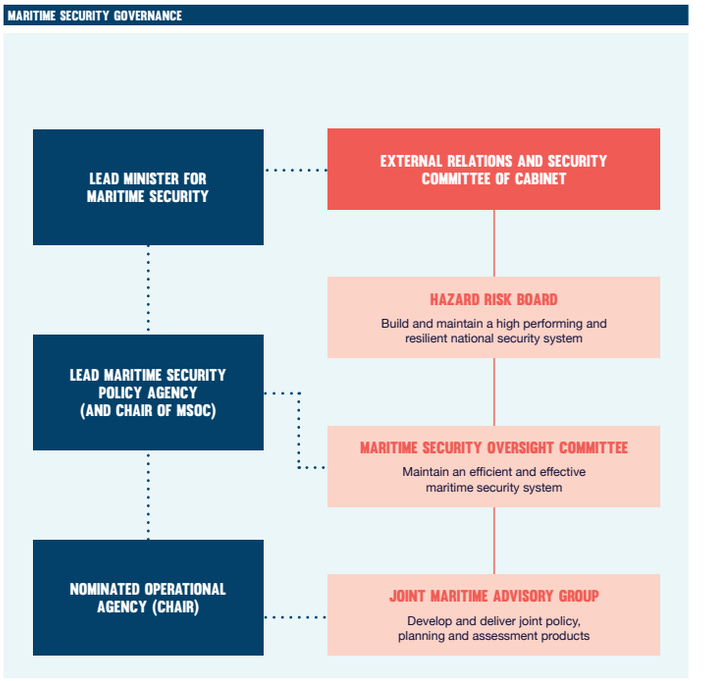
INTRODUCING THE **MARITIME SECURITY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE** AND THE NEW **MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY**

In this article, Peter Mersi backgrounds the work of the Maritime Security Oversight Committee and its new Maritime Security Strategy.



RIGHT
Maritime security governance. Image courtesy of Ministry of Transport.

Introduction

As Chair of the Maritime Oversight Security Committee (MSOC), I welcome the opportunity to respond to Simon Murdoch's timely article '*A Turning Point for New Zealand's Maritime Periphery*' which appeared in the first edition of this Journal.[1]

The present article is in two parts. In Part One, I comment on Simon Murdoch's article, outline the work of MSOC and introduce the new Maritime Security Strategy (MSS).

In Part Two, Commander Gavin Birrell, my programme lead for implementing the new MSS, will provide more detail on what the strategy aims to achieve. Commander Wayne Andrew, my lead for sector planning and performance, will then describe how we intend to measure the MSS.

This piece will be followed in the Journal by an article on how the MSS was developed. This article is written by the Strategy's lead author, Justin Allan, the manager of the Strategic Coordination Unit in the New Zealand Customs Service. While the making of a strategy might be best left to mystery, along with laws and sausages, his insight into building consensus and gaining agreement from eleven different agencies will provide valuable guidance for others seeking to develop inter-agency strategy in the New Zealand public sector.

Firstly, however, I would like to offer my congratulations to all involved in the creation of this impressive journal. This publication provides a valuable platform to promote high levels of discourse and debate to ensure a collective and informed approach toward our maritime security front line. I trust you will see my support reflected in this article.

Part One - Introduction

Maritime Security Oversight Committee

The MSOC was set up to provide a more strategic approach to maritime security and to better coordinate the eleven key maritime security agencies. It is a permanent subcommittee of the Hazard Risk Board within New Zealand's National Security System and comprises executive-level leaders (mostly deputy chief executives) and, at present, myself serving as independent chair. MSOC is accountable for delivering and overseeing an integrated national approach to New Zealand's maritime security. It is supported by a senior officials' group (the Joint Maritime Advisory Group) as can be seen in the above graphic.

MSOC's vision is that we deliver:

> *'A maritime security sector that secures New Zealand's significant maritime economic, cultural and environmental interests and is better able to deter adversaries, reduce harm to New Zealand communities and exert effective kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the sea.'*

The Maritime Security Strategy

To deliver this vision, a coordinated direction of travel and agreed priorities are required and that is what the MSS is for. The MSS adopts a

LEFT
Peter Mersi, Chief Executive, Ministry of Transport. Image courtesy of Ministry of Transport.

1 Murdoch, "A Turning Point for New Zealand's Maritime Periphery," 70-75.

MSOC MEMBERSHIP

- Ministry of Transport (MoT)
- Maritime New Zealand (MNZ)
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)
- Ministy of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
- New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS)
- New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF)
- New Zealand Police (Police)
- Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)
- Department of Conservation (DOC)

comprehensive, multi-agency approach to deliver maritime security through four pillars: Understand; Engage, Prevent; and Respond. I would argue, and I echo Simon Murdoch's thesis in doing so, that this coordinated direction of travel is now more important than any other time since the 1942 Battle of Midway, which marked the beginning of the end of maritime conflict in the Pacific theatre during World War II.

The subsequent "*pax pacifica*" that we have enjoyed since then, along with the development of a maritime rules-based order, has provided the conditions that have enabled New Zealand to flourish through trade. But, while we have enjoyed no direct conventional military threat in that period, to quote the 2018 *Strategic Defence Policy Statement*, 'across geography and domains, challenges once conceived of as future trends have become present realities'.[2]

Those present realities are multiple and immediate and have almost certainly been amplified and accelerated by the COVID-19 global shock that has brought to the fore New Zealand's dependence on the sea as both a moat and trade lifeline. Simon Murdoch recognised these challenges and suggested that the impact of these issues placed New Zealand at a turning point in the way it should consider maritime security. Within New Zealand's maritime estate, larger maritime domain and, increasingly, on our maritime periphery, these challenges are growing. They call for an adjustment in government policy, regulation and investment. The MSS is the start of that called-for policy adjustment.

The new MSS, though, is but one part of New Zealand's maritime security thinking. Sitting alongside the MSS is the *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*. This is the repository for New Zealand's thinking on military maritime security and sovereign defence. It is fair to say that Simon's thinking has informed the development of both documents.

The MSS clearly defines the New Zealand maritime domain where we exercise rights and perform kaitiakitanga to the edge of our extended continental shelf. The MSS also defines the New Zealand maritime area of interest as the area that contains our constitutional responsibilities in the South West Pacific, our treaty obligations in the Southern Ocean and the maritime approaches that bring and take 99% (by volume) of our trade-based economy. Just the simple act of having an agreed definition of these areas, which are depicted in the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) graphic, is a practical example of the value of having a strategy.

Returning to the thesis put forward by Simon, I too recognise the limits of the maritime rules-based order with much of the sea being only 'partially governed spaces'[3] (to use Simon's words), but we need to acknowledge how far we have come. In doing so, we acknowledge the efforts of New Zealand maritime security thinkers and officials whose work through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and in other fora has led the way in the development of this governance. Their efforts continue today with New Zealand participating

LEFT
MSOC agencies. Illustration courtesy of Ministry of Transport.

RIGHT
New Zealand Maritime Domain and Area of Interest. Image courtesy of NZDF/GNZ.

