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Some Progress, But Major Failings, in Getting Viable Survivability Systems into New US Armed Forces Vehicles

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Some Progress, But Major Failings, in Getting Viable Survivability Systems into New US Armed Forces Vehicles

Analysis. By GIS Staff. The International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), publisher of *Defense & Foreign Affairs*, issued a report on October 8, 2007, updating several earlier briefings, on the state of personnel protection programs for the new range of US military vehicles being deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The update report noted that there were still major failings in the ability of the new vehicles to meet current and anticipated levels of threats, and indicated that some systems compounded the dangers for US personnel being deployed.

The new report was entitled *Some Progress, But Major Failings, in Getting Viable Survivability Systems into New US Armed Forces Vehicles*, and follows two earlier reports, on June 21, 2007, and July 3, 2007.

See *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, [June 11, 2007](#): *New Study Highlights Ongoing Dangers to US Troops With Major New Vehicle Programs*, and [July 4, 2007](#): *US Defense Force Personnel Remain Vulnerable as New Vehicle Systems Enter Production Without Appropriate Survivability Systems*.

The new report noted that US military personnel fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan remained at high risk from enemy action and vehicular accidents because of continued failures to make armored and soft-skinned vehicles compliant with recommended approaches to human survivability. The failures, the report said, applied equally to the new vehicles being manufactured under an urgent basis for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) family of vehicles and to the existing HMMWV soft-skinned vehicles and other general purpose vehicles in-theater.

The US Army and Marine Corps continue to have as their highest equipment priority the mission of deploying new and upgraded armored and soft-skinned tactical wheeled vehicles to troops in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The new report said that major omissions in survivability systems, highlighted in the ISSA White Paper Reports of June 11, 2007, June 21, 2007, and July 3, 2007, have begun to be addressed by the US Army and USMC.

Despite the best efforts of US Army and USMC program personnel on the MRAP family of vehicles to ensure maximum compliance by vehicle manufacturers with regard to human survivability specifications, however, attempts by platform manufacturers to field new systems as quickly as possible have resulted in the reality that the intent and the stated requirements of the Department of Defense to get maximum protection for US troops continue to be violated. Manufacturers have continued with the process of the deliberate selection of untested, and often patently dangerous (even potentially lethal), seating and restraint systems on many of the MRAP vehicles.

At the same time, no progress has been made in fitting personnel survivability systems, other than up-armorings, to protect troops using M1114 and other HMMWV soft-skinned vehicles in-theater in Iraq or Afghanistan against improvised explosive device (IED) and other attacks.

Vehicles displayed by manufacturers at the USMC's Modern Day Marine exposition (October 2-4, 2007) and the Association of the US Army (AUSA) Show (October 8-12, 2007) demonstrated that most troop seating in MRAP prototypes and other vehicles failed to offer the requisite seating and restraint protection for troops to protect them against two-stage energy attenuation (EA) following blast. This is in direct violation of the military's program directives insisting that such protection be afforded, and that the protection meets the currently anticipated threat levels.

Some of the seating for the MRAP family of vehicles will shortly undergo comprehensive testing at the ARCCA facility in Pennsylvania¹, but most of the seating systems being installed in US military vehicles have never been tested, and patently do not meet even basic US highway safety standards, let alone the far more rigorous requirements of combat operations. Several manufacturers have begun using fully-tested seats, such as the Global Seating Systems (GSS) CCOPS *Cobra* seats and restraint systems in MRAP vehicles, but not in all crew positions.²

Options now exist for the installation — retrofitting — of seating and restraint systems into currently-operational M1114 vehicles in-theater in Iraq and Afghanistan, a move which would substantially improve personnel survivability. Retrofit into operational M1114s of the CCOPS system, the only seat and restraint system to have been fully tested at this point, would substantially reduce injury numbers and severity, and unnecessary reduce deaths as a result of IED blast and operational attacks and accidents. Significantly, this seating/restraint system also has substantial benefits for frontal collision, rollover, and other problems caused either by accident or combat action.

One Marine Corps source noted: "At best, we see manufacturers — when they even think about the problem — shooting to provide an 'eight pound solution' [providing blast protection against eight pounds of IED explosive], even though we're really functioning in a 12 pound threat environment." Apart from that, the direct blast protection — the armor — fails to address the entire spectrum of problems which arise from IED or other blast situations, or from normal exposure to accidents in the vehicles.

