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2 New Zealand and the world
Andrew Little outlines the Labour Party’s approach to international affairs.

6 An independent foreign policy
Wayne Mapp suggests that New Zealand must adapt if it is to realise the potential of its current approach to international affairs.

10 Game changer competition
Reuben Steff discusses the emerging technological arms competition and a possible New Zealand response.

15 Defence: an evolving approach
Gerry Brownlee reviews the security environment confronting New Zealand and the government’s response to new challenges.

19 Facing new defence challenges
Balaji Chandramohan suggests that the 2016 Defence White Paper represents a paradigm shift in New Zealand’s strategic outlook and its defence operational reach.

22 Looking to an uncertain future
Terence O’Brien reflects on challenges for New Zealand within the Pacific.

28 BOOKS
Raymond Miller: Democracy in New Zealand (Bronwyn Hayward).
Mark Riebling: Church of Spies: The Pope’s Secret War Against Hitler (Anthony Smith).

31 OBITUARY
Roderick Macalister Miller QSO.

32 INSTITUTE NOTES

33 INDEX to VOLUME 41
New Zealand and the world

Andrew Little outlines the Labour Party’s approach to international affairs.

The last few months have been some of the most tumultuous in international affairs for many years. Arguably the most dramatic was the decision of the British electorate to leave the European Union. The consequences of that decision are still being played out and will be for months and years to come. The US presidential race includes a candidate more polarising than any we have seen for more than 50 years. He has harnessed the resentment of people who feel marginalised and excluded from the economic and political system; and he is not the only political candidate to have done so.

Economically, many parts of the world are struggling to achieve pre-global financial crisis rates of growth, and this at a time when interest rates have never been lower, global trade ties have never been deeper and the movement of people never greater. I do not think it is too dramatic to state that we may be at one of those junctures in global history that come around every 30 years or so where the established order and political orthodoxies are overwhelmed by either their own shortcomings or deep-seated public disillusion, or both. I want to discuss Labour’s history in foreign policy, and our take on some of the current issues. But, most importantly, I want to refer to the global moment we inhabit today. It is a moment of uncertainty, of growing insecurity. It is a moment where more and more people feel left out.

The challenge for the world is how to build a global order where everyone has security — physical and economic — and where nobody is left out. And I want to talk about the international approach New Zealand should take to help achieve this.

Birth centenary

The New Zealand Labour party turned 100 in July. Over this past century, part of Labour’s defining achievements in office have been its contributions to New Zealand’s foreign policy, and to international affairs in our region and worldwide. Our foreign policy has always been guided, and continues to be guided, by four core principles.

The first is independence. We believe New Zealand should always make its foreign policy decisions based on an independent assessment of the facts, and on our own views about what action best helps the New Zealand people, and what it will contribute to a just world order. It started with Peter Fraser who, learning the tragic lessons of the First World War, insisted on a New Zealand command for our troops serving in the Second World War. It continued through Norman Kirk, the first New Zealand prime minister to take to the world stage to protest nuclear tests in our region. And, most famously, it was David Lange who declared New Zealand the world’s first nuclear free country in the 1980s.

It is a real testament to the bipartisan nature of New Zealand’s independence that our nuclear-free stance came to be supported by all sides of the political divide in New Zealand. Jim Bolger, Don McKinnon and Winston Peters deserve credit for their roles in managing New Zealand’s international partnerships in the context of a decision some countries would rather we had not made. It is now fair to say our opposition to nuclear weapons has transcended from a ‘streak’, and it now stands as a core part of New Zealand’s international identity. The next Labour government plans to redouble our efforts towards international agreements that further reduce nuclear stockpiles, as we strive for a world free from the constant threat of nuclear annihilation.
Our fierce independence also allowed New Zealand to develop its international reputation as an honest broker. We are proud of that reputation, and of Labour’s part in building it. That reputation has helped us to multiple terms on the UN Security Council; and it is our fervent hope that it will help propel Helen Clark to the office of UN secretary-general later this year. Our spirit of independence also extends to our closest international mate, Australia. If we see wrong being done, we will call them out on it, as we have done over their immigration policy and deportation decisions. Doing so does not detract from our firm and enduring commitment to the highest quality bilateral relationship.

**Core principle**
Of course, the independence of our foreign policy has not led — and will not lead — Labour into isolationism. Indeed, the second core principle underlying Labour’s foreign policy is a policy of engagement. New Zealand has a proud record of lending a hand when countries around the world need our help. That record spans the Second World War, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and many other international conflicts. It involves patrolling one of the largest maritime search areas in the world.

And it involves a deep commitment to multilateral peacekeeping, including taking leadership roles in peacekeeping operations in our region. In Labour, we take our regional responsibilities seriously. A democratic, prosperous Pacific region is in all our interests, not least for the substantial proportion of many Pacific communities residing in New Zealand. This has been a bipartisan aspect of New Zealand’s foreign policy for a long time, and Labour will continue to strengthen it, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Uniting the principles of independence and engagement is a very broad stance of openness. We are open to both sides of an argument, and we are open to helping out where we can.

That same principle also underpins Labour’s approach to trade. Labour is proudly a free trade party. As a small country distant from most of the rest of the world, it is essential we do what we can to showcase our goods and services in the global marketplace. That is why we have long supported bringing down tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade across all sectors, including agriculture. That is why the world trusted another former leader of my party, Mike Moore, with the task of liberalising global trade as head of the World Trade Organisation. That is why we were so proud as a party to negotiate China’s first free trade agreement with a Western nation.

One of the most attractive aspects of many recent developments in trade is seeing countries of all different types, large and small, rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable, all commit to abide by a single set of rules governing their interactions. As we have expanded this rules-based co-operation, the rules have become more specific and more enforceable. That is a good thing. That is what happens when trust between nations grows and matures — we feel comfortable making ever more mutual obligations to each other. In New Zealand, Labour has consistently supported a deepening of the rules-based system on international co-operation.

**Regional security**
Of course, sometimes those rules are tested, and disagreements over their interpretation arise. We have seen this in our region very recently. We have been interested to see the recent rulings from the Permanent Court of Arbitration around the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. The court decided that China’s sovereignty claims in the South China Sea do not have a valid legal basis, and ruled in favour of the Philippines. China has said it does not accept the decision. Our position, which we are proud to share with other parties in New Zealand, is that disputes such as this are best resolved by negotiated peaceful settlements that respect international law, rather than either legal battles or, worse, military incidents.

Of course, issues such as the Spratly Islands cannot be viewed without a broader context, which in this case includes the context of evolving relations between the United States and China. We were very pleased to have the opportunity for some of our senior MPs to meet with US Vice President Joe Biden, when he was in New Zealand in July. As well as discussing China and other regional matters, we were pleased to discuss New Zealand’s on-going commitment to the Five Eyes information-sharing network. We see sharing information with friendly partners as vital in confronting on-going security challenges, including from barbaric
groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS. It is also strongly in New Zealand’s interests that we have deep, friendly military co-operation with the United States. For that reason, I was especially pleased at the vice president’s announcement that a US naval ship would visit New Zealand. I want to congratulate everyone, on both sides of the Pacific, who was involved in putting together this visit, which does good on all sides.

Some in the media here have tried to cast this announcement in terms of winners and losers. I think that is entirely the wrong way to look at it. International co-operation, including military co-operation, is very often about finding ways to enhance everybody’s position, not about a zero-sum game of ‘something for you means something less for me’.

Of course, co-operation with our traditional allies is not the only tool we can use to defeat violent radicalism. We also need to recognise that whenever people feel excluded, and alienated and marginalised, extremism festers. We must remember that here in New Zealand we have a Muslim community that is a vital part of the multicultural society we all love. We must always do more to ensure that every one here in New Zealand feels included, feels part of our great country. That is how we fight extremism, by opening our hearts, by expanding opportunity, by being respectful, by never stopping the fight for an inclusive, open New Zealand.

**Trade developments**

That theme, of understanding those who feel themselves excluded by the global system, is something we need to take very seriously. It encompasses both security challenges and trade challenges. We have seen that theme of exclusion emerge as a core driver behind the Brexit vote. Shortly after the vote, Lord Ashcroft released his private polling about Brexit. It showed one of the strongest predictors of a person voting to leave the European Union was a belief that life was better 30 years ago than it is today.

In other words, it is people who think the 21st century is leaving them behind who drove the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union. Regarding Brexit, there will, of course, be some fallout for our exporters, with our meat exporters being potentially the most vulnerable. We will have to wait and see what shape the post-Brexit United Kingdom–European Union relationship takes before we can assess its impact on New Zealand and our best response. Second, and more importantly, I do not see Brexit affecting the strength of our relationships with either the United Kingdom or the various remaining members of the European Union, either individually or collectively. Europe and New Zealand share many common, progressive values, and share a common interest in ensuring that New Zealand’s products and services are connected with Europe’s discerning and cosmopolitan consumers. And the links between New Zealand and the United Kingdom remain as deep and as broad as ever. I am confident both sets of relationships will thrive and prosper in the years ahead, regardless of Brexit’s eventual form.

There have, of course, been other large-scale trade developments in recent months, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, that affect New Zealand very directly. Labour’s position on the TPP is well known. Despite our longstanding support of free trade, there have to be some bottom lines when international obligations threaten parts of our sovereignty, undercutting our ability to chart our own course in the world. In the case of the agreement, we cannot support the erosion of sovereignty it would entail.

New Zealanders must have the right to elect a government that will give them the same protections from global housing speculators that Australians enjoy today. But the TPP would prevent that. Along with the very weak deal New Zealand negotiated on dairy, that is why we cannot support TPP in its current form. Of course, our position may become moot, because if the United States does not ratify the deal it dies. Both the Democratic and Republican nominees for president oppose the TPP, and it is getting too late for President Obama to try to pass it before he leaves office. Congress already defeated him once on trade this year, and something big needs to change before he will risk being defeated again. If the TPP does not progress this year, Labour would welcome the chance to be part of resumed negotiations leading to an agreement that does away with more tariffs, without curtailing the ability of countries to make laws in their own interests.

**Historic moment**

I want to turn now to a wider issue that I believe sits above much of the challenges we face today. My observation is that we are living in a time of immense global, political and economic insecurity. People are hungry for a sense of physical and economic security; a sense of community; of belonging. But they do not feel these are being provided by the current arrangements. This insecurity exposes the limits of the dominant political project of our time: a 40-year project to subvert more and more of the collective decision-making about how, and in whose interests, our society functions to the logic of the market place; to weaken the role and powers of the state and to reduce the size and scope of government.

From the rise of the New Right in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to the Washington Consensus of the 1990s, through to the austerity movements in the wake of the global financial crisis,
Then Prime Minister Helen Clark ushered in a free trade deal with China in 2008.

There has been a consistent political project on the part of some to reshape the role and size of the state in our modern developed economy. We have been told by the adherents of this project that the path to prosperity was to cut taxes, cut regulations, give more money than ever to the very rich and then wait for the wealth to trickle down. For years, we have been told that a smaller state is the inevitable, correct and natural response to globalisation; that one set of changes flows naturally and unavoidably from the other.

There are some who say that the nation state’s traditional role of ensuring security and prosperity, and a sense of community and belonging for its people, has been taken over by the global market place. And that marketplace is where people should look for answers. This is just a rhetorical sleight of hand, designed to drape a deliberate set of political choices in a cloak of inevitability. But it is not inevitable. It is a choice.

Questioning choices

These major political changes are a separate process to the technological and economic changes brought on by globalisation. And in today’s increasingly insecure world, we are entitled to ask ourselves if the choices were the right ones. Because look at what they have led to:

- a greater sense of financial and economic insecurity for more and more people
- a younger generation burdened with debt, facing the prospects of never owning their own home, entering a workforce that is increasingly precarious and casualised and living on a planet at risk from climate change
- a global economy where the super-rich increasingly operate under their own set of rules, as was shown clearly in the Panama Papers, with ever growing levels of inequality and a loss of social mobility
- a system which, according to World Bank figures, has delivered income growth to the world’s 1 per cent more than five times higher than the meagre income growth to the poorer citizens of developed countries
- a system where distrust and apathy towards public institutions is growing higher every year.

Those outcomes are simply not sustainable. An economy and a system where more people than ever feel shut out, feel insecure, feel cut off and alone and feel the real levers of their democracy are out of their grasp is not sustainable.

The project of a smaller, weaker state for its own sake has failed. Instead, we need a peaceful global order marked by more active states, which take seriously the responsibility to deliver security to their citizens and an active civil society. And, perhaps even more crucially, the state actually has a vital role to play in ensuring that democratic institutions are protected and are responsive to the needs of their citizens and that the deck does not become stacked in favour of those who are already powerful and privileged.

Nation states have the greatest power to come together to tackle the largest and most intractable challenges, whether it is promoting peace or limiting carbon emissions. We need to build a truly democratic society, where every citizen is equal and every voice counts, not just those with the most money or the most power. We need a new progressive approach that builds nations, that builds a fairer, more prosperous global economy.

Essential goal

For me, the goal of any responsible government must be that each of its citizens has the security to live a good, fulfilling life and the opportunity to live up to their potential. That is how I believe we must respond to this historical moment of growing insecurity. As Michael Oakeshott has said: citizenship is a spiritual experience, not a legal relationship. That, I believe, is the way forward for New Zealand, and that is the leadership we need now.

I saw a cartoon recently showing a pub quiz in 2025. The quizmaster starts a question ‘in what year did…’ and three people yell out ‘2016!’ Reacting to world news this year certainly feels, to quote Jeremy Coney, like bowling in the highlights. Only they do not all feel like highlights in 2016; plenty feel like lowlights. The individual challenges the international community face in 2016 are substantial. For some of them, the contours of the issues will not become clear until after the United States votes in November.

But sitting above all those individual issues is a confronting reality. Many millions of people around the world do not believe that the global system is delivering for them. They have tried to protest, but nobody listened. Now they are starting to vote with their feet.

Understanding that feeling of exclusion is absolutely critical: not mollifying it or patronising it, but understanding it and acting on it. The nature of the global system needs to change so that:

- it makes good on its promise of a more secure future for everyone, not just for some;
- it makes good on its promise of enhanced opportunity for all, not just for some;
- and it finally makes good on its promise of enriching people’s identities, rather than denying them.

That is the core international challenge of our age, and will sit at the core of the next Labour government’s foreign policy.
An independent foreign policy

Wayne Mapp suggests that New Zealand must adapt if it is to fully realise the potential of its current approach to international affairs.

It is an article of faith across the political spectrum that New Zealand’s independent foreign policy has its origins in the success of the anti-nuclear contest that played out in the 1980s. The anti-nuclear movement, and the New Zealand government, had its first major successes against French nuclear testing, but the issue gained its full intensity in respect of visits by United States nuclear-powered and -armed vessels in the early 1980s.