2 Ministry of Defence, *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, 16.

3 Murdoch, "A Turning Point for New Zealand's Maritime Periphery," 70-75.

New Zealand Maritime Domain and Area of Interest

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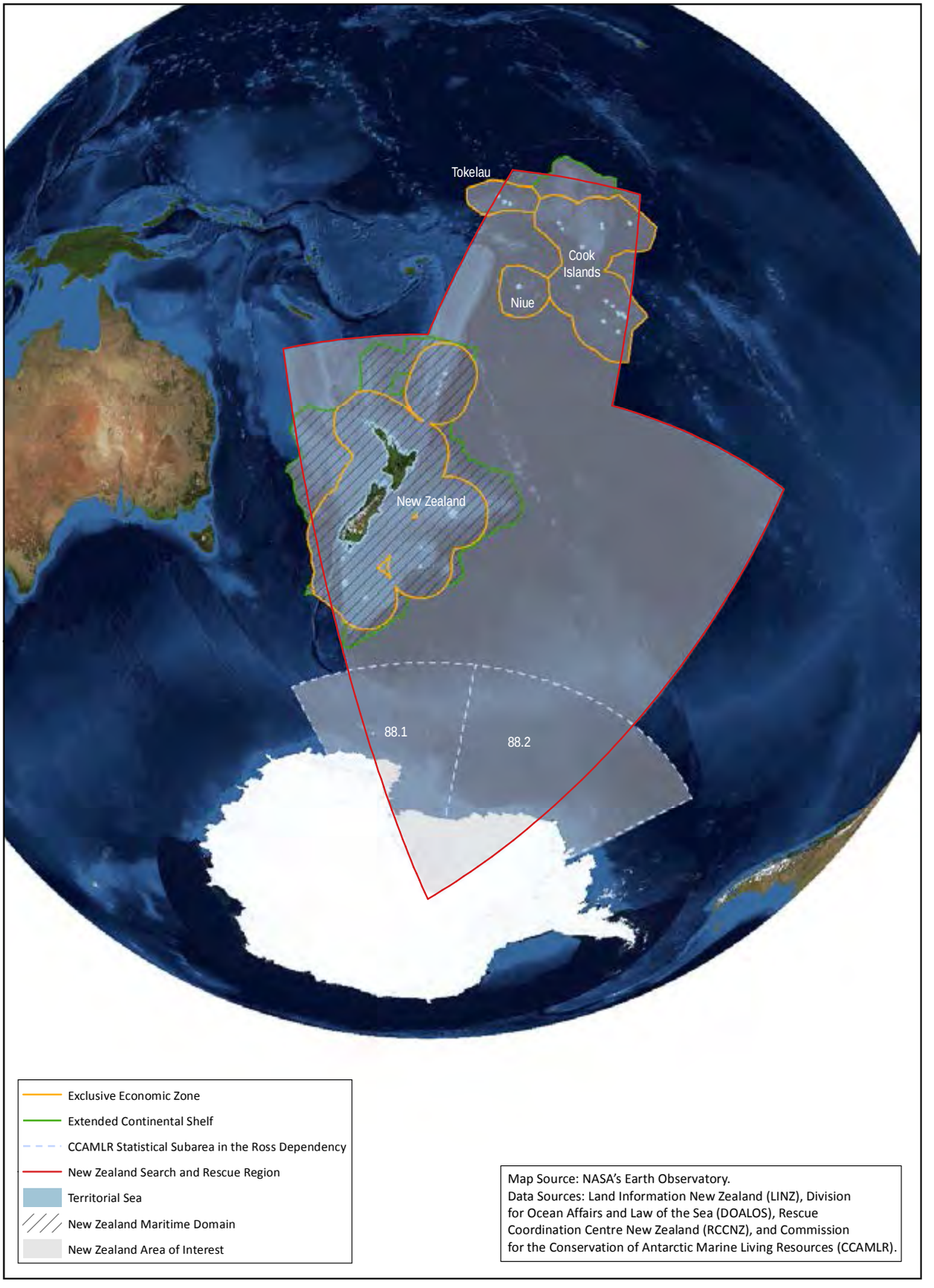


IMAGE

Maritime Security Strategy overview. Image courtesy of Ministry of Transport.

curity Strategy

nds a new vision and approach for the maritime security sector

The Approach

The maritime security sector's contribution to national security will be guided by four interlocking pillars: Understand, Engage, Prevent, Respond.

These pillars describe how an efficient and effective system goes about achieving maritime security.

The pillars are underpinned by two supporting principles: The comprehensive multi-agency approach and Kaitiakitanga.

Kaitiakitanga
New Zealand's stewardship and protection of our maritime domain for future generations.

y System

Achieved by

Implementation Priorities

Priority 1

Enable the comprehensive multi-agency response

- Assign a lead maritime security policy agency.
- Establish sufficient policy coordination, assessment, communications and campaign planning capacity and capability.
- Provide funding certainty.

Priority 2

Establish sector planning and assessment expectations

- A Maritime Security Assessment that identifies emerging threats and opportunities.
- A Campaign Plan that sets an integrated approach to the deployment of resources.

Priority 3

Coordinated investment across the sector

- Determine the approach to investing in the right mix of people, systems and tools to achieve best effect.

A layered approach to investment

People

We need people with the skills to understand the maritime environment, engage with domestic and international partners, develop and implement proactive approaches.

Systems

All elements need to work from a single point of truth (a "common operating picture").

This requires networked systems that support collaborative planning based on a shared understanding.

Tools

Investment in fit for the future surveillance and analytical capabilities.

Ensuring New Zealand continues to have suitable and sufficient maritime response capabilities.

in the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations that continue under the UNCLOS umbrella. Indeed, promotion and support of the Maritime Rules-Based Order is a key issue that MSOC tracks and supports through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), whose BBNJ negotiating efforts are a good example of New Zealand's recognition that its security interests are involved well away from its shores.

Referring again to the New Zealand government's *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*, it is important to note that it aligns with Simon's thinking on the notion of "Community, Nation and World". The associated *Defence Capability Plan 2019* included investment for the replacement of one of New Zealand's two key maritime security capabilities, namely the new maritime P8-A Poseidon patrol aircraft. That significant purchase comes on top of the government's earlier investment in the frigate systems upgrade for HMNZS *Te Kaha* and HMNZS *Te Mana*. With these upgrades complete, the two frigates will once again be ready to respond should our collective maritime security demand action on our maritime periphery or anywhere the government requires.

Part 2 - The Maritime Security Strategy and how it will be evaluated

Commanders Gavin Birrell and Wayne Andrew, RNZN

What is the Maritime Security Strategy?

The MSS is a coordinated strategy with agreed priorities that aims to secure our economic, cultural and environmental maritime interests. This agreement is important for a sector involving eleven separate agencies that, without a strategy, could very easily go in separate directions. When the sector comes together as MSOC, in a practical but simple example of the MSS in action, a hardcopy A3 copy of the MSS (see prior page) sits in front of each member to guide them as they discuss and agree on next steps for the sector.

What the Maritime Security Strategy isn't

The MSS is not a naval strategy, though. There are no fleets-in-being or quotes from Julian Corbett and Alfred Thayer Mahan. And while strategy was born out of warfare, with the word coming from the Greek word *strategos* for a general who leads an army, it is now frequently encountered in both business and government. At its root, strategy is about what one seeks to achieve, why, and with what resources. Strategies also do not stand still; they require continuous attention to context, adapting to environmental and organisational changes that may impact on the strategy. So it follows that a strategy is not the end of the line for any organisation, but the beginning.

The MSS is not a replacement for, and nor does

it compete with, the NZDF's *Maritime Doctrine*.[4] It also does not cover military maritime security and sovereign defence. These aspects are covered in the *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*. The MSS should be read in conjunction with the MSOC vision statement.

> *'A maritime security sector that secures New Zealand's significant maritime economic, cultural and environmental interests and is better able to deter adversaries,[5] reduce harm to New Zealand communities and exert effective kaitiakitanga (guardianship) of the sea.'*

The MSS starts with a vision. The very word can trigger an allergic reaction in some. If this is you, then it might be helpful to explain the need for a vision. It is accepted practice for all organisations to have a vision. This is because organisations exist for a purpose, and, to thrive, they need to know what that purpose is. So for the MSS, a vision is the starting point because it describes what the maritime security sector is trying to achieve. The vision succinctly acknowledges the significance of New Zealand's maritime interests, the breadth of their impacts (economy, culture and the environment) and the fact that these interests include the possibility of 'harm to New Zealand communities'.[6] The sector's purpose is to secure New Zealand's maritime interests by getting better at deterring those who would harm them. It does this for both present and future generations.

