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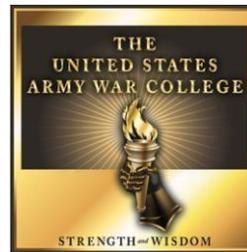
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New Zealand's Geopolitics and Security Challenges

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Abstract

Fear, honor and interest are the strongest motives for a nation to go to war. For New Zealand the maintenance of international peace and security is the key motivation that influences decisions around defense and security. Analyzing New Zealand's security environment through its geopolitical considerations and security challenges reveals that New Zealand does not maintain a comprehensive unilateral defense capability, and, instead, chooses niche capabilities and relies on its partners and friends for its defense guarantee. New Zealand relies on a rules-based international order and employs niche defense capabilities in conflict zones that support the advancement of the national interest. As New Zealand's strategists think about the future operating environment, future force structure, and force design, a full understanding of New Zealand's geopolitical position and strategic challenges leads to six key theoretical principles, which should shape their thinking around needs-based and niche-based employment of the force.

New Zealand's Geopolitics and Security Challenges

You went into it out of pure devilment! You need not have sent those troops unless you had liked. You could have joined the Germans if you liked.

—George Bernard Shaw¹

New Zealand's relationship with war is one of strongly inherited military traditions. These traditions stem from the founding era of modern New Zealand, and successive generations have come to view war as a "continuing part of New Zealand's culture and history."² During the First World War, New Zealand mobilized troops at a higher rate than any other English speaking nation and suffered losses at a rate of one in 175 of its population, which was twice the rate of other commonwealth nations and four times the rate of Americans.³ New Zealand's involvement in the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the War in Afghanistan that have followed it, has been essentially involvement to "maintain international peace and security."⁴ New Zealand has contributed forces to war for the achievement of strategic ends that have been about supporting its partners, and the maintenance of a rules-based international order, rather than being motivated solely by fear.

Thucydides wrote that "fear, honor and interest"⁵ are the three strongest motives that compel a nation to fight. This formulation has informed military theories on the conduct of war developed by theorist Carl von Clausewitz, where he wrote about warfare concerning the people, the commander, and the government.⁶ New Zealand's supporting contributions to war in the past might be classified as being based on honor and interest in this construct. Honor is met by being a trusted partner, a good international citizen, and interest from being positioned to benefit from a functioning

rules-based international order. However, for New Zealand there are other factors at play that influence its decisions around defense and security. Analyzing New Zealand's security environment through its geopolitical considerations and security challenges reveals that New Zealand does not maintain a comprehensive unilateral defense capability and chooses, instead, to maintain niche capabilities and also to rely on its partners and friends for its defense guarantee. To make this strategy viable, New Zealand relies on a rules-based international order that sees the country employ niche defense capabilities in conflict zones that support the advancement of the national interest. A critical implication of this approach is that niche forces optimized for the defense of New Zealand will need to have utility, interoperability, and survivability in global settings. As New Zealand's strategists think about the future operating environment, future force structure, and force design, a full understanding of New Zealand's geopolitical position and strategic challenges lead to six key theoretical principles, which should shape their thinking around needs-based and niche-based employment of the force.

The first section discusses New Zealand's geopolitical position. It investigates New Zealand's isolation from the world and its reliance on the sea as a principal source of national power. The maritime environment is a source of strength in both economic and security matters, but it also introduces strategic vulnerability. Further, geopolitics affects New Zealand's relationships with its regional neighbors through its influence on territorial possessions, alliances and power politics.

The second section examines New Zealand's strategic challenge and explores military decision making related to economics of scale and how these problems can

influence decisions, the definition of national interests, the employment of forces and the directed security tasks for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Finally, the third section builds on the first two to elaborate on six theoretical principles for New Zealand's national strategy, including defense partnerships, prioritization of effort, maintaining a rules-based international order, the will of the people, niche capabilities, and the importance of the geostrategic environment.

Geopolitics

Most countries can lay claim to unique geostrategic environments; however, there are no other countries in the world whose geostrategic environment replicates New Zealand's challenge. This is because New Zealand is the most geographically isolated first world nation on the planet. Figure 1 presents a perspective of the world centered on Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. Isolation and water are the primary features. Critically maritime in its character, its territorial interests span a vast area of ocean from the equator to the South Pole. The dominant features are the Pacific and Southern Oceans the Tasman Sea, Australia, South West Pacific Islands, and Antarctica. Yet figure 1 does not fully represent New Zealand's geostrategic environment because it does not represent strategic security and economic partnerships. What it does do is clearly illustrate that New Zealand is both isolated by the sea and reliant on it to generate national power through diplomacy, defense, and development.



