

Who Is In Command?

John Rodsted: [00:00:00]

Today we speak with Paul Barratt AO, Australians For War Powers Reform [00:00:19]

Welcome to SafeGround, the small organization with big ideas. I'm John Rodsted. Today. We're speaking with Paul Barrett. Paul has had a long career in Australia's public service since 1966, but what distinguishes him from many others within government and the public sector is his strong conscience.

He's held many senior roles within government, notably within the department of trade, primary industries in energy and the business council of Australia and Secretary of the Department of Defense from 1998 to 1999. It was his senior role in the Department of Defense that put him at odds with the government positions and policy.

This led him to leaving the public service. Since then, he's had a very strong voice on how and why Australia goes to war and the powers that a few have to commit us to war. He's also one of the founders and current president of Australians for War Power Reform. Welcome Paul.

Paul Barratt: [00:01:12] Morning John

John Rodsted: [00:01:13] Originally you studied physics and graduated with honours from the University of New England. How did you go from serious science to Australia's public service and Department of Defense?

Paul Barratt: [00:01:23] Well, John, throughout my, undergraduate career, I was intending to do a PhD in physics and become an academic physicist. And towards the end of my honors year, I read this interesting little advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald, I had sort of had a rough rush of blood to the head and joined the public service.

And that interesting little advertisement said the department of defense was looking for people to monitor scientific developments of defense interest in the Asia Pacific region. So I thought that sounds interesting. And I applied for it months later and security clearances later, and what have you? I turned up for work and discovered that the scientific developments of defense interests were China's nuclear program. And so that, that launched me on a very interesting, couple of years in the intelligence community. And it was a time when China's, program really was nice and they just had their third test when I started and the cultural revolution was just beginning. So it was a very interesting time in Chinese history and in the history of our region.

John Rodsted: [00:02:31] When you entered the department of defense in 66, it was right in the early days of Australia entering the Vietnam war. You were in the department of defense during the war. How were Australia's policies and actions shaped, and then by who?

Paul Barratt: [00:02:44] The policy to go into Vietnam was shaped very much by the prime minister Menzies himself. And, I was in the fortunate position of being just one year too old to be called up in the first draft for Vietnam. but some of my university friends were conscripted and set off the fight in a war that we should never have been in.

An Insider To Policy and Decision Making [00:03:04]

John Rodsted: [00:03:04] As a public service insider, you became privy to how policy and decisions were made. And this is, was not always a fair and honourable process. What kind of things and opinions did they drive Australia towards?

Paul Barratt: [00:03:17] Well, if we stick to the defense domain, quite often the real consultative process wasn't around whether or not we should get involved in a war, but how we would get involved. So the prime minister would make a decision that we should go off to fight alongside our American ally. And then first thing that would come to cabinet would be, what form will this assistance take? There's too much power and too few hands at the beginning.

John Rodsted: [00:03:44] So it would sort of come down to the US would effectively insist that we entered a war, supporting them. And as long as the prime minister agreed to that, then, we were committed.

Paul Barratt: [00:03:56] Actually, it's worse than that, John. More often we would insist on participating in a war to which the US hadn't invited us. And that was very much the case with Vietnam. We, our government persuaded them that they should have us along. The US military was not particularly enthusiastic because they find it easier to fight alone and feel that they've got the capability to do so. That turned out to be wrongly in most cases, but they feel they can do it. But the American political system likes to have some extra flags on the poles show that they're involved in a major coalition. The same thing happened with Iraq and Afghanistan. John Howard volunteered us into those wars. The Americans didn't ask us.

What Role Does Opposition In Parliament Play? [00:04:36]

John Rodsted: [00:04:36] With any dissent that may be either within government or within parliament, how are those voices then heard?

Paul Barratt: [00:04:43] Well, with great difficulty. There's unlikely to be dissent within government when the threshold decision's already been made, backbenchers will feel that if we're off the war, their job is to support the government and support the troops in the field. And when first, contingents went off to Iraq, Simon Crean, the then opposition leader leading a party that was opposed to the war, took very great care to distinguish between being opposed to the war. But on the other hand, wishing the troops all the best. We support our troops in harm's way, but we don't think we ought to be there. But that's a pretty difficult thing to navigate.

And as for parliament that depends on whether the government permits the matter to be debated at all. We committed ourselves to Afghanistan in 2001, and the very first parliamentary debate on Afghanistan was in Julia Gillard's time.

