

# Panic Stations: Australia's Scramble to Defend Against China in the Asia-Pacific

Written by Strobe Driver

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STROBE DRIVER, AUG 5 2020

Consecutive Australian governments and industries since *circa*-1990, have pursued China as a fundamental and continuous part of Australia's fiscal capital-base in terms of trade and regional prosperity. The success of China and the reasons it became a hub for Australia's business—and many other countries—mercantile cum trade needs are far too vast to enter into here, suffice to state that it was due to the implementation of the "four modernizations" of economy, agriculture, scientific development and defense'[1] during the Deng era (1976 – 1989),[2] that allowed China to engage in a broad sphere of production. The retaining and maintaining of the four modernizations would enable China to establish the infrastructure; intellectual cum education capacities; fiscal empowerment; taxation base; workforce deployment; research; and many other associated components would evolve Chinese society to continually develop. These would in turn, allow for China to expand its regional; and international expansion influence.

For consecutive Australian governments and businesses the development of China and the concomitant embracing of 'globalisation'[3] and economic benefits therein, would create for Australia an 'economic transnationalism'[4] of businesses directly and of business interests more generally, to deliver prosperity for both countries. For Australia it would become heavily-dependent on Chinese products and develop into an import-driven society—colloquially referred to as a 'cargo cult' mentality. Australia, in the process of engaging with, and profiting from China's manufacturing capabilities, would as a result have a vibrant domestic consumer economy that would have growth overall, although domestic manufacturing output would decline as a share of total output.[5]

The situation has not changed in 2020. Due to the over-emphasis Australia has placed on China in its quest for economic prosperity over the last three decades equates to a significantly reduced capacity to defend against China's preponderance *per se*. This has been due to continually outsourcing of military asset supply and decades-long perceived non-requirement that Australia should produce a completed product or at the very least a near-complete product of a military asset. Other countries however, link the domestic building of for instance, an aircraft requires skillset and infrastructure capabilities that Australia does not possess and as important as it is, has been overlooked by consecutive Australian governments. Other countries do nonetheless, have indigenous asset programmes: China has the J-20B Stealth fighter; France the Dassault Rafale; Israel the IAI Kfir; Taiwan the AT-5 Brave Eagle, and Sweden the SAAB JS-39E Gripen, to only name a few. Australian governments have however, consistently chosen to purchase the vast majority of their defence and offensive capabilities from others.

### Australia as an Asia-Pacific Middle-power

To give Australia's position a perspective the economic transnationalism alluded to for many Australian businesses has over the past three decades resulted in an erosion of manufacturing and processing within Australia, due to the immense profits associated with the utilizing the emerging Chinese market; and the infrastructure and skillsets therein. Australia in the process of dealing with China produced unprecedented growth in its economy[6] and one that did not falter over twenty-seven years.[7] To be sure the growth would also have benefits for Australia's middle-power status and would allow for interdiction in numerous international affairs. Australia would participate in actions as far away as Afghanistan as part of *Operation Slipper*,[8] provide training and support for the Philippines' military

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during and after the (2018) siege of Marawi[9]; and supply personnel and assets in the Middle East in the cause to defeat the Islamic State.[10] All would be useful in reinforcing Australia's middle-power status in the Asia-Pacific (A-P) region.

The ultimate end result for Australia and Australian governments in 2020, would be to have ignored the necessary future requirements of having a set of domestic infrastructure that would be able to produce equipment and assets for a robust military in terms of defence and (limited) offense. To wit, the necessary infrastructure and the associated competent workforce, one that would be able to build a complex piece of indigenous equipment; and the skillset that is required to develop, build and maintain complex military equipment simply does not exist.

## **Australia and the Asia-Pacific**

Throughout the twenty-first century however, Australia's persistent fervour in establishing a military presence has exposed its underlying manufacturing weaknesses and to be sure, they have also thrown up other challenges in the region. From a military cum posturing perspective indubitably Australia has a disproportionate reliance on the United States of America (US) in maintaining the required posturing within the A-P region and this in turn, has allowed it to rely on the US for an overall understanding of what it needs to 'defend' the A-P from deteriorating into a non-Western controlled sphere; and of what is required to defend the Australian mainland. To be sure, the current Australian government (and Department of Defence), has acknowledged, 'While the drivers of change identified in the *2016 Defence White Paper* persist, they have accelerated faster than anticipated.'

