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Defence Review 2000: Our Future Defence Force

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On 27 June 2000, the Prime Minister and I announced the most extensive public consultation process ever undertaken on defence and security issues with the release of the Defence Review 2000: Our Future Defence Force – A Public Discussion Paper.

The Government has been conducting a fundamental review of defence policy and is keen to ensure that the forthcoming White Paper takes into account the views of the Australian people. As part of this process, the Public Discussion Paper has been designed to promote consideration of the key issues relating to Australia’s defence requirements and how these requirements can be met. It will enable the people of Australia to have an input into, and better understanding of, the defence issues that the Government must consider in preparing the White Paper.

A Community Consultation Team, appointed by the Government, has been facilitating public feedback and discussion and identifying and consolidating key elements of the community response to the Discussion Paper. It will be reporting its findings to the Government. The Consultation Team has been travelling extensively and consulting with a wide range of interest groups and individuals.

Individuals and groups have been making their views on the issues raised in the Public Discussion Paper known to the Community Consultative Team by forwarding written submissions, using the feedback facility on the Discussion Paper web-site, or attending the open sessions being conducted around Australia by the consultation team.

The defence of Australia and its interests is of paramount importance to the Government. I look forward to an enthusiastic, thoughtful and wide-ranging response from the community on these vital issues.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

The Honourable
John Moore, MP
Minister for Defence
Some difficult policy choices have to be made.

- What do we want our armed forces to be able to do?
- Where do we want our forces to be able to operate?
- What is the best way to structure the Defence Force?
- What is the best way to spend the Defence budget?

The Services of the Defence Force must fight as a joint organisation, but in deciding how to develop our air and maritime forces, we face a number of choices.

- What levels of adversary capability must our forces be able to handle?
- Do we want to be able to defend Australia against any regional power, or against the lower-level military capabilities available in our nearer region?
- Can we maintain within realistic budget limits a full range of air and maritime capabilities giving the Australian Defence Force (ADF) diversity and flexibility, or should we specialise in one or two capabilities, putting lower priority on others?
- Should we keep our forces prepared for operations at short notice, or can we assume we would have enough warning of a crisis to bring them up to combat readiness?

There are also key choices in developing our land forces.

- What size forces do we want to have ready for rapid deployment?
- How long do we want to be able to sustain forces in the field?
- Do we want our land forces to have capabilities to operate in more intense combat environments?
- How much capability do we want in order to deploy and insert land forces in potentially hostile environments?
- Do we want the capability to expand our Army quickly?

In the Discussion Paper, we look at a range of issues that are the important background to these key choices about the type of Defence Force Australia needs. Following is a brief summary of the topics the Paper covers.
Strategic Fundamentals

Is War a Thing of the Past? Some people argue that long-term trends in international affairs are making wars less likely, especially major wars between nations. The international system works in many ways to reduce the risk of problems degenerating into wars, but we should not assume that major wars cannot happen.

Military Operations Other than War. Over the past few years the unique capabilities of armed forces have been used in an increasing number of non-combat operations. We have undertaken many different types of operations, including famine relief and other forms of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and combat operations.

Key Strategic Changes. Our region is extraordinarily dynamic and complex. Regional economic growth will contribute to regional security over the longer term. It also is likely to lead to expanding military capability in the region. Much will depend on how the rising powers of our region define their future greatness.

Regional Defence Capabilities. Many of Asia’s bigger defence budgets were only marginally affected by the economic crisis. In the last year the defence budgets of many affected countries have again started to increase. If larger defence budgets in our region continue to expand air and maritime capabilities, our relative military capability will come under pressure.

What Are Our Strategic Interests? Our strategic interests are engaged directly in relations between the Asia-Pacific’s major powers. Our most immediate strategic interests are in the arc of islands stretching from Indonesia to the islands of the Southwest Pacific.

Defending Against Whom? At present no country has any intent to use armed force against Australia. But we do need to take account of what capabilities are needed to attack us effectively. An invasion could not be mounted by any country in our region now, though many already have the capacity for minor attacks.

Defending an Island Continent. Our strategic environment is fundamentally maritime, though defending Australia against a major adversary does not mean just the defence of the coastline. If we have the capabilities to deny our air and sea approaches to hostile ships and aircraft, we can defend our continent. Land forces would also be critical, especially in some lower-level contingencies.

Alliance vs Self-Reliance. The choices we have made over the last 25 years about the type of forces we need have been shaped by the policy of self-reliance. From our alliance relationships we can expect in the future to receive support, including military support, in any crisis that directly threatens our security.

Independent Action vs Coalition Operations. Coalition operations have become almost the norm today. Investment in interoperability may need to be a key priority.

Defending Australia vs Regional Commitments. Some will argue we should maintain a narrow focus on the defence of our territory. But there could be circumstances in which our strategic interests might require us to commit forces to operations overseas. Choosing between these demands might not be necessary if we can do both at reasonable cost.

Designing Our Defence Force

Quality, Quantity, Diversity. To keep defence spending affordable, we will have to make tough choices and take some considered risks. The quality we need is relative to the kinds of opposing capabilities we might face in combat.

Conventional Wars vs Non-Combat Military Operations. The ADF does disaster relief at home, humanitarian assistance abroad, evacuations, search and rescue, coastal surveillance and enforcement, and helps the police in counter-terrorism. But our Defence Forces have been structured, trained and
equipped to respond to military threats to our security.

Current Capability vs Future Capability. It takes many years to complete a major capability development project that provides tomorrow’s capabilities. But unexpected demands on today’s forces can arise with little warning. We need to take account of both factors.

What Defence Capabilities Do We Need? Our aim is to select a set of capabilities that gives Australia the widest range of military options to support our strategic interests, at an affordable cost. For the defence of our own territory, we would need air and naval capabilities that could deny our approaches to an adversary. For defence of our regional and global interests, we would need capabilities that could contribute to a coalition. Individual circumstances would decide the nature of our contribution.

Air Combat. Australia’s air combat capability is based on our fleet of 71 F/A-18 aircraft. Key strengths are the skills of the personnel who operate, maintain and support the aircraft. At present we are losing parity with the best regional air forces so we are upgrading the F/A-18’s radars, missiles and electronic warfare systems. Later this decade we face one of the most important decisions – how to retain our air combat capability after the F/A-18s.

Strike. Strike is the capability to target an adversary’s forces and infrastructure in their own territory, as well as in transit to Australia. The muscle of our strike force is the unique capability provided by our 33 F-111 long-range bombers. In the next few years we must consider how to maintain our strike capability after 2020.

Maritime Interdiction. Australia’s maritime forces include surface ships and their helicopters, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and F-111 and F/A-18 aircraft that are very effective for attacking hostile ships. Anti-ship missiles and attack by hostile aircraft are increasingly important for us as regional countries improve their capabilities. Once problems are resolved, the Collins will be among the best submarines in the world.

Land Capabilities. The core of our land force is two high-readiness infantry brigades, each around 3000 personnel. We also have Special Forces – highly trained specialist troops invaluable in a wide range of situations, including counter-terrorism. Reserve brigades around Australia provide the bulk of our sustainment capability.

Information Capabilities. Information capabilities are about applying the ideas of the knowledge economy to the business of fighting wars. With a small but sophisticated force we are well placed to keep a lead in our ability to use what we have to the best effect.

Defence Spending Issues

How Much Does Australia Spend on Defence? Australia spends around $13 billion or $700 per person on Defence annually. Funding for Defence has been held steady in real terms in recent years though it has declined from around 2.5 per cent of GDP in the mid 1980s to about 1.9 per cent in 1999. The level of Defence funding is an important social choice – any change in this funding affects the level of taxes or the amount of money available for other Government programs.

How Does Defence Spend Its Budget? Around 60 per cent of the Defence budget is spent on current capability, with a further third spent on investing in future capability. Some expenditure is committed to providing support to our people in uniform and takes account of the special nature of serving in the armed forces.

Efficiency and Reform Programs. The Government is determined to increase Defence’s efficiency further to give value to taxpayers. The next series of reforms and efficiency measures need to be bold.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Budget Pressures. Major investment costs are rising in real terms. A number of our key war-fighting platforms will become unsupportable or no longer cost-effective to maintain within a few years of each other after the middle of this decade. The cost of recruiting, training and retaining ADF personnel accounts for a major slice of the budget.

Funding Future Capability. Further efficiencies offer some potential over the next few years to find resources for combat capabilities without increasing funding. However, maintaining the current range of capabilities would require an increase in funding over the longer term. Alternatively, if we wish to maintain current levels of funding permanently, we will need to reduce some current capabilities. Whatever is decided, some difficult choices about trade-offs will remain to keep the Defence budget within reasonable bounds.

The Future Defence Force

What Sort of Force Will We Need in the Future? Responsible planning can only be done by making deliberate and informed decisions about priorities. How much weight should be placed on the more likely involvement in peacekeeping compared with the less likely, but far more serious consequences of an attack on Australia? What are the likely dynamics of regional security and what implications does this have for the timing of major acquisitions of capability?

Forces for Defeating Attacks on Australia. The most important capabilities for defeating attacks on Australia are likely to be those that provide air defence and maritime strike. It would be possible to capably defend Australia against attacks, from within the current budget. This could place some limits on our ability to contribute to security in the region. If we want to retain more options for contributing to regional security it is unlikely this could be achieved without additional funding over the longer term.

Forces Structured for Regional Security. A policy focusing on contributing to regional security could be a legitimate alternative to structuring against a direct attack on Australian territory. One option might be to develop our land force capabilities in a way that would allow them to contribute more to higher-intensity conflicts, though this would be an expensive approach and limit other options. A different approach would involve placing higher value on maritime forces.

Military Operations Other than War. Military operations other than war can include assistance for a range of civil emergencies and providing forces for humanitarian assistance. Enhancing our peacekeeping capabilities would require reductions in other capabilities to maintain the budget within realistic bounds.

Evaluating the Options. In a military crisis it is the force that we have at that precise moment in time that will need to be used. Whatever choices are made about the size and structure of our armed forces for the future, our goal should be that they are, qualitatively, world class.

Counter-terrorist exercise
Thanks in part to the end of the Cold War, Australia, like Japan, is now faced with the question of budget restraints. Japan remains very interested in the policy and initiatives which Australia is undertaking in order to meet the challenges of the world’s new security environment. It is highly appropriate for Australia to maintain a strong interest in upholding regional security in addition to defending its own country. Nevertheless, it seems that there are a number of crucial problems in the areas of the defence policy and capability that Australia must address in order to play a more effective role in terms of national and regional security.

This said, I would like to offer my own critiques on the contents of the *Australia Defence White (Discussion) Paper*.

The *White Paper* should present in greater detail Australia’s view of the past, present and future security and military situation in the Asia Pacific region, including South Asia. Do problems only involve the rising powers? What is the extent of the military capability for each country, especially those nations which possess offensive capabilities? How do these capabilities compare with the Australia’s military capability? The answers to these questions are more important than data concerning budget volume. They play a critical role in defence analysis and must be seen as the primary factors upon which a coherent national defence policy is formulated. In addition, while reviewing Australia’s military capability, the issue of potential minor attacks seems small and should be treated accordingly.

It would be helpful for Australia to formally identify which of the following two concepts it has selected as the underlying theory for its defence policy: a) defence against the concrete, calculated threat, or b) the standard defence for an independent country. If Australia supports the former theory, (a), then the *White Paper* should provide a methodology, in a form similar to that used in US defence policy papers, for estimating the military threat to Australia. As it stands, the *Paper* seems to suggest there is no threat calculated. If Australia maintains the latter concept, (b), it would be useful to know in greater detail exactly what is meant by the reference to an “attack against Australia”.

Australia stresses that it is one of the Asian nations. It would be useful for the *Paper* to explain how this concept functions from the standpoint of security and the military policy.

Japan is interested in the Australian concept for regional security contributions. I specifically remember when the Australian Prime Minister ceased referring to the role that Australian Forces were playing in East Timor as “world police.” How does the *Paper* assess Australia’s activities in East Timor and how does it view the responses of other Asian countries to this crisis? It seems that at least Indonesia would not accept the explanation presented in the *Paper*, even from the standpoint of peacekeeping. Australia may have to welcome defence budget increases in neighbouring countries with relatively small-
to medium-sized military capability. Only through such budget increases will these neighbouring countries be able to govern their particular internal security situations by themselves.

By studying issues shown above we can discuss Australia’s contribution to the regional security vis-à-vis the defence of Australia. I am particularly interested in the relationship between the defence mission and the contributory role in regional security for the Australian Land Force.

The claim that Australia has a military budget large enough to maintain maritime (and air) defence capabilities, but still cannot provide full support for regional security seems too simple. The Paper should explain the reasons for this situation and how the appropriate ability to contribute to regional security matters is determined.

In terms of not only Australian national defence but maintenance of regional peace and stability, how does Australia view its relationship with the US and the greater framework of international cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. Furthermore, what is the outlook for Australia’s bilateral security relations with Indonesia, China, India and Japan in future?

Mr. Akiyama worked in the Japan Defence Agency for seven years, during which time he was involved in the process of reaffirming the Japan-US security alliance and reviewing the defence cooperation guidelines between the two nations. He held the post of Vice Minister of Defence before retiring from the Agency in 1998. He is currently engaged in research on current security issues.
Major restructuring is required and public support must be won for this and for a substantial rise in defence expenditure. The Discussion Paper is designed to raise most of the key questions facing defence, generate a public debate and help build a consensus for change.

The Discussion Paper points to many of the factors that are driving us to do more and better in Defence. In real terms the defence budget has now fallen to its lowest level since the late 1930s, equipment acquisition expenditure is being squeezed even harder, and this at a time when the costs of new defence systems are rising at more than three times the rate of domestic inflation. Moreover, when we look into the region we see serious sources of instability, at least some of which are likely to be enduring and the sources of future crises. We also see some regional countries out-spending Australia in defence by more than three times, as a proportion of GDP, and introducing new defence systems that are clearly superior to ours.

Australians face some stark choices. Do we want a third-rate defence force that would face a serious risk of defeat in a future crisis? Do we want to abandon the diplomatic clout that a capable defence force can deliver? Or, do we want to change gears, sharpen our key requirements and spend enough to provide the sort of security for the medium term that our children would expect?

In my view, we are already starting to see the key elements of a consensus emerge. Both sides of parliament, most defence commentators and significant elements of the media are favouring a lift in defence spending, a re-focussing on key defence priorities and a continuing program of reform in defence decision-making and operating processes. But if this agenda for change is to bring the increased security that is required, what are some of the key themes that must win through?

