

Australia's security and prosperity: Ideas for 2020

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Introduction: Thinking about security and prosperity

WILLIAM MALEY

The Rudd government has identified security and prosperity as major topics to address as it looks forward to Australia in 2020. At first glance, the promotion of security and prosperity seems to be a straightforward and obviously desirable objective of a country's foreign policy. One only need reflect on the sufferings of those whose lives are blighted by obvious insecurity, or miserable squalor (and quite commonly both), to appreciate that these are indeed very important ends to pursue. It also seems obvious that an Australian government bears a specific responsibility to promote security and prosperity for Australia's citizens.

On closer scrutiny, however, some complexities begin to surface. The idea of security is not as straightforward as it seems. Security for *whom*, and from *what*? The idea of prosperity is not so straightforward either. Is it sufficient to measure prosperity by average income or wealth? Or is it necessary to take distributional considerations into account, and if so, how? Under this kind of scrutiny, it is surprising how swiftly the ideas of 'security' and 'prosperity' open up quite fundamental questions of political philosophy related to the scope and strength of the state, the role of markets and the framing of rules to govern their operation, and the place of civil society and democratic choice mechanisms in shaping the social order in which we live.

CONCEPTIONS OF SECURITY

For much of the twentieth century, writing about international relations was dominated by a rather simple model. The absence of an overarching global authority created a situation of anarchy; the actors within this anarchical framework (sovereign 'nation-states') were driven either by human nature or the structure of the system itself to pursue power as a means of obtaining security; and security referred to the capacity of states to deter or defeat threats to their territorial integrity and to certain other core 'national interests'.¹ While the premises on which this

¹ For significant samplings of this genre, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); John J. Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

approach ('realism') was based were increasingly questioned by critical observers, it remained popular amongst political leaders and officials.²

However, even on its own terms, it became clear that 'realism' had less to offer than one might have thought at first glance. Most importantly, states did not exist in a vacuum, 'interests' were not set in stone, and the actions taken by one state to protect its 'interests'—for example through the purchase of military equipment—could lead to an arms race which would wipe out any advantage that the initial purchase might have brought. This came to be known as the 'security dilemma', and the spread of nuclear weapons made a quest for absolute security seem more and more elusive.³ Such considerations prompted renewed attention to ideas such as 'collective security' or 'cooperative' security which retained a central focus on the state but sought to move beyond the trap which the security dilemma posed.⁴ Even more recently, some quite new ways of thinking about security have surfaced. While continuing for the most part to accept the importance of states as actors in world politics, they have significantly broadened discussion of which actors need to be studied, which issues are important, and how the very idea of security should be conceived.

The rise of 'non-traditional security threats' is one strand of such thinking which has proved highly influential. Since 11 September 2001, the activities of organised terrorist groups have focused fresh attention on non-state actors as sources of insecurity. Terrorism itself is of course not a novel threat. Anarchist assassins in the nineteenth century managed to slay both Tsar Alexander II of Russia and Empress Elizabeth of Austria; the First World War was triggered by a political assassination; and further into the twentieth century, diverse groups such as the Japanese Red Army faction, the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Provisional IRA, as well as various extremist groups in the Middle East such as the Irgun and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, were prepared to use violence against non-combatants to promote political agendas, and, more importantly, to spread fear. This has given terrorism its bite, even though the most grievous terrorist outrages in no sense pose an existential threat to the states system.⁵ But beyond threats of carnage wreaked by non-state actors, increasing

² See Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, *Making Australian foreign policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 72.

³ See Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the security dilemma', *World Politics*, 30(2) 1978: 167–214.

⁴ See Andrew Butfoy, 'Collective security: Theory, problems and reformulations', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 47(1) 1993: 1–14.

⁵ On the significance of fear, see Robert E. Goodin, *What's wrong with terrorism?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 46.

attention has been paid to challenges as diverse as the threat of transnational organised crime, the risk of severe environmental damage, and even the problem of unregulated people movements.⁶ Whether these should be seen as security threats per se has been hotly debated, with some commentators warning of the danger of ‘securitising’ all discussion of complex problems,⁷ but there is no doubt that issues of this sort now figure much more prominently in the thinking of policy-makers and deserve balanced and careful discussion.

A parallel but distinct strand of thinking has focused on the idea of ‘human security’. Human security thinking is not so much a single coherent doctrine as it is a set of approaches which seek to put ordinary people, rather than ‘states’, at the centre of attention. One approach, associated with the work of the United Nations Development Programme, focuses on diverse threats to the well-being and livelihoods of ordinary people, and incorporates the ideas of economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Another approach, pioneered by the Canadians, focuses on the impact of conflict on ordinary people’s lives, not only during war but after its apparent conclusion when such perils as landmines can remain deeply threatening.⁸ A third approach looks at the way in which practical peacebuilding activities—such as enhancement of community policing of the kind which Australia has promoted through various offshore deployments of the Australian Federal Police—can bring a greater sense of day-to-day security into ordinary people’s lives. The attention of all these approaches to the individual rather than simply to an abstract collective is one of the most appealing elements of human security thinking, and is a useful reminder of the terrible costs that can be associated even with ‘victory’ in interstate conflicts. In the 1960s, the German-born actress and singer Marlene Dietrich captured this in a poignant lyric in one of her darker songs, *White Grass*: ‘War’s over. Seems we won. Hooray’.

None of this is to suggest that there are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ definitions of security. Rather, the various approaches to security that figure in contemporary discussion reflect a range of serious concerns for both policy-makers and communities, as well as changes in the character of regional and world politics as the march of globalisation continues. In

⁶ See Alan Dupont, *East Asia imperilled: Transnational challenges to security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷ See Ralf Emmers, ‘Securitization’, in Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary security studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 109–25.

⁸ See Kanti Bajpai, ‘The idea of human security’, *International Studies*, 40(3) 2003: 195–228; Andrew Mack, ed., *Human security report 2005: War and peace in the 21st century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Pauline Kerr, ‘Human security’, in Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary security studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 91–108.

certain circumstances, threats from militaristic, aggressive, or vicious states have massively affected the life-chances of ordinary people, either through inter-state conflict or genocide, and may seem to dwarf all other problems. But other challenges can also send a chill through societies, making their members feel both unsettled and insecure. The expanding language of 'security' helps to capture these new complexities.

CONCEPTIONS OF PROSPERITY

Just as simple ideas of 'security' tend to unravel under close scrutiny, so too do simple ideas of 'prosperity'. 'I've been rich and I've been poor', the American entertainer Fanny Brice once remarked. 'Believe me, rich is better'. And at one level, she was certainly right. Extreme poverty tends to be associated with a whole range of problems that would be almost universally accepted as major social ills: malnutrition; high infant mortality; truncated life expectancy; and a daily life with little opportunity for leisure, rest, or reflection. But extreme cases are not necessarily helpful in making sense of situations which are less than extreme, and identifying policies to advance prosperity when large numbers of Australians are already well off raises important questions about how prosperity should be understood and measured, as well as about the state as an agent for promoting prosperity in an increasingly globalised world.

For political leaderships seeking to establish their credentials, rising national income per capita or per household is likely to be a key achievement to trumpet. However, there are significant limitations associated with metrics of this kind. First, as a matter of simple statistics, rising average figures tell one nothing about the spread of data from which the average is derived. A rising average figure can be a product of a small number of people being vastly better off while the remainder are either no better off, or actually worse off. In this situation, the rising average figure is no guarantee of a broadly satisfied or contented populace. Second, where household data are concerned, it may well be the case that the benefits from rising household income do not flow equally to household members. Women in particular may be disadvantaged for several reasons: female household income may fund consumption while male household income funds the purchase of assets in the male's name; and in extreme circumstances, male household members may be disproportionately benefited.⁹

⁹ Partha Dasgupta, *An inquiry into well-being and destitution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 471.