The Australians For War Powers Reform [00:05:38]

John Rodsted: [00:05:38] You're a strong advocate for changes on how we go to war. You helped form and chair the Australians for War Powers Reform. What's the organization? And what do you want to see change?

Paul Barratt: [00:05:49] The organization had its origins in something that, in 2012, we call the campaigns for Iraq war inquiry. Our first objective was to get something like the Chilcot inquiry that was going on in the UK to find out how the decisions were made and what could be learned from that process. But the real aim was to use this as a case study in why, the power to deploy the ADF into international armed conflict or to be relocated in the parliament. We expected and we knew a lot

about how the decisions had been made or able to infer a lot by research. And putting various bits and pieces together, but we wanted an open public inquiry, which would demonstrate that our decision-making processes were flawed. And that it was too dangerous to leave it in the hands of a very small number of people. And so now what we want is to relocate the power to send the defense force in any kind of armed conflict, to be relocated to the parliament. A decision only taken when the parliament, and in our view, both houses have accented to that.

Is The Response Time An Issue? [00:06:56]

John Rodsted: [00:06:56] If you take the decision away from the prime minister, removed the so-called captain's call, wouldn't it take too long to respond to any threats in a real timeframe?

Paul Barratt: [00:07:06] No, that's a great, great misapprehension. Most of the Australian defense force quite rightly is held in a pretty low state of readiness. So it's training and doing practice manoeuvres and what have you, but to get your equipment into a fighting state, it requires a lot of preparation. For example, when we went to Timor, Admiral Barry and I advised the national security of committee of cabinet in February 1999, that we ought to get ready have the option to deploy, to Timor as that plebiscite was looming, because we could see that there might be a breakdown of the situation there. They were finally ready to deploy in September. So it took us seven months and the expenditure of almost \$300 million to get everything really up to scratch and to get commanders at various levels used to commanding operations in the field at that kind of level. So we have a ready reaction force in Townsville, which is basically a battalion, and uh, associated elements. And I would be quite happy to say, to have a framework in which anything that the ready reaction force could handle could be done on the decision of the government, because that would be an emergency type situation. But anything that required a larger deployment, ought to be debated and authorized in parliament.

Will Politics Get In The Way? [00:08:25]

John Rodsted: [00:08:25] if the decision had to go through parliament, couldn't it get held up by minor parties or in the Senate or whatever, just people being divisive because they can playing politics with the decision?

Paul Barratt: [00:08:36] That's an argument we often hear. If there was any genuine threat that any major political party would be opposed to the deployment and of course, any situation in which the ALP agreed with the government or the coalition, agreed with the ALP, depending on who's in government. If the major opposition party agrees with government, the minor parties have no role at all. So that concern sounds to me like a concern that it might be difficult for the government to engage in wars of choice. And of course, that's the whole point.

John Rodsted: [00:09:11] And I suppose that separates it perfectly between threat and adventure. One, you're actually going to respond for a real threat, that's threatening Australia and Australia's interests. And the other is getting involved in an adventure that's got nothing to do with us, and that would be the separation

Paul Barratt: [00:09:27] To put it brutally, I would say to government of either's side, if you can't persuade the opposition, that our national security, isn't just a really engaged here. We ought not to go.

How to Keep Intelligence Secret? [00:09:39]

John Rodsted: [00:09:39] So if the party that was in power that had government, at the time had access to secret intelligence that they can't talk about, how would they with this?

Paul Barratt: [00:09:46] There is a couple of ways you could deal with that. That's an argument we often hear and it's sometimes it's a bit hard to keep a straight face. When people talk about that when we reflect back to the WMD in Iraq that turned out not to exist and everybody knew they didn't exist. Hans Blix United Nations weapons inspector certainly knew they didn't exist.

But let's take your question at face value. There's a couple of things you could do. What we do right now is, in any national security situation, the government will brief the leader of the opposition, in private and in secret. That happened in relation to operations in Syria. You could have a proper national security intelligence kind of committee in the parliament, in which those members of the committee were security cleared to receive all the information that's available so that you would have all parties involved in looking at the available evidence. And they could go into the parliament and say, well, we've seen the intelligence and we are convinced.

It's rare that secret intelligence is the only thing you've got. Very often there is information in the public domain as well. In fact, I think most intelligence agencies should devote more effort to analysis of what's in the public domain because you can learn a lot from that. An option would always be available to government would be to say; Here what you're seeing in the public domain, and a simply without elaboration, say our secret intelligence bears out what we've concluded from the open-source material. So if there's a will to do it this way, you can certainly find a way to navigate your way through that real difficulty of, how you handle secret intelligence.

