

Re-thinking national security in the age of pandemics and climate change catastrophe

“It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail”

Abraham Maslow, 1966

Abstract

People around the world no longer feel safe. Nor are they confident that their governments can keep them safe. At the level of the individual citizen, security now has as much to do with managing a global pandemic, mitigating and adapting to climate change, preserving clean water, maintaining reliable food supplies and protecting individual and community well-being as with supporting the ability of the state to protect its sovereignty against threats from other states. Prosperity and individual security are now key considerations in national security policy. If the individual citizen is not safe, the nation cannot be safe. If we are to understand the nature of the disruption that now characterises the global economic, climate, health and political environments, and deal with the consequences of that disruption, it is imperative that we re-think the foundations of national security policy. Social inclusion, the protection of rights, the promotion of values and resilience – all of them supported by a strong economic base – are basic elements of security policy. The scope of national security policy needs to transcend traditional defence and law enforcement models by comprehending climate change, human security against pandemics, environmental (and soil) degradation, food security, water shortages and refugee flows – to identify just a few issues. To see terrorism as an attack on the state, for instance, is to misconceive it: terrorism is really an attack on the values that unite the community in common purpose. A key challenge for Australia is to build these changing concepts of security into our national governance.¹

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¹ This discussion paper is a substantially revised version of an essay originally published in Steve Cork (ed), *Brighter prospects: Enhancing the resilience of Australia* (Canberra: Australia 21, 2009), pp.67-71.

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INTRODUCTION

Since Federation, ‘security’ and ‘prosperity’ have existed in entirely different chapters of the national political lexicon. The Treasurer, together with the industry Ministers, have been responsible for delivering prosperity, while the Defence Minister, the Home Affairs Minister, the Attorney-General and the occasional assistance of the Foreign Minister, have been responsible for delivering security. And ne’er the twain have met, except to the extent that security makes prosperity possible and prosperity makes security affordable. Yet there is a growing realisation that security and prosperity are inextricably linked, since neither is achievable without the other. More than that, there is a growing recognition that prosperity is better measured in terms of individual well-being, contentment and resilience than in gross transactional terms.

For the most part, Australian security policy has reflected a concentration on the principles advocated by the so-called “Realist” school of international relations, articulated principally by Hans Morgenthau in his monumental *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Morgenthau did not devote much time to a systematic consideration of security — he was much more preoccupied with power. It is clear, however, that the basic premise on which his analysis depends (apart, of course, from the assumption that there is always a rational basis on which international power relationships are struck) is the enduring importance of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia which defined the relationships between states. States employ and deploy power in their own interests (as distinct from the interests of their citizens), and it is the use of that power that determines the security of the state.

Morgenthau appears to accept that security means “the defence of the frontiers as . . . established by peace treaties”.² This essentially defines security in terms of the absence of threat against the territory or the sovereignty of the state. In other words, security is the ability of the state to maintain its power by addressing threats. This has been the critical premise in all Australian statements concerning national security.

It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that ‘security’ comprehends something far more fundamental and compelling than the ability of the state to protect its sovereignty against threats from other states — important though that may be to the safety of the citizens. Citizens are increasingly resistant to the state wasting their lives in its own protection. The ‘campaign fatigue’ currently affecting many Americans bears witness to that.³ It is for the

² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 4th edition, 1967), p. 399.

³ See “In Washington, War Fatigue Is Setting In”, *Stratfor*, 2 August 2017 https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/08/02/in_washington_war_fatigue_is_setting_in_111955.html

state to maintain the legal consensus that underpins the protection of its citizens' rights and to provide the economic and social infrastructure that enables the community to generate human and social capital.

As communities everywhere are beginning to discover, 'security' has as much to do with clean air, clean water, reliable food supplies, opportunities for children, freedom from ethnic or racial violence, the ability to live a fulfilling life, personal and economic security in the face of the consequences of climate change, such as bush fires. In other words, security is about individual and community well-being. While, at one level, this emerging concept of security may be comprehended as freedom from threat, it has more to do with the creation of opportunity, prosperity, resilience and well-being. A key corollary of this changed sense of security is that most citizens in 21st century democracies want freedom from military service rather than freedom through military service.