A radical approach might follow that taken in the Kingdom of Bhutan: to replace the idea of Gross National Product with one of Gross National Happiness. (In a way this kind of distinction underpinned the discussion of 'Work Choices' at the 2007 Australian election, where the government emphasised the likely effects on aggregate employment levels of the industrial relations policies it had promoted, while the opposition noted the impact on family life of the increasingly strong position of employers.) The Bhutanese approach is not quite as quirky as it seems: social scientists in Western countries have made serious efforts to understand what might make people happier, and the results of this research go well beyond issues of income to look at family life, social relations, and what in other contexts has been called social capital,¹⁰ as well as something as apparently simple and obvious as time.¹¹ It is certainly useful to be reminded that one does not live by bread alone. However, happiness itself is to some degree shaped by what one observer has called 'the pressure of the prevailing emotional ideology', and even the word 'happy' suffers from being a distinctive part of the English language, without direct equivalents even in the many other languages routinely spoken at homes in Australia.¹²

A further refinement of the idea of prosperity seeks to take into account what welfare economists call 'social costs'. Problems of this sort readily arise where common property has multiple users, leading to over-exploitation ('The Tragedy of the Commons'),¹³ but the area of life where this is most prominently of concern is that of the environment. The satirist Tom Lehrer honed in on this in his classic 1965 song *Pollution* with the lines 'Pollution, Pollution. You can use the latest toothpaste. And then rinse your mouth with industrial waste'. Environmental problems are many and varied, stretching far beyond the issue of climate change which has become so politically prominent in recent years.¹⁴ What is notable, however, is that many environmental problems are a result of 'externalities', that is, negative side-effects of production processes which provide a return to the producer. In principle, the social costs which these externalities create (for example in the form of polluted air or waterways) should not have to be carried by innocent third parties, yet this is often what ends up happening. Even

¹⁰ See Robert E. Lane, *The loss of happiness in market democracies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹¹ Robert E. Goodin, James Mahmud Rice, Antti Parpo and Lina Eriksson, *Discretionary time: A new measure of freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹² Anna Wierzbicka, *Emotions across languages and cultures: Diversity and universals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 54.

¹³ Garrett Hardin, 'The tragedy of the commons', *Science*, 162(3859) 1968: 1243–8.

¹⁴ See Lorraine Elliott, *The global politics of the environment* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

to begin an assessment of ‘prosperity’ requires that careful attention be paid to such social costs and their distribution. This is strikingly an area in which problems which are truly international can arise. Smoke from forest fires in Sumatra can darken the skies in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, and greenhouse gas emissions can increase atmospheric temperatures.¹⁵ A government which is committed to enhancing the well-being of its people may well be obliged to pursue active *diplomatic* steps to promote improvements in environmental policy: a distinctive feature of many environmental problems is that they are not amenable to solution by unilateral actions of a single state, but instead require coordinated solutions.

Thus, just as there is no single ‘right’ definition of ‘security’, there is no single right definition of prosperity either. What is ‘the good life’ can be seen differently by different people, or as the Romans put it, there is no arguing about taste (*De gustibus non est disputandum*). It may be that discussion will increasingly focus on instruments for the promotion of ‘prosperity’. The whole question of how best to promote prosperity inevitably leads to entanglement with larger issues of markets, trade policy, and the appropriateness of state intervention in economic life. Since the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the remarkable rise of China and increasingly India as major economic powers in the wake of domestic economic liberalisation, serious defenders of central planning have been few and far between. Free trade is still an ideal rather than a complete reality, not least because of the power of domestic farmers’ lobbies in the United States and Europe, and even the ideal remains controversial in some circles.¹⁶ But across the political spectrum, there is now recognition of the strength of competitive markets as information-processing institutions, and of the relative weakness of bureaucracies in this sphere.¹⁷ State policies that interfere with price signals or create perverse behavioural incentives may have adverse unintended consequences. Yet even as committed a supporter of markets as the Nobel Prize-winning economist F. A. Hayek was prepared to defend ‘a certain minimum income for everyone’ as not only ‘a wholly legitimate protection against a risk common to all, but a necessary part of the Great Society in which the individual no longer has specific claims on the members of the particular small group into

¹⁵ See Alan Dupont and Graeme Pearman, *Heating up the planet: Climate change and security* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2006).

¹⁶ See Douglas A. Irwin, *Free trade under fire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁷ See, for example, James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); William J. Baumol, *The free-market innovation machine: Analyzing the growth miracle of capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Deepak Lal, *Reviving the invisible hand: The case for classical liberalism in the twenty-first century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

which he was born'.¹⁸ Furthermore, supporters of free markets may find more to praise in the frugality of the new Rudd government than in the extravagant spending and 'welfare-churning' of its predecessor. On the question of how to promote prosperity, there may thus be more room for a broad national consensus than one might first think. The greater challenge will be to maintain this consensus in the face of vested interests abroad that continue to promote protectionism.

In this *Keynote*, a number of scholars from the Australian National University offer reflections on key aspects of security and prosperity, addressing both the factors that shape them, and the instruments that an Australian government might use to pursue them. Hilary Charlesworth looks at the role of rules of international conduct in providing a framework for the promotion of security and prosperity. Hugh White directs his attention to the contribution of national defence. William Maley examines likely diplomatic challenges and how Australia's diplomatic instruments might be sharpened. Andrew MacIntyre examines the impact and implications of globalisation. Finally, Robin Jeffrey turns his attention to Australia's regional relations. These essays on their own can by no means cover all the important questions that arise when one contemplates means of enhancing security and prosperity to 2020, but at least they lay out some key themes that serious discussion of these issues will need to take up.

¹⁸ F. A. Hayek, *Law, legislation and liberty* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), Vol. III, p. 55.

Security, prosperity, and international law

HILARY CHARLESWORTH

The traditional scope of international law encompasses rules and principles that regulate relationships between countries, including matters such as delineation of boundaries, exchange of diplomats and the conduct of war. Since the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Charter in 1945, international law has come to affect areas of activity that occur primarily *within* countries, for example through the international law of human rights. The two major sources of international law are international agreements (such as treaties and conventions) and customary law (practices of states that are regarded as binding).

As a relatively small player in international affairs, Australia has had a close interest in the formation of international institutions and the development of international law. Through the work of Australia's Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V. Evatt, Australia was an influential participant at the 1945 San Francisco conference that drafted the UN Charter. Australia's interest in the international legal system has tended to vary according to the political party in power. The election of the Whitlam government in 1972 escalated Australia's engagement with international law. For example, in 1975 Australia accepted the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice without any qualifications. This engagement was largely continued by the Fraser government. Perhaps the strongest period of Australian involvement with the international legal community thus far came in the first half of the 1990s under the Hawke and Keating governments.¹

Overall the Howard government took a more wary approach to international institutions and international law. In a 2005 speech to the Asia Society in New York, Prime Minister John Howard emphasised Australia's interest in the substance of relationships between countries rather than the formal multilateral architecture.² These comments were read as scepticism about the value of the international legal system,

¹ One sign of this engagement was Foreign Minister Gareth Evans's book *Cooperating for peace: The global agenda for the 1990s and beyond* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993), which responded to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's major 1992 statement, *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping* (New York: United Nations, A/47/277-S/24111, 17 June 1992).

² John Howard, MP, 'Australian policy priorities for the Asia-Pacific', Speech to the Asia Society, New York, 12 September 2005.

particularly in the context of the use of force. Another example of Australia's wariness about international legal institutions was its 2002 amendment of its acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice to preclude any case brought by East Timor over resources in the Timor Gap. It must be noted, however, that in at least one area, international criminal law, the Howard government played a significant role in international law. Australia became a major player in negotiations to establish a permanent International Criminal Court, achieved in 1998, and it ratified the Court's Statute in 2002.

Just as any legal system, international law is profoundly shaped by its political context and contains many gaps and inadequacies. But it offers a set of procedures and standards that have been accepted by the international community and provide a framework for the resolution of disputes. Giving priority to achieving particular outcomes in foreign policy without regard to relevant international legal processes is a flawed approach. If such an outcomes-based ethic informed our domestic legal system, people regarded as suspicious by the government could be imprisoned or punished in some way without the need to accord them due process—the right to legal advice and the right to a fair trial and proportionate punishment and so on. The rule of law at the heart of our legal system would be destroyed by such an approach, leading to arbitrary and unaccountable government. Similarly Australia's national interests lie in supporting the international rule of law. None of the major issues of our time—terrorism, global warming, and refugee flows for example—can be resolved by going it alone, or just with a few friends.

How then can international law contribute to the creation of security and prosperity?

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND SECURITY

Article 1 of the UN Charter identifies the first purpose of the UN as 'To maintain international peace and security', and member states are required by Article 2(4) to renounce the unilateral use of force in international relations. At the heart of the UN system is the norm of 'collective security', meaning that the UN as a collective has the responsibility to maintain security. Chapter VII of the Charter gives the UN Security Council the capacity to determine the existence of, and the responses to, any threat or breach of the peace or act of aggression. This Chapter was included in the UN Charter as a response to what was seen as the Achilles heel of the League of Nations—its lack of power to intervene militarily in the face of serious breaches of the peace, such as

Italy's invasion of Abyssinia in 1935.³ The UN Charter contemplates military action outside the UN framework only in the circumscribed context of self-defence as set out in Article 51.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 has challenged the UN's collective security framework. The 'Coalition of the Willing', led by the United States and in which Australia participated, was formed without a Security Council mandate. Australia managed the tension between its foreign policy commitments to the United States and the rules of international law by releasing legal advice arguing that the attack on Iraq was consistent with earlier Security Council resolutions relating to the 1991 war against Iraq. The invasion of Iraq was, however, widely agreed by international lawyers to be illegal as a violation of the prohibition on the use of force in international affairs under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.⁴

Australia's response to international criticism of its actions was to question the legitimacy of the international legal standards relating to the use of force. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told the National Press Club in 2003 that multilateralism through the UN was 'increasingly ... a synonym for an ineffective and unfocused policy involving internationalism of the lowest common denominator'.⁵ One major problem with the Downer doctrine is that it responded to other countries' violations of the rule of law by means that were themselves breaches of the rule of law.