Figure 1. Wellington at the Centre of the Globe.⁷

The sea is a fundamental driver for New Zealand's thinking around the elements of national power and how New Zealand employs these elements to achieve impact and influence in the world. Diplomacy, defense, and development are the three core ways nations generate national power, and, for those nations with coastlines, the sea provides the critical platform from which to project that power. Most importantly, the sea forms a unifying medium through which it engages with the world. For example, following Cyclone Winston that struck Fiji on February 20-21, 2016 the NZDF supported rebuilding and reconstruction efforts in Fiji through the deployment of 500 soldiers, sailors, and airmen; two ships and six aircraft to assist with delivering essential aid and reconstructing schools and medical facilities.⁸ The sea allowed New Zealand to project power and utilize its military forces to aid in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the region.

New Zealand is also reliant on the sea for the economic power it generates. This reliance on the sea includes the resources it provides and as an environment to support

the bulk of its imports and exports; the sea is critical to economic prosperity. The New Zealand Government research facility GNS Science estimates “[S]ea-floor mineral deposits within New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone could be worth up to \$500 billion,”⁹ and in 2016, “99% of all New Zealand trade was carried by the sea.”¹⁰ This reliance on the sea is complicated by the vast size of New Zealand’s maritime economic zone, which at 4.1 million square kilometers is nearly sixteen times New Zealand’s land area. This large maritime economic zone does present some challenges to New Zealand’s sovereignty and security as the country seeks to police and protect this vital interest.¹¹

The sea and the relative security it affords New Zealand presents as a defensive asset when considering war and its conduct. This is because for any nation to significantly threaten New Zealand in the land domain it would be faced with the challenge of first projecting forces across large spans of ocean. Clausewitz’s theories acknowledged the superiority of defense over attack, and further argues that those waging an offensive campaign must have strong motives to overcome this disparity: “[T]he weaker the motives for action, the more they will be overlaid and neutralized by this disparity between attack and defense.”¹² For a nation to take aggressive action against New Zealand, it must negotiate the difficult obstacle of power projection across and from the sea. This decision would require a very strong motive, one that has, historically, not been generated, especially between maritime democracies and highly developed states with the military means to challenge New Zealand. Perhaps the closest New Zealand came to such a scenario was during the Pacific campaign of the Second World War. A small number of Japanese and German vessels operated around

the New Zealand coast, and while these vessels destroyed some shipping, this never manifested into an existential threat.¹³ Australia, New Zealand's closest neighbor, provides further protection, as it stands in the way of power projection from Asia, in particular. During the Second World War, for the Japanese to project power towards New Zealand, it would have first had to subdue Australia. This proved to be an insurmountable problem given that the Japanese Army viewed invading Australia as weakening Japan in North Asia and the Japanese Navy could not spare "the million tonnes [sic] of shipping the invasion would have consumed."¹⁴

New Zealand's geographic isolation and the strong defensive position it affords has prompted New Zealand to all but rule out the possibility of threats to its territorial integrity. With the exception of European colonization, there have been historically no credible threats that have directly threatened New Zealand territory, and none exist in the contemporary environment that would cause New Zealand to see it differently. The Defence Assessment 2014 states, "New Zealand does not presently face a direct threat of physical invasion and occupation of New Zealand territory."¹⁵ The assessment hedges somewhat with the term presently and explains that the present scenario would need to be preceded by a "significant change" in the global security environment in order to warrant a change in the assessment and that any change would be preceded by, "a reasonable amount of time to re-orientate its defence priorities."¹⁶