It is not necessary here to recall the details of the dispute; these have been well canvassed by many commentators. But it is worth noting that at the time, many senior officials were concerned that Prime Minister Robert Muldoon’s enthusiasm for such visits, particularly by nuclear-powered vessels, was having the opposite effect than was intended. The prime minister’s desire to show just how close the two nations were was in fact damaging the ANZUS alliance. For many New Zealanders, the visits showed that New Zealand was too closely locked into the United States embrace.

The ultimate outcome of the ship visits was the complete opposite of what Muldoon intended. The incoming Labour government rapidly proceeded to ban any visits by nuclear-propelled or nuclear-armed ships. Even the USS Buchanan, which was highly unlikely to be nuclear-armed, was banned from visiting on the basis officials could not guarantee to the government that she did not carry nuclear weapons.

The suspension of New Zealand from active participation in ANZUS as a direct result of the nuclear ban is seen as the origin of the independent foreign policy. Former Prime Minister Sir Geoffrey Palmer, speaking on national radio in July 2016 following the announcement of a visit of a United States naval vessel to the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Royal New Zealand Navy, was in no doubt that the nuclear free policy was the origin of New Zealand’s independent foreign policy. Prime Minister John Key has connected the nuclear free status with New Zealand’s independent foreign policy throughout his prime ministership.1

The nuclear free issue was a highly visible manifestation of an independent foreign policy. In the economic sphere it was arguably also evident in New Zealand being the first developed nation to have a free trade agreement with China, although this was far less contentious across the political spectrum.

Starting point

What does an independent foreign policy mean, particularly in the security arena? As a starting point, many people draw a distinction with Australia. New Zealand is seen to have ‘independence of thought’. In contrast, Australia with its role as ‘deputy sheriff’ to the United States is seen to lack this freedom.2

New Zealand is not alone in this dilemma. Canada, with its longstanding ties with a close and powerful neighbour, has often struggled to find its place in the world. The latest exposition of the Canadian position by Foreign Minister Stephanie Dion is one of ‘responsible conviction’.3 This involves, among other things, increased support for United Nations peace operations, mediation and post-conflict reconstruction. Similarly, in the fight against ISIS, Canada shifted from supplying combat aircraft to tripling the military training effort of Iraqi forces.

Like New Zealand, Canada is a member of Five Eyes, which is arguably the most influential intelligence sharing agreement in the Western world. Canada’s membership of NATO means their situation is somewhat different to that of New Zealand, which has far fewer alliance constraints, and thus

New Zealand's two major political parties, and the likely lead parties in coalition government, see New Zealand as a Western nation, one that is closely linked to the United States, even if not as an ally. It is, therefore, more than likely that New Zealand will be an active participant in Western causes. This presents challenges in sustaining an independent foreign policy. There are several models that New Zealand could consider: the South American, the Nordic or the Canadian. Creative thinking will be needed in future if New Zealand is to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in its approach.
arguably has more choices.

If an independent foreign policy in the New Zealand context reflects independence of thought, how do we exercise it, and do we allow our imagination to envisage new options?

A nation is the product of its history and its myths. The origins of New Zealand in the British Empire was a powerful draw throughout the 20th century, never better expressed than by Prime Minister Michael Savage upon the declaration of war in 1939: ‘Where Britain goes, we go, where she stands we stand’. Of course that is nearly 80 years ago. It is inconceivable that a contemporary era this is closely tied to combatting terrorism. Both the deployments to Afghanistan and the deployment of military trainers to Iraq can be seen in this light. The latter was notable in that the government was careful not to give any sense that there would be a more extensive engagement. The involvement was strictly not a combat role. It is difficult for nations within the Western orbit to opt out of having a limited military and intelligence role to combat terrorist organisations.

Traditional military action, as in the Gulf War of 1991 and the Iraq War of 2003, requires more formal processes under international law, since it usually involves the invasion of the territory of a state. In the case of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, there was major doubt among many Western nations as to the basis of the lawful authority. Prime Minister Clark was clear that New Zealand would not take part unless there was authorisation by the United Nations. However, New Zealand did deploy aircraft and ships to the Gulf, sent special forces to Afghanistan and agreed to send military engineers to Iraq for reconstruction, all of which were made as a result of understandings with the United States administration. The contrast can be made with Australia. As an ally of the United States, Prime Minister John Howard considered that if the United States requested support, then Australia was bound to give it very serious consideration. The deployment of the Royal Australian Air Force F18 squadron was seen as a highly visible, though relatively low risk contribution.

The level of bipartisanship that exists among the leadership of the Labour and National parties does not extend across the political spectrum, including within the two major parties. Thus, in Labour many activists and members do not see themselves as part of the establishment consensus.

### Significant minority

There is a significant minority within the New Zealand population and among political leaders who consider that New Zealand’s foreign policy is too closely tied to its Western origins. In this view, New Zealand neither takes advantage of its relative isolation and the security that confers nor has adapted to the changing circumstances within the world. They contend that both these circumstances offer an alternative path that is both more independent and more principled.
pled. The continuing tie to Western causes and obligations limits a full expression of an independent foreign policy.

There are a number of examples that New Zealand could follow in developing a more independent foreign policy. They range from Canada’s ‘responsible conviction’ to the Irish or Swedish approaches — of countries which, like New Zealand, do not have extensive formal alliance ties — through to the South American model, particularly that of Chile.

**Case study**

Chile provides an interesting case study. Of all the South American nations, Chile considers that it has a close identification with the West. Chile is one of the TPP negotiating nations and has entered into a number of free trade agreements. It is relatively open to foreign investment. On the security front, it is a participant in the United States-led RIMPAC naval exercises at Hawaii. The Chilean Navy has close ties with the Royal Navy, and its naval combat ships are relatively new ex-Royal Navy Type 23 frigates.

None of these connections result in Chile being involved in traditional Western causes. It has not participated in any capacity in the recent Middle East coalitions, and neither does it consider that it is obligated to take any Middle Eastern refugees. Nor, as is the case with other South American nations, is there any expectation that it should do so. Like New Zealand, South America is well away from most of the places of conflict. At least in theory, those far removed from conflict are less likely to feel the pull of obligation.

The South American approach can be contrasted with the Nordic model, particularly that of Sweden and Finland. These nations have taken a different approach to the South American nations in respect of their independent foreign policy. Neither Finland nor Sweden belongs to NATO, the principal European defence alliance. However, unlike most South American nations, they are both internationally engaged. To some extent the Nordic approach may be seen as a trade-off. At least for their fellow European nations, a neutral approach requires a compensating internationalist approach. Nevertheless, Sweden’s foreign policy has evolved over the last two decades to a more Western orientation than was the case in the Cold War. Thus, in Afghanistan I was flown on a Swedish Air Force transport aircraft from Bamiyan province to Kabul.

Ireland also has a similar approach, determined in large measure by its historical relationship with the United Kingdom. The central role that the United Kingdom plays in the Western alliance means that Ireland prefers a more neutral approach. But no one would pretend that Ireland is anything other than a Western country. Ireland has significant forces in United Nations missions, with around 500 people in various Middle Eastern missions and in Cyprus and Kosovo. As with Sweden, Ireland deployed forces to Afghanistan under the United Nations’ mandate.

**Powerful attraction**

The Swedish and Irish approach is powerfuly attractive to many New Zealanders. Both Ireland and Sweden are indisputably Western, but without many of the alliance or partnership obligations. They are both actively internationally engaged and are widely respected. Could New Zealand adopt the same approach?

There are many limitations to the extent that the Chilean, the Irish or the Swedish approach could be adopted, relating to both our history and our relationship with our closest neighbour. New Zealand has deep cultural, economic and security ties with Australia. Thus Australia’s alliance relationships intimately affect New Zealand. While the two countries are able to pursue their own foreign policy, they cannot do so to the point of fundamentally damaging the Anzac alliance. That alliance withstood the ANZUS disruption, though not without significant tension between the two nations, particularly in the decade following the breach. However, the Anzac alliance would not easily survive New Zealand essentially becoming a neutral nation. Adopting the Chilean approach would be a stark shift in New Zealand’s foreign policy and security stance, and would be a dramatic departure from New Zealand’s past.

It is arguable that the Irish and Swedish approach could be more easily accommodated within the framework of New Zealand’s alliance relationship with Australia. Within the South Pacific, New Zealand and Australia would operate much as they do now. It would also be clear that New Zealand would come to Australia’s aid in the unlikely event of an attack on Australia. An alliance relationship that could not guarantee that would hardly qualify for such a status.

However, perhaps the best example for New Zealand is that of Canada. Most recent Canadian governments have had an active role in United Nations peacekeeping missions, to a greater extent than New Zealand. Canada has traditionally been able to balance its alliance commitments with an internationalist outlook. There are many similarities between the two countries, but it is arguable that Canada has been more successful in portraying itself as an independent actor.

**Continuing commitment**

A continuing commitment to our alliance relationships would mean that New Zealand would remain engaged in the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) with the biannual maritime exer-
advocates more enthusiastically sought to trade with Russia in the late 1990s to revive trade negotiations with Russia. It seems ironic that we might look carefully at the conditions required for further trade agreements with a wide variety of countries. But in furtherance of new independent streak. We have sought and gained free trade agreements with a number of countries. Yet the approach might not look much different to Canada’s repositioning view as to where it thinks United Nations missions would best align with our national interest. Some United Nations missions would have greater appeal than others. In many respects, this approach might not look much different to Canada’s repositioning under their new doctrine of ‘responsible conviction’.

In the security arena, which would be the most obvious area for this new approach to be implemented, New Zealand’s prime international role would be peacekeeping. This would not be a blank cheque to the United Nations to determine where New Zealand forces would be deployed, but it would mean a larger level of engagement in United Nations peacekeeping than New Zealand currently sustains. New Zealand would always have a view as to where it thinks United Nations missions would best align with our national interest. Some United Nations missions would have greater appeal than others. In many respects, this approach might not look much different to Canada’s repositioning under their new doctrine of ‘responsible conviction’.

In the economic arena New Zealand already displays a strong independent streak. We have sought and gained free trade agreements with a wide variety of countries. But in furtherance of new opportunities, we might look carefully at the conditions required to revive trade negotiations with Russia. It seems ironic that we more enthusiastically sought to trade with Russia in the height of the Cold War than we do now.

New Zealand’s independent foreign policy can be expressed in a number of ways. At present, particularly in the security arena, we do so through a lens of our traditional alliances and partnerships. Other Western nations demonstrate that a broader perspective is possible, without negating existing longstanding relationships. Those nations with a history of neutralism, such as Ireland and Sweden, provide more challenging models. Their approach cannot be simply replicated in New Zealand.

Nevertheless, it can be cogently argued that New Zealand has yet to fully realise the opportunities of an independent foreign policy, both in the economic and security spheres. To achieve them, creative thinking on how best to fulfil the potential of that policy will be needed.

NOTES
1. A notable example was the prime minister’s first speech to the United Nations on 26 September 2009.
2. Tim Watkin, ‘The Mouse that Roared: NZ’s historic day as the US backed down’, published on Pandit, a web-based forum.
5. The Australian commitment was strictly time limited, and Australian forces never became involved in the later counter insurgency operation. Prime Minister Howard was seen to have finely finessed the Australian contribution so that it gave substance to the alliance with the United States, without fully buying into the Iraq military/political project.
6. The Chilean ambassador to New Zealand advised the writer that Chile considered itself a Western nation.

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Game changer competition

Reuben Steff discusses the emerging technological arms competition and a possible New Zealand response.

A new arms competition is underway between the United States, Russia and China, with implications for every state concerned with international peace and security, including New Zealand. Unlike the Cold War arms race that chiefly sought numerical superiority, the current competition is characterised by a race to develop new ‘game changing’ technologies, with the United States out in the lead across a range of platforms. Indeed, we are on the cusp of seeing the deployment of weapons systems that until recently have only been imagined in science fiction.

Since antiquity, military developments in one country have generated responses in others. Today is no different as Russia and China pursue systems to offset US advances. Despite the fact that the strategic consequences of this competition are unknown, there is little debate taking place outside of national security circles. To shine some light on this subject, this article firstly sets the stage for the competition taking place. It then considers some of the potentially ‘game changing’ technologies that are being developed by the United States, Russia and China, which looks at how US missile defence is generating a response and outlines the nuclear modernisation efforts of these countries. Concluding comments mark the case that New Zealand should positively contribute to efforts to restrain this competition and enhance international security.

While the United States maintained a clear military lead over its rivals throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s, the picture became cloudier from the early 2000s as the Russian and Chinese economies grew rapidly, which translated into new military capabilities. This, in turn, has called into question the balance of power in neighbouring regions that they judge critical to their national security, leading them to assert their geopolitical interests in recent years. For Russia this had led to a struggle with the United States and NATO for influence over former Soviet territories (and parts of the Middle East); for China it is a confrontation over the East and South China seas, and nearby naval trade routes through which an increasing amount of global trade transits.

This confrontation has been intensified by the fact that America’s advantage in conventional weapons technology is being challenged. Two high profile examples include China’s pursuit of ‘carrier killer’ ballistic missiles (the DF-21) designed to push US power away from the Chinese coast and Russia’s cruise missiles strikes from the Mediterranean into Syria that took many commentators by surprise. Speaking in November 2014, then US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel articulated America’s concerns when he stated that countries like Russia and China have been heavily investing in military modernization programs to blunt our military’s technological edge, fielding advanced aircraft, submarines, and both longer range and more accurate missiles. They’re also developing new anti-ship and air-to-air missiles, counter-space, cyber, electronic warfare, undersea, and air attack capabilities.

Furthermore, in a February 2016 speech current US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter made it plain that after a decade of fighting insurgencies, the United States is returning its attention to waging a great power competition against Russia and China. While noting that ‘we do not desire conflict of any kind with either’, Carter explained that ‘Russia and China are our most stressing competitors’ as ‘they have developed and are continuing to advance military systems that seek to threaten our advantages in specific areas’. Thus ‘DOD [Department of Defense] has elevated their importance in our defence planning and budgeting.’ The next section outlines some of the key systems the United States is developing to try stay ahead of its great power competitors.

Restoring superiority

While stealth technology and precision strike capabilities have given America an ability to project power deep into the territories of adversaries since the 1980s, the proliferation of Russia’s sophisticated air defence systems in recent years to China, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela, as well as Russia’s and China’s development of fifth generation fighter jets, has called the future of US air dominance into question. The deployment of new hypersonic missiles could renew America’s advantage. In August 2014 the United States tested an advanced hypersonic missile as part of its Prompt Global Strike programme. Able to travel at five times the speed of sound (Mach 5), these missiles are much harder to detect in flight than traditional ballistic missiles and could allow the United States to threaten dispersed and well-defended nuclear weapons programmes deep inside enemy territory.