Another flaw in Australia's rejection of multilateralism was the assertion of the right to intervene in other countries on the basis of Australia's assessment of its own national interest and rejection of the constraints of the collective views of the international community. First of all, we know from the Iraq episode that governments can make important foreign policy decisions on the basis of questionable evidence about threats to our security. We need institutional checks that can weigh the information used by countries to justify intervention. At the level of principle, a claim of a right to intervene based on unilateral assessment of interest makes it difficult for Australia to criticise the actions of other countries that might see it in their national interest to depose the hostile government of a neighbour. What difference would there be if India decided to invade Pakistan (or vice versa) on the basis that it feared the use of nuclear weapons against it?

³ See Bruno Simma, ed., *The charter of the United Nations: A commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 606–7.

⁴ See, for example, Philippe Sands, *Lawless world: America and the making and breaking of global rules* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

⁵ Alexander Downer, MP, 'Security in an uncertain world', Speech to the National Press Club, Canberra, 26 June 2003.

With a new government, Australia now should reaffirm its commitment to the principle of multilateralism in dealing with international security and support international institutions in this area.

It should be acknowledged that the UN collective security system is far from perfect. For example, it is subject to the politics of the five permanent members of the Security Council, each of which has a veto over Security Council action; it rests on a state-centric understanding of security, and does not respond easily to questions of human security, outlined in the introduction to this collection; it has no independent capacity to maintain international peace and security and relies on *ad hoc* contributions by member states to create peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions.

Ideas for reform of the international security system include the expansion of the permanent membership of the Security Council and limitation of the veto power. Another is the development of the doctrine of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) which contemplates intervention in individual states in cases of massive human rights abuses, if necessary without Security Council sanction.⁶ Unlike the invasion of Iraq, military action based on a responsibility to protect does not rest on the intervening nation's perception of its own national interests. It requires, rather, consideration of the nature of the human rights abuses being committed, the absence of any non-military option, and the involvement of international organisations in the decision to intervene. At the same time, it is important that the R2P doctrine does not become simply a vehicle for justifying intervention in countries at odds with the intervener.⁷ Other interesting proposals for reform of the collective security system include the imposition of a tax on foreign exchange transactions to better fund UN peacekeeping.⁸ Another is the creation of some type of permanent 'UN Legion' that could be quickly deployed to respond to violence and insecurity.⁹

⁶ *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001); see also Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 60/1, *2005 World Summit Outcome* (New York: United Nations, A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005), paras 138–9. This resolution resulted from the deliberations of the World Summit, held 14–16 September 2005.

⁷ For discussion of this point see Jose Alvarez, 'The schizophrenias of R2P', *American Society of International Law Newsletter*, 23(3) 2007: 1.

⁸ This is often referred to as the 'Tobin tax', after the economist James Tobin. See John Braithwaite and Peter Drahos, *Global business regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), pp. 139–40.

⁹ For example, John M. Lee, Robert Von Pagenhardt and Timothy Stanley, *To unite our strength: Enhancing the United Nations peace and security system* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992).

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PROSPERITY

As the introduction to this collection points out, the concept of ‘prosperity’ can be understood in many different ways. Traditional principles of international law had little concern with matters of prosperity and poverty; these were seen as areas of essentially national jurisdiction. Today, international law connects with prosperity in many areas, ranging from the international trading system, to international economic institutions, to issues of individual rights to an adequate standard of living, to health, to work, and to education. Two examples, one international and one local, illustrate the potential contribution of international law to thinking about prosperity.

The international trading system supervised by the World Trade Organization (WTO) is often criticised for reinforcing the wealth of Western countries and the poverty of the developing world. In this sense ‘free’ trade is far from ‘fair’ trade and the former has increased the prosperity of the richest countries. WTO negotiating and decision-making structures give priority to the ‘Quad’—Canada, the European Union, Japan, and the United States—and effectively exclude developing countries.¹⁰ This imbalance has led to inequitable practices, such as the WTO’s acceptance of subsidies for European and American cotton farmers which have undermined the livelihoods of African cotton growers. Another example is the WTO’s system of patent protection which is concerned above all with the rights of patent holders and marginalises the interests of consumers. Developing world sufferers of HIV/AIDS have thus been placed at the mercy of corporations who hold the patent on anti-retroviral drugs and in most cases have been unable to acquire these medicines.

Advocates for linking trade and justice show how legal principles could be developed to make the international trading system more responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged and so create a fairer form of global prosperity. They have argued, for example, that WTO rules should apply to all products, and not just those approved by wealthy countries.¹¹ While some jurists and philosophers dispute the possibility of international conceptions of justice because of the strength of ideas of national sovereignty,¹² trade and justice theorists point to the effects of globalisation in de-emphasising the nation state and thus allowing a

¹⁰ See generally Fatoumata Jawara and Aileen Kwa, *Behind the scenes at the WTO: The real world of international trade negotiations* (London: Zed Books, 2004); Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, pp. 183–5.

¹¹ James Thuo Gathii, ‘International justice and the trading regime’, *Emory International Law Review*, 19(3) 2005: 1407–30, at 1421; Lawrence O. Gostin and Robert Archer, ‘The duty of states to assist other states in need: Ethics, human rights, and international law’, *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, 35(4) 2007: 526–33.

¹² For example, Thomas Nagel, ‘The problem of global justice’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 33(2) 2005: 113–47, at 114.

readier transmission of ethical norms across borders.¹³ In this vein, Thomas Pogge has argued for a system of redistribution that will allow developing countries a greater voice in international economic institutions so that they can prevent unjust decisions being made.¹⁴

These ideas fit well with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), adopted by the UN in 2000. These set out eight major global goals, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, and empowering women, to be achieved by 2015. The MDG include quantifiable targets for each goal, which gives some teeth to otherwise general and ambitious statements. Australia can play an important role in supporting the MDG through increasing its overseas aid. In 2006, Australia contributed only 0.3 per cent of its national income to aid, while the average among the OECD donors was 0.45 per cent. We are also one of the few countries not to commit to a timetable to increase aid to 0.7 per cent of national income.

A more locally-focused set of international law principles also impinge on prosperity. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which Australia is a party, sets out (among others) rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, to the highest attainable standard of health care, and to education. These rights have no independent status in Australian law, and become legally binding only when they are implemented in legislation. Successive Australian governments have failed to implement any of the rights contained in the ICESCR, and they remain vague and unenforceable principles.

The 1996 South African Constitution, by contrast, incorporates ICESCR norms and they have been used to hold both provincial and national governments accountable for arbitrary decisions that effectively deny prosperity to particular groups in society. The right to health care, for example, was invoked successfully to require the Mbeki government to allow trials of anti-retroviral drugs to prevent mother–child HIV transmission.¹⁵ The government had refused to permit the trials because of its view, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that HIV/AIDS was not a serious health problem in South Africa. The South African example demonstrates the value of explicit legal protection of economic and social human rights.

International law thus offers ideas new to Australian foreign policy that could assist the creation of greater global and local prosperity.

¹³ Gathii, 'International justice and the trading regime', p. 1411; Braithwaite and Drahos, *Global business regulation*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Thomas Pogge, 'Recognized and violated by international law: The human rights of the global poor', *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 18(4) 2005: 717–45.

¹⁵ *Minister of Health v. Treatment Action Campaign* [2002] 5 SA 271. For a discussion of the limitations of rights-based arguments in the context of dealing with hunger at the global level, see Jacqueline Mowbray, 'The right to food and the international economic system: An assessment of the rights-based approach to the problem of world hunger', *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 20(3) 2007: 545–69.

Security, prosperity, and defence

HUGH WHITE

When we are thinking about defence, 2020 is not far away. The kinds of armed forces Australia should have in 2020 are already the subject of today's debates, and indeed of yesterday's decisions. In 2007, a contract was signed for three new destroyers at a cost of \$8 billion. They will only just be delivered by 2020. In 2008 or 2009, the government will decide whether to buy the Joint Strike Fighter, which will probably now come into service at the earliest by 2018 or 2019. Within this term of parliament the government will need to start the project to replace the Collins class submarines, even though the new boats will only start to enter service around 2025.

