

STATE OF THREAT

The Challenges to
Aotearoa New Zealand's
National Security



Edited by Wil Hoverd
& Deidre Ann McDonald

STATE OF THREAT

**The challenges to
Aotearoa New Zealand's
national security**

**Edited by Wil Hoverd
& Deidre Ann McDonald**



MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contents

Foreword / Tony Lynch

Preface / Beth Greener

Introduction: Understanding global and domestic security threats in Aotearoa New Zealand / *Wil Hoverd & Deidre Ann McDonald*

Part 1: Offshore threats and opportunities

1. US-China Great Power Competition: Risks, opportunities and strategic options for New Zealand / *Reuben Steff*
2. Conventional warfare today: What has the Russian invasion of Ukraine taught us? / *Terry Johanson*
3. Retaining a national security workforce: Army personnel shortages in a mobile neoliberal society / *Nina Harding*
4. Maritime trade security threats: Protecting New Zealand's economic lifeline to the world / *Stephen Hoadley*
5. Supply chain disruptions and deep uncertainty: Implications for New Zealand in a post-Covid environment / *Germana Nicklin*

Part 2: Intelligence and domestic security

6. Out of sight and out of mind: The absolute importance of submarine cables to New Zealand / *Phil Holdstock & John Moremon*
7. Outlaw motorcycle gangs and illegal trade: What national security risks do they pose? / *Chris Wilkins, Marta Rychert, Jose Romeo, Thomas Graydon-Guy & Robin van der Sanden*
8. Biosecurity intelligence in Aotearoa: Adapting to changing national and international conditions / *Madeline Marshall*
9. Does AI dream of protecting sheep? The role of artificial intelligence in national biosecurity / *Jodie Chapell & Deidre Ann McDonald*

Part 3: Governance and extremism

10. Accountability and oversight: Democratic control over New Zealand's secret intelligence activities / *Damien Rogers*
11. Leading New Zealand's security system: Ministerial responsibility for national security and intelligence / *William Hoverd*
12. As safe now as we were then: Countering terrorism in New Zealand 1968–2030 / *John Battersby*
13. Behind the floral aesthetic: Women in right-wing extremism / *Donna Carson*

Part 4: Future security challenges

14. Russia's invasion of Ukraine: What is the strategic challenge for New Zealand? / *Justyna Eska-Mikołajewska*
15. Digital currencies: Their potential role in New Zealand's economic statecraft / *José Miguel Alonso-Trabanco*
16. The future of the 'good citizen': A perspective from the Polish frontline / *Marcin Lasoń*
17. Self-determination or territorial integrity? Mixed messages from the Ukraine war / *Rouben Azizian*

Conclusion / *Deidre Ann McDonald & Wil Hoverd*

Notes

Bibliography

About the contributors

Acknowledgements

Index

Foreword

This latest contribution to Massey University Press's Defence and Security series arrives against the backdrop of an unprecedented release of national security documents, including Aotearoa New Zealand's first National Security Strategy — *Secure Together Tō Tātou Korowai Manaaki*.

As such, it is a welcome contemporary addition to scholarship on New Zealand's place in the world, on the threats and risks we face as a nation, bringing together a distinctive New Zealand voice and perspective to matters of national security.

It comes at a time when New Zealand faces a fundamentally more challenging security outlook, through an ever more unpredictable and complex global environment. The National Security Survey (2023) found that 80 per cent of New Zealanders felt the world had become a more dangerous place over this last year.

New Zealand is not immune from global trends, if we ever were. In recent years, terrorist events, cyberattacks, transnational organised crime and disinformation have all impacted our communities directly, and are stark reminders that we are exposed to a range of national security threats and risks.

We also learnt from this survey that New Zealanders have an appetite to learn more about national security, to be kept informed and updated on developments and, for many, to be part of conversations about New Zealand's security plans into the future.

A clear message is that the more informed New Zealanders are about national security, the better we are able to take decisions about our resilience and wellbeing.

The report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019 delivered a powerful message about the importance of a public discourse on national security. It challenged the government to develop a conversation with New Zealanders

about the national security challenges we face — expressing the hope that by engaging in frank debate everyone would understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping New Zealand safe, secure and cohesive. These objectives lie at the heart of the National Security Strategy.

State of Threat picks up many of the core national security issues identified in the strategy, building our understanding on issues spanning strategic competition and the rules-based order, transnational organised crime, economic security, maritime security, terrorism and violent extremism, and much more.

A consistent theme from the contributors to *State of Threat* is that these issues merit and deserve informed debate. And yet our national security conversation has not evolved at the same pace as global events.

We all have a role to play. Not least because few, if any, national security issues lie solely within the capacity of government or any one player alone to resolve. Increasingly, whole of society action is necessary — whether to address the existential threat of climate change, or the effects of disinformation, or terrorism and violent extremism.

My congratulations to Massey University, to the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, and to all the contributors to *State of Threat*, for this important contribution. We are so much the richer for this discourse.

As readers, you will be informed, challenged and engaged, and I would encourage you to continue this national security debate in and across your communities, drawing on the breadth of material contained in this volume — and elsewhere!

It is appropriate to conclude this foreword with a whakataukī that encapsulates the essence of our public conversation on national security.