An increasingly complex arms competition is underway between the United States, Russia and China. While the United States is in the lead across a range of current and emerging systems, it can no longer take its position for granted, and there is an urgent need for greater attention to be paid to this competition as the strategic consequences are unknown. Furthermore, an opportunity exists for countries like New Zealand to seize the initiative and play a role in advancing arms control programmes that promote collective reassurance and will enhance international security.
A recent report states that their speed will enable 'US commanders the ability to penetrate an opponent’s decision making process, and as a result, rapidly put an adversary on the defensive'.\(^3\) It goes on to note that hypersonic missiles promise to 'revolutionize military affairs in the same fashion that stealth did a generation ago and the turbojet engine did a generation before' and the United States 'cannot afford to lose this emerging competition….'\(^4\) The United States hopes to deploy its first medium-range system in the 2020s. Russia and China are not allowing themselves to fall behind and are designing and testing their own missiles, and investing in facilities to develop the supporting infrastructure. Tests are the clearest sign of intentions, with China conducting three tests of its Wu-14 hypersonic strike vehicle in 2014 and another in northern China in April 2016. Russia and India are planning tests for 2017.\(^5\) 

Another futuristic technology the United States is investing in is directed energy. The US Navy tested prototypes between 2009–12 and installed a test system on the USS Ponce in the Persian Gulf for operational tests in 2014. These 'lasers' could counter potential targets such as small boats, incoming rockets, artillery shells, mortars, unmanned aerial vehicles, manned aircraft, cruise missiles and anti-ship ballistic missiles (such as the DF-41). When deployed they could lead to profound shifts in US naval tactics, ship design, and procurement plans comparable to the advent of shipboard missiles in the 1950s.\(^6\) While directed energy faces limitations (such as having to maintain 'line of sight' with their targets and being susceptible to disruption by atmospheric conditions), their advantages are considerable, including a low marginal cost per shot relative to launching costly missiles; a deep magazine that could be fired as long as ships generate electricity; the ability to engage targets virtually instantaneously and intercept missiles designed to 'dodge' missile defence interceptors. The US Navy reportedly anticipates moving to a shipboard laser programme of record in 2018 and achieving an initial operational capability in FY2020 or FY2021.\(^7\) 

**Railgun hopes**

The United States also has high hopes for its electromagnetic railgun. Likened by some to a 'battlefield meteorite', it uses electromagnetic rails (rather than gunpowder or explosives) to accelerate hardened projectiles to astounding velocities that could destroy enemy ships and terrorist training camps, and intercept missiles inexpensively and in larger numbers than current missile defence systems.\(^8\) With conventional guns, bullets lose acceleration after firing, whereas railgun projectiles gain speed as they travel the length of their 10.6-metre barrel, exiting at 7200 kilometres per hour.\(^9\) It will also allow massive capacities. Discussing their potential utility, US Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work has stated

> I can’t conceive of a future where we would replicate Cold War forces in Europe… . But I could conceive of a set of railguns that would be inexpensive but would have enormous deterrent value. They would have value against airplanes, missiles, tanks, almost anything.\(^10\)

The US Navy intends to test a railgun at sea in 2016 or 2017 and anticipates fielding systems in ten years.\(^11\)

The Congressional Research Service explains that the successful deployment of any one of the above technologies would be regarded as a 'game changer'; if two or three of them are deployed, then it may be considered as a 'revolution' in warfare.\(^12\) Unsurprisingly, then, and although there is less information available in the public domain, multiple sources note that both Russia and China are also pursuing their own hypersonic missile, directed energy and railgun programmes in an attempt to keep up with US efforts.

The strategic consequences of this competition are unknown. Consider hypersonic missiles which could dramatically decrease the decision-time open to actors during future crises. This, in turn, could increase pressure to pre-empt the other sides’ hypersonic forces since the best defence will be to destroy weapons prior to launch (increasing war planners’ emphasis on taking offensive action). Similarly, they cannot be divorced from the highest stage of escalation — nuclear warfare. Therefore, how conventional and nuclear deterrence are managed will change as well, especially as hypersonic missiles could be equipped with nuclear warheads. Although the United States has said it only seeks a conventional
capability, military planners in other countries plan for worst-case scenarios and will assume the United States would not rule out deploying nuclear hypersonic missiles.

**Missile defence**

Another driver of competition is America’s on-going development and deployment of ballistic missile defence systems. A bit of historical background is required: during the Cold War, the superpowers agreed to stabilise the nuclear arms race after both secured ‘second strike’ capabilities (the ability to suffer a surprise nuclear first strike and retaliate with sizeable nuclear weapons against the attacker). This led to the codification of mutually assured destruction (MAD) with the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1972 that outlawed the development/deployment of national ballistic missile defence systems capable of defending against the others’ intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) — their strategic nuclear forces. Investments into tactical theatre missile defences were allowed to continue. The ABM Treaty came to be seen as the cornerstone of ‘strategic stability’.

However, in 2001 the George W. Bush administration unilaterally abrogated the ABM Treaty, emphasising the unreliability of deterrence by retaliation against ‘rogue states’ and China. This took place alongside debates over whether the United States was seeking to achieve nuclear primacy — a strategic capability that would allow it to destroy foreign nuclear arsenals in a preemptive first-strike (and thus escape MAD). In theory, national ballistic missile defence would complement this. The United States began deployment of a ground-based mid-course defence system in Alaska and California in 2004, while investments and deployment into proven theatre missile defence continued (Patriot-3, THAAD and Aegis SM-3). While Barack Obama cancelled a planned ‘third site’ of the ground-based mid-course defence system slated for Poland and the Czech Republic, he has, if anything, expanded and deepened US commitment to the overall programme by pursuing a European phased adaptive approach (that is progressively rolling out systems across Europe) and sold a range of ballistic missile defence systems to allies spread across the Middle East and North-east Asia. Eventually, it is envisaged that these regional systems will work in concert with one another.

**Great suspicion**

Russia and China view these systems with great suspicion, believing they could undermine their nuclear deterrents and are a geopolitical mechanism for the United States to reinforce its alliances around their borders. In response, Russia and China are taking steps to counter the US ballistic missile defence system. Their efforts have involved fielding new strategic nuclear and conventional weapons equipped with BMD countermeasures, and making alterations to nuclear doctrine. In 2010 Russia deployed the Topol-M (SS-27) ICBM, which contains a manoeuvrable re-entry vehicle to evade US ballistic missile defence systems in flight. A submarine-launched version (the Bulava) was deployed into service in June 2012. Russia will also deploy a ‘super heavy’ ICBM (‘Sarmat’) in 2016 and plans a total of fourteen tests of its re-entry vehicle to evade US ballistic missile defence systems. China is deploying a road-mobile DF-31A ICBM, and developing the DF-41, which could be modified to include multiple independent re-entry vehicles to allow it to hold up to ten missiles. The DF-41 was successfully tested for a seventh time this year and could be deployed by the end of 2016. China is also rolling out a ballistic missile submarine force and shows indications of gradually changing its ‘no first use’ nuclear doctrine and moving from a minimum to a medium deterrent posture.

China also tested ballistic missile defence interceptors three times in 2010 and could be on the cusp of making a decision to deploy its own limited strategic ballistic missile defence system. China’s interest in BMD technology has waxed and waned since the early 1960s, seemingly keyed to the rising and falling of America’s interest in BMD programmes, suggesting an action-reaction dynamic is playing out. Some ballistic missile defence interceptors also have an anti-satellite function. China demonstrated this when it destroyed a satellite in 2007 with a ‘kinetic kill’ interceptor similar to America’s SM-3 missile. This test became the largest contributor to the estimated 500,000 pieces of debris floating in space that pose an indiscriminate threat to space-based systems. China, which was widely condemned for this action, has conducted three tests since that time. The United States followed China’s test in 2008 by destroying a malfunctioning satellite with an SM-3 interceptor, albeit without releasing destructive debris. As one Chinese People’s Liberation Army official noted, interceptor technology ‘is useful for both missile defence and space applications, but space is more important’. This is because the United States, as the dominant global military power, relies on space-based assets more than its competitors (US satellites number 549, China has 142, Russia 131, Japan 55 and the United Kingdom 39), while satellites are intrinsically hard to defend. Thus, America’s position in space is potentially vulnerable to others’ anti-satellite technologies and is another element of the contemporary arms competition. Russia has this technology and India is interested in it, and no doubt other nations will shortly follow suit as space becomes an increasingly contested and important domain.

**Nuclear modernisation**

Early in its first term, the Obama administration tried to re energise nuclear arms control and the wider non-proliferation agenda by signing New START with Russia (that committed both states to limit themselves to no more than 1550 deployed warheads), stated its intention to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and reiterated US commitment to pursuing total nuclear disarmament. But it has become increasingly apparent that the global non-proliferation agenda is making little ground. In fact, all the world’s nuclear powers are engaged in efforts to modernise their nuclear arsenals and some, such as India, Pakistan, China and North Korea, are gradually expanding their arsenals.
The Arms Control Association reports that the United States is set to spend $350 billion between FY 2015 and FY 2024 on nuclear modernisation. Independent estimates put the cost of nuclear modernisation over the next 30 years as high as $1 trillion. The US arsenal is spread across ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and strategic bombers, all of which are being replaced or rebuilt. The ‘nuclear weapons complex’ of supporting laboratories, factories and testing sites where weapons are designed, developed and built will also be renewed. As such, the Arms Control Association notes that ‘The planned U.S. investment in nuclear forces is unrivalled by any other nuclear power.’ Furthermore, despite advice that US security could be maintained while reducing strategic forces by a third below New START levels, spending levels are aligned to sustaining the current nuclear force for the foreseeable future.

Obama has not been helped by his congressional opponents, who contend that cuts would threaten US national security and have prevented moves to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and Russian officials who declare that future arms control agreements will require placing limits on US ballistic missile defence systems. The Obama administration has rejected the latter, and threatened to walk away during the New START negotiations when Russia tried to bring them onto the table. Worryingly, during a recent trip to Washington DC one government insider told me that he sees little likelihood of a major arms control treaty in the next ten years, noting that the demographics of the Senate and Congress will have to change first.

**Russian response**

Russia is also modernising its nuclear programme, developing three new land-based missiles, modernising its ballistic missile carrying submarines, upgrading its air force, developing a new nuclear-capable cruise missile and a new tactical bomber and deploying its Iskander short-range mobile tactical nuclear missile. As noted, Russia points to US efforts in ballistic missile defence and hypersonic missile technology as a rationale for its own programme. Other indications of Russia’s intentions were revealed when it skipped the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit and tested cruise missiles that violate the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty. China, which has long-restrained itself in this area but has been the least transparent, maintaining only about 250 warheads and approximately 50 capable of hitting the United States, is slowly but surely expanding and modernising its nuclear forces to make them more survivable and enhance its retaliatory capacity.

During the Cold War, specialists in the United States believed that there was an autonomous dynamic to the Cold War arms race — a technological imperative or determinism that applied to the development of military technology. The United States had to avoid being overtaken by the Soviets. This led the Americans to pursue a Doctrine of Comparative Technological Advantage that has been institutionalised today. For example, in 2012 then Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter revealed the creation of the Strategic Capabilities Office. The director of the office, Will Roper, articulated the rationale, stating that the United States felt that they were ‘correctly [realising] that going back into a great-power competition [with Russia and China] is going to require bringing back a lot of capabilities that had gone dormant in the department’. The role of the office is to re-imagine existing military systems and give them new missions and field new technologies as quickly as possible. Indeed, the US investment in research and development is immense, totalling US$71.4 billion in 2017 (a figure that roughly equals Russia’s total 2015 military budget).

The Strategic Capabilities Office is one element of America’s new Third Offset Strategy, designed to offset adversaries’ strengths by creating advanced leap-ahead technologies. While these efforts are understandable in a world where America’s position is being contested, James Acton has noted that some of these systems, such as hypersonic missiles, appear to lack a clear mission or articulation of how they fit into US strategy. It is entirely possible that in some cases technology drives US strategy rather than the other way around, even as they generate responses elsewhere that may undermine the potential security benefits that accrue from deploying the systems in the first place.

**Key driver**

The above paragraph raises a question — what is actually driving this competition? Is it a real threat posed from outside or are internal domestic and industrial forces the prime drivers? Or both? In recent discussions between myself and researchers in Washington DC-based think tanks, it became evident that while domestic drivers do play a role, in the current geopolitical environment characterised by intensifying confrontation each side does believe a real external threat exists, and thus an active competition is leading them to take into account others’ respective weapons programmes and respond with their own. This is a dangerous situation and makes the need to decipher and restrain this arms competition all the more urgent.

The Cold War arms race of massive deployed nuclear forces has been replaced by a less obvious and more complex competition, where qualitative advancements are key. The United States is clearly leading this race and will continue to pursue these technologies. For our part, New Zealand has been a beacon of progress when it comes to promoting global disarmament efforts in international bodies. Now is the time for it to recalibrate its efforts by identifying those emerging weapon systems that could be most destabilising in the future, and consider how they might be...
restrained and where ‘quick wins’ could be achieved to generate momentum for arms control processes (for example by promoting a hypersonic missile test ban or anti-satellite weapon test ban to prevent indiscriminate orbital debris). This could provide New Zealand with considerable diplomatic cachet. Relatedly, New Zealand should encourage efforts to look at the role these systems are playing in undermining great power relations and the affects they will have on international security in the years to come.

NOTES

4. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.5.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
19. Cheryl Pellerin, ‘DoD Strategic Capabilities Office Gives

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INS Vikramaditya, purchased from Russia in 2004, undergoing trials
The last fifteen years has seen the international strategic environment become increasingly uncertain and unstable. If we ever were in a benign strategic environment, we most certainly are no longer. Some of the changes have evolved more gradually: for example, the resurgence of a more assertive Russia; the growing economic might of China and its emergence as a military big power; and the cause of concern to Russia and China, and the whole of the Asia–Pacific region, the volatile and unpredictable North Korea. But some changes have come in the form of major shocks like the 9/11 terror attacks or the dramatic emergence of Daesh (ISIS) and other sectarian terrorist groups.

New Zealand’s concept of security has also evolved. We can no longer afford to think about our security from a perspective that says our geographic location provides a fortress against would-be invaders. Indeed, those terms, fortress and invaders, are along with most traditional descriptors of threat and deterrent, being redefined by advances in technology. These advances have brought New Zealand economically and socially closer to the world, and this connectivity also carries increased risks.

Cyber threats are growing markedly both in quantity and variety. They can emanate from anywhere and target any of us. We have seen parts of the Ukrainian power grid shut down and 30,000 computers in Saudi Arabia’s national oil firm disabled. Just weeks ago denial of service attacks were part of the reason for crashing the Australian government’s online census. Such events occurring in New Zealand are not inconceivable. Cyber-attacks, and the need for cyber defences, are now business as usual for many organisations.

New Zealand commerce, social services and government services also rely increasingly on space-based infrastructure, such as satellites. This infrastructure supports critical communications and navigation functions. It is the modern oil of economic prosperity, helps maintain public safety and, in a defence context, supports our military operations.