John Rodsted: [00:11:31] The secret intelligence effectively just becomes a confirmation of what is a greater information stream.

Who Supports War Powers Reforms? [00:11:37]

Yeah. What kind of support have you had for your organizations aims and ideals and where should it go from here?

Paul Barratt: [00:11:44] We've had support from various members of various parties and a lot of public support and I'll come back to the public support. The most tangible support we've had from a political party is a resolution that was passed on the floor of the ALPs national Congress in 2018 in Adelaide when there was a vote on the floor that an incoming Labor government would establish an open public parliamentary inquiry into how we go to war. And I think that was a very, positive step. I think that's a very good way for a political party to get into it because in not pre-committing themselves to change the way we go to war, but they're committing themselves to establish the facts. It would give those who are seeking a change, the opportunity to put their case. And it would put the people who dismiss it in through the various arguments that we've just discussed. They would have to defend it in that kind of forum. So we would end up with a more honest debate.

Another element that these people will tend to use to argue against us is that it's really wouldn't make any difference because everyone had just vote on party lines. What I would say, in such a parliamentary inquiry, I think you would find that being asked to take responsibility for, something that would involve death and destruction

on both sides; I'm putting the young men and women of the ADF in harm's way and do inevitably involving civilian casualties. You would end up with something that looks very much like a conscience vote. I don't think you can assume that everybody would vote on party lines. If we have a parliamentary inquiry, we can flush all these arguments out.

I'd like to see that commitment find its way into the ALP platform, but I very much hoped that, an incoming Labor government, such time as that happens, would proceed along that those lines. Our movement would like to persuade all major political parties that, this is a desirable change. That once one's on board, I think it will be easier to get the others on board.

You've had some pretty good support from some fairly major players within the Australian government and former Australian defense. Can you talk a little about the opinions of some of the others who are involved in your organization and why they think it's a good idea to change the threshold for going to war and the captain's call?

Well, I think were unanimous in feeling that, the responsibility for this order rest with the federal parliament and it ought to be debated and, fully thought through. One of the things that don't happen when it's just decided by cabinet or by the prime minister is a proper analysis of the legality of going to war. And what we would all like to see, is before parliament takes a decision that the Attorney General or Solicitor General tables, a formal written opinion about the legality of this war. Because the best legal opinion about the Iraq war is that was illegal. And no one takes very seriously the reliance that we had, on very old UN security council resolutions that were passed for another purpose.

So, apart from in our movement, we've had people like former Chief of Army, saying that this move ought to take place.

An Artificial Intelligence Arms Race? [00:14:56]

John Rodsted: [00:14:56] Can we shift the discussion a little towards the current arms race that's starting to get going, which is the development of killer robots? Just the talk of killer robots sounds like a bad dream, but they're real and governments worldwide are developing and investing in them. What do you understand these to be and how would they be deployed in the battlefield, for that matter into urban environments?

Paul Barratt: [00:15:19] I think the word robots conjures up in the public mind, things that might move along the ground and have maybe have arms and legs. But what we're really talking about is any kind of lethal autonomous weapon. And that very often would be a more advanced form of armed drone that would have its own decision making capability. And, that would take human agency out of the decision to launch a lethal strike.

Now it gets to a little bit fuzzy because I was reading this morning, someone from the US army talking about the progress they're making with them. And they're saying that they'll never take human agency out of making the decision, but they're saying the way these drones, the way these weapons work, you have a collection of sensors that will bring a lot of data together and then make a recommendation. And that recommendation would include which weapon located where would be the best to use for this purpose. Now this US army spokesman was talking about reducing the decision making time from the censors to someone pressing some button from 20 minutes to 20 seconds. 20 seconds, doesn't sound to me like a lot of time for

someone to make a considered decision to launch a lethal attack on someone. So the word meaningful comes into it. You've got to have meaningful human intervention, not just the fact that a human being is somewhere in this highly automated chain and the importance of human beings being in it is that, got to make some very important, decisions about, who's to be attacked, is this attack militarily necessary? And is it proportionate to what has happened or what you think is about to happen? I would have no faith at all in the ability of people to program an autonomous weapon to make those decisions without the potential for great risk and tragedy.