Mā te whakatū ka mōhio

Mā te mōhio ka mārama

Mā te mārama ka mātau

Mā te mātau ka ora

Through discussion comes understanding

Through understanding comes enlightenment

Through enlightenment comes wisdom

Through wisdom comes well being

Tony Lynch

Chair, CDSS Strategic Advisory Board

Preface

Security and defence matters are not typically a part of New Zealanders' daily concerns. Even in election years such as this one, foreign, security and defence issues do not often feature in national conversations. This absence has consequences. It means that such issues remain the concern of a few professionals (bureaucrats, politicians, academics, journalists) and a handful of interested civilians with strong opinions on these topics. As such, and as expressly recognised in the following Introduction to this volume, debates on these topics have not been and are not yet representative. This narrowness is compounded by the fact that the related security professional sector remains plagued by a lack of diversity. Yet we know that having access to diverse views increases problem-solving capacity, deepens understanding, and thus aids resilience and agility in responding to challenges arising. Getting more people interested in these issues — especially in times of increasing complexity and where, as noted in the Foreword, national security is not just the task of governments — is extremely important. That is where this book comes in.

This book is aimed at reaching out both to the already engaged and the yet to be engaged, with the aim of increasing levels of general understanding about our contemporary security situation. The volume encompasses a range of views on security topics and arrives just after an unprecedented release of national security documents, including the first ever National Security Strategy — *Secure Together Tō Tātou Korowai Manaaki* — and the comprehensive 2023 Defence Policy Review. As such, this book represents a snapshot in time in which its commentators were formulating their own views on security matters absent these documents. Although the authors may bemoan the timing, this is in fact more useful than generating the book after the document release, as it provides an overview of the types of issues that concerned a wider range of individuals *before* their views could potentially have been influenced by official statements.

What is clear, however, is that many of these views do align with those official views outlined in the security strategy and the review — particularly in recognising the broad sweep of challenges currently facing the New Zealand security sector and the need for wide-ranging engagement.

The authors include established academics from New Zealand and abroad, new and exciting early career doctoral candidates, and those who have worked for government agencies or who have spent careers critiquing these. At times, these authors disagree with one another. How to understand the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its consequences, for example, are handled differently by different authors, and hence they also arrive at different options for action. But it is not just difference of interpretation about the motivation or resultant effects of such events that is represented in this text. There are also disagreements about how to interpret what constitutes the security landscape, what the greatest challenges are, or what our security priorities should be in more general terms. Hence, although this book offers up discussions about 'national security', some authors focus much more on issues of social cohesion or threats to New Zealand's economic or societal security as the most important priority, while others emphasise how international developments have exceptionally broad and deep-reaching impacts and thus prioritise these sites of investigation.

In some ways, this range of views is reminiscent of military planning. What is seen to be the greatest threat in terms of quantum and impact of threat is not often the most likely. Making decisions in these complex times requires a balance of consideration, and making informed decisions means gathering in broad views as well as engaging New Zealanders as active citizens in the national security space. This is perhaps the greatest challenge moving forward, given the allergic response of most New Zealanders when it comes to talking about hard security concerns.

The diverse views presented here are thus the core strength of this text. Readers will find themselves cleaving to some assertions and dismissing others. The book provides useful data about some of the issues and events 'out there' in the world, and it also provides different approaches to how we might go about understanding what these *mean* for New Zealand security. This matters more than ever as New Zealand sits in a turbulent global environment, one that it is tightly tied to through trade and other commitments, with domestic cohesion also under strain. Bringing more New Zealanders into national security discussions is therefore perhaps the most important challenge for security community today.

Professor Beth Greener

Introduction

UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC SECURITY THREATS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

In Aotearoa New Zealand we consider national security to be located at the intersection of domestic and international security. Since 2018, significant change has occurred in this space. Once benign, today the language around domestic and international events, trends and conflict reflects a greater sense of threat, making Aotearoa seem less secure than it was.¹

In stating this, however, it is important to pause and think: when it comes to discussing the threats facing any country, there is always potential for the fourth estate and expert commentators to engage in self-interest or hyperbole.² Few experts discussing New Zealand's national security offer evidence for their claims, however.³ In a post-truth world, where experts have been replaced by self-interest, spin, mis- and disinformation and fake news, what can we really know about the claims that our national security environment is becoming less secure?

National security is a constantly evolving concept, constructed and interpreted through language, policy, emotion, empirical evidence and the 'only-sometimes-revealed' lived reality of violence and power.⁴ Inherent in this is the idea that the voices speaking about national security matter; in constructing the discussion, they influence and inform our emotional state and determine whether we feel secure or threatened. *State of Threat: The challenges to Aotearoa New Zealand's national security* presents the editors' view that national security is fluid, dynamic, and constructed through the discourses devoted to the security interactions occurring between New Zealand's domestic and

international environments.

The most authoritative voice on national security in this country is that of the government, because the government implements legitimate democratic power to plan any responses to threat. National security is overseen by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), which reports to the prime minister (who is also minister for national security).⁵ It is generally accepted that national security policy is bipartisan;⁶ as such, the directors-general of the country's two intelligence agencies regularly brief both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition.⁷

The government communicates about national security through the enactment of policy and the prioritisation of funding for the various national security agencies. Due to the apolitical nature of the public service and the hidden nature of classified information, the government's national security voice is often carefully curated; occasional ministerial and chief executive speeches to small, elite audiences provide the most regular insight into the executive's thinking about national security.⁸ This communication is clearest when it responds to an issue about which there is public awareness; at other times the messaging can be shrouded, informed by classified material, intelligence concerns and perhaps Five Eyes priorities.⁹ Occasionally, in times of crisis, the prime minister will speak directly to the nation — as Dame Jacinda Ardern did immediately after the Christchurch terror attack in 2019.

