

Conference Paper
2019 U.S. Naval War College and East Asia Security Centre Conference
Between Scylla and Charybdis: Is there a Middle Path for Middle Powers in the
Indo-Pacific Region?
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Paper Title: From Middle to Great: Australian Indigenous Sovereignty, Organisation of Coal Exporting Countries and Strategic South West Pacific

Synopsis: The paper explores why and how relative power changes occur in the Global Political Economy's hierarchy of states. Australia's desire for more relative power is considered and why and how Australia may change its relative position. This paper identifies the changed Indo-Pacific strategic environment as a catalyst to politically motivate and enable Australia to establish precursors of Great Power capacity in order to meet its long term requirement to conduct International Relations that preserve its unique domestic political economy. Democracy, human rights, a rules-based order, independent strategic manoeuvrability, capacity to undertake political warfare, a nuclear capacity and strategic use of economy to engage and resist the Global Political Economy are all required. As an emerging great power Australia must also assert its own politics and economy in an achievable manner. Applying different 'middle' power definitional approaches – Behavioural/statecraft, Statistics, Perceived Power – this paper identifies a viable strategy for Australia to transition to Great Power behaviour. Creation of structural power elements is found to be most efficient and effective. Australian should thus focus on Indigenous Sovereignty, the creation of an Organisation of Coal Exporting Countries and its Strategic South West Pacific. These are congruent with the global narratives of the reawakening of indigenous culture and post-Westphalian Colonial sovereignty and climate change. Australian Indigenous Sovereignty could lead to create a global movement for Human Security. Its proposal to create an Organisation of Coal Exporting Countries would offer a global solution to the energy/coal/climate policy maze and focusing limited hard power resources into the South West Pacific is an achievable great power goal.

Keywords: Australia, Great Power, Indigenous Sovereignty, Organisation of Coal Exporting Countries, Strategic South West Pacific, Political Warfare, Middle Power