**Terror threat**

Nor are we immune from the terror threat. Extremist groups have shown a sophisticated grasp of technology and social media. This has enabled them to penetrate communities globally to take advantage of the vulnerable and disaffected. Terror attacks in other countries pose obvious threats to life and property — and in the case of Daesh have undermined national borders. This has been borne out with the recent attacks in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Syria, France, Germany, Afghanistan, Turkey, Belgium, the United States, Iraq and Australia.

Terror attacks outside of New Zealand can have a direct impact on New Zealanders too. On any given day there are about 80,000 New Zealanders overseas. Roughly half a million New Zealand citizens live in the United States, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. So New Zealand has a strong interest in contributing to counter-terror efforts overseas.

Overall, we are seeing increasing challenges to the international rules-based order. We have a strong interest in supporting this order. This is the reason we sought a seat on the United Na-
tions Security Council. Examples abound, whether in the Middle East, the Ukraine and Crimea and arguably even closer to home in the South Pacific, where transnational crime is undermining the sovereignty of nations whose ability to control their coastlines is already limited.

As a small country we rely on a stable international rules-based order. This provides a level playing field, according the same rights to all states regardless of their size or strategic weight. It provides a set of rules and institutions that govern state behaviour and maintain a degree of predictability.

Our economic prosperity is intimately linked to security and stability further afield. New Zealand continues to benefit from the opportunities provided by Asia’s strong growth. Seven of our ten largest trading partners are in Asia. We have a strong interest in peace and security in the region. Regional tensions are greater than they were five years ago, but the likelihood of major conflict in the region remains low because of factors such as today’s extensive economic integration. But our geography will still define our immediate priorities.

**White paper**

Our *Defence White Paper 2016* does not identify any direct military threat to New Zealand. But New Zealand must manage a range of other important strategic challenges. Many of these challenges relate to our status as a maritime nation. New Zealand’s exclusive economic zone is the world’s fourth largest. We have got a responsibility to protect the natural resources within this area. Beyond the exclusive economic zone, New Zealand’s area of search and rescue responsibility extends from north of the Equator, all the way to the South Pole, halfway to Australia and halfway to South America (one-eleventh of the planet).

As our wider maritime zone gets more congested, fulfilling our responsibilities is getting more difficult and complex. New Zealand has a claim to the Ross Dependency of Antarctica, an area together with the Southern Ocean that is the focus of increasing international interest. As a nation we have got a strong interest in preserving the Antarctic environment and its stability. Like our South Pacific partners, we face a constant threat of natural disasters.

New Zealand’s security is connected with that of our friends and partners in the South Pacific. Our strong people-to-people links, historical connections and, in some cases, constitutional obligations mean we have a strong interest in supporting regional stability. New Zealand’s role in supporting Fiji in the aftermath of Cyclone Winston is one of many tangible examples of this.

In April of this year the New Zealand Defence Force completed its post-Winston relief operations in Fiji. This operation was one of our biggest peacetime deployments to the Pacific, with close to 500 personnel, two ships and six aircraft involved in delivering hundreds of tonnes of critical aid. Beyond their vulnerability to natural disasters, our South Pacific neighbours also face many social, economic and governance pressures. New Zealand preparedness to support its neighbours in the South Pacific, either independently or alongside its partners, will remain a priority.

**Security issue**

Security is an all-of-government issue. New Zealand, and by extension its defence force, must be ready to meet a wide range of security challenges. Security is not the responsibility of core security agencies alone. Cyber security, for example, requires a national effort. To help defend government and critical infrastructure the National Cyber Security Centre watches for high-end threats. The national Computer Emergency Response Team supports business and private citizens by providing advice on managing cyber security incidents and cyber crime. But to do its job it also relies upon the vigilance of those citizens and their willingness to report such incidents. In the case of Defence, this is about working alongside a range of other agencies, for example to protect resources in our exclusive economic zone.

Given their potential impact on New Zealand’s economic and security interests, we have an enduring interest in responding to challenges far from our shores. New Zealand has always taken a global perspective to global security. We have a history of contributing to international efforts to resolve conflict. We are longstanding contributors to two missions that are helping to preserve peace in the Middle East — the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation since 1954 and the Multinational Force
and Observers in the Sinai since 1982. We also contribute to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and in South Korea as part of the UN Military Armistice Commission.

We expect to see an increasing number of requests for support of this nature. Our commitment to the international rules-based order means we will carefully consider each request. This will involve weighing our international commitments and objectives and our requirements closer to home. We know, too, that in many of these environments, the threat levels are no different to those in more traditional inter-state conflicts.

The risk to New Zealand lives is, therefore, a critical component of these deployment decisions. But no deployment beyond our immediate region will be undertaken alone. This brings me to my next point. New Zealand, and Defence in particular, now places a greater emphasis on the importance of partnerships, and our ability to work with our partners. As our closest partner and ally, we will continue to co-operate with Australia on a range of security issues. Beyond our longstanding co-operation to support security and stability in the South Pacific, New Zealand is also committed to working with Australia much further afield. Last year we deployed up to 143 NZDF personnel, alongside Australia, to the Building Partner Capacity mission in Taji, Iraq.

**Essential training**

New Zealand personnel are in Iraq providing essential skills training to the Iraqi security forces to support them in their fight against Daesh. The deployment has been a success, with the Taji mission training more than 7000 Iraqi soldiers to date. The government recently decided to extend our commitment there until November 2018. We have a small number of officers based at coalition headquarters in Baghdad as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, and those officers are held in high regard. This has been most recently illustrated by the appointment from November this year of a New Zealand Army brigadier to the role of deputy commanding general of the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command, which is a great honour for him and the NZDF.

New Zealand’s relationship with the United States is based on deep historical ties. We have a long record of co-operation on security issues. Our relationship, which dates back almost 180 years, has seen us work together in two world wars and in all the major conflicts thereafter. I recently visited Washington DC where I attended Defence and Foreign Ministers’ Counter-ISIS meetings chaired by US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Secretary of State John Kerry. I also went on to Honolulu to meet with Admiral Harry Harris, commander of the United States Pacific Command.

While there I was able to spend time with NZDF personnel participating in the international maritime exercise, Rim of the Pacific. This is the world’s largest maritime exercise and is an enormously valuable opportunity for NZDF personnel. It is one of a huge number of exercises and training opportunities that has opened up to us as our relationship with the United States has deepened. We were re-invited to RIMPAC in 2010 as an observer and our participation was upgraded to a full participant in 2012.

The signatures of the Wellington Declaration in 2010 and Washington Declaration in 2012 have accelerated the security and defence relationship. Defence co-operation with the United States had become closer in part because of our shared experience in Afghanistan, a country where we both still deploy troops. While the Afghan people and their national security forces have made great progress fighting the Taliban, continued support to the security forces is essential to preserve the investment of the past fifteen years. The government has recently made a decision to extend our commitment of trainers to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy to June 2018, and increase the number of personnel.

**Strategic partnership**

The Wellington Declaration committed us to a strategic partnership to shape future practical co-operation and political dialogue. This was followed up in 2012 when we signed the Washington Declaration, which set out a framework and vision to expand practical bilateral defence co-operation. Early on in my tenure as minister of defence, I met with then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. I delivered him a letter of invitation from the chief of navy to the Royal New Zealand Navy’s 75th anniversary. Like the prime minister, I welcome the United States acceptance of that invitation and their decision to have a ship represent the US Navy at this event. While there is a process to play out, I am pleased the United States is taking up this invitation.

Like our relationship with the United States, our links with the United Kingdom are among our most important and enduring. Common values and interests underpin them. Our close military-to-military links with the United Kingdom are built on common values and interests underpin them. Our close military-to-military links with the United Kingdom are built on common values and interests underpin them. Our close military-to-military links with the United Kingdom are built on common values and interests underpin them.
region stands to benefit from a prosperous and peaceful China that is engaged in international systems as an active and positive participant. New Zealand will, therefore, continue to develop its security relationship with China, which has built significant momentum in recent years. People’s Liberation Army engineers participated alongside New Zealand and United States service personnel in the New Zealand-led humanitarian and disaster relief Exercise Tropic Twilight in July.

Chinese officers also participated alongside representatives from the NZDF, the Australian Defence Force and the United States military in the humanitarian and disaster relief Exercise Cooperation Spirit held in Wellington in August. Further afield, we welcome China’s extensive peacekeeping contributions, and in particular the force protection it has provided to New Zealand troops as part of the United Nations’ peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan.

**Constructive relationship**

Despite relative differences in our strategic outlook and in the sizes of our two defence forces, New Zealand and China are developing a constructive and resilient relationship. Our interactions with the People’s Liberation Army allow for real issues to be discussed openly. And there are challenging issues to navigate. In October 2015 I travelled to China and had in-depth discussions with a range of military leaders, including General Fan Changlong, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission. In terms of his position in the Chinese hierarchy he is similarly placed to our chief of defence force, Lieutenant-General Tim Keating, but with a standing army of 1,987,000 more troops, and another 4 million reserves.

One of the things we discussed was China’s history of doing big things in an engineering sense, notably the Great Wall. We also discussed the — at the time — reclamation of 2500 hectares in the South China Sea in less than 18 months. It would be a considerably greater area now, and General Fan accepted the scale of all this was bound to cause some excitement. Another word for it is tension, which these developments continue to cause. New Zealand’s position on the issue — and on the recent Arbitration Tribunal ruling — has been consistent.

While we take no position on the various claims in the South China Sea, New Zealand opposes actions that undermine peace and erode trust. We support the right of states to access dispute settlement mechanisms in managing complex issues. We also support their right to have the outcomes of such processes respected. At the heart of the matter are two big powers with big responsibilities. With the arbitral process now concluded, we hope that the parties can use it as a basis to work together to resolve their differences. But we are also realistic. This issue will continue to test the international legal system.

Continued China–United States engagement and co-operation is indispensable to security and prosperity in the Asia–Pacific region and beyond. And we are optimistic about the continuing military engagement by both countries. President Xi visited the United States last year, and has invited Defense Secretary Ash Carter to visit Beijing later this year. In recent times, both the commander of the Pacific Command and the US chief of navy equivalent have visited China. New Zealand is acutely aware of the dynamic between China and the United States, but we do not see our defence relationships as mutually exclusive.

Beyond our bilateral relationships, we work actively with a range of regional and international fora. We will continue to develop defence links not only through the United Nations but also through groups such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus, and the Five Power Defence Arrangements. So working closely with our international partners is a critical component of the Defence response to the strategic challenges New Zealand faces.

**Complex challenges**

This brings me to my final point. The challenges we face are diverse and complex. They have changed considerably in a short period of time, and will continue to do so. Advancing our national interests will become harder, not easier, in the decades to come. But none of this absolves us of taking responsibility for doing what we can to understand and respond to this environment.

The Defence white paper launched by the government on 8 June signalled a strong commitment by the government to maintaining a well-equipped and responsive defence force that can respond to a range of likely security challenges in the future. This poses a particular challenge for Defence. We need to make big investment decisions that will determine what our defence force will look like in the decades to come. The government’s recent decision to replace HMNZS Endeavour with an ice-strengthened tanker is an example of this. This decision recognises that our security environment is continually evolving, and will require different responses from the NZDF in the future. Also in line with the white paper, I announced in August the signing of a $36 million contract with Boeing to upgrade the RNZAF’s underwater intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability on the six Orion aircraft, and have given approval for tenders to go out for a new naval ship to support littoral operations.

To ensure we make the best decisions possible and that we are building the best defence force to meet our security needs in the future, the government is committed to a regular cycle of Defence white papers. This will allow us to continually reassess how our environment is evolving. This will enable us to determine the right mix of defence capability needed in the future, and ensure that we will have appropriate capabilities to work with our partners and that we are spending the right amount.

As a final word, I want to acknowledge the real contribution of the men and women of the NZDF. Both at home and overseas, they are asked to undertake challenging and sometimes dangerous tasks to advance our national security objectives. It is behoves our government, and the NZDF, to ensure that our personnel receive the best training and equipment. That, along with the dedication of the men and women of the NZDF, helps immensely in the furtherance of our security and defence objectives. We all owe them a debt of thanks.
Facing new defence challenges

Balaji Chandramohan suggests that the 2016 Defence white paper represents a paradigm shift in New Zealand’s strategic outlook and its defence operational reach.

The release by the New Zealand government of its much-anticipated Defence White Paper 2016 has coincided with important geopolitical changes in the Asia–Pacific region. The possibility of confrontations, especially between the United States and China, provide a backdrop to consideration of New Zealand’s plans for defence provision in an uncertain environment.

Much like its antipodean neighbour, which released its own paper earlier in the year, New Zealand tried to explain the complex geopolitical game that will need to be played in the foreseeable future. This contest will, to a larger extent than previously, have an impact on the allocations of defence funds between the services and also on the politico-military strategy that Wellington must undertake. On that latter note, the white paper has provided an outlook till 2040, with periodic reviews, including the New Zealand Defence Capability Plan to be released in 2018, to take account of developments.1

Strategically, the New Zealand white paper has given answers to the ends, ways and means triangle. In a clear effort to signal its intentions upfront, the government has given most attention to the effort required to guard the sea lines of communications in the South Pacific. With regard to the strategic objective, New Zealand will seek to strengthen its existing defence ties with the United States and Australia. Operationally, this will mean continued cooperation between Wellington and Washington in multilateral naval exercises such as the Pacific Rim exercise.

Wellington’s explicit support for Washington’s pivot or rebalance to the Asia–Pacific region is an important aspect of the white paper. This went further than its 2010 predecessor, and was reflected in the white paper’s reaffirmation of the need to keep sea lines of communications open in the Asia–Pacific region and to maintain command of the sea in its maritime zone.

However, the shift of strategic orientation to a maritime focus should assist in achieving the government’s political objectives. This will be important in enabling the internal force structuring that will be needed. Externally it will help to balance the existing delicate diplomacy that Wellington has to conduct with Washington and Beijing.

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In terms of geopolitical perspective, the Defence White Paper 2016 gives importance to both the Indo-Pacific and the Asia–Pacific regions. The maritime strategic thinking and the geopolitical outlook affects the NZDF’s operational zone of responsibility, but the New Zealand Defence Capability Plan released in 2014 mentions only the importance of the Asia–Pacific region. There is, therefore, something of a dichotomy in New Zealand’s strategic mental mapping between the Indo-Pacific and Asia–Pacific regions.

Significant challenges

The white paper notes the significant challenges that Wellington faces with the rise of Chinese power. For security reasons New Zealand will remain committed to preserving the status quo in the international system, especially in the Asia–Pacific region. This is a crucial difference from the 2010 paper, where attention was also given equally to the prevailing NZDF commitment in Afghanistan and the operational requirements of that commitment. With John Key’s National-led government facing a general election in 2017, it will be interesting to see how the white paper is defended politically during that event.

The white paper states explicitly that the rules-based international order to which Wellington subscribes is under threat. More efforts are, therefore, required to ensure a favourable situation. These include strengthening the existing defence ties with a range of countries, among them India, Indonesia, Australia, Japan and the United States.

