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NEW SECURITY AGENDAS: EUROPEAN AND AUSTRALIAN
PERSPECTIVES
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ABSTRACT OF PAPER

This paper is in two parts. The first part undertakes a survey and critique of the theoretical foundations of the new security agenda, using the work of Professor Buzan and his collaborators Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde as a sounding board in addressing several important and fundamental concerns about the nature of the new agenda. While in general agreement with these scholars on the need to renovate the security agenda, the paper discusses problems of conceptualization and analysis which their project discloses.

The second part of the paper has two purposes. First, it discusses the broad sweep of regional and functional security challenges as seen from the Australian perspective. Secondly, it undertakes a small case study of the nature and significance of Australia's policy and actions in respect of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the 1992 Rio Framework Convention on Climate Change. In doing so, it seeks to point up the significance of this policy challenge to Australia in the context of the new security agenda.

Dr. Chris Hubbard lectures in International Relations at Curtin University of Technology. He holds a Doctorate in International Relations and International Law from Edith Cowan University, and is currently completing a study of the history of Australia's and the United States' shared experience of war.

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Australia's 'New Security' Challenges

Theoretical considerations

The notion of *security* has been traditionally understood as limited, in essence, to the military (and perhaps political) security of the state. In other words, since the survival of the state was regarded as the single *sine qua non* of international relations, it was appropriate to exclude all else from possessing the quality of “security” as such. Security, therefore, was concerned with “the territorial integrity and political independence” of the sovereign state (as distinguished from the nation-state). This in turn meant that the myriad other dimensions of relations between states could not be allowed to enter into consideration of what the state *needed to secure* in order to conduct its affairs, both internally and with the rest of the world. Thus, security as a field of study, exposition and action was largely irrelevant in the arenas, for example, of inter-state economic relations, societal and national identity, outcomes for individual citizens, or environmentally sustainable human activity.

However, as the pace of global change in these and many other discrete fields of human endeavour accelerated towards the closing years of the twentieth century and into the new millennium, the need to re-think the ideas surrounding ‘security’ has grown, perhaps primarily in the hope of regaining control over global, regional and local forces for change which seem to resist coherent restraint, regulation or management. The implication here is that deficiencies in regulation and control mechanisms must ultimately threaten, or result in, breakdown at the systemic and narrower regional and local levels, with incalculable effects for humanity.

Professor Buzan and his collaborators Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde in their book “*Security: a new framework for analysis*” (1998) have proposed an analytical methodology which uses sectoral or disaggregated acts of securitization (specifically in the military, environmental, economic, societal and political spheres) as a means of addressing complexity through a functional and focused series of analyses. This they describe as a ‘socially constructed’ securitization process which is, by implication, a constructivist project. They acknowledge that such an approach does not closely reflect the reality of decisions which policy makers and agenda setters actually confront in weighing the relative strength of a galaxy of competing ‘securitized’ issues. Nevertheless, they contend that this analytical approach is legitimate, since it is possible to re-aggregate their five discrete sectoral analyses in order to show precisely how 21st century conceptions of security, in manifold fields, both condition and affect perceptions of their individual importance and implications. Another aspect of their analysis is the enlistment of classical security complex theory and a ‘levels of analysis’ approach to their new security agenda.

Implicit in this whole approach is a fundamentally important question: why is this broad view of security to be preferred in contrast to its traditional military-specific definition? The answer may turn on individual perceptions about the so-called 'securitization' process. Is it more legitimate, for example, to adhere to the traditional security analyst's objective approach to 'security', regarding it as being about clear, existential military threats, and how to deal with them, rather than the constructivists' subjective alternative of bestowing a 'security' tag on whatever they regard as being in need of that quality? And, again, what criteria should one use in deciding this question?