Legal Framework In Decision Making [00:17:14]

John Rodsted: [00:17:14] I think you hit on something very poignant there, which is reducing the response time from 20 minutes to 20 seconds, which would bring the decision down to an operator who would take it away from a commander. It would take it away from someone who was in charge of a force and bring it down to someone who is the button pusher, sitting behind a console somewhere. It would also reduce the legal framework in the decision-making process. Would that be correct?

Paul Barratt: [00:17:40] It gets harder and harder to say who is responsible under international law for the fact that these innocent people got killed. I think, illustrate the difficulty, both with the delegation of authority, and also with the discrimination.

Bias & Lack of Cultural Knowledge and Sensitivity

[00:17:55]

I remember a case it was probably 10 years ago in Afghanistan where a group of Afghan villagers from a remote village were killed by someone, operating a joystick in Tampa, Florida at an area under surveillance with an armed drone. There was a group of Afghan villagers coming down from a remote village to the nearest, sort of a local town. And they left before dawn for what was a long journey. And there were four or five guys in the back of a, of a utility and someone driving. And, halfway through the journey, a young man in Tampa blew them all away. With an armed drone. Turned out that just completely innocent bunch of visitors. One was going to visit the local doctor and one was going to get a prescription, filled at the pharmacy and this sort. And he was asked why did you press a button? Because I could tell they were terrorists. How did you know they were terrorists? Because when the sun came up, they all got their prayer mats out of the back of the utility and facing Mecca and prayed. So therefore I knew they were terrorists. There's two things about that. Even with the considered human intervention, the human being, made a catastrophic error of judgment because he didn't know enough about the local culture. And secondly, how would you program an autonomous weapon not to make that mistake? And I just don't believe that it can be done. And we've seen lots of tragedies in place like Iraq and Afghanistan, where a wedding party got blown away because people started firing their rifles in the air. When, once the couple was united in holy matrimony, it will be, lets all fire our rifles in the air and someone blows them away because they're firing rifles. The old saying in the IT industry about garbage in, garbage out. What these drones do, autonomously will very much depend on the knowledge and skill of the people that are programming them.

John Rodsted: [00:19:47] I think that hits on a point of how do they identify who is the so-called enemy on a battlefield? Because yes I can see, they cannot identify who the friendlies are. It's pretty easy to put a marker on your own troops. So whether, you know, whatever that may be infrared or whatever, you can have some form of markers. So you'd see your own layout of the battlefield. But then all that does is say that everything else down there living is the enemy. Civilians, combatants, lock, stock, And I can't see how they would be able they segregate the two.

Paul Barratt: [00:20:16] Neither can I. And what we all await the Brereton report on Afghanistan. But I think what you're seeing in Afghanistan, my guess is that you've seen people who are weary after almost 20 years of fighting of not they're very clearly in situation where you don't really know who the enemy is.

A farmer standing in his field may be a, a genuine farmer standing in his field. He may also have a rifle by his feet - about to get you, but he may be a very innocent person, just, going about his normal business. And you have to decide whether to kill him or leave him alone. And, I just, cannot see that autonomous weapons are going to be an advance.

An Algorithm Mess [00:20:58]

John Rodsted: [00:20:58] There was an interview recently with Dr Lizzy Silver who's an AI developer. And the one thing that she really pointed out was how messy and how incapable AI is, It's when AI starts competing against other AI, artificial intelligence. It just turns into an algorithm mess that comes up with no real functional solutions to it. And her point was that, by the very nature, unless you got a human to pull it and go, hang on, this is going turning into nonsense, that the AI will actually go down a path where it's always trying to achieve its goal, but its goal might not be achievable. So it just turns into an absolute Yeah.

Then I suppose it brings us to the point of, whether these things are hackable or not. And, and what would be the look, if somebody then manages to hack into your system?

Paul Barratt: [00:21:45] Well, it would be a brave person who would insist on anything that's not hackable. Recent history is full of people, full of things that have, either information that's been released via hacks. And we know that all of the world's leading powers are looking at how to hack each other's IT-driven system, you know, their electric power system and, all sorts of other things. All you can ever do is say that we can't think of any way to hack it typically, or very often you employ former hackers to try to hack your systems, just to see if there's a way around it. But it would be very complacent to say I've produced something that's not hackable. It seems that they're starting to invest in the development of this kind of technology and what it's really going to start is a new arms race. That would be expensive. And I could imagine a situation where almost annually you're shovelling a lot of your GDP into buying upgrades, buying new weaponry to counter the redundant weaponry that you had a year earlier. This would put, on a country like Australia, it would put a lot of stress on the Australian purse and to what we've got to spend on what should be the expenditure of government; education, health, whatever. have you got some comments about how Australia has got involved in arms races at our level? Not on the US level, but on an Australian level.

