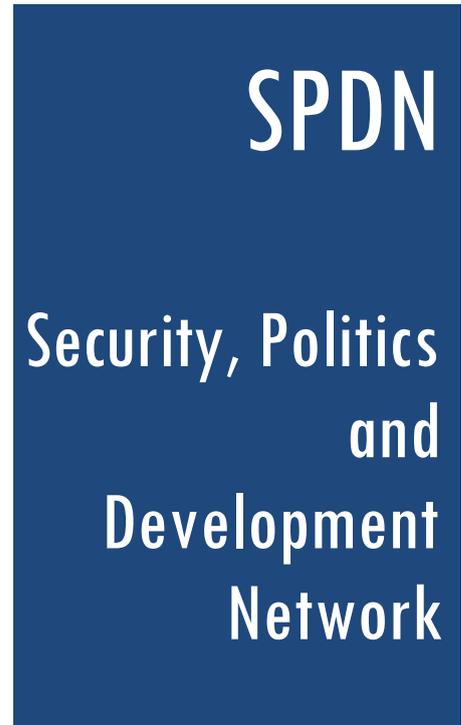


**The Defence Capability Plan 2019: Ten
 Different Views from Security
 Commentators
 Ed. Nina Harding**



NOTES FROM THE FIELD 3/2019 19 AUGUST 2019

With the aim of broadening views on security issues, we asked a range of experts and commentators to respond to the 2019 Defence Capability Plan (DCP19) from their own point of view. Contributors include Rouben Azizian (Massey University), Joe Burton (University of Waikato), Peter Greener (Victoria University of Wellington), Nina Harding (Massey University), Megan Hutching (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Aotearoa), Terry Johanson (Massey University), former Defence Minister Wayne Mapp, Valerie Morse (Auckland Peace Action), Jeremy Moses (University of Canterbury), and Robert Patman (University of Otago). As with all Notes from the Field, the views represented here are those of the contributors alone.

Prof. Rouben Azizian
 Centre for Defence &
 Security Studies,
 Massey University



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Azizian: The elevation of the information domain to the level of the three mainstream domains - air, sea and land - demonstrates a transformational and future oriented approach. The DCP19 notes that information and communication technology are a critical component of new capabilities. It identifies this non-traditional capability as a key element of the positioning of the NZDF for the future. Chapter 6 of the Plan refers to both internal and external aspects of information domain capabilities. Delivering information capabilities will require Defence to work with other Government agencies. Information capabilities are also critical to Defence Force interoperability and New Zealand's defence partnerships. Information security has the potential to optimise and rationalise the role of the NZDF and could potentially lead to continued incremental redesign of the traditional roles and structure of the Force.



What do you think the Plan has right?

Azizian: The Plan is sensitive to domestic social and economic realities and stresses the importance for the Defence Force of supporting New Zealand's community and environmental wellbeing and resilience. The significant and perhaps unprecedented investments in the Defence Force understandably compete with other areas of national development and are not universally supported. That includes a member of the Coalition Government – the Green Party. However, the Plan is closely aligned with the climate change priorities of the Coalition Government, which are very much driven by the Green Party. The document prioritises the implementation of the Pacific Reset and the need for an independent response, if required, to events in the South Pacific. This is an important commitment in terms of supporting the consistent promise by the Coalition Government to conduct independent foreign policy. While an independent posture is problematic in relations with major powers or in the context of global events, a more assertive role in the country's immediate neighborhood is desirable and probably more achievable.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Azizian: In the section focusing on the Pacific Reset the document uses several geographic terms, such as the Pacific, the Pacific region, the Pacific Islands region, and the South Pacific, as if they are interchangeable. Unfortunately, they are not. The Plan inherited its confusing multiple terms from previous Defence Policy documents. This is not helpful in differentiating between required capabilities and defence investments in the Asian or South American parts of the Pacific, in Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. The New Zealand Defence Force obviously has different levels of resourcing and commitments in each of these areas and they should be better explained both in policy and capability terms. The reference to the planned increase in New Zealand Army personnel on page 13 of the document is tied to community-based support from Defence Force. This is the only specific example in that section, which raises the question of whether the Army continues to be perceived as the more people oriented component of the Defence Force.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Azizian: Unfortunately, the Plan does not pay enough attention to enhancing capabilities in strategic defence analysis and developing systematic collaboration with academic institutions. Universities are mentioned only once in the context of relations with the Industry, and very tentatively. On page 42, the document states that inclusion of universities *where suitable* (emphasis added), can provide added access to scientific expertise and innovation in future –proofing Defence capability solutions. How about the social science expertise which could be relevant in supporting the new ways of developing the Defence Force, its better integration into society, as well as providing advice on defence reforms consistent with successful international practice? There is no mention in the Plan of the future role and development of military *education*, not to be confused with skills *training*. The section on sustainable, long-term workforce planning should have included a provision of enhanced leadership capabilities in the Defence Force.

