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..Committee on Economics

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My name is John Gates and although I have had no tertiary education, my only service was in the RAAF 1 N S T U, RAAF Amberley Qld. My business life has been in a family business in Brisbane, however I have always had a very wide interest in politics with membership and assisting in campaigns.

I have a great interest in defence matters and have been on several committees over the years. Naval history and aviation seem to make up a good deal of leisure time.

With recent podcasts by Senator Molan and a recent article by Greg Sheridan and by others including Robert Gottlieb particularly on the proposed new build submarine project, one can only say the people of Australia and their future have been led down the road to another 1939, but far worse in this new age of what looks like another nation with notions and an ideology to expand its power. No political party can openly say we have, or, had, defence of the country, as it's priority. I am heartened that there are a few on both sides of the house are speaking up on the debacle.

The disaster has at the start, the organized and rapid death of most of our manufacturing and related industries. The shutting down of departments, staffed by service specialists in engineering, weaponry, and decision making and handing it on to foreign organizations and Defence Department Bureaucrats.

The debacle is also outside defence procurement. Australia cannot have any defence if we only have a fortnight's stock of fuels. The Government to its credit purchased fuel stocks, but they are still in the U S

A recent article in Proceedings of the USNI, July 2021 by Andrea Orłowski, As currently configured, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve [in the U.S.] can't support a war in the Pacific. Mainly as most refineries on the West Coast depend on foreign oil as the oil from the Gulf must be carried in US Flag tankers. The USA has the world's largest S P R of up to 645 million barrels and in 2018 China released data that its S P R was 276 million barrels but is uncertain. The writer says to prepare new S P R storage should be built on the West Coast

Unlike the US we do not have a national tank farm policy, we leave it to oil companies, whose interest in our situation is shown by the Head Office overseas decides to close refineries, to leave them to rust as

BP has done in Brisbane and soon in Perth. The Brisbane Refinery was the supplier of aviation fuel required by Helicopters. It is a must that Government takes the same path as the wartime ALP Government and finance sufficient state of the art Refineries as a priority, accompanied by tank farms. We certainly require a fleet of oil tankers for coastal voyages, to bring oil from the U S. A serious problem to be faced is that the MUA part of the CFMMEU cannot be allowed to crew these critical assets, history has sadly proved this and the reasonable members of the MUA have been caste adrift.

How is it feasible for a nation to defend itself when we do not manufacture the vehicles, manufacture the tyres, manufacture the lubricants, maybe the clothing, the boots, the proud headgear, as just a few. How can we have aircraft that does not have tyres and untold other items that can be manufactured here in Australia. To save so much travel to Naval Bases in the south of the continent surely it would be feasible to have as in WW2 for refuelling, ordnance, crew change and victualling at Exmouth Gulf

As many reports show the glacial pace that the mandarins work in the Department of Defence and many of the acquisitions that have been purchased and then after billion dollar cost overruns, and then unfit for NAVY, ARMY, AIR FORCE active service, articles, books, highlight this shameful lack of accountability, surely it is time to do a clean of the Augean Stable. There is certainly a cancerous attitude, if not downright lack of horse sense.

The Government's request to have a missile industry is certainly a plus, but if given to a bureaucrat, the prize, like the disaster to be of the French Submarine and maybe the BAE Frigate, is employment for many years and plenty of first class travel, with little result. Surely people who have run a major business, the likes of the late Sir Arvi Parvo, as a mentor on a project surely would be an advantage. The culture is the roadblock. The efforts by many to kill the cost benefits of new age coal fired plants is an exercise in a madness that the world has never seen. The revulsion to Nuclear Energy defies, logic and common sense, to not debate it. There are some very good and patriotic Members on both sides of the Parliament but the throw of the dice factions and power brokers for preselection's does great damage to the quality of our Parliament

I wish that both sides of our Parliament stand together in the main against any perceived threat and that there is no place for appeasement such as pre- WW2. I do appreciate the opportunity to give some input into the debate and hope for far better outcomes than we seem to muddle with at present

Sincerely JOHN  
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John A Gates

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