfares" doctrine is being used to 'undermine international institutions, change borders and subvert global media, all without firing a shot.'²⁶ China's increased status has given it more confidence to pursue its grand strategic vision of leading a new rules-based order with Chinese characteristics. As such, China under President Xi has modified traditional Chinese strategic culture and strategy to incorporate an opportunistic approach to statesmanship, which combines economic imperialism and political warfare characteristics.

Grand strategy

China has a strategic vision and is arguably the only nation to implement a long-term grand strategy. The strategic approach uses diplomatic, information (which includes intelligence and cyber), military, and economic instruments of national power²⁷ in a highly coordinated and integrated way. Understanding of this grand strategy is gained through analysis of Chinese published white papers, and its rhetoric and various uses of national power, behaviours and actions over the last decade. This analysis paints a coherent picture of a state, shaped by its history, geography and culture, which is focused on ensuring its internal political survival and popularity, striving to be a global leader and ensuring the security of its national sovereignty and future prosperity.

China's comprehensive strategy, if successful, will 'shap[e] the world on a

grand and long-lasting scale.'²⁸ A key element of China's grand strategy is its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which seeks to attain access to, and maintain the security of, required resources and trade routes. The concept of security for China under Xi is multidimensional; it includes the long-term viability of its political entity (the CPC), sovereign borders and territories (including Taiwan), its strategic approaches (the SCS), and organic internet and space capabilities. Its international leadership aspirations go beyond wanting to just 'shape international norms and institutions and forcefully assert its presence on the global stage', instead expanding into the key strategic and emerging fields of digital infrastructure, cyber, artificial intelligence and quantum computing technology, polar affairs and space.²⁹ Beijing's pursuit of global leadership is built on a relentless diplomatic effort using both soft and sharp power, which is closely integrated with its economic expansionist activities (through the BRI) and the information instrument of power. China's pursuit of a global leadership role is not intended to spread its brand of communism; instead it seeks a less liberal international system. China's implementation of its grand strategy has seen a bureaucratic authoritarian regime become more confident and revisionist in outlook, more assertive and economically imperialistic in its approach.

Underpinned by economics, diplomacy is the vanguard of China's grand strategy. China's approach is two-fold, focusing on both soft and sharp power. Its soft power is primarily centred on bilateral diplomacy, with the intent to shoulder 'more responsibility in global issues' and seek 'a greater international voice to propose its unique solution to global governance.'³⁰ The ultimate outcome of its self-help style bilateral diplomacy is to seek great power influence within the international community, creating an increased level of control of the geopolitical narrative and in agenda-setting within multilateral fora. China's soft power seems to follow a regular pattern. It starts with bilateral diplomacy, heavily nuanced statements of intent and a comprehensive development aid package, not too dissimilar

25 Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 99.

26 Jackson, "The Three Warfares", 5.

27 For the purposes of this paper the DIME model of instruments of power will be used. Cited in The Royal College of Defence Studies, *Getting Strategy Right (Enough)*, 86.

28 Allen-Ebrahimian, "A China-centric 21st Century".

29 Economy, "China's New Revolution", 65.

30 Jian and Yingqin, "Governing the New Frontiers".



to the West's. China's diplomatic strategy then diverges, to incorporate a BRI "anchor" project and a series of cluster investments. Large BRI infrastructure investments tend to use Chinese labour and involve long-term leases, many of which result in significant levels of debt. In some cases, a significant Chinese diaspora and/or private military or security companies remain within the host country to service and protect the investment. Some of the development aid and cluster investments have less-than-benevolent intentions and are aimed at the needs of national leadership (some of which is overtly corrupt), rather than the needs of the people. It is not uncommon, therefore, that some of the first development aid/ BRI projects undertaken in developing countries relate to palaces or government buildings. Of increasing concern is that this approach, under the guise of soft power, has the potential to create a debt trap for nations lacking significant leverage within the bilateral relationship.

The second diplomatic approach uses "sharp power" to target academic, cultural and social sectors in an attempt to control the narrative. Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig's informative study looked into rising authoritarian influence and coined the term "sharp power". They identified that Russian and Chinese regimes were infiltrating democratic societies with the intent to penetrate 'the political and information environments' using techniques

such as 'co-optation and manipulation.'³¹ Their study identified that China was using educational and cultural bilateral exchanges to 'monopolize ideas, suppress alternative narratives, and exploit partner institutions' in Latin American countries and in European countries such as Slovakia and Poland.³² McMaster, in his assessment on China, identified similar techniques being used in Australia and New Zealand to gain 'influence within universities' and to 'harass the Chinese diaspora community into becoming advocates for Beijing.'³³ China's use of sharp power is part of a broader information warfare campaign aimed at winning in the 'international struggle over information, influence, and ideas.'³⁴ China's diplomatic approach involves very effective use of soft power to influence externally, and sharp power to influence from within targeted countries.

China's highly opportunistic approach to diplomacy has seen much success, exploiting vacuums created by the West in areas such as Africa and the Asia Pacific regions. In Africa, China is exploiting the West's colonial stigma to become the largest regional investor. In Asia, the fragmentation of the relationship between the US and the Philippines has enabled China to exert its influence and attempt to fill the void in what is considered a critical nation within

31 Walker and Ludwig, "Sharp Power", 9.

32 Ibid, 13.

33 McMaster, "How China Sees the World".

34 Walker, "Sharp Power", 24.

Chinese
merchant ships.
Photo:
Wikimedia /
kees torn
(CC-BY-SA-2.0).



A Chinese merchant ship, the COSCO Ningbo, in the port of Hamburg, 2006.
Photo: Wikimedia / Derbrauni (CC-BY-SA-4.0)

the ongoing SCS dispute. China's influence in the Pacific is more widespread, having taken advantage of the US, Australia and New Zealand's recent focus on conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The Pacific region is extremely important to China with respect to the United Nations (UN) as many UN bodies are allocated on the basis of regional representation, with China and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) falling into the same regional group. As such, votes and national perspectives within the different regional groups play an important role in voting and collective representation of stances on geopolitical issues within the UN. The PICs, therefore, are important to China from a UN governance perspective as well as supporting China on sensitive issues such as Taiwan. China's diplomatic

interests and investments in the Pacific are considerable, taking advantage of a region which comprises predominantly poor states and lacks infrastructure and diversity of trade. China has exploited the situation by way of new embassies, developmental aid and investments. On the surface, this appears promising for these nations given their predicament, however, Chinese investment also comes with the normative requirement to align to Chinese "one-China" policy and UN voting preferences, as recently illustrated in Kiribati.³⁵ The reliance on Chinese investment and the longevity of leases has meant some nations have been exposed to coercion.

³⁵ Gan, "China Opened an Embassy on a Tiny, Remote Pacific Island During the Pandemic".

As China becomes more powerful and confident on the world's stage, it is starting to implement more hardened diplomatic tactics. An example is a recent legitimate request by Australia for an independent inquiry to be undertaken to understand the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was responded to by China placing a considerable tariff on Australian barley exports, blocking 'beef imports from four abattoirs, impos[ing] new customs requirements on Australia's iron ore and also [advising] Chinese power stations to turn their backs on Australian coal.³⁶ Many considered China's response to be 'menacing' and 'dramatic'.³⁷ Given that an increased number of nations have a greater strategic reliance on China for trade, a large proportion of the international community is vulnerable to this sort of economic pressure and is susceptible to China's increasingly strident diplomatic rhetoric and tactics.

China's economic expansion activities are at the heart of its grand strategy and, of its instruments of national power, China's most powerful is its economic one. Albeit at considerable cost and still in its early years, BRI is an effective way in which China has built and continues to build influence, expand its economy and secure access to strategic resources. The BRI combination of anchor projects followed by cluster investments has been used to considerable effect to ensure the old Silk Road connects to an expanded network of maritime, polar, digital and health "silk roads", creating vital trade links across every continent and to all corners of the globe. It also provides China with opportunities to gain access to vital strategic resources. Enhanced by the BRI, China has become the 'world's main producer of rare earth elements, and more than 80% of the world's production is managed by China.'³⁸ China's economic power has created strategic dependencies across the globe, impacting strong and weak states, irrespective of their size. A recent survey identified that members of the 'Five-Eyes are dependent on China for 831 separate categories of imports – of which 260 [are] service elements of critical

national infrastructure.'³⁹ In 2019, the US tried to counter this competitive edge and reliance by instructing American high-tech companies to stop supplying Chinese technology company Huawei. Yet, despite this instruction, US firms chose profits over national security concerns and found loopholes to continue to supply Huawei through overseas factories.⁴⁰ Despite US efforts, Huawei and facial recognition company Hikvision are waging a steady campaign to set next-generation global tech standards, which could translate into market domination.⁴¹ China's 'Made in China 2025' goal will only exacerbate this issue. McMaster has observed that the objective of 'Made in China 2025' is—

*creating high-tech monopolies inside China and stripping foreign companies of their intellectual property by means of theft and forced technology transfer. In some cases, foreign companies are forced to enter into joint ventures with Chinese companies before they are permitted to sell their products in China. These Chinese companies mostly have close ties to the party, making routine the transfer of intellectual property and manufacturing techniques to the Chinese government.*⁴²

There are many nations that have embraced China's BRI and see it as a win-win outcome, however, there are others, mostly in the West, that are starting to question some of the more unsavoury aspects of the BRI. McMaster contends that China is using the BRI as a common tactic to prey on 'weak governments, many susceptible to corruption.'⁴³ In Africa, for example, Angola has significant levels of debt, holding 'about 30% (US\$43.15 billion) of the total [African] debt owed to China.'⁴⁴ In addition to the debt, the oil-rich nation's economy is trade-reliant on Beijing, and in this vulnerable state, sells its oil to China in pre-financed deals as collateral for its loans equating to 'about two-thirds of its [total] crude oil.'⁴⁵ Some BRI investments are predatory in nature and

³⁹ Rogers et al., "Breaking the China Supply Chain".