[11] The 'acceleration' referred to is able to be interpreted as China has developed its fiscal, economic and military presence in the A-P region and internationally and moreover, it has caught the current Australian government by surprise and is now being met with an urgent expenditure on defence equipment which it can be safely argued, further emphasises the trepidation that underpins the proposed purchases.

Notwithstanding the ineptness of Australian governments in their approach to China and its posturing *circa*-1995–2020, a fundamental component of why China would not falter – unless a continuum of catastrophes such as famine, revolution or a societally debilitating pandemic – is in contemporary times and remains for the foreseeable future falls within a single paradigm: a country that undergoes an 'Industrial Revolution'[12] will expand extramural to its borders as per government and populace demands. This is true of all forms of political ideologies and is firmly ensconced in history. The practice, and why it should not be a surprise to Australia in terms of both a happening and the pace therein, is able to be placed into perspective with a cursory observation of history.

## **Expansionism: The Inevitable Outcome of an Industrial Revolution**

To be sure and once again reflecting upon China's current status and posturing, is to further observe that greater education practices, science and technology and a robust economy combined with trade and military ambitions, territorial gain through suzerainty, conquering and colonization are mainstays of expansionism; and distinctive by-products of an industrial revolution. This has been a continuum throughout history. Whilst the detail is far too vast for complete analysis here, it is worthwhile albeit briefly, to observe forceful actors and the intensity with which their realms were widened and through the auspices of, in this case Mediterranean and Western industrial revolutions, are as follows: the mid-fifteenth century Portugal would probe the Atlantic Ocean, colonizing the Azores and other nearby islands, and by *circa*-1500 Portugal would establish ports as far west as Brazil, as far east as Japan, and along the coasts of Africa, India and China.[13] The power of Portugal would be consistently under threat by Spain. By 1515 after numerous Spanish exploratory successes Cuba, the islands of the Caribbean and by the mid-1500s much of the South Americas is under Spanish control.[14]

After the French Revolution of 1789, and due to the continuing rise of an educated population, burgeoning middle-classes and a strong military, French forces would occupy Holland, Tuscany, Prussia, Spain, Italy, Sardinia and Austria over the decade following the Revolution.[15] England would follow a similar trajectory to France as its educated middle-classes increased and due to its concomitant imperialism, would begin to overtake France as the leading power of the (known) world. As Britain progressed through its Industrial Revolution (*circa*-1750–1914), consecutive British governments utilized the British Admiralty to protect the home-island with sea-power and an

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ocean-going or 'blue water' navy to protect its interests. At Britain's peak their dominions would stretch from the West Indies to the strategically important Mediterranean possessions of Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Somaliland. Across the Persian Gulf were Aden and the Gulf States which were important in guarding the route to India via the Suez Canal and the final point in the strategic chain, was Ceylon [Sri Lanka].[16]

Post-World War Two (WWII) the US would exercise expansionism and overtake Britain and this would in part be due to the industrial revolution that took place in the US as it supplied its allies with the equipment and matériel to progress the war against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Post-WWII, and after its Pacific victory and the industrial revolution that had taken place on the US mainland during WWII, the US would extend upon its previous gains – Hawaii, the Philippines and Guam (1898) – and would be enabled, becoming involved in 79 conflicts (1946–1996)[17] to the end of the twentieth century. In order to firmly establish global status in the twenty-first century the US has to date, has been involved in six direct interventions – specifically, the Middle East.[18] All have been under the guise of stability and to retain the status the US gained in the twentieth century; and to maintain its global presence and thrust of Western-orientated government- and governance-mandates. Certainly, Britain, France and numerous other Western nation-states – under the banner of multilateralism – would also engage in direct operations and suasions to reinforce Western mandates; and at times establish ongoing allegiance and commitments to and with, US foreign policies.

To give a perspective to the above mentioned is to note that the aim and legacy of imperial powers is total long-term control; and if the control is disrupted to have politico-influence. In contemporary times, the US controls Hawaii, Diego Garcia and Guam; the British, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands/Islands Malvinas; and France continues to have influence and a military presence in Oceania and parts of Africa. The outcome for nation-states that have been imperial powers and within the context of this analysis, is that the influence of the West – through mercantilism, trade, economics, military and the ongoing political interactions thereafter – remains long after a nation-state has benefited from its initial industrial revolution and the vestiges of its peak influence. It is here that the contemporary 'rise of China,' the posturing and preponderance this has brought about; and the way in which Australia has reacted to the trajectory of power can now be reintroduced.