Focus on the essentials but build in some flexibility

We should focus primarily on building those capabilities that are essential for the defence of Australia itself, and its immediate interests. Capabilities acquired for these purposes will provide governments with several options for operations further afield, should they be deemed appropriate at the time. We cannot afford to acquire and maintain all of the capabilities that we might wish, so we need to be very disciplined in avoiding that which is simply “nice to have”.
We need to work harder on our strategy for winning future conflicts

The Discussion Paper is surprisingly thin on the game-plan(s) for winning future conflicts. Getting our strategy right is critical because, at its core, all defence investment needs to be designed to help change the minds of the opposing decision-making elite and force them rapidly to the negotiating table on favourable terms. If we can’t do this in the range of crises we may face in the future, we will lose. If we get our strategy right, especially at the theatre level, it should be a pervading influence on almost everything else that Defence does – including what it buys.

We need to invest selectively in our own version of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)

Creatively combining selected advanced technologies, new operational concepts and changed organisational structures would appear to offer some very high pay-off new options for Australian defence force development. We need to pick up some of the most promising opportunities and start an evolutionary process of experimentation and adoption.

Reinforce the value of our key alliance relationships

Australia’s current circumstances underline the enduring nature of our shared security interests with the United States and our other close allies and friends. Indeed, in exploring novel approaches to the RMA and other issues there may be scope for more joint capability demonstrators and other combined activities. Despite these close alliance links, it will remain important for the Australian Defence Force to be able to conduct key categories of operation on its own, to safeguard against the possibility of Washington being distracted elsewhere when we face a future crisis.

Work harder to marshal whole-of-nation capabilities for future crises

In future crises, persuading the opposing decision-making elite to change its mind will take much more than just our defence capabilities. It is time that we put in place effective means of marshalling the diplomatic, financial, industrial, transport, and other
capabilities of the nation with great efficiency and effectiveness for future crises. This might best be done by a small staff working directly to the National Security Committee of Cabinet.

**Face up to the new threats and get nimble**

Nearly all Australians would prefer to ignore the momentum behind the proliferation of ballistic and cruise missiles, the disturbing developments in chemical and biological weapons, the potential for the terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction and the preparations of others for waging cyberwar. These concerns should not drive our defence development, but there is scope for Australia to be rather more pro-active in our efforts to prepare for these threats.

**We need a new approach to our Reserve Forces**

When regular personnel are likely to be an even scarcer asset in the future, we need to find ways of making better use of, and attracting and retaining larger numbers of, reserve personnel. The Australian civil skills base is vast and deeply impressive. New and more flexible ways of harnessing this resource for defence purposes need to be found.

**Reaping the full gains from contracting out**

When Defence functions are contracted out, the surplus Defence personnel need to be wasted from the payroll, not just reallocated to other duties. It is time to get past the pain and win some more of the gains from the Commercial Support Program.

**A new toughness and rigour in defence analysis**

In recent years Defence has paid a high price for having wound back its hard-nosed analytical capabilities. One consequence has been some very poor and expensive decisions. Another has been some important opportunities missed. It is time to make amends.

**More must be spent**

There can be no avoiding the fact that defence spending needs to rise from its current level of 1.9 per cent of GDP to something like 2.3 per cent–2.4 per cent of GDP if Australia is to develop the kind of first-rate capability to defend the country that the electorate would expect. The level of expenditure needed is close to the average we spent during the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

**Moving in New Directions**

While there may be more money flowing to the defence portfolio during the coming decade, the challenges for management will be even more intense. A strong and unavoidable message is that the Defence Force is facing major change. Some long-held capabilities can no longer be justified, but other completely new ones are essential to bring onboard quickly. Defence needs to become much more practiced at analysing and comparing alternative total defence systems, not just alternative elements of capability, and it needs to strengthen the skills and methodologies required. Making these changes whilst maintaining a clear focus on the essential roles and tasks and the wherewithal for implementing winning strategies will require great management skill and strong political commitment.

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Dr Babbage is Director of the Centre for International Strategic Analysis (CISA), headquartered in Perth. CISA is a non-profit corporation committed to bringing the highest quality analytical minds to bear on the key issues facing Australia’s corporate decision-makers. Dr Babbage has previously held senior positions in the Department of Defence, the Office of National Assessments, the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at ANU and with ADI Limited.
F–111 with bombs and missiles
The fundamental problem for contemporary defence planning at the strategic level is that the strategic environment can and does change at a rate which far exceeds the ability to adjust the defence force organisation, its structure, capabilities and capacity. Accordingly, capability planners need to direct their attention to future possibilities, to situations beyond current warning indicators. This raises three issues, particularly for small forces.

a. There is a need to avoid the temptation to have a little bit of everything, comforting to those seeking to preserve sectional interests, but risking the attainment of effective levels of deployable operational capability.

b. Both short-and long-term exigencies need consideration. Short-term requirements naturally attract attention, but longer-term needs should not be neglected. Difficult choices involving both likelihood and consequences of particular contingencies are involved.

c. Finally, in a highly competitive resource environment, how are resource levels beyond those required to meet evident existing commitments actually justified? Yet investment in future requirements and an appropriate internal allocation of defence resources are essential for long-term security.

The decisions on long-term defence investments are matters for government. Only governments can make the key decision on the degree of strategic risk they are prepared to accept, on the level of resources to be devoted to defence and on the broad priorities for defence expenditure. The task of the defence planner is to articulate clearly the choices and the potential consequences of decisions.

Intelligence, no matter how professional and competent, can not provide complete answers to these issues. Good analysis based on solid evidence can narrow the field in providing a substantial degree of confidence in judgements of what can not happen. For example, comparative force analysis with estimates of capability development times gives a high degree of confidence that Australia will not face for some years a realistic threat of massive invasion of the continent. Further, it is clear that preparations for such action would become evident long before any potential assault. But intelligence is limited in that it can not predict with reliability what will occur, particularly over the long lead times associated with effective defence planning and capability generation. Discontinuities in the strategic environment are the factors of real concern for planners. Yet, because unexpected, they are rarely forecast with sufficient confidence to allow effective advanced decision-making. Recent examples include the Asian Pacific financial crisis of 1997/98 and the Timor operations of 1999/2000, each of which will have significant but different long-term consequences for Australia’s international and regional standing and for its security outlook.

Events of this significance will inevitably have consequences for Australia’s defence capabilities and preparedness. And may involve increased investment in defence and changes in policy and priorities. Frequently such events will lead to public debate and speculation about
future intentions. It is here that there is real potential for significant misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Importantly, it is at times of regional tension and uncertainty that the consequences of faulty speculation are at the greatest danger of adding to the complexity of managing the situation.

Over recent decades the publication by Australia of an unclassified version of each of its periodic strategic reviews has done much to promote understanding of Australia's outlook and broad stance. Indeed the adoption by regional countries of a similar, if not quite so thorough, equivalent process has added to the transparency and confidence-building initiatives essential to the management of relationships with the South-East Asian Region.

However, there remains in explanation a gap between the strategic policy position and force structure outcomes. This leaves open the tendency to read fundamental policy shifts incorrectly as relatively minor force structure or readiness changes, and vice versa.

This gap in understanding can be overcome in part by the articulation of Australia’s Defence Posture. Such a document would reflect the outcome of a whole series of defence policy and force structure deliberations. In turn this provides a defined baseline for ongoing deliberations on aspects such as:

- variations to defence policy;
- adjustments to military strategic concepts;
- force structures;
- capability considerations;
- preparedness needs;
- sustainability;
- force disposition;
- expansion planning; and
- commercial support

Importantly in the expected dynamic strategic and technological environment, mass alone is an inadequate measure of defence capability and potential. The quality and educational level of forces will be all the more significant as cutting edge technologies replace many of the past ways of warfare. In a reversal of the trend of the last century to larger forces, decisive moves in combat now, and in the future, are likely to be accomplished by smaller, longer-range, precise, focussed and powerful systems. Under these circumstances, the quality of the individual soldier and the command arrangements become more important.

In future, battlefield advantages will be drawn not so much from the superior weapons, but from the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). When mastered, the RMA allows forces to derive great power from the synergistic benefits of combining knowledge, experience, commitment, training discipline, and precision with advanced platforms and weapons. Australia is one of the relatively few nations with the education, scientific, industrial, attitudinal and geographic assets to make best use of RMA possibilities.

In this, just as is necessary in defence planning to move away from straight line projections of trends in international affairs, force structure planning needs to become a more dynamic process if the full benefit of the RMA is to be achieved. This is best illustrated by a contemporary example. There is little doubt that Australia’s standing in the region and beyond has been influenced significantly by the performance of INTERFET. It was the speed of deployment and the professionalism of the personnel rather than the weapon systems which produced the outstanding result. As a result Australia can aspire to leadership of future regional reaction to contingencies of similar style. Australia’s defence posture is not only influenced by policy objectives, but the objectives themselves are in part established by reference to national posture.

Any statement of Australia’s defence posture needs to recognise the interaction between objectives and capabilities. Policy positions not only help shape capability needs of the force but characteristics of the force shape the boundaries of feasible policy objectives. In particular flexibility and innovation are increasingly important characteristics which should be pursued with vigour. Posture, accordingly, is the sum of
capability, preparedness and sustainability as they both express policy and influence the articulation of policy.

For simplicity, it could be expressed as:

If it is to add clarity to understanding of Australia’s defence intention, a statement of posture must cover key aspects at various levels of significance and time-frames. For example, the development of the chain of bare air bases to the north of Australia and deployment forward of Army formations should be seen as part of the evolution of defence infrastructure rather than a change in threat perceptions. But at the same time, positioning of force elements in the north, also contributes to deployability as they are acclimatised for operations in the region. Or at a different level, units structured around the needs of a conventional conflict might be trained and prepared to undertake other missions such as peacekeeping.

By way of illustration the following table sets out a number of the characteristics of Australia’s defence posture.

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<tr>
<th>The Fundamentals</th>
<th>The Constants</th>
<th>The Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-expansionary</td>
<td>Joint Force (not integrated)</td>
<td>ORBAT – Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based around the self-reliant defence of Australia and its primary interests</td>
<td>Reliance on industry/commercial support</td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
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<td>Non-nuclear force</td>
<td>Emphasis on knowledge edge</td>
<td>Entry standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional all volunteer force</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Training emphasis and standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix of full-and part-time members</td>
<td>Small size of full-time component</td>
<td>High proportion of force deployable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technologically competent</td>
<td>Maritime focus, emphasis on air</td>
<td>Support to civil community – commitments</td>
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<td>Alliance relationship with the USA</td>
<td>Regional participation and leadership</td>
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<td>Interoperability, alliance and regional</td>
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<td>Northern disposition</td>
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<td>Expandability</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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Clearly this list is not exhaustive. It is intended only to suggest a framework around which statements of defence posture can be structured. Depending on the audience for which it is directed, so the degree of detail can be adjusted. Also, it allows further elaboration in specific areas to deal with particular issues under consideration at any point in time.

A further connection that needs to be made is that the flow of effect is downward. For example, a change of Fundamental would result in a chain reaction through the Constants and the Variables. The reverse does not hold true. This difference is important in explanation of the significance of decisions flowing from a change in the strategic environment. Managed properly it can assist in avoiding the misunderstandings presently encountered in defence policy issues and debates.

In overcoming weaknesses in the present presentation of Australia’s defence outlook, it is the component headed “The Constants” where most debate occurs and explanation is needed. It is here that the greatest interaction between physical and psychological factors occurs, where aspects such as flexibility, inventiveness and commitment can at times more than outweigh shortcomings in structure and capability. For example, all volunteer forces generally perform far better than conscript forces, or command arrangements which provide for initiative of subordinate commanders, often win over rigid systems.

It is in these non-material aspects that the Australian forces have long excelled, yet these are rarely encountered in capability considerations. Indeed there is presently a danger that narrowly focused skills development will work against innovation and flexibility. Considerations of posture can overcome this weakness.

Posture, then, is an articulation of how the Australian Defence Force “looks” both domestically and internationally. It is not directed at aggression or intimidation but at what, credibly, the Australian Defence Force might be required to do by Government.

General Baker joined the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1954, graduating in 1957 he was commissioned into the Royal Australian Engineers. He served in a number of Engineers Units throughout his early career. Following a year at Army Staff College, Queenscliff he undertook a number of staff appointments in Army Headquarters. General Baker served in Vietnam and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1971. Promoted Colonel in 1979 he was appointed Director of Combat Development – Army until posted to the Office of the Chief of the Defence Force Staff in 1980. Promoted Brigadier in 1982 he assumed the duties of Director General Joint Services Policy. In 1987 he was promoted to Major General and took up the duties of Chief of Logistics – Army and in 1989 was appointed Director, Joint Intelligence Organisation. Promoted Lieutenant General in 1992 he took up the appointment of Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

The Survival of the Fittest?

By Commodore Sam Bateman AM RAN (Retd.)

Twenty years ago Australia’s defence planners were in the grips of “Defence Darwinism” as they sought a survivor from the new tactical fighter project, the follow-on destroyer program, and the Navy’s bid to maintain its aircraft carrier capability. In the event, the new tactical fighter project led to the acquisition of the F/A-18, the follow-on destroyer program down-sized to the Australian Frigate Program, and the Navy lost its organic fixed-wing air capability.

Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force sets up a similar round of “Defence Darwinism”. One of its basic choices is whether we can maintain a full range of air and maritime capabilities or “should we specialise in one or two capabilities, putting lower priority on others?” My commentary addresses this choice and in doing so, flags some broader concerns of maritime security.

The Discussion Paper acknowledges that Australia’s strategic environment is “fundamentally maritime” but then gives little consideration to the complex requirements of maritime security. The Paper implies that the main Defence focus should be the ultimate, but highly improbable, threat of major invasion of Australia. This will be handled through air strikes against the invasion forces and bases of the adversary. The Paper emphasises air combat and strike capabilities in higher levels of conflict. Air Combat is the first (and priority?) military capability discussed and with a classical Freudian slip, the Paper includes two almost identical photographs of an F/A-18 Hornet firing an AIM-7 Sparrow missile.

This focus on high technology air capabilities and full-scale open warfare is simplistic. It has the potential to distort Australia’s defence capabilities in such a way that the ADF may be incapable of effectively dealing with contingencies short of major assault on Australia and more likely in the foreseeable future. The focus could also markedly weaken community perceptions of the utility and relevance of the ADF, particularly if the public comes to share the view that wars between nations are now less likely.

The capabilities to defeat an invasion of Australia may have almost no utility for more probable contingencies. Australia’s air combat aircraft have not been used in operations since the Korean War while maritime and land capabilities have figured prominently in all active service contributions by Australia over the last 50 years. The proponents of air combat and strike capabilities will of course argue that these capabilities had a major deterrent value in East Timor. However, the same could be said of the much more visible presence of the major surface combatants covering the landings in East Timor. Also, our land forces in Timor were heavily dependent on the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) from Australia.