⁴⁰ *The Economist*, "Chip Wars: China, America and Silicon Supremacy", 9.

⁴¹ Allen-Ebrahimian, "A China-centric 21st century".

⁴² McMaster, "How China Sees the World".

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ George, "Growing Chinese debt".

⁴⁵ Nyabiage, "Africa has a Question for Beijing".

³⁶ *The New Zealand Herald*, "US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Threatens Australia Over China Deal", May 24, 2020.

³⁷ Doherty, "China and Australia".

³⁸ Volpe, "The Tortuous Path".

‘In some cases, it appears as an intentional tactic for China to invest in nations that, under any basic assessment, are highly unlikely to be in a position to pay the debt back without entering into a binding long-term deal.’

have led to widespread debt traps. China’s investments lack any regulatory framework to prevent debt distress and have some countries overextending their capacity to service debt. In some cases, it appears as an intentional tactic for China to invest in nations that, under any basic assessment, are highly unlikely to be in a position to pay the debt back without entering into a binding long-term deal. For example, there are currently [e]ight poor countries with Belt and Road financing—Pakistan, Djibouti, the Maldives, Laos, Mongolia, Montenegro, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan—[that] already have unsustainable levels of debt.⁴⁶ China is leveraging these nations and others in debt to its advantage. In 2019, ‘China reportedly cancelled \$78m owed by Cameroon. A month later Cameroon withdrew its candidate (and the African Union’s choice) for director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, a UN body, clearing the way for China’s candidate to get the job.’⁴⁷

Other investments are suspect. In 2017, there were accusations of a five-year Chinese bugging and hacking programme of the African Union (AU) headquarters, which were funded and built by China, where ‘the organisation’s secrets were being copied on to servers in Shanghai.’⁴⁸ What is concerning in relation to this example is not just the regular use of technological “back doors” in Chinese tech hardware but the relative acquiescence displayed by the AU in respect to this incident, exposing the lack of leverage African countries have over China.⁴⁹ There are further accusations that in countries such as Djibouti and Sri Lanka, China has engaged in more deliberate debt trap tactics

in order to secure sea-ports of geopolitical significance. Of course, China immediately discredits these accusations, making use of its extensive and well-coordinated information instrument of power. Growing concern over the BRI has created a greater sense of wariness from nations considering future Chinese investments.

While China’s approach is led through a self-help orientated bilateral diplomacy, with economic power at its core, it is the information instrument that acts as the glue to bind the grand strategy together and provide its strength and resilience. The use of the information instrument is critical because it has both an internal and external focus. New security laws introduced in 2015 have enabled the CPC to conduct information operations internally, in what some categorise as activities centred on ‘regime security’.⁵⁰ At its extreme, China has waged information warfare on its own people in the challenging Xinjiang region to counter its domestic security challenge. Measures to suppress dissent have included—

*implementation of hundreds of mobile ‘convenience police stations’, high-tech measures such as installation of China’s Skynet electronic surveillance system in major urban areas, coordinated mass anti-terrorism ‘oath-taking rallies’ by thousands of security personnel, promulgation of new legal restrictions on religious practice and the use of ‘political education centres’ to coerce Uyghurs out of their ‘deviant’ behaviours.*⁵¹

China’s “Three Warfares”—public opinion, psychological warfare and legal warfare—are at the heart of its information operations.⁵² The doctrine is not just limited to supporting the People’s Liberation Army’s operations; it also reflects the ‘...expressions of the CCP’s intentions and day-to-day operations.’⁵³ The CPC approach ‘influence operations and active measures as a normal way of doing business.’⁵⁴ Indeed, President Xi, in addressing the CPC August 2013 National Propaganda and Ideology Work Conference, stated ‘education on ideals and convictions must not only be

launched among Party members and cadres, but must also be launched towards the entire society.’⁵⁵

Education on ideals and convictions is largely delivered through a combination of China’s social credit system, state media and tight controls over the use of social media. This approach was strengthened in 2015, when China’s National Security Laws were enacted, which included the purpose to ‘...safeguard the regime of people’s democratic dictatorship and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.’⁵⁶ The state’s media provides messaging and propaganda to control the domestic narrative, while the monitoring of social media and metadata collected from the social credit system controls the social behaviour of individual citizens. The recent coronavirus pandemic provides clear evidence of this monitoring and the consequences for individuals should their narrative or behaviour deviate from that expected by the CPC. Li Wenliang, the Chinese doctor who originally revealed an outbreak of a serious virus on social media, was being monitored online, and when his content caused concerns for the CPC, he was arrested and reprimanded for spreading a rumour. He was then ordered to sign a paper of admonishment and would have likely had an adjustment to his social credit rating if he hadn’t unfortunately died of COVID-19. However, it is not just individuals who are being monitored and controlled. When COVID-19 started to spread across the globe and external interest intensified surrounding the origins of the virus, China quickly imposed restrictions on academic research through universities and scientific institutions, implementing a new policy to ensure all academic papers and studies relating to the origin of COVID-19 were vetted and central government approval obtained, in order to enable the CPC to control the domestic narrative.⁵⁷

Externally, much of China’s information operations are focused on countering negative Western discourse and challenges to the legitimacy of CPC’s implementation

of foreign and domestic policy. China layers its information warfare tactics, supporting all of China’s instruments of national power. For example, in support of economic sanctions against Australia for leading the request for an investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak, Chinese state media published a number of pieces heavily critical of Australia’s “subservient” politics as well as a cartoon depicting Australia as a ‘mad “yes man” to the United States’.⁵⁸ The published pieces are also supported by well-orchestrated statements by the Chinese “wolf warrior” diplomatic network. Many observers have noticed that China’s increasing use of the “wolf warrior” style is providing a more ‘pugnacious approach’ to Chinese diplomacy.⁵⁹ In addition to this approach, the Chinese narrative is also being worked internally within targeted countries by a proliferation of CPC-funded Confucius Institutes, complemented by China’s ‘global radio web,’ which broadcasts China-friendly propaganda within liberal democratic countries.⁶⁰ Some of China’s propaganda aimed at global audiences is ‘disarmingly Western in style’.⁶¹

Cyber warfare is a key element of China’s information instrument of power. It is being used in both military and commercial settings. In a commercial setting, IP theft has been prevalent in targeting US research institutions and corporations. General Keith Alexander, the former Director of the National Security Agency, once described Chinese cyber theft as being responsible for the ‘greatest transfer of wealth in history’.⁶² Chinese cyber warfare and espionage will continue to provide vital support to growing its military and economic power and China’s push towards becoming the preeminent superpower of the future.

‘Some of China’s propaganda aimed at global audiences is “disarmingly Western in style”.’

46 McMaster, “How China Sees the World”.

47 *The Economist*, “Thanking Big Brother: China’s Post-Covid Propaganda Push”.

48 Aglionby et al., “African Union Accuses China of Hacking Headquarters”.

49 Ibid.

50 Clarke, “China’s Application of the ‘Three Warfares’”, 187.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid, 188.

53 Mattis, “China’s ‘Three Warfares’ In Perspective”.

54 Ibid.

55 Creemers, “Xi Jinping’s 19 August Speech Revealed?”

56 Ministry of National Defence of the People’s Republic of China, National Security Law of the People’s Republic of China (2015), Article I.

57 Gan, Hu, and Watson, “Beijing Tightens Grip Over Coronavirus Research”.

58 Smith, “Cartoon in Chinese Media Depicts Australia as America’s Servant”.

59 Baker, “As China Pushes Back on Virus, Europe Wakes to ‘Wolf Warrior’ Diplomacy”.

60 Scobell, “China’s Real Strategic Culture”, 215; Quing and Shiffman, “Beijing’s Covert Radio Network”.

61 *The Economist*, “Thanking Big Brother”.

