Changing Climates and Changing Global Orders: Australia's new era of uncertainty

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The international order is undergoing rapid change at an unprecedented scale, and whilst change can bring new opportunities for Australia, it also brings many challenges. Australia faces an increasingly concerning strategic outlook, and the two most critical security challenges we face are the threats of climate change and threats to the rules-based global order. In discussing climate change, this paper firstly addresses the localised security impacts on Australian land and domestic resources. However, the most critical dangers of climate change to our security ultimately stem from collateral impacts of destabilisation within neighbouring states in the Asia Pacific region. Climate change threatens Australian security most profoundly as a 'threat multiplier' that reduces state capacity, thus paving the way for transnational security challenges in our immediate region, including refugee crises, regional instability and terrorism.[1] In discussing the second challenge of an uncertain future in the rules-based global order, this paper will explain why Australia's security hinges so greatly upon the existence of such an order. It will then discuss how this order could be threatened by a rising China and an increasingly unreliable United States (US). However, this paper contests the idea that a rising China is ultimately looking to overthrow our rules-based order, and argue instead, that Australia can no longer rely on the US as a willing defender of the rules-based order in order to maintain our broader security. Hence, given these critical consequences, it is evident that climate change and the weakening rules-based global order are the two most compelling security challenges contributing to and validating predictions of a worsening security environment for Australia.

[1] Sherri Goodman, foreword to *Disaster Alley: Climate Change, Conflict & Risk,* by Ian Dunlop and David Spratt (Melbourne: Breakthrough Publications, 2017), 8.

A Worsening Security Environment?

Towards the end of 2018, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne warned Australians that the global balance of power was 'undergoing a structural shift,' and that this shift contributes to an increasingly 'more uncertain, competitive and contested' strategic environment for Australia.[2] Forecasts about change and uncertainty have been similarly echoed by other policymakers, strategists, think tanks and security experts. In 2012, Australian policymakers claimed that we were living in the 'Asian Century', and recognised a need to adapt and thrive with the rise of Asian powers, such as China.[3] In 2014, defence forecasts from The Lowy Institute also identified rising security trends, including China-US power rivalries, transnational terrorism, and changing military technologies, as challenges facing Australia over the next two decades.[4] On the other hand, whilst the Asian Century and major power rivalries are indeed starting to transform the global balance of power, some experts, such as Dr Andrew Carr, argue that for middle powers like Australia, these 'periods of flux and uncertainty are the times of greatest opportunity'.[5] Such changes in the strategic sphere could allow Australia to capitalise on its position in the region, by strengthening relationships with its Asian neighbours to balance its interests with current and emerging great powers. That being said, although some constructive opportunities can arise from the current atmosphere of uncertainty, the strategic outlook and security environment for Australia is indeed worsening overall. In order to argue for this point, this paper will now proceed to assess the two most critical challenges to Australian security – the threats of climate change and the dwindling rules-based global order.

[2] Marise Payne, *Address at AIIA National Conference 2018*, speech prepared for the Australian Institute of International Affairs, (Canberra, 2018).
[3] Commonwealth of Australia, *2012 White Paper 'Australia in the Asian Century,'* Canberra: Department of Defence, 2012, Foreword, ii.
[4] Rory Medcalf and James Brown, 'Defence Challenges 2035: Securing Australia's Lifelines,' *Lowy Institute,* 10 Nov, 2014, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/defence-challenges-2035-securing-australias-lifelines#_edn2.
[5] Andrew Carr, as quoted in John Blaxland, 'Strategic Balancing Act: Australia's apparoch to managing China, the USA and Regional Security Priorities,' *Security Challenges,* 11, no. 1 (2017), 22.