Incredibly there is no mention in Defence Review 2000 of the importance of shipping and the protection of SLOCs to Australia’s security. Strategically important shipping could include ships carrying essential support for operations in the island arc, critical commodities and military supplies into Australia, or fuel and stores for ADF operations in northern Australia. High levels of air activity from RAAF Tindal or the Curtin and Scherger bare bases would depend upon re-supply of fuel by sea as it is inconceivable that with the current land transport infrastructure, these bases could be re-supplied by land alone.

There are other major problems with the consideration of maritime security in Defence Review 2000. The Paper identifies Australia’s most immediate strategic interests as lying in...
the arc of islands stretching from Indonesia to the Southwest Pacific but gives little consideration to how the ADF might operate within that arc. The arc is part of Australia’s maritime environment and maritime capabilities are required to operate there, particularly to deploy and sustain a presence. Flexible sea-based capabilities will have marked utility just as they have for operations elsewhere around Australia and our offshore territories. Relevant sea-based capabilities include air defence, air support for land forces, command and control, surveillance and monitoring, as well as amphibious and logistic support.

Another major problem is the lack of an evident link with Australia’s Oceans Policy released in December 1998. Australia’s Oceans Policy is a major policy initiative that provides the strategic planning framework to protect and manage the large areas of ocean under Australia’s jurisdiction. Australia has rights and obligations in an area of ocean that is at least 50 per cent larger than the continental landmass of Australia and protecting these rights and fulfilling our obligations are major elements of maritime security. In a section on “Protecting the National Interests”, Australia’s Oceans Policy identifies that the challenges for Defence are:

- To protect Australia’s national interests and sovereign rights.
- To provide accurate, up-to-date hydrographic, oceanographic and navigation information within our marine jurisdiction.

(Australia’s Oceans Policy, Vol. 2, p. 37)

In a startling breakdown in coordination between two major areas of public policy, there is no acknowledgement in Defence Review 2000 of how Defence will meet these challenges. The challenges encompass threats, such as illegal fishing, illegal migration, drug smuggling, piracy and pollution. The ability to deal with such threats is a vital element of maritime security. It is not a question as to whether the ADF’s contributions to these roles “should grow or shrink”. Under current arrangements, no agency other than the ADF has both a responsibility and the capability to provide this security.

Defence Review 2000 flags some difficult policy choices. Many of these are set up as alternatives but the reality is that most are not true alternatives. Some capabilities have utility for only a limited number of contingencies while others are relevant to a much fuller range. Some are more fundamental requirements than others. From a maritime security point of view, basic capabilities comprise those that allow us to maintain effective surveillance and response in Australia’s Maritime Jurisdiction and maritime approaches, including the island arc, and to sustain a military presence there. Rather than lose or degrade some of these capabilities, in the short-term it may well be necessary to accept the apparent “falling behind” of our air combat and strike capability.5

NOTES

2. ibid., p. viii.
3. ibid., pp. 36 and 59.
4. ibid., p. 4.
5. ibid., p. 30.
6. ibid., p. 37.

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Security Regionalisation and the Future of the Australian Defence Forces

By Dr C. Bell, Australian National University

The tasks that Australia’s defence forces may face in the next few decades are likely to be shaped by four factors: unipolarity, normative shift, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), and security regionalisation.

Unipolarity (that is, the absence for the next few decades of any plausible military “peer competitor” to the US) means that hegemonic war, like World War I and II is very unlikely for that period of time. Normative shift means that diplomatic and political pressures for intervention in the most likely kind of wars (local “wars of identity” such as Kosovo and East Timor) will possibly increase. The Revolution in Military Affairs means that US interventions in such episodes is likely to concentrate on modes compatible with the “force protection norm”, which was the basis of the US Kosovo strategy.

Taken together, those three factors seem to me to imply the fourth: security regionalisation. Both Kosovo and East Timor were essentially regional crises, handled largely by regional means. Those two small provinces were strategically and economically of importance only to their immediate neighbourhoods. And though the norm created in each case was of universal validity (that minorities are not to be massacred or expelled or deprived of their human rights by the governments which claim sovereignty over them), the military interventions to uphold that norm were and are essentially regional. If Australia had not had forces and bases nearby (or had not been willing to use them) nothing effective would have been likely on East Timor. The many crises of Africa are these days mostly being left to African coalitions even though that has entailed many failures and disasters. The only regions in which a global US-centred response to crises still appears certain are the Gulf (because of the global interest in oil supplies) and the Korea-Taiwan area, because of its importance to global strategic relationships.

So security regionalisation appears well under way. Its main implication for the structure and capacities of the Australian defence forces is a clearer distinction between the “high-tech” element in the ADF and the capacities required for lower-intensity operations. For the “high-tech” end, the US alliance is more than ever indispensable. The Revolution in Military Affairs offers the most promising set of systems yet evolved to solve Australia’s permanent strategic dilemma: how to defend a very large territory and a long and vulnerable coastline with forces which will always remain very small by global or regional standards. The information and technologies which the US provides are crucial to our retaining (or repairing?) our somewhat diminished technological edge, which in turn is vital to the defence of the sea-air gap to the north.

The RMA is a research area in which the evolution of systems takes such radical turns that it justifies postponing decisions on replacements during the “bloc obsolescence” period until as late as is compatible with safety, even if it means interim “updatings”. Advanced versions of traditional, familiar systems are not necessarily the long-term answers. The successors to the F18s or the F111s, 20 years hence, might be UAVs or UACVs, or missiles. The successors to the frigates might be arsenal ships. When the
savings in personnel are taken into account, the radically new systems might actually be cheaper than the current ones.

Some of the systems projected by the RMA especially surveillance, may be useful to low-intensity operations, but here it is clear that numbers of personnel - “boots on the ground” are likely to remain vital. The basic question is who will be available to be wearing the boots? Fit, well-educated young men and women, 17-24 such as the Services have traditionally looked to recruit, are going to be a scarce and dwindling resource all over the advanced world in the next few generations. Birth rates are well below replacement rates almost everywhere in the West. Able young people will have many alluring and remunerative other professional opportunities.

But a larger and perhaps more “available” demographic cohort is just appearing on the horizon: the “baby-boomers”. At a median age now of 50, many of them will have raised the kids, paid off the mortgage and gone as far as they are going in their careers. A new interest, with a touch of adventure and altruism about it, like helping a small people to reconstruct their devastated society, might appeal to quite a few of them. And they will have skills and experience useful for the actual tasks that arise in the aftermath of events like those of East Timor: re-creating schools and legal systems and coping with the sad civilian casualties of modern conflict.

The troops sent to East Timor and Kosovo were combat troops, but in neither case did they see much combat in the traditional sense. They went into “permissive environments”, secured in East Timor by diplomatic pressures, and in Kosovo by an air campaign and a diplomatic deal. Those patterns seem to me the likeliest ones for many future peace enforcement or peacekeeping operations, including the ones in the “arc of crisis” where Australia’s primary strategic interests lie.

There are of course real dangers in such operations, so the “first wave” probably should always be of professional combat troops. But these are not necessarily going to be brief operations: the NATO troops are still in Bosnia, for instance, five years after “peace” was established. Australia could not possibly tie up its tiny combat forces for so long. That is where a “second wave” of what might be called “guardian forces” or “auxiliary reserve” would prove useful. In the age-cohort that I have suggested difficulties over employment promotion and family responsibilities (for women as well as men) might well be less than for younger reservists still making their careers and their lives. I am not suggesting a “Dad’s Army” but an armed and uniformed force with training, weapons and rules of engagement adequate to allowing its members to defend not only themselves but the local victims of harassment or revenge-seeking.

Dr Bell was one of the first women recruited to the Australian diplomatic service where she served during the late war years. She moved from there to the academic analysis of international politics, obtaining her PhD in the University of London. She went on to become Professor of International Relations at the University of Sussex, and returned to the ANU in 1977. Dr Bell is interested in the future of the society of states in the new millennium, particularly in the interaction of its economic, diplomatic and strategic dimensions in a unipolar world; also in crisis management and in American foreign policy. Dr Bell has been writing a book to be published by the United Nations University in 2000, entitled "Kosovo and the International Community". Her study analyses the relation between force, diplomacy and norms in the management of the crisis. She has also written a study of the “zero casualties” strategy as attempted in Kosovo, and an article on “Washington and Unipolarity” to be published shortly by The National Interest, Washington.
Perhaps it isn’t sure yet. With the recent release of a Defence discussion paper, there is now a formal community consultation on the future defence force. Maybe the Government believes the strategic policy decisions Australia now faces are too important to be left to our military High Command.

The White Paper must analyse the roles that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) need to play to provide a broad range of military options for government. The INTERFET deployment demonstrated to many that the ADF is needed to perform a leading military role in the region. Even peaceniks marched for our warriors to go north.

But East Timor also highlighted the need to clarify whether the ADF should focus on being the leading high-tech force in the region or a force that has enough personnel to intervene in the immediate neighbourhood to keep peace on the ground.

Australia’s focus in the past has been on building forces to defend northern Australia from a relatively large military threat. But this has occurred only once in our history. It is unlikely to arise again in the foreseeable future, and is an eventuality which we would have most warning. Defence has, however, continued to invest in weapons platforms that have been justified against the least likely, long-term needs of a large scale direct military threat.

We are, however, confronted by a range of lesser but still serious security threats such as illegal immigration, drug smuggling and illegal fishing. Our strategic environment is volatile and we may see further calls for the ADF to undertake peacekeeping operations and evacuations.

What is more likely than the defence of the continent is that the ADF will be required to participate in regional engagements in our area of strategic interest and beyond. The Howard doctrine of the ADF acting as a regional deputy sheriff was a clear statement that the defence of Australia does not simply begin at the low-water mark. It includes the capacity to deploy into the region. Timor showed that our defence policy would be a failure if we allowed a crisis to unfold in our immediate region and did nothing to prevent it or at least minimise the costs.

But that is not to argue that the ADF should be structured for high-intensity conflict remote from Australia. In the marathon race of states developing the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), mainly advanced developments in information technology, the US is way out in front. Few countries, including Australia, can keep up. We cannot afford to go “all the way with RMA”. In most US-led coalitions we will be the token “flag carrier”.

Contrary to the recent Green Paper, that suggests a decision must be made between defence of Australia and regional commitments, supporting ANZUS deployments and peacekeeping and that these choices dictate different force structures, we should be aiming at a balanced force of the three Services which can participate in operations up to and including medium level conflict either in Australia or offshore. The term defence of Australia should mean more than defence of the continent – it should mean...
defence of Australia and its interests, which includes the capacity to deploy into the region.

Capabilities for defence of Australia will also perform tasks to meet regional commitments such as peacekeeping, humanitarian operations and alliance commitments. East Timor showed a well trained and equipped force can handle peacekeeping and humanitarian work. As the respected defence analyst Derek Woolner recently pointed out to a forum on the Green Paper in Canberra, the choices of role for the ADF do not imply exclusionary force structures. While there may be differences in numbers in inventory, associated systems and states of readiness dictated by decisions relating to the three “choices” in the Green Paper, Woolner correctly argues that these are “issues of balance, rather than fundamental differences of force structures”.

In developing the White Paper greater attention needs to be given to a more people-centric view of defence capability. While Defence has aspired to a knowledge edge strategy for some time this is normally presented in platform-hardware-software terms (superior knowledge of the battlespace confers a combat edge). In the future the knowledge edge will be very dependent on harnessing the knowledge of an increasingly well-educated ADF. The Green Paper unfortunately characterises capability in terms of weapons platforms. But it will be people with ideas and knowledge that will become the key factor in gaining a military edge in the future. People need to be linked into defence capabilities in the White Paper. After all, they consume around 40 per cent of the defence budget.

The extent and size of the force will be limited by the budget, but the roles required of the ADF as outlined should be the basic aim. Here the budgetary challenges are very severe and where the White Paper will need to present an honest picture to allow Government to make a decision on resources. The Green Paper unfortunately in places creates the impression that lower priorities can simply be entirely abolished without serious consideration of their importance to the overall force and its long-term capabilities.

By around 2007 the ADF will have to face up to the problem of retiring much of its most important equipment. The cost of replacing this equipment to 2020 is estimated at between $80 billion and $110 billion. Personnel costs are rising and will restrict options for ADF force structure development. The financial pressures are so severe that Defence will have to select which of its capabilities should be developed and which removed. It will have to focus on defining its key roles and objectives. But then, this is much of what other Departments have been struggling with for the past few years.

In the 1933 film Duck Soup Groucho Marx plays Rufus Firefly, dictator of the tiny nation of Freedonia that is at war with its neighbour. On being told that both sides declared a ceasefire Groucho exclaims; “But they can’t— I’ve still got two months rent on the battlefield”. Judging from Minister Moore’s recent performance, Defence will not be permitted to collect the rent unless the White Paper can clearly articulate Australia’s security needs and define the roles of the ADF within that broader framework.

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Choosing to Make Choices

By Graeme Cheeseman, University of New South Wales

In the preface to their Public Discussion Paper, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence argue that Australia must review its existing defence policies in light of growing budgetary pressures and the fundamental changes taking place around us. Unlike in the past, the Government now wants to include the Australian people in its considerations as part of a “new approach to making defence policy” in Australia (Canada and Britain conducted similar broad-ranging reviews in 1994 and 1997 respectively). The people are being asked for their views on four questions: 1) what should Australia’s armed forces do? 2) where should they operate? 3) how should they be structured; and 4) how should we spend the existing (or an expanded) defence budget. The Discussion Paper, associated video and “capability fact book”, are intended to help the public inform its considerations on these questions by detailing Australia’s changing strategic environment and interests, some of the key policy, capability and spending choices and dilemmas facing our defence planners, and three potential force structures for Australia’s military forces.

While on the surface, the Discussion Paper and associated consultative process are both welcome and overdue, a closer examination gives us some causes for concern. In spite of the complex nature of the issues involved, less than six weeks has been allocated for meeting with the public. Some of those doing the consulting are already on the record as supporting one or other of the options being canvassed. And the series of public and private hearings has been constructed specifically to exclude most of those who write and research on the topics of national, regional and global security. For a document concerned with encouraging a “vigorous, challenging and constructive discussion” of Australia’s defence and security policies, moreover, the Discussion Paper does little to assist the average Australian in coming to an informed decision on the matters raised. We hear only one side of the story - that presented by the Department of Defence. This acknowledges in some areas the problematic nature of some of the arguments and premises being made, but fails to elaborate on these or, even, to provide information or pointers to enable those interested in the issue to follow them up.