ARCCA was tasked by the MRAP program to undertake tests only of the driver seats for the Force Protection (FPI), International Truck & Engine (ITE), and General Dynamics (GD) MRAP platforms. This at least advances the process whereby some of the seating systems — including CCOPS, which has already been rigorously tested and which was designed to an Army specification — will be held to some standards, but many seating and restraint systems being fitted to US military vehicles remain outside any testing validation.

Those outside the testing regime include, for example, seating made by Armorworks, and seats being proposed (but now selected for one proposed MRAP vehicle) by German firm Autoflug³. The International Truck & Engine (ITE)⁴ MRAP passenger seat, for example, also needs to be tested. It is an Israeli Plasan Sasa low-back seat design with flat cushion which is suspended from the roof with ropes. This may do well in blast testing but would almost certainly not pass crash testing; moreover, it does not meet the warfighting requirements of the MRAP vehicle family which requires rapid vehicle ingress and egress, not only for drivers, but for vehicle commanders and troops.

The reality is that while the US Army and Marine Corps now fully understand the realities of blast attenuation in addressing the secondary effects of IED attacks, the vehicle manufacturers are, by and large, still ignoring the requirement to incorporate appropriate design and technology changes into their vehicles' internal survivability systems. The billions of dollars being committed for urgent production of new US military vehicles to protect troops against IED blast are largely being wasted because the internal seating and restraint systems often pose greater risk of death or injury to the troops than the blast itself.

It has now become a matter of urgency that:

1. The US Congressional oversight functions begin to enquire more closely into manufacturer compliance with the intent and letter of MRAP specifications for seating and restraint systems which demand attention to blast attenuation and crash survivability, and to consider the legal liability of manufacturers whose systems place vehicle occupants at unnecessary risk;

2. The Department of Defense elevate the priority of retrofitting of in-theater M1114 HMMWV vehicles to the same level as the provision of new MRAP vehicles; and
3. The Department of Defence and the MRAP program office insist on full testing of all seats — driver, commander, and personnel seating — to be installed in MRAP and other military vehicles, to ensure that the seating meets the anticipated threat levels, not only with regard to direct effects of blast, but also addressing two-stage blast attenuation, frontal collision, and roll-over.

Footnotes:

1. ARCCA Incorporated, 2288 Second Street Pike, Penns Park, PA 18943. www.arcca.com.
2. The CCOPS *Cobra* seating system was developed under contract with the US Army National Automotive Center at the Detroit Arsenal and is currently produced by Global Seating Systems LLC, of Exton, Pennsylvania. See earlier ISSA White Papers on Personnel Survivability for more complete details. Some additional details available at www.globalseating.com.
3. Autoflug currently also provides specialized seating for US M1A1 *Abrams* main battle tanks, and a wide range of European and other armored vehicles.
4. International Military and Government, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of International Truck and Engine Corporation, was named in January 2007 as a finalist for the provision of up to 4,100 MRAP vehicles to the US Marine Corps.

Iranian, Syrian Leadership Turmoil May Indicate Realization that Readiness for Military Ops Against Israel, US is “Not There”

Analysis. From GIS Stations in Tehran, Damascus, and elsewhere. There were, as of October 9, 2007, no marked indications that Iranian and Syrian forces had increased their readiness for the proposed start of military operations against Israeli, and later US, targets on October 12, 2007. While there has been no indication that the October 12, 2007, date has been abandoned, there is some suggestion that the Israeli air and special forces raids on targets in Syria may well have given the Iranian leadership some pause on initiating actions which would invite Israeli and US responses.

As well, as tensions have mounted over the possibility of military action, the power struggle inside the Iranian clerical leadership groups seems to have escalated, with support being given to street protests against Pres. Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad, whose actions to incite a conflict with Israel and the West have been viewed by some clerical leaders as reckless.

The move in late September 2007 by the camp around the “Supreme Leader”, “*Ayatollah*” Ali Hoseini-Khamene’i, to consolidate the position of the conservative leadership against Pres. Ahmadi-Nejad may have also been indicated by the appointment of former Pres. *Hojjat ol-Eslam* Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, now Speaker of the *Majlis*, as Commander of the Armed Forces.