Yet despite the security the sea provides for New Zealand, it also presents as a source of vulnerability. This is because the isolating distance and the size of New Zealand's territorial claims leave the country remote from the security and cooperation alliances concerned with border and resource protection. New Zealand's security may

seem an independent proposition. It also adds distance to trading markets for a New Zealand economy centered on primary industries. Long sea lines of communication are vulnerable to interdiction as they are difficult to patrol effectively. This distance introduces the need for New Zealand to contribute to the security of this environment in meaningful ways to guarantee its prosperity. The Defence White Paper 2016 stated, “New Zealand’s relative geographic distance from other countries no longer affords the protection it once did.”¹⁷ This statement acknowledges that New Zealand’s isolated location, its export dependence, and its vast maritime domain all have a fundamental influence on its security. This influence has shaped New Zealand into a defensive posture that forms the basis of its defense forces today.¹⁸

New Zealand has not assumed that its geographic isolation will shield it from all future threats, and some threats will create genuine security concerns for New Zealand. The threat of nuclear war, no matter how remote the possibility, is one that New Zealand will confront as the world emerges from a twenty-five year period where the United States has been the world’s sole superpower, to one where nuclear-armed “China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests.”¹⁹ Contested global influence and the actions of rogue nuclear states like North Korea and Iran bring the threat of nuclear war back into New Zealand’s geopolitical calculus. Otherwise, threats are unlikely to be existential. Cyber warfare and terrorism also pose direct threats to New Zealand and its security, and oceans and isolation protect from neither. In fact, in the case of a cyber threat, the nation’s primary vulnerability stems from its strategic isolation and its reliance on a single “undersea fibre [sic] optic cable” and space based systems to support the workings of its critical cyber infrastructure.²⁰ It is

likely that only time and opportunity separates New Zealand from having to address these threats head on.

The rise of China and Russia to challenge the power and influence of the United States raises the stakes for all nations. A rebalancing of international power may alter alliances and partnerships that are central to New Zealand's defense strategy, primarily by strengthening existing alliances and partnerships, but also by opening up opportunities for new relationships. New Zealand maintains a close defense relationship with Australia that will require it to respond "in the event of a direct military attack on Australia."²¹ Further, in 2010, New Zealand signed the Wellington Declaration with the United States to further "joint cooperation in addressing broader regional and global challenges, such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, and extremism."²² These geopolitical partnerships remove any vacuum created around the idea of singular geographic considerations of defense. In contrast to security and cooperative relationships with Australia and the United States, New Zealand maintains a strong trading relationship with China that demands a careful balance between maintaining defensive security arrangements and continued economic development through trade and enterprise.²³

Should an existential threat emerge, New Zealand will have to rely on its friends and allies to help because the cost benefit ratio for New Zealand to maintain sufficient military capabilities to conduct an independent defense has proven too much to bear. The scrapping of the air combat force in 2001 is perhaps the most obvious example of the way in which New Zealand has signaled that the cost of military capability is too high when compared to the risks New Zealand faces.²⁴ The Defence White Paper 2016

states that New Zealand “maintains a level of capability that allows it to deter threats, enlarge its forces at short notice, and provide sufficient time for additional help to be sought from its partners.”²⁵ The Indian philosopher Kautilya contended, “[A] nation forced to rely on the kindness of neighboring states is weak and, unless it can change rapidly, doomed to destruction.”²⁶ New Zealand appears to see the situation quite differently from Kautilya, which is unsurprising, given that Kautilya wrote over 2000 years ago from the Indian sub-continent with its differing geopolitical considerations. In New Zealand’s case, its geographic isolation combined with the geopolitical implications of its international relationships, and the cost benefit associated with the assessed risk is such that New Zealand’s political leaders view this as prudent defense policy rather than weakness.

New Zealand’s Strategic Challenge

New Zealand’s strategic challenge, characterized by its geopolitical environment as outlined above, creates a potential trap for its strategic planners. This is because strategists may rely on theoretical models that cannot readily be applied to problems without critical review and sometimes reworking. Conventional wisdom about international politics and grand strategy is generally not framed in a context that relates to New Zealand’s geopolitical environment. For example, Kautilya’s argument that a nation forced to rely on the kindness of neighboring states is weak is not an argument that New Zealand has readily accepted. Context is critical when considering theoretical concepts in New Zealand’s time and space. Kautilya wrote for his King Chandragupta Maurya, and he desired his King to be a “world conqueror.”²⁷ It is important, therefore, that New Zealand strategic planners critically review international theories, norms, and

practices to ensure that when adopted, they are the right fit for New Zealand's unique situation. This is especially true for strategic military planners, whose role it is to anticipate the future state of the armed forces and how best to posture forces today to prepare for the emergent threats of the future.