More worrying still is the way in which the force structure options are presented. The third option – organising Australia’s military forces for operations other than war – is probably, as I will argue shortly, the most appropriate one for Australia in the coming decades. Yet it is presented in a way that is neither fair nor reasonable. The kinds of activities included under this option are too narrowly defined. Readers are warned that it would entail “significant cuts to our forces’ warfighting components”, and could only be followed “if it was assessed that the need for combat forces was very low and that alliances would provide an adequate guarantee of our security”. In case we hadn’t got the message, the Paper adds that the option would be a “major departure in current policy”, and one that would take us down the road of New Zealand! In any case, such operations are said to be able to be carried out by forces developed for the other two “warfighting” options (a position that is informed as much by myths and mantras as an objective view of the issue). Whoever wrote this section of the Paper is clearly only interested in open or frank discussion if it focuses on options one and two.
And yet, as the Paper’s own analysis makes clear, the option of organising the ADF for security rather than traditional defence operations needs to be taken very seriously. The end of the Cold War and the process of globalisation is lessening the prospect of major interstate wars. The key security concerns for Australia, and the countries in its immediate region, are now largely non-military in nature. While there are various causes for concern about the prospects for peace and security in the region, so are there increasing causes for optimism. Australia’s defence and security posture should be fundamentally concerned with enhancing these causes for optimism rather than with remaining obsessed with the causes for concern. This requires us to do what we have done in practice for the last 20 years: in cooperation with others help failed or failing states through their troubles and became part of the international community, be ready to protect local communities against human rights and other abuses, and deal with such sources of insecurity as international crime, piracy and environmental degradation. These kinds of roles do not require F-111 aircraft or missile-firing submarines. They require, rather, the kinds of forces, capabilities, skills and attitudes we have seen in operation in such places as East Timor, Cambodia, Namibia, and Bougainville. The problem for the Defence Minister and his advisers is that this path will require a change, not only in policy but also in Australia’s military and public cultures. This remains the last, most difficult yet most important area of defence reform.

The Government is correct in insisting that the current process is about choices and decisions. The Defence establishment needs boundaries within which to work and plan. The Government has also to meet certain responsibilities and expectations, both to its own citizens and those beyond Australia’s borders. But Australia has finite resources. It cannot do everything everyone would like or expect it to do, nor should it try. The real questions are, first, whether the Government is prepared to make decisions and set boundaries. It says it is but its and its predecessor’s record on adjusting conceptually to fundamentally “new times” is poor to say the least. Second, on what basis should the choices outlined, albeit imperfectly, in the Discussion Paper be made? In an era of fundamental and far-reaching change, is it reasonable to proceed from a start-point which is problematic and, in many respects, out-moded? Or from the basis of popular understandings of peace and war that are centred around the policies and practices of the past? Or in accord with the insular and self-serving dictates of real politik? The task ahead of the Government is much more difficult than is allowed by its spokespersons or, even, the Defence Discussion Paper. It requires not just strength of resolve but an appreciation of our changing times and their security implications, a sense of strategic vision, a preparedness to lead rather than follow, and a capacity and willingness to see Australia and its interests in much broader terms: from an increasingly cosmopolitan rather than a communitarian perspective. There is no evidence that politicians and their advisers are capable of, or interested in, making these kinds of adjustments. We are likely, therefore, to see the same old answers being given to the same old questions.

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Transforming the ADF’s Force Structure For the 21st Century

By Professor Paul Dibb, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University

The most difficult part in writing any Defence White Paper is the process of arriving at force structure priorities. The relatively easy part is analysing the strategic situation and what it means for Australia. But even so there are some difficult questions to answer about what is an appropriate defence strategy. The Public Discussion Paper asks what do we want our Armed Forces to be able to do. One reply is that they must be structured for the defence of Australia and to protect Australia’s interests. But what are “Australia’s interests”? Do they include, for example, the ability to defend our sea lines of communication and is this a credible task for a small nation such as ours? Or rather do we concentrate on the ability to defend our maritime approaches and focal points? Australia’s interests should be few in number and expressed in priority order.

There is also the question of where we want our Armed Forces to be able to operate. In defending Australia’s regional interests, does that include a force capable of making a substantial contribution to high-intensity conflict in Northeast Asia? If so, what would that cost?

When it comes to determining the best way to structure the Defence Force it is obvious that military operations other than war, including peacekeeping, are much cheaper than maintaining a high-technology force structured for high-intensity conflict. But if Australia is to be taken seriously as a competent military power it must be able to do much more than peacekeeping, as important as that may be in our new strategic environment.

It is, however, ridiculous to believe that Australia can afford to structure its Defence Force to fight at the high end of the combat spectrum in Northeast Asia. If, for example, we wanted to have a force of two or three armoured divisions equipped with attack helicopters and ground to air missiles and capable of operating in a nuclear, chemical and biological threat, what would that cost? Or what about having one or two aircraft carrier battle groups with VSTOL aircraft and equipped with Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles? And what would be the cost of acquiring 70 to 100 advanced combat aircraft, such as the F22, to operate alongside US forces in a high-intensity combat environment in Northeast Asia?

Acquisition costs alone for such a high threat expeditionary force might well exceed $70 to 100 billion. And the through-life support costs could be at least three times this amount. Clearly, those who dream about such matters when we spend only about $2.5 billion a year on equipment acquisition are living in a fool’s paradise.

The former Chief of the Defence Force, General John Baker, in evidence before the Defence Subcommittee of the Parliament’s Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade on the 30 June said that: “I am a strong proponent of structuring around the self-reliant defence of Australia”. He went on to say that any contribution that Australia could make to high-intensity combat in Northeast Asia would be “minuscule” and that we need to clearly understand the limitations of Australia’s power.

But there can be no doubt that we do need to transform the ADF into a different sort of Defence Force to meet the strategic challenges of the 21st century. My view is that the defence of Australia and the archipelago to our
north and east are now one force structure planning problem. This is what I have termed “the Regional Defence of Australia”. We need to be able to operate there in an essentially maritime and littoral environment. We also need to be able to handle two regional contingencies simultaneously (for example an escalated East Timor type situation at the same time as a Service protected evacuation from Papua New Guinea).

The sort of limited expeditionary forces suggested here should include a larger and more mobile Army supported by greater air and sealift and armed reconnaissance helicopters. Our Navy needs to move away from the idea of open ocean AAW destroyers and concentrate instead on maritime operations, including in support of the Army, in the archipelago and the maritime approaches to Australia. Our Air Force is deficient in in-flight refuelling and most contingency plans show that this, as well as heavier airlift, are very significant force multipliers. And we should think about radically different solutions for our future strike requirements.

Above all else, we need to press ahead and give very high priority to having a clear superiority over regional powers in the areas of intelligence and surveillance, as well as command and control and communications.

This will not come cheap. It may amount to as much as 30 per cent of our future capital spend. As for interoperability with the United States, it is obviously crucial that we retain this capacity but in highly selected areas. And whilst we must always be able to make a modest contribution to alliance operations much further afield, the US will expect us to be the most influential military power in our own region.

What might all this cost to develop a Defence Force for “the Regional Defence of Australia”? It is hard to say with any precision until the real accrual-based costs of the force element groups that I have described are arrived at. An indicative estimate, based on the United Kingdom’s experience in developing an expeditionary force for mid-intensity conflict, is that it will cost about 2.5 per cent of GDP. Australia currently spends 1.8 per cent of GDP on defence. If then we were to emulate the UK it would cost an additional $4.2 billion a year, which is an increase of one-third on our current defence budget.

This is clearly a big ask. A more feasible goal politically would be for the Government immediately to increase the defence budget to 2 per cent of GDP, which would be an increase of about $1.2 billion. It would then need to commit itself to real growth in the defence budget of three to four per cent per annum. This would generate an additional $5 to 6 billion over five years. Given Defence’s presently parlous budgetary condition, this would only provide the bare minimum for what is necessary to transform the force structure of the ADF for the 21st century.

Professor Paul Dibb is Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University and was previously Deputy Secretary in the Department of Defence.
Educating Cabinet

By Graeme Dobell, Radio Australia/ABC Foreign Affairs/Defence Correspondent

The Discussion Paper wins an immediate prize for the most lukewarm endorsement of the US alliance ever formally issued from Russell Hill. The Green Paper strays into marshlands of probability and imagination as it grapples with Australian expectations of future American actions.

It is hard to imagine today’s United States standing back if a close ally like Australia was threatened... So we can probably expect to receive support, including military support, in any crisis that directly threatens our security... America is hardly likely to allow Australia to be overrun. But we need to think how things might change in the decades ahead."

It is clearly an honest rendering of the limits on probable help from America. In its unipolar moment, the US is still great and powerful, but how the friendship will apply is open to speculation. Just as a key reason for holding Parliamentary inquiries is to educate Parliamentarians, so a central purpose for a Green/White paper process is to educate a Cabinet. A government that expressed surprise when it couldn’t summon American “on the ground” for Timor needs to clarify its assumptions (or hopes) about the alliance.

The Green Paper questions how closely Australia’s interests and perceptions will match those of the US. And, by implication, the Paper expresses doubt about the current American doctrine that the US will have the military capacity to fight two regional wars simultaneously, asking: “What would happen if the US was deeply committed elsewhere when we needed its support?”

The continuing tensions between self-reliance and the enormous benefits of the alliance run through the equipment debates that drive the discussion. In brutal win-lose terms, the Air Force is way ahead and the surface Navy is taking water.

A lot of space is devoted to the investment challenge posed by future fighter capability. This is described as the most difficult budget issue because the fighters “provide Australia with the primary means of controlling our air and maritime approaches”.

While the Air Force fighter gets a couple of pages, the surface Navy is effectively dealt with in one sharp paragraph. The Paper defines two big decisions:

• Do we need expensive ships that can shoot down attacking aircraft at a long range?
• What size and quality of fleet do we build for the second decade of the 21st century and beyond?

The surface Navy-fighter aircraft tension is the starkest equipment conundrum because it is the most expensive. But other choices will be equally hard fought. Do we really need tanks, for instance? The agonising over the aircraft carrier in the early 1980s shows how hard it is for Australia to let go of a capability. And this leads us back to the alliance and Australia’s musings about its regional roles.

Blessedly, the second Howard Government has outgrown the map creep or mission creep that marked its first term. We hear less about Australia’s defence role in the Asia Pacific, with all that implied about operations in Korea, the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea.

Timor, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Fiji and the huge issues confronting Indonesia mean Australia has brought its focus back to the foreground – South-East Asia and the South Pacific (with the odd worried glance across the Indian Ocean at the new nuclear powers).
When the Paper talks about “our region” it is looking at ASEAN and the island states. The North Asia rhetoric of the early Howard years is much less evident. The education of Cabinet is under way. The hard part is still to come. Defence has to start choosing capabilities, and letting some capabilities slide or disappear. We can see the shape of the debate. But the winners are still hidden in the fog of war that stretches from Russell Hill to the Cabinet room opposite the Prime Minister’s office.

Graeme Dobell is Foreign Affairs/Defence correspondent in Canberra for Radio Australia and ABC radio. He has held the post several times since 1978, between postings to Europe and Asia. His previous position was as the ABC’s South-East Asia correspondent. His book Australia Finds Home: The choices and chances of an Asia Pacific journey was published in August.
The Defence of Australia and its Interests

By Air Marshal S D Evans, AC DSO AFC RAAF (Retd)

Firstly I congratulate the Government on this ground-breaking initiative of putting these fundamental but critical options before the Australian community and giving those so inclined the opportunity to express their views. These issues have been the subject of debate and discussions within defence circles for over two decades.

The first question I will address sets the very foundation for structuring the Australian Defence Force (ADF) – its raison d’etre – the defence of Australia and its interests. In their defence policy statements the major political parties attest that the first responsibility of government is the security of Australia and its interests. One might rightly expect that the Australian Defence Force would be structured for this predominant task. Furthermore and this point is crucial, a force structured for the defence of Australia can contribute usefully to almost all the other calls likely to be made on the ADF. Indeed, the ADF has carried out, with commendable skill, peacekeeping missions in Cambodia, Namibia and Somalia; peace making and then peacekeeping in Timor; humanitarian aid in Rwanda; search and rescue deep in the Southern Ocean; flood relief and a host of other non-combat tasks over recent years. However, let it be perfectly clear, that a force structured only to accomplish these tasks would be totally inadequate in defending Australian sovereignty or the Australian people.

Perhaps the obvious question that follows from this – can the ADF provide for the defence of Australia, a large landmass and oceanic area, from a population of only 19 million? The answer is yes, it can, provided that the strategic concept for this defence is soundly based and that the resources of the ADF are not frittered away by structuring for extraneous tasks.

In determining this strategic concept, account must be taken of the factors that have shaped consideration of Australia’s defence planning for the past two decades – after rejection of wasteful and illogical Core Force concept of the 70s and early 80s. That is, to those enduring characteristics of the Australian environment that will not change or do so very slowly, and to reassess their relevance to the defence of Australia at this time.

Australia is an island continent, tanks and enemy forces cannot just roll across our borders. To get here an enemy force would need to transit on, over or under the seas that surround us – a progress during which an opponent would be extremely vulnerable. Also a telling factor is the deficiency in manpower available from a nation of only 19 million people – particularly bearing in mind the population of the nearer nations of our region. Operations that are manpower intensive – land battles – would see Australia at a distinct disadvantage. A disadvantage exacerbated by the huge landmass and poor communications across the Australian continent.

Looking to our defensive strengths we have our island geography – the seas that surround us and across which an aggressor must transit. We are a technically-advanced people able to maintain and operate the most sophisticated and effective weapons systems giving extraordinary flexibility, mobility, speed of response and, when combined with state-of-the-art precision weapons, concentrated, effective firepower.

Using such weapons systems the ADF should be structured to achieve our strategic aim – to prevent a lodgement on Australian shores and to defeat air and missile attacks on our infrastructure.
Currently this involves the capability for surveillance, early warning, air defence and strike operations provided by air, together with surface and sub-surface naval forces and, of course, the means to protect these assets and their bases against commando or other land attack. Given the vast area to be covered the call on mobility and in speed of response are paramount requirements. Air power, with its innate capability for such operations will be a pivotal element of the force structure required for the defence of Australia. Furthermore, as the range of cruise missiles and stand-off weapons increase, as they do with each generation of missiles, the tactical advantage provided by the sea-air gap to our North will be reduced and the ADF must be able to out reach the reach of our adversary. Of course the sea-air gap will remain hugely important in regard to an anti-lodgement scenario.