The “Supreme Leader” on September 1, 2007, had replaced the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC: *Pasdaran*), Brig.-Gen. Yahya Rahim Safavi, with Brig.-Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, who was promoted to major-general. Gen. Jafari had commanded the IRGC ground forces for 13 years, and was also head of the IRGC’s Center for Strategic Policymaking. Brig.-Gen. Safavi, who was not promoted, was named as senior adviser in military affairs to “*Ayatollah*” Khamene’i. These changes were followed by two other significant appointments. Brig.-Gen. Mohammad Hejazi, the doctrinaire head of the Basij militia, was named head of the IRGC Joint Forces Command, and Brig.-Gen. Aliakbar Ahmadian was to take Maj.-Gen. Jafari’s post as head of Strategic Policy.

The shuffle of senior officers ensures that command of the IRGC, which controls all Iranian strategic weapons, launch vehicles, and national command authority (NCA) assets, stays under the command of the “Supreme Leader”, and not the President. At the same time, the appointment of Rafsanjani as commander of the conventional Armed Forces structure ensures that the Khamene’i-Rafsanjani camp now have all the military assets under their command, and outside the control of the President.

There seems little question but that the Iranian and Syrian leadership were taken by surprise by the ability of Israeli Air Force and Israeli Special Forces to strike with impunity at nuclear-related targets in Syria, despite the installation of advanced air defense systems which did not detect the Israeli Air Force aircraft. This may have led to the belief in Tehran that plans for an escalation of attacks against Israel, as a prelude to more open conflict, may yet not be ready, despite the massive and continuous build-up of weapons and personnel through Syria into Lebanon's Beqa'a through much of 2007.

If the push for the October 12 — or thereabouts — escalation of conflict against Israel and the West fails, it seems logical that the conservative leadership may well take the opportunity to jettison Pres. Ahmadi-Nejad as leader.

Meanwhile, a key leader of the secular Iranian opposition movement, Dr Assad Homayoun, President of the Azadegan Foundation, on October 9, 2007, told *the* National Security Roundtable in New York that a military strike by the US or Israel against Iran was not necessary, and that the Iranian public should be supported in their efforts to overthrow the clerical leadership. His presentation, entitled *Iran and US Interests in the Middle East*, was as follows:

You all, this past month, heard Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad speak in New York. You implicitly understood from his speeches that he and his clerical colleagues — who now so tenuously control Iran — are the enemy of the West, and that they are also the enemy of the Iranian people. The war which they have begun against the West is designed, first and foremost, to consolidate their illicit control over Iran itself.

The clerics do not represent the Iranian people or the historical Persian nation. And my task here today is to ensure that the United States does not commit either of the two great strategic mistakes which are currently being promoted in Washington, DC.

Those mistaken paths are, firstly, the desire of one part of Washington to “normalize” relations with Iran by treating the clerical administration as though it were legitimate. This would consolidate the clerics’ power over the people of Iran, who overwhelmingly despise clerical rule, and who overwhelmingly see the United States and the West as their allies. The second mistaken path being advocated by part of the Washington, DC, establishment is that the US should take military action against “Iran”.

The clerics in Iran — who, by the way, are not legitimate Shi'a clerics; they are largely self-appointed in their clerical titles — would be happy with either US strategy. Both serve their purposes of legitimizing and strengthening their control over Iran, and allowing them to extend their strategic hegemony over the Middle East and into Central Asia and the Indian Ocean regions.

But let me go further in discussing my concerns about the US pursuit of a military solution to the challenge being thrown down by the clerics. And later I will discuss with you the “third path”: one which would greatly enhance US prestige, security, and influence, without the dangers attendant to military operations or legitimizing the clerics through the Baker Plan's proposed “normalization” of relations.

Bombing Iran would be militarily ineffective, and would lead to enormous, and protracted difficulties for the US, including possible loss of any substantial US influence in the region. It would almost certainly lead to a much more virulent conflict in Iraq, and a full-scale war against Israel. Moreover, a major series of attacks by the US, or the West, or Israel against Iran opens the potential for damage to the Iranian people, who are not the enemies of the West or of Israel. Also bombing Iran could disturb unity of the country which will certainly contribute to balkanization of the Greater Middle East that is already volcanic.

Ruhollah Khomeini — I will not call him an Ayatollah, because, in truth, he was only called an Ayatollah to avoid being prosecuted for treason in the time of the Shah — when he was the self-styled “Supreme Leader” of Iran, in 1982, was about to be removed from office by the groundswell of public outrage against the clerics. Khomeini embraced war with Iraq — a war which could have easily been avoided — so that the Iranian people

would be distracted, and would be forced, as patriots, to rally around the government of the day.