Dr Joe Burton
*Political Science and
 Public Policy
 Programme; New
 Zealand Institute for
 Security and Crime
 Science, University of
 Waikato*



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Burton: I'm drawn to the sections on the New Zealand Defence Force's evolving cyber, information warfare and space capabilities. These sections reflect an ongoing evolution in the international defence and security sphere towards 'informationised' conflict. This is where both adversaries and allies seek pre-eminence in the information domain, including through satellite-based Global Positioning Systems (GPS). The report suggests a New Zealand commitment to adopting and integrating a range of new technologies into New Zealand's military with the aim of protecting, exchanging and exploiting information. The 'exploiting' language is particularly provocative and alludes to the use of the information domain for strategic effects, including, potentially, disinformation, information denial and degradation operations. This is part of a more offensive approach on the part of the New Zealand government, mirrored in the 2018 New Zealand Strategic Defence Policy Statement, which refers to the adoption of 'a broader set of tools to achieve military objectives'.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Burton: The emphasis on developing a modern workforce is important. It's all very well committing funding to developing cyber capabilities, but the capabilities themselves are people as much as computer software and hardware. The plan also refers to interoperability in the information and cyber domains. This is essential too. We need to be able to work with key allies in a way that protects our strategic communications from a range of malicious actors. More generally, the strong focus on maritime security and the impact of climate change is a real positive. Our defence forces are just as likely in the years and decades ahead to be deployed to help deal with a severe climate event as to a more traditional military conflict. We will need effective maritime capabilities to help countries in our own region and potentially beyond. Situational awareness gained through emerging technologies will be crucial to our ability to respond to climate and maritime events.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Burton: More openness about the capabilities that are being developed in the information space would be welcome. These capabilities are being developed with too much secrecy around them and this contributes to uncertainty in the international environment which drives competition and mistrust between states. Here, I would suggest greater clarity and scrutiny around some central questions: What sort of cyber tools are being developed? Are New Zealand personnel going to be hacking into adversary computer networks? Will these offensive operations be conducted within or outside of armed conflicts? What work is being done on rules of engagement for cyber and information capabilities? Will offensive cyber operations be conducted by allies to support our own military operations, or will we see a fully independent information and cyber operations force? Will the development of offensive cyber and information warfare capabilities potentially make us more of a target for malicious actors?

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Burton: This is not something that I would necessarily see in a capability plan per se, but, as per the above, there continues to be a dearth of policy on how key technologies including cyber, space-based systems, and information warfare capabilities will be used and in what circumstances. This is about 'rules of engagement' and doctrine, essentially. It is all very well having the capabilities, but the thinking around their deployment is missing (at least in the public domain). Perhaps the most consequential technology (or set of technological developments) is Artificial Intelligence (AI). This receives zero attention in the capability plan. The United States Department of Defense recently released its strategy for AI, which seeks to integrate AI across the US armed forces. There is a shift to 'informationised' warfare recognised in the New Zealand capability plan, but the next step is 'intelligentised warfare' where AI algorithms and systems are being used defensively, offensively, to increase lethality, to enhance and degrade situational awareness, and to improve decision making. I hope a stronger focus on AI is included in the next round of Defence Policy.

Dr Peter Greener
Centre for Strategic
Studies, Victoria
University of
Wellington



What do you find of most interest in this new Statement?