62 Cited in McMaster, “How China Sees the World”.

China is currently investing in enhancing its military power. New capability enhancements and the securing of key strategic hubs in Djibouti and Sri Lanka provide China with greater global reach and with the ability to conduct, if necessary, expeditionary operations. China's grand strategy does not portray any desire to engage in expansionist military campaigns. Instead, its strategy reflects a continuation of the traditional military concept of "active defence". Andrew Scobell's analysis of Chinese use of military force has found that active defence is a 'highly elastic' concept, which 'encompasses all manner of military actions, including pre-emptive strikes.'⁶³ A review of Chinese military action since 1949 illustrates that China is prepared to use force in a crisis or if provoked and is willing to pay the price in blood and treasure to achieve success. Indeed, viewed through a Chinese lens, China 'labels every use of its military force since 1949 as a "self-defence counter-attack"'⁶⁴ action and its military has achieved a '100 per cent success rate'⁶⁵ during that period.

The militarisation of the SCS is an extension of the active defence concept. In addition to the greater strategic reach that the occupied islands in the SCS give China's military, they also provide a dual purpose for Beijing. Firstly, they provide a critical defensive barrier and enhanced early warning of a potential attack on its sovereignty, and secondly, any attack on these islands, irrespective of whether the international community sees Chinese occupation as being legitimate or not, would be considered by China as just cause for "self-defence counter-attack" military action. This approach would only be successful if Chinese military power continues to be enhanced from a technology and capacity perspective. China is certainly on track to ensure it has sufficient military power to deter and, if necessary, support its active defence concept.

It appears that China's relentless pursuit of its grand strategy is impacting on international opinion, with some nations starting to question whether the trade-off of values and liberal standards for economic

prosperity through Chinese trade and investment has gone too far. In 2018, the US looked to counter China's grand strategy with a strategic pivot to focus more on the Asia Pacific region. The US pivot aimed to negate a perceived attempt by China to seek an 'Indo-Pacific regional hegemony' and to displace the US in order to 'achieve global prominence.'⁶⁶ US concerns with China are best captured by US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper in his speech at the 2020 Munich Security Council, when he stated—

*In fact, under President Xi's rule, the Chinese Communist Party is heading even faster and further in the wrong direction – more internal repression, more predatory economic practices, more heavy-handedness, and most concerning for me, a more aggressive military posture. It is essential that we – as an international community – wake up to the challenges presented by China's manipulation of the long-standing international, rules-based order that has benefited all of us for many decades.'*⁶⁷

It seems the international community is awakening. In the Pacific region, New Zealand has risked its heavy reliance on Chinese trade by becoming more assertive in articulating unease at China's increasingly negative influence and behaviours within the Asia Pacific region. In 2018, for the first time, New Zealand cited Chinese actions as a security concern within a Defence Policy document. The document called out China for 'not consistently adopt[ing] the governance and values' of the international order and stated that 'China holds views on human rights and freedom of information that stand in contrast to those that prevail in New Zealand.'⁶⁸ Additionally, a recent survey of ASEAN nations found that Chinese influence is not 'well-received in the region' with 71.9% of those surveyed being 'worried about its growing regional economic influence.'⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Summary of the 2018 National Defence Strategy of the United States of America.

⁶⁷ Esper, *Speech at the Munich Security Council*, February 15, 2020.

⁶⁸ New Zealand Government, *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, 2018.

⁶⁹ ASEAN Studies Centre, *The State of Southeast Asia: 2020 Survey Report*.

⁶³ Scobell, "China's Real Strategic Culture", 218.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 214.

⁶⁵ Cited in Scobell, "China's Real Strategic Culture", 214.

The criticism of China could, however, be a reflection of the West's struggle to counter Chinese grand strategy and a demonstration that President Xi's approach of attacking the "enemy's strategy" and alliances is forcing the US to court diplomatic favour well beyond traditional partnerships, such as in Africa. The inability to stop China's militarisation of SCS, address human rights concerns regarding the Uyghurs, regulate economic debt trap tactics and halt China's rise within global leadership means that China's grand strategy has so far been effective. The current decline of the international liberal order is playing directly into the Chinese strategy. Key future battlegrounds of great power rivalry are likely to play out in areas such as the SCS, around Taiwan and in the strategic polar theatres.

Case study: China as a 'near-Arctic' state

Introduction

In 2018, China published its long-awaited white paper on the Arctic. The carefully constructed policy document sets out China's position on Arctic affairs, outlines basic principles and clarifies its policy goals, which are intended to guide Chinese government interactions and engagement in and around the Arctic.⁷⁰ Through this

white paper, China also seeks to 'encourage relevant parties to get better involved in Arctic governance' and to 'work with the international community to safeguard and promote peace and stability in, and the sustainable development of, the Arctic.'⁷¹ The policy document acknowledges the fragile nature of the Arctic's biodiversity and ecosystem, realising that a 'harmony between natural conservation and social development' needs to be ensured and a 'better balance between utilization, management and protection' needs to be established.⁷² China has identified four policy goals around which it will base its Arctic strategy, which are to: (1) understand, (2) develop, (3) participate in governance of and (4) protect the Arctic.⁷³ Implementing the Arctic policy draws upon China's diplomatic, economic and information instruments of national power, and its involvement in Arctic affairs is yet another demonstration of China broadening its grand strategy ambitions through its deliberate strategic positioning. However, in this region, it is adopting a less assertive approach by positioning itself to take advantage of the geographical consequences of climate change.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁰ The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.



Drift ice camp in the middle of the Arctic Ocean as seen from the deck of icebreaker Xue Long. Photo: Wikimedia / Timo Palo (2010). (CC-BY-SA-4.0).

An Arctic warbler.
Photo:
Wikimedia / Alnus
(CC-BY-SA-3.0).



Understanding

Science and research are at the heart of Chinese activities supporting the policy goal of understanding the Arctic. In the early years, science proved a useful starting point for China's involvement in the area and a non-intrusive way for Beijing to expand its presence in Arctic affairs. Since 1999, China has used its research vessel *Xue Long* (*Snow Dragon*) to conduct a number of scientific expeditions in the Arctic. In 2004, China expanded its activities further with the building of its first base, the Yellow River Station in Ny Ålesund in the Spitsbergen Archipelago.⁷⁴ Over the last 21 years, China has gradually '...established a multi-discipline observation system covering the sea, ice and snow, atmosphere, biological, and geological system of the Arctic.'⁷⁵ During this period, Chinese polar science and research has expanded to become more collaborative in its approach with China at the forefront of the establishment of numerous organisations and institutes. In 2004, the same year in which their Arctic base was built, China established the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences (AFoPS). This international forum of Asian polar research institutes was established with the aim to advance polar sciences among its six members (China, Japan, South Korea, India, Malaysia and Thailand) and its four observers (Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka

74 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.
75 Ibid.

and Vietnam). Since its inception, the AFoPS has served as a multilateral forum to conduct information exchange and discussion.⁷⁶ China's leadership role in AFoPS is aimed at providing Beijing with greater influence in polar governance discussions, given that many of the member and observer states, unlike China, are not active themselves in the polar regions.

In December 2013, the China-Nordic Arctic Research Centre (CNARC) was established to formalise and enhance interaction between China and Nordic states. The CNARC comprises 10 Nordic and eight Chinese Member Institutes, and is designed to better coordinate and shape Arctic research.⁷⁷ The establishment of an annual CNARC forum, many of which are hosted in China, has provided an opportunity for China to influence the agenda of Arctic research and science discussions. For example, despite the white paper's references to resolving environmental issues as being their 'top priority', China's agenda within the CNARC reflects a completely different focus.⁷⁸ Over the seven CNARC symposiums conducted between 2013 and 2020, China has placed a greater priority on Arctic governance, social development and Arctic sea route or shipping related topics. Of the 110 Chinese presentations given across these different symposiums, 72 of them were on topics relating to either governance or social development. There were only 16 presentations related to environmental conservation or protection, ranking fourth out of the five main topic areas discussed by Chinese speakers.⁷⁹ This is another example of China using sharp power tactics to influence the agenda under the guise of diplomacy.

In addition to driving the agenda, research forums and science literature serve as primary means for China to steer ideas and influence the narrative on Arctic affairs. Over the last two decades,

76 Kim and Jeong, "The Development of the Asian Forum for Polar Sciences", 343.
77 China-Nordic Arctic Research Center.
78 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.
79 The main topic areas discussed by Chinese speakers are: Governance (includes policy and strategy) - 38, Social development - 34, Arctic sea route/shipping - 19, Environmental issues - 16, Security - 3, <https://www.cnarc.info/symposia>, (Accessed 2 April 2020).

