Curtin University of Technology

STRATEGIC FLASHLIGHT
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ASIAN LANGUAGES

Seminar:

Maritime Security Challenges in Australia's Northwest

Date : 8 September 2010

Time : 4.00 - 5.30pm

Venue : Fremantle Ports' Administration Building
1 Cliff Street, Fremantle (at entrance to west end of Victoria Quay)

Abstract

Australia's most critical sovereignty and border protection problems are in the offshore areas of Northwest Australia with high levels both of illegal fishing and people smuggling, as well as potentially difficult maritime boundary issues and an exposure to marine natural hazards, such as tsunamis and cyclones. The northwest has always been Australia's most exposed flank, but this is sometime overlooked in our national defence planning with Canberra often appearing more fixated on the Pacific Ocean rather than towards the West and the Indian Ocean. The need for Australia's defence planning to give greater attention to the Indian Ocean is accentuated by the developing strategic uncertainties of that ocean with increased competition likely between India and China, our growing trade in the ocean, the enormous economic and strategic significance of the mining, oil and gas developments along the Northwest coast, and the expansion of the vital national infrastructure in that area.

This talk will discuss the maritime security challenges in Australia's Northwest. It will identify particular threats that might arise in the area and suggest the need for an increased level of defence activities along and off the west coast to meet those threats, including the establishment of a naval operating base on the northwest coast, This would close the existing gap between Perth and Darwin, and help ensure an acceptable response time to any security contingency off the Pilbara coast. It would also support the development plans of the Australian and Western Australian governments for the Pilbara and Kimberley regions. The talk will also refer to the strategic significance of Australia's island territories in the Indian Ocean, particularly the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the importance of regularly patrolling the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around those islands.

Presenter: Prof Sam Bateman (University of Wollongong, New South Wales)

Dr Sam Bateman retired from the RAN as a Commodore and is now a Professorial Research Fellow at the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) at the University of Wollongong in Australia, and a Senior Fellow in the Maritime Security Programme at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He was awarded his PhD from the University of NSW in 2001 for a dissertation on "The Strategic and Political Aspects of the Law of the Sea in East Asian Seas". He has written extensively on defence and maritime issues in Australia, the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean. He has co-authored several reports for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), including *Sea Change: Advancing Australia's Ocean Interests* (in 2009) and *Our Western Front: Australia and the Indian Ocean* (2010), as well as the Policy Paper *Good Order at Sea in Southeast Asia – Policy Recommendations* for RSIS (in 2009). Recent co-edited publications include *Southeast Asia and the Rise of Chinese and Indian Naval Power: Between Rising Naval Powers* (2010), *Security and International Politics in the South*

China Sea: Towards a Cooperative Management Regime (Routledge, 2009); and *Lloyd's MIU Handbook of Maritime Security* (Auerbach Publications, 2009). He is a member of the Order of Australia, and a nominated member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Expert and Eminent Persons' Group.

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RSVP is essential. Photographic ID is required.
Please arrive at the venue 15-20 minutes prior to seminar to allow time for sign in.

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