## What to do? Australia and the Difficulties of Coming to Terms with an Expansionist China

As has been stipulated, consecutive Australian governments have embraced the industrialisation and mechanisation of China and have sought to advance Australia's wellbeing since circa-1995. Until approximately 2010, it can be safely argued there existed a recognized politico-balance and relative harmony between the two nation-states which was enunciated by the Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in 1996 as, 'closer engagement with Asia is the Australian government's highest foreign policy priority.'[19] Downer would further stipulate, 'There is, I think, widespread [Australian] support for continuing United States strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific which underpins the regions security and stability ... .'[20] The associated underpinnings of and for the new recognition of a more focussed 'acceptance of Asia' and of Australia's closer engagement would be an acceptance that Australia was part of Asia (a region in which it geographically belongs) and not Europe, and that greater involvement would enhance regional stability. To be sure, at times there would be regional-; economic-; and politico-tensions is to observe the new-found cosmopolitanism within the region would mean none would be unable to be worked through.

The above mentioned understanding it is safe to argue, would prevail until approximately *circa*-2010 when it became clear to China that the 'closer engagement' alluded to would not extend beyond rigid mercantile cum trade parameters – there would be no meaningful or deeper regional military – or strategic-ties. Australia, whilst overtly promoting regional engagement, would remain firmly focussed on the historical post-WWII approach of the US keeping the region 'stable'; supporting the inculcated *status quo* therein. A further explicit signal that China would not be part of the strategic future of the region and Australia's dedication to the historically ensconced post-WWII parameters would be the purchase of multiple US-designed and -built F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF);[21] and since 2011, and to support the US' 'pivot to Asia,' would allow a yearly rotation of US marines through the Northern Territory.[22] The aforementioned would incrementally and then exponentially incense China; decrease trust in Australia-China diplomatic relations; relay the message that Australia's focus remains regionally-sectarian and Western-centric; and that the post-WWII norms will remain far into the future.

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Over the decade 2010 – 2020 China would expand upon its Deng-era programmes; develop regional (militarised) strategies and preponderance; and continue to progress its geo-strategic footprint. History has shown it is the want of nation-states that undergo an industrial revolution to continue their focus on establishing their military and politico value-systems and then be prepared to back them with direct military force—France in Algeria and Indochina; the US in Vietnam; Britain in Northern Ireland and Malaysia. China, having moved from the Deng era's quasi-isolationism through to comprehensive regional and global cosmopolitanism in the time period alluded to, has inevitably backed up its status with economic and military status cum support, would continue with its focus becoming a major actor in what is and remains a fractious geostrategic and geopolitical environment.

Whilst the continuum of the rise of China has caught consecutive Australian governments almost completely by surprise and whilst the evidence-base of the external impact of an industrial revolution is a predominant factor in expansionism, Australia has chosen to ignore history and is now in an overall panic. This state-of-affairs has finally come to the fore in July 2020 with the Morrison government announcing a 270 billion (bn) dollar decade-long investment in Australia's defence. The expenditure it must be stipulated does foreshadow what was detailed in the *2016 Defence White Paper*, [23] although it is a first major step in addressing what has become known as an 'evolving security challenge,' which can be interpreted a non-Western power directly engaging and attempting to dislodge the dominant post-WWII presence in the Asia-Pacific of the US; and its allies: notably, Australia. The *2020 Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan* [24] whilst being too voluminous to enter into here, conspicuously moves Australia's defence capabilities from a platform of wait-and-see to a more robust encounter-and initiative-driven paradigm which is driven through a prism of, 'longer range strike weapons, cyber capabilities and area denial.' [25] The desire for this to happen; the reality of whether it can happen; and the panic that exists within Australia can now be addressed.

The grandiloquence of the new initiatives do come to terms with the threat that Australia faces in the future should the current *status quo* remain consistent. However, they also expose the considerable weaknesses in Australia's current and future defence; its regional preponderance capabilities; and its domestic manufacturing-base and the build-up of failures therein. Perhaps the greatest weakness is Australia does not have the skillsets to independently produce a large number of defence assets and relies on other countries to supply the major portion of its military assets.