China has increased its contribution to international scientific collaboration in the Arctic. In 2016, the Far Eastern Federal University published their pilot study into Arctic research publication trends. Their comprehensive study, covering the period 1996–2015, shows China's contribution to Arctic research as having a 'stronger relative growth than others.'⁸⁰ Of all the countries contributing to Arctic research, China has '... the highest relative growth (260% increase), and the republic is now the seventh largest country in terms of Arctic scientific publications. This strong growth is, however, not unique for Arctic research and overall China is now the second largest country in the world in terms of publication output.'⁸¹ It should be noted, however, that while China is a dominant contributor to Arctic science literature, the citation impact of Chinese publications is poor when correlated with their overall volume and when compared with the other countries in the study. Only Russia performs worse, with the study concluding that, unlike China, a possible explanation for Russia's lack of citation could be attributed to Russian scientists publishing their findings in scientific journals using their native language.⁸²

While China is seen as a major global contributor to science in general, they face potential challenges due to perceptions within the international scientific community relating to Chinese political interference, pressures placed on young scientists to publish and scientific fraud.⁸³ Across almost all Chinese industries, the government plays a crucial role and prioritises science and research through a very bureaucratic system.⁸⁴ Concerns have been raised within the Chinese scientific community that the bureaucracy has created '...a very small group of bureaucrats and their favourite scientists', which 'stifles innovation and makes clear to everyone that the connections with bureaucrats and a few powerful scientists are paramount.'⁸⁵ This system is, therefore 'misallocation of research funds, as decisions for funding

80 Aksnes, Osipov, Moskaleva and Kullerud, *Arctic Research Publication Trends*, 14.
81 Ibid, 14.
82 Ibid, 25.
83 Xie, Zhang and Lai, "China's Rise as a Major Contributor".
84 Ibid.
85 Shi and Rao, "China's Research Culture".

may be influenced by extraneous, or functionally irrelevant, factors such as social networks or political patronage rather than scientific merit.'⁸⁶ Doctor Zhao Long, a research fellow at Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, in a CNARC Fellowship Research Report raised his concerns over Chinese diplomats being involved in Arctic Council scientific working groups rather than scientists, indicating that this approach created 'gaps in professional knowledge', reducing China's ability to fully contribute.⁸⁷

Additionally, within China, there is also increasing institutional pressure on Chinese scholars to publish in international journals as part of a broader strategy to turn China into one of the top five countries in the world in terms of aggregated scientific paper citations.⁸⁸ China's desire to be a global leader of scientific publishing as part of its grand strategy has created an incentive-based approach within the research-centred universities and has created a publish-or-perish culture. A Chinese study into the perish-or-publish culture cites a number of international reports, which observe 'a "serious shortage" of imaginative and innovative research', a 'growing homogeneity in research' and highlight that quantitative measurement has 'pushed researchers away from 'genuinely fostering' original knowledge.'⁸⁹ The combination of a bureaucratic system, a desire to become a global leader in science and the associated pressure to publish in international journals has contributed to the rise in China of scientific corruption and fraud.⁹⁰ Science writer Shimin Fang, who was awarded the John Maddox Prize for his work exposing fraudulent and plagiarised science practices concluded that '[f]aked research is endemic in China.'⁹¹ Fang suggested that fraudulent practices are occurring in a multidimensional fashion, resulting from a combination of—

interactions between totalitarianism, the lack of freedom of speech, press and academic research, extreme capitalism that tries to commercialise everything

86 Xie, Zhang and Lai, "China's Rise as a Major Contributor".
87 CNARC, *China-Nordic Arctic Research Newsletter* 3, 22.
88 Tian, Su and Ru, "Perish or Publish in China".
89 Ibid.
90 Xie, Zhang and Lai, "China's Rise as a Major Contributor".
91 White, "Fraud Fighter".

including science and education, traditional culture, the lack of scientific spirit, the culture of saving face and so on. It's also because there is not a credible official channel to report, investigate and punish academic misconduct.⁹²

The study uncovers a potential threat to China's sharp power tactics within the Arctic science community. While Beijing is making progress in agenda-setting, the polar science and research community consists of a very astute and networked group who pride themselves on quality rather than quantity and who value cited literature. While China might be making some headway in controlling the narrative from a geopolitical perspective, they will need to re-assess their sharp power tactic within the narrower polar science fraternity in order to fully realise the outcomes that these tactics seek.

Science and research activities in the Arctic provide China with a historical presence and connection to the region as a "near-Arctic" state. This is important because, as China has experienced in the SCS, historical linkages, continual presence and controlling the narrative are core foundation pieces of seeking a legitimate claim or, in the case of the SCS, justifying actions undertaken. No doubt, sometime in the future, when the Arctic has melted to a point where contestation begins and pressure is applied to exploit the natural resources within the global commons deep sea-bed area, China will have solidified its status as a "near-Arctic" state and normalised its presence in Arctic affairs. China will continue to build on its status and presence primarily through its extension of the BRI, which also serves as critical leverage for China to call upon if required.

'The combination of a bureaucratic system, a desire to become a global leader in science and the associated pressure to publish in international journals has contributed to the rise in China of scientific corruption and fraud.'

92 White, "Fraud Fighter".

Development

The second policy goal of the white paper is to develop the Arctic. Its stated policy outcome is to investigate resource utilisation and contribute to the economic and social development of the Arctic, while at the same time looking to improve the living conditions of the local people and protect the environment.⁹³ Central to China's Arctic development strategy is an intensification of its bilateral relationships with Arctic states through an extension of the BRI. China's ultimate end-state would see a Polar Silk Road established through the creation of governed Arctic shipping routes connected to infrastructure constructed throughout the Arctic region.⁹⁴ The Polar Silk Road would encourage regional enterprises to pave the way for commercial and regularised operation.⁹⁵ Professor Yang Jian points out that economic exploitation in the Arctic region contributes to intensifying relationships and is fundamental to formulating a 'model of virtuous interaction'.⁹⁶ This model is already well advanced, with China very active in extensive Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) with many Arctic nations. Russia, Norway, Iceland and Greenland are nations considered to be at the forefront of China's win-win Arctic strategy and drive for economic prosperity. Russia and Norway are extremely important relationships for China to build long-term given these two nations also have critical leadership roles in both polar regions.

The foundation of the Sino-Russian Arctic relationship is built around the energy sector but over time is being extended, as China's presence and influence in Arctic affairs expands. The most notable example of Chinese investment in Russia is in the Yamal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project and infrastructure enhancements in the Port of Sabetta on the Yamal Peninsula.⁹⁷ Chinese companies own 29.9% of the Yamal LNG Project, considered to be the largest LNG project in the world.⁹⁸ The Russian economy is heavily reliant on the energy

93 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

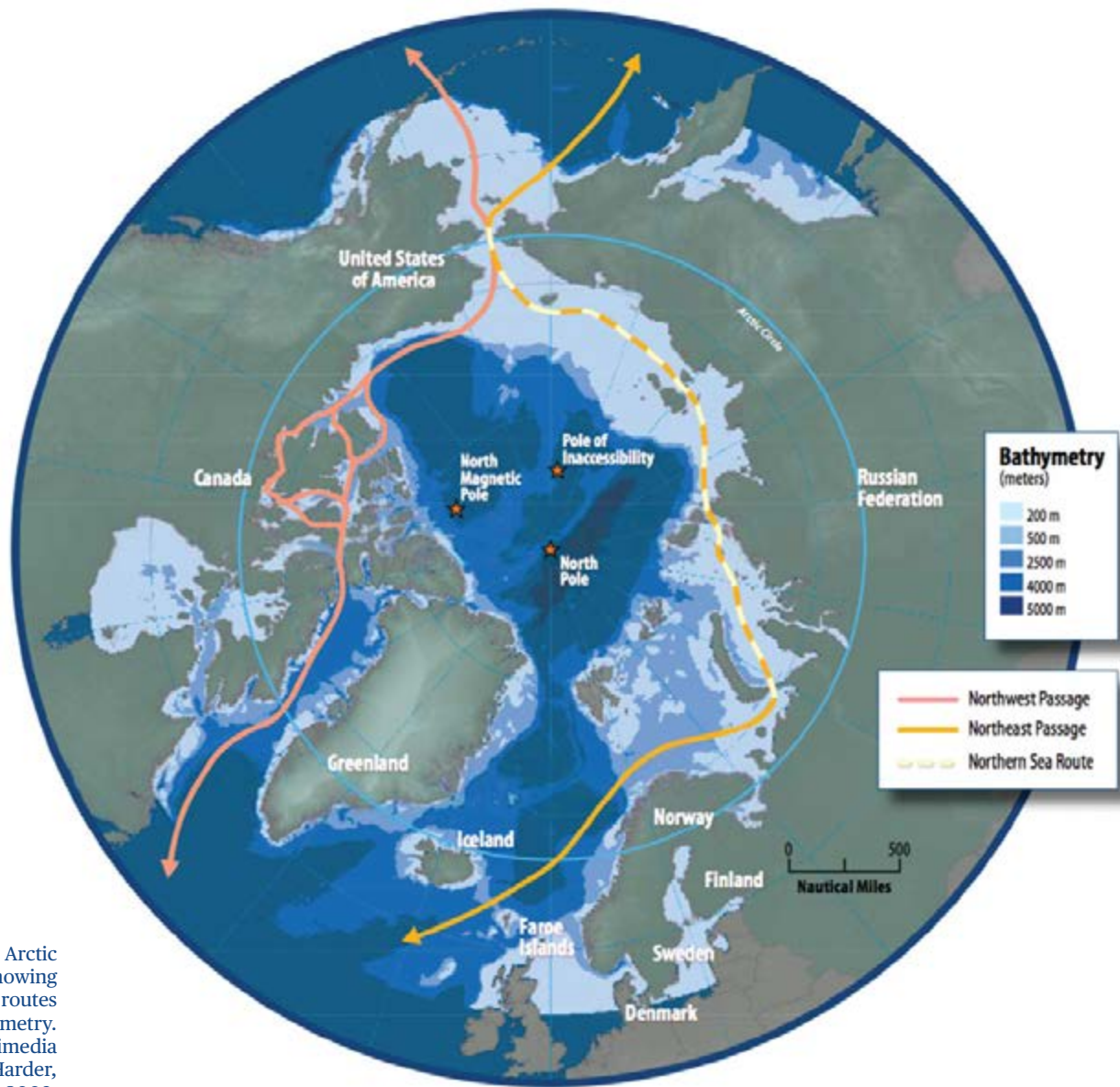
96 China-Nordic Arctic Research Center, *Newsletter* 2, 3.