The clerics in Tehran and Qom once again seek to force the Iranian public to put aside their political hatred of them to fight a foreign aggressor. Thus, by taking the bait, the West saves them. Khomeini did not care if the war cost a million Iranian lives; the dead of Iran were a small price to pay for his, and his colleagues', survival in power. Ahmadi-Nejad and the other clerics — who are by no means unified, except in the need to survive in office — are trying the same trick.

Do we once again save the clerics, at the cost of God knows how many Iranian, Israeli, and American lives?

You will recall that Ahmadi-Nejad said, when he opened his remarks at Columbia University in New York in September. He said: "Oh, God, hasten the arrival of Imam al-Mahdi and grant him good health and victory and make us his followers and those to attest to his righteousness ..." This call for the arrival of the 12th Imam was a call for Armageddon, because that is what the arrival of the 12th Imam is supposed to mean.

We should make no mistake: the clerics are hoping by their direct challenges to the US to force a national security crisis, which they hope to survive, even if it means presiding over an Iran reduced to rubble. Did we not see the same messianic selfishness in Hitler?

You do not need me to remind you that the Middle East — or the Greater Middle East — is the center of an array of different religions: Zoroastrian, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is the original cradle of civilizations and the deep-seated origin of much within the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman cultures which in turn gave us the modern world. You have witnessed that the region is also a center of clashes between East and West.

History is geography in motion, Geography is energy, energy is economics, economics is security and security is geopolitics.

And the geography of the Middle East, not only in ancient times but in the present, is becoming more and more important politically and economically. Nor is it all about oil and gas, although this will remain very important for the next few decades. The geography of the region shows it as the crossroads of trade, communications, and cultural exchange between East and West, and North and South. The sea lanes across the Mediterranean and through the Suez/Red Sea lines of communication are one thing; the opening of the revived Great Silk Route across the Caucasus, and possibly through Iran, is another part of the equation and one which could be the economic driver of the 21st Century. And there is also the growing network of oil and gas pipelines, and much more.

Much of the world's progress has been jeopardized by conflicts which have suspended this strategic nexus in the past. The Great Silk Route was buried for more than two centuries of Russian and then Soviet rubble, inaccessible to the trade which had once begun to energize both Europe and Asia.

All this is once again jeopardized because of an essentially delusional group which seized power in Iran, and which are literally holding up the traders along the path, like gatekeepers and highwaymen of old, blocking a vital pass through the mountains. The blackmail they hold against us all today, including the people of Iran, is their ability to cause a great war, most probably nuclear one.

The United States has legitimate vital interests in the Greater Middle East. And there is no question that Iran — even though the clerics have robbed it of its position as a great regional power — is the center of gravity or lynchpin state of the region. To me, it is clear that none of the current problems in the Middle East and Islamic world can be solved unless there is change in Iran.

And this change is not best achieved either by bowing to the clerics' demand that the US and the West kowtow to them and legitimize them and their greatness, or by bombing Iran.

Before we move on, let me say that the Iranian command and control system, and the missiles and strategic warheads available to the clerics, are exceptionally sophisticated, and there exists a clear capability in Iran and its surrogate, Syria, to withstand a major incoming strike, and to retaliate with strategic weapons and major attacks on Israeli and Western targets. We know that there exist, ready, within the *HizbAllah*, Syrian, and Iranian arsenals may tens of thousands of tactical, battlefield, theater, and strategic missiles already in place to overwhelm Israeli ballistic missile defenses.

We also know that Iran has acquired a dozen or more nuclear warheads since 1993, and that, in all probability, North Korea attempted to deliver and mount at least one nuclear weapon on a Syrian missile just recently. We can also expect that, when the time comes — and it may come very, very soon — North Korea, as a major treaty ally of Tehran and Damascus, will begin major strategic moves to cause the US to be militarily distracted in the Pacific as Iran, Syria, and *HizbAllah* begin their escalation in the Middle East.

This is a global war, and Tehran and Pyongyang have rehearsed it for many years. Moreover, Iran's conventional warfare capability, with cruise missiles and very, very quiet *Kilo*-class submarines operating in the Arabian Sea, pose a danger to the three US Carrier Battle groups there. If this war does erupt, do not expect the US to have the same low losses of human life which we have seen in the Iraq War.

The question now may not, in fact, be whether the US should attack Iran militarily, but whether Iran will give it no choice but to respond militarily to an attack by Iranian forces against Israeli or US targets.