The inclusion of the word "adversary" has immediate military as well as civil connotations. The MSS aims to reduce 'the ability of malicious and/or negligent actors to undermine our national and maritime security'.[7] In that sense, it applies to anyone who would harm New Zealand's maritime interests, be they criminals, negligent mariners or foreign powers.

Securing our maritime interests is enabled by four pillars that interlock to support the eleven maritime agencies working together. This is because no single agency can deliver maritime security on its own, as every issue or threat has impacts beyond a single agency's remit. An example is the response to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. This is led by the Ministry for Primary Industries, but when the response encounters the use of enslaved labour, the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment also needs to be involved.

Understand is the first of the four interlocking pillars. It comes first because the best decisions are well-informed

4 Directorate of Sea Power and Warfare, *New Zealand Defence Force Maritime Doctrine*.

5 Editor's Note: The next iteration of the MSOC vision could with benefit reflect further on the question of what makes an "adversary". The MSOC is focused principally on threats of a civilian nature. These arise from criminal entities or groups ignorant of, or wishing to break, New Zealand regulations and laws. Such people are not "adversaries" in the normally accepted sense. Adversaries are state actors with military forces or "grey zone" forces under the control of a government.

6 National Maritime Coordination Centre, *Maritime Security Strategy*, 16.

7 Ibid.

ones. It focuses on knowledge of our maritime areas, particularly data on those plying their trade or pleasure afloat. To deliver this, MSOC has its own centre—the National Maritime Coordination Centre (NMCC)—that is focused on delivering an All of Government maritime domain awareness[8] capability. Their current, partial capability combines some surveillance data with information from domestic and international partners, which enables New Zealand's limited stock of maritime security assets to be directed to the right place at the right time. Importantly, understand also includes the longer-term activity of horizon scanning, which enables our assets and activities to be directed to where they will have maximum impact.

The **Engage** pillar recognises that maritime security can only be achieved through the support and co-operation of partners. Our maritime areas adjoin those of other countries; many activities in our areas start or finish outside New Zealand's waters. Working with our partners supports efforts to take appropriate action before threats can impact New Zealand.

The **Prevent** pillar comes from the adage that prevention is better than cure. The NMCC and the maritime sector's agencies attempt to target their presence or activities to prevent harm from occurring. This ranges from capacity-building efforts such as the MFAT-funded, Customs-delivered South West Pacific work with partners to deterrence by physical patrolling of harbours or marine reserves by the New Zealand Police.

The **Respond** pillar includes a range of actions up to and including the seizure of a maritime vessel involved in illegal activity or the exposure of illegal activity in international fora. A recent example of that involved New Zealand presenting information to the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) that was obtained through an NZDF overflight of illegal fishing operations in the 2019/2020 season by a Russian-owned fishing vessel, *Palmer*. Although Russia blocked the vessel being added to the CCAMLR's illegal, unreported and unregulated vessel list, the vessel did not participate in CCAMLR fisheries this season. The sector has also enforced the maritime border during the COVID-19 pandemic with NMCC positional information triggering multi-agency responses whenever vessels unlawfully bound for New Zealand were detected, such as the interception of the yacht *Anita* in October 2020.

Guiding principles

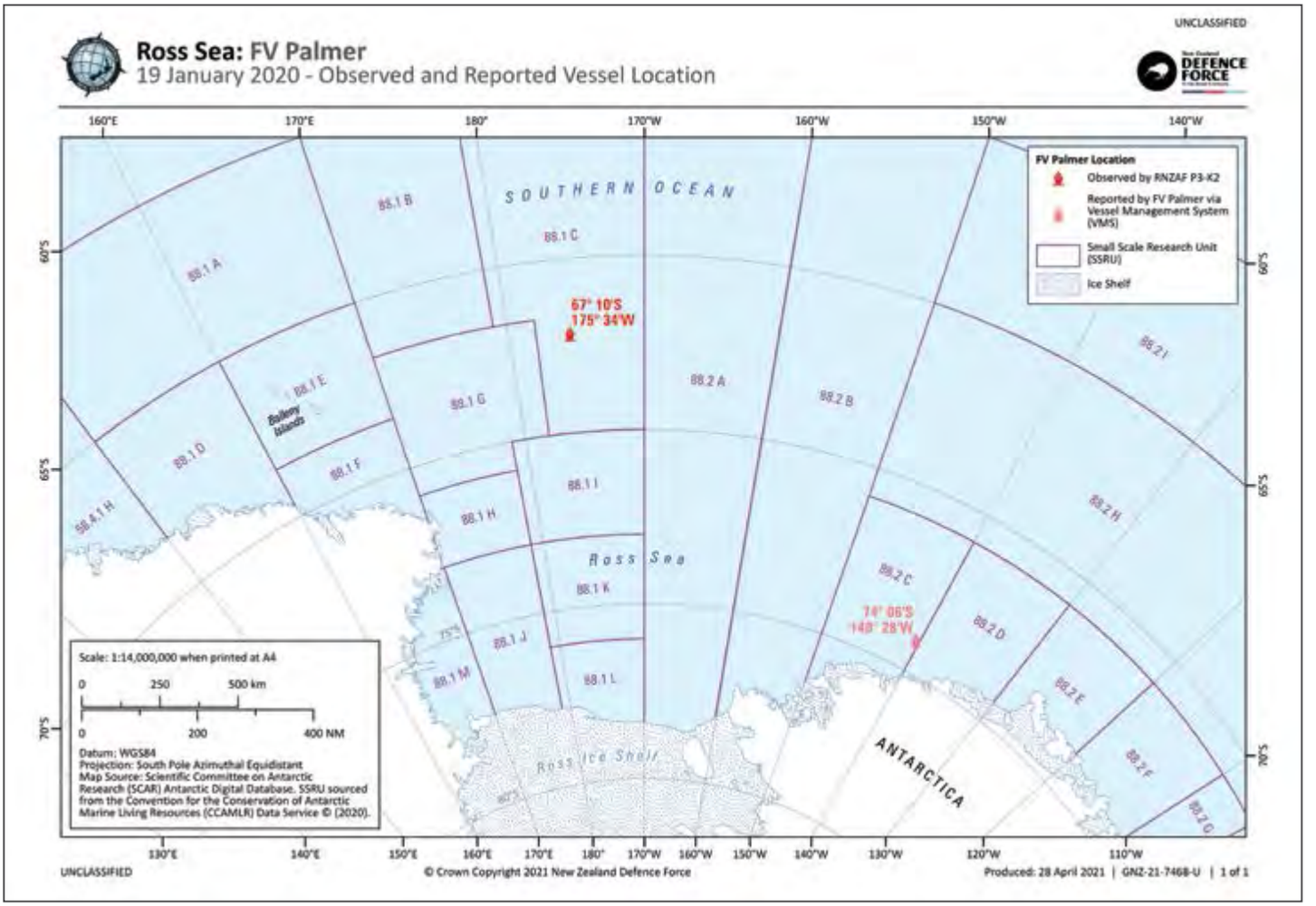
Two principles guide the actions of MSOC agencies. These are the **comprehensive multi-agency approach** and **kaitiakitanga**.

As already noted, no single agency can deliver maritime security for New Zealand working on its own, so the sector delivers maritime security through a comprehensive multi-agency approach. The best example of this approach is the funding by MSOC member agencies of the NMCC, which works to deliver shared

RIGHT ABOVE
Map indicating where *Palmer* was located. Image courtesy of NZDF.