Greener: What is most striking is the comprehensive nature and longer term planning timeframe of the DCP19. Capability intentions are for the most part clearly spelt out, both for near-term and future acquisitions. Whilst there has been a determination for a number of years to view the NZDF as an integrated set of capabilities, this Plan sends clear signals about how this is to be achieved. The recognition of the importance to New Zealand of having all three services equipped for the tasks expected of them in an increasingly uncertain future is welcomed. For instance, HMNZS *Canterbury* has proven her worth in humanitarian crises, yet the acknowledgement of the limitations imposed by the design of the *Canterbury* and the importance of sealift is present. Committing to two similar highly capable, possibly Landing Platform Dock, ships – combined with the new C-130J Hercules and Army's new vehicles - will provide New Zealand with an enhanced ability to respond to HADR events.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Greener: Drawing on the Strategic Defence Policy Statement and The Climate Crisis: Defence Readiness and Responsibilities Report, both released last year, the Defence Capability Plan sets out the range of capabilities that will be required to respond to the challenges each document highlights. The complementarity and utility of capabilities identified is striking. Maritime domain awareness is central to securing New Zealand's (and the South Pacific's) prosperity. We have a total area of ten million square kilometres that will need to be protected. Air and space assets will be able to provide information to maximize the usefulness of ship patrols, and the new replenishment ship *Aotearoa* will help ensure those patrols can stay on station for extended periods. The decision to extend the life of the ANZAC frigates is no surprise, given the level of investment being made into the renewal of their systems. It was however pleasing to see the intention to acquire new maritime helicopters. The current Seasprite SH-2G(I) were a bargain, but are orphan. As an integral part of the ANZAC's weapon systems their replacement will help ensure the frigates' ongoing viability. Finally, with the anticipated

frequency of security events in our region, I had been concerned that, to achieve 36 months endurance for a Battalion deployment, previous documents suggested that Army would 'require additional resources to raise and sustain the junior infantry personnel required for second and third rotations.' The decision to increase the size of Army is therefore welcomed, though an increase to 6000 by 2035 is a surprise and may place a training burden on Army.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Greener: The DCP19 indicates that across the NZDF service personnel numbers will rise by approximately 1500. It also notes that 'Defence embodies and promotes New Zealand values.' In terms of embodying New Zealand's values, attention is drawn elsewhere to the need to ensure gender diversity within the Force. What needs to be addressed is the development of a Force that reflects New Zealand society. Army figures in 2017 also indicated that 16% of Army personnel identified as Māori, 4% as Pacific Islanders, and only 2% as Asian. This compares with 14.9% of New Zealanders identifying as Māori in 2017, 7.6% as Pacific Islanders and 11.8% as Asian. An explicit commitment to increasing diversity overall would be welcomed.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Greener: Whilst it is pleasing to see such a strong commitment to capability renewal across the three services, the one area where there may be a gap is in rotary aviation. There will be an increase of more than 25% in Army service personnel, and, ultimately, nine ships capable of embarking helicopters, with two sealift ships capable of carrying additional utility helicopters. Coupled with an expectation of an increase in tempo of operations, perhaps consideration should be given not just to the replacement of the maritime helicopters, but to increasing the total number of operational helicopters?

*Dr Nina Harding
Security, Politics and
Development
Network, Massey
University*



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Harding: I am particularly interested in the increase in personnel numbers: approximately 1500 new personnel for the Defence Force overall, with a new total size of 6000 for the New Zealand Army by 2035. The Plan states that this is to enable concurrent large-scale operations, seen to be increasingly necessary for various reasons including the Pacific Reset and an expected rise in climate change related security events.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Harding: Multiple simultaneous deployments have pressed land units and personnel in the near past. The Plan also correctly states that 'defence personnel are highly trained professionals [...] skilled to succeed' (16.2, page 7). This however can make the balance between periods of high deployment and periods of low deployment difficult. I was embedded with infantry units for eighteen months during one such recent low deployment period whilst conducting research on soldier identity. There was already not enough to keep infantry troops occupied at current personnel numbers. Soldiers felt their training and skills were under-utilised, which further made them feel unfulfilled in their working life and under-valued as employees. This can contribute to retention problems that make it hard to maintain a trained force for high deployment periods.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Harding: While there are some suggestions (for example deployable cyber teams) it would have been particularly helpful to see more information on how the 1500 new personnel will be organised, that is into which roles and units, with what types of training? The Plan at times seems to demonstrate the same unexamined assumption as the 2018 Strategic Defence Policy Statement that ‘core’ combat skills can be adapted to a broad range of other quite different tasks (see 16.1, page 7 for example), and in general emphasises that all capabilities including personnel need to be flexible. However, given the Plan’s expectation that many of the anticipated simultaneous deployments will be Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) ones, is there a possibility for the creation of specialised HADR units trained for the specific demands of this type of operation?