Whether these decisions—and many others now on the government's agenda as they undertake a new Defence White Paper—end up seeming wise or foolish will depend on much that we can only guess about the world and our region decades from now. How then can we think sensibly about the decisions we as a country must take now to shape our strategic environment and provide for our defence needs in the 2020s? One way is to step back from the polemical debates about continental versus expeditionary strategies, and the passionate arguments about which fighter aircraft we should buy, and ask some deeper questions about the role of armed force in our national security, the objectives we might want to achieve through military means, and the resources we might have available to build and maintain them. Thinking about these deeper questions will help us to see the long-term issues that will shape our defence needs over coming decades. They will also help us to think more deeply about what we should expect from our governments as they go about making long-term defence decisions on our behalf.

Here then are three questions which might help to frame a clearer debate about Australia's long-term defence choices.

WHAT ARE THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCES (ADF) FOR?

Australia spends \$22 billion a year, or around 2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), on our military forces, and yet there is no clear consensus in government, among the experts, or in the wider community, about what we need armed forces for. Obviously we need to understand how armed forces will contribute to Australia's security before we start thinking about Australia's long-term defence needs. Clearly there are a lot of security problems that Australia might face in the 2020s. That range might include global warming, terrorism, natural disasters, pandemic diseases, state failure in neighbouring countries, conventional warfare, and many others. Different people weigh these

potential threats in very different ways. Some see jihadist terrorism as the key security threat we will face. Others believe it is global warming. Many worry about conflicts within states, while some argue that the risk of Australia's being drawn into old-fashioned conventional war remains a primary security concern. It is impossible to say who is right: they will probably all be correct to some extent. So the best way to think about future defence needs is to ask how useful armed forces will be in responding to these different threats as and when they arise.

This is a central question because armed forces cannot be good at everything. Naturally we want forces that are as flexible as possible, but there are real limits. The ADF today does many different things—border protection, disaster relief, and stabilisation operations—but it is still overwhelmingly organised, trained, designed, and equipped for a single group of tasks: fighting the armed forces of other nation states in conventional wars. Conventional combat is perhaps the most extreme and demanding milieu we can conceive, and only forces designed specifically for that milieu have a hope of survival, let alone success. The ADF is therefore a very specialised institution indeed. It has to be, if it is to retain the ability to fight conventional conflicts, because forces that are not optimised to fight conventional wars cannot adapt to them.

Of course the ADF's capabilities can be used for other tasks, but because they are designed for very different and much more demanding roles, they tend to be highly inefficient. We can use a Navy destroyer costing \$2 billion to chase illegal immigrants, but a \$10 million patrol boat will do that job just as well, and ten such boats would do it much better, at one twentieth of the cost. And often we find that armed forces, no matter how well trained, are simply not much suited to the problems we face. It is hard to see that armed force will do much in tackling the problem of global warming, for example. And even the stabilisation operations that have been so important a part of the ADF's workload in recent years are not necessarily a task to which they are much suited. By and large the troops have done their jobs well in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, but what has been achieved? Our wider strategic aims remain unfulfilled, and what reason do we have to expect better results in the future? As the harsh lessons of the last decade sink in, the current fashion for military stabilisation operations will quite probably fade. Stabilisation of weak states will remain a priority, but experience is teaching us that armed forces have at most a subordinate role in them: success or failure will depend on much broader programs of support, and above all on the efforts of those most directly involved.

All this suggests that we need to be careful not to simply assume that our armed forces can or should be adapted to address the wide range of different security threats we might face in the future. Against many of those threats armed force will not be much use, and against others it will be highly inefficient. Indeed, the only threat against which armed forces

are clearly the best policy instrument is conventional military conflict. It therefore only makes sense to invest in armed forces if we believe we face a significant risk of conventional conflict. Otherwise we should stop building forces designed to fight such threats, and concentrate our resources instead on policy instruments which will attack the security problems we do face more cost-effectively—such as expanded international policing capabilities, a civilian coast guard, and more development aid. But how sure are we of that?

WHAT KIND OF WAR?

Everyone agrees there are lots of non-state security threats to worry about. The key issue for our future defence needs is whether we *also* need to worry about the risk of conventional war between states. In some parts of the world like the Middle East the answer would obviously be yes, and in places like Western Europe one could rather more confidently say no, but here in the Asia-Pacific things are less clear.

The good news is that for the past 35 years Asia has enjoyed a period of remarkable peace and harmony between states (even if there have been terrible conflicts within states like Burma and Cambodia). These peaceful decades have permitted amazing economic growth and regional integration, which in turn gives everyone a huge stake in keeping the peace in future. The bad news is that Asia's economic growth is fundamentally changing the power relations between states, which in turn undermines the political understandings upon which the peace has been based. In particular, it puts important long-term stresses on the relationship between the US and China. To put it in a nutshell, as China's power grows, it will increasingly expect to be accepted as an equal by the US, but the US is determined to retain its position of primacy in Asia. If China keeps growing through to 2020, their different views of their roles in Asia could well become acute.

This nascent clash of national objectives is elemental, because it goes to deep questions of national identity and self-image on both sides. Could any President persuade Americans to treat China as an equal? Is there any chance that China, as it grows, will settle for anything less? Both sides have an immense stake in reconciling their different visions of the future peacefully, and there is good reason to expect they will succeed. But there is no guarantee they will: it is not a question of whether anyone in Beijing or Washington is dumb enough to want conflict, but whether everyone in both capitals is smart enough to avoid it.

Needless to say Australians have an immense stake in this. Our vision of Australia's future tends to assume that our relations with both the US and China can prosper and grow indefinitely, but that can only happen if they get on well with one another. If they do not, Australia

will face many problems, including the risk that the international order which has kept Asia free of major wars will break down, and we will return to a situation more like that of Asia in the first half of the last century—not a high likelihood but still a distinct possibility. If so, the probability of old-fashioned conventional conflict in Asia would rise sharply. What might that mean for Australia? It is hard to say specifically, but we can at least conclude that we would be much less confident than we are today that we face no risk of being drawn into a conventional war.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

The points I have made so far lead me to suggest that our main purpose in building defence forces is to hedge against the risk that a collapse in the international order in Asia over the next few decades might sharply increase the risk of conventional conflict. The next question is, what could Australia do about that if it happens? Should we stick to the US alliance, and hope for the best? Or do we need to think about a more independent stance? Sticking to the US has obvious attractions. It would certainly simplify questions about our future defence needs: we could simply develop forces able to support the US in any conflicts in Asia that may arise.

But it may not be that easy. How sure can we be that the alliance we enjoy today will still work the same way in 2020 and beyond? The forces that may shake Asia's peaceful order may shake our alliance too. Different views on how to respond to China's growing power could create the biggest divergence in basic strategic perspectives between Australia and the US in the long history of our alliance. Can we assume that we would always choose to support America, if America decides that it would prefer to fight China rather than share power in Asia? And can we assume that the US will remain a major strategic player indefinitely?

Here then is the big question behind any serious debate about Australia's defence. It is a question about independent strategic weight, by which I mean our independent capacity to shape our security environment by the use of armed force. Should we try to build forces that give Australia the independent strategic weight to look after ourselves and our interests if the Asian century turns out to be less benign than we expect? If we do, we will need to spend a lot of money, and spend it very carefully. If not, then we can afford to take a much more relaxed view. The answer we give will depend on how likely and serious we think the risks are, whether such independent strategic weight is achievable for Australia, and if so how much it would cost. For myself I think the risks are only moderately likely, but very serious if they occur, so I think it is worth considering our independent strategic weight carefully. But it will not come easily. Australia's strategic

potential—the capacity of our country to support armed forces—is in long-term decline relative to many countries in our region. On the other hand geography—all that water—gives us big advantages, not just in the defence of our own continent but in protecting our wider strategic interests which also have a distinctly maritime character. I therefore think there is a chance that if we plan our defence shrewdly, and deliver it efficiently, we could sustain forces that would give us the capacity to shape our strategic environment at an affordable cost—say between 2 and 3 per cent of GDP. Those are two very big ‘ifs’, but I think on balance that it is worth a try. After all, what is the alternative? An Australia which lacks independent strategic weight would become another New Zealand. There is nothing wrong with New Zealand, but is that what we hope for Australia?