97 Conley and Melino, "Arctic Moment", 15.

98 Ibid.

The front door to the Chinese Arctic Yellow River Station on Svalbard, established in 2003. Photo: Erlend Bjørtvedt (CC-BY-SA).





Map of the Arctic region showing shipping routes and bathymetry. Photo: Wikimedia / Susie Harder, 2009.

sector, particularly given the current economic sanctions imposed in relation to their military activities in the Donbas region of Ukraine and Crimea. These Chinese investments on the Yamal Peninsula are considered strategic anchor projects, ‘...designed to establish an initial commercial presence that will eventually support other related “cluster” infrastructure investments (such as rail, telecommunications and tourism-related infrastructure)’ in the future.⁹⁹ The trans-polar route could improve the cost-effectiveness of the Yamal Peninsula investment for China and Russia and is likely to see Russia support any future Chinese governance or maritime regulatory proposals relating to the route.

99 Ibid.

The “anchor and cluster” approach has had considerable success across other Arctic nations. Norway, one of the wealthiest Arctic nations, has up until recently resisted Chinese investment, but there are signs this is changing. China is in talks regarding investment at Kirkenes, a Norwegian port on the Barents Sea.¹⁰⁰ Norway is also being touted, along with Finland and Russia, to be involved in a Chinese project to connect Asia to Europe by laying a 10,500 km high-speed telecommunications cable across the Arctic Ocean.¹⁰¹

Greenland plays a key role in China’s win-win strategy as it is ‘extremely rich in natural resources’ and is considered a key destination point of the Polar Silk

100 Kynge, “Chinese Purchases”.

101 Suokas, “China, Finland in Talks About Arctic Telecom Cable”.

Road using the trans-polar route, where in the future, the passage is foreseen to not require transit through any nation’s territorial waters.¹⁰² Greenland, following achievement of self-rule status in 2009, is relatively underdeveloped from an infrastructure perspective and in need of international investors.¹⁰³ China has had significant investment in mining projects (Isua and Kvanefjeld) in Greenland, which is likely to increase further with a zinc mine planned at Citronen Fjord. China is looking to diversify and expand its investments further in the infrastructure, tourism and scientific sectors. In 2018, it is understood that Chinese firms were ‘being considered for the expansion of three airports’ and China is also looking at building its second Arctic research station in ‘western or northern Greenland’.¹⁰⁴ Greenland is also considering the potential of using the capital Nuuk as a key hub to tap into a growing Asian demand for Arctic adventure and ecotourism.¹⁰⁵

China already has a strong bilateral relationship with the recent Arctic Council chair (2019–2021), Iceland. China provided significant investment into Iceland when Iceland’s economy collapsed following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, and again in 2013 when Iceland became the first European nation to sign a free-trade agreement with China. Beijing will hope its close relationship with Iceland will translate into increased support for China’s desire to see the Arctic region developed as a ‘shared future for mankind’ and that ‘the overall interests of the international community in the Arctic’ are respected.¹⁰⁶ The win-win nature of China’s Arctic investments are illustrated in Iceland, where it is taking advantage of the growing demand for Arctic tourism. The main airport at Keflavik saw Chinese visitor numbers jump from ‘about 9500 to 86,000 between 2007 and 2017’.¹⁰⁷ However, it is not just tourism and trade that define Chinese interests in Iceland. Their investments, as for other Arctic nations, also extend to natural resources where ‘the

102 Volpe, “The Tortuous Path of China’s Win-Win Strategy in Greenland.”

103 Ibid.

104 Shi and Lantaigne, “The (Many) Roles of Greenland”.

105 Ibid.

106 The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, *White Paper: China’s Arctic Policy*.

107 Ibid.

China National Offshore Oil Company has a 60% share in the venture operating two of Iceland’s potential oil and gas shelf sites – Dreki and Gammur’.¹⁰⁸

While the Arctic offers China a ‘vast landscape of opportunity’, the considerable FDI could have significant geopolitical implications if not managed effectively.¹⁰⁹ A key component of Chinese BRI investment involves the use of Chinese labourers, many of whom look to remain and seek residency. While this is not considered to be of widespread concern across Arctic nations, Mark Rosen and Cara Thuringer, in their study into unconstrained FDI in the Arctic, identified that Chinese migration into Greenland has the potential to affect the balance of political influence in the Arctic. Their study considers that—

In a small nation such as Greenland, it may only take a couple [of] hundred new citizens to dramatically alter the political landscape. Greenland elects 31 members to its national legislature every four years using proportional representation. In the 2014 election, the difference between the winning Siumut Party and the runner-up Inuit Ataqatigiit Party was 326 votes. The recent passage of the 2012 Large-Scale Projects Act through the Inatsisartut, Greenland’s National Legislature, gives foreign workers rights in Greenland. Once the bill is enacted, over 3,000 Chinese workers could potentially be making their way to Greenland to work on the Isua iron project. This would increase Greenland’s population by 5 per cent; assuming that the workers were able to remain in Greenland and sought political rights.¹¹⁰

There is further concern that the Chinese global investment model, where China ‘taps into the resources available in partner countries, often outsources the environmental impacts of China’s growth, and ensures that Chinese companies and their technology are directly benefiting from involvement’ could have significant environmental and social impacts, given the fragility of the Arctic ecosystems and

108 Conley and Melino, *America’s Arctic Moment*, 15.

109 Rosen, *Unconstrained Foreign Direct Investment*, 61.

110 Ibid, 59-60.

indigenous populations.¹¹¹ China's diplomacy and carefully constructed policy documents are trying to reassure the region that Chinese investments will be sustainable and environmentally responsible, yet this rhetoric has been used before in relation to the BRI and in that case, China's actions have not consistently measured up to the associated diplomatic messaging. China's approach in the Arctic is positional. Its focus on building partnerships with a wide range of partners in the region and its desire to participate in the governance of the Arctic is designed to ensure that China will have an enduring voice in Arctic affairs into the future.¹¹²

Governance

China's Arctic policy paper states that it 'will participate in regulating and managing the affairs and activities relating to the Arctic on the basis of rules and mechanisms.'¹¹³ Demonstrating China's desire for increased rights and responsibilities in the region, the 2018 policy reflected a role change for China, transitioning it from a "near Arctic" state to an "Arctic stakeholder".¹¹⁴ As an Arctic stakeholder, China sees a proactive role in governance as a key mechanism to develop medium-term economic interests and achieve its desire to enhance maritime access to the global commons area of the Arctic (Central Arctic Ocean) and Arctic shipping routes, as well as access to the region's potentially rich fisheries resources.¹¹⁵ In 2015, Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming outlined the importance of supporting efforts to create a governance framework for the Arctic, based on existing international law (UN Charter, UNCLOS, Svalbard Treaty, etc).¹¹⁶ He further stated in light of this framework, 'Arctic and non-Arctic countries are entitled to their rights and also shoulder obligations under international law', and recognised the role the Arctic Council and the International Maritime Organization

will play in Arctic governance.¹¹⁷ China was a proactive contributor to the formulation of a new Polar Code by the International Maritime Organization, seen as a positive step to improve environmental pollution prevention and maritime safety in the polar regions.¹¹⁸ China has also been supportive of initiatives by the Maritime Safety Council to adopt new routeing measures in the Bering Sea and Bering Strait, aimed at reducing the risk of incidents.¹¹⁹

Protection

The final policy goal of the white paper is to protect the Arctic. In respect to this outcome, China states that it will 'actively respond to climate change in the Arctic, protect its unique natural environment and ecological system, promote its own climatic, environmental and ecological resilience, and respect its diverse social culture and the historical traditions of the indigenous peoples.'¹²⁰ China has not been as proactive in implementing this policy objective compared to the other three, however, this may be reflective of the wider region, which for many years has exploited the Arctic. Exploitation of the Arctic has been undertaken by nearly all Arctic stakeholders and, as a result, has become somewhat normalised. It also appears that the Arctic community has accepted that a permanent degradation of the Arctic cannot be avoided through climate change mitigation, and that any action to reverse the melting would be too late and unrealistic.

117 Ibid.
 118 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Keynote Speech by Vice Foreign Minister Zhang".
 119 International Maritime Organisation, "Shipping in Polar Waters".
 120 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.