Sitting beneath the speeches from the executive (the prime minister, ministers and chief executives) is a significant amount of policy, funding and legislative change concerning the governance and implementation of security. So, when we think about the construction of national security in Aotearoa, we must first look to the language of the state, which has the intelligence collection functions, is informed by its international partnerships, and has the executive power to implement national security and legitimate violence.

In August 2023, the government released its first National Security Strategy, which claims that 'New Zealand faces a fundamentally more challenging security outlook.'¹⁰ The strategy employs phrases such as: 'we live in an era of disruption', 'we live in a contested world', 'pressure is likely to grow for countries like New Zealand' and 'threats are reaching New Zealanders more directly'.¹¹ Consequently, when the government

communicates the existence of a threat, we must treat this information with the authority it deserves, since this voice matters the most. Unlike in an authoritarian nation, however, in New Zealand when we construct a view of national security, we are free to consider alternatives, history and ambiguity and to develop critiques unrestricted by the constraints and priorities of government. Most authors in this book do exactly that.

Academic experts also construct the language of national security. For a number of reasons, these voices seem to have receded into the background of the public space.¹² These experts are constantly involved in rigorous assessment and systematic review of data associated with wide-ranging topics of security; as critics and consciences of society, they are mandated to speak a form of ‘truth’.¹³ Their authority is based upon empiricism, teaching and subject-matter knowledge. They are trained both to deconstruct and reconstruct how we think about national security and threat in Aotearoa. Their experience informs the contributions in this volume, the purpose of which is to present a diverse set of contemporary academic essays intended for New Zealanders.

So far, we have briefly considered three social groups that together hold a form of hegemonic monopoly over the language, governance and construction of national security in Aotearoa. Unfortunately, all are privileged elites who offer prioritised discourses that contain the inherent bias associated with their hegemony (wealth, education, whiteness, heteronormativity and maleness). The fourth social group that must and can engage in and influence the construction of national security is the public, in all its forms.

This country has a long and unresolved colonial history of violence towards Māori.¹⁴ The New Zealand Muslim community has said it feels explicit bias from the state.¹⁵ The 2022 protest in Parliament grounds involved a range of people who felt the state did not represent their views or value them. Together, these examples should make us feel very uncomfortable. Ideally, inclusive discussions that embrace all members of our society should decrease social conflict and make us feel more secure, especially since the implementation of national security is almost always done to those who do not represent the ‘nation’, in order to secure the nation.¹⁶

The voice of the public has the power to create substantial change, particularly in terms of diversifying and democratising the voices and

viewpoints constructing our security landscape. Elections provide one opportunity for the public to exercise their voice.¹⁷ But while aspects like economic security, policing and law and order are common electoral concerns, matters of defence and security tend not to be. (Debate and protest about the nuclear-free policy is one obvious exception to this.)¹⁸

Engagement in questions about what it means to feel secure or threatened is essential to both community and national wellbeing. The public needs to understand the various threats to Aotearoa, the prevalence of these, and which ones should be prioritised. They must be able to recognise when security commentators are engaging in hyperbole. Informed voices must be able to contribute to discussions about who we want to be as a nation in terms of both domestic and international security.

NEW ZEALAND'S THREAT ENVIRONMENT 2018-23

Since 2018 our threat environment has changed from benign to threatening. We make this argument to foreground the contemporary essays contained in the volume. But before we shift to those essays, it is necessary to provide a brief history of Aotearoa's national security environment and the major changes that have occurred globally, regionally and domestically from 2018 to 2023. Three key factors have altered the threatscape during this period.

It can be argued that in 2018, national security matters were relatively benign, as most threats had become diffuse and complex rather than imminent threats with single points of origin from terrorist groups or nation states.

In 2018 US President Barack Obama had just left office and Donald Trump had begun his presidency of the United States of America. The world was economically prosperous with strong, interlaced trade relationships occurring across the European Union (EU), Russia, China and the US. New Zealand's 2008 free trade agreement with the People's Republic of China was coming into full force by 2019, and China was now our largest trading partner.¹⁹ By the end of 2018, the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) had been declared defeated, terminating the primary initiator of global terrorism.

New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) commitments to Afghanistan (where eight New Zealand soldiers had been killed over the 20-year

deployment), Camp Taji in Iraq and the broader Western Operation Against ISIL were winding down, particularly after the battle for Mosul, although the official investigation into early New Zealand Special Air Service (SAS) actions in Afghanistan was just commencing.²⁰ Questions were arising about the whereabouts of ISIL captive Red Cross nurse Louise Akavi and the possibility of repatriation for the ‘bumbling jihadi’ Mark Taylor (both still unresolved today).²¹

Domestically, the Ardern Government had been in office for a year, and Aotearoa appeared to have avoided the terrorist threat of ISIL that had beleaguered Australia and other Western nations.²² After almost 20 years, Western concerns about globally organised Islamic-inspired domestic terrorism had largely receded.²³

