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Submission: The Lessons of International Policy and History are ever present if we have the wit to read them.

There are too many analysts and other professionals that discount such lessons purely due to the passage of time in a changing world. They are blind to the enduring features of the past and if permitted to prevail in today's and tomorrow's formulation will condemn us all to repeat the lessons of the past.

An enlightened approach is to subject each prospective lesson of history to critical review and cross-examination and then to reject the lesson only after due consideration of all the arguments pro and con.

For example here are two rich lessons that we should consider most comprehensively before we should set them aside: the submarine campaigns of World War 2 and campaign for the recovery of the Falklands in the 80s.

The submarine campaigns were waged on two fronts - in the Atlantic by Germany, and in the Pacific by the USA. In both cases they inflicted quite extraordinary losses on the shipping of the opponent and had enormous consequential effects on the country that was reliant on such shipping. The outcomes in each case are well known but the applicability of both these case studies to Australia is not much recognized.

This I believe is due to the psychological discontinuity of historical analysis that affects some people - they cannot read the analogies from the past to the present or the feasible futures.

The approach that should be taken with all national security analysis is to consider the precedents and past lessons on their merits and only after objective and comprehensive debate should they be set aside

The second example is the retaking of the Falklands by British forces at great distance from home base and with only minimal assistance from allies. Compare this with the stretch that Australian experienced to reach East Timor in 1999 in an unopposed intervention and the differences are stark but the lessons are remarkably alike.

The need for force projection can arise at short notice and may not have been the subject of prior operational planning. Distances and threats are not always neatly defined nor easily overcome. Maritime resources are needed - both air and naval and civil surface assets and submarines. Sustainment is a stretch and must be mobilized rapidly and effectively. There will be losses of major assets on both sides; casualties will be significant and the effects of them in the media will be intense

These lessons should be considered every day, and in every way, as we plan and prepare for an uncertain future

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

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