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Harding: I would add at least one more word to the statement ‘New Zealand is a Pacific nation through geography, identity, and values’ (62, page 12), i.e. ‘New Zealand is a Pacific nation through *colonisation*, geography, identity, and values’. The reason I mention this one short statement in a 43-page document it is that it is a small but illustrative example of New Zealand’s wider tendency to use the culture and identity of its Māori and Pasifika citizens to build a distinctive, non-colonial seeming international identity. This presents a picture of equal bicultural partnership, but fails to acknowledge actual socio-economic inequality and its historic causes.

*Megan Hutching,
on behalf of the
Women’s
International League
of Peace and
Freedom Aotearoa*



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Hutching: Of most interest, and concern, to WILPF is the extent to which New Zealand is building a capacity to engage in combat operations. This is premised on the need for a military to respond to an ever-widening range of threats. Most of the activities outlined could be achieved by Civil Defence, Coastguard and others. The Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018, which the DCP19 seeks to implement, identifies a wide range of concerns facing all countries and peoples. Considering these through a security lens, with its underlying logic of threat and defence, results in militarised responses. These are often the least suitable responses in terms of sustainability. This is particularly so for complex transnational issues which demand collaboration and coordination at many levels. There are many other ways to respond which, if given equal weighting and funding, would likely produce outcomes that better serve New Zealanders and others with whom we engage.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Hutching: It aims for a NZDF with the capability to respond either independently, or with partners, to events which impact on New Zealand’s well-being, and global threats to the international rules-based order. Priority is accorded to Australia as an ally and other traditional security / Five Eyes partners without clarifying which events or situations to which New Zealand will respond will be prioritised. While importance is given to working alone, there are few situations, outside national situations, to which the Defence Force will act as a sole military responder. In a New Zealand context it would always work with other national agencies such as Civil Defence and Red Cross. (Despite being a national

auxiliary to the Defence Force with significant capacity to support natural disaster and complex emergency responses in New Zealand and in all Pacific Islands, Civil Defence is not mentioned in the Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 or the DCP19.)

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Hutching: The shift from defence to promoting ‘a safe, secure and resilient New Zealand’ does not clearly define the purpose and role of the NZDF. The lack of clear definition is also reflected in what are listed as the underpinning principles of New Zealand Defence Policy (16.1-16.6, page 7) which read more like goals or objectives. WILPF would welcome the NZDF defining ‘security’ to begin with, and then outlining the principles which guide its work, which might include *inter alia* fairness, integrity, and honesty. The Plan seeks to implement the ambitious Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 but unless this ambition is tempered with the reality of what a small state might best contribute, it is likely to be setting itself up for failure.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Hutching: The Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018 reiterates several times the importance of the international rules-based order to small states like New Zealand. However, it fails to articulate what New Zealand will do to support United Nations authorised and managed responses to situations the Security Council has identified as threats to international peace and security. For a state committed to the United Nations and the rules-based system it offers, much more is needed to determine how New Zealand would work with the United Nations, and work to encourage others to do the same. That capability is likely to be slightly different from that demanded by the expensive interoperability partnerships with Five Eyes partners, NATO or European mechanisms. It would also be more likely to focus on non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms, as opposed to peace enforcement operations such as those in Afghanistan which morphed into counterinsurgency operations and hence spiralling insecurity for ordinary Afghans.

