

THE ECHIDNA STRATEGY

in Europe during World War II, so no one understood better than he that the use of military force is necessary to preserve freedom and defeat tyranny. Yet as president, he warned that:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

Defence spending is theft. It is striking to hear such language from an American conservative. Even political leaders from America's Democratic Party could not endorse such radicalism today, and neither will you hear it from an Australian politician. But limiting the cost of defending Australia is a moral imperative. Every dollar spent on defence reduces our opportunities to contribute to human flourishing at home and among our neighbours. However, defending Australia is a moral imperative too. This nation is worth protecting from predation and exploitation by foreign powers. Certainly, Australia has committed crimes,