On its face, and for a range of reasons, this attempt by the new security analysts to construct the parameters of a remoulded global security agenda seems necessary, supportable and/or analytically more useful than the traditional military security model. For one thing, it could be said to provide the promise of a closer theoretical approach to the vast complexity of the empirical world. It also allows the security analyst the tools with which to begin to unravel the nature and effects of the interwoven threads of the total security rope – which in the post Cold War world grows ever thicker and more difficult to comprehend. The challenge is to unpick the threads of their methodology, theoretical assumptions (for example, about human nature and society) and analytical strategy in deciding whether, and if so to what extent, they (and other constructivists such as John Ruggie and Alexander Wendt) have succeeded *in their own terms*, as well as from a wider, and perhaps more objective point of view.

A number of concerns immediately spring to mind as we consider the validity of the 'new security agenda'. For example, at the outset, it is necessary to understand the implications of the various theoretical IR perspectives in order to critique the move towards a new framework for analysis in the field of security. The most obvious starting point is the question inevitably posed by those in the realist camp who will question the dilution of the security imperative on the ground that this will ultimately result in analytical incoherence. The nub of their argument would be that security as a coherent notion depends on some form of hierarchical ordering of priorities. When more and more claims to the status of 'security' beyond the political process are entertained under the aegis of imperative need, then the very idea of prioritising unlimited goods using limited resources starts to look meaningless.

Of course, this problem of ascription may look very different from a liberal or constructivist perspective. On the ground of inter-dependence, a globally focused neo-liberal would perhaps have fewer quibbles than a realist about the need to ascribe 'security' status to those challenges which threaten the lives of individuals and their descendants. Still less perhaps would a neo-liberal institutionalist decry the utility of a widened security agenda promising to advance the cause of political, economic, cultural and even legal institutionalism in the cause of a Kantian peace and the advancement of individual identity and values. Environmental and societal threats in their numberless constellations would also line up with these categories, as would, for example, challenges to tribal and other traditional communities in the domains, for instance, of folkloric or

linguistic atrophy. It is important to note here that the rights and fate of the individual person begin to take on growing dominance from the constructivist perspective.

And what of this constructivist perspective? If people, groups and institutions are able, in an inter-subjective way, to build communities of identity and interest in social settings which generate a structural and/or idealist view of global politics, is it at all likely that they would resist the potential benefits which the broadened security agenda promises? Perhaps not.

A second question surrounds the need, implicit in the 'new security agenda', for reconceptualisation of the traditional modes of securitisation (especially the explicitly military mode) in order to incorporate it in a wide conception of the nature of *security*. This amounts to recognition of the claim that the architectures and goals of traditional military and diplomatic security may need to be redefined in terms of their relationships to the new spheres of security. No longer, suggest theorists such as Buzan *et al*, is it possible to quarantine or privilege military security above other forms of security activity on the ground that it alone is concerned with the survival of the identity of the state. What use, for example, is the capacity to defend one's territory against all-comers if that territory has become incapable of sustaining the life and well-being of its inhabitants through environmental degradation or toxin pollution?

Taking the argument concerning analytical coherence further, it is not clear that by disaggregating the expanded arena of security into five (why not seven, why not seventeen?) categories, it will be possible to *re-aggregate* them in order to form an integrated and analytically useful result. Is it legitimate to identify these five sectors of securitization – their military, environmental, economic, societal and political manifestations – and avoid ambiguity and fallacy? For example, the "levels of analysis" approach to understanding how to build a matrix of security architectures leaves open the difficulties inherent in comparative analysis at the regional or sub-global levels. The degree of inter-subjectivity which is allegedly constructing regional security complexes such as that in North Asia reduces the ability of analysts to draw universal conclusions beyond the specifics of the North Asian experience. Again, the securitisation of environmental issues in South Asia, for example, may have very different implications (and be constructed in radically different ways) when compared with similar concerns in Western Europe. So too the relationship of environmental securities with military or economic imperatives. And so on.