In terms of regional security challenges, the Labour-New Zealand First coalition government was attempting to revitalise its engagement with the South Pacific under the Pacific Reset Policy.²⁴ This policy recognised that the region was experiencing stressors from climate change and lack of infrastructure and investment; as well, with Russia and China showing interest in nations such as Fiji, strategic competition had entered the region.²⁵ Refugee quotas (particularly after the Syrian and Iraq conflicts) were a matter of contention between Australia and New Zealand, specifically concerning the illegal detentions that had occurred at Manus Island until 2017.²⁶ The matter of ‘501 deportees’ (New Zealand and Pasifika citizens) repatriated from Australia to Aotearoa and the Pacific region was beginning to cause tension between the two nations.²⁷ As well, the prevalence of Transnational Organised Crime across the Pacific region became a heightened concern, as did ongoing concerns about the prevalence and violence of gangs in Aotearoa.²⁸

In 2018, when it came to domestic threats, the Hon Andrew Little (minister for the Government Communications Security Bureau and New Zealand Security Intelligence Service) stated that the two greatest national security threats to Aotearoa were cyberthreats and terrorism, both of which would originate from malicious actors.²⁹ Yet we know that threats do not only come from such sources: earthquakes, floods, cyclones, sea-level rise and fires are all matters for constant vigilance.

The NZDF has recognised the challenge of climate change,³⁰ and we can safely say that it is an existential threat globally and specifically in terms of sea-level rise in the South Pacific. In their respective essays,

Reuben Steff, Germana Nicklin, Phil Holdstock and John Moremon, Nina Harding, and Jodie Chapell and Deidre McDonald all touch on issues associated with climate change.

Other notable security events have stemmed from non-malicious actors, such as the incursion of the cattle disease *Mycoplasma bovis* in 2017, which cost the country an estimated NZ\$886 million;³¹ and the December 2019 Whakaari White Island eruption, which killed 22 people and seriously injured another 25. Nevertheless, the malicious-actor definition remains helpful if we want to think about the argument that Aotearoa is more threatened today than in 2018.

One place where that linguistic distinction has been made is by the DPMC itself, which shifted its primary national security definition from an ‘all hazards, all risks’ approach to ‘malicious threats’ in 2022,³² and then in the 2023 National Security Strategy, the phrasing changes to: ‘National security is about protecting New Zealand from threats that would do us harm.’³³

The question then arises: has the threat environment changed, or are there exogenous factors for the language shift?

We consider three key factors to have influenced the alteration of New Zealand’s security focus from benign to threatening since 2018. These are the Christchurch terror attack; the Covid-19 pandemic and global recession; and the return of great-power competition (GPC).

The terror attack and the potential of great power competition engage directly with the problem of malicious threats, while the pandemic and global recession form an ideological, social and economic background of increased amorphous insecurity for the population. These security crises inform the essays in this volume. Before introducing the chapters themselves,³⁴ it is useful to examine how these events have impacted national security.

THE CHRISTCHURCH TERROR ATTACK FUNDAMENTALLY changed the structure of New Zealand’s national security environment. On 15 March 2019 a gunman attacked two mosques in Christchurch while worshippers were at prayer, killing 51 people and injuring another 40. The horror, destruction and loss of life resulting from the attack itself was unprecedented in New Zealand. This act of terror represented a failure of the security system to identify and prevent it. More than that,

it suggested that the government's focus on Islamic jihadi terrorism had created a situation in which those in the Muslim community were viewed as suspects rather than potential victims.

The mosque attacks demonstrated the power of the right wing to act against multiculturalism, which for some replicates the colonial violence against indigenous peoples and immigrant others.³⁴ It also showed the public that we are not immune to terrorism, that terrorism could come from anywhere, and that perhaps our nation was not the egalitarian country we imagined it to be. This despicable event has prompted extensive reflection, academic research, a royal commission of inquiry and national security reform. It is not the purpose of this introduction to review those individual responses (although each is referenced for the interested reader).

The attack instigated several transformations to New Zealand's national security:

1. A systematic revision of the counterterrorism national security functions³⁵
2. Development of a nuanced understanding of violent extremism³⁶
3. The understanding that social cohesion in our population is a national security priority³⁷
4. The initiation of the Jacinda Ardern-led international Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremism content online, and³⁸
5. Reviews of legislation around firearms, hate speech and the Intelligence Security Act 2017.³⁹

This slew of sector changes increased national security workstreams, which today suggest an increase in capability across the various initiatives. It has also normalised the increased production of government language and resourcing devoted to mitigating future violent extremist threats. But what are these threats?

There remains future risk from ISIL and Al Qaeda. However, it is generally considered that the main unidentified threat actors in this space today are non-affiliated individuals, described as 'self-initiated terrorists' (replacing the term 'lone wolf', as they are inevitably

connected somewhere online) who have fragmented ideologies and utilise low-technology attacks such as improvised explosive devices, knives, firearms and vehicles. The 6 September 2021 Lynn Mall terrorist fits this model: he was carefully described as acting alone and using a knife picked up in the supermarket in which the attack took place.⁴⁰

On 15 March 2019, New Zealanders learned that our geographic isolation does not secure us from the threat of terrorism; and on 6 September 2021 we became aware that this threat is continually present.