RIGHT BELOW
Russian fishing vessel *Palmer*. Image courtesy of NZDF.

8 Maritime domain awareness is defined as the collection, analysis, assessment and dissemination of maritime domain information and intelligence.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Ross Sea: FV Palmer
19 January 2020 - Observed and Reported Vessel Location
DEFENCE FORCE
160°E
170°E
180°
170°W
160°W
150°W
140°W
60°S
65°S
70°S
SOUTHERN OCEAN
88.1 A
88.1 B
88.1 C
88.1 D
88.1 E
88.1 F
88.1 G
88.1 H
88.1 I
88.1 J
88.1 K
88.1 L
88.1 M
88.1 N
88.2 A
88.2 B
88.2 C
88.2 D
88.2 E
88.2 F
88.2 G
88.2 H
88.2 I
Balleny Islands
Ross Sea
Ross Ice Shelf
ANTARCTICA
67° 10'S
175° 34'W
74° 06'S
148° 28'W
FV Palmer Location
Observed by RNZAF P3-K2
Reported by FV Palmer via Vessel Management System (VMS)
Small Scale Research Unit (SSRU)
Ice Shelf
Scale: 1:14,000,000 when printed at A4
0 250 500 km
0 200 400 NM
Datum: WGS84
Projection: South Pole Azimuthal Equidistant
Map Source: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Antarctic Digital Database. SSRU sourced from the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Data Service © (2020).
130°E
140°E
150°E
160°E
170°E
180°
170°W
160°W
150°W
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
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YACHT *ANITA* INTERCEPT

- 02 Sep - *Anita* submits exemption application to Ministry of Health (MoH)
- 03 Sep - Departs French Polynesian waters for New Zealand
- 22 Sep - Submits its Advance Notice of Arrival to NZ Customs
- 23 Sep - MoH advises request to enter New Zealand denied
- 23 Sep - Customs advises entry not permitted. They reply they intend to proceed to New Zealand anyway
- 23 Sep - Pre-planned multi-agency operational response activated
- 23 Sep - National Maritime Coordination Centre tracks vessel and coordinates assets for response
- 24 Sep - P-3K2 maritime patrol aircraft monitoring commences
- 24 Sep - HMNZS *Otago* Offshore Patrol Vessel deploys
- 25 Sep - *Otago* locates and surveils *Anita* through the night as it approaches and transits the Contiguous Zone
- 25 Sep - On entering territorial water, Customs patrol vessel *Hawk V* takes over surveillance; escorts the vessel into Opua
- 25 Sep - Customs, Health and Immigration New Zealand officers interview the crew and they are detained by Immigration New Zealand
- 25 Sep - Customs takes control of the vessel at Opua
- 29 Sep - Court appearance. Remanded in custody awaiting deportation
- 01 Oct - Three German crew deported
- 01 Oct - Vessel deemed liable for seizure and duty under the Customs and Excise Act

understanding of our waters through maritime domain awareness and to coordinate agency activities to best effect. An example of this is the NMCC identifying the need for a police vessel to deploy to the Marlborough Sounds to *prevent* and *respond* to potential harm to our maritime interests. Depending on circumstances, a Ministry for Primary Industries fisheries officer might be embarked on a Police vessel to enforce fisheries regulations or a Department of Conservation ranger transported to an offshore sanctuary, ensuring that best possible use is made of these assets. This approach is designed to be mutually supporting and efficient. For a small nation with a very large maritime area, this is the only practical way to deliver maritime security in New Zealand.

The second guiding principle is kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Recognition of the stewardship and protection of New Zealand's maritime domain on behalf of future generations of New Zealanders underlies all single agency and MSOC decisions.

Maritime Security System

To be successful, the MSOC requires a system with the following effective enablers.

Operational coordination

Operational coordination is delivered by the NMCC, which harnesses technology to ensure the efficient and effective deployment of assets. The need to invest in that technology is well recognised, with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), on behalf of the whole sector, investigating infrastructure and capabilities investment. This activity by one agency for the whole sector is a good example of MSOC leveraging the unique strengths of its members for the benefit of all.

This year, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) commenced its role as the policy coordinator for the maritime sector. MOT is taking over the servicing of MSOC's needs while developing a number of other policies that support the MSS. MOT is also leading the development of a communications and engagement plan, which builds on existing agency relationships.

The annual maritime security assessment and five-year forecast

As outlined earlier, a strategy is normally only the start of efforts to improve because the world that a strategy is based on continually changes. Information on those changes comes through the *Understand* pillar with an annual maritime security assessment providing a five-year forecast for maritime trends, and a measurement regime that provides MSOC with information on where New Zealand's maritime interventions give best value for money and most effect.

Measurement and evaluation

To help determine what aspects of the MSS are working and what may need adjusting, the MSOC is also developing a measurement and evaluation regime.

How many of you have used or heard the phrase "I intend to leave this position/place/organisation in a better state than when I found it"? A great philosophy, but the challenge is how to prove that you have actually delivered what you intended.

In the commercial sector, the end state is driven by increased profits and/or

LEFT
The yacht *Anita* under escort by Customs vessel *Hawk V* as it approaches Opua on 25 September 2020. Image courtesy of NZ Herald/ The Northern Advocate.


POLICE

LEFT ABOVE
NZDF operating environment in the Southern Ocean. Image courtesy of NZDF.

increasing service levels, but for the majority of the public sector and, in particular, the security sector, delivery levels against the desired effect are more difficult to measure. The security sector is tasked with delivering an effect rather than a product, and, as such, the result is much more subjective and open to interpretation.

The intention of the MSS is to deliver the best possible outcome now and into the future. But the question remains: how do you measure progress toward achieving outcomes across a sector that comprises eleven agencies, all with a vested interest in the strategy but all funded separately to achieve individual agency results?

Winston Churchill is reputed to have remarked when being asked to comment on an especially elegant piece of wartime strategy, 'Yes, it is certainly beautiful. But no matter how beautiful, we should occasionally look at its results'.

How do you measure results in a security environment?

Security *performance* is intrinsically difficult to quantify. We can measure how many arrests have been made, ships interdicted and fishery catches inspected, but all of these are specific outputs rather than the outcome itself in terms of improved maritime security.

Moreover, not only are we trying to measure the success of the MSS, we are also trying to align sector strategy with the requirements of the National Security System and the way that risks are managed on behalf of all New Zealanders. To do this, we rely on using information provided by the eleven agencies who hold individual responsibilities in the maritime domain, all with differing governance arrangements and with their own competing information and resource demands.

Kaplan and Norton[9] discuss how a balanced scorecard can be used by government agencies to ensure alignment between customer's expectations, the strategy to deliver to those expectations, and organisational performance against the strategy. In measuring the maritime security sector's performance against the MSS, a balanced scorecard has merit, but, before this can be implemented, the system needs to be resourced appropriately and display the behaviours that support the rationale for its creation. In short, 'a maritime security sector that contributes to the advancement of New Zealand's national security through a common approach, coordinated investment decisions and effective resource prioritisation'.[10] To make sure that we transition at a rate that matches system maturity, and to ensure that progress is being monitored and made, an interim performance management system is being implemented.

How are we measuring progress?

The most significant challenge facing the maritime security sector is sustainable resourcing of the overarching policy and performance management function for the sector. While this resource is currently being provided through an extended club funding model and the provision of a "free" resource by the NZDF, this is only a short term fix.

LEFT BELOW
Rescue exercise off Wellington. Image courtesy of New Zealand Search and Rescue.