A further theoretical question deserves attention, before considering the state of play with regard to the ways in which the realignment of security and other relationships are changing for Australia, Europe and the wider world as a consequence of recent shifts in global politics. The question is concerned with critically examining the process by which an issue or perceived problem in the affairs of the individual, nation-state, region or entire world moves from being a *political* to an overtly *security* matter. This is a vitally important move, since it is the basis upon which the process of securitization is distinguished from the merely political process (in any coherent polity such as, say, Australia). Thus, it is necessary to examine the *validity* of such a move, which results in

the transformation of a traditionally narrow and circumscribed domain – that of the military security of the state – into a broad and potentially universal articulation of what ‘security’ actually amounts to, and what purpose this transformation serves.

What distinguishes a security issue from its political counterpart? It is suggested by Professor Buzan and his colleagues that it is the presence and nature of an existential threat requiring emergency measures in response which transforms a political issue into one which has the quality of a security concern. The threat response entails the suspension of the normal ‘rules of the game’ – such as the regular political process or the Basic Law – in order to deal with an extraordinary situation. In reality, each individual situation must be assessed on its own merits in order to decide whether it counts as such a threat. In a broadened definition of ‘security’ the range of threats expands exponentially, and may be limited only by one’s ability to imagine its extent. Using the sectoral distinctions suggested by these theorists, one set of examples could range between a declaration of war by a neighbouring state, crop failure caused by climate change, a threat to national income caused by rising international trade protection, social unrest as a result of religious intolerance, and the rise of political extremism which is seen as a threat by the ruling elites of the polity.

All this seems quite amorphous, universal and indeed difficult to analyse in a coherent fashion. The answer to this conundrum is said to be the new security analysis process, which amounts to a discussion about the practice of turning a political process into a security issue. Of course, whatever criteria we use to distinguish between issues by labeling them ‘environmental’, ‘societal’, ‘military’, ‘economic’ or ‘political’ as such, their resolution will always carry an essentially political quality.

The securitization process must be unpicked to lay out its features. First, Professor Buzan claims that ‘securitisation’ is an ‘inter-subjective’ process in which what counts as ‘security’ is essentially what sufficient (and sufficiently powerful) people decide it is, and which they articulate through a ‘speech act’. Thus, the perception of an existential threat requiring immediate and drastic action is also a matter of subjective (and inter-subjective) identification. But who and what are the actors in the securitizing drama? Buzan *et al* identify three primary agents: the *referent object* (that which is threatened), the *securitizing actor* (declaring a threat to exist) and the *functional actor* (a third agent which influences the dynamics of a threat scenario). More generally, they claim that the key question in security analysis is “Who can *do* security in the name of what?”

Finally, they identify the relevance of the notion of ‘security complexes’, and the linkages between them and their own wider security agenda. Here, complexity itself is inevitable in view of the possibility that security complexes may comprise elements which cut across individual sectors (for example, the economic and environmental fields within a specific geographic region such as Europe). Such a *heterogeneous* complex refutes the ‘classical’ formulation of a *homogeneous* security complex which resides solely in one (usually military) sphere.

How valid is this kind of deterministic approach to security analysis in the real world of rapid change, fluid relationships and reactive (as opposed to pro-active) foreign policy development processes? Furthermore, what basic assumptions does this question make about the nature of relations between states at the beginning of the 21st century?

The literature examining the inherent tensions between the globalising processes of economic and political interdependence, on the one hand, and political, social and cultural fragmentation, on the other, is now immense. One general conclusion has been that real threats to the nation state certainly exist, but that they are not likely (at least in the medium term) to result in the collapse of the Westphalian system. A more likely scenario envisions the growing side-lining or irrelevance of the institutions and shared values which constitute that system, and of the states themselves. Instead, an ever expanding global matrix of relationships in all fields of human activity will bypass the overview, regulation and *fiat* of the states through the agency of dense, highly capable and increasingly efficient communications in all its forms.