It should be understood that the maritime strategy formulated for the defence of Australia does not mean that there is no place for the Australian Army. Indeed, an enemy must assess that landing on Australian shores would involve combat with a highly trained,
well-equipped, well lead, professional army. The enemy would be required to fight an intense and bloody battle should it land on the Australian continent. To do so it would have to transport across the sea a very substantial force. Facing a demonstrably strong maritime offensive capability and an effective air defence system the enemy may well conclude that it would not be a viable operation of war. Such a force structure may well deter an invasion attempt.

A potential enemy in some dispute with Australia might see it as more productive to engage in harassing action as a way of extracting concessions. This could include intrusions into our airspace and territorial waters, action against our off-shore oil and gas installations, threatening moves such as build up of forces in West Timor or Irian Jaya, small raids on Australian shores or on Christmas or Cocos Islands. Australia, in trying to counter these hostile and provocative acts, would soon exhaust the limited sustainability of our small forces. The only options would be to negotiate, perhaps on terms dictated by our opponents, or to escalate. Our best course would be to seize the initiative by action against the enemy and thereby force them to cease harassing tactics. This course of action would require the same level and type of force structure needed for the defence of Australia.

More likely than the scenarios outlined above and relatively more frequent, will be calls on Australia to take part in peacekeeping, peace making or humanitarian support operations. We should not expect the Australian taxpayer to provide additional force elements for such voluntary participation in contributing to United Nations operations or request from alliance partners. On the other hand there will be occasions when the Government may wish to contribute as a good global citizen or to pay our dues. Such contributions could be provided from the force structure developed to counter the ultimate threat – hostile action against continental Australia, our overseas territories or our vital interests.

Can we afford the high technology force structure required to provide for the strategy outlined above? I believe the answer is yes. But clearly it will demand a higher allocation of resources than the 1.9 per cent of the GDP presently provided. We must involve civil contractors and industry, to the greatest practical extent, as partners and work assiduously to develop and maintain an effective reserve force. Developing the reserve force required will involve a cultural change in the Australian community and may well take a generation or even longer. However we must embark on that course of action and, in the meantime, put in place the several legislative actions required. These include, enabling the reserves to be activated when required, for compensation to employers and for the protection of the jobs of reserve members. The fact that such measures will not be well received initially should not deter the Government from its responsibility to the defence of the nation.

Other matters to be addressed and that may have some impact on the force structure to be acquired would be our strategy in regard to offshore territories, in particular Cocos and Christmas Islands. Would we want to defend either or both? – Why? – How?

Air Marshal David Evans AC DSO AFC, graduated as sergeant pilot RAAF in August 1943. After World War II he flew Transport operations including Courier to Japan and Berlin Airlift. Air Marshal Evans had extensive flying postings (8600 hours) including Canberra bombers in Malaya and Vietnam (Commanded No.2 Squadron) F-111’s when Commanding RAAF Amberley. Senior Appointments include Chief of Air Force Operations, Deputy Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Joint Operations and Plans, Chief of Air Staff.
Brazilian contingent greeted by INTERFET Commander.
That leaves the Discussion Paper with one overriding purpose: to generate support within the public and the Government for an increase in defence spending. Prime Minister John Howard almost said as much when at the Discussion Paper’s launch he put a little more substance to his promise to raise defence spending, saying the increase would not be “nominal or derisory”, and promising to at least hold spending steady as a proportion of national output. Even this seemingly modest goal would mean a turnaround from defence’s shrinking share of the national cake over the past decade and would amount to a spending increase of $500 million a year on the current $12.5 billion budget. The figure could be much higher than that. These comments were made before the widespread community discussion the Paper was supposed to engender debate on defence policy.

That said, the Discussion Paper does ask some important questions about the future capability of the Defence Force. But the answers are heavily contingent on the Paper’s assumptions about the security environment. The assumptions frame the answers it gives.

The Discussion Paper canvasses the key issues of Australia’s strategic environment in a section headed Strategic Fundamentals. As the heading implies, the most fundamental debates in defence policy are at the strategic level. But these the Paper takes as given, and although it seems to be inviting debate by raising a series of choices, the choices it canvasses relate not to strategic judgements, but to the capability needed to meet strategic objectives that have already been made clear.

Australia’s strategic situation, the Paper asserts, is this: Although no country has any intention of using armed force against Australia, this could change with little warning. The strategic environment is dynamic and uncertain, and although cooperation and integration are growing, risks remain. Planners should not assume that major conflicts are becoming less of a threat, even if they are less likely. The US alliance is critical to Australia’s security. Regional defence budgets are rising again after the Asian crisis. There are growing demands for an Australian role in low-level military operations outside war such as famine relief and peacekeeping.

Only after laying this foundation does the Paper address the difficult and complex choices that have to be made within a constrained budget to respond to it. The discussion poses six “key choices” facing the Government for the Defence Force. The first three of the six “choices” relate to the strategic environment, the last three to the capability needed to respond. Should the ADF focus on defending the continent without relying on allies’ combat forces? Surely the answer is that Australia will try to do both – rely on its alliances, especially with the US, but within that alliance to seek a level of self-reliance.

The Paper’s second choice, “independent action versus coalition operations”, has a similar answer. As the Paper says, coalition operations have become the norm, and investment in interoperability with other countries’ forces – especially the United States’ – is critical. The third question, posed as a choice between defending Australia versus...
regional commitments, is one of the great debates in Australian defence policy, and really should precede questions one and two.

The Howard Government in its first term espoused ambitions to play a role in the broader region that were probably beyond Australia’s resources to fulfil. This is a big question, but it gets smothered in the Discussion Paper by the detail devoted to different kinds of questions about military capability.

Answers to the next three questions will be heavily influenced by the views about the strategic environment, and by the constraint of limited resources. On the choice between quality and quantity, it is difficult to dispute the argument that with relatively small numbers of personnel the ADF needs to maintain high technological capability. The fifth choice, between conventional wars and non-combat military operations, will be met by trying to do both. The sixth choice, between current and future capability, is a technical question that will depend critically on judgements about the nature of the security environment.

The Paper does reveal, perhaps inadvertently, a battle within the Defence Forces over the nature of new high-end capability – an intriguing debate, but one for experts, not the sort likely to be advanced by discussion among a lay audience. It makes clear the authors’ preference for jet fighters as the heart of the capability for defending Australia’s air and maritime approaches, presumably at the expense of Navy’s aspiration for improved air warfare capability. Nor is there much enthusiasm for Army ambitions for greater “weight and firepower” or enhanced ability for amphibious operations in high-level conflict.

In spite of the confusion of purpose in the Discussion Paper, the authors’ views are generally clear. Not fortuitously, they coincide with the consensus that is already emerging in the National Security Committee of Federal Cabinet, which devoted a day to discussing strategic policy in February, and will revisit the issue when it finalises the Defence White Paper due late in the year. More than likely the White Paper will propose a modest increase in spending, of perhaps $1 billion a year. The underlying strategic doctrine will not change. Preventing attacks against Australia will remain the primary doctrine for designing capability, with the aim of making only modest contributions to coalition operations beyond South-East Asia and the Pacific. There will be some increase in Army capability, but this will not meet the Army’s bigger ambitions. There will be some scaling back of future high-end capability, which cannot all be afforded within even a modestly expanded budget.

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Territorial Integrity and Regional Stability

By Rear Admiral Richard Hill, (Retd.), Editor, The Naval Review

The Interloping Pom

It is a great honour to be invited to contribute, from the UK, to this special edition of the Australian Defence Force Journal. My meager credentials are a book called Maritime Strategy for Medium Powers (Croom Helm, 1986) that has had more attention in Australia than in my own country; several contributions to Australian conferences and publications in the last decade and a half; and two lecture tours, the latter of which in the year 2000 resulted in Medium Power Strategy Revisited, Working Paper No.3 of the RAN Sea Power Centre. This sets out the more detailed underpinning of the following comments on the Public Discussion Paper (PDP).

It is natural, given the method I have adopted, to look first at Section 3 of the PDP. The sequence of “Strategic Interests” stated there is interesting, beginning with the wider Asia-Pacific area and narrowing down to the defence of an island continent. This is a reversal of the more natural sequence of Territorial Integrity and Regional Stability and, paradoxically, it has the effect of weakening the claims of the latter because the reader is led towards the conclusion “Ah, but what really matters is our own territory”. This in my view would be a profoundly mistaken conclusion for a developed medium power.

Great and Powerful Friends

The unique position of the USA in the current global strategic situation is rightly acknowledged throughout the PDP. There is more than a hint, particularly in “Key Choices”, Section 4, of a partial return to reliance on “Great and Powerful Friends”, the Australian defence philosophy up to the late 1970s. While the language is suitably hedged, it seems to this observer that it would be a curious path for a prosperous and expanding nation to follow.

That is not to say that US engagement in Australian security should not be sought or encouraged. But more powerful levers than a hopeful “America is hardly likely to allow Australia to be overrun”, or even a reiteration of the ANZUS Treaty, are required. A helpful notion here might be that of catalysis; the ability of Australian forces to put up robust and spirited opposition to any violation of Australia’s vital interests and to sustain it for long enough to ensure either a satisfactory outcome unaided, or a decisive American reaction. This really, it seems to me, sets the upper limit for Australian aspirations to self-reliance. It will not be easy to reach.

Levels of Operation

That upper limit represents what we may call Operations at the Higher Level, most critically (but least probably) in the case of aggression against Australian territory, and the notion of catalysis makes it clear that the forces provided must be the core of Australian defence capability. Necessarily brief comments on their nature will be offered later in this article, here it need only be said that because Australia is an island continent the forces will be predominantly maritime (threedimensionally maritime) but with enough land components to dispute or dislodge any land incursion.

But by far the more likely operations will be in support of regional stability, and here they are less likely to be at the Higher Level (what used to be called War) than at Low Intensity. This is a phrase more precise than
the fashionable “Operations Other than War”, allowing for the sporadic acts of violence, regulated in most cases by strict Rules of Engagement, that are a feature of many such operations. Because, typically, they are politically sensitive they require very precise or specialised application of military force or resources and therefore may need characteristics different from those needed for Higher Level operations.

Reach

The force structure dilemmas for a nation with a limited defence budget, suggested above and emphasised in Section 7 of the PDP, are not much helped in Australia’s case by considerations of Reach – the distance from the home base at which operations can be sustained. The huge distances throughout the region put great strains on logistic support and endurance. In the defence of Australia itself they may work to Australia’s advantage; the supply lines of any assaulting force are highly vulnerable. That is one reason for having robust maritime forces operating at the Higher Level. But in operations supporting regional stability, attaining the desirable reach is a real problem, soluble only by carefully scaling the forces put in to match the capacity to sustain them. Operationally, this means choosing the lowest intensity that is viable, and seeking coalition partners wherever possible. In force planning, it means providing robust and flexible units of good endurance, with enough logistic backup to ensure effective autonomy.

Resolving the Dilemmas

Analysis beyond the space allowed in this article, centred on maritime forces, may be found in my Appendix to SPC Working Paper No. 3. But in all too brief summary, I see the deficiencies in future plans as follows:

- Area Air Defence for surface forces: because regional-stability operations demand defence of amphibious and logistic shipping against air and missile attack, the capability in the “Perth” class must be replaced.
- Mine countermeasures: the mine is an underrated threat and current forces, though capable are short of numbers.
- Amphibious shipping and training: increased emphasis on this element of joint operations will be required.

If it is absolutely necessary to cut capabilities in other areas to accommodate these elements, then I would suggest that lower priority should be given to sophisticated anti-submarine warfare and nuclear, biological and chemical defence. Total neglect would of course be unacceptable, scaling down might not be.

Finally, the question of strike capability is certain to arise in the longer term (PDP, p.38), and it seems to this observer surprising that a Tomahawk Land Attack Missile option is not mentioned.

Conclusion

The PDP is a frank and worthy effort to engage the public in the difficult choices facing Australian defence. This commentator from the other side of the world detects some trends that don’t seem desirable for a medium power, and sees many difficulties in providing all that Australia needs, if the defence budget is capped. Stay Lucky!
Australian Government’s Major Responsibilities and the Principles Underlying Defence Force Development

By Admiral M. W. Hudson, AC, RAN (Retd.)

I applaud the Government’s decision to conduct a fundamental review of our defence policy but I hope this will not be seen as a license to rebut all that has gone before. Our Defence Force today has evolved over many years of experience in a range of conflicts, and in the time since World War II we have had several comprehensive strategic defence analyses. Of course it should be modified, if necessary, to meet contemporary circumstances but no amount of change can be effective without more adequate funding than we have seen over the last 15 years.

My concern with the Public Discussion Paper is that it presents the major force structure options in a simplistic way, which could suggest to the wider public that the optimum solution lies in only one or the other. This is a dangerous road to follow, ignoring the complexity of the spectrum of activity in which the ADF could potentially be involved.

My intention, within the limited space available for this article, is not to advocate specific military capabilities which meet our needs but to set out very briefly what I believe are the basic principles of air, sea and land control for our particular circumstances and those more important principles governing force development. If they serve as a catalyst for debate and expansion I will be more than pleased.

The most fundamental responsibility of the Australian Government is to provide for the defence of Australia and her sovereign interests. Those latter interests are too often overlooked but they embrace political, economic, social and cultural factors which include our global responsibilities flowing from the Charter of the United Nations, the importance of our contribution to the security of our strategic region of interest, the protection of our overseas trade, threats to Australia’s maritime resources and the safety of Australian citizens at home and abroad.

While the threat of global war has subsided since the end of the Cold War, and there is at this stage no apparent threat, there can be no guarantees that Australia and her territories will never be physically threatened, albeit the threat of large scale military action directed at the Australian landmass, or portions of it, would appear very remote.

However, low to medium conflicts continue around the globe, and even within our own region political tensions continue to arise which could require Australia’s involvement. The potential for Australia’s continuing involvement in United Nations actions seems very real.

Australia’s geographic environment, a large continental landmass surrounded by sea, provides both protection and a threat. The sea is a major challenge to any would be aggressor but it also means the lifeblood of our nation, its maritime trade, is vulnerable to attack. It is a vast area and not an easy environment to defend, requiring highly capable naval and air forces.

While it is hard to imagine that any country would seek to control our entire landmass, its size facilitates the landing of small to medium sized forces with the aim of controlling key areas. The challenge to our
own land forces would be great, with long distances requiring high mobility, quick response and endurance.

The bottom line is that in any conflict directed at Australia the aggressor must come by or over the sea and it is this maritime environment that must embrace our first line of defence. But there can be no certainty that our territorial integrity will never be threatened nor our vital sea and air lines of communications free from interdiction.