Conclusion

The case study has demonstrated that China has adapted its grand strategy behaviours and tactics in implementing its Arctic policy by being less assertive in this region compared to others. The purpose of this adjustment in approach is to position China to be able to take advantage of the anticipated benefits from a permanent degradation of the Arctic ice shelf. Its approach is threefold. Firstly, it has invested in key sectors within Arctic nations that are then likely to benefit from its ability to sustainably exploit the increased access to resources. Secondly, its involvement in maritime governance is linked to the benefits that greater access to a trans-polar trade route will provide. Finally, it will use diplomatic and economic leverage to ensure that China, as a near-Arctic state, has access to the global commons deep seabed and fisheries, should that area become sufficiently exposed for exploitation to occur.

China's opportunistic approach has continued in the Arctic with great effect, taking advantages of opportunities presented in Iceland (providing assistance post-GFC) and Greenland (using Chinese migration into Greenland to potentially influence the balance of political power there). It has also continued to impact on US alliance structures through enhanced relationships with North Atlantic Treaty Organization Arctic states, as well as affecting US strategy through its relationship with Greenland. China's ability to adapt its grand strategy in different strategic theatres is a hallmark of its rise as a superpower, and a key contributor to the country's progress to date.

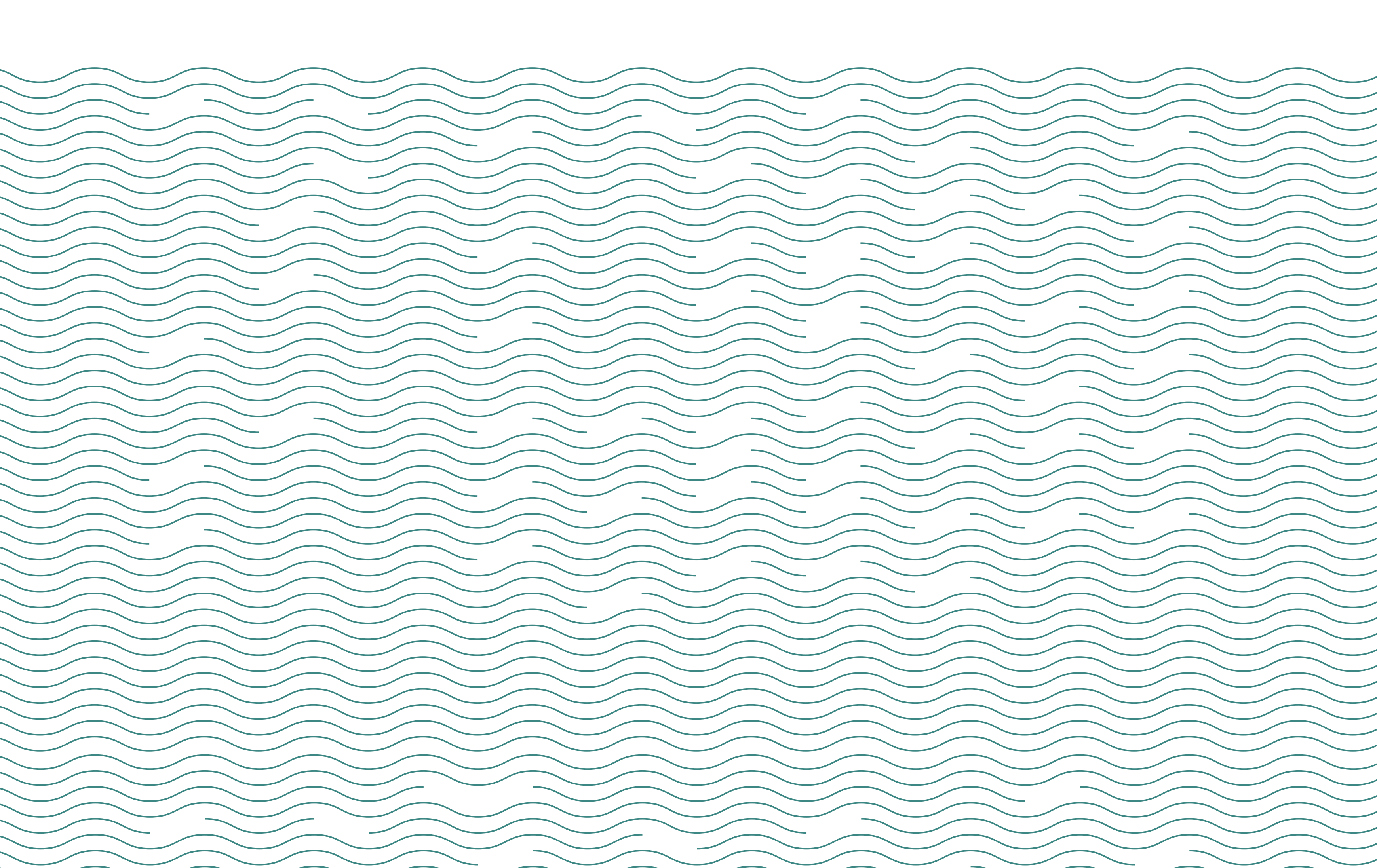


COMMODORE GARIN GOLDING

Commodore Garin Golding joined the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1988 and completed his officer training in the same year. He did his basic officer of the watch and navigation training and appointments on various ships before specialising as a Mine Clearance Diving Officer in 1995. He has commanded the Operational Dive Team and HMNZS *Manawanui*. He has a variety of operational experience from tours in Bougainville and Timor-Leste. Senior appointments include command of the Deployable Joint Inter-Agency Task Force Headquarters and Assistant Chief of Navy (Strategy and Engagement). In 2019, Commodore Golding completed the United Kingdom's Royal College of Defence Studies programme. He holds a Masters in Strategic Studies from Victoria University of Wellington and an MA in International Security and Strategy from King's College, London.

Commodore Golding posted as Director, Maritime Domain within the New Zealand Defence Force's Capability Branch in August 2020, and as the Maritime Component Commander, HQ JFNZ, in December 2021. He is married and has two adult children. He enjoys a wide variety of sports.

111 Goodman and Freese, "China's Ready to Cash In on a Melting Arctic".
 112 Wishnick, "China's Interests and Goals in the Arctic", x.
 113 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *White Paper: China's Arctic Policy*.
 114 Goodman and Freese, "China's Ready to Cash In on a Melting Arctic".
 115 Conley and Melino, *Arctic Moment*, 4.
 116 Wishnick, "China's Interests and Goals in the Arctic", 26.



BOOK REVIEWS

A note from the Book Reviews Editor, Commander Andrew Dowling, RNZN

Since I last sat at my desk and tapped away at reviews for the previous Journal, an awful lot has happened in the world with the crashing, visceral return of state-on-state conflict, the corresponding re-emergence of Cold War enmities and the potential for an increase in proxy conflicts.

For the book reviews of this edition, I was inexorably drawn to digging out every book I had on Cold War politics and the history of that period (Odd Anre Westad's *The Global Cold War* is a great one-stop shop), but I have refrained from simply passing on a "top ten" of literary must-reads of that era. I've tried to resist the urge to go back to the Cold War and to keep my reviews in this edition a little more balanced, but there are some books I've read over the last twelve months that may also pique your interest in relation to Russia. Serhii Plokhy's *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union* is a good place to start and counters well the modern Russian myth-making about the Soviet collapse, while including the views of republics such as Ukraine, where much of the final decisions about the end of the Soviet Empire were, in reality, made. On a more intimate level is Colin Thubron's *The Amur River: Between Russia and China*, which details his travels (in 2020) through Siberia along the Amur, all the way to the Kamchatka Peninsula and his interactions with the population along the way. Finally, there is Sophy Robert's *The Lost Pianos of Siberia*, which although it may sound like an odd premise for a book, is in fact a delightful (even melodious) angle with which to approach the history and current challenges of that enormous area of Russia.

Now to this edition's offerings! First up is Peter Conradi's *Who Lost Russia? How the World Entered a New Cold War*, which is a book I first read in 2020 and which, as I'll explain, is invaluable in understanding the events of this year. The second book is Michael Burleigh's *Small Wars, Faraway Places*, which is a timely reminder of how proxy wars can have unintended consequences on the global stage at a time when such conflicts may be making a reappearance. The third and final review is Emma Sky's *The Unravelling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq*, which details one women's challenge as a political advisor to the coalition military in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am sure across the globe there are many historians, political commentators and military experts who are filing away their books on counter insurgency, terrorism and security operations while trying to find copies of their notes from thirty years ago. Yet, if history has taught us nothing (which it often seems it doesn't) then the lessons learnt since 1991 and the supposed end of great power conflict will be needed again as the world faces up to the next set of challenges.

As ever, I hope one of the books reviewed or mentioned in this editorial takes your fancy and you take the plunge. I still contend that we cannot become better professionals, whatever our sphere of interest, unless we understand the viewpoints of others, the history of what has gone before us and the challenges of the world around us.