Climate Change

Given Australia's geopolitical position in the Asia Pacific, being one of the most susceptible regions to the environmental forces, climate change could gravely endanger Australia and destabilise the region around it. The 2016 Defence White Paper identified that higher temperatures and rising sea levels would remain key contributors towards the 'frequency and intensity of extreme weather events' felt ubiquitously around the world.[6]

Climate change is already shaping Australia's own environment in alarming ways and will continue to do so. The Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) found that rapidly changing climates have drastically increased the intensity, frequency and duration of heatwaves across the country, which have heightened the risk of bushfire dangers overall.[7] As a country bordered by sea, rising sea levels have also left coastal towns and cities vulnerable to land erosion and flooding.[8] In 2011, the Australian Government estimated that land erosion and inundation from rising sea levels would cause more than AU$220 billion worth of damage to commercial, industrial, transport, and residential assets by 2100.[9] In particular, sea levels will also severely impact Australia's defence infrastructure. The Defence Estate is the 'most complex, specialised and expensive land' in Australia, comprised of more than 3 million hectares of land and 25,000 assets.[10] Many of its assets are highly vulnerable to inundation from rising sea levels and land degradation, such as low-lying training areas, naval bases, airfields and munitions facilities, with an estimated replacement value estimated to be in excess of AU$62 billion.[11] Evidently, if Australia is

[6] Commonwealth of Australia, *2016 Defence White Paper,* Canberra: Department of Defence, 2016, Chapter 2, 55-56.
[7] Chris Barrie et al., *Be Prepared: Climate Change, Security and Australia's Defence Force,* (Sydney: Climate Council of Australia Limited, 2015), 9.
[8] Ibid, 11.
[9] Anthony Press, Anthony Bergin and Eliza Garnsey, *Heavy Weather: Climate and the Australian Defence Force*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute*,* Issue 49, 2013, 24.
[10] Barrie et al., *Be Prepared,* 48; Press, Bergin and Garnsey, *Heavy Weather,* 23.
[11] Barrie et al., *Be Prepared,* 48.

unprepared, such costs and infrastructural damage from climate change could seriously injure Australia's future economic and military security. However, whilst these impacts do pose a visible threat to Australia, Professor Tim Stephens from the University of Sydney notes that as a 'technologically advanced, economically developed, and politically stable nation with strong legal institutions, Australia is reasonably well-placed to adapt to climate change and its impacts, at least for some decades'.[12]

Therefore, the more alarming security concern for Australia arises from the impact of climate change on the immediate region surrounding it – the Asia Pacific. The Asia Pacific region has been fittingly labelled as 'Disaster Alley' by experts, because it is most susceptible to the impacts of climate change.[13] In 2014 alone, more than half of the world's 226 natural disasters influenced by climate change occurred in this region.[14] The Pacific Islands are also at greater risk of experiencing extreme weather events, with an alarming average of 41 tropical cyclones per year so far.[15] Slow developing nations in the Asia Pacific are especially vulnerable to climate effects on economy, environment and human livelihood, which will, in turn, have broader security implications for Australia.

The first transnational challenge that could occur in our neighbourhood is the forced migration of populations. Inundation from sea levels, devastation from natural disasters, desertification and extreme heat, are all immediate impacts of climate change that can render a place uninhabitable. In Southeast Asia, for example, tropical areas face increasing extreme heat stress, which will cut labour productivity by 25% over 30 years and eventually make the region uninhabitable.[16] The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) who make up 'Australia's

[12] Tim Stephens, *Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security,* Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, (Canberra, 2017), 1.
[13] Dunlop and Spratt, *Disaster Alley*, 1.
[14] Barrie et al., *Be Prepared,* 55.
[15] Doherty, 'Labor says Australia must "tell story of Pacific to world" at Paris climate talks.'
[16] Stephens, *Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security,* 3.

immediate front yard' represent more than 15% of Australia's trade, and also collectively make up Australia's third-largest trading partner.[17] As Australia's most climate-vulnerable neighbours must confront the impacts of climate change, this will see migrations of affected peoples to other countries for survival. According to security strategist Alan Dupont, 'climate refugees' are now the fastest-growing types of refugees globally, and by 2050, there could be up to 150 million displaced climate refugees within the Asia Pacific region alone.[18] As former Chief of the Australian Defence Force, Admiral Chris Barrie, aptly states 'neither the world nor Australia are prepared for the serious, large-scale impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities and refugee patterns'.[19]