The NZDF White Paper sets the primary policy direction for the New Zealand military force.²⁸ The White Paper is informed by a formal Defence Assessment that "provides an up to date assessment of the strategic environment and take into account the views of a range of defence partners."²⁹ These documents are produced every five years or sooner on Government direction. The latest Defence White Paper makes no explicit reference to strategic ends; however it articulates national security interests forming goals for defense as:

The promotion of a safe, secure and resilient New Zealand, including its border and approaches; the preservation of a rules-based international order which respects national sovereignty; a network of strong international relationships; and the maintenance of New Zealand's prosperity via secure sea, air and electronic lines of communication.³⁰

These security interests form the basis of the roles and tasks for the NZDF and allow defense planners to draw up ways and means through capability plans and capital plans to "set out how these intentions will be translated into defence effects and materiel."³¹

The most pressing challenge for defense planners in New Zealand in addressing how it achieves military effects is the relationship between the tasks required, the time available to achieve the tasks and the resources available. Ultimately, resource constraints drive this challenge, as the military relies on government allocations to provide its defense guarantee, and the amount of money the government is willing to spend varies. Here, too, New Zealand's isolation comes into play. Isolation affords not

only a strategic defensive advantage, but also shapes how New Zealand’s political leaders think about how to resource its defense.

New Zealand seeks to balance the competing priorities of its geostrategic environment by apportioning broad roles and tasks to its forces and then limiting the scope of their employment through considerations of the national interest. Figure 2 illustrates how the nation considers the effects to be achieved (nature of commitment) and the time available (reaction time) and then rationalizes these against the resource challenge (Choice, Length of Commitment, and Level of Commitment).

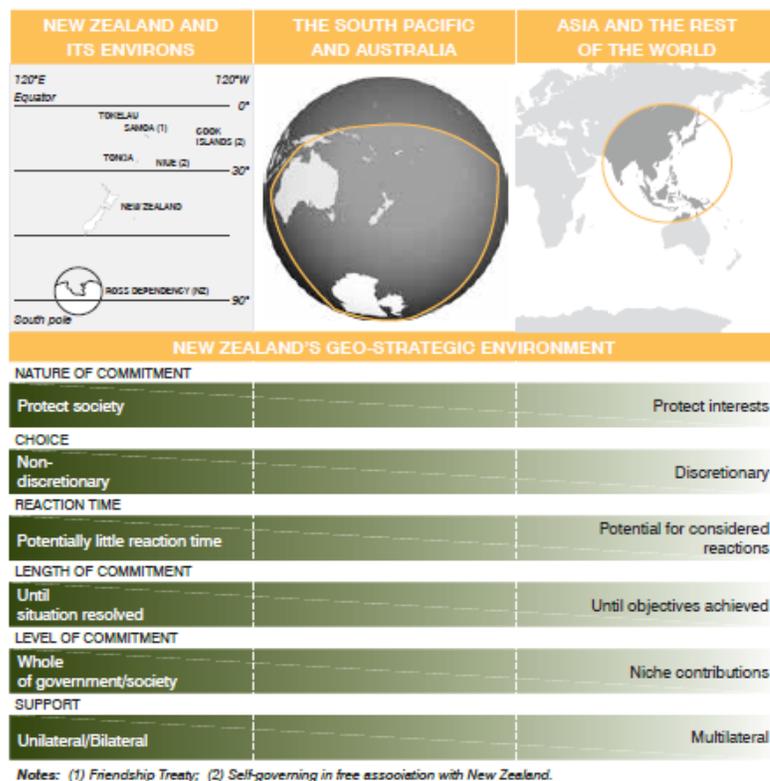


Figure 2. New Zealand’s Geo-strategic Environment³²

The NZDF is required to “operate in New Zealand and its Exclusive Economic Zone, followed by the South Pacific and the Southern Ocean” as the governments highest priority.³³ It is also tasked with contributing capabilities as an ally of Australia,

making a credible contribution in support of peace and security in the Asia Pacific, and protecting wider interests by contributing to international peace and security and the international rule of law. This broad variety of tasks presents a dilemma for the NZDF because the limited size of the force and the broad expanse of the operating environment require the nation to make considerable tradeoffs with respect to military capability and capacity.