Is it likely, then, that these new forms of non-state global economic, social, cultural – and increasingly political activity – will be the sites of the securitisation process as discussed earlier? In my judgment this will increasingly be the case, if for no other reason than that there will be little choice as the governments of the nation states find themselves unable to make inroads into the solution of global, regional, sub-regional and individual security challenges through falling access to resources and growing challenges from both within and outside international borders. Other agents of change will inevitably fill the gaps thereby created.

Nevertheless, the question remains: how convincing is the new security agenda in its attempt to distinguish between that which is the work of the political process, and that which is ‘securitized’, and therefore quarantined from that process? In a simplistic sense, all the various elements of the broadened agenda retain a political quality. It is too early for a defensible answer to this question to have emerged from the work so far completed. Even so, some general observations are possible. It seems generally acceptable, for example, to claim that whatever arrives intact on the broadened security agenda has done so because, as noted above, sufficient and sufficiently powerful political agents have made it so. Whether this occurs as a result of a distinguishable “speech act” or by some other method (the general will? an act of voting? coercion?) is not particularly relevant to the central question of enlistment. But there is little doubt, again as noted above, that the real post Cold war world of the new millennium demands that as threats – ultimately to individual persons – multiply, then responses to them must keep pace with the rising existential dangers posed. Perhaps in this perspective, the new security agenda is not particularly controversial.

Emergent Security Challenges in the 21st century

What is the nature and scope of the challenges to international security in the real world of rapid change? As we begin to answer these questions we will be able start to build a

picture of the character, size and diversity of security challenges actually or potentially confronting securitizing and functional actors, and those agents (referent objects?) subject to threat. Put simply, what does the future hold for Europe? For Australia? Such a 'snap shot' of emergent challenges must necessarily be selective, but is likely to be useful to laying down some parameters. At this stage, and for the sake of clarity, we can divide these examples informally between regional and functional security challenges.

On the regional front, we can acknowledge the existence and importance of classically formulated security complexes in many parts of the world. They tend, in this formulation, to be on a continental or sub-continental scale and include South Asia, North east Asia, the Middle East, Southern Africa, Europe and South/Central America. Note that the existence of a security complex does not immediately denote the presence of existential threats emanating from within the complex (although it might). A particular security complex could also exist as a mutually reinforcing defence mechanism against threats which originate externally. In the regional context, new, re-emergent or intensifying security complexes are appearing in North Asia (China / North Korea / South Korea / Japan / US), South Asia (the India / Pakistan nuclear confrontation), the South China Sea region (the Spratley and Paracel Islands dispute between Thailand, the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam) and the South West Pacific (Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Fiji).

From a functional perspective, we can see a large range of emerging sources of potential conflict in many parts of the world, and on a global basis. The rise of global terrorism – the actions of the politically weak - is paradoxically merely the most visible of many new sources of dispute, insecurity and conflict between agents at all levels of analysis, from the individual to the global sphere. Others include intra-state warfare, environmental degradation in all its forms, energy and information (in)security, economic security issues such as the fate of developing states of the global south (especially in Africa) and security of oil supplies, and societal threats to self-identifying groups such as civilisations, nations, tribes, clans, and the like posed by migration and social competition.

The diversity of this list begins to define the size of the existential 'security' challenge in real terms, and emphasises the drivers behind the move by governments, their advisers, mass communications media, NGOs, IGOs, social movements, church elites, multinational corporations and the academy to assert that the notion of 'security' must be grown beyond its classical military and political roots. This in turn serves to underline the fact that the original domain of security and its challenges remains somewhere near the vanguard of their burgeoning counterparts. As Paul Rogers has noted in his monograph *"Losing control: Global security in the 21st century"* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), the Cold War has ended but the 'peace' is violent. And as the United Nations Report of the Commission on Human Security asserts, security as a concept is ultimately about people rather than states.