9 Kaplan, Robert, *The Strategy-Focused Organization*.
10 National Maritime Coordination Centre, *Maritime Security Strategy*, 3.

As an interim step until the sustainable resourcing issue is resolved, the MSOC has developed a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) as a first step toward measuring progress. These KPIs use existing information sources and reporting tools. They will be updated as progress is made and the system matures, but for the moment the KPIs are tactical/operational and quantitative in nature, measuring indicators such as numbers of patrols, number of interdictions made and so on.

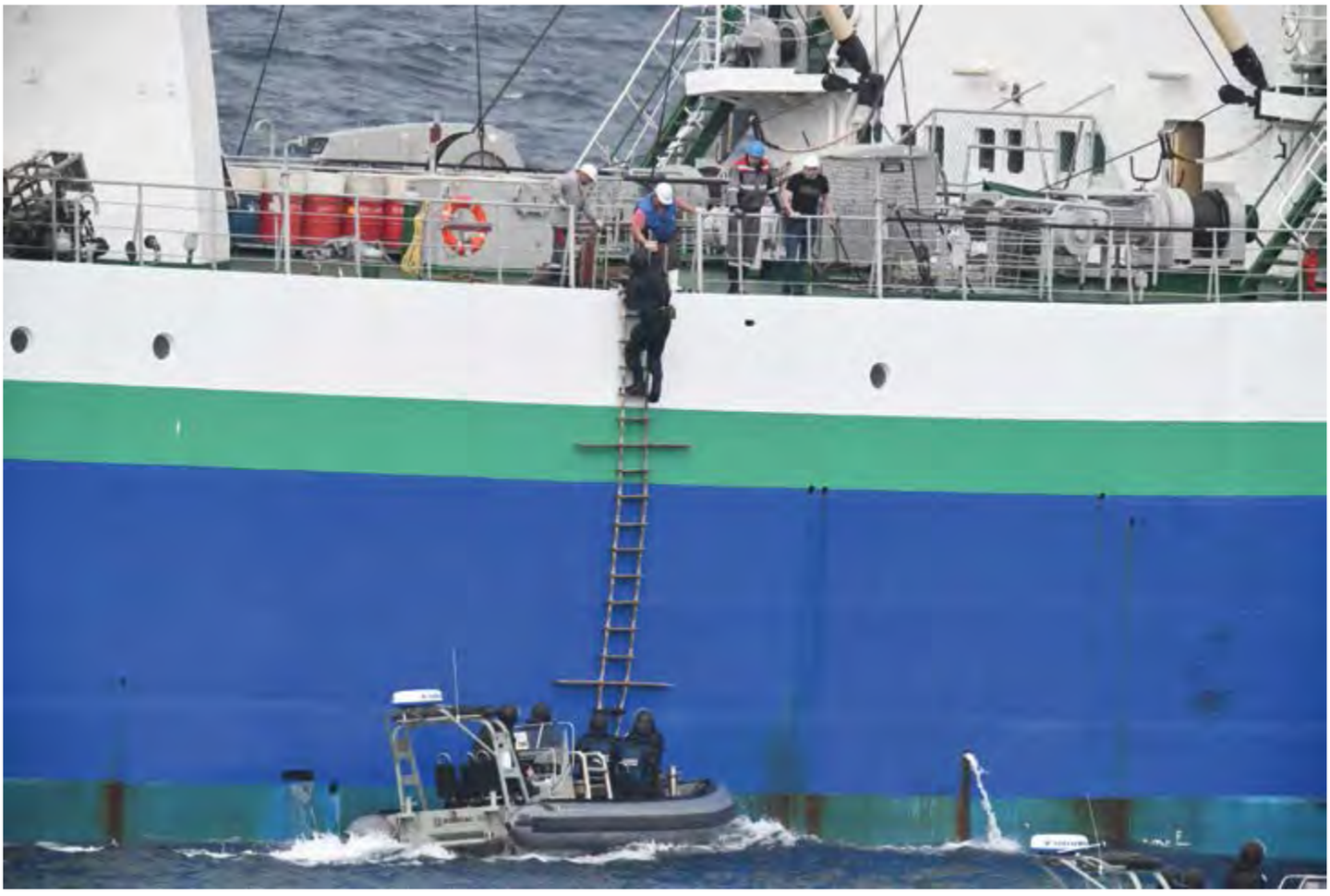
Summary

There has been a lot of very good work done within the eleven agencies that hold responsibilities for risks and threats as they evolve within the maritime domain. The introduction of the MSS has enhanced the effectiveness of the system as a whole. It is providing the direction and guidance that is needed to align investment decisions, response options and information sharing across the sector.

But it would be fair to say that the performance evaluation system is still evolving. There remains work to be done. Early performance measures are in place but these will take time to mature. Real progress can only be made when matching systems are in place in the overarching national security and risk management system.

A final thought—it may strike you that there are two competing adages worth thinking about when discussing system-wide measurement and evaluation. The first is the old saying, "what can be measured can be managed", which is no doubt very true. As a counterpoint to this, I have also been reminded of a saying attributed to William Bruce Cameron, 'Not everything that counts can be counted. And not everything that can be counted counts'.[11] Also very true, and worth keeping in mind for the sake of our sanity.

11 I owe this quotation to Matt Cavanaugh, the author of a periodic blog for practicing strategists called *Strategy Notes*. See mlcavanaugh@substack.com.



PETER MERSI

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Peter Mersi was appointed Secretary for Transport and Chief Executive of the Ministry of Transport in July 2016.

Prior to this, Peter was the Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand (2012-2016) and spent six months as the Acting Secretary and Chief Executive of the Department of Internal Affairs.

Peter has held senior leadership roles in Inland Revenue and the Treasury where he spent 14 years, much of which focused on social policy and the public management system. He has also worked for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Labour, the former Department of Trade and Industry, and the Bank of New Zealand. Peter has chaired the Maritime Security Oversight Committee since becoming Secretary for Transport.

Peter has an economics degree from Victoria University of Wellington.

COMMANDER GAVIN BIRRELL, RNZN

Commander Gavin Birrell is on secondment to the Ministry of Transport as the lead for implementing New Zealand's Maritime Security Strategy.

He is a naval warfare officer with wide-ranging operational experience in all oceans and most seas ranging from navigating mine hunters to leading information warfare efforts for a Carrier Strike Group. After seventeen years in the Royal Navy, he immigrated to New Zealand. His time in the Royal New Zealand Navy has included specialist roles such as commanding a joint information warfare-related unit and general roles such as the Fleet Warfare Officer and seconding to the Ministry of Defence as the Capability Manager for the Frigate Systems Upgrade for HMNZS *Te Kaha*. The highlight of his time in New Zealand has been the opportunity to deploy on exercises and operations six times including the 2015 Indian Ocean deployment in HMNZS *Te Kaha* as the Intelligence Officer for its $235M heroin bust.

Gavin has an MA (Hons) in Intelligence and International Relations and a BSc (Hons) in Political Science and International Relations.

COMMANDER WAYNE ANDREW, RNZN

Commander Wayne Andrew is a Principal Warfare Officer (PWO) in the Above Water Warfare specialisation, graduating from the Royal Australian Navy PWO Course in 2002 with the St Barbara's Award for Gunnery. He is a graduate of the 2012 New Zealand Defence Force Command and Staff College Advanced Course and has completed a Master of International Security from Massey University and a Graduate Diploma in Information Management from the University of New South Wales.

Wayne has extensive sea experience as a watchkeeper, navigator, warfare officer and command positions deploying on multiple exercises in the Indo-Pacific region. His operational deployments include HMNZS *Canterbury* during the Timor-Leste independence crisis and in HMNZS *Te Mana* during the Bougainville crisis. He served as the Fleet Warfare Officer during the introduction into service period for the Protector Fleet.