These tradeoff decisions can have significant implications for the nation's ability to employ force. For example, in 2001 the New Zealand Government announced that the air combat force of A4 Skyhawk fighter bombers would not be replaced. In justifying this decision, Prime Minister Helen Clark stated: "The simple fact is that New Zealand cannot afford modern combat aircraft and the weaponry needed to equip them, and also maintain adequate army and navy capabilities. This new defence plan aims to develop adequate depth in our defence capability, rather than try to carry on with inadequate breadth."³⁴ This decision, made out of necessity from an economic position, has far reaching implications not only for the air domain, but also for the joint effect generated across the maritime and land domains.

Reducing or scrapping elements of a balanced military capability diminishes the usefulness of the entire force by undermining the effectiveness of joint warfighting functions. The implication for New Zealand is that its overall military capability has been lowered to a level where the country has the ability to undertake independent military operations only in the most benign threat environments. This limitation is illustrated by Figure 2, in which New Zealand acknowledges that it must be able to operate

unilaterally only in New Zealand and its environs. This limitation is further supported by the strategic assessment that there is no direct threat to New Zealand.

The motive for war in the region may be changing as the United States, China, and North Korea flex their military muscles. The rise of China as an economic power and growing military power will have a destabilizing effect on the balance of power relationship with the United States.³⁵ Further North Korean development of nuclear weapons and their threats to target them against the United States presents very real security challenges in the region.³⁶ While these changing motives may be concerning for strategists, they are unlikely to cause New Zealand intelligence analysts to review the Defence Assessment 2014, which assesses the likelihood of a direct invasion threat towards New Zealand before the year 2040 as very low. What changing motives may do is to cause intelligence analysts to potentially review downwards the time horizon associated with the assessment. Any compression of this time horizon would only amplify New Zealand's reliance on its security partners to guarantee its security because of the long timelines required for the reorientation of defense posture.³⁷

New Zealand's closest security partner is Australia, and Australia also represents the most powerful nation within New Zealand's sphere of influence. Both nations have a shared history and similarly aligned cultures and experiences. Together the two nations fought at Gallipoli as part of an Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) force in 1915, and they retain that tradition today by maintaining a combined ANZAC force in Iraq.³⁸ The New Zealand Defence White Paper 2016 reinforces the closeness of the relationship by referring directly to a principal role for the NZDF to "meet New Zealand's commitment as an ally of Australia."³⁹ The importance of the Australian security

partnership is one that New Zealand should not take for granted, particularly in the provision of balanced defense capabilities. Any accusations from Australia that New Zealand is not pulling its military weight in the region warrants consideration by strategic planners. New Zealand, for its part, maintains a “steadfast commitment to making independent policy decisions”⁴⁰ and will act in its interests.

While New Zealand is committed to making independent policy decisions, it also relies on an effective rules-based international order to ensure its security. New Zealand’s reliance on the sea and secure sea lanes for its trading relationships and the imbalance in its defensive military capabilities brought about by the economics of scale require both order and predictability. A rules-based international order provides just such a stable system under which New Zealand can survive and prosper. To that end, New Zealand acknowledges that it will need to contribute forces to preserve and reestablish that order when it is in its interests to do so; it further acknowledges that those contributions will be in niche areas due to the tradeoffs it has made in light of its geostrategic position and resource constraints (Figure 2).

A strong and functional United Nations (UN) is essential to New Zealand’s approach to a rules-based international order because it provides an “opportunity to engage and influence at the highest level to advance [New Zealand’s] strategic and relationship objectives.”⁴¹ This diplomatic approach to a rules-based international order aims to “demonstrate that small countries can be influential on the global stage and are valuable partners.”⁴² It also carries with it development and defense responsibilities, which sees New Zealand making niche contributions to UN-mandated security operations. These contributions are selective based on the criteria in Figure 2; however,

commitment decisions are made in the national interest based on the legitimacy of the United Nations and its principled role in the preservation of a rules-based international order. For example, between 1999 and 2002 New Zealand deployed over 6000 personnel to peacekeeping efforts in East Timor, and since 1954, New Zealand has maintained small numbers of military observers as part of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East.⁴³

New Zealand's competing defense priorities require balancing its broad security tasks with the effects required and the resources available to achieve the strategic ends. The NZDF has been equipped with capabilities that balance these three competing priorities with particular emphasis on the affordability of military capabilities. As a result, New Zealand has abandoned essential joint warfighting capabilities (especially in the air domain) in favor of greater depth in selected aspects of the land and maritime environment. This approach requires a reliance on security partners and a strong and stable rules-based international order to ensure New Zealand can exercise its national power and provide for its own security in a changing world.