In a monograph published in 2016, the UK-based Ammerdown Group observed:

The proper goal of security should be grounded in the well-being of people in their social and ecological context, rather than the interests of a nation state as determined by its elite. This first requires a collective effort to build the conditions of security over the long-term. A commitment to the common good should guide the approach, recognising that security is a shared responsibility and its practice should be negotiated democratically; when security is the preserve of a few, it will not serve the many and is likely to fail everyone.⁴

The extent to which security legislation and conventional military spending work to protect and advance community well-being, to that extent it is worthwhile. But where military spending becomes a substitute for investment in the muscles and sinews that make for a strong nation, to that extent it undermines security.

The defeat of fascism and militarism was a defining moment of the twentieth century, even if that defeat unleashed a global nuclear threat. Even more defining, perhaps, was the unimaginable carnage and suffering that was inherent in that defeat. Mankind had looked over the precipice, recoiled, and looked for global mechanisms to prevent a recurrence. So the 'victorious powers' – principally the western democracies led by the US – established the United Nations which, in important ways, gave political expression to the Bretton Woods agreement that stabilised the global economic system.

Central to the UN Charter was the basic unifying principle of western humanism, the value and dignity of the human person as more astringently expressed in the term 'Rule of Law'. Preambular paragraph 2 of the UN Charter captures the idea:

⁴ The Ammerdown Group, *Rethinking Security: A discussion paper*, May 2016

<https://rethinkingsecurityorguk.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/rethinking-security-a-discussion-paper.pdf>

[We] reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

Article 1 of the UN Charter, with its emphasis on equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms, implicitly places the individual at the centre of the 'state'. The 'state', which consists of individuals who enjoy basic rights, is charged with protecting those individuals and their rights. In that sense, the 'state' is the creature of its members, not the other way around. Yet, over the past few decades, that relationship between the individual and the state has been under stress, as the state increasingly attempts to assert itself over its citizens, limiting their rights as it seeks to maintain and entrench its 'security'.

As Francis Fukuyama has written, "A liberal democratic regime based on individual rights enshrines the notion of equal dignity in law by recognizing citizens as moral agents capable of sharing in their own self-government".⁵ This principle, it would appear, is increasingly under challenge in a disrupted world.

⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity* (London: Profile Books, 2019), p. 40

EMERGING SECURITY ISSUES

CLIMATE CHANGE

On the ABC program Q&A broadcast on 9 December 2019, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull declared that climate change was a national security concern.⁶ The panel did not demur. The intensity of the fire season in South Eastern Australia during December 2019 and January 2020 has been catastrophic, impacting on the personal, financial, physical and mental health security of hundreds of thousands of Australians. But the catastrophic fires of 2019-20 are not a singular event. They are part of an enduring pattern of climate-change induced events that will continue to impact on Australia for decades, if not centuries, to come. That is why climate change and all its associated effects – drought, rising sea levels, soil salinity, oceanic acidification, rising sea and land temperatures – constitutes a threat to the nation’s long-term security.

INTERNAL COLLAPSE

The long arc of history demonstrates that the greatest threat to the survival of the state is not aggression by neighbours, serious though that is, but rather the internal collapse that comes from civil war and the destruction of social cohesion. The English Civil War, the French Revolution, the American Civil War, the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Communist Revolution, not to mention the many revolutions and civil wars in Africa and South America, illustrate the point. And such internal assaults on the cohesion of the state are often the consequence of structural inequality. Inequality saps the internal cohesion of a nation. It is a cancer within, weakening not only the body politic but, just as importantly, rendering the nation vulnerable to external forces.

The disturbing resurgence of nationalism in parts of Europe and Asia, particularly the ethno-nationalism demonising minorities and ‘outsiders’ that has taken root among the more extreme right groups in continental Europe, serves as a reminder of how ancient scourges can metastasise generations after they were deemed to have disappeared.

PANDEMICS

The outbreak of the coronavirus in China and the speed of its spread globally is another reminder of the vulnerability of the human species to sudden transspecies viral mutations

⁶ See <https://www.abc.net.au/qanda/2019-09-12/11751668>

such as occurred in the 1918-19 influenza epidemic⁷, or the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus that appeared in 2002-03.

