

CHIEF OF ARMY SPEECH**OPENING ADDRESS FOR LAND WARFARE CONFERENCE****BRISBANE, 29 OCTOBER 2008**

Thanks for that introduction, Steve (Quinn) or Vinod (Puri) . I am delighted to be invited to open this Land Warfare Conference, which is co-sponsored by Army and DSTO.

Could I start by welcoming our guests here today, with a special mention to Minister Fitzgibbon who has just gotten off an aircraft from Perth to join us. Minister, thank you for joining us today and thank you for your welcome address.

To Doctor Tony Tether, Director of the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, welcome. Thankyou for travelling such a long way to be with us this week. We look forward to your presentation shortly on your research that supports the conduct of land operations.

Indeed, to all of your gathered here, welcome and I trust that your attendance and participation will make this an event of considerable academic, professional and commercial value. Over the years since these conferences began, I believe that we have collectively made a significant difference to our understanding of

how Armies see, can and will react, to both current and future operating environments.

The Land Warfare Conference has become a major domestic and international event. It provides a venue where we can exchange ideas, learn from each other and potentially envisage the next big thing for Defence Forces. This has been of immense benefit to our Army. Importantly, it provides the Army with a forum in which we can pose some of our more perplexing problems, and ask you how we might bring our collective weight together to seek innovative solutions to these problems. Being able to assemble soldiers, scientists, academics, industry, commercial organizations, and other interested people in one location and focus them on a theme is a terrific opportunity for us.

Over the last few years, these conferences have become a busy place - both commercially and socially. This could not have been achieved without the efforts of our tireless organising committee. Thank you to you all, but could I especially mention Vinod Puri, and Despina Filippidis and my own PA Maria Nicholls. They are the backbone of the Conference and I think we all owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

I am also grateful to you – our delegates and exhibitors – for your continued support to Defence and Army. The success of this

conference over the years is due to your very generous and energetic participation. I am very pleased to see you here, and I lost a bet with Steve Quinn when I was forced to admit that this exhibition is our biggest yet.

I have been a vocal and a strong advocate for a vibrant and evolving strategic relationship between our Army and Defence Industry. We have had a successful past, but there is much, much more which can be achieved. And it will require good will and strong cooperation to make the kind of headway which I feel is needed into the future. The kind of progress I'm talking about isn't something which should or would be detrimental to either party. Rather I see us developing a relationship, a partnership, in which we all benefit.

The topic of this year's conference is *force protection in the 21st century*. It is an area that is, of course, very important to us in uniform. Our ability to protect our soldiers while they conduct missions on behalf of our Nation, in what is an increasingly lethal operating environment, is a key challenge for Army.

Over the last two days, I ran a conference here in Brisbane that brought together Army's most senior officers. We discussed the key challenges that we as an Army face in ensuring we maintain an appropriate balance between the pressures of current

operations, fleet renewal and the economic crisis, while laying a base for development which will see us adaptable, relevant and successful in the battlespace of the next decade and beyond. I posed them a series of questions and then set them to work in starting to develop a range of potential solutions for the balancing act that lies ahead.

First and foremost among our challenges is our people. Our enduring number one priority is our soldiers – regular and reserve – and our civilians. Regardless of the amount of equipment and technology we purchase in the coming years, we will remain a force that ‘equips the man or woman’ and not visa versa. As such, the recruiting and retention of our workforce will remain our biggest and most important challenge.

In recent years, we have introduced several schemes to retain key elements of our workforce. While these have experienced varying levels of success, we still have difficulty meeting our quotas for technical personnel and officers. We need to think strategically about what kinds of remuneration (and not just the monetary kind) that our people will expect in the future. What will their expectations be of their service? What types of leadership will be required to allow us to get the very best from highly networked people in the future? We are far from

exhausting the range of good ideas that are likely to be out there for strategic workforce management. I see this as a significant challenge for us.

But I see the people dimension, especially the technical skills shortfalls, as an issue we, Defence and Industry, need to share. While we are currently cooperating in some mutually beneficial trade and technical training schemes, this cooperation must expand and continue in a carefully planned manner into the future.

Why? Well we both seek to draw on a finite resource of skilled personnel from the Australian community. This competition for the same scarce resource cannot be conducted in the manner of a knock down drawn out battle. With this approach victory by one party will see the failure of the other party. But in reality the failure of either party is an own goal, as ultimately both parties come undone, and we will have done great damage to our nation. It is obvious to me therefore, that on the issue of workforce, the cultivation of training, innovation and business based on an ability to share the asset is the only real path to success. I'd be interested in your views on how we achieve this.

I should also make the point here that developing and sharing human resources requires the elimination of redundant training.

This means that we have to make maximum use of recognition of prior learning and ensure that we all accept, as far as is reasonable, relevant defence and civilian competencies. Similarly, civilian workplaces need to be able to recognise the competencies developed by Army and particularly through service in the Army Reserve.

I have no doubts that our success or failure as an Army in the future will be determined by our ability to respond effectively to personnel challenges. I've mentioned just two in this session but they are shared challenges. The strength of our necessary partnerships with industry will be a key element of our success going forward.

Another area we discussed over the last couple of days was fostering a responsive, agile and adaptive Army. One of our first duties is to ensure that we are ready, and able, to deploy at short notice with our joint and interagency partners to undertake a range of missions anywhere in the world our Government requires. As part of this, our Army is about to undertake the most significant period of modernisation in its history.

We are about to replace our entire light A and B vehicle fleets, introduce new artillery systems, new fleets of helicopters and

water craft, a mounted and dismounted battlefield management system and perhaps most important of all, a digital network to act as the communications backbone for our people and our equipment.