BETTER DEFENCE POLICY

These are tough questions, and governments habitually evade them as they make defence policy, which is why defence policy is often done badly. So perhaps the first step to getting our long-term choices about defence right would be to agree that we need to do defence policy better. This is not rocket science, but it is hard work. Australia’s defence policy today is a mess. We have no chance of doing better if today’s defence *status quo* is simply reaffirmed. Some hard choices have to be made, and ministers should take responsibility to make them. Their task is to bring together Australia’s strategic objectives, capability plans, and defence funding so they all line up. The first step, as we have seen, is clearly and realistically to define the strategic objectives we want our armed forces to achieve, then identify the operations and capabilities that can achieve them as cost-effectively as possible, and finally commit the funds required. This is what the 2008 Defence White Paper should do. The 2020 Summit is a great opportunity to make clear to the new government that we hold them responsible for doing it well.

Security, prosperity, and diplomacy

WILLIAM MALEY

In looking ahead to 2020, one of the challenges for Australia in promoting security and prosperity is to make effective use of diplomacy and diplomatic instruments. Diplomats are ultimately constrained by government policy: the best diplomat in the world cannot spin straw into gold. Nonetheless, while skilful diplomacy is all too often devalued as an asset, centuries of experience have established its credentials, and Australia's performance for many years was outstanding.¹ Yet it is important also to recognise that diplomacy as a practice is itself going through changes at many levels, reflecting both changes in the ways in which power is conceived, and developments in global governance which create new opportunities for international engagement to address collective action problems. In the following remarks, I begin by discussing some of the recent key changes in the understanding of diplomacy. I then go on to discuss a range of diplomatic challenges which Australia might face, with particular emphasis on the management of key relationships, and the promotion of multilateral interests in the form of both membership of key international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) Security Council, and the promotion of key norms such as that of the responsibility to protect. I conclude with some suggestions about the future shape of Australia's diplomatic arsenal.

CHANGING FORMS OF DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy is both a venerable tool for managing relations between states, and a notably elastic one. Diplomatic engagements took place between Greek city-states in ancient times, and renaissance diplomacy has been well studied and documented. Diplomacy in more recent centuries has been shaped by the role of states as key units of political organisation, by the emergence of the foreign ministry as a distinct agency of government, and by the establishment of resident legations and embassies on the territory of host countries as tools for diplomatic engagement. These structures point to the defining features of 'classical' diplomacy, as underpinned by the 1961 *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*: communication and diplomatic reporting;

¹ See Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe with Garry Woodard, *Ministers, mandarins and diplomats: Australian foreign policy making 1941–1969* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003).

representation and the conveying of formal messages; negotiation; and through these processes, what scholars have termed the ‘reproduction of international society’.² Alongside these diplomatic responsibilities, embassies often perform ‘consular tasks’, involving the support of their own nationals in various forms of difficulty (sometimes because they are accused of criminal conduct, as in the cases of Schapelle Corby or the ‘Bali Nine’, but sometimes because they have fallen victim to circumstances beyond their control such as the October 2002 Bali bombings or the December 2004 tsunami). Diplomacy was long seen as an elite preoccupation, a view which the recruitment practices of many foreign ministries tended to substantiate, and diplomats as members of a very exclusive ‘club’.

In recent times, however, ‘club’ models of diplomacy have given way to what are frequently called ‘network’ models,³ and this has much to do with the evolution of diplomatic practices. This, of course, is by no means the first example of a ‘new diplomacy’ coming into view. The development of the resident embassy brought about marked changes in diplomatic practice; the invention of the telegraph revolutionised diplomacy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and Woodrow Wilson’s hostility to secretive diplomatic plotting heralded an era in which diplomatic engagements received far more attention. But there is no doubt that shifts of emphasis in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been particularly striking. Five interconnected developments in particular stand out. First, globalisation has brought new means of communication which allow faster exchange of messages than ever before between diplomats in the field and their own head offices. Second, many agencies other than the foreign ministry routinely post staff in embassies, and in some cases pursue their own agendas and contribute to their countries’ reputations abroad. Third, non-governmental organisations are increasingly claiming a role for themselves in the shaping of foreign policy settings, often on the strength of very considerable expertise which may exceed that of ‘generalists’ in foreign ministries.⁴ Fourth, the networking of officials and regulators across a wide range of issues is contributing to the

² See Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall, *Essence of diplomacy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 119–35; also G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

³ See Jorge Heine, ‘On the manner of practising the new diplomacy’, in Andrew F. Cooper, Brian Hocking and William Maley, eds, *Global governance and diplomacy: Worlds apart?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴ On these developments, see Andrew F. Cooper, John English and Ramesh Thakur, eds, *Enhancing global governance: Towards a new diplomacy?* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2002); Shaun Riordan, *The new diplomacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003); and Carne Ross, *Independent diplomat: Dispatches from an unaccountable elite* (London: Hurst & Co., 2007).

emergence of the phenomenon of ‘global governance’, although it has its limitations.⁵ Finally, bilateral diplomatic relations are increasingly augmented or even outweighed by multilateral activities, either on an *ad hoc* basis or through frameworks provided by international organisations.⁶ The challenges posed by these developments will only grow as we draw closer to 2020.

MANAGING KEY RELATIONS

Over the coming decades, the relationship between Australia and the United States will remain a central feature of Australian foreign policy. However, the management of that relationship may require considerable diplomatic dexterity. A fruitful alliance is not one in which the weaker partners necessarily follow the strongest in every respect. Where that does happen, one is talking not about an ally, but about a satellite. Such relationships tend to be unrewarding for the weaker actors, which should expect to be taken for granted. Alliance with a feckless, reckless America may not do much for Australian security at all. One of the greatest skills of a diplomat is to be able to say no without causing offence, and this typically involves a multiplicity of day-to-day endeavours to preserve the foundations of a relationship in troubled times.

The difficulty which may haunt discussion of the alliance arises from the diverse understandings of what ‘America’ means. At one level, America functions as a beacon of positive values in a way that few other powers have done: Anne-Marie Slaughter’s programmatic book, *The Idea that is America*, captures this fairly, with chapters entitled ‘Liberty’, ‘Democracy’, ‘Equality’, ‘Justice’, ‘Tolerance’, ‘Humility’ and ‘Faith’.⁷ Yet below this listing is a more complex and turbulent reality. First, in the United States one finds darker strands of nationalism and ideology that somewhat compromise this positive vision: in particular, neoconservative thinking, of the kind which in part underpinned the March 2003 US invasion of Iraq, has recently been neatly described by a distinguished British observer as ‘a mix of crackpot realism and chiliastic fantasy’.⁸ Second, the size and wealth of the United States

⁵ Cf. Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A new world order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Jim Whitman, *The limits of global governance* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁶ On the significance of multilateralism, see Ronald A. Walker, *Multilateral conferences: Purposeful international negotiation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Edward Newman, Ramesh Thakur and John Tirman, eds, *Multilateralism under challenge? Power, international order, and structural change* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2006).

⁷ Anne-Marie Slaughter, *The Idea that is America: Keeping faith with our values in a dangerous world* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

⁸ John Gray, *Black Mass: Apocalyptic religion and the death of utopia* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), p. 123. On American nationalism, see Anatol Lieven, *America right or wrong: An anatomy of American nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

provides no guarantee of omniscience in the spheres of policy-making and implementation. The shambles in Iraq, and the failures of intelligence which led to misconceptions about weapons of mass destruction before the invasion, highlight this point rather starkly. So did the failure of the US to respond effectively to the rise of al-Qaeda and its implantation in Afghanistan before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.⁹ If a fish rots from the head down, so also can the policy process in a strongly-presidential system such as the American. The diplomatic challenges for Australia in relating to the US will thus be significantly shaped by the outcome of the 2008 US presidential election—although should the Bush administration use its dying days to launch or support a strike against Iran, Australia might find itself trapped uncomfortably between pressure to back an ally and the need to speak out against international vigilantism.

Beyond this fundamental relationship, a number of others will manifestly require careful diplomatic handling. Indonesia, China, Japan, and India all baulk prominently in Australia's international relations, and all are Asian powers of strategic significance, although the nature of the different countries' power varies as well. Here, there is a considerable need to nurture relevant expertise across a range of Australian bureaucratic agencies, especially where language is concerned. Australia was caught by surprise at the time of the September 1999 East Timor violence in part because of a degree of self-delusion amongst politicians and officials who had forgotten Thucydides's warning that hope is an expensive commodity,¹⁰ but also because too much reporting from Jakarta had been coming from English-speaking diplomats reporting the perspectives of English-speaking interlocutors, missing in the process the harsher views of Bahasa-speaking military figures. A renewed attention to the study of Asian languages in Australia would offer an excellent foundation for richer engagement with the most significant Asian powers.

MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

All that said, the coming decade may well be dominated by engagements through multilateral rather than bilateral channels. This is partly because pressing issues such as climate change are classic 'collective action' problems that require coordinated responses from a range of actors if they are to be successfully addressed at all.¹¹ But it is also

⁹ See Roy Gutman, *How we missed the story: Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and the hijacking of Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008).