COMMANDER ANDREW DOWLING, RNZN

Commander Dowling joined the Royal Navy in 1999. Following basic aviation training, he completed Lynx helicopter training, deploying in HM Ships *Manchester* and *Somerset* in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He then joined HMS *Marlborough* (2002-2004) for a tour, during which he saw active service in Iraq in 2003. He spent 2004-2006 as an Observer/Helicopter Warfare Instructor on 702 Naval Air Squadron before becoming a Flight Commander of the aviation component of the UK's Maritime Counterterrorism team. Offered an opportunity to broaden out of pure aviation, Commander Dowling was selected as the Strike Operations Officer for HMS *Illustrious* during its period as an amphibious assault ship. Building on his joint force experiences, Commander Dowling then spent a period as the J5 Planner for the UK Maritime Battle Staff, being involved in a variety of simultaneous deployments across the globe. His last job in the Royal Navy was as part of the Carrier Strike team in the Maritime Warfare Centre, and in 2015 he moved, with his wife Claire, to New Zealand to join the Royal New Zealand Navy.

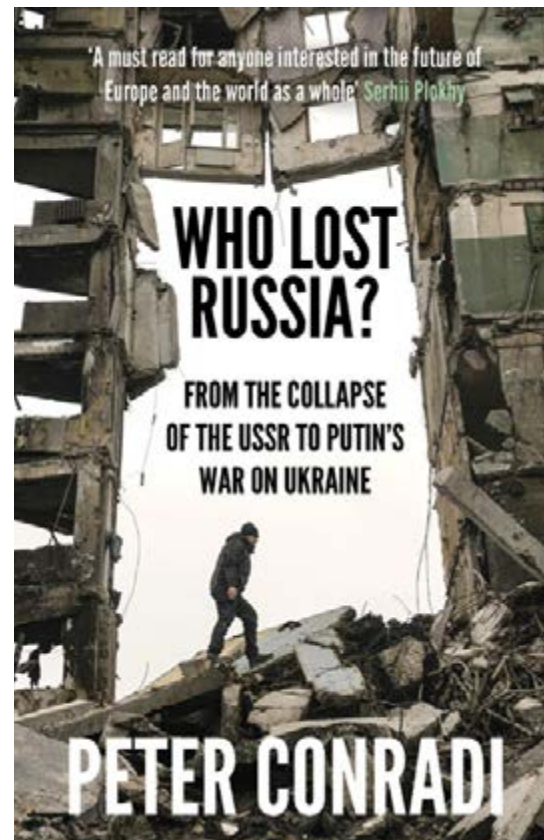
Commander Dowling served as the Air Staff Officer for Seasprite and then as the Operational Flight Commander for CO6 Squadron. After completing the Advanced Command and Staff Course in 2017, Commander Dowling spent four years in Capability Branch as the Naval Aviation Capability Manager and then as the Naval Combat and Patrol Force Capability Manager. Commander Dowling was then selected to be Commander of the Royal New Zealand Navy's Maritime Operational Evaluation Team and continues in that role today.

Outside of the military Commander Dowling has completed a Master's at King's College London in warfare in the modern world and has a passion for rugby, cooking, diving, reading, and writing military history and strategy.

Who Lost Russia? How the World Entered a New Cold War

Peter Conradi

Published by Oneworld Publications, 2017.



There is sure to be an avalanche of publications on the current Russian invasion of Ukraine, but Conradi's rather prescient book from 2018 tells you all you need to know to understand the background to the current conflict.

The 1991 demise of the Soviet Union and the supposed ending of the Cold War should have marked the start of a new era (the supposed peace dividend as armed forces were slashed across the Western world) of cooperation between the Western powers and the nations of the "East". As is now starkly apparent, that spirit of cooperation hasn't endured, with relations continually souring over the last twenty years as Russia made incursions into Georgia, Ukraine and Syria.

As Foreign Editor to the *Times of London* (with six years resident in Moscow), Conradi was able to access a wide range of political and academic interviewees, publications and fellow journalists to develop, what I consider, to be a balanced and sharp narrative about the gradual deterioration of international relationships with Russia.

Russia came out from the 1990s battered, humiliated, its military rusting in ports and depots, its protests for help ignored (in their mind) as NATO expanded eastwards to take in Moscow's former satellites. Set against that background, the book largely focuses on the relationships between the leadership of the United States (US) and the leadership in Russia. It exposes the

topsy-turvy, sometimes contradictory and often ill-conceived policy decisions made by both nations as they tried to forge a path together.

President Vladimir Putin offered a new start in relations when he took the place of the erratic and often-inebriated President Boris Yeltsin in the Kremlin, yet initial contact with Western leadership wasn't as convivial as it could have been. Conradi recounts President Bill Clinton's initial meeting with Putin and his comments to Yeltsin which considering recent events is illuminating,

'He (Clinton) wasn't sure, he told Yeltsin, "how this new guy of yours" defined strength either for himself or the country. You've got the fire in your belly Boris of a real democrat, a real reformer. I'm not sure Putin has that.'

The book is a fast-moving, highly articulate narrative that neatly blends the approaches of historian and journalist. Conradi recounts events and historical context that is frequently overlooked, with an eye for analysis that is largely unblemished by typical Western bias, offering a balanced approach. The author underscores that it was the USSR—in its manic attempt to create fictional Soviet republics with faux autonomy within the historic Greater Russia—that encouraged secession when the Soviet Union dissolved. Ukraine had been a part of Russia for hundreds of years. So too was Crimea, which was only ceremoniously gifted to Ukraine in 1954, when it had almost no practical significance. Today Russian nationalists look upon these former territories and others as the "near abroad", and demand to have a say in their respective destinies. These points are not made to justify current Russian aggression, but to give them a view from the "other side of the hill", something often conspicuous in its absence in media coverage and fundamental for understanding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Conradi goes on to objectively chronicle the failed "reset" efforts by President Barack Obama and his Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, noting that Obama, like those before him, seemed plainly unaware of what

really went to the heart of Russia's concerns around NATO and the history outlined above. The author appears to disapprove of Obama's absence of decisive action in Syria, which no doubt signalled weakness to Putin, yet he neglects to advance an available option that would have avoided exacerbating the multiplicity of competing actors on the ground there.

If I could find room for a second criticism, it is that the Russia-China relationship is given little space on the page, yet as we are very aware in the Pacific, that relationship may turn out to be one of fundamental influence in how the next few years of global relations develop.

The portions of the book I found most compelling were those where Conradi took the time to paint portraits of the main protagonists and how their personalities (like so much) drove the way they approached relationships and policy with each other. Clinton's obvious affection for Yeltsin and that of President George Bush Snr for President Gorbachev stand out in contrast to the lack of any relationship between Western leadership and Putin.

This is an even-handed and honest account of relationships, of misconception, miscommunication and misunderstandings in those relationships and the consequences of being ignorant of history.

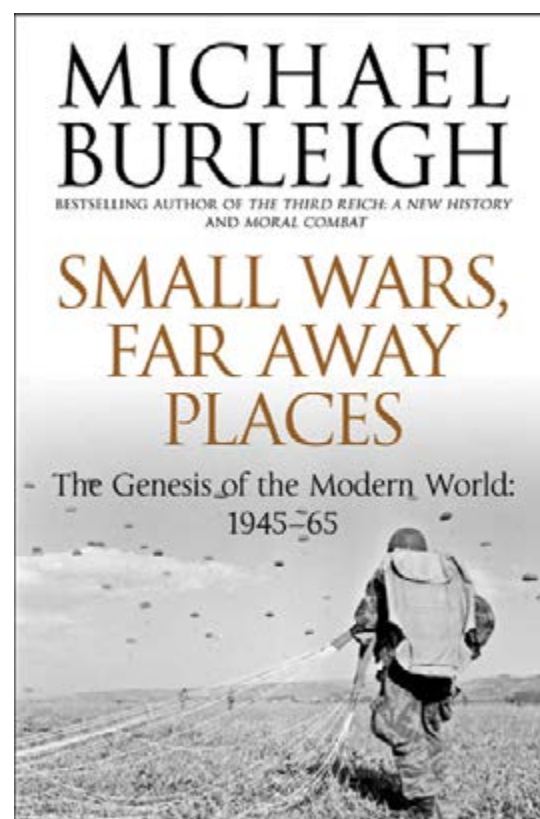
Reviewed by Commander Andrew Dowling, RNZN.

Since this review was penned, *Who Lost Russia?* has been reissued, with updates and additional chapters to cover the war on Ukraine. The new cover is shown opposite.

Small Wars, Far Away Places: The Genesis of the Modern World 1945–65

Michael Burleigh

Published by Pan Macmillan Australia, 2013.



An engaging, dynamic and insightful look into how the post-WWII competition between East and West forged countries, displaced societies and set in motion the modern world we live in today.

For some commentators, proxy wars may be making a comeback. Others believe they never went away, with the conflict within Syria and Northern Iraq being a prime example. The danger with proxy wars is that they can have second, third and fourth order effects that were never envisaged. For those not aware, a proxy war is an armed conflict between two states or non-state actors that act on the instigation or on behalf of other parties that are not directly involved in the hostilities. Recent examples are the civil war in Yemen, insurgency in the Southern Philippines, the Syrian civil war and arguably the current war in Ukraine.

Burleigh's book is a potted history of hastily conceived foreign policy and a testing of wills between the Soviet Empire and the countries of the West headed by the United States. At its heart are the consequences of using others to do your own dirty work and the extent to which morals are usurped and long-lasting enmities established.