Pandemics constitute an existential threat to individuals and communities. While they may not (yet) lead to the destruction of nations, the spread and lethality of the corona virus has caused massive economic and social dislocation, driven the global economy into recession, collapsed key industries such as aviation and tourism, caused significant unemployment and consequent economic insecurity, and left governments around the world scrambling to provide medical facilities and social safety nets. With entire cities and states in lock-down, citizens everywhere are wondering just why their governments were so slow to recognise the risk and to undertake preventive measures. When first world nations such as Italy and Spain are unable to protect their populations, and when governments around the world embark on stop-gap measures that lack consistency and coherence, it is little wonder that citizens feel insecure and fearful. And it is little wonder that their trust in government erodes substantially.

The corona virus does not have nationality and knows no boundaries. It is indiscriminate, affecting the healthy and the vulnerable wherever they are. As a global phenomenon, it demands global cooperation if it is to be contained, treated and eradicated.

Little is known about the possible links between climate change and pandemics. But what has become clear is that no one is immune from their consequences.

DRUGS AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

According to the most recent World Drug Report,⁸ 585,000 people died as a result of drug use in 2017. The number continues to rise. The number of drug users was estimated to be 271 million, or 5.5 percent of the global population aged between 15 and 64. Cannabis remains the most commonly used drug, though opioids are by far the greatest cause of death.

A 2013 Parliamentary Library report estimated the global cost of transnational organised crime as US\$870 billion per year, with illicit drugs accounting for about half the total, with significant funds also deriving from people trafficking, firearms, natural resources and wildlife, counterfeit goods and cybercrime.⁹ This has now risen to an estimated US\$1.6 to

⁷ Spanish influenza, which is thought to have originated in pigs, infected up to 500 million people and killed between 50 and 100 million.

⁸ See 2019 Drug Report, UNODC, June 2019

https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/prelaunch/WDR19_Booklet_2_DRUG_DEMAND.pdf

⁹ See "Transnational organised crime", Parliamentary Library

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook44p/TransnationalCrime

US\$2.2 trillion.¹⁰ An Australian estimate suggests that serious and organised crime in Australia costs between \$23.8 and \$47.4 billion.¹¹ The ongoing but as yet unresolved debate in each of the Australian jurisdictions about pill testing at music festivals underscores both the availability of so-called recreational drugs and their lethality. Yet law enforcement continues to focus on apprehending those in possession of drugs, with drug syndicates continuing to be successful at evading detection and arrest. A focus on the health and well-being of citizens would suggest that the decriminalisation of drug possession and the legalisation and regulation of drug supply offer more constructive avenues for the control of drug use and supply.¹²

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

WMD, especially nuclear weapons, remain an existential threat to humanity. While the global community has lived with them for three quarters of a century, proliferation has continued while non-proliferation efforts under the NPT have effectively stalled. The reduction in the nuclear use threshold by the US, as contemplated in the *2018 Nuclear Posture Review* where the boundary between nuclear and conventional warfare has become blurred, is a particularly worrying development.¹³

Australia has a solid record as an advocate of nuclear arms control and disarmament – a record that has been somewhat tarnished in recent years as disarmament issues have been less frequently part of Australia’s international policy agenda. But the fact remains that nuclear weapons constitute an existential threat to humanity, and their eradication is essential if people are to live in a more secure world.

TERRORISM

Since the World Trade Centre attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11), terrorism has become *le problème du jour* for many western countries, especially Australia. For the two decades following the Hilton bombing in 1978, the policy of successive Australian governments was to deal with terrorist acts under the Commonwealth and State/Territory criminal codes. 9/11 changed all that, with a frenzy of legislation both fomenting and responding to public

¹⁰ See Global Financial Integrity (Washington DC) Report, 27 March 2017 <https://gfintegrity.org/press-release/transnational-crime-is-a-1-6-trillion-to-2-2-trillion-annual-business-finds-new-gfi-report/>

¹¹ See Russell G. Smith, “Estimating the costs of serious and organised crime in Australia 2016-17”, Australian Institute of Criminology, 10 October 2018 <https://aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr09>

¹² For a short but comprehensive statement on drug law reform, see Mick Palmer, “Drugs Policy – there has to be a better way”, Pearls and Irritations, 20 March 2018 <https://johnmenadue.com/mick-palmer-drugs-policy-there-has-to-be-a-better-way/>