The aforementioned 'cargo cult' can be directly attributed to considerable French involvement in building Australia's new-era 'Attack Class' submarines; near-complete 'ground up' building and supply of the US JSF and Apache helicopter; European and US involvement in the supply of other helicopter models; and the US M1 Abrams battle tank – the list of foreign equipment supply is far too vast to further enter into here. The vast majority of equipment mentioned will also be purchased and delivered and the problem that immediately arises is what happens if the import sea- and air-lanes are cut off by an adversary; or a group of adversaries. An attrition-rate of personnel and equipment is normal in both attack and defence and thus, a continual coordinated logistics and supply chain is needed to ensure any kinetic situation is able to be opportunistically advanced beyond a strategic footprint; or to defend a position. Therefore, replacement of major assets for Australia if a situation escalated and a conflict ensued would be dependent upon the industrial capabilities of other nation-states per se. An ally cum supplier, whether directly engaged in a conflict or not would have to be prepared to deliver industrial wares to Australian forces and therefore, would have to be prepared to break-through any risk factors. Put more succinctly, any zones-of-control would have to be sufficiently managed by the supplier in terms of accepting that ships might be sunk or aircraft fired upon in the delivery process. To be sure, wharves are static and particularly vulnerable locations in the exchange of fire and a supplier would be aware of the dangers and whether it would be prepared to go through with asset deliveries would be uncertain; and moreover, Australia would not be able to force compliancy.

Furthermore and in terms of capabilities, Australia is effectively only able to defend its homeland and littoral region per se as it has no inherent capacity to 'stretch' its zones-of-control. Australia does not have a comprehensive ocean-going/blue-water navy and nor does it have a fleet-air-arm (aircraft carriers) to enhance or extend its level of attack capabilities. Therefore, if its 'area denial' is breached and its preponderance directly challenged in a kinetic encounter – known as a force-on-force collision – its naval capabilities would be immediately overstretched if the encounter was beyond the strike-and-return range of its JSFs or its allies – specifically the US. More importantly and as attrition is a part of any encounter Australia would become exponentially reliant on its allies if an encounter

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developed into a sustained series of kinetic encounters. With this in mind the problem of a deeper malaise than an over-reliance on an ally or allies can now be addressed.

The Morrison government in its announcement of the \$270bn dollar spend whilst confirming it has the intention of defending Australia and of its commitment to retaining its middle-power status, also confirms the deleterious state of skillsets within Australia; and the dire need to seek assets from elsewhere. Regional preponderance *per se*, requires an overt and ongoing presence and the ability to maintain and continue with focussed platforms of intent, such as patrols, denial and interdiction. All require a well-trained and focussed domestic populace, one that has an overall high-education level and the ability to hone their skills through an industrial-base. At the present time and within the scale of the previous several decades of reducing university and more generally education budgets, Australia it is fair to argue, does not have and will not have the professional-base from which an industrial-base is able to supply Australian Defence Force requirements without the ongoing and dedicated help of others. Realistically, should Australia have the skillset by 2030, there will concomitant to the \$270bn allocated for defence, be an additional requirement over the decade to further inject billions of dollars into its domestic economy to support the defence quest. The sum is needed in order to build the infrastructure and the skillsets required to service the 'evolving security situation' and improve the denial capabilities, and retain the status of a regional middle-power.

## Conclusion

It is the contention of this analysis that Australia will not have the overall capabilities to mount a strong and focussed area denial and dependable follow-up if a kinetic exchange occurred and would not have the structural-base to encourage conflict abatement. The purchase of weaponry *per se* is only a minor component of a varied and fluid requirement should a conflict arise. Thus, a conflict is fought on many fronts: fiscal, logistic, economic, political, strategic and tactical to name only some. From these perspectives it is important to observe, China – which is the main focus of Australia's panic – will continue to maintain an ever-stronger presence in the Asia-Pacific region and moreover, will incrementally and then exponentially increase its influence in the region. The industrial revolution China has undergone and the exponential influence and power it has gained in the process have continuously generated an intent which will be backed-up by force if need be, and as other powerful nation-states have accomplished before it.

The panic for Australia however, will set in much more firmly when the aspects of its decades-long non-preparedness and reliance on others for defence or offense assets is met with increasing regional politico- and military demands from China. It is the further contention of this analysis that whilst this state-of-affairs may not happen until the end of the decade (to 2030), although it will incrementally happen as China establishes its increasing status and throughout this time line Australia will be unable to support its middle-power status without ongoing indirect and if need be, direct support from its allies. A further panic will be generated if the National People's Congress – the ruling body of the People's Republic of China – directs the People's Revolutionary Army Navy to protect its overseas assets as the Port of Darwin and other major property assets and leaseholds that have been purchased on Australian territory.