This leads to the next challenge, which concerns how climate change can significantly destabilise states when its environmental effects generate enough civil disorder and discontent. Climate change is a 'threat multiplier', meaning it exacerbates vulnerabilities of states, increases political instability and civil unrest, and consequently fosters an environment for conflict to unfold in.[20] Irregular migration, food, water and resource shortages all affect the livelihood of people and are most likely to cause social and political unrest. For example, consider the ongoing Syrian Civil War which began in 2011. Between 2006-2010, 60% of Syria had experienced an extreme long-term drought and crop failures.[21] By 2009, 800,000 rural people had lost their livelihood, 2 million were driven into extreme poverty, and 1.5 million forced to relocate inwards in urban cities, at a rapidly unsustainable pace.[22] The internal disorder brought about by the drought, compounded with an already frail Syrian governance, ultimately saw the Syrian regime fall apart to civil war and require foreign military intervention.[23] This

[17] John Blaxland, 'ASEAN matters and deserves credit.' *Lowy Institute: The Interpreter,* 6 Feb 2018. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/asean-matters-and-deserves-credit.
[18] Alan Dupont, 'The Strategic Implications of Climate Change,' *Survival* 50, no. 3 (2008): 41.
[19] Dunlop and Spratt, *Disaster Alley*, 18.
[20] Ibid, 8.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

example exemplifies how a 'threat multiplier' like climate change can increase instability and unrest in countries, leading to increased conflict.

Destabilised states can also become havens for terrorism to flourish in. The German Federal Foreign Office also commissioned a report in 2016, delving into the links between climate change and non-state armed groups such as terrorist networks.[24] The extensive report, which examined a variety of global case studies, found that large-scale climatic changes contribute significantly to an environment where non-state armed groups 'can thrive and open spaces that facilitate the pursuit of their strategies'.[25] There were three identified ways that climate change can facilitate the proliferation of non-state armed groups: 1) terrorists operate advantageously in a fragile socio-political environment, 2) climate change-affected populations become more vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups who offer appealing alternative livelihoods and seem to respond to public grievances, and 3) the scarcer resources become, the more power is given to those terrorist groups who are able to control them.[26] Indonesia is a prime example to illustrate this connection and its security implications for Australia. After the Asian Financial Crisis (1998), 80 million Indonesians were left impoverished.[27] A severe drought, caused by the El Niño Southern Oscillation (an ongoing weather phenomenon resulting from the changing climate), aggravated this crisis with consequent food shortages.[28] Combined with the pre-existing reality of poverty, the food shortage from harsh drought conditions triggered social and political uprisings across Indonesia, ultimately leading to the resignation of President Suharto. During this sensitive political climate, many radical Muslim exiles returned to Indonesia to revive the militant Jemaah Islamiyah extremist group and advocate for the creation of a radical Islamic state in Indonesia and across Southeast Asia.[29] In the years following, the group

[24] Katharina Nett and Lukas Rüttinger, *Insurgency, Terrorism and Organised Crime in a Warming Climate,* (Berlin: Adelphi Publications, 2016).
[25] Ibid, 55.
[26] Ibid, IV.
[27] Ibid, 272.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

coordinated multiple terrorist attacks, including the 2002 attack on two Bali nightclubs (killing more than 200 people, 88 of whom were Australians), and the 2004 bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta.[30] This example demonstrates complex links between how socio-political unrest, as a result of climate change-induced droughts, can enable the rise of terrorism and affect Australia's security in the region. As security analyst, Paul J. Smith, argues, whilst climate change does not directly cause terrorism per se, it *does* create 'hospitable enabling environments, weak states, reduced state capacity and ungoverned spaces' that enable terrorist groups to thrive.[31]