Terry Johanson
Centre for Defence
and Security Studies,
Massey University



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Johanson: The increased focus on New Zealand’s maritime domain and enhancing NZDF’s capacity in this area. Given New Zealand’s physical environment, the need for an effective maritime service is obvious. The DCP19 seeks to build resilience in this area in purchasing a sister ship for the HMNZS *Canterbury* and a multi-layered maritime patrol aircraft concept. The greater emphasis of the NZDF role in responding to non-traditional defence issues is more explicitly discussed than in previous documents. The inclusion of separate sections focused on climate change and technology recognises the impact of these global issues on when, and how, the NZDF will be employed. The equal importance given to NZDF involvement in domestic security issues as well as external security challenges acknowledges the changing nature of state defence, in that risks and threats do not only emerge from external actors.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Johanson: Conceptually the DCP19 reflects the changing international security environment. It highlights the major trends impacting national security in the post Cold period. Climate change,

cyberspace and outer space are significant issues for all state militaries and are unconstrained by political borders. Hence highlighting these as major focus areas is an encouraging development. Modern defence forces are being utilised to respond to a broader spectrum of security issues and require the flexibility and capacity to do so. The greater emphasis on regional and domestic security will more directly contribute to New Zealand's national interests; and prioritising NZDF operational capability growth in these areas will not only enhance the organisation's reputation at home but also New Zealand's relationship with Pacific Islands. Given New Zealand's physical and geopolitical environment, building the capacity of its naval forces is logical and acquiring assets that provide greater situational awareness within the maritime space directly supports its national security interests and demonstrates commitment to regional partners.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Johanson: The devil is in the detail. Although the DCP19 discusses the risks and capabilities required it doesn't provide the definite link between the identified risk and the resultant capability. An example is the purchase of the P8-A Poseidon aircraft. These aircraft 'provide a sophisticated, technologically advanced military capability' (79, page 13), however no clear military threat to New Zealand's maritime domain was articulated in the Plan. The only military use for these aircraft indicated was 'in support of our defence partners and the rules based international order' (80, page 13). A clearer articulation of how these new capabilities are to be implemented, and a discussion of how the project implications have been considered from purchase to introduction into service, would be welcome. For example, will the sister ship HMNZS *Canterbury* provide the specialist amphibious operations capability that is currently lacking? How will the fleet of Unmanned Aerial Systems be manned and what will its command and control architecture be? Will joint training regimes be funded to improve interservice interoperability? What does interoperable with partners mean? Are allies driving specific equipment purchases and influencing NZDF into actions that have tenuous connections to New Zealand's interests? The Plan could be strengthened through a more explicit articulation of how New Zealand's unique defence environment drives the desired NZDF capabilities and how these capabilities allow New Zealand forces to respond effectively to complex security issues.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Johanson: The biggest omission of the DCP19 is a discussion that identifies the existence of a threat that necessitates New Zealand maintaining a military force. The risks and resulting responses from the NZDF lie primarily in areas seen as contingent to the primary function of Defence Forces and in support of other Government agency operations. Despite the reinforcement of a war-fighting role for NZDF, the primary threats articulated within the Plan relate to issues that do not constitute an existential threat to state territory or political authority. Has the role of the NZDF changed fundamentally? Now might be a time for a re-examination of what type of defence organisation New Zealand needs to meet its interests and what roles and tasks best fit with its strategic environment and place in the world. The other question I had after reading the DCP19 was: how is this Plan future-proofing the NZDF in a dynamic global security environment? The future threats and risks presented are already here and the continuity plan saw these purchases being replaced with similar capabilities. Given the rate of change currently seen in the international system any assumptions that future defence environments will be a continuation of the current one may be flawed.

**Former Defence
Minister Wayne
Mapp**



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Mapp: For the first time in many decades New Zealand has a full political consensus on the overall shape and purpose of the Defence Force. Golriz Ghahraman, Defence spokesperson for the Green Party, endorsed the overall intent of the plan with its greater emphasis on humanitarian support in the South Pacific with a particular focus on climate change. While these things had been identified in previous reviews, their greater political emphasis meant that the Green Party could join the other political parties in parliament in supporting the broad direction of New Zealand Defence Policy. This was less about the individual capabilities and more about political bridge building.

What do you think the plan has right?