The white paper foreshadows an increase in defence expendi-

**Footnote:**

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**The long-awaited New Zealand Defence White Paper 2016, released in May, has signalled a paradigm shift in Wellington’s response to the shifting geopolitics of the Asia–Pacific region. It calls for further strengthening of its existing defence arrangements with the United States, Australia, Indonesia and Japan. The white paper has also reaffirmed the importance of the South Pacific in New Zealand’s geopolitical perspective and provided a predominantly maritime strategic outlook. This change reflects Wellington’s efforts in recent years to restructure New Zealand’s three armed services and to modernise them to meet current and future requirements.**
Maritime outlook

New Zealand’s predominantly maritime strategic outlook is reflected in the white paper. The importance now attributed to it is a paradigm shift from the 2010 paper. New Zealand’s maritime strategic approach will involve both the protection of sea lines of communications and conduct of operations in the littorals of the South Pacific. In terms of the former, Wellington has used the newly coined maritime geo-strategic term ‘Indo-Pacific’, but for the latter it is understood that the term ‘Asia–Pacific’ will suffice. The inclusion of the South Pacific is an extension of the previous white paper. The subtle variation is important. As envisaged in the 2010 paper, New Zealand’s strategic interest lay in the South-West Pacific and the South Pacific, whereas Australia had identified its area of strategic interest as lying between South-east Asia and the South Pacific. The above-mentioned contradiction between Wellington’s geopolitical perspective and its geo-strategic orientation is important, since it will affect Wellington’s strategic outlook and the internal balancing it requires among the services.

In that respect, the 2016 white paper has underlined the importance of the navy’s Doctrine 1997, though, much like its trans-Tasman counterpart, there is no explicit mention of terms such as command of the sea or spelling out of the much-needed oceanic policy.

In order to strengthen its ability to deploy across the South Pacific, New Zealand will give priority to a maritime capability by strengthening the NZDF’s existing capabilities for logistics and lift operations. That will require the acquisition of a new littoral operation support vessel. Interestingly, the white paper has also detailed the NZDF’s area of operation as including Antarctica and the southern ocean.

At the same time, in continuation of the 2014 Defence Capability Plan, the replacement of the aging C-130 Hercules and Boeing 757 fleets is envisaged ‘in the early 2020s’. Additionally, the Anzac frigates and the highly versatile P-3K2 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft ‘will also reach the end of their service life in the 2020s warranting sufficient replacements’. Also, as the NZDF shifts its focus to a maritime orientation, it will be interesting to see how some of the concepts that were discussed actively in the New Zealand strategic community, such as the revolution in military affairs in the early part of this century, are incorporated.

Greater clarity

From the outlook of the white paper, it appears that the New Zealand government perhaps awaited the release of the Australian white paper to allow greater clarity in its observations on the South Pacific in its own paper. For example, the Australian paper indicates that Australia will eventually augment its submarine strength to twelve from the existing six. This increased force will likely be based in the Royal Australian Navy’s Perth Fleet covering the Indian Ocean rather than in its Sydney Fleet covering the South Pacific. This likely deployment means that New Zealand must focus more directly on its South Pacific maritime outlook by strengthening its patrolling capacities.

Overall, it seems that there is Australasian convergence in maritime strategic policy. Both countries are giving importance to concepts like command of the sea, sea denial, sea control and power projections. However, these concepts are not explicitly stated in New Zealand’s new white paper. Geopolitically, China’s three island chain strategies in the Asia–Pacific region may constrain the above maritime function and compel Wellington to strengthen its alliance systems.

Geopolitical perspective

One of the key aspects omitted from the white paper is any reconciliation of New Zealand’s strategic outlook with the assertion of countries like India and Indonesia beyond the Indian Ocean into the South-west Pacific, even extending to the South Pacific.

On the much-awaited Wellington response to the South China Sea issue, the white paper is up front in saying that it will not take sides on this or the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute in East Asia. However, from a geopolitical perspective the white paper commits itself to the status quo, which angles its stance towards that of its alliance partners.

Further, the white paper acknowledges the existing alliance
The RNZN is to decommission its principal hydrographic survey vessel of the South-east Asian countries. Therefore, in that context it is Zealand Defence Assessment underlined the military capability New Zealand’s strategic outlook. For that matter, the 2014 New dictates the white paper’s affirmation that the rise of Asia has altered Cold War commitment in South-east Asia, which largely contra-South-west Pacific and South Pacific than to have reaffirmed a their increased role both militarily and diplomatically in the Viewed from Jakarta or New Delhi, it reflects a Cold War mindset, though things have changed for the better in New Zealand’s relationship with both those countries. It is also true that India is expanding its maritime area of responsibility, which also includes being a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific region. Viewed from Jakarta or New Delhi, it would have been better for New Zealand to have acknowledged their increased role both militarily and diplomatically in the South-west Pacific and South Pacific than to have reaffirmed a Cold War commitment in South-east Asia, which largely contradicts the white paper’s affirmation that the rise of Asia has altered New Zealand’s strategic outlook. For that matter, the 2014 New Zealand Defence Assessment underlined the military capability of the South-east Asian countries. Therefore, in that context it is an interesting question why the NZDF should be committed to providing forces should Singapore or Malaysia be attacked.4

Increased co-operation
Furthermore, the white paper indicates that the NZDF’s opera-tional area will expand, especially in the South and South-east Pacific, an area that is largely unpatrolled. Co-operation will in-crease between New Zealand and countries such as France and Chile, the former especially having a significant military presence in the South Pacific. This will pose interesting political problems for Wellington, given that self-determination movements are in-creasing in New Caledonia and the Easter Islands.

Another important operational aspect mentioned in the white paper is New Zealand’s commitment to Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States in comprehensive and complementary co-operation involving technology and personnel exchange, information sharing, intelligence co-operation, joint ex-ercises and skills development. This does not reflect the changing geopolitical realities of the Asia–Pacific region. India, for example, is inching closer to the United States, as reflected in the Logistics Support Agreement, Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation. All these agreements are aimed at installing a comprehensive umbrella of security provisions in the Asia–Pacific region, and they involve issues related to New Zealand’s security also.

The white paper would have been better served by acknowledg-ing the complex alliance system that Washington is trying to set up in the broader Asia–Pacific region, which includes closer strategic partnership with countries ranging from India to Japan. Wellington’s affirmation of that system would have sent better sig-nals to those countries in the Asia–Pacific region that are viewing the white paper with interest.5

The New Zealand Defence White Paper 2016 has highlighted the shifting operational challenges confronting the NZDF and the politic-military strategy that Wellington needs to undertake in the shifting regional geopolitics. However, a better articulation of some issues would have enhanced understanding of New Zealand’s position.

NOTES
Looking to an uncertain future

Terence O’Brien reflects on challenges for New Zealand within the Pacific.

The old image of New Zealand as a small, distant, dependable outpost of an unrivalled Atlantic world, which shaped this country’s identity for so much of the 20th century, no longer reflects the realities of New Zealand’s situation. That Atlantic world is, moreover, in a state of considerable turmoil because of what seems, from this distance, a momentous Brexit mistake by Britain. At the same time, the centre of gravity in the world economy continues to shift in particular towards Asia, which has seized upon the opportunities of globalisation to record striking progress. All this is changing the horizon of New Zealand’s external interests, as well as its sense of place in the world.

It is a world of new opportunity but also of challenges and, indeed, dangers as the emergence of a globalised version of terrorism demonstrates. Overall, economic globalisation is not, however, ‘making the world all the same’, as some of the more fervent free market admirers suppose. A conviction amongst Western nations that there is but one model for human progress — their brand of democratic capitalism spread on the back of a globalising neoliberal economy led from the West — is proving deceptive and nowhere more so than in Asia.

The rapid rise of Asia over the last third of the 20th century is unequalled in speed and extent. Asia compressed into a period of 30 or more years an advance that it had taken Europe nearly 100 years to accomplish. Asian governments variously adapted practices and ideas from Europe and elsewhere to their own needs, but they do not ‘owe’ their success to the magnanimity of others. Indigenous versions of capitalism, of democracy and of governance in Asia do not, therefore, conform necessarily to Western practice or preference. New Zealand along with other Western countries should be very wary about any crusade, even those led by the most powerful, to dictate Western practices and preferences. New Zealand’s own experience confirms democracy is a homegrown product not capable of simply being imposed from outside.

Moreover, democracies can display contrasting values. For example, the world owes the United States a considerable debt for the many accomplishments that it has bequeathed. Yet events inside the United States confirm different versions of values and of democracy from those cultivated by New Zealand itself. American militarisation of law and order, its deluded gun laws, racism, bizarre presidential election politics and lavish open-ended campaign funding of politicians by private wealth, which effectively purchases democracy, are all exceedingly different from the New Zealand experience. New Zealand, nonetheless, sets store by its ties to the United States. Diversity not conformity remains, however, the defining feature of the modern world, as Asia conclusively demonstrates. Making that world safe for diversity, tolerating and respecting difference and nourishing trust remain the supreme challenges for humankind.

Comfort zone

Values are not, however, to be discounted in the business of international relations. The cause of human rights — one of the foremost legacies of the 20th century — remains a central element because modern conflict involves such gross inhumanity that it cannot be simply ignored internationally. Radicalised extremism, frequently masquerading in the guise of religion, is a modern scourge, and a small, conscientious, prosperous and privileged country like New Zealand bears a responsibility to play a role within its means to confront the threats and to address their
basic causes.

As the world moves through the first decades of the 21st century, New Zealand confronts, therefore, a challenging set of external realities. Its ‘comfort zone’ in international relations is being transformed profoundly. It relies significantly now upon Asia, a region whose culture, values, languages, traditions and world experience are very different from its own. The 20th century, nonetheless, teaches stern lessons. One is, for example, that as a trading nation it is highly inadvisable to place too many trading eggs in one basket. Diversification of dependency throughout the vast Asian region and between Asia and the rest of the world remains a compelling task for New Zealand traders and New Zealand trade negotiators.

It has become quickly clear, and most notably in Asia, that to secure predictable trade and economic connections which endure depends first and foremost upon sound political and diplomatic relationships with foreign governments. New Zealand’s international relations horizons are widened extensively by the demands of the diversification process. They require in particular that New Zealand deepen understanding of Asia, its history, its various cultures and its ambitions. That involves a many faceted process of education across our entire society, embracing the New Zealand government system, the universities, schools and language training along with peer group connections through the professions — like lawyers, scientists, doctors, commodity producers and the like. It is a whole-of-country enterprise.

Amongst the transforming influences, the emergence of China in the 21st century in a world of established American primacy is a transcendental challenge for New Zealand and many other countries. The jury is still out over whether China and the United States are actually predestined to view each other as eternal strategic rivals or strategic partners. Like most small countries New Zealand does not want to have to choose between powerful partners if or when they disagree with one another. New Zealand needs a quality of diplomatic relationship, therefore, with Beijing and with Washington that can survive those occasions whenever choice becomes unavoidable. Such challenges of balance and consistency demand a brand of independent New Zealand foreign policy thinking that largely exceeds anything in New Zealand’s previous 20th century experience.

American engagement

America’s engagement is widely welcomed in those Asian capitals where there is circumspection about potential consequences for the region of China’s re-emergence as the pre-eminent influence. Not for the first time in history, China’s neighbours are hedging bets, this time by encouraging US engagement in the region to provide balance to China in whose shadow they have, of course, existed for centuries. This deep and lengthy experience in itself conditions the nature of various and sometimes contrasting responses throughout the region. New Zealand needs to watch and learn and apply the lessons.

In such a diverse region it is risky to generalise, but in Southeast Asia, where governments cherish a collective role for themselves in promoting wider regional co-operation, they seek American engagement so that they can feel comfortable in engaging but not isolating China. China supplies engine power for the entire regional (indeed global) economy. Asian governments remain intensely realistic. They value the extensive trade and economic connections with China, so that it is not surprising many resist a notion of collective military and political containment of China — even although a number have, for example, sharp disagreements with Beijing over disputed sovereignty claims to rocks and small islands in the China Sea.

China devotes effort to cultivating relationships with Southeast Asian governments, but a sharper, less conciliatory tone has crept into relations over the recent past. Maritime sovereignty disputes are one explanation, but certainly not the whole story. Domestic political and economic change within China itself is a factor, as are American intentions. For the United States, engagement in the region necessarily must entail resolute American leadership. One without the other is simply unimaginable in Washington, although in theory the two roles are not necessarily one and the same.

The Obama administration has initiated a so-called ‘pivot’ of US strategic interest towards Asia, which includes strengthened trading arrangements (the TPP agreement) and an expanded American military capability that builds upon the already substantial supremacy that America enjoys in the region. This unceasing quest for military supremacy provides a spur to Chinese military expansion, where greater resources and ambition are a result of economic success. There remains a question mark, nonetheless, whether, given an over-riding preoccupation with the formidable difficulties of the Middle East, the United States can devote the necessary care, time and attention that are vital to understanding the intricacies of the Asian political and security landscape. Be that as it may, China, on its side, is agitated by aspects of the ‘pivot’ that it chooses to interpret as an act of containment.

By connecting the dots between the present hostility in the South China and East China seas and the proposed American ‘pivot’ towards Asia, one glimpses the intricacies. In competition with a group of South-east Asian countries and with Japan, China lays sovereign claim to an array of small islands and rocks that are equally claimed by the competitors. Outsiders like New Zealand and the United States stick firmly to the view that diplomatic and legal processes be allowed to settle the issues. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague recently found in favour of a Philippines charge that China’s actions to assert its (disputed) claim between the two countries are illegal, while the court has not pronounced on the legality of the sovereignty claims as such. China flatly rejects the court’s verdict. The Philippines have said
they wish to engage with China to settle matters on the basis of the verdict.

Unfortunate example

It is regrettable that China rejects the recent court ruling on its South China Sea actions. But in doing so it follows an example set by others. The United Kingdom and the United States have in the past themselves also resiled from rulings by international legal bodies about maritime disputes. It seems China is here then copying an exceptionalist tradition. It is a statement of the obvious that this unfortunate tradition must be set aside by all major powers if an effective 21st century international rules-based system is to flourish.

The immediate issue of the rocks and islands is connected directly to China’s resistance to the United States traditional Cold War practice of operating naval and other patrols right up to China’s 12-mile territorial sea limit. The United States claims the legal right under the UN Law of the Sea for such longstanding practice, which predates the 1982 law itself (the United States, unlike China, has not ratified the Law of the Sea Convention), and justifies operational patrolling and exercising on grounds of longstanding US security interest. Beijing, on the other hand, asserts that Chinese security interests require the United States to desist from the practice. The issue centres round freedom of military (not commercial) navigation. Each side claims in effect that its own security interests trump those of the other.

