

# The Emerging Global Order: Australian Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Russell Trood**

**Reviewed by Ian Dudgeon**

This monograph, published as a Lowy Institute Paper, has three strong supporting features. It identifies and credibly explains the range of issues likely to shape the global order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it draws out the implications of these issues for Australian foreign policy; and it is written by Senator Russell Trood, formerly one of Australia's leading academics in the field of Australian foreign and defence policy and Asian affairs. The book is an essential read for anyone with a serious interest in future global issues and discussion of the foreign policy strategies Australia should adopt in response to best protect and promote our national interests.

The paper is comprised of four parts. The first three examine the emerging global order and the fourth discusses the options for Australian foreign policy.

Part I discusses the key geo-political 'fault lines' of contemporary international politics. These include globalisation and the geopolitical shifts associated with the economic growth of China and India, the future role and influence of the USA including the importance of Western liberal values, changing ideologies including (especially) the challenge of radical Islam, environmental issues, and challenges to state sovereignty. Part II discusses the likely prevalence of inter-state and intra-state war, and various issues confronting international organisations and international law. Part III discusses other prominent and familiar international security issues such as international terrorism, WMD, global energy security, climate change, changes in world demography, pandemics and trans-national crime. Overall, these three parts describe a global order undergoing significant transformational change with major challenges for all players across the political, strategic, economic, and societal spectrum.

Part IV emphasises that Australia is inescapably caught up in this situation of transformational global change. Trood's consequent approach is based on the conviction that Australia must understand the global and regional forces shaping the strategic environment and gain a clear understanding of our own national interests within that environment. He argues that Australia's global engagement requires a realistic national foreign policy strategy based on what he describes as *selective global activism*. This he defines as the ordering of national priorities and then having the appropriate diplomatic, military, economic, legal and other relevant means to implement sound policy and contribute to 'international public goods'. Trood also sees it as an evolutionary 'process of policy innovation that builds on existing strategic foundations'.

He concludes with ten recommendations to support an effective foreign policy strategy. These recommendations include both new capabilities and reinforcing capabilities and policies already in place.

His lead recommendation concerns the development of policy processes and mechanisms to reinforce Australia's

capacity for whole-of-government policymaking. Two new capabilities are recommended to support this. The first is the creation of an independent, statutory, National Security Office (NSO) that would report to the Prime Minister and whose responsibilities would include policy advice and co-ordination, and crisis management. The second is the production by the NSO every three years or so of a

National Security Appreciation (NSA) that would underpin a National Security Strategy and serve as the foundation for the conduct of Australia's foreign policy. Such a formal and structured appreciation would indeed be a major reform.

Trood follows with three capability-related recommendations to execute such holistic policy. The first two focus on maintaining and developing the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). He stresses DFAT's need for adequate funding to ensure retention of the department's high quality core capabilities. He also recommends the creation within DFAT of a new intelligence assessment capability with specific responsibility for examining long term strategic trends and their policy implications. His third capability-related recommendation covers the need to maintain a credible, technology-advanced, defence force that can conduct both 'low-end' peacekeeping and 'high-end' combat operations.

The remaining four recommendations are more policy oriented. The first concerns maintenance of our collective defence alliance with the US but ensuring the right balance between alliance obligations and national interests. The second recommends a continuing priority focus on Asia and the South Pacific where our national interests will generally be most directly and fully engaged. The third and fourth recommend support to the Western liberal order through maintaining and building effective multilateralism, active involvement in regional and global institutions; and promoting the importance of a rules-based international order through international law.

All up, the publication is 200 pages in length and, while comprehensive, has been written in a readable and digestible style. The only potential omission in contemporary terms is reference to the long-term effects and implications of the current global financial crisis. Its exclusion is understandable as the paper was written before the full extent of the crisis became apparent. Nevertheless, given the style and logic of the paper, it is not difficult to overlay the global financial crisis across the relevant issues to put them in mutual perspective.

Finally, it is comforting to know that the knowledge and experience behind this paper now resides in the Australian Senate and constitutes an expert resource for the parliament and the people of Australia. ♦

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