Mapp: The overall balance of capabilities, which builds on the previous plans, fits New Zealand's situation well, especially in the South Pacific and the Antarctic region. The greater emphasis on naval capability, along with the new P8 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, means New Zealand will be able to maintain greater presence in our region with capabilities that are directly relevant to our immediate needs. They will also dovetail well with Australia. By 2030, the total tonnage of naval ships will be over 60,000 tonnes compared to 35,000 tonnes in 2018. The increase is primarily in the new tanker, the proposed new ice capable offshore patrol vessel and the new dive and hydrographic ship. The *Canterbury* replacement is expected to be a much more capable ship.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Mapp: The two gaps are the delay in replacing the Boeing 757s with a mix of jet transport aircraft more suited to New Zealand's needs, and the replacement of the ANZAC frigates. The two Boeing 757s need to be replaced relatively soon, probably by three new A321s. These A321s would be able to be serviced by Air New Zealand given the commonality with the Air New Zealand fleet. The frigate replacement decision has been pushed out too far, to a point when the existing ANZAC ships will be 40 years old. While some extension of the ANZAC frigates was warranted, it seems like a difficult decision is being deferred too far into the future. The ANZAC frigate replacement will be the most challenging future defence capability decision. The decision as to what type of combat ship will replace the ANZAC frigates needs to be made by the mid-2020s if the new ships are to be in service by 2035.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Mapp: Not really. It is a pretty good plan. The one thing that I would note is that, by mid-2035, the New Zealand population will be 6 million. New Zealand has had a regular force army of around 5,000 ever since the population was 3 million in the 1970s, with an equal number serving in the reserves, and the Plan proposes a new total of 6,000 by 2035. A regular force army based around two battalions looks a little small for 2035, especially with the reserves now being less than 2,000. I would have thought it sensible to add a third regular force battalion by 2035, leading to a regular force army of more like 7,000, with a reservist force of around 3,000 to 4,000. A third battalion would provide sustainability. The combination of the deployments to East Timor, Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands in the early 2000s was too great a strain for a regular force Army of 5,000. A third battalion would have meant that such simultaneous deployments would have been more sustainable.

Valerie Morse
Auckland Peace
Action



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Morse: What I find of most interest in this document is that it is military propaganda. It invokes a set of assumptions and then builds a strategy based on these assumptions, without reference to facts. As examples, the NZDF says that 'Defence embodies and promotes New Zealand's values' (16.5, page 7). Yet the values that the New Zealand military have displayed most recently include 1) being responsible for the probable deaths of civilians 2) attempting to cover-up this operation 3) begrudging participation in an inquiry on that operation and 4) the maligning of a journalist who exposed the operation. These are definitely not values

that I, nor any New Zealander I know, hold. Another example is, defence 'supports New Zealand's community and environmental wellbeing and resilience' (15, page 7) despite recent crises about land and water contamination from firefighting foam at defence sites throughout the country.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Morse: It has correctly identified some challenges that those of us who care about a peaceful and inclusive society face. Yet, at the same time it suggests as remedies for these challenges the very things that have caused the problems in the first place. The document says that New Zealand has 'no better friend than Australia'. Australia has been a key participant in United States wars of conquest; it can be accused of being involved in torture and violations of human rights in its treatment of asylum seekers. Australia is a contributor to the breakdown of the international rules-based order that this document says is important. It says that New Zealand benefits from the Five Eyes: a group that is arguably responsible for the endless wars in the Middle East, for the deaths of millions of civilians, for funding and arming militant fundamentalists, for destabilising the region, and for creating a vast surveillance web over the domestic populations of Five Eyes countries.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Morse: This document is based upon the colonial, white supremacist, capitalist paradigm that national security applies equally to everyone. The events of March 15 2019 should have forever put that idea to rest. Their concept of national security says nothing about people having enough to eat, a house to live in, or a dignified life. New Zealand already suffered a devastating military invasion; it happened starting in 1840 and has never stopped. It has resulted in the loss of land, power, resources and culture for hundreds of thousands of people, not to mention the loss of lives in wars and inside prisons and other institutions. The 'seven overarching national security goals' need to start with building a tolerant, inclusive and equitable society. They need to include protecting the vulnerable and marginalised. Our future can only be secure by redistribution of stolen wealth back to Māori and changes to constitutional structures. This is what national security means.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Morse: The NZDF enjoys a good reputation. It does so because it has very good public relations and because it has people who have joined the military to do the good things that the military says that it does, like humanitarian aid, peacekeeping and search and rescue operations. Unfortunately, I believe that the military does very little of any of these things. Instead, it does things that most New Zealanders would find objectionable if people had a clear picture of not only what the troops were doing, but also

what the effect of them doing it was, such as being part of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The ‘hearts and minds’ operations of militaries on the domestic population are always the most significant expenditure of energy. They do not feature in this document at all.