Regional stability appears to be increasingly less certain and it is in our national interests that whatever defence posture we have now and may develop in the future it be seen as capable of contributing to regional security. A defence force capable of defending Australia should be able to do this but this assertion must be tested against relevant scenarios.

**Principles of Air, Sea and Land Control**

In providing for the defence of Australia it would not be possible for Australia to exercise total control of our entire air, sea and land environment. Therefore, our military aim at the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war must be, in the first instance, to utilise our naval and air forces to exercise control of the sea and the airspace above it, most relevant to the situation at the time. Offence is the best form of defence and the ability to strike an aggressor’s military bases would be an important element of exercising sea and air control.

Should this be totally effective any attempt to breach our territorial integrity with incursions onto continental Australia or its related territories would fail. But this cannot be guaranteed and provision must be made for land and air forces capable of countering offensives in those most likely areas of threat. Naval forces would also be required in the inshore areas (e.g. mine warfare) and to provide amphibious forces for the movement of land force elements. The latter would also be relevant to regional security and United Nations commitments.

**Principles for ADF Force Development**

The ADF should have the capability to deter aggression at the higher level of conflict with the clear message that anyone attempting to breach our territorial integrity would be putting themselves in harm’s way. Such a force should, in the main, be capable of contributing to regional security and United Nations actions.

Our relatively limited resources and the extent of our geography and regional interests mean that our armed forces must be balanced, flexible, multi-purpose and sustainable, capable of joint and independent operations, often at long distances from base resources.

Where choices have to be made between platforms having similar potential capabilities the cost effectiveness of each against the other must be fully analysed, with weight being given to those of a multi-purpose nature.

High-grade intelligence and the ability to communicate this to the relevant military commanders are essential.

With our limited means multi purpose platforms should not only offer significant financial savings but also flexibility of employment, be they at sea, in the air or on the land.

The ability to conduct joint operations is essential, as is interoperability with our major ally, the United States, and those regional countries with which we are most likely to operate.

While Over-the-Horizon radar offers potentially good surveillance of our maritime surrounds, at least in our major areas of interest, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV’s) should be actively pursued.

A strong industrial base, familiar with the needs of defence, is essential to provide Australia, as far as possible, with independence from other countries.
Priority must be given to the acquisition of combat forces, including those forces vital to logistic support in combat areas.

There is need to ensure that there is no overlap between areas of responsibility of strategic, operational and tactical headquarters.

With defence spending having fallen from 2.5 per cent of the GDP in the mid 1980s to now about 1.95 per cent it appears clear that increased funding will be necessary to overcome potential block obsolescence in the near future.

The very strong political, military and personal relationships we have with the United States must continue to be fostered.

**Conclusions**

Whatever the final outcome of Defence Review 2000 it will dictate our capacity to defend Australia and discharge our global and regional responsibilities for the next 30-odd years. It should not be rushed, although there are sufficient indicators that funding has reached rock bottom.
Guided Missile Frigates
Alliances: Two-way Streets

By Professor Robyn Lim, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan

The Defence Review 2000 – our future Defence Force moves further away from neo-isolationism, and the delusion that we can pursue defence on the cheap. But not far enough. It still focuses on the least likely threats to our security – those that appear in the so-called sea-air gap – while skirting the critical issue of whether we are willing to incur the costs and risks required to remain credible as a US ally. The Review’s approach still reflects that of the 1970s – the era of our disillusionment with allies, and consequent flirtations with isolationism.

Threats in the inner arc are likely to arise only as a consequence of great power tensions further north. Our interests have always required seeing power balances struck and conflicts resolved as far from our shores as possible.

Australia is an island continent, so it needs maritime protection. Because we lack the population and resources to defend ourselves against major attacks on our territory, we have always sought the extra margin of security that alliances provide.

For us, because we are an island, alliance with the dominant maritime power represents optimal security. Currently, the United States is the global offshore balancer – having inherited that role from Britain – so it needs to maintain a balance of power on the opposite shores of both great oceans. That is highly congruent with our key strategic interest, which is to foster a settled balance of power in East Asia.

But the United States is also a democracy, and democracies find it hard to think strategically in the absence of palpable threat. Many Americans now believe they should bring their forces home, and end their “entangling alliances”. That’s all the more reason for us to press our interests in sustaining our alliance with America.

A US withdrawal from East Asia would give a free hand to the region’s rising and ambitious power, China. In the 1940s, we would have found life highly unpleasant in a region dominated by Japan, had the US been willing to grant Japan a free hand. For the same reasons, we would find life disagreeable now in a region dominated by China – even if we were not threatened with invasion.

But alliances are two-way streets; security benefits come with costs and risks attached – for both parties. Australia has generally been willing to accept its share of costs and risks. We joined worldwide efforts to prevent Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union from exercising regional or global power in ways inimical to our interests.

Defending Australia from a distance was what my grandfather was doing in Palestine in the Light Horse with the 1st AIF, in the days when “expeditionary force” was still a positive term. And this was indeed Australia’s war – had Germany and its allies won, Australia would have become part of the spoils of the British Empire.

But in Brisbane a quarter of a century later, after the fall of Singapore, my grandfather and his family were facing the threat of invasion. That threat did not arise in the sea-air gap. It originated much further north, but Japan struck south over vast distances because of opportunities presented by the collapse of the global balance.

Nor did the threat arise without warning. The Pacific War had its roots early in the century when America started to resist Japan’s demands for a free hand in East Asia. Major threats do not arise out of the blue, though changing strategic circumstances can make them suddenly more dangerous.

In February 1942, all the advantages of tactical surprise and concentration of force lay with the Japanese, while Australian forces were
dispersed and left guessing where the invader might land. No strategist, my grandfather did know that fighting Turks in Palestine was vastly preferable to fighting Japanese on Queensland beaches. Luckily for us, the US placed global priority after Pearl Harbor on keeping open the lines of communication from Australia to Hawaii – while not losing sight of the need to concentrate on Hitler, who represented the greater threat.

We started to forget the importance of the global balance for our security in the late 1960s. With the US in post-Vietnam strategic paralysis, and Britain also in retreat, it was easy to become disillusioned with allies. That was reflected in the 1986 Dibb Report, which represented the global balance as irrelevant to our security. To justify force structure and defence spending, it conjured up a threat from Indonesia. Yet Indonesia has never had the capability or intention to invade us.

Since then, we have based our force structure mostly on dealing with phantom threats in the inner arc, while fostering the delusion that we can get away with minimal commitments to allied “out of area” operations. During the Gulf War, Bob Hawke was shrewd enough to calculate that if he got in early, he wouldn’t have to do much. So he sent two frigates and an oiler, and had the chutzpah to call it a task force. Next time, we may not be so lucky. We might, for example, fail a critical test of alliance in a Taiwan crisis. America – especially the Congress – would not be satisfied with token commitments.

True, a Taiwan crisis would be tricky. We are not obliged to support the US in defence of Taiwan – our commitment under ANZUS is only to consult in accordance with our constitutional processes. But the critical issue is China’s insistence on its right to use force. If China succeeded in taking Taiwan by force or threat, that would threaten our security over the longer term. It might also induce Japan to go it alone.

A rupture of the alliance consequent upon our failing a critical test is a far more serious threat than that of Indonesian fishing boats in the inner arc. So our force structure must serve both our defence (defined in terms of threat of invasion) and wider security requirements. We don’t need a huge defence industry or Army, or the most expensive and advanced fighter aircraft or submarines available. And “bloc obsolescence” is a distraction; what we needed in the past is no guide to the future.

We do need a core capacity to expand our forces rapidly in order to defend against invasion, should that unlikely possibility ever arise. We also need an ADF capable of responding to challenges in our immediate environs, to build on the success of East Timor, as well as being able to make meaningful contributions to “out of area” contingencies.

So we need forces interoperable with those of allies, especially maritime and air assets, capable of participating in the Revolution in Military Affairs. We should also consider developing amphibious forces like the US Marine Corps – a sort of modern Light Horse.

Some, including those sympathetic to China’s interests, would say that such “expeditionary forces” would be provocative. But our friends and allies would welcome a White Paper and consequent force structure which showed that Australia had finally abandoned the neo-isolationism of the 1970s.
In the absence of a manifest and clear threat, defence policy should be devoted to the creation and sustainment of the widest possible range of options for the use, potential or actual, of military force in support of government policy. Committing Australia to any one defence strategy or concept of operations would serve only to encourage a potential adversary to develop alternatives.

Defence planning should be based upon three fundamental principles that are at odds with our somewhat rigid traditional practices and, to some extent, with Defence Review 2000. The three principles are:

- Strategy should be flexible;
- Capabilities should be adaptable; and
- The force must be sustainable.

A country like Australia can use its defence force reactively to deal with threats to national interests as they arise or it can operate proactively to strengthen its strategic position. In the modern era, neither role is likely to be used unilaterally. Rather the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will operate with allies either directly in operations or in strategic concert. The notion that the ADF will ever have to operate on its own in some last-ditch defence of Australian territory is conceptually faulty. If Australia is ever reduced to such a desperate situation, it will have already lost.

Popular – and indeed some professional – discussion of defence policy in Australia tends to focus on the defence of Australian territory as the fundamental basis of any national security strategy. Such a focus ignores the reality that Australia has a wide range of interests that define the nature of Australian society. The political reality is that Australia will commit, as it always has committed, military forces to distant operations to maintain global or regional order. Maintaining such order is an overriding national interest that may in some circumstances be a vital interest. In the latter case, it will be equally vital but more immediate in time than defending Australian territory.

In this context, the failure of Defence Review 2000 even to mention the importance of Australia’s sea and air lines of communication is little short of astonishing. By its very nature, Australia always has been and is a nation that engages commercially and socially with much of the rest of the world. Its communications have always been crucial to its existence. Previous defence policy papers have also ignored this factor with at least one arguing that Australia could be self-sufficient in extremis. The argument is fundamentally flawed because it ignores the domestic and international political pressures that would flow from an interruption to Australia’s communications.

Of course, such communications are important to Australia’s partners so that any threat to them would engage those partners. Less obviously, any threat to our trading partners’ communications will necessarily engage Australian interests in a classic manifestation of John Donne's dictum that no man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.

In formulating a force structure that will be both relevant to strategic and political realities as well as the constraints applied by a small population, Australia needs to do more than simply defend Australian territory against...
assault. At the same time, it cannot try to imitate its principal allies and attempt to do everything. There must be a strategic focus to define a force that can contribute in an affordable way to the defence of Australian interests.

The issue of what is affordable is crucial but all too often avoided in serious discussion. *Defence Review 2000* is certainly less than helpful in its somewhat vague discussion of the financial issues. Very properly, the document remarks that measurements of defence spending as a proportion of GDP are generally flawed but then proceeds to do just that. It points out that Australians spend about $600 *per capita per annum* on defence but fails to note that, in real terms, current spending is at the low end of a very small range over the past 20 years. Over the same period, personnel and equipment costs have increased very substantially in real terms so that effective spending has fallen sharply. This, rather than efficiency considerations, is the real reason for the 28 *per cent* cut in military numbers over the past 20 years.

Similarly, it offers flawed comparisons with regional countries. South-East Asian countries spend much less in raw terms than Australia even though they are said to be modernising more rapidly than us. No explanation is given for the seeming discrepancy, not even the obvious one that their wage rates are so much lower than ours that Indonesia for example can buy 30 soldiers for the price of one Australian. The document points out that seven *per cent* of total Federal outlays are devoted to defence but does not point out, for example, that in 1991 the figure was nine *per cent*. Over the same period, Federal outlays on health, education and welfare have grown from 51 *per cent* of the Budget to 65 *per cent* currently.

The simple fact is that Australia can afford to spend whatever is necessary for a perfectly adequate and markedly more capable defence force to support a flexible security strategy. With the economy growing at between 3 and 4 *per cent* annually in real terms, the capacity exists to increase defence outlays with little or no political pain. The 1987 *White Paper* made a commitment, unfulfilled, to increase defence spending to 3 *per cent* of GDP, currently about $20 billion annually. That level of commitment of national resources is almost certainly more than is necessary but, if it was considered achievable and sustainable in 1987, a lesser commitment of, say, $15 billion should be so now, even if it takes some years to achieve.

*Following service as a patrol officer in Papua New Guinea and full-time duty as a naval reserve officer in the Naval Intelligence Division, Michael O’Connor was appointed National Executive Director of the Australia Defence Association in 1981. A detailed statement of the Association’s views and its formal response to Defence Review 2000 can be found at www.ada.asn.au*
History teaches us that it is usually foolish to plan specifically to meet any one set of contingencies because the international environment is too unpredictable. In the 1920s we were preparing to face Japan as the most likely enemy. Where did we end up fighting in 1940? The Middle East. In 1950 we were gearing up for major commitments in the Middle East and where did we go? Korea and Malaya. For 40 years the United States prepared primarily to fight the Soviet Union. It fought in Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East. What is the point? Sudden storms can blow up from across a wide horizon. We have to be able to face any that hit us, not just one or two from a particular sector.

And the world is changing rapidly. In the first truly global war, the Seven Years War of 1756-63, decisions for and against alliances, for and against wars, were taken by kings and their handfuls of advisers. In the next global war, the Napoleonic Wars, the group of essential decision-makers widened to include key ministers and planners of national economies. The two global wars of the 20th century gave public opinion and therefore the media major influence. They also led to the establishment of a global authority for upholding peace - the UN Charter. As national decision-making structures have widened, the international system has become more stable.

It is becoming harder and harder to think of ways of beginning wars which do not prove counter-productive. Hence the major contingencies, which Australia might have to face, are less likely to be global wars, or conflicts between well armed major powers than at any time in our history. But it is foolish to say they could not happen. The current state of world order could be unravelled. Mankind is capable of such action.

Equally it would be foolish to say that Australia could never be the target of direct pressure from a major hostile power. To meet both of these contingencies we need as much self-reliance as we can muster with a stout effort, plus the underpinning of a sound alliance with the strongest power in the world.

The more likely dangers will be trouble in our own region, both the distant sector of East and North East Asia, and the near arc from Aceh to Fiji. We must be able to play a part commensurate with our size, wealth, vulnerability and interest in regional peace, to reinforce friendship, and cooperation throughout these two sectors. We can also be called upon by the UN or our major ally to help reinforce the rule of international law in many parts of the globe. We need to have something to offer – not only ships, aircraft and combat ground forces, but above all high skill and outstanding performance in whatever elements we contribute.