I don't think we've had a lot of experience of it. Because for most of the postwar period, our defense force operated at a higher technical level than our neighbours. I

don't think that's the case anymore. But, whenever we've put an emphasis on, self-reliant defense capability, we've just defined what we think we need to be able to do, which basically boils down to control the air and sea approaches to Australia. That puts you into an implicit arms race in that as, as people's capability to come to our way increases. We might have to do more to be able to be in control. I think we're now in a situation where, um, we're probably in a, certainly in an air combat arms race. We committed ourselves 20 years ago or almost 20 years ago to the joint strike fighter, the F 35. And I've had people tell me that the Russian sourced equipment that neighbouring countries are using is more capable on that. So we might be in an arms race anyway.

Responsibility For Picking Up The Tab? [00:24:03]

John Rodsted: [00:24:03] With the prime minister, having the sole responsibility at present to commit us to war, does that also put the sole responsibility on the cost of going to war in the hands of the prime minister? It's that person who decides that we're going to spend a lot of our national treasure on going to a war? or does that get checked by house of reps?

Paul Barratt: [00:24:24] In practice it puts it in the hands of the prime minister, because whilst the constitution provides that you can't spend any, federal government, can't spend any money that hasn't been appropriated by the parliament. You can never envisage a situation in which the prime minister would commit us to combat and the parliament would refuse to vote the money. Because that would leave the troops high and dry. So once we're at war, the parliament basically has to get dragged along, funding whatever executive government says it needs to sustain that combat.

Will Killer Robots Be Used If We Get Them? [00:24:56]

John Rodsted: [00:24:56] The military by its very nature is always in the business of, I suppose, force multiplication acquiring weapons that are gonna give it, sort of more bang for its buck, If we went down the path of building an arsenal of lethal autonomous weapons, do you think the very fact that we had them that would create our threshold to be combative would be less, and I'm not talking from a prime minister's perspective. If you're a commander in the field and you've got stockpiles of, say, artificial intelligence, drones at your disposal, would that make your decision making to engage - a lower threshold or a higher threshold?

Paul Barratt: [00:25:30] I think it would be a lower threshold. Once we've got them in our, inventory, they would come to be used and it would be very hard for, anyone in the civilian space, you know, like our political leaders or anyone else to tell the chief of the defense force, not to use weapons that in his military judgment, the troops needed to get themselves out of a hole or to achieve what they've been sent to achieve.

Weapons and Proportionality [00:25:53]

John Rodsted: [00:25:53] And I guess it brings us into the discussion about proportionality and there's a number of benchmarks with proportionality in weapons. A couple off the top of my head would be the, poison gas after world war one, where we saw what a nightmare that created to people who were gassed. The convention was created and I think 1925. then the other one would be, blinding laser weapons from I think 1992, which, had the ability to blind anybody on a

battlefield and that technology was beaten before it was ever deployed in war. And the two pragmatic ones would be the landmines treaty of 1997 and the cluster bombs treaty of 2008. We, do have a history of looking back or even looking forward in the case of the blinding laser weapons and choosing to either eliminate a functional weapon system or stop one that got started before it was deployed. I guess it comes down to the thing of having a prime minister or ministers or decision-makers who don't just get seduced by the latest, greatest technology that's being offered up on a plate. And this would probably be autonomous weaponry.

Campaign Vigorously to Outlaw Fully Lethal

Autonomous Weapons [00:26:55]

Paul Barratt: [00:26:56] What you say is true, but the dilemma that would face a government is that if these are not outlawed and other people are getting them; are we forced to respond? And, of course, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was, drawn up, to avoid that kind of situation. That as these things spread, other people feel obliged to equip themselves with those as a deterrent. So by far, the best option that I can see for an Australian government is to campaign very vigorously for these things to be outlawed. That would, no doubt cause some friction with our allies in the United States, who by the way are not parties to the cluster munitions treaty. The United States refuses to have anything outlawed as it applies to the United States. But nevertheless, I think we should be campaigning to have those things outlawed. And hence not equipping ourselves with them.