Dr Jeremy Moses
Political Science and
International
Relations, University
of Canterbury



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Moses: I’m particularly interested in references to ‘semi-autonomous’, ‘remotely operated’, and ‘space-centred’ technologies, as the prospective move into these areas in the future will likely be plagued by a range of technological, economic and ethical challenges, as they already are for those states that are currently active in these areas. It seems most probable that such technologies would be geared toward humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR), surveillance, and other non-combat roles, but the possibility that they could also be deployed in combat situations will come into play once concrete decisions on acquiring them come into focus in future. Are we fully prepared for dealing with the ethical ambiguities of semi-autonomous weapons? Is there a possibility that becoming more enmeshed in networked military systems increases the vulnerability of defence personnel and citizens? It is not the role of this plan to answer these questions, but the proposed spend in these areas will eventually lead us down that path.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Moses: The sales pitch! Negotiating amongst coalition partners with very different views on defence spending was always going to be a challenge, but the emphasis on non-combat roles such as HADR and surveillance and monitoring of the New Zealand’s huge search and rescue and exclusive economic zones and is well pitched for the current political, economic and environmental situation. Thorny questions about New Zealand’s role in US-led combat operations such as Afghanistan or Iraq are effectively marginalised in this plan, making it palatable for political leaders and citizens of all political persuasions. It also helps that this is not *just* a sales pitch, given that it is in fact most likely that the new tools be acquired will largely be used for non-combat purposes. The largely positive reception of the DCP19 in the media and the lack of serious political contestation around it since its release suggest that this framing has been very effective.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Moses: I think the DCP19 continues to make too many assumptions about ‘key partners’ when it comes to questions of interoperability. It is understandable that there is an expectation that the United States and Australia will continue to be the main military partners for New Zealand in both security and HADR situations and that interoperability with their defence systems should remain a major consideration. But at present it is very hard to look out to 2030 (or even 2025) with any confidence that those partners are or will continue to be like-minded on the question of defending a rules-based international order. Therefore, what is missing is any attempt to come to terms with the wildly fluctuating and unpredictable international scene and to make some allowances for the potential transformations in international power dynamics that may emerge from that.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Moses: Overall, I think it is a very well constructed and convincing policy document. It makes a compelling case for the various acquisitions and does a decent job of projecting out into the future. As I noted above, there is a lack of rich political and ethical analysis, which are the elements that are most interesting to me, but this really is not the place for such analysis anyway.

*Dr Robert Patman
Politics, School of
Social Sciences,
University of Otago*



What do you find of most interest in this new Plan?

Patman: New Zealand is probably facing its most challenging international security context since the end of the Cold War, and the new DCP19 indicates that the current New Zealand government recognises that it must maintain multifaceted capabilities to sustain its core goal of maintaining and extending a rules-based international system in that environment. That is to say, this Defence Capability Plan acknowledges that if New Zealand wants to advocate multilateral approaches to security problems, it must be prepared to actively contribute to international initiatives or responses that are adopted.

What do you think the Plan has right?

Patman: The plan seeks to operationally link New Zealand's national security interests with the security interests of the Pacific region in which it is located. I welcome this development. It would be naïve to believe that events in the Pacific, such as great power rivalry or the impact of climate change, would not directly impact New Zealand. The commitment to enhancing the country's airlift and sealift capabilities in the 2020s reflects a new realism that Wellington must build a greater capacity to undertake military or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, whether in New Zealand or its regional neighbourhood.

What would you suggest could be done to improve the Plan?

Patman: While it is pleasing that New Zealand is boosting its maritime security capabilities, it does have one of the largest economic exclusion zones in the world, covering 11% of the Earth's surface, and it is not clear the DCP19 will provide sufficient capabilities to adequately protect and safeguard the resources of this enormous maritime estate.

Do you think there is anything missing from the Plan?

Patman: No, the DCP19 has commendable breadth. It envisages improvements in the maritime, land, air and information domains. Further, this broad-based approach to national security appears to be fully consistent with the core goal of pursuing an independent New Zealand foreign policy in an increasingly interconnected world. The Christchurch terror atrocity in March 2019 dispelled the idea that New Zealand's geography was a protection against trends that have affected much of the rest of the world. At the same time, questions may be raised about the depth of the commitments envisaged under the Plan.