The key requirement for meeting such a wide and essentially unpredictable range of contingencies is a substantial pool of
competent professionals. The Green Paper does not dwell on this need, although obviously its authors are not unaware of it. But I would like to suggest that many of the imponderable issues raised in the document can be dealt with only by reinforcing the mid-levels of our Defence Force. The history of wars, warfare and international relations generally shows that surprises are more the order of the day than foreseeable outcomes. The way countries faced with these problems in the past have met them has been by improvisation - intelligent, brave, adventurous people putting their lives on the line aided by whatever was to hand by way of equipment, manpower and resources.

In major commitments the chief problem has usually been shortage of mid-level operational commanders and staff personnel. The First and Second AIF took some three years each to climb the learning curve. It depended mainly on company and battalion commanders mastering their jobs. The RAN and RAAF in war also faced serious bottlenecks of the same kind. National defence planning and operational direction suffered because there were so few professionals, civil and military, who could contribute usefully to it.

The most important element in determining whether or not the Defence Review 2000 will be judged a success or not will be whether the Government brings together, keeps together and trains superbly the mid-levels of the Defence Force. We are not going to be short of senior commanders and planners. The personnel pyramid is broad enough, and deep enough to provide outstanding leaders at the top. But they will not be able to command properly without a surplus to peacetime requirement of company commanders, ship captains and squadron leaders. These are what we will need most desperately in time of major danger, and also in time of multiple but lesser commitments in support of regional peace and international law.

The Government and its key advisers therefore would be wise to lay emphasis on the recruitment, training and retention of more mid-level professionals. They should be given challenging education in first-rate institutions at home and abroad, they should be developed in tough, realistic exercises, and broadened through frequent cooperation with international partners - in exercises, secondments, training and close and lasting personal contacts and friendships.

With more strength and quality in the mid-levels we have much more hope of improvising successfully to meet the surprising future. To pretend that we can get the answers to those four opening questions right, and avoid any need for a lot of improvisation would be the height of self-delusion.

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New Directions for Australia’s Defence

By the Honourable Derek Quigley, Consultant, New Zealand

It is tempting to conclude that the current extensive community consultation campaign under way to chart Australian attitudes to defence is simply a public relations exercise to justify an increase in the defence vote.

Why? Because the June 2000 Green Paper recognises that the ADF “is only one part of Australia’s wider approach to ensuring [the] country’s security and prosperity”, but then devotes virtually all of its attention to seeking responses to standard military questions.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in Chapter 7 where the question: “What Sort of Force Will We Need in the Future?” is discussed under three headings: Forces for Defeating Attacks on Australia; Forces Structured for Regional Security; and, Military Operations Other Than War. My guess is that the answer will be “all three”.

In my view, this is the wrong approach. At the start of the 21st century Australia needs, not more of the same, but a root and branch review of defence. This should be similar to what we did in New Zealand two years ago, where – unlike the current Australian exercise based on a Department of Defence discussion paper – a multi-party Parliamentary Select Committee started with a clean sheet of paper and analysed the way ahead for defence, based on widespread public input and consultation.

The resulting document became the blueprint for the current Labor/Alliance Government’s new defence policy.

In contrast, the Australian Green Paper is all about sustaining a traditional approach to defence. Hugh Smith, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald of July 5, 2000, makes the very valid point that it is based on four assumptions that could result in “major increases in defence spending with no clear purpose in mind”.

All countries, including the United States with all of its resources, are confronting the need for new thinking on security issues. The Europeans are trying to grapple with the new environment by creating a new Euro defence force.

For smaller countries like New Zealand – and even middle powers – the sheer cost and complexity of new defence systems become eye-watering and increasingly difficult to justify, given competing demands from areas such as health, education and welfare.

The Americans and the Europeans are moving to put their forces into expeditionary structures, capable of rapid deployment to trouble spots around the world. As the former British Secretary of State for Defence and now Secretary-General of NATO, George Robertson, put it in 1998, “having flexible, well-trained, well-equipped, sustainable and survivable forces is what modern defence is all about”. His comments are even more valid two years later, given the experience of Kosovo and East Timor.

There are parallels between the experiences of Australia and New Zealand in redefining defence policy. Both face increasing financial demands caused by bloc obsolescence, aging equipment, rapid technological advances and the difficulty of retaining sufficient well trained, well motivated personnel.

Both countries need to be more selective in retaining and acquiring assets. This has been acknowledged by the Australian Secretary of Defence and the New Zealand Government which is taking sensible steps to determine specific equipment acquisition priorities.
How then should we proceed? We need to look at what we want from defence from the perspective of questions like:

what does national security mean?
how best can it be achieved?
what is the best balance between diplomatic and military means to achieve security?
what are the trade-offs?
what are the appropriate roles for the armed forces?

This does not mean that we should train and equip for every eventuality on a country-by-country basis. For smaller states this is particularly important, given the staggering cost of traditional defence equipment and the intellectual challenge of using it properly.

This suggests two things. First, that we should keep as many options as possible open for as long as possible. Hugh Smith makes the point that we may be witnessing the end of traditional warfare and a shift to “asymmetric war” where regular forces campaign against irregulars, guerillas, freedom fighters, terrorists, militias and the like. East Timor is a good illustration.

Coupled with this, is the rapidly evolving nature of military technology. Given this reality, why would any defence force with limited resources lock itself into a particular capability – such as, for example, conventional military aircraft – if unmanned aerial vehicles are likely to take over many of their tasks, ranging from reconnaissance to strike, in the not too distant future? To quote The Economist of December 18, 1999, which cited a USAF officer:

In the near future, unmanned weapons systems will prevail over their manned equivalents by every indicator. To products of the Nintendo generation... that's obvious.

The potential for these types of developments does not mean that we should hang off and do nothing, as there are now acquisition options available that can avoid the risk of traditional bloc obsolescence. The recently cancelled F-16 contract that would have provided the NZRAF with near-new combat aircraft is a case in point. That “lease-to-buy” deal contained a 180-day exit provision in favour of both contracting parties, plus two further break points at the end of each five year lease. The “option” to purchase in the contract was simply that, an option, and did not have to be exercised. In terms of the “deal”, New Zealand was therefore not locked into the F-16s indefinitely and could have settled for different aircraft, or indeed no strike aircraft at all, at the end of the lease period.

Secondly, the lessons of Kosovo and East Timor suggest that collective capabilities will invariably be required in the future for most crisis management operations. However, on past experience, the armed forces of many potential contributors are currently inadequately equipped or prepared for these tasks. To quote the 1999 UK Defence White Paper:

Too few have been modernised to meet today's requirements. Too few can be deployed to crises quickly, are flexible enough to meet the difficulties they will face, or [are] sustainable over long periods in difficult conditions.

The European Council’s answer is to be able to deploy, by the year 2003, a rapid reaction Euro force of up to 60,000 personnel for humanitarian, rescue, peacekeeping and peace making tasks.

Closer to home, the East Timor deployment demonstrated the value of coalition operations to nations in the region and has spurred interest in moves to develop standard procedures for planning and conducting these types of initiatives. It also emphasised the need for better communications amongst the region's armed forces and for them to be better coordinated, trained and equipped.

More importantly, East Timor illustrated the likely extent of future American involvement in coalition activities in this part of the world
and has brought home to Australia and New Zealand the need for them to be prepared to assume more active responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in their own region. As Admiral Dennis C. Blair, US Navy Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Command said on 7 March 2000 to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

Our program improves the ability of regional partners to defend themselves, …and promotes security arrangements better suited to the challenges of the 21st century.

In view of this comment and clear American reluctance to put its own forces on the ground in harms way, perhaps the focus of Australia’s current defence and security policy review should be on regional security and how it can be enhanced in concert with other like-minded countries. This would require a departure from traditional thinking and would put Australia more in tune with the views expressed in The Economist of February 26, 2000, which discussed European defence needs:

The Europeans will need time to work out exactly who does what in ways that produce a coherent military effort, rather than just the quirky sum of the hotchpotch of national parts.

It will be interesting to see whether this sort of thinking will emerge at the end of the heroic and exhausting public consultations on the Green Paper. I fear not!

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National security is a whole of nation issue, which should engage a broad cross-section of our society in the building of a consensus on the way Australia commits its resources to the generation of a dynamic and enduring relationship with the international community. The fact that the global environment is experiencing unprecedented technological and sociological change is reason enough for the Defence Policy consultation with the Australian community. At the end of the day the most important ingredient of national security is national unity, and governments of any type are obliged to bring the community they represent along with them as they pursue national interests.

Planning horizons of five years are way beyond the limits of predictability, both in the nature of technology, and in social change. Despite this, the Public Discussion Paper released in June 2000 asks much the same questions that have been a constant part of the Defence Review process since the Vietnam War. By its nature, the Paper suggests that its principal purpose is a sharing of the challenges that beset Defence as a prelude to a much-delayed increase in the Defence Budget.

Instead of further salami slicing into what are now minimal Defence capabilities, the Paper suggests that whole capabilities will have to go in order to replace others that are approaching the end of their useful life. The fact is that there are many things that have already gone that emerging circumstances are suggesting Australia continues to need. Many of these are to do with expeditionary capability, which was once heavily discounted in order to provide funds for continental defence infrastructure.

The Defence Program

Since 1986, the Defence Program has always been larger than the Defence Budget and Forward Estimates. The 1986 Defence Review called for the Defence Budget to grow at the same rate as the national economy, i.e. 3.1 per cent. If Defence spending had remained at the 2.8 per cent of GDP of that time, the annual Defence Budget today would be of the order of $18–19 billion. More to the point, the wedge of foregone Defence expenditure over the period since 1988 is something like $36 billion in today dollars. The truth is, that in keeping with the trend towards smaller government, the Defence allocations were never going to be able to finance the modernisation of the force structure while re-orienting the Defence infrastructure to match the demands of both the 1986 Review and the changing strategic environment. Such an outcome would be more acceptable if it could be agreed that our strategic circumstances had improved markedly in the past decade.

The Strategic Outlook

With the exceptions of New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia, none of Australia’s near neighbours appear to have the necessary combination of educated labour, effective consensual governance, modern infrastructure
and natural resources to advance the interests of their people in 21st century terms. The trend if anything is away from these desirable economic and social conditions. The prospect for Australia to have a growing band of mendicant states in its immediate vicinity appears to be gaining in probability. A large part of these populations are already severely disadvantaged and the growing divide between rich and poor creates a potential for chaos that will generate unforeseen outcomes. The archipelago and the South Pacific are beginning to resonate with the African syndrome, where tribal struggles override the Law, and political leaders resort to and support a form of modern day fascism in order to consolidate their power.

Australia cannot turn its back on these developments without enduring repercussions. Defence planning that is based on wishful thinking has always been a recipe for strategic surprise. The alternative for Australia is a more pro-active, hands-on strategic approach than has been considered desirable in the past. Australia’s regional engagement should be the focus of its defence of the approaches to the region and the continent.

The Strategic Tradition

Since 1945 and the advent of weapons of mass destruction, nearly all wars have really been operations other than war, where fighting while negotiating has become the standard strategy. The mass armies of mobilised and partly trained reserve forces that died in such large numbers in World Wars I and II, have slowly given way to professional armed forces whose services can be applied as part of the negotiating process without having to arouse nations to the full and impassioned response that mobilisation entails

The Australian tradition of mobilising voluntary expeditionary forces for defence of the Empire finished with Korea. Manpower policy subsided into the confusion of the 1960s, when it was decided to expand the Regular Army by balloted conscription to meet the demands of a forward defence strategy aimed at keeping the major Western powers engaged in Asia. The 1950s experiment of building a national mobilisation base through male universal national service only lasted through that decade.

The tradition of preparing forces to fight as subordinate elements of larger allied forces resulted in separate development of the Australian Navy, Army and Air Force, each developing characteristics and culture more akin to their British or American counterparts than to each other. The different focus of each of the Services also resulted in varying philosophies for development. Very low priority was accorded by the Services to capabilities for the support of each other.

Producing a coherent strategy that endures and overcomes the latent effects of these traditions and development philosophies has so far proven to be very difficult and costly. The primary cause of this retardation has been the lack of national consensus on an appropriate future role for Australia, and an increasingly ambiguous division between the political parties on the centre of gravity of Australia’s strategic focus. Rather than the shift in the Services’ commitment to each other being policy driven, the indications are that it will come in the form of fait accompli military missions, like the East Timor intervention, in which the Services generate shared values and operational requirements as a result of having to do things together. The extent to which this natural development will be inhibited by the influence of non-operators will depend on the momentum of changes in our region that demand military responses. It seems that this momentum is increasing.

The 1987 and 1997 Defence Policy Statements

The Defence Policy Statement presented to Parliament in March 1987 by the Hawke Government has been much derided because of its seeming emphasis on continental defence.
Of the coalition deployments that followed in the five years after its release, only Cambodia had any linkage with the Defence Policy, being regional, international peacekeeping, and in the national interest.

That aside, there were many positives to come from this continental defence interregnum. All three Services had deployed more capability and support structure into the North, allowing the capacity to build and sustain coalitions for use in the archipelago. The focus of C4I infrastructure on the North and northern approaches gave advantages that did not exist before 1987. A joint command and control capability had been established, both in the North, and in a deployable form. Operations could confidently be launched from northern bases, which could be defended if necessary. Australia’s ability to do all of these things was a powerful signal of its willingness and capacity to protect its interests on its maritime approaches.

The 1997 Defence Policy Statement is a lesser document, clearly produced without the benefits of the intellectual engagement of a broader community, and transparently aimed at shoring up the spending priorities in an increasingly crammed Defence Program. Its analysis of the nature and impact of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs is cursory and shallow, and its broad allocation of priorities is very confusing.

Both policy statements reveal a fundamental flaw in Defence policy development, and that is that operational requirements are driven from the top down rather than from the front back. If the policy makers were to say to the operators for example, ”We want you to be capable of doing such and such. Now tell us what you need”, you would then have the beginning of proper capability based planning. That is, provided the question was asked of a properly constituted joint command team that had the analytical tools as well as the experience, and was supported by Industry and Science to give you the right answers. Such a capability at the operational level could be expected to allow significant savings in the strategic level bureaucracy bringing it to the much smaller size of defence organisations such as Germany’s. Of course, if such a team is never established the initiative must remain elsewhere.

Perhaps such a team, if it existed, could demonstrate why Army has to have effective mobile firepower and armoured protection if any sort of break-in against any well-armed enemy in a fortified position is contemplated. You don’t have to go to the Korean Peninsula or the Persian Gulf to experience this need. It will be a requirement to take and hold any piece of infrastructure that is vital to defence needs.

Perhaps such a joint operational team could also explain that any continental or maritime defence that depends almost entirely on a couple of strips of concrete should take the defence of those bits of concrete very seriously. They might also be able to show you why you cannot sustain a maritime passage through a strait unless you have compliant forces holding either side. If they were to tell you all these things and more, a totally different view of the demands for management of the strategic environment might emerge, together with a different set of strategic priorities.