John Rodsted: [00:27:46] So in the case of the use of lethal autonomous weapons, what would you imagine some of the scenarios of a failed strike could look like if someone deployed these and where could that go wrong?

Paul Barratt: [00:28:00] Well it could go wrong in almost any conceivable way. But typically, the algorithm goes wrong and you attack people who ought not to be attacked, including perhaps friendly forces. And also of course, what if the weapon was hacked and turned back on us? Or if you just fail to complete the task? You go into this business assuming that this very, very complex and sophisticated piece of equipment will work perfectly. Imperfection could lead to all sorts of failures, including damaged your own side.

John Rodsted: [00:28:32] That brings us to a lot of arms manufacturers who would love to have manufacturing of lethal autonomous weapons because it's going to provide them a continual stream of investment that every year someone has to go and buy the upgrade or get the replacement technology. And from a Sharemarket perspective and from a corporate perspective, that would be quite attractive. Although it wouldn't be terribly attractive on the ground. I suppose that's another risk that we'd be stepping into.

Paul Barratt: [00:28:58] No and I don't think either our national or the international approach to weapon systems ought to be driven by the interest of the arms manufacturers. I think we come to national and public interest first. And see the interest of arms manufacturers are subordinate to that.

The Role of Universities [00:29:14]

John Rodsted: [00:29:15] You know, your origins came from the study of physics and a university and universities are always looking to solve technological problems. And, that's part of the greatness of universities, is these brilliant young minds have got

problems and they, they take them on and they create function out of the ether really extraordinary stuff. Should the universities be looking at limiting what they do with lethal autonomous weapons or at least with the various platforms that would be employed in this technology ?

Paul Barratt: [00:29:43] I think so. We don't expect our universities to be doing research on biological weapons or chemical weapons except possibly for strictly defensive purposes. I can see a role for universities to examine how you might defend yourself against these things. And certainly, for, people in the sort of arms control kind of space in universities to be thinking about how you establish an effective regime that, that outlaw such weapons. But, to have our universities go into developing these things or some aspect of them with their ears pinned back, I think can be a very bad idea.

John Rodsted: [00:30:22] It sort of separates it into two spaces. One would be about technological development, you know, getting out and doing the software and then working out what the platforms are and the other would be the ethical sides. The ethical investment would be overriding the technological investment.

Paul Barratt: [00:30:39] Yeah our efforts should be directed to the ethical side of this issue, not the technical side of it, except to the extent that we need to understand the technology in order to defend ourselves from it.

John Rodsted: [00:30:51] Do you think these are a step too far or there is a space somewhere within the defense landscape for them?

Paul Barratt: [00:30:57] I think they're a step too far. When it comes to killing people, you've got to have people not only in theoretical control, but ineffective control and accountable for the decisions they make.

Trusting The Prime Minister? [00:31:07]

ohn-rodsted: [00:31:08] Trusting the prime minister in the past or the present or the future to make the right call going to war. Do you think they have in the past or they would in the future, is that a decision making perspective that is trustworthy or should there something else?

Paul Barratt: [00:31:22] Well, we've, seen in, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, we've seen the the prime minister of the day make the wrong decision. We also saw Tony Abbott make a decision to extend our operations in Northern Iraq, against ISIL, to extend those operations into Syria. And we saw him talking about, putting a battalion into Ukraine for God's sake, to secure the site of the crashed aircraft. I don't think you can rely on prime ministerial decision making at all. And, I should mention that Malcolm Fraser was, while he was alive, was the patron of our organization. And he, he argues that, a, prime minister always going to get his way in cabinet if there is something he really wants. And it's too easy for a small group like that to get involved in group think and not think at right through just, You know, we've had a busy morning, and it's lunchtime, you know, let's, let's make this decision and get out of here or just simply listen to what the prime minister have to say and say, yes, prime minister, that's fine. And not really unpick it. uh, no I would not trust any prime minister to make the right call.

John Rodsted: [00:32:27] So it really sounds like we're getting to a step too far and at the moment there is work on the development, hopefully of a treaty and things might come to a head next year. Let's hope so, Paul, thanks so much for your time

and thanks for joining us with SafeGround and good luck with getting some changes to the way Australia gets committed to go to war.

Paul Barratt: [00:32:45] My pleasure, John. Thank you very much

John Rodsted: [00:32:48] If you'd like to know more about Paul Barrett's work with Australians for War Powers Reform, please visit their website. www.warpowersreform.org.au