What then are the primary emergent security challenges at the beginning of the 21st century, at least as seen from the Australian parapet? We can initially focus on the

traditionally understood security sphere. The overwhelming desire of states and their elites for long-term survival *as states* (and polities) within the international system is still the fundamental driver of most dimensions of military and political securitization. The basic parameters of both domains are of concern here, but the most pressing need is to generate alternative explanations of the various vectors of change and evolution within them. Here, we can note, for example, the still reverberating effects of the end of the Cold War, the influence of the so-called ‘revolution in military affairs’, American and allied responses to international terrorism and other forms of global criminality, the trend towards US unilateralism and the threats thereby posed to the rule of international law, and the tensions increasingly evident between conceptions of US hegemony and their many challengers. As this truncated list shows, military / political security remains centrally important in the affairs of the world, and in no smaller measure to Australia.

It is important to reiterate here that, while we are examining security as a dimension of the affairs of states and their powerful elites, the single most important agent in international relations – the individual – remains as the ultimate ‘referent object’ in all the decisions and actions of agents at this and all other levels of analysis.

How to make sense of the vast diversity of actors, agents, influences, values, and relationships in this most easily understood formulation of ‘security’? The first step, perhaps, is *focus*: on that which can be said to be self-evidently allied to the politico/military field in terms of securing the future. Note that, in doing so, we implicitly acknowledge the legitimacy of the security disaggregation analysis, which itself is capable of significant critique. Nevertheless, there are lessons to learn.

One lesson from the Cold War is that a mutually distorted perception of the nature of states’ security needs can lead to the most ironic form of ‘cooperation’ – the steady, inexorable accumulation both of firepower, and the ability accurately to deliver it – eventually to the point of farce. The Cold War protagonists ultimately held the ability to destroy the Earth’s people and future many times over within less than one hour and, more chillingly, believed it necessary to do so. This kind of security complex continues to exist in its original form, replicated in microcosm in many parts of the world, notwithstanding the lessons the Cold War can teach today’s military and political decision makers. Security in the field of the use of force, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values and, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Thus, whatever constitutes the value to be preserved, what matters in judgments about security are relative capacities and their clear possession by a perceived or potential adversary.

The rise of American hegemony, at least in the realm of the application of military force, has undergone a transformation which continues today, and stands behind much of the willingness of the US to take unilateral action – including the use of force - against threats to its interests, be they international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or regional political instability. It remains an open question whether this unilateral global strategic direction can sustain challenges from aspirant states such as China, or an increasingly unified Europe. What is beyond reasonable doubt is the fact

that the stable bipolar world pre-1989 has been transformed into one whose structure is increasingly defined in terms of the friends and enemies of the United States of America. The threat this poses to the future of an international system based on the rule of international law should not be lightly regarded (while it should not be exaggerated). Even so, neo-realists are increasingly becoming harder realists of the Morgenthau persuasion, while neo-liberal institutionalists fight ever more desperate rearguard actions.

Here does Australia stand in the new world of burgeoning dangers and rising claims for securitisation of threats beyond the application of force?

A Case Study: Australia and the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

A small case study of the Australian Government's engagement with the negotiation of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the 1992 Rio Framework Convention on Climate Change provides a rich illustration of the new security agenda in action. Ostensibly focused solely in the environmental domain, it was in fact a double-edged security sword. Not only was Australia confronted with a policy and negotiating challenge over its future 'greenhouse gas' emissions within the context of a multilateral negotiation process, but had – at the same time – to develop a long term energy market strategy which took into account the emerging local and global demands for environmentally sustainable energy consumption.

How clearly did Australia's actions indicate that its government had accepted, or alternatively failed to acknowledge, that the policy questions surrounding the effects of rapidly rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and the complementary threats to Australia's energy market stability, were issues of national security? After all, Australia depends to a relatively high degree for energy production on the burning of fossil fuels, the most important of which – coal – is the most polluting. With a range of energy intensive industries (such as aluminium, steel, zinc, magnesium and fertilizers) Australia is poorly placed in terms of the economic effects of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (chiefly carbon dioxide). The average Australian is responsible for somewhere between 10 and 20 times the greenhouse gas emissions of a person in India or China.