Whatever the letter of the law, third countries like New Zealand need be very cautious indeed about taking sides in such a highly sensitive area. China is reinforcing and extending claims to the rocks and small islands in its maritime approaches by constructing facilities upon them (some of the other claimants are doing the same thing) which has the deliberate design of pushing China’s 12-mile territorial sea out well beyond China’s continental coast line. The United States resists the Chinese action and sends naval vessels up to the 12-mile limits of the various islands and rocks in question. It offers closer military co-operation to those regional governments that dispute China’s claims, while Washington formally maintains neutrality on the contested legal claims.

It is difficult to envisage a large-scale war erupting between China and the United States solely over rocks and small islands. Moreover, the deep trade and economic ties between the two, as well as those between China and all the claimants (including Japan), serve to mitigate the quarrels. But the damaging effects of discord upon the overall security environment in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be discounted. Given its own extensive economic dependency on China and on other regional countries now in dispute with China, New Zealand retains a vital interest in supporting action that helps defuse the tensions.

Defence policy

Last month New Zealand released its 2016 Defence white paper, its first for over five years, in which the importance to New Zealand of defence relationships with the United States and the other English-speaking traditional partners is firmly restated. The value of joint exercising and operating with such countries, especially the United States, is underlined. By way of contrast, while China is, for the first time, described as ‘a strategic partner’ for New Zealand, the document stops short of envisaging proposed operational relationships with China.

Given the manifest sensitivities over the South China Sea, great care needs be taken to avoid any such New Zealand involvement, especially joint naval and other operations with the United States that are interpreted by China as hostile. The white paper reveals, nonetheless, a strong preference for New Zealand’s traditional ‘comfort zone’, even as our security and prosperity are increasingly centred in a new ‘comfort zone’. It is not a case of throwing the baby away with the bathwater. Traditional attachments have receded in their overall importance to New Zealand, but they warrant preservation, provided they are balanced by new connections with Asia. Such balance is not fully reflected by the white paper.

Asian governments are, for example, displaying greater interest in UN peacekeeping just as New Zealand commitment diminishes. Of the 123 countries that are contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, New Zealand now ranks 101st. Of the top dozen contributors, six are from Asia. This record of New Zealand performance is disappointing. In New Zealand’s notably successful bid for a non-permanent UN Security Council seat, the New Zealand peacekeeping effort was proclaimed. The scope for joint operations with Asian militaries deserves greater attention, therefore, from New Zealand as a means both to widen and deepen connections with the region and to improve upon New Zealand’s UN peacekeeping performance.

Asian regionalism

New Zealand’s dealings with Asia do not solely rely upon one-on-one bilateral relationships with individual governments. One of the paradoxes of the globalising world is that it is producing a world of regions. Regional institutions have been conceived to promote prosperity and underpin stability. Asia is no exception, although it is moving perhaps at a more deliberate pace than other regions in creating instruments for such regional co-operation. Experience across the world confirms there is no one single model...
for a successful regional arrangement. Even highly integrated regional economic and political union remains, moreover, vulnerable to shock as the turmoil flowing from Brexit, with its worldwide ramifications, demonstrates right now.

New Zealand has a compelling interest in involving itself in region-wide co-operation in Asia because to be left on the outside as a small non-powerful player risks marginalisation. Sub-regional co-operation has, however, evolved more readily than region-wide progress — notably in South-east Asia through the development of ASEAN, involving ten countries and founded some 40 years ago, which rests upon foundations of inclusiveness, good neighbourliness, confidence-building, collegiality and intensive personal networking. It relies less upon legalism, rules and accountabilities that characterise regionalism elsewhere.

As the sole and durable institution of consequence in the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN is charting a path towards an East Asian Community and has created a free trade area. It is responsible, too, for a whole series of formalised dialogues with non-ASEAN governments (including New Zealand), as well as providing the platform for the East Asia Summit, the only existing top level region-wide political institution, and fashioning a framework for political/security dialogue. All of this has produced a veritable alphabet soup of different institutions. While ASEAN has been unsuccessful to date in the conciliation of differences (like the South China Sea sovereignty disputes), its undeniable accomplishment has been to persuade China and America to actually sit around the same table together with the rest of the region.

For New Zealand, ASEAN remains valuable both in its own right and for providing a threshold for New Zealand into the wider region. North-east Asian governments have no comparable sub-regional machinery themselves. They acknowledge ASEAN significance, although not always with great expectations about what ASEAN can accomplish in terms of their own particular preoccupations, which include the divided Korean peninsula and nuclear capable North Korea, China–Japan rivalry and South Korea–Japan bad feeling. The direct American interest here increases considerably the great power dimension of what is at stake for the entire Asia-Pacific region. Japanese intention to play a more assertive international security role adds materially to that dimension. New Zealand retains a profound interest in a peaceable North-east Asia, although having little capability that allows it a substantive role directly to ensure that, even while it cultivates vital trade connections underpinned by indispensable political relationships.

**Economic co-operation**

New Zealand’s greater interest overall rests in the trade/economic equation of Asia-Pacific regionalism. Some 45 per cent of our exports by value go to East Asia, of which about half goes to China. Australia takes 18 per cent and the United States 9 per cent — so that New Zealand relies upon Asia-Pacific markets for some 72 per cent of its export receipts (on the basis of 2013 figures). The trade agreements that variously facilitate this New Zealand trade are different in scope and purpose. They include a free trade agreement with China, a closer economic relations (CER) agreement with Australia and a free trade agreement with ASEAN collectively (in harness with Australia) as well as with individual ASEAN countries, plus a prospective trade and economic policy integration agreement with the United States and Japan (the TPP agreement, which has yet to be ratified by the various legislatures of the twelve signatories).

All of these agreements are part of a veritable noodle bowl of cross-cutting trade and economic bargains struck by regional countries one with another or with several others, over a period of decades. This noodle bowl is mixed up with the alphabet soup. These agreements, it is fair to say, are less about free trade in its real sense than they are about preferential trade between involved partners. There is, nonetheless, a groundswell of sentiment that favours the wholesale rationalisation of this kaleidoscope of compacts into one bumper regional agreement through negotiation of a Free Trade Area of Asia Pacific (FTAAP). New Zealand endorses that idea.

Action along such lines is unlikely to be swift. There is no agreed framework around which to build a negotiation, although inside the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum there are real currents of opinion in its favour, but APEC itself, by design, is not a negotiating body. Other stepping-stones towards the grand design might be provided by the recently concluded TPP agreement, or by a different route through the still to be concluded negotiation of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). New Zealand has a foot in both these camps, which is some tribute to trade policy agility and ingenuity even though difficult choices for New Zealand may lie in wait.

The present important differences between these last two arrangements lie with their membership and content. The RCEP involves all Asian governments including China, but not the United States. The TPP agreement involves some Asian countries (five in all out of the twelve signatories) plus the United States, but not China. The TPP agreement is open to new members if they can accept provisions that extend well beyond trade liberalisation as such to include broader economic policy integration provisions in accordance with a US-led agenda.

**Essential part**

That agenda previously formed the essential part of American objectives for overall global trade liberalisation through the World Trade Organisation, where negotiations have now been stalemated for over ten years because large newly industrialising economies resist that US agenda. It is far from clear, therefore, if or
when China might take up the regional possibility of negotiating TPP entry, especially as one specific US aim for the agreement is to ensure China does not ‘make the rules for world trade’.

Looked at from a wider perspective the two agreements (if both are finalised and ratified) would actually serve to segregate the Asia–Pacific trade economy rather than to integrate it. Optimists believe they provide a pair of stepping-stones towards the grand design of a FTAAP, but it is too early to be confident about the way things will eventuate. What is clear, however, especially from New Zealand’s standpoint, is that any final agreement that excludes China would be totally irrational as a serious long-term way to manage regional and indeed global trade. A segregated trade economy created on the basis of US–China rivalry would constitute a political division reminiscent of the old 40-year Cold War in the 20th century.

The TPP agreement remains to be ratified. In the United States the presidential elections may delay things. In New Zealand the government has pledged to complete the parliamentary ratification with all due speed, but until American ratification occurs the agreement will not enter into force; and there is a prospect that a new US president will want to renegotiate some of the provisions and if so that will guarantee further delay. It remains a controversial agreement for many people (both in New Zealand and the United States and other places) for the same sorts of reason that have produced the Brexit result in Britain, namely a growing mistrust amongst disaffected in a globalising age about agreements arrived at privately by governing elites plus a widening realisation that the effects of modern trade liberalisation produce adverse distributional consequences — it creates both winners and losers.

**Supreme prize**

For New Zealand officialdom the supreme political prize of the TPP is less about the actual content of the agreement than the achievement of a formal free trade relationship with both Japan and the United States. For over 30 years New Zealand pressed resolutely in the capitals of each government the case for such an arrangement, but each resisted for their own hardheaded reasons. The rhetoric that New Zealand employed to make its case indeed came more than once close to implying that negotiations had only to commence and they were predestined to succeed.

The interest subsequently displayed first by the United States and then by Japan for involvement with the TPP negotiations was a pleasing surprise for New Zealand, even though the scope of their ambition exceeded the original TPP concept devised largely by New Zealand. This great power interest presented an ideal opportunity to consummate the 30-year New Zealand desire for a formal free trade connection with both countries. Negotiations were predestined to succeed. As Prime Minister John Key has conceded, the TPP outcome, while pleasing, is sub-optimal in terms of overall New Zealand farm trade gains. Like all TPP ‘true believers’ the prime minister commends, nonetheless, the ‘high quality’ of the agreement in other respects. A complete and balanced assessment of the overall benefit for New Zealand remains speculative at this early and incomplete stage.

This contribution is supposed to include some opinions about how New Zealand maintains national independence while pursuing effective and productive Asia–Pacific relationships. It is obvious, by way of conclusion, that in terms of political, military and economic strength New Zealand possesses little to impress or influence the wider region. It threatens no-one because its hard power is negligible; but its soft power is an asset — what New Zealand is and what New Zealand seeks to be are the cards New Zealand needs to play.

A small, mature, open democracy committed to reconciliation at the heart of that democracy between Maori and Pakeha while adjusting to the challenge of a multicultural future where Asia figures prominently constitutes an asset in an era where values driven international relations are valued and promoted. New Zealand has no power to compel others to copy its example, but it can quietly impress and persuade.

**Trade agreement**

Evidence for what is possible can be found in, for example, the initiative by China to sign a free trade agreement with New Zealand in 2008. There seemed no rational explanation as to why the world’s largest nation and economy should enter into such a first-ever formal David and Goliath arrangement with such an inconsequential partner. China, however, saw that a formal agreement with a small democratic free market economy provided an opportunity to prove to itself and to others that it could successfully negotiate a free trade relationship as a dress rehearsal for subsequent arrangements with larger, more powerful democratic free market economies.

New Zealand became thus a small laboratory for an experiment that China might wish at some point to repeat, as it has done with Australia. As the China free trade agreement reaches the stage of its formal renewal, New Zealand must anticipate that Chinese expectations of New Zealand — politically, economically and commercially — will expand. This is the logic of the new international comfort zone pathway upon which New Zealand has entered. Politics and security issues characterised the old New Zealand comfort zone, and they will similarly figure importantly and differently in the new zone.

In South-east Asia there are occasions, too, where New Zealand benefits from the fact that it is different from Australia in terms of its level of ambition and power. Australia seeks a military edge over its Asian neighbours through acquiring superior capabilities plus a close military relationship with the United States. By necessity New Zealand pursues a quieter, less assertive pathway. It is not more dangerous to be small than large in today’s world — indeed globalised terrorism is more likely to strike larger targets than remote New Zealand, which is less vulnerable though certainly not immune from globalised radical violence. Remoteness in no way absolves New Zealand from an international responsibility to contribute to confronting radical violence as well as its causes.

Closer to home, developments in the South Pacific will also be a significant factor where greater interest by China, Japan and other Asian governments is evident. Given New Zealand’s traditional connections and responsibilities, the South Pacific becomes the place where wider regional and more immediate neighbourhood interests intersect. Reality is reality so that any notion that New Zealand might discourage Asian interest or discourage Pacific governments from responding to that interest out of a concern over ultimate consequences is unrealistic, and would be entirely self-defeating.

**Thinking small**

New Zealand’s comparative advantage in the South Pacific rests with its ability ‘to think small’. As Asian powers and commer-
cial interests enhance a presence related to access to resources like fisheries, so New Zealand should respond co-operatively to avoid duplication of effort and guard against overload in aid and capital transfers to small fragile economies with limited absorption capacities, including for debt repayment.

Asian interest, of course, opens up new opportunities for Pacific governments as well as exposure to wider political relationships with powerful outsiders at a time when there are signs of greater assertiveness in some governments of the South Pacific. This has, for example, even extended to suggestions to exclude New Zealand (along with Australia) from the Pacific Forum for perceived overbearing metropolitan behaviour. This must not be exaggerated, but there are also potential political challenges lying in wait that may severely test New Zealand’s neighbourhood policy, like the political future of Indonesian-owned West Papua or independence from France for New Caledonia and French Polynesia; and from the economic and social consequences of climate change and unsustainable exploitation of marine resources.

New Zealand scarcely features regularly on the radar screens of the powerful. That is a fact of New Zealand international life, but the country has proven under successive governments that it can operate effectively beneath those radar screens, as it did over the three decades from the 1980s when New Zealand relations with the United States were strained by disagreement over the New Zealand non-nuclear policy. New relationships within Asia and particularly with China originated over that period. New Zealand successfully fielded candidates for three top international jobs, lodged two successful UN Security Council membership bids and initiated a peace process on Bougainville ending a conflict that had cost thousands of lives. These were authentic independent accomplishments by a country which was a ‘friend but not an ally’ of any major power.

As a small, open, modern democracy New Zealand has the capability and indeed instincts for evenhandedness and impartiality that allow it to adjust more readily to big change in a world marked by the arrival onto the stage of successful non-Western powers with different histories, culture and interests. In contrast, on the other hand, powerful established states muscle-bound by concerns over prestige, ambition and leadership are less flexible and adaptable.

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DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND

Author: Raymond Miller
Published by: Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2015, 288pp, $45.

Democracy in New Zealand is a small gem of a book. In an era of fractured political analysis, Raymond Miller’s discussion of the practice of New Zealand democracy offers a coherent narrative, a sustained argument and thoughtful insight into the evolution of the institutions of New Zealand’s small democracy. Five features make this book stand out as a useful edition to the personal libraries of undergraduates, public administrators and professional politicians alike.

The first notable strength of this text is its accessibility. As the experienced editor of a series of successful undergraduate books on New Zealand politics, and a sought after political commentator, it is not surprising that Raymond Miller’s monograph would be engaging, but it is rewarding to read a sophisticated analysis of the evolution of New Zealand political institutions which is written with a clear, thoughtful voice.