Looking into the future, the United Nations (UN) reports that the El Niño Southern Oscillation is already causing widespread droughts across the Pacific and could trigger a future regional humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 4.1 million people at risk of disease, food insecurity and water shortages.[32] As stated in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, stability in Papua New Guinea and the wider Pacific is 'vital to our ability to defend Australia's northern approaches, secure our borders and protect our exclusive economic zone'.[33] Most countries within this region are already buckling under acute development and economic challenges, and are being further incapacitated by the burden of climate change threatening their stability and very existence. As a result, Pacific nations have limited capacities to overcome potential security threats like mass migration, political unrest and terrorism. The 2016 Defence White Paper highlighted state fragility within our immediate neighbourhood as one of six 'key drivers' of defence policy that will 'shape the development of Australia's security environment to 2035'.[34]

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[30] Katharina Nett and Lukas Rüttinger, *Insurgency, Terrorism and Organised Crime in a Warming Climate,* (Berlin: Adelphi Publications, 2016), 272.
[31] Sanjay Chaturvedi and Timothy Doyle, 'Geopolitics of Climate Change and Australia's "Re-engagement" with Asia: Discourses of Fear and Cartographic Anxieties,' *Australian Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 1 (2010): 109.
[32] Ben Doherty, 'Labor says Australia must "tell story of Pacific to world" at Paris climate talks,' *The Guardian,* 1 Nov 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/01/labor-says-australia-must-tell-story-of-pacific-to-world-at-paris-climate-talks.
[33] Commonwealth of Australia, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,* Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016, Chapter 7, 99.
[34] Commonwealth of Australia, *2016 Defence White Paper,* 40.

Hence, as evidenced above, climate change in the immediate regions surrounding Australia could pose serious regional and transnational challenges to these security interests.

The Rules-Based Global Order

As the result of a changing power dynamic in the world, the rules-based global order is being undermined, which poses a serious threat to Australia's security over the coming years. As defined by the 2016 Defence White Paper, a rule-based order refers to 'a shared commitment by all countries to conduct their activities in accordance with agreed rules which evolve over time, such as international law and regional security arrangements'.[35] The rules-based order is crucial in the maintenance of international security and is the structural backbone to which Australia's own security depends so greatly on. The 2016 Defence White Paper emphasised the increasing importance of protecting such an order to Australia's security interests, mentioning support for the 'rules-based global order' a notable 56 times throughout.[36] In identifying why the maintenance of such an order is of such pivotal importance to our security, we must firstly understand Australia's position in the world as a middle power. Power theorists in security literature suggest that middle powers like Australia must 'think beyond the dominant drivers of realist power politics', such as hard power capacity, and look into how global institutions and interdependence can best serve the middle power's own security interests instead.[37] Since middle powers have an 'inability to shape global outcomes in any direct manner', due to not having remarkably strong coercive powers, they must rely on a stable rules-based global order that can capably and peacefully maintain security through laws, institutions, rules and norms.[38] Both Defence and Foreign Policy White Papers reflect this theory in an Australian security

[35] Commonwealth of Australia, *2016 Defence White Paper*, 15.
[36] Andrew Carr, 'A Pilot Fish Returns to School: Australia Explores New Approaches in East Asia's Evolving Regional Order,' *Asia Policy* 13, no. 2 (2018): 48.
[37] Mark Beeson and Richard Higgott, 'The changing architecture of politics in the Asia-Pacific: Australia's middle power moment?' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 14 (2014): 220.
[38] Simone Van Nieuwenhuizen, 'Australia and People's Republic of China government conceptions of the international order,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2019): 182.

context, stating that Australia's security and prosperity rests on a global order that is 'anchored in international law, support for the rights and freedoms of United Nations declarations, and the principles of good governance'.[39]

Furthermore, Australia has historically always played a pivotal role in the maintenance of the rules-based global order. Australia actively helped to develop many rules and norms governing cooperative international behaviour, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, Law of the Sea Convention, Antarctic Treaties, humanitarian law and arms control.[40] Australia has also benefited greatly from pursuing its security interests through international institutions that govern global rules, such as the UN. This is affirmed by Australia's support, through the UN, for Indonesian independence, peace process in Cambodia and intervention leading to the stabilisation of Timor-Leste.[41] As the Director of the Australian Institution of International Affairs (AIIA), Allan Gyngell, rightly argues, Australia had an important 'voice' in the construction and enforcement of global rules and norms, but today these 'central tenets' are now all in doubt'.[42]