This is occurring over a reasonably short period of time and will present a significant challenge for us. I am interested in your thoughts in how we have found ourselves at this point, and whether this 'big bang' approach to modernisation is appropriate. Can we 'smooth out' the obsolescence cycle of equipment to avoid this and ensure we maintain an appropriate sized fleet of equipment that is capable of operating in contemporary and future threat environments?

The current financial crisis brings into stark relief the necessity for us to achieve economies in how we do business. We must ensure that we not only utilise our resources effectively now, but that we invest wisely in future capabilities that are likely to give us the greatest utility across a broad range of scenarios and perhaps over a longer life of type. To inform ourselves further on this issue, and in conjunction with the DMO, we have commenced a detailed examination of Army's fleet management processes.

On another level, to foster a more innovative Army, I recently launched our *Adaptive Army* initiative. As we have transitioned to an Army that is constantly deploying and re-deploying force elements, it has made us focus more on our supporting mechanisms.

In particular, we have learned much in the last decade about the strengths and weakness of our structures and processes for generating and preparing land forces for operations. As a result of this, it has become clear that we need a more systemic approach to adaptation within the force generation and preparation of Army force elements.

At the same time, the changes in our Defence command and control over the last decade, and pre-eminence of our joint headquarters in the conduct of operations, demanded we re-look at how we structure ourselves.

The result is our *Adaptive Army* initiative. The six key objectives of this initiative are:

- To improve Army's alignment with, and capacity to inform, ADF's strategic and operational joint planning.

- Better execute force generation and preparation, in a way that balances operational commitments and contingency planning.
- To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of training within Army.
- To improve the linkage between resource inputs and collective training outputs within Army's force generation and preparation continuum.
- To improve the quality and timeliness of information flows throughout Army in order to enhance Army's adaptation mechanisms at all levels.
- And, finally, posture Army so that it can continue to adapt itself to changed circumstances in the future.

These are challenging but worthy objectives. But as I stated in the objectives, I am convinced we need to have Army postured so that it able to continue to learn and effectively adapt to whatever challenges confront us in the future. This inculcation of an adaptive approach across the Army is key to our future success – on the battlefield and as an institution.

A final question that I posed to the senior officers of the Army was ‘how do we work better with our partners in other government agencies, non-government organisations?’ I think this question is also relevant to the participants of this conference because it is just as important for us in the Army to ask ‘how do we work better with industry?’

We must develop relationships with our partners in the commercial world that allow the innovative nature of the private sector to help discover solutions to new challenges in time-sensitive situations. Army must be a learning organisation with a high degree of flexibility.

I believe that Defence derives tremendous benefits from working in concert with industry to deliver logistic outcomes. Through our inherent capabilities and a range of agreements and contractual arrangements with Industry, we are able to maximize our ability to provide support to those on the front line, and to fight above our weight. For example, in the Middle East we have engaged Industry to provide a range of logistic services to our forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

The key to the ADF’s continuing success is the positive engagement and true partnerships with industry and Australian employers. Conferences such as this one provide us with

tremendous opportunities for building mutual trust and understanding. I would encourage you all to continually ask yourselves – ‘how can I enhance the Defence-Industry relationship?’

That brings me back to the specific topic for this conference. This year we have picked a topic which is very important to us. Force protection in the 21st century. We chose this theme to get people to think more broadly about protection. Traditionally we have thought about protection as armour on vehicles or helmets on people. But protection has much broader implications, and to remain adaptive to the threat posed in the contemporary and future environments we need to view protection as a system of systems.

It some respects, it can be seen as a number of concentric rings, starting at the extremity and working in, comprising:

- An ability to understand the environment, including its human terrain, the capacity to detect a threat and to differentiate that threat from other inhabitants of the environment.
- Ensuring our systems that enhance friendly protection are not detected by the adversary.

- If those systems are detected, they are able to degrade the adversary's capacity to accurately target, or hit, our forces. This must encompass active and passive measures.
- If hit, our forces must have the ability to minimise injury to personnel and damage to equipment and infrastructure.
- At the centre is the human, who must possess the mental hardness to successfully operate in ambiguous environments, respond effectively to shock, and who is able to out-think the adversary.

Each level of protection has both human and technological dimensions. Each requires a combination of technology, human intellect and cunning. None of these levels have easy solutions – and the layering of the different levels requires a careful balancing act.

But this is an area we must get right. Our soldiers are right now serving in high threat environments where new threats can emerge in an instant. We have seen in the last six months how even the best trained soldiers can be vulnerable to an enemy that can be almost impossible to detect among the population.

Our contemporary operations are characterised by the need for deployed land forces to work *among the people*, and establish a broad relationship with the supported population. We must ensure that our force protection measures don't compromise that capacity to actually work with people. We cannot separate ourselves with multiple layers of armour if we expect to establish the kind of rapport that is essential to success in the type of operations we currently find ourselves conducting.

So, in achieving force protection, we need to carefully balance our application of technology with our application of mass. Now, there was time not so long ago that using the term 'mass' in relation to military operations would immediately see one accused of being an *attritionist* – and for a soldier that can indeed be a dirty word!

But as we and our allies have learned - in the conduct of our operations among the people, mass is about having our soldiers out and visible amid the people. It is about having sufficient numbers of soldiers interacting with local populations – whether it is training their nascent Armies to protect themselves, teaching their young men to be tradesmen or simply providing a high visible presence to foster security and stability. We then need to

ensure these soldiers have the right type and quantity and technology to aid them in the conduct of their duties.

So, as participants at this conference I hope that I have provided you, in a very abbreviated manner, a challenge and a basis for a cooperative engagement as we face the future together.

I note that many of these issues I've touched upon are going to be examined during plenary sessions over the coming days. I hope that what promises to be a stimulating and productive conference meets all of our expectations.

I wish you well in your deliberations.