A second strength of Democracy in New Zealand is the seamless way the author places the evolution of New Zealand’s democratic institutions in a wider, historical and international context. Too often the small size and geographic remoteness of New Zealand has encouraged political analysis which is either too myopic, with an almost insular focus on singular events and personalities, or too targeted to the comparative political journal market, reducing New Zealand experiences to a footnote in other people’s studies of coalition formation or a study of voter engagement through proportional representation. Thankfully, this book avoids both traps, although Miller does offer detailed argument about the extent to which New Zealand has modified the Westminster model of representative government, while retaining centralised powers and the dominance of two parties. Miller also offers careful analysis of the impact of MMP on the quality of New Zealand democracy. His observation that MMP was the ‘unexpected consequence’ of public engagement has been made elsewhere, but the recent Brexit vote reminds us that even in an age of near constant political polling it is still all too easy for political parties’ elites to lose touch with core concerns of citizens for accountable, fair and accessible government.

A focus on the evolution of political parties as key institutions of New Zealand democracy is a third strength of this text. Miller brings his wider research expertise on parties to a discussion of the rise of political managerialism as mass membership organisations have evolved into professional fundraising and polling teams focused on campaigns for vote maximisation. The remarkable persistence of two-party domination is set within a wider context, the transformation of parties from sprawling groups of enthusiastic amateurs loosely co-ordinated around shared values to small campaign teams of polished, vote maximising strategists and managers. Miller also refers to the rise of ‘Dirty Politics’ campaigning with dismay, but it is surprising that the names of influential pollsters like Lyndon Crosby, Mark Textor, Lord Ashcroft or New Zealander David Farrer are not listed in the index. Given the impact of polling companies, particularly on loosely co-ordinated global conservative party campaigns in Anglo-speaking democracies in recent years, a discussion of the strategies of firms like Crosby–Textor could have further underscored the concerns Miller expresses about the rise of party elites.

A fourth important strength of Democracy in New Zealand, however, is the way this book self-consciously advances an analysis of the health of New Zealand democracy. In writing this text, Miller is both responding to and continuing a discussion about the state of New Zealand democracy begun by Richard Mulgan in his 1994 book Politics in New Zealand (also published by Auckland University Press). However, where Mulgan’s work was essentially a defence of incremental pluralist reform as a way of ‘ameliorating the most glaring deficiencies of the present system’, Miller’s view of the way forward in New Zealand politics is more equivocal. Like Mulgan, he hesitates to endorse far-reaching political change, which might only advantage the already powerful, and yet there is a thread of deep disquiet with the status quo that serves as a subtle undercurrent of dissent throughout Democracy in New Zealand. Miller returns several times to express concern at the way the New Zealand electorate appeared to simply shrug off, or be distracted from, considering serious accusations about the use of mass surveillance in New Zealand, or ‘Dirty Politics’ campaign tactics in the period 2008–14, the latter appearing to have been co-ordinated directly out of the prime minister’s office. Miller also refers to the complex impact of growing social inequality on declining patterns of citizen engagement and the suspension of democracy in Canterbury. These concerns provide an unsettling counter-narrative to any pluralist complacency about the possibilities for effective democratic reform in this small state.

Finally, the lasting legacy of Democracy in New Zealand is the way this text opens and closes with an important discussion of the values that inform our democratic institutions. Miller observes with concern that one of the consequences of New Zealand’s uncodified constitution is that shared civic values which maintain this small democracy are not easily conveyed to new generations or new citizens. Miller’s obvious passion for the values and virtues of New Zealand’s democratic institutions informs his work. Unlike other texts on New Zealand politics which need constant revision for current news events or electoral analysis, this text offers a wider reflection of the state we are in. The undercurrent of disquiet that Miller expresses about the shortcomings of New Zealand’s democracy is countered by a final statement about the surprisingly significant numbers of New Zealanders who still continue to express strong interest in everyday politics. While there is no room for complacency, Miller ultimately expresses a strong democratic faith in citizens of New Zea-

Notes on reviewers
Associate Professor Bronwyn Hayward is in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Canterbury University.
Matt Hill is a PhD candidate with the Department of Government, Cornell University.
Dr Anthony Smith is in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The views expressed here are those of the author alone and do not represent the DPMC or the New Zealand government.
land and sees citizen engagement as this small democracy’s greatest source of enduring strength.

BRONWYN HAYWARD

**NEW ZEALAND AND THE UNITED NATIONS: 70th Anniversary**

Editor: Brian Lynch
Published by: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 2016, 148pp, $29.99.

It says something about the state of the world’s foremost multilateral body that a volume ostensibly focused on recognising the achievements of 70 years of engagement should be shot-through with concerns regarding the future. As the weave of economic, political and strategic forces upon which the United Nations has rested frays, it is necessary to take a hard look not only at the foundations of New Zealand’s influence within the UN system but also at how those foundations are likely to shift in the coming decades. The contributions to this volume — representing the proceedings of a conference held by the NZIIA on 20 November 2015 — provide thoughtful reflections on both of these crucial issues.

A look back at the past seven decades provides ample evidence of New Zealand’s outsized role in UN affairs. From the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, New Zealand has been at the forefront across a range of substantive initiatives. Seeking to explain that influence, the contributors frequently point to our reputation as an honest broker, and the particular mix of principle and pragmatism deployed by New Zealand diplomats are emphasised throughout. In her contribution Charlotte Darlow (currently unit manager of the UN, Human Rights and Commonwealth Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) highlights the flexibility and willingness to embrace contingency that has animated New Zealand’s mission to the United Nations. Openness to new relationships and opportunities to advance the agenda have fed symbiotically off one another, allowing New Zealand to bridge between diverse parties across disparate issues. Similarly, New Zealand’s successes in building effective coalitions is also emphasised by former Permanent Representative to the United Nations David McDowell’s account of New Zealand’s engagement with decolonisation in the Pacific.

Contributors are not shy to stress the United Nations’ successes. Sir Kenneth Keith’s contribution elucidates the fact that the evolution of the International Court of Justice, frequently unacknowledged, has nonetheless had a material impact on security and reconciliation. Conversely, David McDowell and the director of the UN Information Centre, Christopher Woodthorpe, make the case for the United Nations’ role in economic development. Global poverty reduction has certainly been a singular success, with the number of people living in poverty declining from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. However, the reader is at times sceptical as to the extent such widespread economic improvements can be credited to the United Nations itself.

It is ironic then that the same transnational economic dynamics that have reduced the salience of global economic disparities are seen to be intersecting with persistent institutional weakness to fuel a genuine legitimacy crisis across the United Nations. The most obvious manifestation of this is the heightened dissonance between the make up of the Security Council and the distribution of international power. As Terence O’Brien (another alumni of the UN mission in New York) observes, the emergence of new economic and political powerhouses are rendering the international disparities institutionalised at the core the UN system more problematic than ever. The result is a tendency towards growing dysfunction as the central bodies become, to quote journalist Tracy Watkins’ contribution, defined by ‘[p]rotocol, process and posturing’. This is particularly problematic, as the UN system is increasingly expected to respond to ‘wicked’ transnational challenges such as climate change, refugee flows and diseases, which inherently require multilateral solutions.

Yet, to their credit, the contributors note that the structural disparities of institutionalised advantage go far beyond the P-5 and the Security Council. New Zealand’s own successes rest on its advantageous position within the international political and transnational economic order. Drawing on his own experiences heading New Zealand’s mission to the United Nations, Michael Powles identifies the structural basis of Wellington’s advantageous position within the organisation as stemming from New Zealand’s membership of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). This position facilitates a greater frequency of election to significant roles than is offered to members of other regional groupings that are dominated by developing states. This lack of institutional equality is linked by Powles to the broader dysfunction of the body as a whole, and motivates his egalitarian call for unilaterally rescinding our privilege in favour of solidarity with our Pacific and Asian neighbours who lack similar advantages. This is a provocative argument: that a small country should surrender its already limited advantages in hope of long run benefits.

It is not clear that New Zealand’s abandonment of its position would benefit other smaller partners, particularly given the fact that it has often proven to be a conduit for their voices. What is more, we must face the uncomfortable reality that current asymmetries of power within the United Nations do not appear likely to unwind towards mutual sovereign equality, but rather appear inclined towards the elevation of a new set of great powers, whether they be India, Brazil or a resurgent China. Jim McLay, former New Zealand permanent representative to the United Nations, makes the crucial point that adapting to a changing global distribution of wealth and power does not automatically imply a shift towards a more equitable UN order from the perspective of smaller states. As rising powers seek their ‘place in the sun’, there is inherently a risk that minnows will find themselves firmly shunted into the penumbra of the multilateral system.

As Tracy Watkins and the executive director of the NZIIA, Mary Nikkhoo-O’Brien, emphasise, New Zealand can and does harness its privilege to provide a voice for other smaller states. The latter quotes José Ramos-Horta to good effect: ‘The world needs small countries with decades of active engagement with the world to facilitate dialogue, mediate and bring parties in wars to the negotiating table. New Zealand is one such country.’

Is it really desirable to give up the ability to push issues of concern to other small states onto the global agenda, particularly as many other smaller states lack the diplomatic capacity and physical presence at the United Nations to advocate on their own behalf? This is especially important to consider as conflict between established and rising powers risks side-lining the concerns of smaller...
states. In this sense, relative size and influence increasingly cuts across traditional notions of regional and economic privilege.

Throughout the volume is a recognition that changes in the global balance of economic and political power are giving rise to an era where New Zealand’s engagement with the United Nations will be more challenging than in the past. As Terence O’Brien observes, ‘the task for smaller countries like New Zealand of maintaining influence inside an international system of increasing complexity becomes no easier’. For this reader, the key question remains: to what extent can a foreign policy of principled pragmatism succeed in an era defined by a degradation of the international structure of power and values that implicitly facilitated it? These and other questions strike the reader as they engage with this thoughtful volume, and highlight its greatest value: as a stimulant to thinking harder about the nature of New Zealand’s position within the UN system, and its capacity to harness that position to advance its interests and values amidst historic changes in the global system.

MATT HILL

CHURCH OF SPIES:
The Pope’s Secret War Against Hitler

Author: Mark Riebling
Published by: Scribe Publications, Brunswick, Victoria, 2015, 375pp, $35.

In what is billed as a ‘radical reinterpretation’ of the wartime Pope, Mark Riebling seeks to rebut the notion that Pius XII could be accurately described as ‘Hitler’s Pope’ (a reference to the 1999 title of a bestselling book by journalist John Cornwell). Riebling’s account takes advantage of new documentation to show that Pius XII was not only actively anti-Nazi, making use of the Church’s intelligence channels, but also involved in support for the German Resistance’s attempt to kill Hitler himself. Riebling also highlights a pre-war encyclical ‘Darkness over the Earth’, in which Pius XII denounced attacks on Judaism; something other scholars have sometimes neglected to mention. The Papacy would then remain silent on questions like this until 1945, causing many (like Cornwell) to wonder if it could have done far more to prevent the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, amateur historians have dominated much of the debate around the role of Pius XII. Riebling, who has a background as a writer and consultant on police intelligence after 9/11, is no exception. Riebling does have in his corner the endorsements of some noted historians. One of them, the late Sir Martin Gilbert (official biographer of Sir Winston Churchill), has this to say at the start of Church of Spies: ‘Without minimising the complicity of individual Christians, or the role of Christian anti-Semitism, Mark Riebling shows that the Vatican took a very powerful stance against the Nazis. It is especially important for Jewish people — and I am Jewish myself — that this information is now being gathered for all to see.’

The official stance of the Vatican during the Second World War was neutrality. Selected in March 1939, Eugenio Pacelli (who would take the name Pius XII) had previously headed the Holy See’s diplomatic efforts as secretary of state — the appointment of an experienced diplomat (although Riebling prefers to bill him as an intelligence chief) with the prospect of the Second World War looming. While the Catholic Church and Nazi Germany entered into a form of accommodation before and during the war, each tried to gnaw at the foundations of the other. Hitler thought Christianity’s traditions got in the way of his attempts to create a racially ‘pure’ and highly martial society: ‘we do not want any other God but Germany’. Hitler had plans to crush the churches. A large number of Catholic clerics were amongst the first executed during the invasion of Poland. There is evidence that Hitler may have contemplated the destruction of the Vatican late in the war; and Pius XII had to have been aware that this was a distinct possibility.

This volume notes that, for its part, the Vatican was involved in intelligence gathering and the sheltering of refugees from the authorities. It also highlights the important role that the Vatican had in giving ethical permission (in the tradition of theologian Thomas Aquinas’s Just War doctrine) to kill a usurper (an invader) or an oppressor. The Lutheran (and Calvinist) traditions of the majority of Germans and many German officers, however, did not necessarily allow for the same resistance to the state. Influential Protestant pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who the Nazis would execute, eventually delivered the theological basis for a possible decapitation of the Nazi regime. (Riebling notes Bonhoeffer’s connection with the theological circle of Pius XII in coming to that conclusion.)

Having outlined the theological basis for regicide, Riebling focuses mainly on the role of the Catholic authorities in supporting attempts to assassinate Hitler. Hitler survived so many attempts on his life that he came to believe that he was protected by Providence. Riebling is most interested in the plots of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr (military intelligence), his deputy Hans Oster and their intermediary to the Vatican, Josef Müller (who would survive the war and have a role in post-war German politics). Canaris and Oster were amongst a number of Wehrmacht officers who were secretly opposed to Hitler from the 1930s onwards, many of whom would not be uncovered until late in the war. Canaris had attempted to use the good offices of Pius XII to connect his plans to remove Hitler with outreach to the Western Allies. Appeasement policies in the face of Hitler’s rearmament and expansion in the 1930s saw popular German support for the regime rising and the opportunity for a successful military coup lost.

Of the various plots of the Canaris–Oster group to assassinate Hitler, Church of Spies reads like it is written as a movie script. However, the most wellknown of these plots has been on the screen before, in the form of Tom Cruise’s (2008) portrayal of Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg in the film Valkyrie. Operation Valkyrie was the July 1944 plot to kill Hitler and establish a new government that would sue for peace with the Allies. Hitler only narrowly survived the bomb that von Stauffenberg placed. The colonel’s deep commitment to Catholicism connects him spiritually back to the Vatican, but his connection to Pope Pius XII is at least a few degrees of separation.

The debate about the Vatican’s words and deeds during the war will continue; and will still divide opinion. Faced with overwhelming odds, what should Pius XII have done? Riebling’s book notes on the backcover that Pius XII was a politician ‘at a time when the world needed a prophet’. What that would have looked like remains to be more thoroughly illuminated. Hopefully historians and other specialists will now pick up the challenge. Meanwhile, Riebling has produced a volume that mounts a serious challenge to some of the preconceptions about the leanings of Pius XII.

ANTHONY SMITH
With the passing of Rod Miller, New Zealand has lost one of its pioneering Asian specialists and one of the early-generation diplomats who helped build the New Zealand foreign service. He did much to create the warm relationship New Zealand currently enjoys with its former enemy Japan.