The reality is that the US should already have been following the "third path" toward victory over the clerics, which would immediately stabilize the region. The third path, the option which I have always advocated, is a comprehensive psychological strategy which would empower the Iranian people to seize the situation. The clerics know how vulnerable they are to their own people, which is why they have always taken the offensive, to create a sense of siege within Iran, and to keep the US at bay.

When the Reagan White House wanted to end the Cold War, the National Security Council mounted an intense psyops (Psychological operation) campaign which derailed Soviet decision making, and paralyzed it, often sending it off on false trails. It was the Reagan campaign which, without a shot being fired, caused the Soviet Union to collapse. And yet no such campaign has, in any realistic sense, been mounted against Iran. We should ask why not?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that, historically, the State Department has been charged with seeking diplomatic solutions, opening legitimate lines of communications with foreign powers. Hence, they favor the Baker Plan. The Defense Department is charged with finding military solutions, and they plan accordingly. But, outside of the White House, no-one is charged with thinking outside the box, and with developing truly strategic maneuver, which is what psychological strategy entails.

It is not too late to begin this process. But what is critical is that we cannot allow the clerics to dictate the rules of engagement, or the field of battle. The first rule of strategy, whether you read Clausewitz or Sun-tsu, is that you must command the field, and determine the time and method of battle. And all agree that to win without firing a shot is the acme of strategic skill.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was quoted as saying in 1951 that there was no region in the world which was geopolitically more important than the Middle East. It was true in 1951 and is even more truly profound today. The outcome of the war on terrorism and the efforts at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — particularly

nuclear weapons — are key elements which will determine the success or failure of the US policy in the Middle East. The future security of the region is dependent on its successful outcome, and the stability of the region and international order is crucial to the flow of energy which is vital not only for the US but for Europe and Japan as well.

The region was dominated by Great Britain for nearly three centuries, and challenged constantly by Russia and later the Soviet Union. The core of British policy was to keep other foreign powers as well as local forces from changing the balance of power or sharing in the domination. This lasted until World War II when the US gradually and steadily replaced Great Britain as the dominant force in the Middle East, and continued essentially the same policy, with Great Britain as a complementary player.

Let's face it: no-one was prepared for Germany to rise so quickly from the ashes of World War I to challenge the entire world in 1939. And no-one in the West has been prepared to understand that Iran — forgotten for centuries — could rise so quickly to provide a challenge to the US and the West. We forget, too, that Iran has a number of key allies on the Eurasian landmass, helping the clerics in varying degrees for their own purposes. Iran has some very sophisticated weaponry from Russia and North Korea, including nuclear weapons. It has some support from China. These countries cannot, for their own geopolitical reasons, ignore Iran.

Thus the Great Game for the region has begun again. It is not just about Shi'ism and mainstream Sunni Islam. It is very much about geopolitics, about groups seeking to grasp or retain power, and about how people respond to threats and other stimuli. We have to be careful that the West is not going to let itself be managed by the Iranian clerics. For the sake of the Iranian people and the entire Western world, we need to start understanding, and controlling, the strategic agenda.

The Azadegan Foundation — my organization — is in a unique position to provide a sound ground for the concerted and unified psycho-political effort which is necessary for the emergence of leadership needed to transform Iran. It is respected and accepted by many. It has the vision, background, experience, knowledge, with untainted record and also contacts — both inside and outside Iran — which will enable it to play a decisive role.

From Washington we ask for clear-cut, unequivocal, and vocal support for the Iranian people. The Iranian people must know that the US Government and the American people stand with them in their quest for freedom. When the President of the United States — the leader of the Free World — speaks to the Iranian people, and demands they be treated with respect and dignity; when he demands that they be granted the freedom that only God can give and the false "men of God" have stolen: then the Iranians know that when they stand for their freedom, they will not stand alone. America and the free world must shout loud and clear. I am certain that Iranians will rise, since they vowed to fulfill the task of cleansing Iran from the pestilence, and saving the land of Cyrus the Great — and the world — from the new Dark Ages.

If we do not take this path, then a major war will disrupt the Middle East very soon, and we will all lose what we hold dear: the Iranian people will lose their lives, their land and their history; the West will lose its energy and the vital trade links with all the promise they hold for the future; and the world will see the final great end to the 3,000 years of cultural partnership between Persian culture and Western civilization.

And, as with any great nuclear outcome, all that will survive will be the cockroaches.