This paper will now examine the factors undermining the rules-based order by firstly addressing and refuting the argument that a rising China is the biggest threat to the order for Australia. Some experts, such as Dr Marcus Hellyer, argue that the rules-based global order is being threatened by the rise of China, as 'China simply ignores it when it chooses' and is 'embarking on creating a new regional order that it seeks to define alone'.[43] Several instances of increasing Chinese assertiveness can allude to this threat. Most notably, China's continued

[39] Commonwealth of Australia, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, 7.*
[40] Allan Gyngell, *Australian Outlook,* 'The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,' (blog), 13 July 2018, accessed 24 April 2019, https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-liberal-international-order/.
[41] United Nations Association of Australia, 'The United Nations and the Rules-Based International Order,' (Canberra: 2017), 3.
[42] Gyngell, 'The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order.'
[43] Marcus Hellyer, 'The Cost of Defence: ASPI Defence Budget Brief 2018-2019,' 24 May 2018, https://www.aspi.org.au/report/cost-defence-aspi-defence-budget-brief-2018-2019.

militarisation of the South China Sea and rejection of the judicial outcome from the Permanent Court of Arbitration (2016) demonstrate how China has undermined international laws and institutions.[44] Some analysts also perceive China's institutional statecraft as indicative of its attempts to create a new global order, with its own interests and leadership at the forefront. For example, China's establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (2015) aroused fears that it could oust existing institutions, like the World Bank, and 'alter the institutional balance of power' by placing China at the centre (rather than the US).[45] Actions such as these have evoked concerns from experts, such as Aaron Friedberg, who argues that China is 'contributing to the erosion of liberal norms and institutions' and its assertive actions are 'aggressive, destabilising, and flout international norms'.[46] However, this paper argues that China's outward assertiveness should not necessarily be equated to an intentional desire to uproot the rules-based global order at the present moment. Chinese President Xi Jinping stated in 2015, that China has been a 'beneficiary of the existing international order' itself.[47] Given China's avid participation in the World Trade Organisation, support of the free trade system, and increased involvement in global forums (such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015), it is simply 'not in China's interests to radically upend an order that has, to a significant extent, served its interests so well in recent decades'.[48] China risks undoing all of its progress in integrating into global institutions, and consequently alienating itself should it seek to overthrow the rules-based order completely. Evidently, China has been wrongly painted as the

[44] Ian Hall and Michael Heazle, 'The Rules Based Order in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges for Austrlia, India and Japan,' *Regional Outlook,* 50 (2017): 5.
[45] G. John Ikenberry and Darren Lim, 'What China's Institutional Statecraft could mean for the international order,' 13 April 2017, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/what-chinas-institutional-statecraft-could-mean-for-the-international-order/.
[46] Aaron L. Friedberg, 'Competing with China,' *Survival* 60, no. 3 (2018): 51.
[47] Shiping Tang, 'China and the Future International Order(s),' *Ethics and International Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2018): 34.
[48] Ikenberry and Lim, 'What China's Institutional Statecraft could mean for the international order.'

'lawbreaker-in-chief,' and 'most formidable challenge' to the rules-based order that Australia is so familiar with and dependent upon for its security.[49] [50]

This paper will now argue that the increasingly wavering commitment of the US in maintaining the rules-based global order will pose a more critical challenge to Australia's security. The rules-based global order that Australia depends on today was developed at the conclusion of the devastating Second World War, by the US and its allies.[51] After the bipolar Cold War environment drew to a close with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rules-based global order saw the US gradually become its 'hegemonic organiser and manager'.[52] Since then, Australia has been reliant upon its most powerful ally, the US, to not only be an enforcer and 'guardian' of this system, but to also lead by example and embody the fundamental liberal values of a rules-based order.[53] However, our 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper highlighted an increasing 'debate and uncertainty in the US' regarding its international commitment.[54] The change has most notably been amplified since the election of President Donald Trump in 2016 and his advocacy of an 'America First' policy – a product of Trump's underlying discontent with the US's international obligations thus far.[55] As The Brookings Institution's Thomas Wright argues, Trump feels that 'the US is overcommitted around the world,' and 'seeks nothing less than ending the US-led liberal order and freeing America from its international commitments'.[56] Evidently, this mounting discontent has caused the US to lose confidence in its role and purpose as the leader