¹³ See *2018 Nuclear Posture Review* <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>

concern about acts of (Islamic) politically motivated violence. As of 30 September 2019, Australia had enacted 82 anti-terror laws, with another six in the pipeline – far exceeding the legislative responses of the UK, Canada and even the US.¹⁴ 54 pieces of legislation were enacted in the decade following 9/11,¹⁵ hyper-legislation that cemented ‘security’ into the national predilection for anxiety and exacerbated the tendency towards ‘othering’ by singling out the Muslim community for special concern.

Calls for an increased emphasis on social policy tools – interventions aimed at building stronger, more inclusive and more tolerant communities – have gone largely unheard, the default position being ever greater reliance on expanded surveillance and law enforcement powers. The question is whether a community can be more secure when it is more fearful and less free.

The so-called war against terrorism offers a salutary lesson in this regard. The military capabilities and doctrines developed to ensure victory in any possible war against an aggressor state have already proved themselves to be largely irrelevant in the fight against those groups that resort to a form of asymmetric warfare (terrorism) to promote their cause. They do this either to penalise those states that pursue policies against the interests of such groups (for instance, the liberal democracies, whose basic support for the value and freedom of the human individual flies in the face of the theocratic absolutism of radicalised Islam) or to force concessions that would have the net effect of undermining liberal democracy itself. Random acts of violence and terror simply cannot be prevented by air strike, tanks and prolonged military occupation. Indeed, all that air strike, tanks and military occupation seem to succeed in doing is to sap the strength and resolve of the nation that deploys forces, and provide the rich, sludgy soup of anarchy that is the perfect incubator for terrorism. As General Petraeus tried to demonstrate in Iraq, ‘search and destroy’ must be matched against ‘hearts and minds’: negotiation with the enemy is just as important as the annihilation of the enemy’s hard core. And the modern history of Iraq is a testament to the failure of that strategy.

For the basic problem is that, like security, the very concept of terrorism is misconceived. It is seen as an attack on the state when it transparently is not: it is an attack on the values that unite the community in common purpose and joint endeavour. It is hardly surprising, then, that a misconception of the nature of terrorism invokes an entirely inappropriate form of response — military force, in the case of Iraq, or an over reliance on statutory instruments, in the case of Australia. This is, after all, the old security paradigm: where

¹⁴ See Nicola McGarrity and Jessie Blackbourn, “Australia has enacted 82 anti-terror laws since 2001. But tough laws alone can’t eliminate terrorism”, *The Conversation*, 30 September 2019 <https://theconversation.com/australia-has-enacted-82-anti-terror-laws-since-2001-but-tough-laws-alone-cant-eliminate-terrorism-123521>

¹⁵ See George Williams, “A Decade of Australian Anti-terror Laws”, *Melbourne University Law Review* 38 (2011) <http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/MelbULawRw/2011/38.html>

armed violence is employed against the state, the state retaliates with armed force, because it is the only entity that is constitutionally empowered to do so. If all you've got is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. But the response exacerbates the problem, because the aim of the terrorism is to provoke an over-reaction, thereby eroding whatever support the community might have for legitimate military force.

As Philip Bobbitt has noted, since the emergence of modern states during the Renaissance the world has been divided into states of consent and states of terror. States of consent derived their legitimacy from the consent of the community given freely and renewed frequently — consent that can be withdrawn. States of terror govern through oppression of the people, and their regimes do not cede power freely.¹⁶ Terrorism is the weapon of choice when the aim is to prevent states from operating on the basis of popular consent. Consequently, as Bobbitt notes, “the threats we will soon face are such that we cannot afford to lose, yet to win we must reconceive victory; now that war must aim at victory newly conceived, we must change our ideas of what counts as war: the new warfare attacks innocent civilians because it challenges rights and opportunities, not nationhood or wealth or territory; finally, war is changing because states go to war on behalf of their legitimacy and the basis for legitimacy is changing”.¹⁷

¹⁶ Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 182.

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 236.

WHAT KILLS AUSTRALIANS?