How clearly did the Australian government demonstrate that these questions extended beyond the mainstream domestic political process, into a newly 'securitised' realm? Even given the remaining doubts surrounding the legitimacy of the best science available on the status of the global warming effect, the answers to these questions should throw some light on the analytical strength of theoretically defensible versions of the new security agenda.

It seems from the evidence available that the Australian government, from the outset, was anxious to develop a negotiating strategy at Kyoto which would deliver to Australia an outcome on greenhouse gas emission limits which would have been seen as unattainable around the world prior to the Kyoto Climate Summit. This is one striking indication of the priority which the Australian government attached to the Kyoto process,

and to the level of threat which it saw as inherent in the potential environmental/economic burdens Australia may have to endure as a result.

Although most industrialised nations had agreed to go along with the so-called ‘Big Three’ economic powerhouses – the European Union, Japan (both of which have now ratified Kyoto) and the United States – on gas emission reductions, Australia held out. At the last minute Australia, through exhaustion rather than anything else, obtained the agreement of its conferees that those industrialised countries with net emissions from land use change and forestry in 1990 (including, of course, Australia) could obtain credits for reducing those emissions. By insisting on the inclusion of emissions from land clearing and forestry in the baseline 1990 data, Australia was setting up for itself a cushion of carbon sinks for use as tradable offsets, should reductions in emissions from industrial activity prove politically or economically unpalatable or even impossible. In the same atmosphere of last-minute desperation, Australia also extracted from the Kyoto process a mandated eight percentage point *increase* in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010, using 1990 baseline data (including the contentious land use emissions) as compared to an average 5.2% *decrease* between 2008 and 2012 agreed by the 38 major industrialised countries inscribed in Annexe I of the Protocol.

Although the reduction ‘tariff’ for individual states varies considerably (for example, a 28% reduction is set for Luxembourg, but only parity is required of Russia) and Europe may redistribute targets between its member states to reach an aggregate 8% reduction, the overall target of 5.2% is just a beginning. Much more will need to be done, resulting finally in a 70% reduction in gas emissions if the global warming effect is to be definitively reversed in the long term.

Notwithstanding its undoubted diplomatic coup, Australia has failed to ratify the Protocol which it strove so forcefully and successfully to modify. Prime Minister Howard stated in June 2003 at Bali that Australia does not currently view ratification as lying in its national interest. He reinforced this assessment by pointing to the US failure to ratify, noting President George W. Bush’s statement that ratification was ‘not in the United States’ economic best interests’.

It seems, therefore, that the policy issues surrounding greenhouse gas emissions and their accompanying climatic changes are regarded by the Australian government as security issues – and would be so whether or not Australia viewed the principles of the Kyoto treaty with less or more favour. Had Australia wholeheartedly embraced those principles, the federal government would surely have argued that the effects of runaway global warming would be so severe as to constitute a long term threat to the survival of the nation, It would be derelict, in this circumstance, not to treat the issue as an existential threat and a matter of national emergency, and one, furthermore, with the unalloyed quality of national security as traditionally understood.

On the other hand, and as the current Australian government’s greenhouse gas emission policy dictates, mandatory targets in the arena, for example, of contributions to energy generation by renewable resources in Australia remain on foot. The quality of this

kind of action, being prosecuted outside the Rio/Kyoto process (Australia continuing not to ratify the Protocol) may be argued not to reach beyond the purely political realm. In this view, it is merely an element of Australia's environmentally sustainable march towards the new millennium, not dependent on whether other countries see the world and its future as Australia does.