Theoretical Principles

While geography is constant, the geopolitical environment is constantly changing. Analysts may try to understand and predict the future environment; however, the geopolitical future is uncertain and prone to the independent policy decisions of the actors involved. In addressing this challenge, a theorist like Carl von Clausewitz might argue that the study of theory should not represent a plan for action and a way out of situations presented in the future but rather as a means to "structure past and present reality intellectually" to "analyze the constituent elements" and to "define clearly the

nature of the ends in view.”⁴⁴ Having analyzed New Zealand’s geopolitical past and present and its strategic ends in relation to defense and security matters, this section addresses the theoretical principles that strategists must consider when addressing New Zealand’s defense and security challenge.

The first principle is that New Zealand’s geostrategic environment is a critical consideration for decisions around defense and security. Strategists must recognize that New Zealand’s isolated location, the defensive advantage afforded by the sea, and the economics of scale all contribute to the calculus of what capabilities are required in defense of the nation. Carl von Clausewitz who wrote that “Among civilized nations combat uninfluenced by its surroundings and the nature of the ground is hardly conceivable,” supports this perspective.⁴⁵ Realist arguments that a nation forced to rely on the good nature of others is fundamentally weak may have credence in common understandings of international relations, but they ignore New Zealand’s unique situation. New Zealand acknowledges this realist position as having merit, so it maintains defensive capabilities; however, the nation places its trust in the effectiveness of international institutions to maintain order and thus guarantee security.

The second principle derives from the first and states a successful New Zealand defense and security strategy is reliant on an effective rules-based international order. Without balanced defense capabilities in sufficient depth to guarantee freedom of action, New Zealand relies on the alignment of interests of its allies and partners to guarantee its defense. Alignment of interests cannot be guaranteed, however, and a mitigation strategy for this is for New Zealand to be a good international citizen and support international efforts to maintain an effective rules-based international order.

New Zealand has been among countries that have called for UN reform; however, the United Nations represents the best system the world has.⁴⁶ It therefore remains in New Zealand's interest to work closely with the system to advance its interests.

The third principle for New Zealand is that security partnerships form an important link to support a rules-based international order. New Zealand has not demonstrated hostile intent towards another nation that has not demonstrated hostile intent first. This is a values-based approach to war and New Zealand should continue to align itself with nations that share its values. In doing so, New Zealand must accept that there are times where threats to a partner with shared values will require a consideration to use force to uphold shared values and the principle of a rules-based international order. In support of this idea, Australia and New Zealand issued a joint statement on closer defense relations that recognized, "[W]e uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and we acknowledge our responsibility to be prepared to make military contributions in support of those principles."⁴⁷

The fourth principle is that New Zealand will maintain warfighting capabilities only in niche areas. The lack of balanced joint warfighting functions in sufficient depth to guarantee security from external threats requires that New Zealand relies on its allies and partners for its full security guarantee. Once a position has been taken with respect to not maintaining balanced warfighting capabilities, the fallback position is one of niche warfighting capabilities. A niche capability approach allows for New Zealand's political and military leaders to hash out what niche capabilities must be maintained organically, and which ones may be provided by allies and partners. This principle suggests an approach to capabilities that emphasizes strategic need first and then matches these

needed capabilities and their inherent warfighting strengths to the wider operating environment to form options for New Zealand's niche contributions. For example, New Zealand prefers to maintain line infantry forces rather than mechanized infantry on the basis that there is no identified need for mechanized forces in the regional operating environment. It follows that New Zealand would likely avoid contributing these line infantry forces to areas of operation where mechanized warfare is anticipated. Instead, New Zealand would seek out niche areas of operation where its infantry forces could make its most effective contribution. New Zealand should guard against its needs-based and niche-based employment approach being confused by attitudes toward force structure that draw on more traditional warfare doctrinal concepts.