FROM JANUARY 2020 THE DEADLY Covid-19 pandemic began to spread through the world. In response to this threat, in March 2020 New Zealand closed its borders and implemented lockdowns in a four-level alert system to control community transmission. The government's elimination policy was in response to the virus's high fatality rate, its potential for long-term harm and its easy transmissibility. A system of controlled border entry was initiated, initially managed by private security companies, but in June 2020 the NZDF was deployed to run these managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) facilities.⁴¹

As the pandemic continued, the virus mutated, and with the introduction of vaccines the government's elimination policy became increasingly untenable. Public support for lockdowns waned, especially when Auckland lockdowns were prolonged to buy time to vaccinate the broader population. The implementation of a vaccine mandate culminated in a significant protest in the grounds of Parliament House, Wellington, from 6 February to 2 March 2022, which ended in a violent dispersal of protestors by a nationally mobilised force of the New Zealand Police. From February 2022, the borders were gradually reopened, and all Covid restrictions were lifted on 14 August 2023.

Three ongoing national security concerns arose during the pandemic: the impact of the MIQ deployment on the NZDF; the effect of the Wellington protest on social cohesion; and the continuing impact on supply chain security, along with the resulting economic recession.

AS EARLY AS AUGUST 2021, reporter Jane Patterson observed that the ability of the NZDF to respond to a major disaster was significantly reduced because so many army personnel were deployed to Operation Protect — staffing the MIQ facilities.⁴² As well, Lauren Walters reported,

‘rising attrition rates, and personnel satisfaction surveys, reveal issues with culture, morale, opportunities for career development, and pay — issues that have been driven, and compounded, by Operation Protect’.⁴³

A ‘workforce crisis’ was argued to exist around pay rates, though this was mitigated somewhat by the government’s announcement of an extra injection of funding in May 2023.⁴⁴ Charlotte Cook suggested it could take the NZDF at least two years to rejuvenate its workforce and capabilities as a result. In 2022, attrition rates in the NZDF sat at 16 per cent for the civilian workforce and 15.6 per cent for the regular forces, with a 29.8 per cent staff turnover in the previous two years.⁴⁵

When Cyclone Gabrielle struck in 2023, the NZDF was unable to implement its preferred response, as predicted. Because of an acute shortage of technical and tradespeople, it had to retire its P3 Orion aircraft early, and three naval patrol boats remained tied up at Devonport Naval Base.⁴⁶ Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Kevin Short suggested that it would take four to ten years to fully rejuvenate various NZDF capabilities.⁴⁷

New Zealand now finds itself in a position where its small military cannot function effectively; and in the face of an ageing population and full employment, the country is struggling to attract new recruits. For the foreseeable future, the NZDF will be operating at reduced capability. This is a vulnerability in terms of being able to secure ourselves and our region. It becomes a threat, however, if New Zealand needs to be an active participant in the GPC, as discussed by Dr Reuben Steff and Terry Johanson in their respective chapters.

AT THE PEAK OF THE 2022 Wellington occupation of the grounds of Parliament House, reporters noted ‘there were approximately 3000 protesters, 2000 vehicles in surrounding streets and 300 structures illegally erected in and around Parliament’.⁴⁸ The protest lasted 24 days and more than 300 people were arrested. Dispersal of the protesters involved the largest deployment of riot police since the 1981 Springbok tour protests.⁴⁹

The protest’s origins lay in widespread dissatisfaction with the government’s Covid-19 policy and vaccine mandates.⁵⁰ Protesters came from a variety of backgrounds with a range of motivations: early images showed some waving Tino Rangatiratanga flags and others wearing Trump supporter gear. The protest was complex and confounding, and,

over a two-week period, slowly escalated from a legitimate traditional protest to violence. Police control was escalated in response.

The demonstration drew on a long history of protest on Parliament grounds, as people with perceived legitimate grievances engaged in the proper exercise of free speech. But these grievances were interspersed with conspiracy theory, intense vitriol against then Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and a tendency to violence. The scale of the event suggests that care is required in the production of reductionist views regarding protest, or ‘othering’ the phenomenon using descriptors such as ‘it’s just the alt right’ or ‘it’s just the anti-vaxxers’. The protest evidenced a divided, perhaps polarised, New Zealand that is not socially cohesive and in which certain groups feel they have been ‘othered’ by the state.

Six issues for national security that were evident at the protest are ongoing. First, the protest highlighted the vitriol directed at Prime Minister Ardern, which had moved beyond speech to genuine threats to her safety and that of her family.⁵¹ Much of this was severely misogynistic and some was extremely violent in nature. Several of the individuals who threatened the prime minister have since been prosecuted. Misogyny, which is arguably endemic in New Zealand, creates generational and social insecurity for all women.

Second, links were made between the Wellington protest and the 6 January 2021 protest and attack on the US Senate⁵² and a similar anti-mandate protest occurring in Ottawa, Canada, and certain groups and individuals wished to exacerbate those links.

Third is the distinct online environment that New Zealanders are engaged in, which encourages the spread of disinformation about vaccines and the role of government.⁵³

The fourth is that conspiracy theories can be used to amplify and/or motivate protest action and anti-government dissent.⁵⁴

Fifth is the realisation that the intelligence and policing capabilities of the state in combination with the political will of the executive are not well equipped to disperse and engage democratically with a protest such as this.⁵⁵

And sixth, it appears the acceptance of adversarial ideas is becoming harder, and social groups are forming silos from which it is easier to cancel and silence other views than engage with them, learn from them and perhaps influence them.

While the unifying trigger of the vaccine mandate has now receded, the division and online environment associated with the protest have not, and the threat of another anti-government protest remains. New Zealanders today are not immune to a permissible online environment where individuals can become subject to and receptive of dis- and misinformation, extremism, misogyny and violence.

THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS WERE CHARACTERISED by supermarket shortages as consumers placed higher demand on certain products, and at times our domestic and international supply chains were stretched to breaking point. As workforces were sent home, jobs and businesses were lost⁵⁶ and the supply of some non-essential goods and services became problematic. Among other industries, tourism, A2 milk formula and international student enrolments collapsed overnight.⁵⁷ China's Covid-19 border closure meant that much of the world's shipping transiting through Shanghai experienced significant delays.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, the supply of goods was impacted by increased restrictions and compliance in other jurisdictions. Shortages of supply increased costs for producers, suppliers and consumers; in response, governments increased the money supply and certain subsidies, and lowered interest rates.⁵⁹ In New Zealand, housing prices shot to levels unaffordable for most first-home buyers.⁶⁰

Globally, the supply chain shortage played out in the context of the 2020 Brexit withdrawal of the UK from the EU, and a trade war between the US and China that had begun in 2018 with the US placing tariffs on Chinese goods and companies.⁶¹ This economic conflict had already impacted our neighbour, Australia, after China restricted its steel exports to the nation.⁶²

Since 2022, the Russian-Ukraine war has had further impact on global grain, natural gas and fertiliser supplies, among other goods.⁶³ The economic sanctions against Russia have resulted in economic changes whereby Western nations have commenced sourcing products from closer, more expensive but trusted sources. Some have argued that a global economic decoupling is occurring.⁶⁴ Certainly, there is some bifurcation taking place between the West, China and Russia that is leading to pressure on economic globalisation.

Across the world, fears of recession have grown as inflation occurs as a product of reduced supply of goods, low interest rates and the

increased monetary supply made available by many governments. In her chapter, Dr Germana Nicklin discusses her research on the outcomes for national security that have arisen from this environment of supply chain disruption.

Today, New Zealanders are facing economic hardship from recession and inflation in a way many cannot recall experiencing before. Inflation is sustained.⁶⁵ Wage growth has not matched inflation. Prices for goods and services — notably for food and fuel — are increasing. Industry is struggling to pass on the increased expenses caused by inflation. Across the Western world, reserve banks are increasing interest rates to curb inflation and manufacture recessionary environments. Many New Zealanders are finding their mortgage payments increasing as they refix loans; and house prices are falling, leading to negative equity for some.

The resulting economic experience for Aotearoa is one of sustained insecurity. While a recession and shortage of goods and services might not be threatening in and of itself, it heightens anxiety and perhaps creates domestic and international situations where concerns about shortages create the potential for conflict. Associate Professor Stephen Hoadley looks at this potential in his chapter, devoted to the pressures on New Zealand's maritime environment.

THE RETURN OF GPC AND its ramifications, the decline of the multilateral order, and exploring what the threat of war might mean for New Zealand, are the focus of parts one and four of this volume. The National Security Strategy notes that if this 'intensifies, New Zealand may face a less predictable more contested international system that is less aligned with our values'.⁶⁶ This threat was triggered by the 2022 illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and concerns about a Chinese invasion of Taiwan after the visit of US politician Nancy Pelosi to Taipei.⁶⁷

China has been undergoing a rapid militarisation over the last few years, significantly growing its military capabilities. In response to Pelosi's visit, it engaged in ballistic missile launches over Taiwan and air and naval operations on the edge of the island's territorial waters.⁶⁸ This aggressive response was based on the Chinese view that Taiwan is still part of China. However, the US is committed to assisting Taiwan to resist an attack. China's aggressive military response suggests that war is possible.⁶⁹

Events like the Ukraine war, Putin's nuclear sabre-rattling, the rise of authoritarian regimes, the failure of multilateral institutions such as the UN Security Council and tensions over Taiwan have brought the possibility of contemporary warfare, nuclear conflict and grey-zone or hybrid conflict to the centre of global affairs. The tension is pushing China and Russia closer together and creating tacit Chinese support for the invasion of Ukraine. Any prospect of war between the US and NATO and one or other of these nations is a matter of deep existential concern. It is leading to militarisation across the Western world (see Professor Marcin Lasoń in this volume), questions about the role of the NZDF (see Terry Johanson), how New Zealand acts in the international environment (Dr Justyna Eska-Mikołajewska writes of this), and how New Zealand balances its trade relationship with China and its Five Eye (FVEY) intelligence and defence relationships with its Western partners (see Reuben Steff's chapter). Together, these writers exhibit distinct unease about the possibility of conflict. Regardless of New Zealand's response, other players in our region are also being pulled into this tension and their involvement should be a matter of concern, given our commitment to the Pacific region.

Australia, our only military ally, has entered the AUKUS agreement with the US and the UK, which enables the sharing of military technology and the development of interoperability between the three militaries.⁷⁰ This also involves our neighbour committing to the eventual purchase of nuclear-powered submarines to support its navy. China has suggested that it views AUKUS as encirclement and therefore a provocation.⁷¹

New Zealand's defence minister, Andrew Little, has recently suggested that New Zealand might consider joining AUKUS as a Pillar 2 member, giving us access to technology and joint operations among other perceived benefits.⁷² Ideally, any commitment to joining AUKUS first entails conversation with the public, as it commits New Zealand to a certain future.