Rod’s first contact with the East came shortly after the end of the Second World War when he applied to be trained as an interpreter for service in J-Force, the New Zealand contribution to the Allied occupation forces in Japan. With fifteen others, he spent the first six months of 1947 learning colloquial Japanese at a Royal Australian Air Force language school in Melbourne. The acquisition of this skill would be a defining moment in his life.

Rod arrived in Japan in September 1947 and was eventually seconded to the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre in Kure. His tasks included interrogating Japanese officers and on one occasion he succeeded in uncovering a large cache of carefully hidden weapons near Matsue. He also travelled extensively, including to the devastated city of Hiroshima. ‘The thing I remember most about it — I wish I couldn’t — was the sight of the people…’, he recounted many decades later, ‘kids with no hands, just keloid scars, just lumps of redish kind of claws and no faces, wandering around.’ During his time in Japan, he later recalled, he ‘acquired a great admiration for the spirit of the Japanese, their character in general and their interests and avocations’.

Born in Roxburgh, Rod had attended high schools in both Dunedin and Feilding — he was dux of Feilding Agricultural High School in 1941 — before going on to study at Auckland University College. He graduated with a first-class masters degree in 1945. With high academic qualifications, linguistic skill and knowledge of Japan at a time when most New Zealanders were Europe-orientated, Alister McIntosh no doubt hesitated not at all when Rod sought to join the fledgling Department of External Affairs following his return from Japan in October 1948.

After attending Victoria University College in 1949, he became a member of External Affairs’ Far Eastern Section, where he was involved in the formulation of New Zealand policy relating to the Japanese peace settlement. In early 1951 he was a junior member of the New Zealand delegation that crossed the Tasman for talks in Canberra on the resolution of this issue, on which Australia and New Zealand had been firmly opposed to the American preference for a soft peace treaty. Rod took the notes of the crucial meeting that would lead in time to the conclusion of the ANZUS alliance, providing the security guarantee from the United States that the two South Pacific states believed they needed if Japanese sovereignty was to be restored without restrictions. His debut diplomatic posting was as second secretary in Tokyo, the first of three diplomatic stints in Japan.

Rod spent 1957–58 as first secretary in the New Zealand Mission at the United Nations in New York. From early 1959 to 1963 he was a first secretary (later counsellor) in the New Zealand Embassy in Washington. During this posting he courted and married Pamela Bond, who was working in the British Embassy there; they would have three children. After serving as counsellor in Tokyo, Rod attended the Imperial Defence College in London in 1966, and three years later returned to that city as deputy high commissioner. He made an equally important contribution in Wellington, heading at various times the department’s European, American, Commonwealth Affairs and External Aid divisions. He was also an assistant secretary. His contemporaries were impressed by his drafting skills, his sense of humour, his firm advocacy of Asian language proficiency within the service and his mentoring of younger staff.

Rod’s final overseas posting was fittingly as ambassador to Japan in 1976. He enjoyed good access at the highest levels, not least because of the habit of Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira’s private secretary to get the British ambassador, Michael Wilford, and Rod to ask him ‘out for a day’s golf to get him clear of work!’

Rod’s commitment to improving New Zealand–Japan relations did not end with his return from Tokyo in 1982. Following his retirement from the now Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1985, he became a member of the New Zealand–Japan Foundation and would chair it in the 1990s.

His services to diplomacy were recognised in 1989 with his appointment as a companion of the Queen’s Service Order for public services. Japan also honoured his long contribution to Japan–New Zealand relations, in 1993 conferring on him the highest award that could be given to a foreigner, the 1st Class Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun. Rod never let his high achievement go to his head: he was, David McDowell noted in his eulogy at his funeral in Palmerston North, ‘modest to a fault’ and ‘had no delusions of grandeur’. Quietly committed, always conscientious and very capable, he ranks high in the pantheon of New Zealand diplomacy.

Ian McGibbon
National Office and branch activities.

On 30 June Terence O’Brien, former ambassador to the European Union, United Nations and the WTO/GATT and senior fellow at VUW’s Centre for Strategic Studies, chaired a panel discussion on ‘Brexit: What Does it Mean for New Zealand?’ More than 300 people attended. The panelists were HE Jonathan Sinclair OVO (British high commissioner to New Zealand), Sam McIvor (chief executive officer, Beef + Lamb New Zealand), Andrea Vance (Northern Ireland-born political reporter for TVNZ) and Prof Robert Ayson (professor of strategic studies, Victoria University of Wellington).

On 4 July the NZIIA co-hosted with the Centre for Strategic Studies and the Centre for Defence and Security Studies a symposium on ‘The 2016 New Zealand Defence White Paper’. The speakers were Tony Lynch (Ministry of Defence), Prof Rob Ayson (CSS), Prof Anne-Marie Brady (University of Canterbury), Associate Prof David Capie (CSS), Dr Anna Powles (CDSS), Associate Prof Beth Greener (Massey University), Dr Joe Burton (VUW), Paul Sinclair (CSS), Dr Mark Thomson (Australian Strategic Policy Institute), Dr Peter Greener (CSS), Terence O’Brien (CSS), Air Vice Marshal Kevin Short (vice chief of defence force), Richard Harman (Politik.co.nz), Simon Murdoch (consultant, former secretary of foreign affairs) and Prof Robert Patman (University of Otago).

Andrew Little, the leader of the Opposition and leader of the Labour Party, addressed a very well attended meeting at Victoria University on ‘New Zealand and the World’ on 26 July. (The text of his address is to be found elsewhere in this issue.)

A breakfast meeting was held on 5 August to hear Sarah MacIntosh, director-general for defence and intelligence in the United Kingdom’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, give a presentation on ‘International Security: The UK Response in a Post-Brexit World’.

A roundtable was held with Hon Charlot Salwai, prime minister of Vanuatu, on ‘Vanuatu: Priorities and Perspectives from the Prime Minister’ on 10 August. The following day the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, addressed a meeting on ‘Nuclear Technology’s Role in Sustainable Development’.

On 25 August the minister of defence, Hon Gerry Brownlee, addressed a well-attended breakfast meeting at the Wellington Club on ‘God Defend New Zealand?’ He provided perspectives on core issues, including tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, relations with the United States, China and other defence partners and New Zealand’s approach to counter-terrorism. (The edited text of his address is to be found elsewhere in this issue.)

The NZIIA was saddened to learn of the passing of its former director, vice president, member of the Standing Committee and life member Bruce Brown on 2 October. An obituary will be published in the next issue. A memorial service will be held in Wellington early in the New Year.

Auckland

The following meetings were held:

3 Aug Prof Andrew Lang (professor of law, London School of Economics), ‘Brexit, the TPP and the Future of the Global Trading System’.

11 Aug Mario Alzugaray Rodríguez (Cuba’s ambassador to New Zealand), ‘Economic and Political Relations Between Cuba and the United States in a Time of Upheaval’.

Christchurch

On 5 July Jeremy Moses (senior lecturer, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Canterbury) addressed the branch on ‘Untangling the War in Syria’.

Waikato

A panel discussion chaired by Prof Dov Bing (Waikato University) on ‘The Future of Europe and Brexit’ was held on 3 August.

Wairarapa

The following meetings were held:

17 Aug Dr Jon Johansson (Victoria University of Wellington), ‘Does America Want this Donald Trump vs Hillary Clinton “Scary Movie” Election?’

14 Sep Prof Robert Ayson (VUW), ‘New Zealand’s Security Strategy in a Changing Asia-Pacific’ (in conjunction with Waikato University’s Arts and Social Sciences).

Wellington

The following meetings were held:

11 Jul Prof Wang Yuzhu (National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), ‘Belt and Road Initiative’. Commentary was provided by Prof Siah Hwee Ang (BNZ chair in business in Asia).

28 Jul Prof Martin Holland (director, National Centre for Research on Europe, and Jean Monnet chair, University of Canterbury), ‘Two Referendums and Whose Funeral? The UK and the EU’.
INDEX to VOLUME 41

( Issue number in bold)

ARTICLES
BATTERSBY, John, ‘Policing terrorism in a void’, 4, 2
BROWNLUE, Gerry, ‘Defence: an evolving approach’ 6,15
CHANDRAMOHAN, Balaji, ‘Australia’s strategic outlook: a paradigm shift’ 3,11
——— ‘Facing new defence challenges’ 6,19
——— ‘Indonesia’s new maritime focus’ 1,21
FALLOWS, Brian, see LEINING, Catherine
FU YING, ‘A tale with many dimensions’ 1,19
GILBERT, Mark, ‘The Obama presidency’ 5,22
——— see JACKSON, Steve
GNIATKOWSKI, Zhigniew, ‘NATO’s summit of unity’ 5,10
GOODMAN, John, ‘Holbein’s mistake: The Ambassadors’ 3,19
HOADLEY, Steve, ‘Europe after the British exit: demise or reinvention?’ 5,7
HYDE, Andrew, ‘Following an engagement approach’ 3,23
JACKSON, Steve, Mark Gilbert and Sir Jim McIlay, ‘Sports diplomacy: New Zealand’s hardest soft power?’ 2,22
JACOBI, Stephen, ‘Friends with benefits’ 4,20
——— ‘Making trans-Pacific friends’ 1,2
JELASSI, Tawfiq, ‘ISIS attacks Tunisia’ 2,26
KENNEDY, Molly, ‘Putting our refuge hand up’ 5,10
KEY, John, ‘Punching above our weight’ 4,13
LEINING, Catherine, Brian Fallows and James Renwick, ‘Assessing New Zealand’s climate target ambition’ 2,20
LITTLE, Andrew, ‘New Zealand and the world’ 6,2
MAPP, ‘Wayne, An independent foreign policy’ 6,6
McCULLY, Murray, ‘New Zealand and the United Nations 70 years on’ 5,25
——— ‘Seeking opportunities and facing challenges’ 3,7
McINTYRE, W. David, ‘CHOGM 2015: the invisible summit holds out promise for rejuvenation’ 2,10
McIlay, Sir Jim, see JACKSON, Steve
McMillan, Stuart, ‘Germany’s relations with Russia: willing fools or trusted intermediaries?’ 4,6
NEUMANN, Klaus, ‘The current refugee crisis: what’s new?’ 4,10
O’BRIEN, Terence, ‘Looking to an uncertain future’ 6,22
——— ‘Moving out of comfort zones’ 4,24
——— ‘Should war define New Zealand’s self-view?’ 1,6
OYEWOLE, Samuel, ‘Rescuing Boko Haram’s schoolgirl victims’ 1,25
RENWICK, James, see LEINING, Catherine
RICKETTS, Ritu, ‘An English tea party?’ 1,11
——— ‘BREXIT: a long march’ 5,2
——— ‘Chinese whispers’ 3,2
ROSS, Ken, ‘ANZUS: “our richest prize” or “that scrap of paper”?’ 2,6
——— ‘David Lange’s French connection — mais qui?’ 1,15
——— ‘Diplomatic dancing with Oceania’ 4,16
——— ‘Helen Clark: some Washington encounters’ 3,14
——— ‘Peter Fraser’s post-war diplomacy’ 5,18
STEFF, Reuben, ‘Game changer competition’ 6,10
——— ‘Strategic liberalism and Kiwi maximalism’, 2,14
VOGEL, Stuart, ‘The “beautiful island” speaks’ 2,18

CONFERENCE REPORT
LYNCH, Brian, ‘The United Nations at 70’, 2,23

BOOKS
(Reviewer’s name in brackets)

ASPINALL, Edward, Marcus Mietzner and Dirk Tomsa (eds), The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesian Decade of Stability and Stagnation (Anthony Smith) 3,27
AZIZIAN, Rouben, and Carleton Cramer (eds), Regionalism, Security and Cooperation in Oceania (Roderic Alley) 3,28
CRAMER, Carleton, see AZIZIAN, Rouben
CURRAN, James, Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War (Gerald Henley) 4,28
DENSON, Bryan, A Spy’s Son: The True Story of the Highest Ranking CIA Officer Ever Convicted of Espionage and the Son He Trained to Spy for Russia (Rhys Ball) 2,29
EASTERLING, Keller, Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space (Malcolm McKinnon) 5,28
EDWARDS, Peter, Australia and the Vietnam War (Roberto Rabel) 4,29
FIONNA, Ulla (ed), Watching the Indonesian Elections 2014 (Stuart Smith) 3,27
FRIEDMAN, George, Flashpoints, The Emerging Crisis in Europe (Stuart McMillan) 1,29
GESSEN, Masha, The Tsarnaev Brothers, The Road to a Modern Tragedy (Anthony Smith) 1,30
GIDDENS, Anthony, Turbulent and Mighty Continent, What future for Europe? (Stuart McMillan) 1,29
HOLSLAG, Jonathan, China’s Coming War with Asia (James To) 2,28
JÁSZBERÉNYI, Sándor, The Devil is a Black Dog: Stories from the Middle East and Beyond (Stephen Hoadley) 3,30
KENNEDY, Alistair, Chinese Anzacs, Australians of Chinese Descent in the Defence Forces 1885–1919 (Ian McGibbon) 3,32
KILCULLEN, David, Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla (Jeremy Moses) 5,26
LOVERIDGE, Stephen, Call to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War (John Tonkin-Cowell) 3,30
LYNCH, Brian, (ed) New Zealand and the United Nations: 70th Anniversary (Matt Hill) 6,29
MARDER, Michael, see VATTIMO, Gianni
MIETZNER, Marcus, see ASPINALL, Edward
MILLER, Raymond, Democracy in New Zealand (Bronwyn Hayward) 6,28
MORIN, Jean-Frederick, Tereza Novotna, Frederik Ponjaert and Maria Telo (eds), The Politics of Transatlantic Trade Negotiations: TTIP in a Globalized World (Stephen Hoadley) 2,27
NAYLOR, Sean: Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command (Rhys Ball) 4,30
NELSON, Nick, see POWLES, Anna
NOVOTNA, Tereza, see MORIN, Jean-Frederick
PARTOW, Negar, see POWLES, Anna
PONJAERT, Frederik, see MORIN, Jean-Frederick
POWLES, Anna, Negar Partow and Nick Nelson (eds), United Nations Peacekeeping Challenge: The Importance of the Integrated Approach (Anthony Smith) 5,27
RIEBLING, Mark, Church of Sins: The Pope’s Secret War Against Hitler (Anthony Smith) 6,30
TELO, Maria, see MORIN, Jean-Frederick
TOMSA, Dirk, see ASPINALL, Edward
VATTIMO, Gianni, and Michael Marder: Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics (Nigel Parsons) 1,31
WARREN, Elizabeth, A Fighting Chance (Jennifer Curtin) 3,29

MISCELLANEOUS
Correspondence: 1,33 (Pamela A. Jeffries); 2,30 (Roger Cornelius); 4,32 (Neil Plimmer, Peter Nichols); 5,30 (Hugh Steadman)
Institute Notes: 1,32, 2,31, 3,33; 4,33; 5,31; 6,32
Obituaries: Harold Hayton (‘Tim’ Francis, 2,32; Roger George Weston 2,33; Roderick Macalister Miller QSO 6,31
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