It looks, on the surface, as if Australia is moving away from Europe's and Japan's embrace of the environmental threats posed by carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. It follows America's lead in refusing ratification of Kyoto on the grounds of economic cost – in terms of the costs of production and the loss of markets to the free riders of the developing world who will not be bound to emission reduction targets in the same (legal) way as are the industrialised nations.

But can Australia continue to ignore the directions set by many other countries around the world, notwithstanding the support of the US? Probably not, at least not in the longer term. Its own initiative in introducing the possibility of setting up an international market in carbon credits, admittedly in its own interest, may be the vehicle for the global dissemination of the security paradigm into the environmental sphere. Much mooted since 1997 as a potential saviour, a market for carbon credits is only now emerging in any coherent fashion. From a fitful and uncertain start, it seems now to be overcoming the worst obstacles to its growth and, in the process, offers the possibility of allowing the broadest possible recruitment of nation states into the environmental securitisation arena.

Concluding Remarks

The decisions and actions which the Australian government has taken on the pressing environmental problems associated with global greenhouse gas emissions illustrate an important, more general, point. The extent to which the world is becoming increasingly inter-dependent in most arenas of human endeavour results in a diminishing capacity for unilateral state action based on narrowly defined national interests. Governments which attempt to distance themselves from the mainstreams of international political, economic and diplomatic life merely abrogate the responsibility they have to their citizens to reach beyond their borders for solutions to global problems without frontiers.

There is a temptation to date the new thinking on security to 11 September 2001 and to that day's events in America's centres of political and economic power. In my view, that would be a mistake. September 11 can be more profitably regarded as a watershed event, and a catalyst which has focused the thinking of both the academy and governments on the notion that security as a paradigm must be re-defined. In Australia's case, the most immediate reaction was the invocation of the ANZUS Treaty in defence of the US, and what has subsequently proved to be clear and steadfast military and other support for America's "Coalition of the Willing" agenda in Afghanistan and Iraq. Australia's acknowledgement of the new security realities can now be seen in its policies on asylum seekers and immigration, on its active participation in the enforcement of the Missile Technology Control Regime, and on steps being taken to secure its vulnerable production centres (such as the Pilbara natural gas industry), to take only three examples.

The post Cold War phase in international relations has ended. That transitional period of perhaps a decade, from 1989, is now being replaced by the realities of 21st century international life - characterised by perceptions of rising levels of threat to human societies over a wide range of activities. The threats posed by military action remain, of course, towards the vanguard, but many others are now being regarded as in need of the same level of attention. Perhaps the most pressing need in all of this is to acknowledge the force of the UN Report on Human Security and its call for the individual person to be privileged at the forefront of all security referent objects, to use Professor Buzan's term. By doing so, governments would also acknowledge that solutions to security threats which exclude calculations of outcomes for individuals simply compound, rather than solve, the security dilemma.

Finally, it may be that the greatest risk embedded in this 'new security agenda' (at least in the formulation suggested by Buzan *et al*) is the suite of risks which attend the legitimized suspension of the 'rules of the game.' If their suggestion is that it may be necessary in specific security-related circumstances to suspend, for example, the operation of a state's Basic Law or Constitution, its Bill of Rights, the protection of the rule of law (domestic and/or international) or its range of entrenched political structures and institutions, what is to be substituted? Presumably this will amount to the exercise of political power through government decree and the enforcement of martial law in circumstances in which the markers of a democratic polity – individual rights and duties for citizens, universal franchise, *Habeas Corpus* and all the rest, fall rapidly into disuse through neglect which eventually becomes alienation, disdain, and finally rejection. One has only to think of the failure of the armed forces of the United States in Iraq to prevent the widespread abuse of power in the jails of the '*Coalition of the Willing*' in Baghdad, Basra and elsewhere to understand the speed with which the checks and balances of democratic institutions, or enforceable sanctions against criminal behaviour, can melt away.

The ultimate question for decision may be whether there is a price to be paid for the uncertainties of a 'secure' future which is simply too hard to accept.