Although China may view AUKUS as a provocation, it continues to actively exert influence in the Pacific region, engaging in what some have called 'debt trap diplomacy' and a commitment to building a base in Solomon Islands.⁷³ And FVEY intelligence agencies are increasingly worried about foreign interference occurring in their domestic environments, where China coerces or weaponises its diaspora to gain

access to information or influence certain political and community discourses. As the relationship between the West, China and Russia degrades, New Zealanders need to consider how this growing threat will impact our national security.

THE FOUR PARTS OF THIS book each examine a relevant security issue or theme. **Part 1: Offshore threats and opportunities** begins by looking at offshore threats to New Zealand's security, before moving to consider some domestic security challenges and opportunities.

The opening chapter begins with an analysis of the great power competition (GPC) being enacted between the US and China and how this might impact on the Pacific region. Dr Reuben Steff begins by sharing a sobering statistic, demonstrating that rapid geopolitical shifts in power often result in war. He warns that conflict in the Pacific is 'no longer inconceivable'. Given that China is our largest trading partner and the US is an important partner, the question arises, with whom would the government stand? Would Wellington have to make a choice, or could we retain a balance? These are some of the geopolitical challenges confronting New Zealand's foreign policy. Dr Steff walks the reader through three questions he considers are relevant to our strategic approach and examines the risks and benefits inherent in each. He contributes to the public debates that must continue about the US-China GPC that may call on the government to choose sides in the Pacific region.

Chapter 2 brings the war in Ukraine closer to home. Massey University lecturer Terry Johanson examines lessons that have emerged from the invasion and asks what New Zealand can learn about contemporary conventional warfare. He investigates characteristics of Russia's war against Ukraine and contrasts these with the most likely scenario this country's defence force could face, which he describes as 'defeating Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific region'. The challenge, according to Johanson, is to determine where the NZDF should focus its military efforts, given its current financial and human resource limitations. This chapter offers some options to apply lessons from the Ukraine war and discusses the implications of each one. Unlike Professor Lasoń in a subsequent chapter, Johanson argues that focusing on New Zealand's immediate defence environment is the strategic approach.

Dr Nina Harding's sobering discussion about the NZDF's workforce

shortages follows. In Chapter 3 Dr Harding examines why people join the New Zealand Army and why they leave. Her research indicates that soldiers want not only to put their skills into service for their country but also to have opportunities for self-development; if those opportunities are not provided, soldiers resign. This point is particularly salient in relation to workforce retention following the MIQ experience. There is a paradox here, however: while long-term retention of soldiers is vital to national security, retaining them is 'incompatible with a neoliberal nation-state' where individual economic security is prioritised and rewarded.

Maritime trade security follows in Chapter 4, by Associate Professor Stephen Hoadley, who reiterates the importance of trade for New Zealand's economic and social security. Hoadley situates his discussion within the strategically relevant maritime space. This chapter sheds light on the importance of maritime security for island states and explains some of the contemporary challenges, including the high attrition rates of navy personnel.

Chapter 5 considers the significance of supply chains and, in particular, the uncertainty caused by their disruption. Dr Germana Nicklin argues that GPC, climate change and resource insecurities can all influence supply chain stability as much as the more obvious disrupters of pandemic proportion. She examines some of New Zealand's supply chain vulnerabilities in detail and considers options for strengthening our preparedness and resilience. The chapter demonstrates that this future-focused work is not optional; it is our pathway toward supply chain resilience.

Part 2: Intelligence and domestic security continues the theme of regional security but moves to consider New Zealand's economic, social and environmental security across a range of topics, from deep-sea submarine cables to the illicit domestic drug trade, the role and function of intelligence gathering for biosecurity purposes, and some of the complexities associated with using artificial intelligence.

In Chapter 6, Phil Holdstock and Dr John Moremon explain the 'absolute importance' of submarine cables to global economic security. This global network of copper and fibre-optic cables exists underground and under oceans and carries almost all the world's electronic communications. New Zealand is dependent on this

infrastructure for access to the internet, banking, business, news and more. The authors suggest the cables are not usually considered as a security risk because they are out of sight, and argue that they are more vulnerable than we realise. They outline some of the main threats to this essential communications infrastructure, from human interference to natural disasters. Protection of these cables is particularly vital for a geographically isolated country like New Zealand.

The theme of hidden economic risks continues in Chapter 7, which focuses on illegal trading in outlaw motorcycle gangs. Associate Professor Chris Wilkins, Dr Marta Rychert, Dr Jose Romeo, Thomas Graydon-Guy and Robin van der Sanden expose the growing membership of gangs in New Zealand and the sophistication with which these gangs run their criminal networks. The authors expand our knowledge of gangs' international involvement in illegal drug trading and explain some of the reasons for the lack of available information about gang-related violence. Of particular concern are the social impacts of organised crime, the methamphetamine trade, and gang intimidation in rural areas.

The next two chapters focus on intelligence gathering. In Chapter 8 Dr Madeline Marshall explains the operational aspects of intelligence gathering for biosecurity purposes and describes the process of monitoring overseas threats to New Zealand's biosecurity. She illustrates the importance of gathering offshore data for anticipating pest and disease pathways and showcases the fusion of intelligence and biosecurity disciplines.

Chapter 9 follows her detailed explanation with a discussion about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in biosecurity. Dr Jodie Chapell and Deidre McDonald argue that AI is a valuable tool for identifying biosecurity threats, but that limitations in the use of this technology require careful consideration. An underlying message is that AI cannot replace human knowledge-sharing or place-based understandings of biosecurity threats in New Zealand. The authors caution that more work is required to ensure transparency, the minimisation of potential harm, and the maximisation of benefits for all kinds of security outcomes.