He has had a broad range of postings ashore in personnel management, capability development, operations training, operational planning, strategic international engagement, and logistics strategy roles. His most recent postings were as the Principal Advisor Logistics Strategy and Chief of Staff for Defence Logistics Command. Wayne is currently taking up a secondment opportunity with the Ministry of Transport as part of the Maritime Security System Implementation Team.

LEFT
MPI Fisheries Officer boarding a ship to inspect the catch. Image courtesy of NZDF.

MAKING A SAUSAGE:
REFLECTIONS ON DEVELOPING A MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY

In this article, **Justin Allan**, Manager Strategic Coordination Unit, New Zealand Customs Service, discusses how he approached the development of the Maritime Security Strategy including problems encountered and lessons learned.

Introduction

In successfully developing and delivering the Maritime Security Strategy (MSS), I learned some valuable lessons on the way. While it's a bit like revealing how the sausage is made, reflecting on a few of these lessons and the process I took to develop the MSS is, I hope, useful to those who hope to develop future strategic documents.

My journey to develop New Zealand's first national MSS did not start auspiciously. I remember discussing the role with a colleague who had worked on an earlier attempt at developing such a strategy. My colleague expressed his opinion that anyone taking on this role ought to have their head examined. After an uncomfortable silence, he realised that I was that person! His final word on this was 'well I hope you like a challenge'. Over two years later and numerous meetings, workshops, consultations and seemingly endless iterations of A3 overviews, I can confidently say that my colleague was prophetic in his view.

I have been asked to reflect on the process of developing a government strategy by setting out some of the challenges and reflecting on some of the things that helped me guide the process to a successful conclusion. To do this, I will provide a brief overview of the development timeline and then focus on some key considerations that can help a budding strategist navigate a way through the interagency system.

In doing this, I want to stress that my experience was shaped by a unique set of circumstances. Some of my observations will be of value, but I am not attempting to provide precise guidance, as contexts always differ.

Developing the strategy

The overall delivery of the MSS was informed by arguably the most mature "national strategy" process followed in New Zealand—the *Defence White Paper 2016*. Roughly speaking, this broke development of the MSS into key chunks:

- Commissioning (in particular, confirming scope)
- Assessment of the current and projected environment
- Defining the vision (ends)
- Outlining an operational approach (ways)
- Articulating how the approach would be delivered and what was needed (means)

Recognising the value of learning from the Defence experience, I was hosted within the Ministry of Defence team, tasked with writing the *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018*. This was a great move as it provided me with a support network of colleagues tackling similar challenges. That said, the challenges I faced differed in a number of ways, for example:

- The Defence strategic planning process had a legislative basis (mine did not).

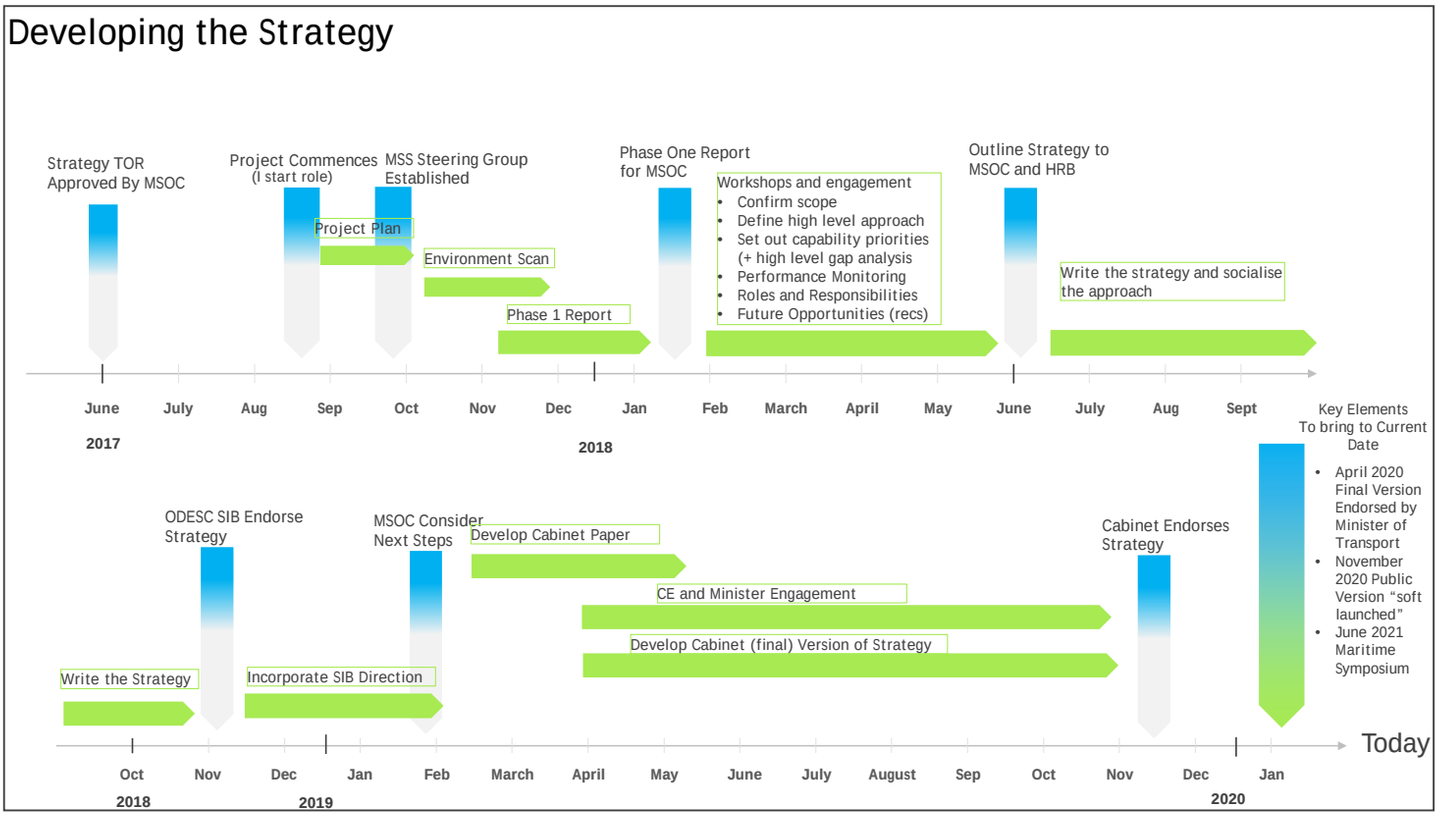
LEFT
Justin Allan.
Image courtesy of Justin Allan.

- The Defence work had clear antecedents, whereas, New Zealand had never had a national MSS.
- The Defence work had a clear ministerial lead; there was no minister responsible for maritime security.
- I was working on behalf of 11 agencies and reporting to the Secretary of Transport in his role as chair of the interagency governing body (the Maritime Security Oversight Committee).

In practise, I had to work out my own unique process and approval pathway through the interagency system and Executive Government. There is no step-by-step manual for this. And, given the complex and iterative nature of this process, it is arguable whether there could be. Despite this, I have attempted to map out the broad steps that were followed in the diagram below.

One thing on this diagram that will probably stand out to readers is the amount of time it took to take the MSS from developing the terms of reference (TOR) in June of 2017 through to public release at the end of 2020. This may seem like an inordinate amount of time, but as many of you with government experience will know, the time spent is not actually that excessive when compared with the time needed for legislative processes or any complex piece of interagency work. In addition, most of the time spent was not on *writing* the MSS, but, instead working through Cabinet processes and the interagency system. The long periods of time associated with the Cabinet process were largely driven by the challenge of getting this onto the agenda of very busy ministers, which in turn meant getting a number of chief executives (CEs) on board. All of this takes time, and these engagements required investment in supporting documents (diagrams and the ubiquitous tablemat A3s, for example, used to illustrate the MSS as it was developed).

