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To: White Paper
Subject: WWW Submission: 1. Strategy/International [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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Submission: In all the discussions about defence strategy one hears little or nothing about the prevention of conflict. In any modern armed conflict, the civilian casualties far exceed those of combatants. The burden of death, injury, psychological and emotional illness and grief is great and the economic costs to the countries involved are very debilitating. Australia needs to lead the world in preventing war. Research has shown that the greatest factor determining the risk of armed conflict within a country is its degree of poverty. A country that cannot afford to establish institutions of law, courts and an effective and honest police force is at great risk of generating internal conflict, which, as we know, can easily lead to external conflict. Our aim ought to be to work as hard at ensuring our neighbours prosper as we do in preparing to defend ourselves militarily. At the same time we must ensure that our aid is not military hardware alone. History shows that military aid too often ends up being used to oppress a country's own people, or even being used against the donor. We might legitimately bring people in to develop relationships based on trust and understanding, and to be educated in international conventions and the Australian ethos, or to give them training in policing. We must not give them weapons.

I write this in a personal capacity, but acknowledge my membership of the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. I must, as a professional committed to the health of all people, point out the inconsistency of seeking to improve the health of the Australian people through disease prevention and medical services while not doing everything possible to prevent one of the most significant causes of ill health in our modern world.

John Masarei MD

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report