As once-great Western colonial empires collapsed, counter-insurgency campaigns raged in the Philippines, the Congo, Iran, and other faraway places. Dozens of new nations struggled into existence, the legacies of which are still felt today. Placing these vicious struggles alongside the period-defining United States and Soviet standoffs in Korea, Vietnam and Cuba, Burleigh deftly swerves from Algeria to Kenya, China, Vietnam and Kashmir. He expertly intersperses top-level diplomatic negotiations and military action with

portraits of the charismatic local leaders who often cared little about which political philosophy supported them, if they were supported.

Burleigh executes the book well with each chapter being a self-contained story of a conflict that is also drawn together as a cohesive tapestry bound within the book. Most importantly each chapter wraps up with the "So what" for the globe today. As an example, the chapter on the Chinese civil war that ended in 1949 with the retreat of the Nationalists into Taiwan may be old news for many. However, what may have slipped from memory is the power that the "China Lobby" in the United States had and the scale of support the government of the United States had given the Nationalists since 1941. It is not surprising Beijing and Washington, DC, still have a strained relationship.

The book is easily accessible for the generalist and as such offers a straightforward way into this period of the postmodern world. It is not without its faults though as Burleigh clearly tries to pack as much as he can into each chapter. Some of his sentences can seem like an information barrage, but as he makes clear, these chapters are not a definitive history of each conflict, more of an *amuse-bouche*.

The aspect of the book that I enjoyed most was that Burleigh made clear his opinions of actions and personalities describing one as 'bludgeoning incompetent' and another as a 'quasi-heroic sophisticate.' While I don't necessarily agree with all of Burleigh's conclusions, he isn't afraid to make them which allows the reader to stop and apply their own academic rigour to a particular period, person or place. Too many history books can be dry, linear narratives, and this book certainly isn't that.

A good history book should be one that makes the subject relevant and feel almost unfamiliar and new. This book is a good platform for one to seek more on the various regions and conflicts discussed while also providing the reader with a solid one-stop shop of a period in history that is often overlooked despite its wider consequences.

At a time in the South West Pacific when non-traditional state and non-state actors are beginning to exert an influence and the spectre of grey-zone competition ever more likely (if not already in play), this book serves as a good reminder that proxy conflicts are alive and well and that the consequences of setting them in motion are by no means certain.

Reviewed by Commander Andrew Dowling, RNZN.

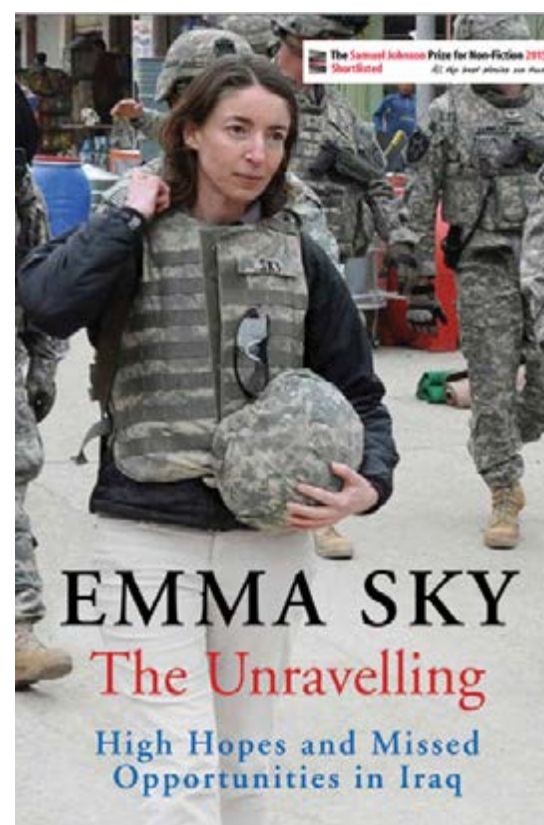


Sailors in HMNZS Taranaki in the Far East, 1962. Photo: National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy.

The Unravelling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq

Emma Sky

Published by Atlantic Books, 2016.



An engaging, intelligent and, in places, dark account of one person's involvement as a civilian advisor to the military in Iraq post the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein. This is a book that weaves characters and events together. It endeavours to understand everyone's perspectives and motivations while trying to tie together a story of an individual and a country that still has no conclusion.

Working as part of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2003, Emma Sky applied for a role as a civilian advisor in Iraq. What started as an opportunity to help a country, after a Western invasion she vociferously opposed, ended up being an odyssey for Sky as her fortunes were entwined with those of Iraq from 2003–2013.

Initially posted to Mosul and Kirkuk and working hand-in-glove with the military, Sky initially railed against “the American military tribe” whom she at first, worked with, ‘so out of place, running around in uniforms which looked like pyjamas, with their name tags on their chests.’

Despite her initial misgivings (and admitted naivety), Sky became political advisor to United States’ (US) General Raymond T. Odierno from 2007 to 2010, valued for her knowledge of the region and her outspoken voice. She became a tireless witness to coalition efforts to transform a country eviscerated by decades of war, sanctions and a brutal dictatorship. She witnessed the spiral from insurgency to civil war, as well as being part of the planning and implementation of the surge and the subsequent drawdown of Coalition troops.

Sky's tough, no-nonsense approach led to her forming bonds across the communities in Iraq; it led her into conflict with not just the US military but also with the United Kingdom (UK) and US political hierarchy in Iraq. Throughout the book you can sense the internal tension within her as, on the one hand, she disapproves of military presence in Iraq, while on the other recognises the need for it in order to try to maintain the peace.

In the book, Sky is forthright about her views on the decisions made by presidents Bush and Obama and how she felt the Iraqi people were being let down because the West couldn't see the job through. For me though, what is remarkable throughout this book is the level of mental and physical resilience displayed by Sky throughout her eleven years involved in Iraq, which encompassed some truly terrible times for the nation, as she describes—

Dead animals were used to conceal roadside bombs. Bodies of dead Iraqis were booby-trapped to blow up relatives who approached them. Mentally disabled children were turned into suicide bombers. Funerals were frequently the target of attacks. The morgues were full of mutilated bodies: If the head was cut off, it was Shia; if the head was drilled through, it was Sunni.

As the book progresses, so too does Sky's understanding of the scale of sectarian violence, something for which she was unprepared. This descent of Iraq into civil war was the point at which Sky began to view the Western militaries differently, as they shifted from peace enforcer to peacekeeper, although not always approving of their tactics and *modus operandi*.

Yet this continual pressure does take a toll on Sky, and the end of the book finds her struggling to break free of an Iraq she clearly loves to forge a new path for her life before Iraq totally consumes her. This last section is told at a different pace to the rest of the book and with great pathos.

The area of the book that stood out for me (and this runs through the entire work) is the dispelling of the traditional tropes

of left and right politics as the real-world situation constantly undermines what an individual thinks they align with when faced with the reality on the ground. From being initially repulsed by the military, Sky came to recognise that ‘Amidst the horror of war, I had experienced more love and camaraderie than I had ever known,’ she writes. ‘I had become part of their band of brothers.’

As an officer who took part in the invasion of Iraq in 2003, I have my own feelings and recollections of the country, the people and the ostensible reasons for the action. I found I could visualise all that Sky was writing about; I could relate to her thoughts, even though I may not have agreed with them. Like her, I remember Freedom Fries being available at the DFAC (Dining Facility) and wondering if the invasion was anything more than a vulgar display of power that ultimately failed to achieve anything other than suffering for millions. This is a book that military practitioners and politicians alike should read because the grim reality of modern war among the people as well as war against the people is laid bare throughout this narrative.

Reviewed by Commander Andrew Dowling, RNZN.

NEXT ISSUE AND GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The *Professional Journal of the Royal New Zealand Navy* team look forward to welcoming you all back for the next issue of the Journal.

Guidelines for submissions to the Journal are as follows:

- Articles submitted for publication in the Journal should normally not exceed 4,000–4,500 words in length. Shorter articles and commentaries are always welcome.
- References should be included for all sources and carefully checked for accuracy and relevance. These should be set out using the Chicago Manual of Style's "Notes and Bibliography" style. Online references must include the date accessed and a link. Sources referred to, in footnotes or in the text, must be given a full reference in the bibliography.
- Accompanying illustrations must be high resolution (300 dpi minimum) and in colour wherever possible. Caption information and sources should be provided with illustrations so that copyright permissions can be sought.

The next issue of the Journal will be published in 2023.

Intending contributors are encouraged to consult the Editorial Working Committee (EWC) at the email address below to help shape ideas for their articles and obtain advice on the suitability of topics and prospects for publication. Once accepted, completion of articles will be subject to deadlines, and the timeline of publication will be at the discretion of the editors.

The general address for correspondence relating to the Journal is—

rnznjournal@gmail.com

If your interest is to do with the book reviews, Commander Andrew Dowling is more than happy to take your ideas. He can be contacted at—

Andrew.Dowling@nzdf.mil.nz



HMNZS Aotearoa in
Auckland. Photo: NZDF.

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