
Sent: Saturday, 27 September 2008 12:47
To: White Paper
Subject: WWW Submission: 2. Navy/Sea Power [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Name: Christopher Skinner
Organisation: DISplay Pty Ltd

Submission: Australian capability and responsibility for protection of trade shipping is a matter of current debate.

Some analysts have argued that since most of the shipping is foreign-flagged Australia has no direct responsibility for its protection and that may be true in a narrow sense. However the consequences of even a fractional reduction in such trade will have devastating effects of the Australian economy and over the longer term on the very way of life we have come to expect.

There are other analysts who argue that the scale of such shipping and the areas and distances covered is so vast that it is beyond Australia's capacity, and that is also true in a narrow sense if the absolute deterrence of such interference is attempted.

In the real world what we have seen on both sides of World War 2 and in earlier conflicts, is that some effects of the interference will be impossible to avoid but as they become more pervasive and the hardships suffered more widely experienced, more desperate measures will be invoked. Any less response by the Australian Government would be unacceptable to the Australian public

The combined forces of the ADF and of those other countries with whom we trade would be employed to deal with the interference. Alliances and treaties would be invoked. The diplomatic and economic power of Australia and its partners would be mobilized and the United Nations would be addressed

There would be losses - of ships, of crew members and members of the armed forces deployed in their defence, of aircraft and other assets and large measures of national and commercial wealth. The size of the losses would be considered in assessing the nature and magnitude of the responses needed. More ships to replace losses, and to permit longer diversionary routes and convoying,; more mariners; more fuel and more insurance cover. These all cost dearly. But to proceed otherwise would be cowardly and un-Australian and only serve to encourage an aggressor to further attacks

So the voices of the analysts are ill-informed. They have not thought through their arguments. They have depended too much on recent experience and forgotten to look closely enough at the realities of Australia' national economic situation.

They have concentrated far too much on an unlikely invasion by a foreign power and forgotten the precepts of luminaries such as Sun Tzu who exalted the pinnacle of generalship as holding sway while managing to avoid the direct fight.

The weakening of an adversary by interference in its trade and hence its economy is such a ploy. One that we should not trust to others to address.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report