Part 3: Governance and extremism turns the spotlight on other issues of national intelligence and opens up a debate about the democratic principles of transparency and oversight, and how threats are communicated and understood by the public. It then shifts to the ever-

present threats of domestic terrorism and extremism. The contributors unpack some misconceptions about our safety and ask the provocative question, 'What exactly does a terrorist look like?'

In Chapter 10 Associate Professor Damien Rogers argues in favour of more openness and accountability from government about how it manages its 'secret intelligence activities'. The chapter encourages deeper thinking about the role of democracy vis-à-vis those intelligence activities. The author offers some options for democratically driven reform in this area to increase accountability for government and ministerial actions.

In Chapter 11, Associate Professor Wil Hoverd takes readers into the world of national security speeches and the evolution of national security roles and functions within government, with a particular focus on the minister of national security. He analyses how the definition of national security has changed over time and provides examples of how this has been framed for public consumption. His chapter echoes the need for more public awareness of matters of security and suggests the time has come to stop calling for broader conversations about national security and actually start having them.

In Chapter 12 Dr John Battersby begins a conversation that spans the remainder of this section with a piece on the history of terrorism in New Zealand. He provides a troubling reminder that our current terrorism threat level (which is sitting at 'low') is the same as it was on the day of the mosque attacks in Christchurch. Dr Battersby notes that terrorism has been present in New Zealand in various forms for decades; however, the very nature of terrorism makes it difficult to detect, and even more so when the manifestations and motivations are divergent, and where law enforcement agencies, like the NZDF, struggle with finite human resources. He argues that missed opportunities to learn from recent history present an ongoing problem, because counterterrorism preparedness requires (at the very least) a solid understanding of past trends.

The next offering continues this theme of missed opportunities. Chapter 13 explores an overlooked topic: the role and identity politics of women in extremist groups. PhD candidate Donna Carson looks at the influence of gender bias when identifying what an 'extremist' looks like. Carson tells us that women involved with right-wing extremism (RWE)

rely on gender stereotypes to hide behind a 'cloak of plausible deniability'. These women appear feminine, are often wives and mothers and tend to live within traditional (Western) nuclear families, yet some have also masterminded extremist actions. The chapter identifies women as powerful actors within RWE movements, and stresses that New Zealand is not immune to their influence.

Part 4: Future security challenges pulls together key conceptual threads from earlier chapters as the contributors look to options for the future. Here, the volume circles back to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and impacts for the territorial sovereignty of small states, with a particular focus on the self-determination of populations.

In Chapter 14 Dr Justyna Eska-Mikołajewska considers Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She argues that the war's impact on global and regional security highlights the importance of stability in the international system, and questions whether this invasion poses a foreign policy challenge for New Zealand despite our geographical isolation. She points out this nation's vulnerabilities in the face of such disruption and ponders how New Zealand can maintain its position as 'a balanced international actor promoting a rules-based order'. The author considers that, despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine changing the international balance of power, New Zealand can retain a strategic independence and support a rules-based order at the same time.

PhD candidate José Miguel Alonso-Trabanco then raises the topical issue of digital currencies and explains the importance of these 'game-changing' currencies for national security. In Chapter 15 he discusses recent examples of these technologies and some of the risks, including illicit activity. He also highlights some non-apparent opportunities for New Zealand that are arising from digital currencies. According to Alonso-Trabanco, digital currencies have disruptive potential, both for good and for bad, and they cannot be ignored.

In Chapter 16 Professor Marcin Lason provides a Polish perspective on the Ukraine war and applies the lens of a 'good citizen' to his analysis of Russia's territorial invasion. He urges readers to consider what could happen here if New Zealand were to find itself in Ukraine's position. This forward-thinking chapter offers some Polish experiences as illustration. Professor Lason reinforces the view set out in the previous chapters: that New Zealand can no longer rely on its geographical isolation as a measure

of protection or a guarantee of continuous territorial sovereignty. There is a recurring theme of threats to the rules-based order from Russia's invasion, and in particular a threat to the sovereignty of small states. Unlike Dr Eska-Mikołajewska, however, Professor Lasoń argues in favour of New Zealand acting 'unequivocally' on the side of the West, in part because of the strategic importance of being seen to do so. The chapter concludes with a call for the government to act not only in its own interests but also in the interests of international military cooperation.

The Ukraine war is also the topic of the final chapter, and again the gaze is turned towards home. In Chapter 17 Professor Rouben Azizian argues against a 'West versus Russia' view of this conflict and calls for a more nuanced framing of self-determination and territorial integrity issues. He critically analyses the ways in which Russia's war against Ukraine has altered global relations and focuses on potential consequences for Pacific Island nations and New Zealand. Professor Azizian likens the Ukrainians' struggle for self-determination with local, indigenous struggles for recognition. This chapter illustrates that tensions between territorial integrity and self-determination are likely to increase due to the existence of authoritarian regimes and increased global geopolitical rivalry. The author suggests New Zealand's approach to domestic and international politics must include consistent and informed consideration of the tension between sovereignty and self-determination.

This introduction has highlighted the contributions to this volume and situated the essays within recent global and domestic security challenges. We are told that New Zealand feels more threatened than in 2018; these essays allow the reader to judge for themselves the state of threat for Aotearoa.