The fifth principle is that New Zealand will prioritize the acquisition of defense capabilities to address the regional environment. The Defence White Paper 2016 has stated that the "Government's highest priority for the Defence Force is its ability to operate in New Zealand and its Exclusive Economic Zone, followed by the South Pacific and the Southern Ocean."⁴⁸ This suggests a requirement to fully resource capabilities to operate in the domestic security realm and to secure the maritime environment. Dual use capabilities that are optimized to operate in the low intensity domestic security and maritime environments extending to the South Pacific and Southern Ocean and also have mid to high intensity warfighting functions will present as the capabilities with the most effective utility for New Zealand strategists. In the land environment an example of this type of dual use capability is light infantry. A light infantry unit provides mass and with support is capable of rapid strategic mobility. A light infantry unit can effectively

contribute to an operating spectrum that ranges from disaster relief through to mid to high intensity warfare in niche environments.⁴⁹

The sixth, and possibly the most important, theoretical principle for New Zealand is the requirement to maintain the will of the people in understanding and supporting the reality of New Zealand's defense strategy that will see it fighting to maintain international peace and security. This is especially important given New Zealand's isolation from conventional threats and historical decisions around removing balanced capability from the NZDF. Carl von Clausewitz described, "[T]he most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."⁵⁰ New Zealand has established through a reliance on a rules-based international order that the ends to which it will fight will be to maintain international peace and security. New Zealand's strategists must clearly communicate this strategic vision to the public, thus obviating the critique that New Zealand is only involved in fighting "other people's wars." In fact, New Zealand has vested interests in contributing forces and capabilities to such endeavors when the rules-based international order and international organizations legitimacy are at stake.

Conclusion

Its geopolitical environment heavily influences New Zealand's relationship with international institutions and its reliance on a rules-based international order. For now, New Zealand will be reliant on its friends and allies to help in the event of direct threats emerging. For New Zealand the cost benefit of providing fully for its own defense has been too much to bear given an analysis of the probable threats. New Zealand's

geographic isolation combined with the geopolitical implications of its international relationships, and the benefit associated with the assessed cost and risk is such that this is viewed in New Zealand as prudent defense policy.

Prudent defense policy has also seen New Zealand balance its broad range of security tasks against the effects required and the resources available to achieve the ends. The NZDF has been equipped with capabilities that balance these three competing priorities with a weighting towards the affordability of military capabilities. In taking this approach, New Zealand has abandoned unaffordable joint warfighting capabilities in favor of greater depth in some environments. This approach amplifies the reliance on security partners and on a strong and stable rules-based international order to ensure New Zealand can exercise its national power and provide for its security in a changing world.

The changing nature of the geopolitical environment presents uncertainty for New Zealand around the effectiveness of international institutions and their role in maintaining a rules-based international order. An understanding of the concepts that inform New Zealand's decision making calculus around strategy formulation in the preparation for and conduct of war and armed conflict can reduce this uncertainty and provide a set of principles upon which a defense foundation can be maintained. These principles are: First, the geostrategic environment is a critical consideration; second, New Zealand relies on an effective rules-based international order; third, security partnerships support a rules-based international order; fourth, New Zealand will maintain warfighting capabilities only in niche areas; fifth, New Zealand will prioritize defense capabilities to address the immediate environment; and sixth, there is a need to

maintain the will of the people to support New Zealand's defense strategy that sees it fighting wars to maintain international peace and security.

In their conclusion to *The Sources of Military Change*, Terry Terriff and Theo Farrell suggested that "states may undertake military change for reasons of identity and legitimacy rather than to improve military effectiveness."⁵¹ This speaks directly to the fourth and fifth principles given above and highlights a need for New Zealand strategic leaders to be clear about the capability means they seek. Leaders must ensure they ask the question: Do new capabilities adequately address military effectiveness in the regional environment? Leaders must also be prepared to critically examine capabilities that give the impression of placing identity and legitimacy with partners and the world ahead of regional effectiveness to ensure fit for purpose capabilities for the future.

The NZDF has established a long and proud history of service in the maintenance of international peace and security. A clear vision of New Zealand's pathway towards the maintenance of international peace and security in the future demands familiarity with the six principles captured above. Consideration of these unique New Zealand principles in thinking around the future operating environment, future force structure, and force design of the NZDF will ensure that New Zealand's geopolitical considerations are addressed in its military strategy.

Endnotes

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