

From Rome's greatest enemy Hannibal to the modern-day Pashtun tribal leaders in Afghanistan, history recognises it is better to be feared by enemies than applauded by foolish friends. Yet this wisdom has not stopped the Australian government imposing its net zero madness on the Defence Force, during one of the most unstable geopolitical times since prior to World War II. Instead, **as former defence official Ross Babbage wrote in Learning to Walk with Giants, Australia needs a flexible deterrent that can 'rip an arm off' opponents. That's the kind of defence force capability Australia needs, not tanks run on virtue.**

In case you're starting to dabble in subjective truths and don't believe it, on 24 October 2024, the Hon. Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery, International Development and the Pacific released Defence's Net Zero Strategy. Australia must have many foolish friends. And our foolish friends are taking us for a ride, when not a single enemy of the West, state or non-state actor, is pursuing a net-zero strategy for their armed forces. None. And just in case you kind of agree with human contribution to global temperature rises, Australia has 43 navy ships. China has 730, Russia has about the same, India has around 300 and the United States under 300, and Indonesia about 240. I've never been good at climate maths, but I'm confident not a single popsicle would melt because of emissions from Australia's Defence Force. Even if all those ships were operationally deployed.

From electric-powered Bushmasters to bio-fuelled jets, the net zero defence strategy claims, 'climate change is a national security issue'. The document explains, 'This strategy ensures that our accelerated preparedness, operational effectiveness and capability requirements remain uncompromised, as we strive for sustainability and resilience.' While its broader aim is to minimise 'our contribution to climate change'. One of the few Roman generals to frustrate Hannibal during the second Punic war, Quintus Fabius Maximus (c. 280 – 203 BC), recognised policy was moulded by circumstance, not circumstance by policy. And the circumstances of our time demand armed drones, counter-drone capability, long-range missile offensive and defensive platforms, sea mines, and the widest range of air, sea and land asymmetric war-fighting options our imagination can design and deploy.

The circumstances of our time also have many contemplating the potential of a war to defend Taiwan. The task would be impossible powered by wind, solar and bio-fuel. And as sure as night follows day, the moment any major military confrontation kicked off involving the deployment of Australian forces, talk of net zero would vanish. So why bother? Right now, Australia is engaged in joint combat training exercises known as Kerris Woomera with Indonesia involving around 2,000 personnel, attack helicopters, tanks, artillery and amphibious landing craft. Not a single consideration will be given to emissions.

It's hard to believe such serious people in charge of our nation's security and the lives of our service men and women would willingly put their names to the Defence Net Zero Strategy. What is more likely is they have little choice. Neither nature's course nor the designs of our opponents will bend to Australia's net-zero defence policy. Instead, we need the kind of people designing much of our defence and security strategy who British prime minister, Winston Churchill, described as having 'corkscrew minds'. A strategy focused on equipping our combat forces with the greatest number of lethal weapons systems suited to our region as possible. This is on top of alternative supply chains for fuel, food, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and energy. We do not need Australia becoming a renewable energy

superpower (whatever that means) where nearly all the inputs come from China. We will become the Germany of the Pacific, where they signed up to be dependent on Russian gas. When US President Trump warned them about this at a dinner in 2018, they all just laughed.

The net zero mind virus is not confined to Australia. When a Russian Su-27 fighter jet sprayed fuel on a US MQ-9 reaper drone in 2023, the Biden Administration complained it was not 'climate friendly'. We are being held to ransom by a bodyguard of strategic incompetence.

And while we are captivated with China, the Israel and Iran-proxy war as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, right now al-Qaeda is rebuilding its resources, networks, training and terrorist capabilities. For us the global war on terror may be a thing of the past. For the global Islamist insurgency, their brand of terrorism is a multi-generational strategy. While its non-violent proxies are successfully mainstreaming the Islamist project in Australia, its terrorist wings are preparing for the next phase in the war against the West. According to Foreign Policy, al-Qaeda is back to running militant training camps; sharing the profits of the Taliban's illicit drug, mining and smuggling enterprises; and funnelling the proceeds to affiliated jihadi groups worldwide. If Australia is forced to respond, it will not be with bio-fuelled jets.

Ultimately, our defence and national security strategy depends on the willingness to adapt to changing circumstances without being trapped within our own ideological prisms.

As soon as possible, we need to dump our obsessions with climate, transgenderism, race and cancelling information that offends subjective truths; obsessions that are undermining the West's duty to maintain power and security. No people or nation in the history of warfare ever defended themselves with virtue-powered weapons. Not one. Except our political elites and the globalists who are encouraging them and continue to disregard the grubby truth that their ideals rely on the security provided by realists. Security relies on a strong, lethal defence, utilising all available sources of energy, means of production and supply, secure borders and a population culturally sure of itself. All these are within our control.

In this new era of multipolar, great-power politics, the realist accepts the evolving competition of nations and the dangers of weak men, and recognises certain ideologies refuse to be at peace. If your grandfather was like mine, proud of their nation and culture, they knew what they were fighting for. And as is the case today, his only net zero piece of kit was a shovel.