While the above timeline does indicate a largely linear progression, the reality was that all elements were being reviewed, challenged and considered right up until the draft strategy was endorsed by Cabinet. This is just the reality of working on complex policy. Neat hierarchies flowing from strategic objective through to tactical execution only really exist in diagrams or PowerPoint slides. In practise, each level interacts and informs the other and you, as the writer, will find yourself juggling ends, ways and means as you struggle to balance this equation and work



BELOW Strategy development and delivery timeline. In the figure, the abbreviations are as follows: HRB=Hazard Risk Board; ODESC=Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination; and SIB=Security and Intelligence Board. Image courtesy of Justin Allan.

the necessary compromises across an array of key stakeholders.

Key considerations when developing a government strategy

Working through the development of a strategy successfully requires a series of ingredients that include:

- Nailing the why
- Executive level guidance and support
- Project discipline
- Formal and informal engagement
- Tackling criticism
- Pragmatism
- Getting on with it
- Selling it

Nailing the why

The official "why" of the MSS has been outlined in Peter Mersi's introductory article in this Journal. In summary, senior maritime security officials wanted a strategy to provide a shared narrative for maritime security which would, in turn, enable a more cohesive approach to the conduct of maritime security and the direction of future investment. This formulation needed to be developed further by ensuring that the "why" continued to be compelling from the perspective of key stakeholders. This is important as it will vary across agencies' CEs, officials and politicians. For a strategy to make its way through our system with the necessary support, a compelling "why" must be provided that can appeal to a range of interests.

An early interaction I had with a senior CE underscored the critical importance of considering the "why" questions in relation to various stakeholders. This CE bluntly put forward the challenge that the MSS was 'just something cooked up by officials as they had run out of ideas for moving forward'. While we managed to convince this CE otherwise, there was a note of truth in this, as the MSS for many did reflect a hope that it would somehow resolve interagency frustrations with a lack of cohesiveness in the New Zealand maritime security system.

For many officials, the MSS was seen as a way through a seeming inability to enhance investment in the maritime security sector. This perspective was largely focused on capability gaps and, in the case of maritime security in particular, a desire to enhance the ability of agencies to develop and share a common understanding of the maritime operational picture. For other officials, especially those engaged in their own capability projects, the MSS was viewed as something that could support their work.

Busy officials tend to view strategies in quite a narrow and utilitarian way. Their interest is likely to be less about articulating how they will collectively go about their business and more about marshalling an argument for more resources. This connection is widespread and stubborn, to the point that a strategy that does not arrive with investment earmarked is often pre-emptively dismissed as "vaporware". While it is true that the sign of a bad strategy is ends that fail to have a realistic connection to available means, you can still write a good strategy that does not solely exist to grow resources to meet the endstate that it articulates.

Politicians again will take a different frame. Their focus will centre on how the strategy supports their current policy priorities. This, in turn, will be informed by the stark reality that politicians and "big G" government have limited "bandwidth" and are often dealing with a range of more pressing policy issues. For a multi-agency sector strategy, this can set a relatively high bar, as the main thing that limits a government minister is time and attention. They can be convinced of the merits but still find it really hard to allocate the necessary time and focus. This is especially the case when the interests are cross-cutting and not focused on their core portfolio responsibilities.

The MSS, therefore, needed to be shaped and pitched to account for a range of interests. As the MSS developed, it was indeed able to (in the main) meet the objectives of all key stakeholders while also not falling into the trap of trying to please *everybody*. This is reflected in the various strands that came together in the final product.

Executive level guidance

Having effective executive level support and guidance was a critical contributor in navigating the strategy through the interagency process. One of the first things established was a strategy steering group that included senior leaders from New Zealand Customs, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry of Defence, the National Maritime Coordination Centre (the Director), and the Ministry for Primary Industries. This group was chaired by the Executive Sponsor, the Secretary of Transport (Peter Mersi).

The strategy steering group was critical to my ability to make progress for a number of reasons. The regular meetings with this group and reports

back kept me honest and drove progress on the project. The meetings also kept me in close contact with Peter Mersi, as my Executive Sponsor, and other influential officials. This ensured that what I was doing continued to meet their expectations and, importantly, maintained their active support throughout. The members of this group also provided me with the principal means for resolving conflict with influential stakeholders. This greatly eased the burdens on me as they were able to take on a number of tricky conversations. Finally, the forum was kept relatively informal, which allowed for robust testing of concepts and approaches at early stages.

Project discipline

When writing a strategy document, you have to find the right balance between linear, less creative processes and more free-form creative approaches. Planning, and in particular project planning, is a necessary chore. In fact, planning at the start created the basis for creativity. Some framing was needed to allow each chunk of the problem set to be focused on and worked through. Interestingly, the project plan, once developed, was largely not referred to further. That said, the exercise of developing this document was crucial as it allowed me to think through how the project would unfold and also gave me an opportunity to test my approach with others. As General Eisenhower has been quoted as saying, 'plans are useless, planning is indispensable'.

Formal versus informal development processes

Developing a national strategy comes laden with expectations that it will weave its way through formal engagements, consultations and workshops. Used effectively, these expectations can greatly assist the development process by providing a clear series of development checkpoints, engaging the broad array of stakeholders and building confidence in the work's progress.

However, care has to be taken not to overburden the system through too many workshops and unrealistic expectations around what can be achieved. The New Zealand inter-agency environment is busy. Bandwidth is at a premium and it is very easy to exceed its capacity, either through expecting attendees to do too much or by running too many workshops. I made both mistakes! The best way to use busy people is to get them to react to more fully formed ideas. Expecting them to progress and engage from a "blank piece of paper" is not realistic.

Informal development is crucial and works best in conjunction with more formal workshops. This is where you can go from a blank piece of paper through to a more fully formed idea, suitable for more formal set pieces. The three core elements (the four pillars, maritime security system, and

LEFT
Effective use of images and illustrations is key to selling the strategy and supporting important themes. This image underscores the core concept of 'people, systems and tools'. Ministry for Primary Industries and Fiji Fisheries working together onboard an RNZN patrol vessel in the South Pacific. Image courtesy of Ministry for Primary Industries.

investment priorities) that form the heart of the strategy were largely developed through informal engagement with interagency partners. These were done huddled around white boards in breakout rooms, on scrap paper over a coffee or in a car on the way back from the Wairarapa. It is through these less formal engagements that our interagency environment finds its true strength in its ability to unlock collaboration.

The bottom line is, if you want a fully formed idea tested and communicated, then more formal engagements are the way to go. However, if you want to collaborate and creatively tackle a problem, then informal engagement can be more productive.

Tackling criticism

No plan, strategy or policy worth the paper it's written on ever got to the finish line without taking on-board criticism. I told myself from the start if I was not getting criticised, then I probably was not pushing hard enough. However, I did learn there was a big difference between constructive and non-constructive criticism (with the former to be welcomed and the latter to be ignored).

Constructive criticism can sting. While it will often require you to eat crow, it is critical to developing a robust product and has to be welcomed. At times, you may need to be deliberately provocative in papers or at meetings to try and draw this out, so that criticism can be tackled head-on (a tactic akin to deliberately trying to provoke enemy fire just so you know where it is coming from). It is possible to skate along and let the veneer of politeness and professional courtesy, prevalent in the interagency environment, shield you from this. But this approach will come back and bite you. Unaddressed (legitimate) criticism will not go away; if ignored, it will come back and result in loss of support at later stages. Tackle this head-on, draw the criticism out (informally is always best, but sometimes this will have to be done through a set piece in a meeting) and be prepared to modify your approach. This will strengthen both the product you are working on *and*, if done well, create a new ally with a vested interest in supporting something that is now only back on track because of *their* intervention.