Why is this matter so important? The first reason is that there has never been sufficient emphasis on this process of developing an understanding of what constitutes a capability from the operational end, and this creates a disconnect between the operational and strategic levels. Furthermore, without a properly collocated and constituted operational headquarters with a high level of modelling and analytical ability, there is a more than an even chance that priority will be accorded to capabilities that are irrelevant to future strategic problems. The second reason is that the purely equipment or platform oriented approach adopted at the strategic level
heavily discounts the key ingredient in Defence capability, and that is talented and creative people who have both the understanding and the courage to make decisions in complex and chaotic environments.

The Future

It seems most unlikely that any power will challenge the United States in either the maritime or the aerospace environments for the next half century at least, and therefore the possibility of naval battles on the high seas is remote, as is the idea of invasion forces from anywhere ever putting to sea. Nobody will waste resources on these options. The truth is that anything that travels at less than 35 knots in a flat two dimensional plain would have to have extraordinary organic defensive systems to consider operating alone in range of land-based attack systems of even the most fundamental type. The extraordinary costs of having aircraft deployed at sea are well beyond Australia’s resources and those of any other nation in the region. Air Force and Army between them will therefore have to take and hold airfields if air cover is to be provided to Australian ships at sea beyond the range of our northern bases.

The problems we are facing are unlikely to be solved by standing off and taking out civil infrastructure with missiles or bombs, nor are there likely to be military targets in our region the destruction of which would have much impact on our objectives. While Australia needs leading edge maritime defence capabilities on her northern approaches, and the capacity to destroy any specific military infrastructure that supports operations against our deployed forces, there is a much lower probability of having to use these capabilities than there is the more intimate and direct weapon systems of intervention.

The third issue is that defence of the air bases in the North becomes paramount. Unless these are alive and functioning, the sea-air gap can belong to someone else, and deployments to influence or intervene on the northern approaches will not be an option. The truth is that these bases are what Army used to call...
vital ground, and you do not defend on the vital ground. You defend well forward of it which, for Australia, is in the archipelago itself. This does not mean the invasion and takeover of other territories, but the sharing of a mutual defence purpose whereby Australia accepts part of the defence burden of friendly countries as a means of defending itself. How to make them friendly countries while they are under stress and fracturing is the moot point. You clearly can’t do this unless you are engaged and seen to be acting in the mutual interest rather than just your own. Australia needs to generate and lead a regional alliance.

The region we live in is our responsibility. No one else is really interested, and no other nation in the region has the capacity or the desire to adopt a leadership role on regional issues. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that a vacuum in this part of the world is just as destabilising as a vacuum anywhere. Whether we in Australia like it or not, the problems of the region will not go away, and in all probability, will get worse. They are much more important to us than problems in Africa or the Middle East or North East Asia. It is transparently obvious that our major ally expects us to lead on these regional matters.

Returning to the issue of creative people. They are far more important than pieces of equipment in a chaotic environment where there is a high probability of strategic surprise. Australia has to stop paying lip service to this need. The people who make good modern day warriors are not in a majority in this country or anywhere else for that matter. They will be difficult to find, and expensive to train, and even more expensive to retain. These sorts of people are most unlikely to come from the ranks of the unemployed, as they will be attractive to any employer. They can come from the ranks of the reserve, but only if they are fully trained and prepared for conflict.

Finally, the entire development process needs to become more organic and responsive. The idea of controlling operational requirements and equipment solutions on a linear five to ten year basis as Defence has done in the past is irrelevant to what is actually happening with technology and its application. We need a collocated joint operational headquarters that is properly staffed and engaged in the development business in real time with Science and Industry. This is the most fundamental of requirements to link development to the strategic circumstances of the future rather than the strategic circumstances of the past.

None of this will be at all possible if Defence funding is not increased by significant amounts.

Lieutenant General John Sanderson was the Chief of the Australian Army from 1995-98. He joined the Army in 1958, graduating from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1961. During his military career he saw operational service in Malaysia and Vietnam. Promoted to Major General in 1989, he was first the ACDF Policy, and then the ACDF Development. After promotion to Lieutenant General in 1992, he assumed command of the military component of the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia, remaining in the appointment until the successful conclusion of that mission in October 1993. Between 1993 and 1995 he was the first Commander Joint Forces Australia.
Information Capabilities
An Unofficial American View

By Thomas-Durell Young, Naval Postgraduate School

The release of Defence Review 2000 by the Australian Government is a novel approach to address Australia’s future security requirements. To the optimist, the Howard Government is attempting to engage the Australian public in a public discussion regarding the future force structure requirements of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). To the cynic, the Review delays the publication of the Government’s long awaited Defence White Paper, i.e. buying six months before having to make any hard financial decisions. Whatever the rationales behind the Coalition Government publishing this Review and delaying the release of its long-awaited White Paper, the fact remains hard decisions will need to be made if the ADF is to be structured to carry out the missions the Coalition Government have determined it must undertake in future – Defence of Australia proper and force projection beyond Australia with its allies.1 That the ADF has been developed for 25 years solely for missions tied to the “Defence of Australia”, the Howard Government’s defence policy objectives are, to say the least, ambitious.

Of course, the problem of how Australia will defend itself and its interests is hardly new and harkens back to the defence debate in Alfred Deakin’s Government following Federation. The Australian defence dilemma is one with which successive governments have struggled: finding a balance between continental defence (aka: Defence of Australia and Self-Reliance), or force projection to defend Australia and its interests within severe financial constraints. In some Australian defence circles the latter has become known by one of its characteristics, “forward defence”, and has been discredited as inappropriate for an independently-minded Australia. And indeed, the Defence Review 2000 document dutifully raises the question of the US security commitment to Australia (in a qualified way to be sure).

But how important is this particular qualification? In other words, how importantly should the force structure requirements of the ADF consider the collective defence aspects of the ANZUS Security Treaty? As I will argue in this short response, the siren of defence of Australia and self-reliance has produced a distorted Australian Defence Force force structure, given decisions taken by successive governments to deploy the ADF beyond Australia. In other words, “Defence of Australia” has failed to keep the ADF on the “Fatal Shore” and therefore it makes little sense to “structure” the ADF predominantly for “Defence of Australia”. Now is a fortuitous time for the Howard Government to establish clear force development guidance for the ADF the better to enable it to defend Australia proper, whilst at the same time being more capable of carrying out the foreign policy objectives of the Government.

To be sure, any country would be imprudent to assume that another will forever underwrite its security. Yet, I would argue that for the purpose of ADF force structure planning, the issue of the United States commitment is of less importance now than those who have previously argued the case of “Defence of Australia”. For, as Defence Review 2000 accurately points out, the United States is currently at the pinnacle of its power in the world. If Australian defence planners cannot assume US assistance now, when could such assumption be considered?
Rather than debating whether the United States will come to the aid of Australia in “its time of need” (and, ergo, “Defence of Australia”), what is of critical contemporary import for the force development objectives of the ADF is determining which capabilities need to be obtained in order to: 1) defend the country and 2) achieve the external objectives establishment by Government. In both cases, the continued adherence to the more conservative interpretations of “Defence of Australia” is unlikely to provide Government with the capabilities needed for either objective. After all, it has long been recognised by successive Australian governments that the defence of Australia proper, in almost all scenarios, can only be undertaken with assistance from friends and allies. Even the lower-level contingencies envisaged by Dr Paul Dibb in his seminal review of Australian defence capabilities, and mirrored in the 1987 Defence White Paper, external assistance was assumed in the form of materiel, combat service support, strategic intelligence, etc. Thus, a force development policy that limits the ADF’s development solely to Defence of Australia has limited value given the international security environment.

Given that the ADF will require assistance from friends and allies in times of crisis (as do Australia’s friends and allies), the next issue that needs to be addressed is which capabilities do the ADF need in order to fulfill the policy objectives of Government? The stated foreign and security policies of Australia, as well as the United States, recognise that the world is at a critical juncture where many countries are susceptible to adopting Western norms, but many need assistance to do so. Western armed forces no longer can claim to have solely a collective defence mission, but rather must also adopt the capability to undertake peace-support operations (PSOs), in all of their different manifestations. As a result, a defence force orientation that is fixated on a specific geographic region or limited missions is of declining relevance. Thus, for the West to achieve a “better peace”, largely the same capabilities required for power-projection are needed for crisis management and PSOs: the Australian-led International Force East Timor being an excellent case in point.

A final and related aspect of the requirements for the ADF’s future force structure requirements is the increasing need for armed forces to participate in coalition operations. In carrying out the defence of Australia proper and undertaking peace-support operations, the ADF could well require a greater capacity for working effectively together with the armed forces of other countries, both sophisticated and those that have modest capabilities. Since the end of the Cold War Western armed forces are finding that they must be capable of operating across a broadened spectrum of conflict, as well as with smaller national contributions, thereby requiring multinationality at increasingly lower organisational levels, i.e. squadrons, battalions, etc. Whilst long stressed by the ADF, enhance capabilities in this area will pay dividends for Australian security policy in: 1) undertaking peace-support operations, 2) equipping the ADF to serve as a bridge between armed forces with disparate capabilities, 3) defending Australia proper with allies if required, and 4) engaging in shaping activities with friends and allies. Again, such requirements hardly align themselves to a strictly defined force development policy that focuses predominantly on the “Defence of Australia”.

In the end, the Coalition Government has difficult and crucial decisions that must be made in the near future if the ADF is to remain a technologically advanced defence force, capable of furthering the country’s objectives and interests. Despite the past value the concept of Defence of Australia has provided in the area of disciplined defence planning, the time has come for a break with some of its atavistic aspects and concepts. A less narrowly-focused national-level defence
concept is now required if the ADF is to have the capabilities necessary to meet stated Government objectives. This orientation should place a premium on improved power-projection and sustainment capabilities. Such a sea-change in policy should have the beneficial effect of better structuring the ADF, as well as reinvigorating the strategic debate in Australia and thereby avoiding intellectual stasis.

NOTES

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

Many Government functions contribute to maintaining Australia’s national security – foreign trade, immigration and aid policies are among them. The Minister for Foreign Affairs visits Cambodia in May 2000 to view demining operations.
An Indonesian View

By Jusuf Wanandi, Senior Fellow, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta

It is an excellent idea of the Australian Government to offer to the public the opportunity to comment on the Defence Review to be issued at the end of the year. That is how a democratic government should work and to get much feedback and ideas from the Australian public.

It is even more encouraging that they have invited regional thinkers and strategists to give their views. This is indeed significant. Although Australia is geographically a separate continent, it is politically, economically, and strategically very much a part of East Asia and the Asia Pacific.

The Defence Review 2000 gives a very useful overview of the real and strategic choices that Australia has in formulating its defence policies in the future. The arguments on those choices are balanced and down to earth. It also made explicit the consequences, in strategic, political, and financial terms, of those different options.

I would like to concentrate my comments on Australia and the region. As has been underlined in the proposal a correct assessment of strategic and security developments in the region is critical for Australia’s defence. For that reason a network of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with the region is of great significance. It also provides the basis for confidence building measures par excellence.

In fact, regional cooperation should also include political, social and economic ones, since defence and security in the region has to be understood in a comprehensive way where diplomacy as well as economic cooperation are part and parcel of it.

Australia must keep relations with the region as a high priority. The region as well as Australia has benefited from Australia’s regional initiatives and participation in all regional institutions. This remains valid in the future as well.

In all these efforts in the Asia Pacific and East Asia, the second track activities and contributions from academe and intellectuals in cooperating together with officials in a private capacity are an important contribution towards regional cooperation, especially for undertaking studies and introducing new ideas to be looked into. Here Australian scholars have excelled.

Therefore, APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) as well as PECC (Pacific Economic Cooperation Council) in the economic field or ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) and CSCAP (Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific) in the security field are all making a significant contribution to regional peace and prosperity. In due time, Australia should also participate in the emerging East Asian regional cooperation structure. Now is the time for both Australia and Indonesia to take the lead in cooperation with others to reinvigorate those regional institutions after the financial crisis brought them almost to a standstill.

An important issue to be examined is whether Australia should be involved only in the defence of the continent, its territories or also in security problems of the region. Of course, it should be both. The emphasis should be on the defence of the continent, first and foremost through its maritime and air capabilities and then with ground troops that should be mobile.

At the same time that Australia is involved in the region through regional and bilateral defence and security relations and arrangement it should also be ready for all kinds of engagement in the region: search and rescue (SAR), peacekeeping operations (PKO), new security issues (narcotics, transnational
crime, environment, migration, even humanitarian issues and domestic instabilities). In the event of humanitarian intervention, such as in East Timor, Australia was wise to do it after Indonesia had given its agreement and with the support of the UN Security Council. Although the rhetoric and theatrics of its intervention was controversial, the fact that it was willing to do it and had done it in a professional and capable way is to be lauded.

By hindsight it could be argued that the Howard Government could have prevented such a human calamity in East Timor if it did not support the Habibie plan too eagerly. Apparently, it did that in the belief that only a transition government with a weak president and a demoralised army could deliver independence to East Timor. But as history has shown, it did not work out that way, because the Habibie Government was too weak to deliver and the military leadership never accepted the idea of East Timor becoming independent. They have tried to sabotage the plebiscite from the beginning.

Since relations with Indonesia has been singled out as vital to Australia’s defence, the new Indonesia provides an opportunity for laying down a broader-based relationship than the one which developed with the Soeharto regime. Although Indonesia is going through a crisis, in the end there is a fair chance for a democracy to emerge. It should be in Australia’s interest to assist and fully support efforts in every field it can. In this context, a strong defence for Australia is an additional support for a stable, secure and democratic Indonesia.

This only suggests that the right judgment coupled with intensive relations with the region, including with Indonesia, are critical to Australia’s defence and security.

__Mr Jusuf Wanandi is a Member of the Board of Directors and Senior Fellow of the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).__
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**Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force**

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**How do I have my say?**
The Government appointed a Community Consultation Team comprising The Honourable Andrew Peacock, Doctor David MacGibbon, Mr Stephen Loosley and Major General Adrian Clunies-Ross (Retd.).

This team has been visiting capital cities and regional centres to conduct public meetings throughout July and August. Further information is available from the website (whitepaper.defence.gov.au). All Australians have been encouraged to express their views by e-mailing a submission to whitepaper@cbr.defence.gov.au or by posting it to:

Defence Review 2000
R1-5-A137
Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**What happens then?**
The Community Consultation Team will submit its report to Government in late September. The report will identify and consolidate the issues raised by the Australian community, and will inform the Government’s review of the fundamental principals underlying the structure and role of the Australian Defence Force.