[49] Gregory Raymond, 'Advocating the rules-based order in an era of multipolarity,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (2018), 5.
[50] Nick Bisley and Benjamin Schreer, 'Will Australia defend the "rules-based order" in Asia?' *ASPI*: *The Strategist,* 18 April 2018, https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/will-australia-defend-rules-based-order-asia/.
[51] G. John Ikenberry, 'The Liberal International Order and its discontents,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 3 (2010): 512.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Guy de Jonquières, 'The world turned upside down: The decline of the rules-based international system and the rise of authoritarian nationalism,' *International Politics* 54 (2017): 533.
[54] Commonwealth of Australia, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,* 7.
[55] Donald Trump, *Remarks of President Donald J. Trump,* Inaugural Address*,* (Washington DC, 2017), https://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural-address.
[56] Thomas Wright, 'Trump's 19th Century Foreign Policy,' *Politico,* 20 Jan 2016, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-foreign-policy-213546.

of the rules-based global order. Hence, since assuming the presidency, Trump has been 'hastening the decay' of the rules-based global order.[57] Trump has already removed the US from several multilateral treaties and bodies that promote global cooperation and security, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Paris Climate Agreement, Iran nuclear deal, Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the UN Human Rights Council.[58] The withdrawal of one of the world's most powerful states – and to Australia, its most important ally – from such pivotal institutions diminishes the effectiveness and legitimacy of global governance. The wary and uncertain tone of Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper emphasises how 'international challenges can only be tackled effectively when the world's wealthiest, most innovative and most powerful country is engaged in solving them', and pushes for more 'strong and sustained US engagement in the international system'.[59] Evidently, Australia faces a deteriorating security environment, if it continues to lose the US's support and commitment to the rules-based order that Australia's security and prosperity have thrived on for the last seven decades.

This paper has firmly established that the widespread impacts of climate change and withering rules-based global order are the two most important security challenges facing Australia. This paper explored the challenge of climate change at a domestic level, by examining the direct threat of heat waves and rising sea levels on Australia's security infrastructure. However, the more critical climate change risk facing Australia is its impact on our neighbourhood in the Asia Pacific region. The Asia Pacific region is most susceptible to the environmental, political and economic burden of climate change, which can spark transnational security crises, such as climate refugees, conflicts and terrorism. Although Australia does not share direct borders with any other affected Asia Pacific nations, the future of its security is inextricably linked to the

[57] Amitav Acharya, 'After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order,' *Ethics and International Affairs* 31, no. 3 (2017): 272.
[58] John Glaser, 'The Amnesia of the US Foreign Policy Establishment,' *CATO Institute,* 15 March 2019, https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/amnesia-us-foreign-policy-establishment.
[59] Commonwealth of Australia, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper,* 80.

stability of the region overall. This paper then discussed the rules-based global order, which is of paramount importance to Australian security, especially as a middle power. Although China may be considered as the greatest threat to this order, it is not realistically in China's interests and capacity to be so. Instead, under Trump, the US's confidence in and commitment to the rules-based global order has deteriorated significantly, despite having historically played a leadership role in bolstering the order itself. A middle power like Australia must rely on a strong rules-based global order to guarantee security at a national, regional and global level. If this trend continues, then there will be no more international institutions, rules, norms and laws for Australia to rely on to maintain its security. For Australia's peace and prosperity to thrive, ideal conditions, such as a secure and stable neighbourhood, coupled with a cooperative rules-based global order, are absolute necessities. As these conditions come under critical threat, Australia's strategic environment looks to be characterised increasingly by uncertainty, risk and danger.

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