¹⁰ See William Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor crisis: Some critical comments', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 54(2) 2000: 151–61.

¹¹ William Maley, 'Foreign affairs', in Robert Manne, ed., *Dear Mr Rudd: Ideas for a better Australia* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008), pp. 114–26.

because multilateral diplomacy is itself a useful instrument for reconfiguring the structure of the international order in ways that can benefit countries such as Australia. Some countries, rather than accepting the shape of world politics as 'given', set out instead to function as 'norm entrepreneurs', seeking to promote rules and norms that make the system work better. Canada in the 1990s worked very successfully in this respect around issues such as the banning of antipersonnel landmines and the establishment of the International Criminal Court—both of them initiatives that secured bipartisan Australian support.¹² An obvious norm for Australia to seek to advance is that of the so-called 'Responsibility to Protect', which was articulated in the December 2001 Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty,¹³ and has secured further endorsement in a number of key forums over subsequent years. Two of the twelve commissioners (Gareth Evans and Ramesh Thakur) were Australian, and Evans served as Co-Chair, but Australia's stake in the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine has far deeper roots than mere national solidarity. The doctrine itself is designed to provide an intellectually coherent grounding for decisions in cases where compelling human need throws out a challenge to the states which make up international society, and if Australia aspires to play a wider role in international affairs, these are the very kinds of cases to which it may have to respond.

This will particularly be the case if Australia commences a campaign for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. It is more than two decades since Australia was last a Security Council member, and its 1996 bid for membership ended disastrously, not least because of the bombastic way in which the campaign for membership was pressed. Some might query whether non-permanent membership is worth pursuing. Sometimes being a non-permanent member can leave a state frying in a very hot seat;¹⁴ and campaigns for non-permanent seats have become quite unseemly.¹⁵ Nonetheless, there is still a degree of prestige associated with occupying such seats, and for the Rudd government, a successful campaign would signal the end of a period in which Australia

¹² See Ramesh Thakur and William Maley, 'The Ottawa Convention on Landmines: A landmark humanitarian treaty in arms control?', *Global Governance*, 5(3) 1999: 273–302.

¹³ *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

¹⁴ See, for example, Colum Lynch, 'US pushed allies on Iraq, diplomat writes: Chilean envoy to UN recounts threats of retaliation in run-up to invasion', *Washington Post*, 23 March 2008, p. A11.

¹⁵ Ian Hurd, *After anarchy: Legitimacy and power in the United Nations Security Council* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 120.

was seen by well-placed observers as virtually unelectable.¹⁶ However, there is a significant tension between the present objective of cutting spending in the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio and a future intent of winning a Security Council seat. Putting aside the near-bribes that have on occasion been used to woo voting delegates, it is clear that effective campaigns require major diplomatic exercises to present a state's strengths to as wide a range of UN member states as possible. This can require both an expansion in the number of embassies established in particular continents—Africa was a notable weak-spot for Australia in 1996—and the despatch of special envoys to press the case. This does not come cheaply. But nor does effective diplomacy in general.¹⁷ Diplomacy is a process rather than a project, and needs to be financed with the recognition that cuts that are made to meet present fiscal needs are likely to have long-term consequences that cannot rapidly be reversed.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMACY

The realisation of Australia's foreign policy objectives will require a set of instruments which are equal to both the tasks at hand, and the changing shape of diplomacy in the years to come. The resident embassy is certain to remain one of these tools. A well-run and well-staffed embassy should be able to provide information and advice which adds significant value to the operations of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. However, there have been notable innovations in recent times, such as the use of *ad hoc* task forces to deal with complex issues, that merit possible expansion. A particular area of need is the rebuilding of long-term analytical capability in the Department, which over recent years has lost many key experts to other agencies such as the Office of National Assessments and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The establishment of the Global Issues Branch is a very positive development, but in the longer run, there is a strong case for the development of a Bureau of Intelligence and Research, along the lines of that found in the US State Department, which draws in a wide range of opinion, and promotes Socratic dialogue in a way that can help work against groupthink or tunnel vision.

It is especially important that the Department's role as public face of Australia be reasserted. In recent times, the proliferation of actors that 'speak' (in some sense) for Australia has greatly increased the risk of blurred messages, and this is even more perilous in an environment in which discrepant signalling can be quickly detected in many parts of the

¹⁶ Richard Woolcott, *Undiplomatic activities* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2007), p. 195.

¹⁷ See Russell Troad, *The emerging global order: Australian foreign policy in the 21st century* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2008), pp. 145–6.

world. In some ways, the task must seem near-hopeless, and in many cases there is little harm in communications which bypass the Department (such as the routine e-mail exchanges between functionally-related agencies in Australia and New Zealand which scarcely ever become controversial). However, the risk of something going wrong is ever-present, and professional diplomats in particular may be alert to the reality that what some other agency sees as a one-shot negotiation to be 'won' at all costs may for the diplomat be just one small phase of an iterated process of engagement in which winning a battle may contribute to losing a war. For this reason, the reassertion of the primacy of the professional diplomat in the task of promoting security and prosperity for Australia and its neighbourhood is highly desirable.

Security, prosperity, and globalisation

ANDREW MACINTYRE

The early months of a new government are an opportune time for reflecting upon the core ideas and trends informing international policy. All the more so when, as is the case today, the Rudd government has come to power with ambitions for significant change following a long-serving government. In this essay, I reflect on three main priorities connecting to globalisation that feed into Australia's security and prosperity interests: assisting economic development, promoting democracy, and facilitating trade and financial integration. My focus is on the shifting debates about how these priorities are best advanced and how they play in the region of greatest importance to Australia. I close by considering two big new issues for international policy that we are only just beginning to understand how to address: labour migration and climate change.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ABROAD

Our understanding of economic development has evolved greatly over the years. Reflecting shifts in wider debates about the appropriate role of government in economic activity generally, the consensus in the literature has moved from an emphasis in the 1960s and 1970s upon a central role for the state in spurring economic growth by overcoming problems of capital mobilisation and market-failure, to a heavy emphasis in the 1980s and 1990s upon the role of the market in spurring economic growth by getting prices right and overcoming problems of government-failure. This emphasis upon market-oriented policies was subsequently supplemented with an emphasis on institutions and good governance, as being necessary precursors for policy reform and effective market operations.

The debates of the past several decades have tended to have something of a doctrinal quality about them. Perhaps the starkest illustration of this was the emergence of the notion of a 'Washington consensus' capturing a core mix of market-oriented policies and institutions to maximise development favoured by the United States, allied countries including Australia, and the major international

development agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹

There is increasing recognition today of the need to move beyond doctrinal positions. We have indeed learned powerful and fundamental lessons about the importance of, *inter alia*, sound macroeconomic management, competition and efficiency, and the security of property rights, but the precise way in which these insights are applied is likely to require some adaptation to particular national circumstances. To borrow Dani Rodrik's apt catchcry: 'One economics, many recipes'.² Just as ignoring chronic inflation or systematically suppressing market competition will assuredly stifle growth and progress with poverty reduction, so too will an inflexible, 'one-size-fits-all' insistence on textbook solutions lead to disappointment.

This is a vital consideration for Australia as it contemplates anew its development assistance strategy towards those parts of the world that matter for us: Asia and the Pacific. Consider, for a moment, some of the most important neighbouring countries for Australia in this respect: Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Solomon Islands. The developmental needs of Indonesia are very different from those of PNG, to say nothing of East Timor and Solomon Islands; and so too is the nature of some of the key constraints operating on leaders in each of those countries.

The need for Australia to pragmatically adapt robust economic principles in support of the developmental efforts underway in Asia and the Pacific takes on sharper focus once one recognises that the economic context for developmental efforts is likely to be less hospitable over the next five years than it has been over the last five years. Notwithstanding the widespread existence of profound poverty and other developmental challenges in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America, the past five years have been the very best of times developmentally. In the five years to 2007, world income per capita has increased more quickly than at any other time on record. Particularly in the developing world, the past half-decade has been the most conducive period on record for the advancement of economic welfare across the developing world. Even if one follows most China specialists in anticipating continued strong economic growth in China, the likelihood

¹ The term, originally put forward in a considered and tentative way by John Williamson, was subsequently applied in quite unfortunate ways.

² Dani Rodrik, *One economics, many recipes: Globalization, institutions and economic growth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

is not high that the world as a whole—and therefore the developing world in particular—will have as favourable a trajectory as it has over the past five years. Simply put, for all the developing countries about which Australia cares most, the environment is likely to become less forgiving rather than more forgiving.