The sustained focus on defeating military threats as the core consideration that drives national security policy has emphasised death and injury in armed conflict as the ultimate price paid for and by a secure nation. Successive Australian governments have been prepared to spend around 2 percent of GNI annually as the ‘treasure’ necessary to forestall the loss of ‘blood’. But if the security of our citizens – in terms of their well-being, quality of life, contentment and ability to bounce back in the face of adversity (resilience) – is brought into the equation, the broader issue of community safety necessarily brings other factors into consideration.

According to Australian War memorial records, over 102 thousand Australians have died in armed conflict.¹⁸ Although the ratio of persons killed to persons wounded is uncertain (due to differing methods of accounting for neuroses, post traumatic stress [shell shock] and other brain injuries), the multiplier is approximately 7:1.¹⁹ While the deaths from more recent wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) are fewer than fifty, the 60 thousand in WW1 and the 40 thousand in WW2 are sobering.

Australians are much more likely to die from lifestyle causes than from armed conflict, however. Since 1968, when consolidated data became available, 316,853 Australians have died of lung cancer, caused principally by smoking.²⁰ The Cancer Council of Australia estimates that 150,000 new cancer cases will be diagnosed in Australia in 2020.²¹

Road trauma has an enormous impact on the well-being of Australians. Since 1925, when statistics were first collected, over 180 thousand people have been killed in motor vehicle accidents, and with a multiplier of 27:1,²² the injuries due to motor vehicle accidents have a significant impact on individuals and their families.²³

And while death from gunshot, totalling a little over 10 thousand since 1979 (when national figures first became available),²⁴ may not appear to be as serious a threat to the well-being

¹⁸ https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/war_casualties

¹⁹ See Craig Tibbitts, “Casualties of War”, *Australian War Memorial*, <https://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/article2>

²⁰ The figure is calculated from the Cancer Council of Australia database dating from 1968. The database covers cancers of all types. <https://ncci.canceraustralia.gov.au/outcomes/cancer-mortality/cancer-mortality>

²¹ See Cancer Council of Australia, “Facts and Figures” <https://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/what-is-cancer/facts-and-figures.html>

²² See Car Accident Statistics 2019 <https://www.budgetdirect.com.au/car-insurance/research/car-accident-statistics.html>

²³ See Australian Transport Safety Bureau, “Road crash casualties and rates, Australia, 1925 to latest year” <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/safety/publications/2005/pdf/1925-present.pdf>

²⁴ See the statistical tables at <https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/australia>

of most citizens, it is important to record that a significant number of victims are women in domestic violence situations.²⁵

These figures are, of course, illustrative. They are not intended to offer a comprehensive picture of mortality and morbidity in Australia. Their purpose is simply to suggest that human security issues in Australia impact more directly on the lives of individual Australians than do national security issues. Yet the security of the state, as distinct from the security of individual citizens, tends to dominate the security policy domain.

Spending in the security domain seems to be disproportionate to the actual threat. When looked at through the lens of the myriad factors that threaten the health and well-being of a citizen – suicide, homicide, motor vehicle accidents, diabetes, HIV, cancer cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes – the risk of terrorism is insignificant.²⁶

²⁵ See Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ADFVDM-Report_2018.pdf

²⁶ See C. Michaelson, "Terrorism in Australia: An Inflated Threat", *Security Challenges* 6(2), Winter 2010, p. 25 <https://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Documents/vol6no2Michaelsen.pdf>

WHAT KILLS AMERICANS? CARS, GUNS AND DRUGS

The distinction between security and safety is particularly stark in the US. War has exacted a terrible toll on the United States. For over a century, the estimated number of soldiers killed in the US Civil War, Union and Confederacy combined, stood at 618,222. More recent research, however, has revised that figure to over 750 thousand.²⁷ It was bloodletting on an unimaginable scale that continues to resonate deep in the American psyche. This is a significantly greater number than those killed in the wars of the 20th century (617 thousand) and the 21st century (just under 7 thousand).²⁸

Data compiled from the National Highway Safety Administration website indicates that over 3.7 million Americans have died on US roads since 1899.²⁹ Over 37 thousand Americans die in motor vehicle accidents each year, with another 2.35 million suffering injury or disability.³⁰ And according to Bloomberg, the three years between 2016 and 2018 saw US road fatalities exceed 40 thousand per year.³¹