Essential Reading

A Timely, New Study on the Social Attitudes of Australians

Advance Australia...Where?: How We've Changed, Why We've Changed and What Will Happen Next. By Hugh Mackay. Sydney, Australia, 2007: Haachette Australia. ISBN-978-0-7736-2219-9. 356pp, indexed, Softcover.

Review. By Andrew Pickford, in Perth.* Forming an accurate view on social attitudes of a group of people is an extremely difficult proposition. Attempting to forecast changes in social attitudes is even more challenging. However, through the compilation of qualitative and quantitative data, against the backdrop of a career as a social researcher, psychologist and columnist Hugh Mackay in *Advance Australia...Where?* does a very good job of painting a picture of Australians as well as trends in societal attitudes.

For those studying the future of nations and the international system, the study of social attitudes and societal values may initially appear questionable. These matters are typically hard to define, almost impossible to measure and are nearly always subject to the bias of the researcher. Nonetheless, a well researched and methodical analysis of societal attitudes can paint a picture of the trajectory of a group, a region or even a nation. This insight, especially for those in decision making roles, is invaluable, as it can provide advance warning for subtle shifts in voting patterns, consumer habits, as well as general demographic trends.

Overall, *Advance Australia...Where?* is a very easy read, which masks the large amount of data and work which went into its production. Hugh Mackay has spent a long career in social research and has researched and written on Australian social attitudes for a number of decades. This book, in many ways, while being a stand alone study, is part of Hugh Mackay's continuing cataloguing of Australian attitudes. It has even been compared to Hugh Mackay's 1993 study, *Reinventing Australia*, which forecast a number of trends that manifested in the 1990s. While this is a useful marketing tool, it will probably not be until the beginning of the next decade that it can be determined if the forecasting is accurate.

One of the potential shifts in Australian society, which the author considers, is the end of what is referred to as the "Dreamy Period", and the prospect of a more active and engaged populace which looks beyond their immediate conditions. The Dreamy Period is seen as the time when Australians sought a break from the turbulence of the 1980s and early 1990s and looked inward to avoid perceived unsolvable, global problems and issues. Hugh Mackay describes the Dreamy Period as: turning away from the so-called "big picture"; a higher level of focus on backyards and personal homes, evidenced by the popularity of home renovations; a yearning for simplicity; greater individualism; and an idealised view of "community". The end of the Dreamy Period, if there was one, could be punctuated by a number of causes, but it would certainly signal a shift in national attitudes and hence the national direction.

Generally, writing on social attitudes is nearly always done through the prism of an unrealistic view of society and the shortcomings of political leaders, or the broader public. The fact that Hugh Mackay's job is partially dependent on accurately forecasting social trends means that his work is less prescriptive and that he has a stronger motivation for hitting the mark. This being said, Hugh Mackay does not hide his own views; but his focus is to describe and reflect, rather than prescribe. Likewise, the demographer Bernard Salt, who is a partner of the auditing firm KPMG, is able to accurately capture largely quantitative trends and communicate this to corporate clients, as well as the public, in a similar way to Hugh Mackay, through newspaper columns, interviews and published books.

Why does this matter? Subtle changes in attitudes have a way of feeding through to voting patterns, consumer habits, as well as general demographic trends. Forecasting an end to the "Dreamy Period" would imply a break in existing attitudes which could lead to a more engaged populace and change in social trends. This may flow through to the ballot box, not necessarily in changes of government, but in existing policies by incumbent governments.¹ These changes would reverberate out to the wider world and would alter how Australia acts on the international stage.²

It is perhaps too early to tell if *Advance Australia...Where?* accurately captures the mood of the nation, as some of Mackay's earlier works have done. However, for those interested in the future direction of Australia, it is a very important text. One criticism is not so much directed at the book, or its author, but

rather the lack of other public social researchers and forecasters who conduct similar work and put forward additional viewpoints on the future of the nation. This being said, *Advance Australia...Where?* is a valuable addition to almost all decisionmakers' libraries.

* Andrew Pickford is research manager at Future Directions International, Australia's strategic analysis center, the sister organization to ISSA, publisher of *Defense & Foreign Affairs*.

Footnotes:

1. Hugh Mackay does make a number of observations on the upcoming 2007 election and how this scenario may play out.
 2. In a wide ranging interview, Opposition (Australian Labor Party) leader Kevin Rudd outlined his foreign policy vision to the Foreign Affairs editor of *The Australian*, Greg Sheridan. See: Greg Sheridan: "Rudd the Rationalist", September 22, 2007, <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,22460178-5013460,00.html>.
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