There is a big caveat here though and that is to not be distracted by the other kind of criticism that comes from a shallow or unprepared approach. Often this type of criticism can be easily identified (it generally looks like a comment that is based on reading the headline while ignoring the content of the article) but sometimes can be harder to avoid, especially if it comes from influential stakeholders. This is why you have established a steering group and marshalled a set of key senior allies. At the point that it is clear that the criticism is not really about improving the product, agenda-driven or just flat out wrong, you (as the author) can't waste any more intellectual or emotional energy on it. The role of an effective executive sponsor kicks in and will engage (generally behind the scenes), and you can carry on, politely and firmly ignoring the non-constructive criticism.

You will not please everybody, and you have to make choices about who you ensure is kept on board throughout. This is a key part of the initial scoping exercise; mapping out your stakeholders and targeting your efforts on a carefully chosen range of high influence individuals (key ministers, CEs, influencers etc.) is critical. Without this touchstone, I would have found it next to impossible to focus my engagement and develop the core support needed to shepherd the strategy through the interagency process.

Pragmatism

Writing a strategy (or any significant policy) is a messy process. Mistakes will be made. In fact, you should *expect* mistakes to be made if you are trying something new or trying to resolve a difficult problem. The thing you should be worried about is not identifying when you have made a mistake and course-correcting early. One mistake that held up development of the MSS was an adherence to framing it as a "civil" MSS. This was influenced by the framing used in Australia and other jurisdictions and seemed to offer a way of focusing attention on the "constabulary" elements that needed attention. It also avoided, or so it seemed, getting dragged into debates that the commissioning body did not feel able to engage in. For example, the future surface combatant debate, strategic diplomacy and broader questions around military capability. However, this formulation is especially problematic in the New Zealand context as most of the "civil" effort from a platform perspective comes from "military" assets. Framing the discussion around "civil" maritime security appeared to downplay this reality.

To respond to these criticisms, I produced complex diagrams, increasingly tortured definitions and attempted various avenues to seek compromise. None of this managed to crack the issue until I landed on the most straight forward remedy: simply remove

the "civil" reference and flag that if you wanted to get into the war-fighting stuff, then you needed to read Defence policy. This essentially pragmatic approach, which gave up trying to create neat definitions between defence spheres and the civil realm and just accepted the messiness that might result, ended the distracting debate. The main mistake here was the length of time it took me to correct the initial error and the time wasted trying to resolve what turned out to be a debate mainly of academic interest.

A final point about pragmatism: the cliché "don't make the best the enemy of the good enough" is something that every budding national strategy or complex policy author should keep at the top of their mind. Government strategies have to exist in the real world, and the real world is a messy, complex and confusing place. Attempting to land on perfection, while still something to be aimed at, cannot come at the expense of making progress, as the pursuit of the perfect will come at the expense of the one resource that the current strategic environment has made extremely scarce: time.

Just write it

In the end, I found that I had fallen victim to the tendency of spending too much time on analysis rather than just writing the strategy! It took a frank conversation with a senior colleague who said that I had nothing more to find out and just needed to put my thoughts down and stop worrying about "being 100% correct". While it was a challenging conversation, it was also an empowering one. I was given full support to just "say what I thought". Over a period of a few weeks at the end of 2018 (less than a year into the project), all of the elements came together as a first draft, based on a one-page overview that had been approved. This draft was then presented to the Officials' Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination (ODESC), and, after a bit of a grilling (akin to a shortened and sharper thesis review panel), the draft was endorsed. From this point, November 2018, the MSS remained essentially unchanged as it worked its way through the Cabinet process until eventually the final version was approved at the end of 2020, much delayed due to the pandemic.

The period of actually writing was a very productive and short span of time (2–3 weeks). The period of productivity sat at the end of a much longer period that, to the casual observer, did not have a lot to show for all of the workshops, discussions and meetings. However, while at the time I was painfully aware of the lack of progress, wheel spinning and definitional problems, looking back I can see that all of this was a necessary precursor to the burst of highly productive work that resulted in the successful delivery of the strategy to ODESC and ultimately Cabinet. I needed the final push to "get on with it", but the long period of musing, consultations and discussions was also a crucial enabler to being able to put a set of coherent thoughts to paper.

The strategy can't speak for itself

This might seem like a really obvious point, but it must be stressed: writing good policy and/or strategy is just not enough. As the earlier timeline highlighted, the actual writing and development took up much less time than progressing through officials' committees and then ministers.

Communicating in an attractive, concise and professional way is an absolute imperative. A core underpinning, of course, is to have a document of high quality that can withstand scrutiny. But people are not going to be satisfied with a wall of text. So, my final point is to stress that investment in what some people may dismiss as "pretty pictures" is actually a critical and core part of gaining support and confidence from CEs and ministers. Being able to describe the strategy on a single page is not only a great way of communicating, it also reflects the maturity of the longer document and the soundness of its logic. A good A3 generally reflects a good underlying product.

I took care in selecting images for the MSS to support the key themes (for example, the focus on interagency efforts and people-centric approaches) and ensuring that the essence of the MSS could be communicated in five minutes and supported by a one page overview. Using catchy language to articulate core concepts, for example 'people, systems and tools', was especially effective and has left a lasting legacy in how the conversation around maritime security is shaped.

Ensuring that the strategy is visually appealing, easy to digest and supported by good images is a critical ingredient that needs to be planned for from its inception and should not be regarded as a discretionary element.

Final reflections

It is crucial that you work out as early as possible what kind of strategy you are writing. This can only be done by determining exactly what your key stakeholders need to achieve. The strategy I had to write was one that was internally focused on a sector that needed a common narrative and a better sense of itself. It was not so much focused on getting out there and shaping an operating environment, rather, it had to focus on setting the conditions for effective interagency engagement to occur. Other strategies or, indeed, the next version of the MSS, will necessarily have a different focus.

Strategy writing in New Zealand has no set model or template to follow. Nor should it, as each strategy will need to be shaped to fit the unique circumstances and the particular opportunities and threats that present themselves. This can be viewed as a challenge, but it is a fact of life that gives the writer an opportunity to shape a development and approval pathway that suits the particular circumstances. Therefore, don't waste time waiting for someone to tell you what process you have to follow; just come up with something reasonable and get on with it!

As I reflect on the last three years over which I struggled to "make the sausage", it seems clear to me that the international and regional environment in which New Zealand makes its living is demanding the development of more forward-leaning and ambitious strategies, especially in the national security space. The new MSS represents only an initial step as New Zealand faces up to the challenges and opportunities of a more challenging and less benign world.

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Justin's current role sees him leading a small team charged with supporting Customs engagement with the national security system and ensuring Customs continues to meet its national security responsibilities. This involves interagency and internal NZ Custom's coordination work focused on a range of readiness and response activities. For 2020 this has focused almost exclusively on COVID-19 issues as Customs Strategic Coordination Unit continues to serve as the NZ Customs Incident Management Team and chairs the key border sector operational coordination mechanism, the Border Sector Working Group.

Justin has held senior advisor roles in the National Security Systems Directorate in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Police Policy Group. Justin also spent time working on NZDF capability projects as an analyst in Army General Staff and has served overseas with the New Zealand Police as a mentor and performance advisor (Solomon Islands) and two operational tours with the New Zealand Army (Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands).

Justin has a Master of Arts (Hons) in Strategy and Defence from the Australian National University and BA(Hons) in Political Science from Canterbury University.