US citizens have approximately the same chance of dying as a result of gunshot as they do in motor vehicle accidents. The annual death toll as a result of guns reached just under 40 thousand in 2018. Nearly two-thirds were suicides.³² Between 2005 and 2015, gun violence (excluding suicides and accidental discharges) in the US killed 428 times as many Americans as did terrorism. And even if the comparison is tracked back to include deaths resulting from the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Trade Centre in New York, the Pentagon in Washington and the associated aircraft crash in Pennsylvania, the ratio drops to 127 – still astonishingly high.³³

²⁷ See Guy Gugliotta, “New Estimate Raises Civil War Death Toll”, *New York Times*, 2 April 2012

<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/science/civil-war-toll-up-by-20-percent-in-new-estimate.html>

²⁸ See American Battlefield Trust fact sheet <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-casualties>

²⁹ See for instance Fatality Analysis Reporting System <https://www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>

³⁰ See *Association for Safe International Road Travel* fact sheet <https://www.asirt.org/safe-travel/road-safety-facts/>

³¹ See Ryan Beene, “Traffic Death in U.S. Exceed 40,000 for Third Straight Year”, *Bloomberg*, 13 February 2019 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-13/traffic-deaths-in-u-s-exceed-40-000-for-third-straight-year>

³² See Sarah Mervosh, “Nearly 40,000 People Died From Guns in U.S. Last Year, Highest in 50 Years”, *New York Times*, 18 December 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html>

³³ See Inga Ting, “Gun violence killed 428 times more Americans than terrorism over the past decade”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 October 2015 <https://www.smh.com.au/world/guns-killed-428-times-more-americans-than-terrorism-over-the-past-decade-20151002-gjzv6t.html>

At current rates, drugs kill almost as many Americans each year as motor vehicle accidents and gunshot combined. In 2017, 70,237 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States, with opioids involved in some 47,600 deaths.³⁴

³⁴ See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fact sheet “Drug Overdose Deaths”
<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>

AN EXPANDING GLOBAL APPROACH TO SECURITY

The past decade or so has seen the beginnings of a paradigm shift in the global approach to security — a shift that is yet to be detected in Australian security policy. National security has begun to include more basic concepts of values and rights — concepts that have not thrown over the need for states to be able to protect themselves against aggression, but have rather expanded the basic connotation of security to accommodate human security concerns. Security as a function of the power of the state to protect itself has progressively expanded to incorporate the basic need for personal and community well-being in a world where threats from states are diminishing while threats from other sources are increasing.

An expanded concept of security is not new. This evolution was captured nicely by Francisco Aravena, writing in 2002, when he noted that “a conceptual transition is taking place from a Cold War perspective that visualized an enemy expressed in strongly military actions carried out by a state, to a post-Cold War perspective in which threats are diffused, the weight of military factors has diminished and many of the threats appear not to be linked to state actors, and even not to be linked to any particular territory”.³⁵ Aravena went on to say:

Four substantial elements need to be emphasized in today’s security landscape:

- International security extends beyond its military components;
- International security is transnational, global and interdependent;
- International security is produced by a plurality of actors, the state is no longer the exclusive actor; and
- International security in the twenty-first century has enlarged its agenda and demands that actors work together.³⁶

It would be wrong to suggest that Australia now needs to replace its traditional concept of security with one that focuses exclusively on values and rights. Rather, what Australia needs to do is to expand its understanding of security to include the management of climate change, pandemics, international criminality, pollution and environmental degradation, the creation of human and social capital, the expansion of institutional and other arrangements that enhance social equity, and the recognition that resilience and social inclusion are of greater significance in maintaining and enhancing national security than are defence and law enforcement systems of themselves. Breakdown in internal social cohesion and the resultant civil wars are a greater threat to the survival of the state than is war against other

³⁵ Francisco Aravena, Human security: emerging concept of security in the twenty-first century, Disarmament Forum 2, (UNIDIR, 2002), p. 8.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 9

nation states. In this context, it is important to recognise that social inclusion erodes, and community cohesion dissipates, when the rule of law is in any way compromised. It is a paradoxical that a scrupulous adherence to due process offers a better defence of social inclusion and community cohesion than does the creation of arbitrary exceptions in the name of “national security”. In other words, adaptability, flexibility, resilience and legality are the new hallmarks of security, as they are of economic prosperity.