This will prove an immensely difficult challenge for Australia and as China's Australian assets become more politically and strategically-relevant to the overall preponderance of China and as powerful nation-states are wont to do, will place greater demands on its regional strategic loyalties. To be sure, the parlous state of Australia's current military capabilities and the subsequent inability to fight sustained force-on-force campaigns; an over-reliance on (long-distance) providers for the replacement of assets; and the inherent skillsets shortages (Australia ranks in the bottom forty percent of Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation[26]); the creating of, and further development of assets will come to the fore and will plummet its capabilities. All have now and will continue to coalesce into an ongoing panic.

The underpinning of the purchase and the subsequent increase in defence spending Prime Minister Morrison stipulated, "The world hasn't known a time of strategic uncertainty like this since the 1930s and 40s,"[27] and further commented that Australia has an oncoming existential threat to its existence.[28] There is no doubt, the threat which China poses to Australia is a clear and present danger in terms of being an existential threat—as was Imperial Japan in the early stage of the Pacific phase of WWII to which Australia was completely and absolutely unprepared.

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It is nonetheless, the dictum of nation-states and as history attests, to (re)establish their irredentist policies with claims over nautical and geographic territories; expand extramural to their borders; and apply threat-of-force mandates and implement direct force when required. An offshoot of the force is often interdiction, invasion, and coercion or a combination of all three and moreover, a powerful nation-state will often gain allies as it progresses to power which it is able to use as a multi-lateral leverage—the US and Saudi Arabia, Britain and Australia, France and Senegal, Russia and Kazakhstan; and in more recent times the European Union (a politico-bloc of powerful nation-states) has approached numerous African countries to secure closer ties. Thus, China is currently no different than what has gone before, and nor will it be in the future.

Australia however, whilst having had some regional strategic comment on China's preponderance in the first decade of the twenty-first century, has also refused to come to terms with the regional geostrategic focus and intent of China and has been diffident due to the beneficial fiscal and economic outcomes. These have overridden any deeper concerns and now present a scenario similar to the Pacific phase of WWII. The business-as-usual approach in the twenty-first century mirrors the lackadaisical attitude Australia had to Imperial Japan in the 1920s and 1930s even though the evidence-base about Japan's power and preponderance had been proved prior to the Pacific phase of WWII: Japan taken control of Formosa/Taiwan (1895–1945), defeated Russia in the Russo-Japan War (1904–1905) and had invaded China in 1937, and 1942. Nonetheless, Australia refused to believe in its regional-strategic capabilities and had managed to posit Japan as an inept and muddling feudal country, until the Pacific phase of WWII in which Australian forces were overwhelmed by superior Japanese forces on numerous occasions and was bombed by the Imperial Japanese Navy's fleet-air-arm in Darwin (1942).

A similar ineptitude in understanding the magnitude of China remains in current times. The continuum of strategic blindness has left Australia severely wanting, as it has an army that is only able to adequately operate under extreme duress for 19 days[29] without assistance from allies, has an over-reliance on allies (especially the US); has an over-budget and time-critical submarine programme which will not come to fruition until the mid-2030s; and its fixed-wing combat aircraft will plateau at 72 aircraft. A cursory glance at China's domestic and indigenous-built military capabilities shows that it has the potential to carry out a sustained set of campaigns against its regional adversaries without the assistance of allies. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned factors, there is an even more worrying aspect to the panic that will and must come, as China continues to stake its claims in the A-P region.

Although Australia is reliant upon and has faith in a US' interdiction should kinetic action take place, it is also worth mentioning that the US Congress it is safe to argue, feels under-appreciated for the American military effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. Should this sensitivity manifest further and the US return to a similar form of isolationism as was the case during the 1930s[30] Australia would essentially, be on its own militarily. The current panic associated with the ongoing preponderance China is generating is in large part due to the ill-preparedness and vulnerability that Australia faces as well as the continuum China is presenting. Whether China will directly attack Australia is moot and need not be entered into here, although it is certain that Australia will eventually be forced by China to accede to many of China's politico- and military-demands. Whilst the level of diminution will be dependent upon the focus of US military might, and whether the 'pivot' remains robust, it will nonetheless, and because of the fluidity within the US' domestic liberal-democratic tendencies – whether the American people want to protect Australia – create an ongoing panic in Australia than the current purchases have already signified. Australian governments now and in the future have the near-impossible task of satisfying both China and the US, and a kinetic action will eventually take place should Australia stay focussed on its current policies of WWII allegiance to the US.