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY ABROAD

There are some remarkable similarities between debates and trends about supporting economic development abroad and the parallel campaign to promote democracy internationally. Both will matter greatly for the efforts of any Australian government to advance security and prosperity. Democracy promotion is a much younger global campaign than the half-century old campaign to promote economic development. Not surprisingly, then, the corpus of scholarship surrounding it is much less well developed. Efforts to promote democracy have grown from two separate but, ultimately, mutually reinforcing ideas: one geopolitical and the other developmental. Having been none too choosy about regime-type through much of the Cold War period, since the Reagan administration the United States has been increasingly drawn to the idea that democracy was to be actively encouraged because democracies were likely to be more peaceful.³ In other words, the strategic interests of America and its allies would be well served if more nations, particularly the larger developing countries, were to become democratic. Reinforcing this logic has been the growing popularity in the development field of the notion that democracy and sustained economic advancement were likely to go hand-in-hand, since democracy was associated with the rule of law and good governance. These have now become standard themes in the developmental repertoire of the major national and international developmental agencies in recent years.⁴ Counter-terrorist priorities have only given added impetus to this logic.

During the first decade of this century, democracy-promotion has become an extraordinary ‘growth industry’. Australia, along with countries such as Britain and Japan, joined the United States in giving prominent emphasis to it in their international policies. But no sooner had this policy ‘consensus’ emerged, than it too was increasingly undercut by the messy and highly diverse realities of political life in developing countries. The flush of enthusiasm in the democracy-promotion industry at the beginning of this decade has been replaced

³ For an introduction, see for instance Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the democratic peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁴ For an introduction, see Stephan Haggard, Andrew MacIntyre and Lydia Tiede, ‘The rule of law and economic development’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11, 2008: 205–34.

today by a much greater sense of caution. Practitioners and analysts alike report on the extraordinary difficulties of externally-driven campaigns to instil democracy and the rule of law.⁵ Larry Diamond, one of the scholarly founders of the democracy-promotion movement, has written recently of democracy being in retreat, with democratic governance being overthrown or interrupted in Nigeria, Russia, Thailand, Venezuela, Bangladesh, and the Philippines.⁶

To this list one could add other local cases such as Fiji, with East Timor and Solomon Islands appearing on the verge of deepening political malaise. And yet not all is gloomy on this front in our region. Against the trend, Indonesia is making remarkably good progress in consolidating its fledgling electoral democracy, and despite widespread and deep-seated governance problems, PNG's political reforms of recent years are showing signs of traction and even some progress. And new possibilities are opening to assist parallel efforts at the sub-national level in a range of countries.

Even more than is the case with economic development assistance, there can be no single blueprint for political engineers working on the redesign of national and sub-national architectures of governance; local interests are paramount. As the former Brazilian cabinet minister Luis Carlos Bresser Pereira once put it: 'institutions can be at most imported, never exported'.⁷

As with development assistance generally, democracy-promotion sometimes suffers from too many dollars chasing too few genuine opportunities. This is a sad truth in a world in which market-failure and government-failure are rife in developing countries. And yet on both the supply and demand sides there are real capacity limits; limits in supplying truly well-considered programs and limits in absorbing change of this sort. The election of a new government is a good opportunity for pausing and taking stock.

TRADE AND FINANCIAL INTEGRATION

The desirability of further global economic integration has been the subject of extensive public debate for some years now, with contending peak global summits each year for the pro and anti-globalisation camps, the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum. Among

⁵ See for instance, Thomas Carothers, ed., *Promoting the rule of law abroad: In search of knowledge* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

⁶ Larry Diamond, 'The democratic rollback: The resurgence of the predatory state', *Foreign Affairs*, 87(2) 2008: 36–48.

⁷ Quoted in Adam Przeworski, 'Institutions matter?', *Government and Opposition*, 39(4) 2004: 527–40, at 540.

professional economists there is debate as well. While most professional economists readily endorse the merits of increased global trade, the same is not true of increased global financial integration. For instance, Jagdish Bhagwati, one of the most high-profile advocates of globalising trade, is much more sceptical about freeing the movement of capital because of the danger—particularly to developing countries—of being caught in financial crises.⁸ But as Frederic Mishkin has emphasised in a recent review of the subject, the issue is not so much whether greater financial liberalisation and integration is inherently good or bad, as whether it is done successfully.⁹ In other words, while financial liberalisation and integration with the rest of the world can bring very considerable developmental benefits, it also carries great risk if the country in question is unable to manage a wider set of institutional adjustments to enhance financial governance since, sooner or later, it will be swept up in episodes of sudden financial instability.

Asia has been at the epicentre of economic globalisation; it has experienced more of the benefits than any other developing region, along with some of the most dramatic setbacks. East Asian economies have strongly outperformed all other developing regions, decade after decade, in part because they have been more open to the rest of the world. In aggregate trade terms, Asia is now the most open region in the world, with the ratio of total exports to overall regional gross domestic product recently surpassing that of even Europe.¹⁰ And while Singapore and Hong Kong demonstrate what is possible with financial globalisation, Thailand and Indonesia illustrate just how disruptive ill-managed financial liberalisation can be.

Australians have grown almost blasé about rapid economic growth in Asia. But this has now gone so far that the headline message is no longer one of rising living standards and commercial opportunity, but of systemic regional and global change. The weight of global economy activity is increasingly tipping towards Asia (it is already roughly the size of Europe and North America, and this trend is accelerating), and Asia is increasingly integrated within itself. Trade, financial and investment links now criss-cross the region. A hard-disk drive assembled in Thailand, for instance, comprises components coming from not just Thailand, but also Japan, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia,

⁸ Jagdish Bhagwati, *In defence of globalization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁹ Frederic S. Mishkin, 'Is financial globalization beneficial?', Working Paper No. 11891 (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2005).

¹⁰ World Bank, *East Asia update: Solid growth, new challenges* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006), p. 4.

Singapore, and Indonesia.¹¹ The continued economic transformation of Asia is powerfully in the interests of all countries in the region, including Australia. As Washington, Beijing, and Tokyo (joined perhaps by New Delhi before long) vie for regional pre-eminence, Australia will have strong incentives to join forces with others in the region to ensure that no version of a hub and spokes model comes to prevail and that, instead, increasingly robust frameworks for multilateral regional engagement acceptable to all gather momentum in the region.

NEW CHALLENGES

Even though their modalities are hotly debated, development assistance, democracy-promotion and facilitating trade and financial integration are well-entrenched elements of Australia's international strategy. There are opportunities for the Rudd government to enhance and extend their application, but the general direction is now reasonably clear. Just breaking onto the agenda are two new issues that will play powerfully over the coming decade: labour migration and climate change. Both are very difficult and very pressing.

It is becoming less and less defensible—particularly in the small countries of the Pacific—for Australia to insist that it will only support economic development *inside* the recipient country. When job creation is slow and pools of young males with little productive use for their time accumulate, trouble inevitably brews. Around the developed world there is growing acknowledgement of this reality and the need for greater receptivity to labour migration in some fashion. Australia is unlikely to be able to stand apart from this. And climate change, a global challenge if ever there was one, threatens to overshadow all else. The risks for Australia in particular now appear to be so serious that the debate must move quickly beyond the technicalities of projection and begin to focus on the politics of local, regional, and global action. These are challenges with which we have only begun to come to grips.

¹¹ Daisuke Hiratsuka, ed., *East Asia's de facto economic integration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Australia in Asia, Australia and Asia: The next generation

ROBIN JEFFREY

Australia's future is entwined with its global neighbours. As with all neighbours, the ones closest are the ones you deal with most. For Australia, that means Asia and the Pacific.

Australians are not well-prepared to live with these neighbours. Our language-learning capacities, never great, have shrunk in the past 10 to 15 years, and our interactions with the region are narrow and instrumentalist (that is, if there is a dollar to be made, Australians may be there; but broader, deeper connections are far less common than they need to be).

Why wouldn't Australia in the twenty-first century look for models in Switzerland in the nineteenth and twentieth? Eliminate, of course, the dark sides—the exclusion of women from politics, for example, or a willingness to shelter war criminals and their loot. But the old Swiss model has three aspects that Australia might seek to emulate:

- the ability to work in the cultures and languages of its neighbourhood;
- a resulting reputation as a safe site for dialogue and transnational activity; and
- the appearance, founded on geography and a citizen army, of being able to defend itself like a porcupine or a skunk.

Let me focus on the first two items and leave the last to security specialists.