As a disrupted 21st century unfolds, declining relative prosperity (as measured by the widening gap between the world’s rich and poor) and increasing insecurity go hand in hand. That inversion largely defines the disruption we currently confront. That is what security policy needs to address, and that demands a realignment of prosperity with security. Security will not be guaranteed by a clinical preoccupation with military threat (and/or its absence) and freedom from crime while more devastating possibilities — with potentially greater costs in terms of human lives and national treasure — progressively dominate the national and international consciousness.

For governments, this creates a new set of challenges. Whereas, during the 20th century, governments of all persuasions looked to ‘hard power’ (that is, military capabilities) to assert their authority, to protect the nation against attack, and to promote their strategic interests, the demand of the 21st century will be to develop the appropriate forms of ‘soft power’ that at once realise the security aspirations of the community while constraining those circumstances in which ‘hard power’ might be required.

SO, WHERE TO?

This discussion paper has identified a number of matters that affect the way Australia's national security policies are designed and framed. It has also identified several symptoms of misalignment between the security needs of the Australian community and the policies that are intended to meet those needs. But this discussion paper has not identified a systematic treatment for the symptoms of misalignment. Nor has it resolved the more fundamental contradictions that prompted this *Rethinking Security* discussion paper in the first place.

This paper implicitly diagnoses four intersecting 'binaries' that need to be addressed if 'national security' is to be reframed in ways that address the disrupted global environment in which Australia is now situated and the disruptive forces that are reconfiguring the 'global rules-based system' that has underpinned Australia's economic, political, social and strategic security since WW2. These 'binaries' include:

- The fundamental relationship between the individual (citizen) and the state.
- The reactive planning dynamic that focuses on threats and risks to security as distinct from the proactive dynamic that might focus on the constructive and positive elements of national harmony that is characterised by harmony, inclusion, resilience, tranquillity and well-being.
- The 'control mentality' that seeks to isolate (and marginalise) problems and manage the people who have those problems as distinct from the 'empowerment mentality' that seeks to enable individuals and communities to take charge of their own lives and prospects.
- The 'intervention model' of public policy design as distinct from the 'prevention model' of public policy design.

From Plato to the Hon. Ken Wyatt, from Jeremy Bentham and his 'panopticon' to Professor Fiona Stanley,³⁷ brilliant people have been attempting to resolve these seemingly intractable tensions. Yet in the past couple of decades the pendulum has swung noticeably in the favour of the state when it comes to the rights of the individual. Whether it is the passage of bills that afford greater powers to police and security agencies, the collection of telecommunications metadata, the surreptitious introduction of facial recognition

³⁷ Consider, for instance, Professor Stanley's sustained efforts to improve the long-term well-being of all Australians, especially indigenous children, through her work on early childhood intervention. See Professor Fiona Stanley AC, "The real brain drain – why putting children first is so important for Australia", *National Press Club*, 6 August 2003 https://www.aracy.org.au/publications-resources/command/download_file/id/149/filename/The_real_brain_drain_-_Why_putting_children_first_is_so_important_for_Australia.pdf

technologies, the profiling of individual preferences in order to develop manipulative choice algorithms or the use of artificial intelligence to generate individual and social controls such as 'robodebt', the privacy and rights of individual citizens are increasingly restricted, all in the name of 'security'. Yet the question remains, how can the state be secure if its citizens are not? This is a fundamental problem that policy makers have failed to address.

New security issues that affect the nation in ways that traditional security solutions are unable to resolve, such as climate change, the affects of climate change on agriculture and food resources, the impact of climate change induced bushfires and floods on national infrastructure, economic well-being and amenity, massive refugee movements as a result of climate change induced civil wars, pandemics, perhaps demand a new suite of conceptual and policy frameworks if the citizen and the state are to enjoy the well-being that is the goal of all sound policy. The reactive, control and interventionist models will simply not cut the mustard if we are to develop systematic solutions to systemic problems.

This is a key contemporary challenge that Australia needs to meet if the nation is to manage, survive and ultimately benefit from the disruption it currently faces.