China will invariably make new demands on Australia due to the historical dictums of preponderance and if the panic alluded to manifests in the same way it did with the bombing of Darwin, it will create an immense panic that will essentially, paralyse Australia's military capabilities. The time has passed to adequately prepare to defend Australia and a new formulaic of politico-negotiation needs to come to the fore as any new military purchases cum capabilities on the part of Australia is too little, too late.

## Notes

[1] 'Xiaoping Deng. Chinese Leader.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping>

[2] 'Xiaoping Deng. Chinese Leader.'

[3] Richard Huff. 'Transnationalism.' 'Globalization ... represents the intensification of economic, cultural, and political practices accelerating across the globe in the early 21st century.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transnationalism>

[4] 'Transnationalism [comprises the] economic, political, and cultural processes that extend beyond the boundaries of nation-states.'

[5] Sean Langcake. 'Conditions in the Manufacturing Sector.' *Reserve Bank of Australia*. 2016.

[6] Greg O'Brien. '27 years and counting since Australia's last recession.' Statistics and Mapping. *Parliament of Australia*.

[7] '27 years and counting since Australia's last recession.'

[8] 'Currently [2010] Australia's largest international military commitment comprises approximately 1550 ADF personnel deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Slipper. This is Australia's contribution to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The main focus of ADF activities in Afghanistan is the mentoring and training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the provision of protection for military and civilian personnel involved in reconstruction activities.' See: David Watt. 'Australian Defence Force in Afghanistan.' Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Section. *Parliament of Australia*.

[9] Christopher Pyne. 'Australia-Indonesia ties: from disaster relief to counter-terrorism.' *The Weekend Australian*, 10 Oct, 2018.

[10] 'Australia-Indonesia ties: from disaster relief to counter-terrorism.'

[11] *2020 Defence Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan*. Department of Defence, 1 July, 2020. <https://www.defence.gov.au/strategicupdate-2020/> The strategic divers alluded to can be found at: *2016 Defence White Paper*, Strategic Outlook.' <https://www.defence.gov.au/Whitepaper/AtAGlance/Strategic-Outlook.asp>

[12] An 'Industrial Revolution' is characterised by 'rapid industrial growth' and the 'concentration of industry in large establishments. See: 'Industrial Revolution.' *Dictionary.com* <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/industrial-revolution?s=t>

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[15] 'French Revolution 1787-1799.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/French-Revolution/The-Directory-and-revolutionary-expansion>

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[17] Mark Peceney. 'Twentieth-century U.S. military interventions.' *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1999, 16.

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[19] Roy McDowall. *Howard's Long March: The Strategic Depiction of China in Howard Government Policy, 1996 – 2006*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2009, 7 – 8. Italics in original.

[20] *Howard's Long March: The Strategic Depiction of China in Howard Government Policy, 1996 – 2006*, 9.

[21] Peter Layton. *Australia's F35s: Lessons from a problematic purchase*. *The Interpreter*. The Lowy Institute, 2019.

[22] Girard Dorney. 'Is Australia Cool With The Growing Number Of U.S. Marines In Darwin?' *Vicemediagroup*. 15 Apr, 2015.

[23] *2016 Defence White Paper*. Australian Government, Department of Defence. 2016. <https://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/>

[24] *2020 Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan*. Australian Government, Department of Defence. 2020. <https://www.defence.gov.au/StrategicUpdate-2020/>

[25] *2020 Strategic Update and 2020 Force Structure Plan*.

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[28] 'Scott Morrison right to say times as dangerous as the 1930s.'

[29] Hary Berlot and Mark Conifer. 'Jim Molan, former military chief turned Liberal senator, issues stark warning of military capabilities.' *ABCNews*. 4 Jan, 2018.

[30] 'American Isolationism in the 1930s.' United States of America, *Office of the Historian*.

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### About the author:

**Strobe Driver** completed a PhD in War Studies in 2010 and since then has been writing on War, Conflict, Terrorism and Asia-Pacific Security. During 2018 he was awarded a year-long Taiwan, ROC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fellowship to write an independent analysis of Taiwan – China relations with a focus on when and whether a conflict would break out. The analysis is entitled 'Asia-Pacific and Cross-Strait Machinations: Challenges for Taiwan in the Nascent Phase of Pax-Sino.' All other writings by Strobe can be found on his blog.