LANGUAGES

Australia suffers from two problems which work against the logic of its geography and demography. Geographically, it lies among, and trades overwhelmingly with, four of the world's largest languages—Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Hindi/Urdu.¹ Demographically, Australia is tiny. The equivalent population of Australia is transported on the Mumbai municipal railways between Monday and Wednesday each week. (It's a nice picture: 'Sydney and Adelaide—you're Monday;

¹ Hindi/Urdu is the spoken language of northern South Asia; Hindi, written in Devanagari script, is the national language of India; Urdu, written in Perso-Arabic, is the national language of Pakistan.

Melbourne and Brisbane, hurry up, it's Tuesday; and you lot, the rest, you're on Wednesday'.)

Such logic—a tiny population depending on hugely more numerous and powerful trading partners—ought to dictate that learning languages would be part of Australian self-interest, as deeply planted in the national character as opera for Italians or ice hockey for Canadians. But, as we all know, it is not so.

There are two reasons why Australia is as monolingual as it is. The first lies in the fact that European settlement coincided with English becoming Top Language, as *1066 and all that* would have put it. By the time Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove, the American and Industrial Revolutions had begun to roll. As an isolated corner of the British empire from 1790 to 1942, English was all one was ever likely to hear, speak, or read.

The utility of languages other than English, particularly languages of Australia's neighbourhood, became more widely apparent only with the Second World War. But even today it is a refrain among Australian commercial people that 'you don't need the language to work in Country X. Everybody speaks English, and if we need some translation, we hire an interpreter.' This attitude recalls the rollicking scene in one of the *Flashman* novels set in India when the subedar major translates the English Colonel's sermon on Christianity to the regiment of sepoy. Like the monolingual Colonel, Australia does not know what it is missing.

The second problem for language learning in Australia is the varied linguistic environment in which we live. Close to three million Australians (about 15 per cent of the population) are regular speakers of other languages. And at least nine languages have strong claims on community support:

- Arabic community, with growing strategic significance;
- Chinese community, region, trade, size, strategic;
- French traditional;
- German traditional;
- Greek community;
- Indonesian proximity, size, strategic;
- Italian community;
- Japanese region, trade, size, strategic;
- Vietnamese community, region.

No tertiary institution in the country teaches, or could teach, all of these languages. And think of the difficulties for politically sensitive state governments in deciding which languages to support in primary and high schools. Then add to the equation some of the languages omitted from the above list:

- Hindi/Urdu region, size, strategic;
- Korean trade, region, strategic;
- Pacific Pidgins community, region, strategic;
- Russian size, strategic;
- Serbo-Croatian community;
- Spanish community, size;
- Thai region, strategic.

Australian federalism compounds the problems facing a national plan for the learning of languages. Eight states and territories, each with three education systems (public, Catholic, and ‘independent’), making a total of two dozen bodies, need to coordinate their efforts to achieve substantial, enduring results. The wonder of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australia Schools scheme (NALSAS), scrapped by the Howard government in 2002 two-thirds of the way through its planned life, was that it achieved some unity of purpose.

So what needs to be done now? Four measures will help. First, leadership. Young people, parents, teachers, and principals need to hear strongly and regularly from influential public figures that a language-skilled Australia is essential for a peaceful, prosperous, twenty-first century. This message can’t come only from the current Prime Minister. If it does, it opens him to ridicule: the nerdy guy in glasses who knows Chinese. There’s a danger here already—recall Alexander Downer’s claim to have picked up French as a Foreign Affairs trainee as easily as having done a course in, say, ‘bookkeeping for bureaucrats’. Language learning takes talent, dedication, and investment. At the moment, no prominent public figure speaks about the need to learn languages. The cause needs champions.

Second, we need a program to turn out a new generation of motivated, rewarded language teachers. Take Indonesian, for example. At the end of 2008, probably the last two of the teachers who drove Indonesian in Australian universities for 25 years will retire. Indonesian enrolments in universities and high schools have fallen steadily since 2000. Even if a school wants to teach Indonesian today, it has difficulty recruiting the talented teacher needed to deliver an attractive program.

Let’s create a National League of Language Teachers. Offer current university students who have studied language to an advanced level a HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) exemption for their final year of study, plus a HECS-free place in an Education diploma, on condition that they teach language for (say) three years after graduation. Use them as the foundation for the National League of Language Teachers (NLLT) or the Feith Brigade (after Herb Feith, the legendary Australian scholar of Indonesia who died in 2001), a network linking language needs around the country with appropriate teachers and supporting those teachers through networking, resources, conferencing,

opportunities in the region and, most important, *esprit de corps*. Think of the best of the Peace Corps.

Third, we need to focus on how we provide languages. It won't be easy, but let's decide that each Australian state supports no more than six languages in its schools. Choose them from the nine languages listed earlier on the basis of community concentration and the state's relations with particular countries. Then support those languages by declaring a few schools in key areas as Language Rich Schools (LaRiS) and support them so that they can guarantee that a program will carry children from Years 7 to 12. (Consider the frustration of parents whose daughter has excelled in Indonesian since Year 7 to be told at the end of Year 10 that the school will not offer Indonesian for Years 11 and 12.) Imagine the LaRiS staffed with well-prepared, well-supported, highly motivated teachers, all members of the Faith Brigade. And imagine their being backed, rhetorically and materially, by Australia government and business leaders.

Fourth, Australia should become a centre for the global teaching of languages of our region, especially those with only specialised appeal in schools or universities. Think of Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Pacific Pidgins, and Hindi/Urdu. We already have examples of how new technologies open possibilities. For nearly 10 years, an effective two-year Hindi program has been offered on the web through Open Universities Australia. It ends this year when its developer moves to the National University of Singapore; but at its height, he taught more than 70 students who participated from as far afield as Europe and the US. All of this was done on the smell of a kleenex tissue. What could be done with an Australian Centre for World Languages (ACWoL)? Such an organisation would provide a multi-faceted program of language-learning, founded on web-based components but also intensive face-to-face summer and winter schools and in-country study. An ACWoL would have the potential to enrol paying students not merely from all of Australia but from around the world. It would further establish Australia as a Swiss-style *entrepôt*.

DIALOGUE: ENTREPÔT AND HONEST BROKER

Such a globally relevant centre for language learning would reinforce another way of basing Australia in its region and pursuing the mutual education essential for trust, harmony, and prosperity. To establish Australia's 'honest broker', rather than 'deputy sheriff', role in the Asia-Pacific, we need to create Institutes for Inter-Regional Dialogue in Asia and the Pacific (IIRDAP).

Founded on the principle of partnership, an Australian organisation at arm's length from government (say, a university but not necessarily a university) would work with a partner organisation in one of the democracies of the region. For now, that would have to be in India, Indonesia, or Japan; but the prospect of becoming a partner might for some countries be an incentive for deepened democratisation and political reform.

Such an institute (let's start with only one) would be based in the partner country. It would create a new entity, symbolising the needs of the twenty-first century and Australia's recognition of its place in the world. It would combine aspects of traditional think-tanks with the study-and-resource features of institutions like the British Council and study sites like the Rockefeller Foundation's Study and Conference Centre in Bellagio, Italy. (Imagine, for example, a beautifully renovated old building within a two-hour drive of, say, New Delhi or Yogyakarta.)

Such an institute would work on:

- cross-cultural projects involving translation and communication exchange;
- new ways of teaching languages to global audiences;
- security and governance questions, such as how does one construct a 'European Union of West Asia'?; how does one create a security apparatus to defuse a Kashmir?;
- reconciliation questions (for example, Japan, Bangladesh);
- environment questions (who 'owns' the rivers of Asia—Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mekong?)

Because it would have both an Asian and Australian connection, such an institution would have links and acceptance that few others in the world could match. It would not provoke the suspicion that accompanies the activities of US think-tanks, yet it would have the 'Western credibility' of Australia. It could draw on the 'non-aligned' credentials of India, the 'Islamic' affiliations of Indonesia, or the global economic reputation of Japan. It would be a centre where scholars from all parts of the region could base themselves for periods of research and writing. It would be at home in English but highlight the crucial importance of other languages; and though it could be America-friendly, it would not be American-controlled.

For Australia, the advantages would be great. Such an institute would become a recognised platform for dialogue throughout the region and the world. It would underline Australia's place as a committed member of the Asia-Pacific, but with unique links to the rest of the world. And for the region itself, and for countries outside the region, it would provide a vantage point with unrivalled access and perspectives.

A world of rapid, often instantaneous interdependence is inescapable in the twenty-first century. Australia enjoys proximity to the most dynamic region of that world—monsoon Asia. But to make the most of such proximity, and to mitigate the problems and threats that such proximity brings, more Australians need to know languages. And to be seen as a secure, adroit, and honest broker, Australia needs to cultivate partnerships that facilitate research and dialogue. In an age of energised elephants, wallabies that sit still will get sat on.

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